

## Noorjehan Bilgrami - Brief CV

Noorjehan Bilgrami is a visual artist, art educationist, textile designer and researcher. Her interest in traditional crafts led to the formation of KOEL in Karachi, an Atelier that pioneered the revival of hand block printed fabrics in Pakistan. Noorjehan later established KOEL Art Gallery in the same complex. As the Director of the Koel Gallery, she has promoted the work of emerging artists through a number of innovative exhibitions.

As a visual artist, Noorjehan has had a number of group and solo shows of her own work at various national and international venues.

She is one of the founders of the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture (IVS), Karachi, an institution of excellence in the field of the arts, and was its first Executive Director in 1990-95. She served as Chairperson, Board of Governors of IVS in 2010–2012. She was a member of the Higher Education Commission, Government of Pakistan.

Years of research into *ajrak*, a traditional Sindhi textile, led to publication of the book “Sindh jo Ajrak,” and later to the making of the documentary video, “Sun, Fire, River, Ajrak - Cloth from the Soil of Sindh.” As a consultant to Aik Hunar aik Nagar (AHAN), she conducted natural dyes workshops in the villages to make *ajrak* a sought after fabric for apparel in our urban markets.

Her 220-page book “The Craft Traditions of Pakistan”, along with a 55-minute video documentary, was commissioned by the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan in 2005. She also authored the book, “Born of Fire,” and a documentary film, “Yeh Kiya?” on Pakistan’s renowned ceramist, Salahuddin Mian, curating a Retrospective Exhibition of his work at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture.

Handloom weaving and natural dyes are her major interest and she was awarded the Japan Foundation Fellowship in 2001-02 to pursue research on natural indigo in Japan.

Noorjehan curated the exhibition “Tana Bana: The Woven Soul of Pakistan at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, in 1998 which later travelled to the Pacific Northwest College of Art, Portland, Oregon, the Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, California and the Japan Folk Craft Museum, Tokyo. A comprehensive bilingual exhibition catalogue documenting the traditional textiles of Pakistan, titled TANA BANA, was produced in 2004 when the exhibition traveled to Tokyo.

“Pursukoon Karachi” was a concept she spearheaded, with a team of over 300 artists, designers and creative persons, in Karachi to reclaim the strife ridden city to its citizens through art. Her own project for Pursukoon is the restoration of the Cantonment Railway Station, Karachi.

She has travelled extensively and lectured at universities and museums in the United States, Canada, Scandinavia, Australia, Middle East, India and Japan, contributed numerous articles to international journals and presented papers at prestigious international conferences over the past two decades. Through her publications, lectures and travelling exhibitions, she has highlighted the crafts of Pakistan at diverse international venues, promoting recognition of the craft and craftsmen of Pakistan.