



**Naqqāshī: An Art of Multan  
History, Evolution and its Contemporary Form**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Art is all about defying, and it refuses to articulate the established patterns, and it may be considered free-floating without closure. It is driven by a thought process, creative pleasure, and multiplicity. Naqqāshī is a form of art in which patterns are painted with a brush and colours. Usually, the painted work is done on walls (interior and exterior), wood, and camel skin. The art of Naqqāshī came from Central Asia, Turkey, and Iran. According to Naqqāshī, the art of Naqqāshī in Multan can be traced back to the 12th century BCE. Mostly, Naqqāshī choose blue and turquoise colours in their art pieces to present a cool and calm vibe. The present article is an attempt to unfold the history of Naqqāshī in Multan. It seeks to explore the origin, evolution, and transformation of Naqqāshī in the land. The work of Naqqāshī reflects the cultural patterns and cultural turn in the region. The Naqqāshī of Multan amalgamated a unique pattern to preserve the traditional art of Multan. Therefore, wherever this artwork goes, it represents the cultural heritage of Multan. The blend of diverse cultural aspects is like a unique bouquet, and Naqqāshī termed it "Hamā Gull". The art of Naqqāshī has impacted the socio-economic realm of Multan and, its contemporary form is strengthening the national identity. Now Naqqāshī has transformed as a popular form of art. The paper provides a descriptive and analytical discourse in which primary and secondary sources are utilized and field research based on interviews and discussions.*

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## Introduction: Defining and Understanding Naqqāshī and Popular Discursivity

*Naqqāshī* is an Arabic word that means maker of *naqsh o nīgār*, *mūsawirī* and *rang kāri* (Dīn, 2010). It means applying colors to a surface or area in its most simple sense. Generally speaking, there is no significant difference between these terms; however, there is a difference in their application and usage. The terms *naqsh o nīgār* and *mūsawar* are used when some sort of artwork is created. While the *rang kāri* is a work in which color is painted plainly. It does not create anything artistic. Its practitioner is called *rang kāri*. *Mūsawirī*, on the other hand, is an art in which an image is created (Qasmi, 2001). While in *Naqqāshī*, *Naqsh* are painted on a solid object (made of clay, stone or wood) with the help of different colors (Board, 2021).

The term *Naqqāshī* is used in a fairly broad sense. Any type of carving, Inscription, mark, feature, impression, picture or stamp can be included in *Naqqāshī* whether they are made on any material in any way. Application of colors and *Naqsh* in various ways to different materials has been given distinct names and each variation has taken the form of a separate art. These types are *Kāshī Kārī*, *Kāshī Sāzī*, *Mīna Kārī*, *Pachī Kārī*, *Kandā Kārī*, *Kashīda Kārī* and *Qalamkārī* or *Kalamkārī*.

- i) ***Kāshī Kārī*, *Kāshī Sāzī* and *Kāshī Garī***: The source of the word *Kāshī* is the Persian word *Kāsh* which means glass. (Badīkhshānī, 2004) The Persian terms *Kāshī Kārī*, *Kāshī Sāzī* and *Kāshī Garī* all mean "to make shiny tiles". These three words, at least in the beginning, were used to describe the same task 'to create gleaming tiles. However, when this art evolved and spread to different locations, it took different forms. These days, *Kāshī Sāzī*'s work refers to the making of shiny tiles, usually blue, of which Isfahan (Iran) is famous.<sup>1</sup> While *Kāshī Kārī* and *Kāshī Garī* include *Naqsh* on

pottery for which Multan (Pakistan) is known for. *Kāshī Sāzī* (Tile Work) is also done in Multan and is well known in the region but *Kāshī Kārī* (Pottery design) is of international fame. The art of *Kāshī Kārī* was introduced in Multan (Pakistan) by Irani artists centuries ago but here this art took on new dimensions. Instead of just carvings on tiles, Multani artists started making *Naqsh* on red clay, China clay and camel leather. Multani *Naqqāshī* and *Kāshī Kārī* are often considered the same form of art, but there is a distinction in their application and materialization. *Kāshī Kārī* is done on pottery (made of red clay or China clay) while *Naqqāshī* is done on leather.

- ii) ***Mīna Kārī***: The technique of painting and colouring the surfaces of metals and ceramic tiles through vitreous enamel coating is known as *Mīna Kārī*. (Ferozsons, 1968) *Mīna* is a Persian word for coloured glass (Sirhindi, 1983) and *Kārī* is a Persian suffix for work or craftsmanship. (Badīkhshānī, 2004) Intricate geometrical and congruent designs are typically employed as decorative elements to serve dishes, vases, jewelry and display ornaments. Nowadays Iran, Pakistan, India and Afghanistan are the main countries where it is made commercially.
- iii) ***Pachī Kārī***: *Pachī* is a Sanskrit word means that 'Jōr or Pīywand' (Dīn, 2010)(Joint or patch). *Pachī Kārī* is an image or pattern created from small, uniform or asymmetrical pieces of colored glass, ceramic or stone that are bonded together by plaster mortar and cover a surface. This art is frequently employed for flooring and wall decorations.
- iv) ***Kandā Kārī***: *Kandā* is a Persian word used for engraving and carving. (Dehlvi, 2010) *Kandā Kārī* is the

creation of designs and patterns on metals, tiles, wood and other items. This is done by cutting grooves into the material with the help of a burin. Other metal tools such as a knife can also be used. These grooves and depressions on materials may or may not be colorful. Different wax techniques are used to permanent colors.

v) **Kashīda Kārī:** *Kashīda Kārī* is also a Persian word that means needlework. (Dīn, 2010) It is the art of applying thread or yarn to fabric or other materials with a needle. Other materials used in *Kashīda Kārī* include beads, pearls and sequins. Threads of different colors are used to beautify the fabric. It is an ancient art and is found in almost every culture.

vi) **Qalamkārī or Kalamkārī:** The art of *Qalamkārī* is the art of block-printing and hand-painting on fabric. The word *Qalamkārī* is derived from the Arabic word *Qalam* which means “pen” and the Persian word *kārī* means craftsmanship or work. The pen referred to in the term is a short piece of bamboo or date palm stick, shaped and pointed at its end to form a nib (Chandra, 2015). It is an old art of Isfahan, Iran and Andhra Pradesh, India. In India it has 3000 years old history (Vasantha, 2010).

The art thrived in temples dedicated to establishing distinct religious identities and it may be found on temple hangings and images of deities and scenes from Hindu epics (Vasantha, 2010). In both *Kashīda Kārī* and *Qalamkārī* designs are made on fabric.

The main difference is the material and tool with which these designs are made. The tool is needle and the material is yarn or thread in *Kashīda Kārī* while in *Qalamkārī* they are a pen (or dye) and natural colors.

### Research Objectives:

- To clearly understand and define *Naqqashi*.
- To explore the Historical Tradition of *Naqqashi* in Multan.
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- To explore the Historical Tradition of *Naqqashi* in Multan.
- To provide a detailed on the contemporary form of *Naqqashi*.
- To examine the importance the use of colors and tools used in *Naqqashi*.
- To describe the training process of *Naqqash*.

### Literature Review: Different Perspectives on the Origin and Historical Traditions of *Naqqāshī*

There are different perspectives and versions on the origin and historical tradition of *Naqqāshī* in Multan. Therefore, it is difficult to comprehend the exact timeline or to stick with some a specific version.

The book titled *Multani: Multan kī Tarīkh, Tehzīb o Thqāfat* traced the origin of this art from the 13th century. The author was of the viewpoint that after the Mongol invasion and fall of Baghdad in 1258, many artisans' families migrated from Kashan to Multan along with the Sufis. (Pervez, 2007) Malik Muhammad Abdul Rehman Naqqāsh, one of the most famous naqqāsh of Multan, whose family has been associated with art for 900 years. He claimed that they belonged to the Rajpūt Chōhān family who migrated from Rajasthan. (Naqqāsh, Oral History Project, 2018) They have been living in Multan for centuries. He further added that when the Sufis came to Multan, our naqqāsh ancestors were the city's residents. He further argued that basic naqqāshī is the same at all places. In India, naqqāshī is not too different and is influenced by Central Asia. In Turkey, this same tile is also made. However, it includes other colors as well, like red, turquoise, gold, and brown, and the change of color was

because of the indigenous environment. (Naqqāsh, Oral History Project, 2018)

The President of Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) said that the origin of artisan families could be traced to the excursions by Muhammad bin Qāsim at the beginning of the 8th century (Recorder, 2010). He further claimed that, "The use of blue glaze on pottery made from Multani mīttī or fuller's earth is an imported technique first developed by Mongol artisans who combined Chinese glazing technique with Persian decorative art." (Recorder, 2010).

In official sources of the British era, glazed pottery was mentioned as one of the unique products of Multan. Furthermore, this work was not confined to tiles; instead, it was also used in ornamental items (India, 1908). The British called Kāshīgars conservative and reluctant to share the secret of their art. Most of them were located east of Dōlat gate, and the number of workers was less than 20. There was information about glazed pottery in the context of Kāshīgars. (Punjab, 1926) Naqqāshi is an old Multan craft primarily used to carve palaces and forts. With time, Naqqāshs took this art in another direction and began making furniture and wooden boxes. The founders of this craft used to work on architecture all year, and when they had free time, they would make small works, such as engraving bows and arrows and decorating 'ghī kē kuppay' on camel hide. Over time, they started to make vases as well. Local Naqqāsh claimed that initially, the Naqqāshi was used for palaces owned by the ruling class and was done with fresco, natural dyes, and stone crushing. Later, they joined the Sufīs. The Sufīs had a team of people with them who were interested in religious studies. Even if they did not convert to their religion, the Sufīs taught them various arts so they could make a living from them. The Sufīs such as Hazrat Bahāuddīn Zakarīa and Hazrat Shah Shams from Tabrīz, used to make the people work on construction as well as craft small items. It is of great significance that they

paid close attention to the local weather, culture, and customs when converting people to Islam and teaching them various arts. (Rehman, 2022) The crafts of the city, which have been made for centuries, clearly illustrate the local culture and history. As people accepted Islam, the Sufīs would provide them with the necessary skills to support themselves, and the Sufīs would separate them and their families. Everyone had a need for a skilled craftsman. When someone wanted to construct a house and have woodworking done, it mattered not what their religion was - their proficiency was more significant. Thus, the Sufīs not only encouraged individuals to turn to Islam but also taught them the necessary skills to become self-sufficient. (Rehman, 2022)

The common factor in the two perspectives was the Sufī patronage of this art, which had solid supportive arguments and evidence in the form of tombs and buildings, which we can see even today. Secondly, in the British sources, there was no mention of naqqāshi; instead, they used the word for glazed pottery and tiles. The British did not consider naqqāshi and kāshīgarī as separate forms of art, and as naqqāshi was part of kāshīgarī. It can be interpreted in a way that to make an artifact, and some art on building, both form naqqāshi and kāshīgarī are applied simultaneously so the British considered it as one form of art.

### **Conceptual Framework**

All the material that presents a glimpse of the past is grist for understanding and analyzing human history. If that is considered a tenet, then it essentially cannot be limited to text and archive. The artworks, paintings, artifacts, calligraphy, and sculpture are vital historical sources. The writing of art history passes through various turns to establish its significance in the world of academia. Initially, the tradition of art history was followed by the notion of specious analysis. It was somewhat interpreted from a oversimplified perspective, in which its

purpose was not to beautify a particular place. Likewise, the paramount of this perspective was limited to exploring the date of the artwork, grouping it into different styles, and identifying the artist (Tosh, 2015). As Shakespeare pen down in Hamlet "Though this be madness, yet there is method in it." (Shakespeare, 2012) Thus, in this traditional approach, the method of madness was not deciphered. In the context of Derrida's theory of Deconstruction, which is interpreted as "All texts have ambiguity". In brief, ambiguity means something which has more than one meaning, which are "Writing and Difference", "Of Grammatology", and "Speech and Phenomena". (Güney, 2008) In art, there is more than one intrinsic meaning that can be unearthed in an artwork. In 1930s Erwin Panofsky, gave the idea of "Iconography", which says: "The reading of art in relation to the intellectual world in which it was commissioned and created. This worked particularly well in the case of artists like those of the Italian Renaissance, who worked for highly accomplished patrons and delivered works with philosophical or mythological themes". (Tosh, 2015) In recent times another name T.J. Clark gave a new dimension to art history. He emphasized focusing on the connection between art, social structure, and the process of history in which artwork was created. He said: "There can be no art history apart from other kinds of history" (Tosh, 2015).

Hence, modern art history encompasses exploring the genesis and development of artwork. The historical research based on art intends to answer the discovery and authenticity of the artwork, define the question of cultural growth in an artist's career, analyze the impact on the historical development, and lastly to collect biographical data of the artist and testify to the claim on the artwork (Britannica, 2023). The point, as mentioned earlier, can be categorized as the primary concern in art history. Furthermore, art history also aims to unfold the tradition of art, styles of art and the

socio-cultural background of an artist (Britannica, 2023).

## **Materials and Methods**

The study employs a combination of descriptive and analytical approaches along with qualitative methods to reinforce the argument. *The* study is divided into two main parts. The initial part revolves around conducting research in libraries and archives, encompassing the examination of books, official documents, gazetteers, newspapers, and magazines. Accordingly, Historical methodology is incorporated to interpret, contextualise and analyse the qualitative material available in both primary and secondary sources. The second part exclusively focuses on field research, which entails conducting open-ended interviews with seven artisans who are directly dealing with the art of contemporary form Naqqashi. It is important to mention that six out of seven artisans want to keep their names private. So, according to them, they are being cited with names. Lastly, a table of glossary is attached for the brief description and meaning of Arabic and Persian words used in research.

## **Results and Discussion: Significance of Selection and Use of Colors in Artwork of Naqqāshi**

In Persian cultural tradition, blue inspired creators more than any other colour throughout the centuries. It has shamanistic and talismanic associations, believed to be capable of repulsing the 'evil'. It has a wide-ranging significance in Persian literature, crafts and other arts. *Nizāmi* in his famous work *Khamsā* recorded "One Wednesday, when the blooming sun coloured the black sphere's dome blue, the King, who was victorious in battle like the sun, donned sky-like turquoise robes and went to the pavilion for sport. The day was short, and the tale was long." Bahrām Gūr (420-438 AD), the King of Persia, "visited one of his seven wives from the Maghreb and lived in a pavilion made of

turquoise tiles and decorated with murals of various colours.” (Juliet, 2018) A couple is depicted in her pavilion in a 1537 copy of the *Khamsā*, which is richly decorated with gold and yellow decorative elements and its turquoise dome. Turquoise to indigo, Persian blue's many expressions, which symbolize life, water, sky, and then celestial, can be seen in architecture, carpets, cloisonné, glass, as well as paintings and calligraphy. (Juliet, 2018) From the earliest Islamic period of Persian history, the Umayyāds (661-750), turquoise-glazed earthenware storage vessels were ubiquitous. Historically, the combination of blue and gold in Persian artefacts was a glorious one. The vivid effect of deep blue and metallic gold resonates in Ilkhante 1256-1335 BCE (Mongol Khanate) ceramics tiles and pottery, characterized by a deep blue overglaze known as *lājavadīnā*. Gold was also the imperial Mongol colour for clothing. The significance of Persian blue on other cultures, particularly those to the east is not exaggerated. The use of Blue colour in artefacts reached China with the development of maritime Silk Road and to its peak during the Song dynasty (960-1279) and Yuan (1279-1368) with Muslim traders accorded relatively high social status in China. The influence was not one-way and this cultural interchange also impacts other cultures which were on maritime routes. Huge quantities of Chinese blue and white porcelain products sailed through China Sea, the Indian Ocean and to the Red Sea, affecting indigenous ceramic industries in South Asia and the Middle East. Blue colour was more attracted by Muslim cultures and the tile choice for the domes and walls of blue-tiled mosques with glazed blue tiles was a no-brainer, given their divine symbolism. Literary and courtly themes were frequently featured on blue ceramic tilework in the form of gilded Quranic inscriptions, maintained well into the Qajar period (1789-1925 BCE). Non-figurative tile decoration covered mosques, madrasas, and mausoleums in blue. In a mosque's mihrab, an earlier tile from the thirteenth century BCE would have been

placed. This turquoise-overglazed tile from the thirteenth century features a pendant lamp that was typically hung in mosques (Juliet, 2018). A long Turkish tile panel circa 1650-55 features a hanging lamp at the top. Its cool blue, green, and white colors are typical of Iznik pottery.

### **Nature and Transition of this Art Work and Training of a Naqqāsh**

Naqqāshi is an important and ancient industry of Multan. The place named Mōhalā Kamāngarān is associated with this industry. (Pervez, 2007) This locality is famous because of its craft for making manufacturing bows and arrows that is “kamāngarī”. People from different areas also used to come here, learn the craft and then go back to their areas. Places like the Mōhalā Kamāngarān, Mōhalā Kāshī Kārān, Mōhalā Kūmhāranwālā, Mōhalā Kālīn Bāfi, Mōhalā Daighōn Wālā had a status of a University vis-a-vis these arts and crafts. (Rehman, 2022) In medieval India, most of the works of *naqqāshi* were done on palaces that belonged to Sultāns, and the roofs were decorated by *naqqāshi*. (Rehman, 2022) It was done by fresco, natural dyes, and stone crushing. Gradually, *naqqāsh* took it in another direction and added furniture and wooden boxes as well. At that time, *naqqāsh* used to work on buildings all year long, but when they got free, they made these small little crafts. Mainly, the turquoise color was used. Later on, they started decorating buildings but focused more on mosques. Here it is significant to mention that the transformation of work from palaces to mosques and tombs was because of the conversion (Naqqāsh, Oral History Project, 2018). He further added that: “Some from Baghdad like Hazrat Bahāuddīn Zakarīa and Hazrat Shah Shams who had come from Tabrīz. So, when these Sufis converted people to Islam and taught them different arts, they took special care about the local weather, culture and traditions of the city which were prominently highlighted ” (Rehman, 2022).

## Training to become a Naqqāsh

To excel at Naqqāshi, it is essential to follow the basic structure. When learning the art, they are initially instructed on the basics, such as having the correct grip on the paintbrush (known as *pakar*). The hand movements of the brush should be gentle. Some children have naturally rough hands from childhood, so their hands are tied with a dough (*ātē kē pēṛa*) to make them softer (Naqqāsh, Oral History Project, 2018). In order to master this art, one's mind, breath, and hands must be soft and flowing, as there is no place for strength in art. The artist builds up his mental fortitude by repeating the same tasks repeatedly. Even if he has accomplished a successful creation, his teachers often require him to redo it. We practiced our craft on a *takhtī* and made vibrant colors with oil paints. Creating these colors is mesmerizing. A lit a small lamp or *dīā*, and put a plate above it. The soot that accumulated from the flame is known as '*phllā*' in the Saraiki language and is also used to create *kājal* for the eyes (Rehman, 2022).

The interviewee narrated as his experience: "I was attempting to draw a Zumbak flower for the first time, and my dad was watching me. I blamed the brush for my poor results and vented my frustrations to my father. He started to laugh and handed me his own brush. Unfortunately, I still could not draw the flower correctly as I did not have sufficient practice. He then told me that he had also expressed the same grievances to his father when he first tried to draw this flower" (Rehman, 2022).

Hence, continuous practice is the key in the learning of this art. In the Saraiki language, there is a term called '*phattī*' which means '*takhtī*'. We also have the phrase '*Nirri Chattī*' which refers to hard work and a lot of it. The pioneer *Naqqāsh* used to share a proverb that read '*Phattī Nirri Chattī, Bād Mīn Nirri Khattī*' where '*khattī*' stands for a person's income. The proverb was an advice to practice your

skill relentlessly and become an expert, as it will be a source of your income and society's respect (Rehman, 2022). Nevertheless, the first step is to remain focused on the task and forget everything else. The eyes, mind, body, and breath must all be aligned with the job. One may even have to hold their breath for a while attempting to draw a thin line.

## Camel Skin as a Contemporary Form of Naqqāshi

When electricity came to Multan city, the first camel hide lamp installed with a bulb was installed. Abdul Rehman Naqqāsh claimed that it was his grandfather Ustād Abdullah Naqqāsh, who had the distinction of being the founder of the camel hide lamp with the bulb in 1911. (Ahmed, 2013) During the British time, due to the uniqueness of this craft Hindu middlemen started selling it in the other cities of British India like Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi (Chaudhry, 2002). In the post-partition context, one of the important reasons in decline of the product was no direct trade access to the major cities of India. (Chaudhry, 2002)

Basically, there are three craftsmen involved in the making of one art product of camel skin.

- i) Naqqāsh: A naqqāsh is a person who makes different patterns and also does naqqāshi in the form of designs (Rehman, 2022).
- ii) Clayman: A potter makes a clay mold according to the design and shape (Craftsman2, 2022).
- iii) Dabgar: His work is to clean the skin, hair removal and prepare it to put wet camel skin on the clay (Craftsman1, 2022). After two days, a stick was used to break the mold (Ahmed, 2013). Lastly, this camel skin mold is handed over to naqqāsh for finishing work.

### Tools used in making the Artefact from Camel Skin Work

i) **Brush:** The tail hair of squirrels is used to make paintbrushes. The central part of their tail contains useful hairs, whereas the rest are of no use (Craftsman4, 2022). We pluck these hairs and fashion them into brushes. Three distinct types of squirrels yield different brushes:

- The young squirrel has only black fur.
- The older squirrel has fur that is both white and black.
- The youngster squirrel has fur that is all black (Craftsman3, 2022).

To identify the type, we perform a test. If the fur is completely black, it belongs to a young squirrel. If the fur is black and white, it is from an adult squirrel. Lastly, if the fur is black, it belongs to a child squirrel. It is vital to mention that squirrels are not hunted or harmed in this process. Squirrels often succumb to harsh weather conditions, and the gardeners cut off their tails and bring them to the Naqqāshs. With the use of brushes, we can create many colorful flowers. The brush can absorb much water due to its soft hair (Craftsman4, 2022).

ii) **Colors:** Colors were made by crushing natural dyes back in the day. There used green stone that was placed in an oven. It used to swell like powder, and then it was crushed. The more challenging part of the stone was separated, and the lighter part was used to turn it into powder. Then it was mixed with animal skin *shiresh* (Craftsman5, 2022). Normal water was not mixed in it; instead, Sika Kāi was used. Sika Kāi is boiled, which is essential to bring a flow to the color. It was necessary because of one more thing. In building works, especially in fresco, it was added by boiling it in water (Craftsman5, 2022).

iii) **Pencil and Paper:** Having a pencil and paper to carry out divisional work is essential. Traditionally, when a master had to build a dome with a 70-foot point and a 200-foot height, they would draw a little outline and indicate a black contour representing the 16th part of the dome. Furthermore, it is necessary to comprehend how to safeguard the colors. It is significant to consider what materials are being used and whether they have a sturdy base (Craftman6, 2022).

### A Glance at Modern Day Art form of Naqqāshi on the Camel Skin



Figure 1. Naqqashi Art on the Lamps made up of Camel Skin



**Figure 2.** Naqqashi Art on the Lamps made up of Camel Skin



**Figures 3.** Naqqashi Art on the Lamps made up of Camel Skin



**Figures 4.** Naqqashi Art on the Lamps made up of Camel Skin



**Figure 5:** Naqqashi Art on the Lamps made up of Camel Skin

### **Famous Work of Naqqāshi in Multan**

- Tomb of Shah Yusaf Gardēz
- Tomb Shah Rukn-ī-Alam
- Tomb of Khāwjā Owīs Khaghā
- Tomb of Mōlānā Abdul Haq Multanī
- Masjid Khadkā
- Sāvi Masjid
- Shrine of Shams Tabraiz
- Masjid Nawāb Ali Khān. (Pervez, 2007)

### **Famous Works by Naqqāshs of Multan in different cities**

- Serena Hotel Faisalabad: In Medieval times, this work used to be done at havelis and palaces but now palaces are not constructed so the Prince Karīm Aghā Khān got it done at the hotel.
- Dome of Qilā Bālāhisār, Peshwar: (Naqqāsh, Oral History Project, 2018) In this work Traditional Multanī style of Naqqāshi was done with golden and turquoise artwork.
- Aīwan-ī-Iqbal, Lahore
- Benazir Bhutto's Tomb, Larkana

### **Pedigree of Prominent Naqqāsh Family in Multan**

- Ghulām Hussēn
- Illahī Baksh
- Rahīm Baksh
- Khuda Baksh
- Ustād Abdullah Naqqāsh
- Malik Aashiq
- Abdul Rehman (Naqqāsh, Oral History Project, 2018).

During the interview the Mr Rehman mentioned the name of his forefather in the chronological order but unable to provide a systemic timeline. In 2005 and 2006, Mr Abdur Rehman took part in a competition run by UNESCO. It was identified that the creation of camel lamps is exclusive to Multan, Pakistan; however, India claimed that they were also making them. Because of

this, a delegation from UNESCO went to both Pakistan and India to investigate. Eventually, it was determined that the art of making camel lamps originated from Multan, Pakistan, so UNESCO gave a Seal of Excellence to the nation. (Naqqāsh, Oral History Project, 2018)

### **Conclusion**

The art of Naqqāshi started in the 13th century, and it passed through various transitions. It began with royal patronage accompanied by Sufi's tremendous influence, it was more customize art work for an influential segment of society and now in the 21st century, it is shaped as a lucrative business. Due to changing socio-economic patterns and the rule of demand and supply enormously changed Naqqāshi from the time of its beginning. In the medieval age, it was confined to a specific ruling elite, ashrafī and the artwork was customized and classical in the genre. In contemporary times, the artwork has become more commercialized, and its range of customers increased; however, the quality of work is also affected. From classic art now, it has now transformed into a traditional form of art. Accordingly, with the historical progress of art history, it has emerged as an integral part of Multan's culture and identity. It has also enriched the cultural heritage of Multan both at the national and international levels. Apart from it, there is the utmost need to preserve this precious, rare, and delicate traditional Naqqāshi by hand, which is replaced by machine work. The number of artisans is decreasing and the quality of the artwork is limited to very few skillful Naqqāsh. A new generation is not being produced in this craft like the one we perceived forty or fifty years ago. The new generation needs to show more enthusiasm for it. The primary reason for this is our educational system. If, in the educational system, native products are not taught, they eventually become insignificant. As a result of ignoring local and regional products in the curriculum, people are drifting away from the indigenous culture

and tradition. Precisely, the art of Naqqāshi is becoming common, but the spirit of classical Naqqāshi is somewhat getting obsolete. Everyone desires that an item be created rapidly. However, crafting requires time. Ironically, it has not affected the requirement for our work. People value handmade products. People are turning back to handmade items. However, now, the number of young committed artisans is less. Lastly, we would suggest that at the

government level, it is the need of the hour to institutionalize this art to construct a counter-narrative to respond to national challenges i.e., economic instability, extremism, intolerance and identity crisis.

**Acknowledgement:** Courtesy of The Citizens Archive of Pakistan for providing interview of Muhammad Abdul Rehman Naqqash.

### Glossary

Sr no	Word	Description/ Meaning
1	Naqqāshi (Arabic)	Drawing, Engraving, Painting
2	Naqsh (Arabic)	Carving, Inscription, Mark, Features, impression, picture, Stamp
3	Naqsh ō nīgār maker	Drawer, Painter. The person who does Naqqāshi
4	Rang kāri (Persian)	Plain Painting, It does not create anything artistic
5	Rang kār (Persian)	Painter, who practices Rangkāri.
6	Mūsawirī (Arabic)	The art of Painting in which an image is created. It is also called Sōrat Garī (Image Making)
7	Kāshi (Persian)	Shiny Tile
8	Kāshī Sāzī (Persian)	Tile making
9	Kāshī Kārī (Persian)	Colorful designs on pottery
10	Mīna Kārī (Persian)	Vitreous Enamel
11	Pachī Kārī (Urdu)	Mosaic
12	Kandā Kārī (Persian)	The art of engraving and Carving on wood, metal or clay.
13	Kashīda Kārī (Persian)	The art of applying thread or yarn to fabric. Embroidery

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<sup>i</sup> It is one of Iran's ancient crafts and is usually used to decorate the walls of mosques, shrines, and tombs.

<sup>ii</sup> In South Asia, social strata are primarily divided into two: the *ashraf* (the so-called high-born) and the *ajlaf* (the so-called low-born)