

TRIBAL TRUCK ART

INTRODUCTION:



The exuberant and flamboyant style Pakistani Truck Art is a legitimate and distinct folk art, which represents the values and aspirations of vast majorities of ordinary truck drivers and artists especially from the mountainous tribal areas in the Northern part of the country.

Anjum Rana represents the new Pakistani woman entrepreneurial and creative with an eye for the extraordinary in ordinary everyday life. She has made it her goal to bring this art into the mainstream, into our homes, and give it the recognition it so richly deserves. It is this discerning eye that has always made her appreciate what most of us dismiss or even ridicule or take for granted at best.

Anjum Rana has employed master truck painters and directs them in painting their richly textured motifs on everyday objects such as kettles, lanterns, oil-lamps, boxes garden furniture, walls, fans and object d'art.

Many of these painters were giving up this art due to a lack of patronage as modern photo-printed advertisements on buses and vans become more popular. Some Master Artisans were unable to continue painting since climbing these buses becomes physically challenging due to age. Now, they are able to paint and train apprentices due to this new arena developed by Tribal Truck Arts initiative.

Artists /painters are trained to paint over vehicles only, but once they come to work for TRIBAL TRUCK ART, they are given the opportunity to paint over smaller objects d'art and of daily use, besides vehicles and walls fans, furniture etc.

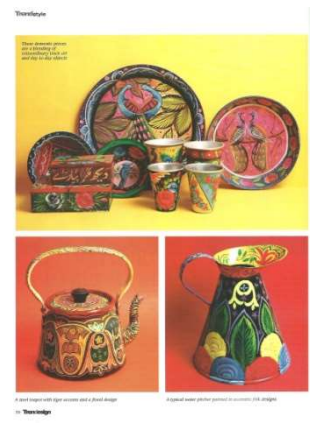
Painters who are master artists and can work independently are now USTAADS (TEACHER'S) in their field.

We usually give different artists a chance to travel each time, so that they can gain experience and confidence in themselves. As most painters have not ever sat in an Aeroplane.

A show was organized by the Pakistan Embassy, Wellington, New Zealand where we painted a van in Wellington and drove up to Taupo almost at the end of the North Island in five days stopping for small Truck Art shows on the way.



I have worked on furniture, bells for Christmas gifts and at least fifty different objects of daily use and decoration.



We have also painted a 30feet long wall by the side of a swimming pool at a private residence.

Pillars and Doors painted in Edde' Sand Resort, Byblos Beirut.



We conduct workshops where painters demonstrate on board and the students attending the workshop then copy the work on objects.

Workshops in Amman, Jordan at Solideire and at King Hussain's Children's Museum.



The meaning of each motif and its significance in truck art is explained to the students and the painters show them how to paint in this unique form.

A workshop can be held at a School/University, with art students. We have also held workshops for adults who want to learn how to paint .Paints and objects are provided and it is usually a two hour session.

SHOWS:

I have held shows in Glasgow, Scotland with a team of painters where we also exhibited film posters on canvas made by poster artists who are out of job.

In Glasgow we got the contract to paint a van for a British film “Nina’s heavenly delights” in 2005.

We also held a show the same year in London at the Pakistan High Commission.

There have been numerous shows in India in cities like Kolkata, Chennai, Delhi, Jaipur combined with food shows from Pakistan.



The Heritage Transport Museum in Delhi, proudly displays our work at this prestigious venue.



In 2008 I was awarded with the UNESCO AWARD, SEAL OF EXCELLENCE IN HANDICRAFTS.

UNESCO sponsored me and a painter to exhibit in Santa Fe' New Mexico, where participated in the International folk art market twice.

In the past few years we have been invited to AMMAN, JORDAN in collaboration with the Pakistan embassy we painted a Land Rover jeep and presented it to the King Hussien's Transport Museum, and also a Volkswagon car was painted and presented to the Children Museum in Amman. I also conducted workshops for children and adults.



The Royal family of Jordan was very encouraging and we were asked to paint for the Royal Summer Home in Accaba.

In 2012 the embassy of Pakistan in Lebanon invited me to paint a school bus for Hariri in Saida, Beirut. I held an exhibit at a very prestigious hall given by Solidiere and conducted workshops for interested adults.



I held a week long show in Byblos, Beirut at the Park area.



IN 2013 June ,we painted a van in Wellington , New Zealand and drove right up to the tip of the North Island through snow and by volcanoes , stopping on the way at market places exhibiting the van and smaller objects for sale .

In 2014 travelled to India twice where we have been commissioned work for private homes and for the Heritage Transport Museum Delhi.

Before the shows start it is important to educate the viewers about this unusual truck art, through print media and TV. I was invited to a TV Show in Beirut alongwith Pakistan's Ambassador to talk about Truck Art.



Tribal truck art featured in MEA, inflight magazine for three months in 2012. I received a picture of the Pope reading the article on Truck Art.

Jean Francois Lesage a famous Parisian embroiderer took truck art pieces for his museum. Christian Loubouton the famous French shoe maker, commissioned me to design a shoe and box with invitation card in Truck art ordered five types of figures to be made in steel and reflector tape.

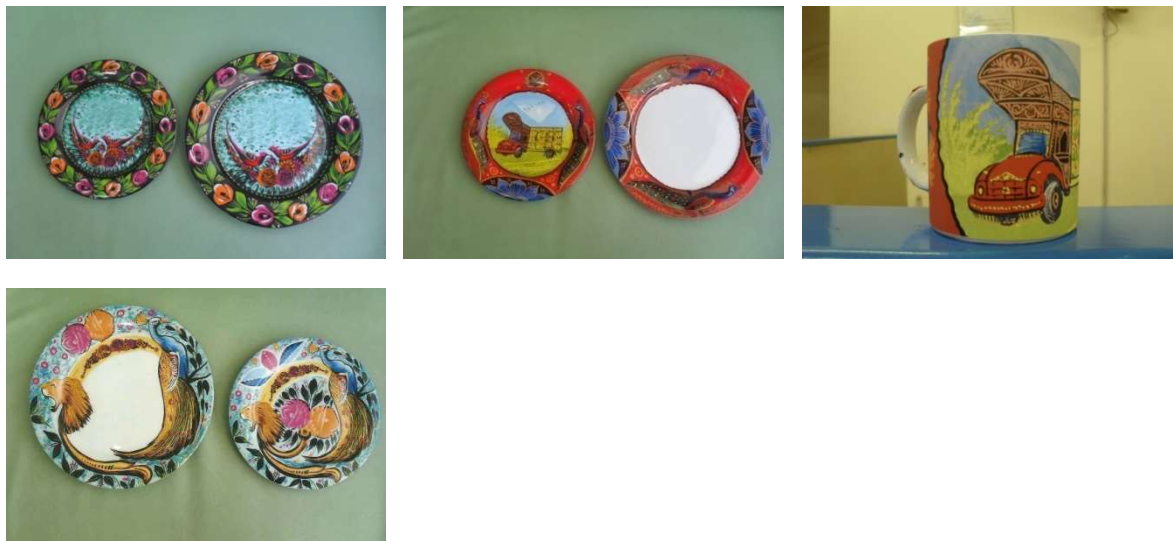
We made huge pieces of animal shapes for Christian Loubiton.



I support Film Posters Artists who are out of job due to Digital Media.



I have complete range of dinner ware, Porcelain Plates, Mugs, Tea cups, Bowls, Platters.



BUSES PAINTED BY TRIBAL TRUCK ART, for O2 Sim Company U.K 2013.



Different objects in truck art.



Kiwi Van in New Zealand:



Truck Art Show at SANTA FE, SCOOTER:



Pataka Gallery New Zealand:



This truck-art project just doesn't seem to slow down. The opening was a real success.



Bottle Creek Gallery, Pataka Newzealand.

VAN Painted in Scotland in 2005 for a British Film, “Nina’s Heavenly Delights”



TRIBAL TRUCK ART SHOW AT SULTANPUR LODHI QILAA, INDIA , MARCH 2014



2018 Pakistan Embassy held a two week long truck art show in Oslo Norway. I was invited by Oslo Mela in August 2018 to paint a truck for the show.

2019 March I held a Truck Art show at Milad Tower, Tehran, Iran, in collaboration with the Pakistan Embassy and painted a School bus and the wall of the Ambassador's residence.

This wonderful, handmade, one-of-a-kind item is an example of truck art rooted in our cultural tradition. Tribal Truck Art has made a positive impact on the life of the artists and their families.

We at Tribal Truck Art hope that you will give us the opportunity to show truck art as an art form as well as a vehicle for positive change.

The mission of Tribal Truck Art is to foster economic and cultural sustainability for truck artists and truck art worldwide, and to create intercultural exchange opportunities that unite the people of the world.

ANJUM RANA

www.tribaltruckart.net

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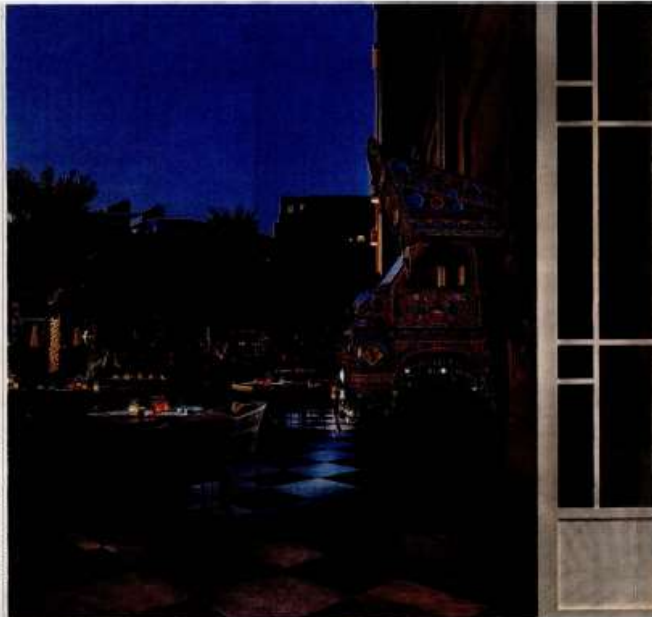


FRI, 15 DEC 2017

Trucking on to keep art moving

TRUCKING ON TO KEEP ART MOVING

► With her first truck art installation in the UAE, Anjum Rana is continuing on her mission to revive this dying art form, writes **Melanie Hunt**



The vehicle used for the installation by Anjum Rana was salvaged from Sharjah. Left: Alan Prida

Anjum Rana has made it her mission to bring the glorious colours and designs of Pakistani tribal truck art to a wider global audience, and with the UAE's first truck art installation at Little Miss India restaurant at Fairmont, The Palm, Dubai, she has stylishly driven her folk art message home.

Rana and two master painters, known as "ustads", spent a little over two weeks on site this summer, decorating a Bedford bus salvaged from a scrapyard. Like all great creatives, they had to suffer for their art, Rana reflects. "It wasn't ideal working in the middle of the construction phase, with all that heat and the dust. I tried a mask but I thought I would suffocate – it was not an air-conditioned area."

Part of the design brief given by interior design consultancy Stickman Tribe was to communicate a culinary journey across India, and the front of the truck is 'driven' through the outside wall, with its body

creating the structure for a bar inside the restaurant. The resulting piece provides a striking focal point for the restaurant and is representative of a style that is typical of Karachi truck artists, who are considered to have the highest level of creative finesse – a consequence of the city's busy market and large port.

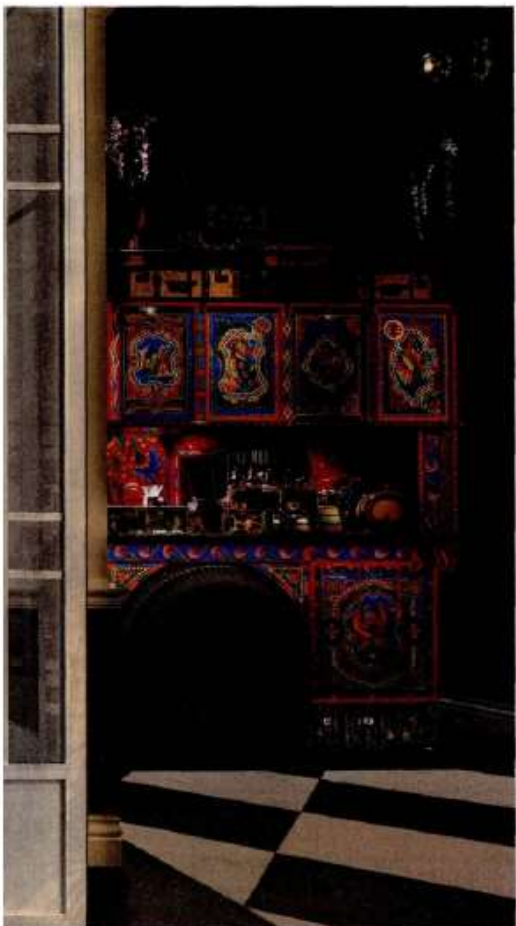
Given that the work will be seen close up, some adjustment was made to the scale of the imagery, which now includes slightly more detailed work than might be found on a large moving vehicle. "I think the front of the truck is particularly beautiful and the work looks like embroidery; it's as finely done," says Rana. "Inside the venue is the rear of the truck, and the stools by the bar panels, with the benches inside, look utterly beautiful."

Rana particularly likes the large pair of peacocks on the back wall, which act as a symbolic illustration of love and affection. Truck art originated in the 1950s, and was initially practised by long-distance

Typical tribal art motifs include a variety of natural scenes, featuring birds, landscapes, waterfalls, snowy mountains, fir trees, wooden chalets and winding trails

lorry drivers who decorated their own vehicles with pop art colours and scenes of home, to ease their homesickness on long journeys, which could last for many months, with rides from Karachi to Peshawar and Balochistan. Painting the vehicles became a way to ease boredom on long trips, where even a tyre change could result





The truck art installation at Little Miss India restaurant in Fairmont, The Palm, above and left, is an extension of the artform that originated in Pakistan in the 1950s, below right. Anjum Rana, below left, is behind the Dubai offering. Stickman Tribe, Little Miss India; Flickr Vision; Getty

in a wait of several days for the right parts or equipment.

Typical tribal art motifs include a variety of natural scenes, featuring birds, landscapes, waterfalls, snowy mountains, fir trees, wooden chalets and winding trails, along with trees, flowers and idealised portraits of actresses. Not all the images are realistic

— some are aspirational places or imagined creatures. F16 planes sometimes feature, as many men in Pakistan's border regions have been affected by war (similarly, rug weavers from these locations also incorporate planes into their designs).

There are regional variations in style, with Karachi, Peshawar and Balochistan being the three main areas of output. Similar work is also done in India, but the motifs are not quite as elaborate.

Poetry is typically included within the work, with traditional phrases such as "Mothers' prayers are like a breeze from heaven" and "Don't be jealous", although for the Little Miss India project, Rana took the view that as a lot of people cannot differentiate between Arabic and Urdu, their local designs would not feature script.

Rana has had an interest and passion for these vibrant hand-painted designs since she was a child. Drivers may have painted their own

vehicles in the early days but, over time, as skills evolved, the painting of trucks became a stand-alone profession, and it required 10 years or more to become an *ustad* or master. With the advent of digital printing, this intricate art form was in danger of being lost, and skills perfected and honed over years were not necessarily being passed on to the next generation. Sadly, none the masters currently working with Rana has a family member interested in learning to work with paint. "They don't want to stand in the sun or work in a dusty shed; they want to earn money a faster way," she points out.

A significant investment of time and money is required to complete a truck — anything from around US\$10,000 to \$15,000 (Dh36,725 to Dh55,087), depending on the size or intricacy of the work. Elaborate decorative features can include dangling chain metal work and cut-out shapes, and the larger the budget the more elaborate the

results. Or, as Rana translates: "How's it going to look? Depends on how much sugar you put on it." More is most definitely more, in the world of truck art.

Rana founded her company, Tribal Truck Art, almost 20 years ago, as a means of bringing this art form into the mainstream and preserving the skills of these artists, by finding new projects, products and arenas in which to apply their talents. Although Rana did not train formally as an artist, she has picked up the requisite skills along the way and, when working in Karachi, she is often found sitting with the other painters in her back garden, under the shade of a tree — as none of them like sitting inside.

She has worked on exhibitions all over the world, and

her work was recognised with a Unesco Award of Excellence for Handicrafts in 2008. Recently, Rana collaborated with Christian Louboutin on a shoe and shoebox design and also completed painting installations in Delhi — at the largest transport museum in Asia.

While the majority of the work for the Little Miss India project was done on site, some of the panels of the crown (the section on top of the cabin of the truck), the cut-out metal work and the handmade chains, were prepared in Karachi and shipped to the UAE. In addition, the lacing beadwork, which hangs like a necklace across the top of the windscreen inside the cabin, and the ceiling panel, made from different kinds of gold braids sewn to velvet with mirror appliqué, were created

by the wives of lorry drivers, in their homes.

Rana continues the tradition of home working and collaborates with a number of artists to produce a collection of truck art homewares and accessories, which are sold through Tribal Truck Art. The very first piece produced was a small box that sold for the equivalent of just Dh16, but she was encouraged to sell more.

Today, the range includes garden furniture, fans and other object d'art. In developing a new respect for the art form and opening up new markets, Rana has created a platform from which master artisans can encourage new apprentices to train — creating cultural and economic sustainability that's a direct consequence of one Pakistani woman having an eye for art out on the road.



The School Library Journal Blog is regularly read by librarians in the US, and The Truck was listed amongst recommended books of 2017:

http://blogs.slj.com/afuse8production/2017/05/03/celebrating-small-publishers-an-array-of-remarkable-2017-titles-from-the-smallest-houses/#_

The prestigious Kirkus Review is going to feature this rather nice review of This Truck...

From Kirkus Review:

"THIS TRUCK HAS GOT TO BE SPECIAL".

The review of "THIS TRUCK HAS GOT TO BE SPECIAL" will go live on our site on May 10th, 2017. The review will also be published in the June 1st edition of Kirkus Reviews. In some cases, a review may be held until the following edition.

www.kirkusreviews.com

THIS TRUCK HAS GOT TO BE SPECIAL

Author: Anjum Rana

Illustrator: Hakeem Nawaz

Illustrator: Amer Khan

Illustrator: Sameer Kulavoor

Review Issue Date: June 1, 2017

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Publisher: Tara Publishing

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Publication Date: July 11, 2017

ISBN (Hardcover): 978-93-83145-42-3

Category: Informational

In this fictional tribute to a very popular art form—truck art—in Pakistan, a seasoned truck driver reminisces about his career and ruminates on the evolution of truck art. Chinar Gul finally pays off the loan on his truck and travels over 200 miles to a truck-yard for his friend Zarrar, an artist, to paint it. This is no ordinary paint job. Truck art merges many art forms: painting, carpentry, calligraphy, metallurgy, and bazaar art (portraits, landscapes, and iconic representations of birds and animals) and is often personalized. Chinar likens it to "getting your house done up. It makes it welcoming and your own." Chinar was a truck cleaner before eventually becoming a driver, wending his way along the treacherous mountain roads for 30 years. To have his own truck is "a dream of a lifetime" for him, and Zarrar proclaims, "This truck's got to be special." Chinar agrees. After Zarrar inscribes "Mashallah" on the crown of Chinar's truck for divine protection, he paints mountain animals and landscapes on the sides. Accompanying the substantial text, monochromatic line drawings contrast effectively with the kaleidoscopic patterns and creatures on the trucks, illustrating how the resplendent beauty of truck art can brighten up an otherwise dreary, hard life. A fascinating glimpse into the lives and work of an intriguing yet largely unfamiliar segment of society (and culture), both through the gorgeous art and the fascinating story. (author's note)

(Picture book. 4-10)



[Book details](#)

This Truck has Got to be Special

by [Anjum Rana](#) (Text)

★★★★☆ 3.73 · 15 ratings · 6 reviews

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“This truck has got to be special!” says truck artist Zarrar to Chinar Gul, a truck driver from Pakistan. Gul—who drives along the mountain roads of the Karakoram and the Hindu Kush—has finally acquired his own vehicle and wants it painted beautifully. As Zarrar gets to work, Gul waits in the yard, thinking about his many journeys, the splendor of the hills and the intricacies of truck art—until everything is at last ready and it’s time to be off, on the road again!

A richly imagined collaboration between a Pakistani writer, truck artists and an Indian illustrator, this book celebrates the energy and joy of Pakistani truck art as well as the artists whose skill and labor breathe life into it. All along, the bold graphic vigor of truck art tells its own story.



AMBASSADOR

EMBASSY OF PAKISTAN
3517 International Court, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008
Tel: (202) 243-6500

April 18, 2016

Dear Ms. Anjum Rana,

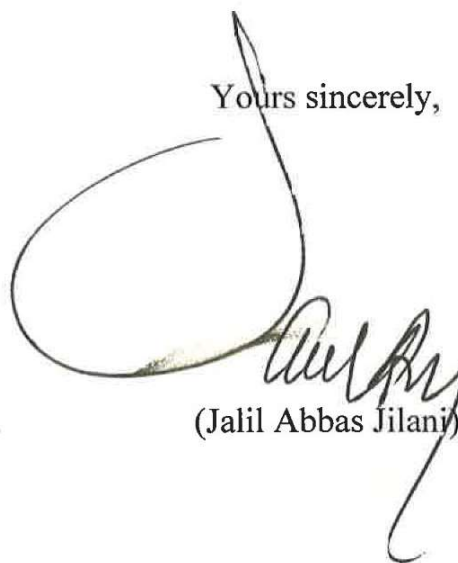
The Embassy had sent the truck art portrait of President Barrack Obama painted by you to the White House.

President Obama has conveyed his thanks for your painting and he is appreciative of the unique Pakistani art. I am glad that your thoughtfulness for projection of Pakistani culture has been acknowledged.

Let me convey my best wishes for your future endeavors and my best regards.

Best wishes,

Yours sincerely,



(Jalil Abbas Jilani)

Ms. Anjum Rana

PAKISTANI TRUCK ART BY HIMALI SINGH SOIN

Joan Baez's voice lilts and quavers this hymn of community, of compassion and of the preservation of the mind and the spirit and its art, as I reflect upon my day with Anjum Rana truck artists from Karachi. Baez's lyrics begin to transcend place and culture and resonate within the brightly painted boxes and pots that have fought for their visas and crossed borders to display their fantastically ornate, intricately crafted, imaginations.

Anjum Rana—recipient of the UNESCO Seal of Excellence in the Handicrafts—grew fascinated with the art on the trucks in her hometown of Lahore, and began chatting with their creators. These painters were not making an art of self-expression; rather their practice was their means of survival. Their problems varied from alcoholism to low income to disease (standing in the sun painting all day) and often a lack of materials with which to work. Anjum's answer was to become their agent, of sorts. She hands them materials, and smaller mediums, like water hoses, boxes, jugs, chairs, sofas to decorate elaborately, then she tours with Ustaad to sell the objects they decorate. "It always brings a smile to people's faces," she grins.

Its true: humor is often evoked from a sense of absurdity, asymmetry, inversion. This art, de-contextualized from its day-to-day image on trucks, imposed on relatively miniature, everyday objects arouses a smile. It represents the comedic infiltration of the noisy, polluted streets into the safety and polish of the middle to upper-class house. Kitsch becomes high-brow.

The scenes depicted on the trucks are from the painter's imagination, sometimes guided by the truck drivers' requests. But imagination is, after all, created from our dreams and our experiences. Anjum explains that painters are often topical in their choice of subject matter. During the war in Afghanistan, several painted scenes of war—F 16 fighter jets and Ghauri missiles—against dreamlike scenes of a placid lake or a lush tree, of course. The omnipresence of nature in all its serenity is influenced by the artistic legacy of the 'anatomical' drawing in India and Pakistan: still life, nature, and human postures that trace back to Mughal patrons and their specific requests. The peacock, as seen in box paintings, is an important and recurring image, a beautiful creature that bridges animal and bird, whose feathers ward off evil, and whose sight brings luck. Nearer local election times, the truck artists will paint political figures; when Pakistan won the World Cup, cricketer

Imran Khan commanded space on every other truck; else the latest film star with rosy cheeks smiles at you in motion. Moreover, fantastical characters from the Q'uran, such as the prophet's winged horse, Buraq, have become emblems of speed and safety.

May you always know the truth, and see the lights surrounding you.

Truck art in India and Pakistan represents desires, dreams, hopes, idols, serenity, food, color, protection, and freedom. The color and decoration signify a kind of escapism, from a reality that can otherwise be sharp at the edges, with few comforting spaces within. It represents stature: he who has the best truck will get the most business—amongst clients or ladies or otherwise.

I watch painters fill in symmetrical, perfectly aligned pink stripes into the paisley pattern of a brightly-colored table fan you can see painters standing on the crowns of trucks under the sun, painting, conceptualizing. They add an aural dimension to their art by hanging bells, metal leaves, and even decorating their radios.

A carpenter chisels wooden panels for the doors. The polluted, crackling lanes of Karachi turn into an art gallery that pops with color and bling. From Indian trucks issue lemons and chilies with a phrase, 'Bure nazar walla, tera moon kala' (Cursed be the one with an evil eye). In Pakistan, a gentler phrase: 'May your mothers' prayers be a breeze from heaven,' along with a pastel colored scarves that wipe off the evil eye.

Inside the trucks is a whole other decorative ecosystem in itself. Dashboards are bedecked with fake silk or plastic flowers, old fashioned talcum powder boxes with fair smiling housewives and outlandish wall-clocks, mirrors, even miniature chandeliers. This is not simply art; it is design. Thus are Ms. Rana creations so vital today; they not only preserve this warm, color-filled tradition, they render it functional at a smaller scale, introducing that which is 'tribal' and pertaining to the 'outside' world into the cooler quarters of the wealthier, who are perhaps often in need for such wish-fulfillments themselves.

May your heart always be joyful,

And may your song always be sung.

-- Himali Singh Soin

The Embassy of Pakistan in New Zealand, in collaboration with Pataka Art Museum, organized an exhibition of photographs by Peter Grant of the decorated trucks of Pakistan, titled, “Painting Pakistan Proud – Truck Art Comes to New Zealand” in May 2013. The highlight was decoration of a vintage New Zealand ambulance by truck artist from Karachi, Yunus Nawaz who accompanied Anjum Rana, the well-known truck art promoter. They decorated New Zealand’s first vehicle with Pakistani truck art and travelled through the North Island on the truck.

Anjum Rana came from Pakistan to help the artist and to run the workshops on truck art in Wellington, Porirua and Auckland. She has promoted the truck art both at home and abroad.

Pakistan’s vibrant and rich culture was well received in New Zealand.

Zahra Akbari (Retd) Ambassador
New Zealand.

A mega 3 day cultural event was organised by the Embassy of Pakistan Tehran in collaboration with Milad Tower to celebrate Pakistan Day in March 2019. The event was inaugurated by the Iranian Minister for Trade, Mining and Industry Reza Rahmani. This was the first time that such an event showing the best of Pakistan’s cultural heritage had been held in Tehran. Dhol performances, stalls representing the provincial diversity of Pakistan and traditional Pakistani cuisine prepared by chefs flown in from Lahore entertained thousands of Iranians and diplomats.

The hallmark of the event was an exhibition of truck art items by renowned truck artist Anjum Rana. Ok This unique medium, indigenous to Pakistan art generated a great of interest amongst the local population. The Pakistan Embassy school bus, parked outside the venue and live painting by the artists attracted many. This was the first time that Iranians had been introduced to truck art. Anjum Rana and her team successfully showcased the versatility of Pakistani art and culture in Iran.

Riffat Masood (Retd) Ambassador
Iran

I have known Anjum Rana for over two decades now. I got familiar with her Truck Art right in the beginning when she started branching off from other work into encouraging local Truck Art painters to paint objects of everyday use. She in effect started “domesticating Truck Art”. She remains the undisputed Queen of Truck Art, even when so many others have also started doing the same.

I was fortunate to arrange two shows of her during my postings to Jordan and Indonesia. These shows were singularly unparalleled in the display of such a unique folk art, and were hugely successful. During this time I saw her level of commitment to the art and care for the artists that accompanied her. The shows got exceptional reviews in the local media and were widely appreciated. Her work continues to grow and gain appreciation wherever she displays her work. She is thus a true ambassador of Pakistan when she takes such art abroad.

I wish her success for all of her future exhibitions.

Ambassador Retd. Attiya Mahmood

Indonesia and Jordan

Truck Art in Lebanon

Anjum Rana introduced Truck Art in Lebanon by organizing exhibitions in Lebanon holding Workshops and even painting a school bus and the pillars of a famous resort.

The events included

1. Byblos

Exhibition and workshop at the scenic gardens of the ancient city of Byblos:

Painting pillars of the most famous Resort and Spa (can't remember name) in Byblos.

2. Beirut

Two weeks Exhibition in a beautiful traditional Villa in Downtown Dubai which was inaugurated with a reception hosted by the Ambassador attended by the Diplomatic Corps and elite of the Lebanese community.

Workshop at Discovery Science Museum for children (pl check the correct name) Downtown Dubai .

3. Saida

Ten days Exhibition and workshop at the historical Saida fort.

Painting a school bus .

Ambassador (Retd) Raana Rahim

Tribal Truck art is a community of Artists, who believe in transforming mundane things into something unusual. They are here to create an alternate world, a parallel reality .

Truck art has a blend of traditional and contemporary designs. Anjum Rana has invented creative use of material and design. Recycled materials have been used in many items. Tribal Truck art is an expression of cultural identity and traditional crafting techniques. Truck Art is an outlet for self expression and has the capacity to create objects that uplift the spirit and enhance the painter's lives. The products we produce, meet the highest level of craft excellence and is distinguished as a bench mark for craft production.