

MEMORIES OF JAPAN

A Tribute Exhibition For
SHAHID JALAL

Chief Guest
SYED BABAR ALI

Monday **16 May 2022**
6:00 PM Onwards

79 B/1, off MM Alam Road, Gulberg III, Lahore, Pakistan.
Phone: +9203008447748 | 042-35718038, 35762784


EJAZ
ART GALLERY

My Brother: A Personal Reminiscence

Among the many out-of-the-box things my brother Shahid Jalal did within the span of a relatively short but productive and self-fulfilling life was to quit his job as a chartered accountant and join the National College of Arts in 1979. Lacking independent means of income, this was considered whimsical and irresponsible on his part. He had a wife and daughter to support and my father with whom they lived in Lahore had just retired from government service. I was in the United Kingdom studying at Trinity College, University of Cambridge. When I returned home for the summer holidays, I experienced what was the @nly truly stressful time in our otherwise harmonious family life. My father, who had a heart condition, felt terribly let down, and my mother was not pleased. Firm in his determination to attend art school, Shahid Bhai reminded them that when he took art classes at the Lahore Arts Council, people called him a "child prodigy". This was heard with skepticism, but I recall seeing an oil painting of his when I was about four years old that had earned him kudos. Despite an abundance of memories of him as a teenager in Rawalpindi where my father was posted in 1963, none relate to his penchant for art. I recall him wanting to become a doctor and a writer - a creative impulse quashed by my father's sharply critical assessment of his writings. So, he made a pragmatic decision and left for London to study chartered accountancy, self-financing himself by working at a firm as part of his practical training. My father was posted to New York in 1970 and my mother, sister and I moved to the USA. I often visited my brother in London, a city he had explored to the hilt. It was thanks to him that I first learnt to appreciate London's rich and diverse artistic, cinematic, culinary, literary, and theatrical scene. A food buff, he knew the best desi restaurants and had become a great cook out of sheer necessity. On one of my stopovers in London, I stayed with him for a few days. We would meet up during his lunch break at his favorite joint, Anwar's, which served South Asian cuisine. After a good lunch he would direct me to museums or matinees of must watch films like *My Fair Lady* and *Doctor Zhivago*. His passion for good cinema, theater, music, and literary fiction left its impression on me. Despite all the evidence pointing to an inclination for the art and culture, my brother had to postpone what he really wanted to do to fit the conventional role expected of him as a bread earner for his family. He qualified as a chartered accountant, a drab profession for a colorful and multifaceted personality. When he decided to take a break from accountancy, most doubted his judgment. A nagging fear gripped us: what if he had no talent? My sister-in-law was the acknowledged artist in the family. Was the idea of being a "child prodigy" just a pie in the sky? Could he at this late stage start an entirely new career. But as they say, when your heart is in something, there is nothing to prevent you from scaling the heights. Our worries about Shahid Bhai's artistic talent were put to rest when he started painting the Punjab landscape under Khalid Iqbal's keen mentorship. In 1989 he won an award at the Punjab Painters Exhibition. It was appropriate that we were on a family holiday in London in 1994 when news came of him being awarded the Presidential Pride of Performance for painting. Shahid Jalal had made his place in the art world, regardless of what snobbish art critics thought of his work. But he was unsatisfied, noting that if he had time to take in more of the landscape, the better his paintings would be. He announced his intention to retire at fifty while in his mid-forties and organized his finances to ensure that his family could sustain themselves comfortably after he retired. The depth in his post-retirement paintings is there for all to see. I am fortunate to have witnessed his evolution as a painter and cherish the paintings, in oil and watercolor, he generously gifted to me. Being away from Pakistan has meant missing most of his exhibitions, and this one is no exception. However, I am glad to have played a small part in the making of this exhibition. After three successive trips to Japan I urged Shahid Bhai repeatedly to visit and partake of its exquisite artistic, culinary, and myriad other cultural treasures. He has captured the manicured beauty of Japanese landscapes and gardens in his own inimitable and unforgettable way. This series inspired by his visit to Japan is more special for being the only exhibition where Shahid Jalal will be more conspicuously present than ever in his absence.

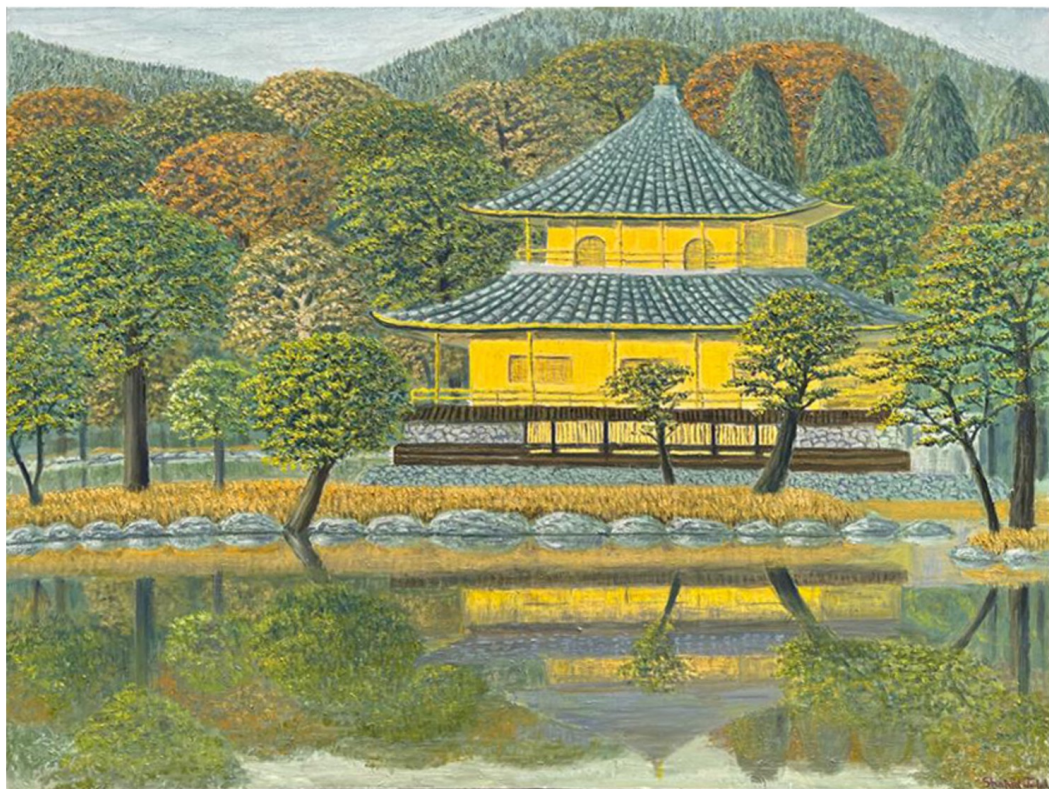
SHAHID JALAL

Shahid Jalal was among the few painters who seldom repeated themselves. He always strived to explore new challenges traveling beyond his trodden path. I recall the painting he gifted to my son on the occasion of his wedding in 2009 more than a decade ago, that encourages the viewer to peer in the far distance at a huddled habitation, sanctified by the presence of a little mosque. The mosque rested like a child in a mother's dusty lap. It bore only one 'minar' and was without a dome. The mason contracted for the purpose either lacked the skill or the Mosque Committee ran short of their meager funds most probably extracted with some effort from the poor residents. The habitation was located beyond arid fields. Dark foliage of a young tree indifferently leaned over a mud wall. Beyond in the distance a faint image of a row of trees could be discerned. Not even a stray dog was in sight. The second painting I acquired from him later was a quiet landscape with successive rows of ditches. Their tops were layered with deep green grass touched by the evening sun. The sight receded to the far distance. A small ditch in the foreground with some shallow rainwater blankly stared at us in the foreground. In more than one way the painting has never ceased to engage me. Despite the bare subject it never ceases to excite my curiosity or sate my senses. Shahid Jalal's earlier works are simple in design and thrifty in content, which led him to more elaborate works visualized in the sprawling Jinnah Gardens and the Jilani Park that is adjacent to the abandoned Lahore Polo Club. These works were more complex in composition, with a profusion of flora and fauna that trailed lazily up and down and around the hillocks. In these works the artist stands in silence on his toes, aloof in nature's living presence. In an interview Shahid Jalal recounts his fascination with multiple varieties of seasonal flowers, planted in decorative patterns, by the municipal gardeners of Lahore public parks. Sometime later when Shahid visited the Tehran Museum, he was dazzled by the carpets on display: many of them woven centuries earlier at Lahore. Subsequently back in Lahore Shahid labored for several years inventing and executing his own carpets with paint on canvas. Naturally he had to abandon plein air easel painting. Shahid would now closely observe and scrutinize individual flowers, then sketch them in meticulous detail before transferring them to a canvas. He then proceeded to paint them with impeccable care. Shahid worked in the studio with a steady hand, without the slightest flaw in evidence. Purdah Bait and the Bottle Brush paintings by Jalal 'mimic' a waterfall, by quasi magical interplay of light and shade. Sunlight plays an integral role in most of his works, while horizontal beams of sunlight bring into relief the entire surface plain of the canvas, the frontal light penetrates the leaves and ignites the petals. Significantly, as mentioned earlier, Shahid Jalal seldom repeated himself. Painting for him was a journey - an unending journey; a means of exploration. He explored and then moved on to another neighbor hood. Whenever I am reminded of the little painting that Shahid presented to my son and compare it to his last works, where lariat of exotic blossoms dangle from delicate branches like pearls in a string, it is a long journey. I believe that often the last lap is the most important factor that determines whether you did win or lose. In Shohid's case he elegantly stampeded beyond the finishing line. However the story does not end there. Works of his last lap are boldly conceived, yet most delicately rendered. Radiant strings of white pink beads dangling off dark branches, simulating cherry and plum trees. They seem so tactile that the viewer is encouraged to reach out and pluck a pregnant bud about to burst into bloom.

Ijaz ul Hassan
19th March 2022



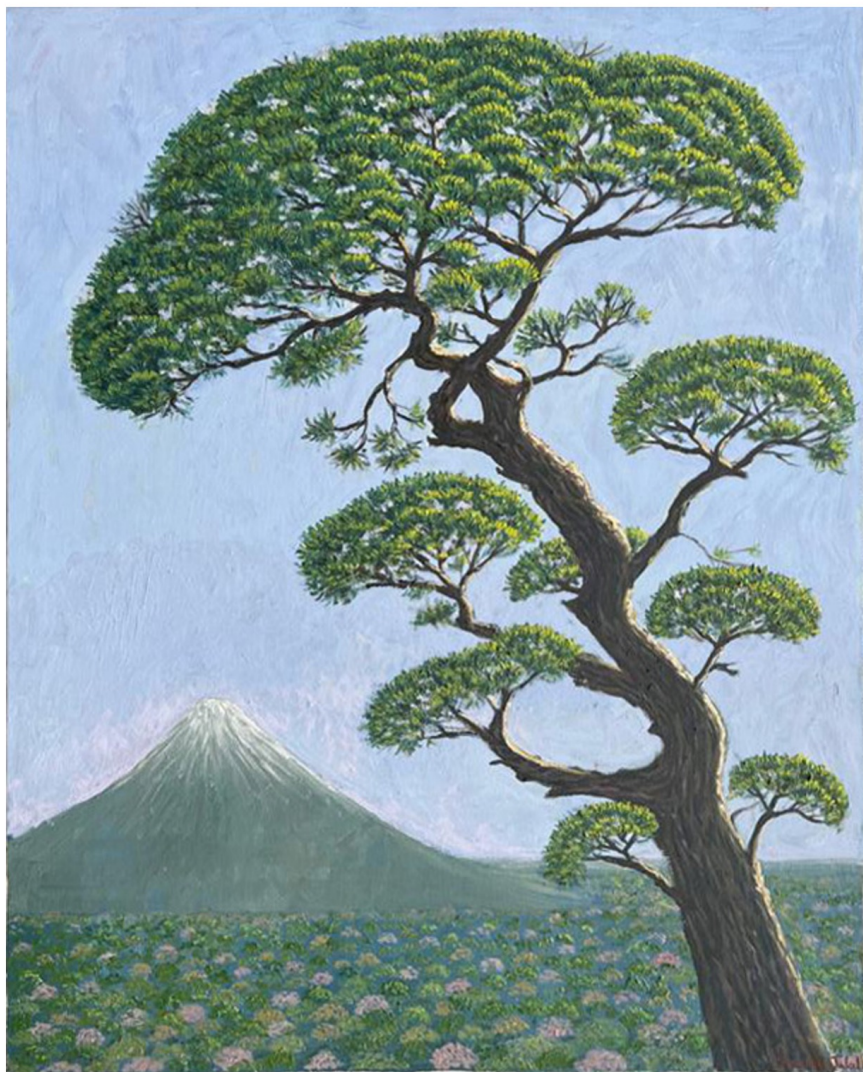
Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 35 x 46 in | Code 01



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 35 x 48 in | Code 02



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 31.5 x 39 in | Code 03



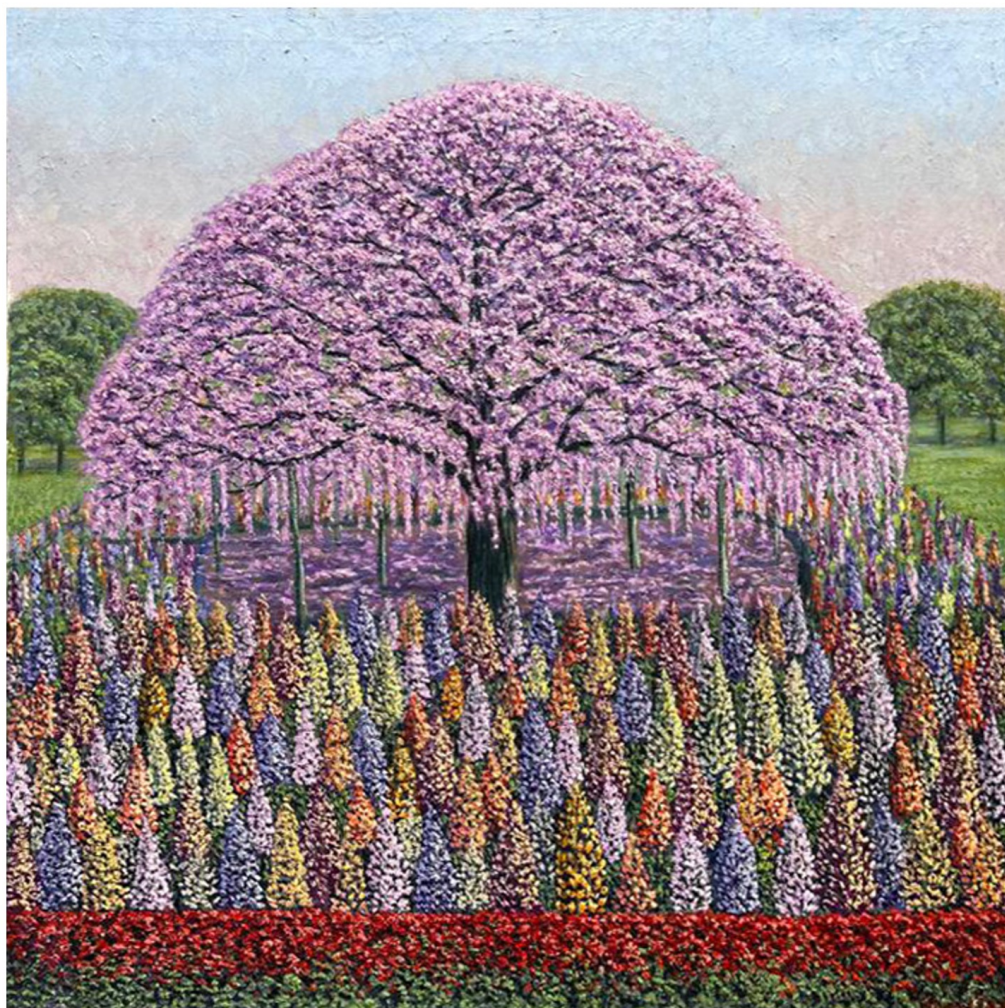
Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 39 x 31.5 in | Code 04



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 39 x 31.5 in | Code 05



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 31.5 x 39 in | Code 06



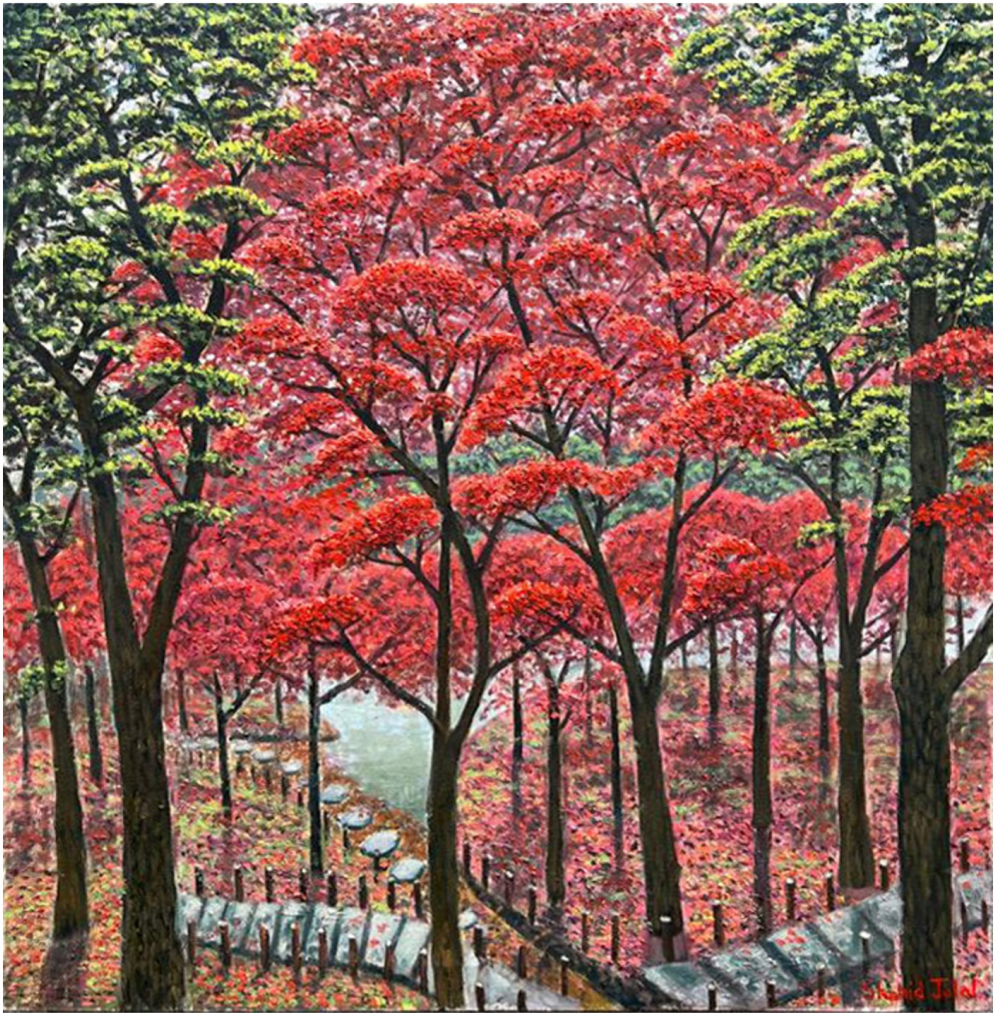
Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 36 x 36 in | Code 07



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 32 x 32 in | Code 08



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 32 x 32 in | Code 09



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 30 x 30 in | Code 10



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 32 x 32 in | Code 11



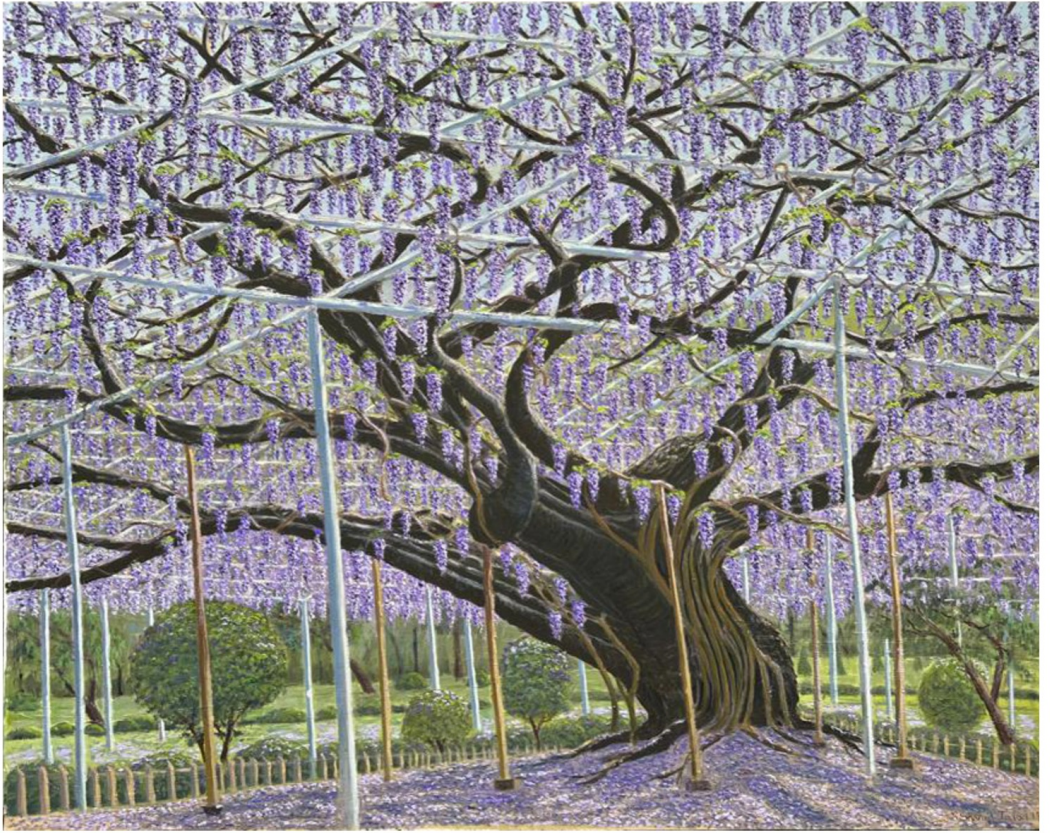
Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 31 x 31 in | Code 12



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 48 x 48 in | Code 13



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 48 x 48 in | Code 14



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 48 x 60 in | Code 15



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 48 x 60 in | Code 16



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 24 x 36 in | Code 17



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 24 x 36 in | Code 18



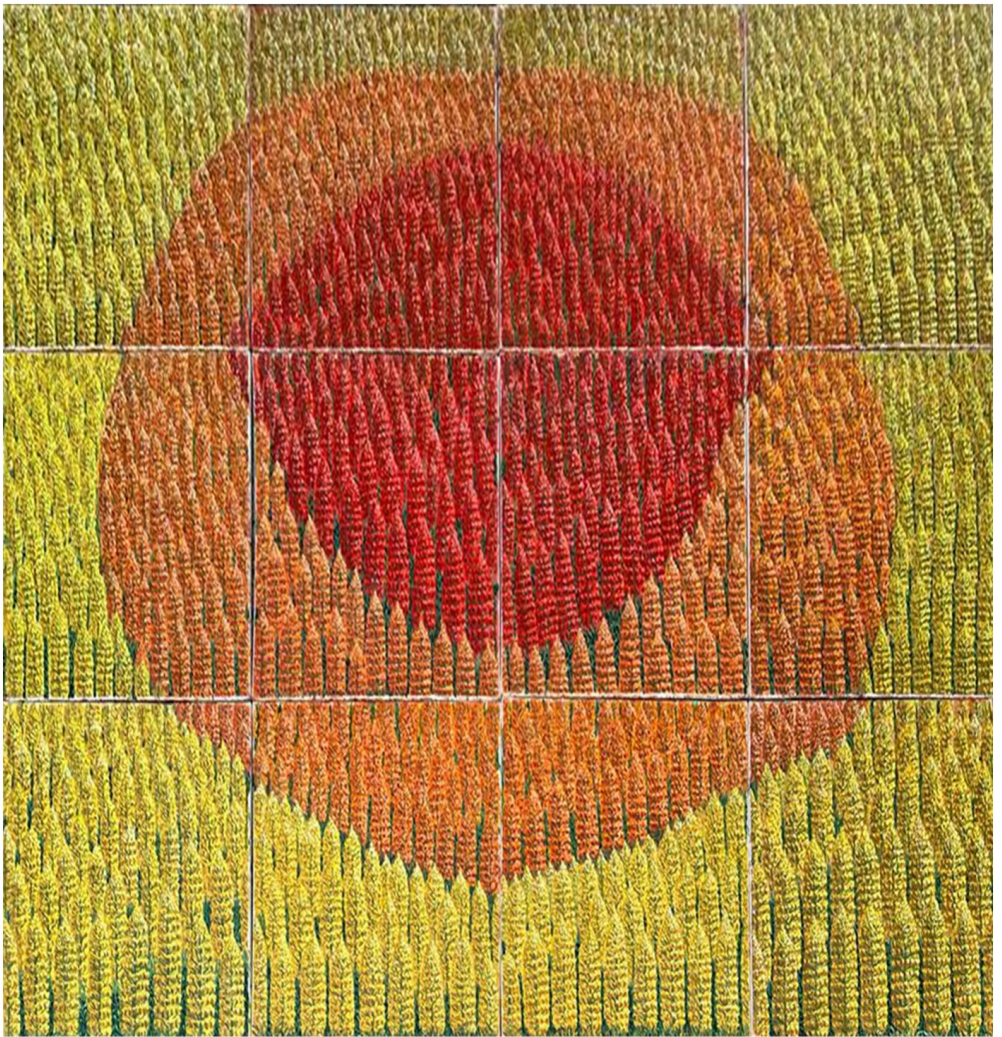
Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 24 x 36 in | Code 19



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 24 x 24 in | Code 20



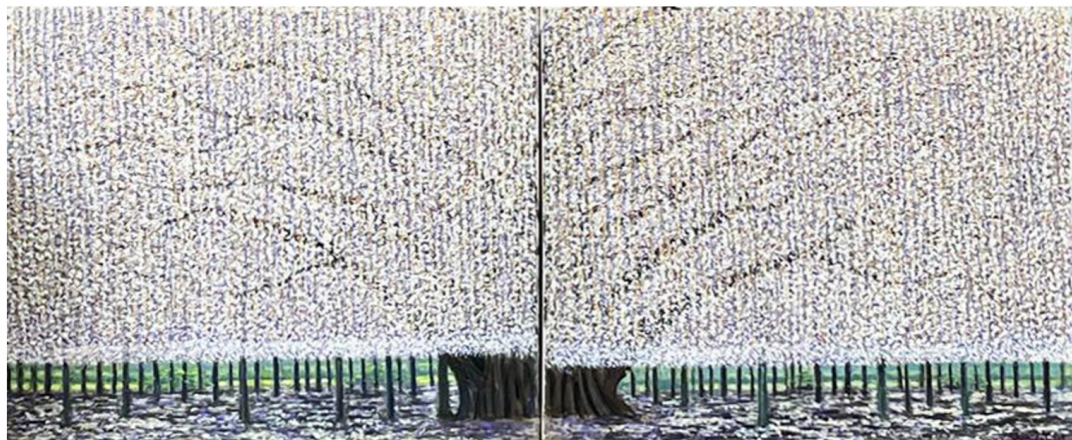
Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 18 x 24 in | Code 21



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 96 x 96 in | Code 22



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 87 x 24 in | Code 23



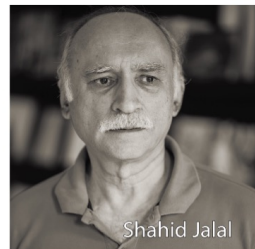
Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 21 x 51 in | Code 24



Shahid Jalal | Oil on Canvas | 39.5 x 31.5 in | Code 25

Born on 13th August 1948
Died 18th August 2020, Lahore

Education:
FCA England
National College of Arts



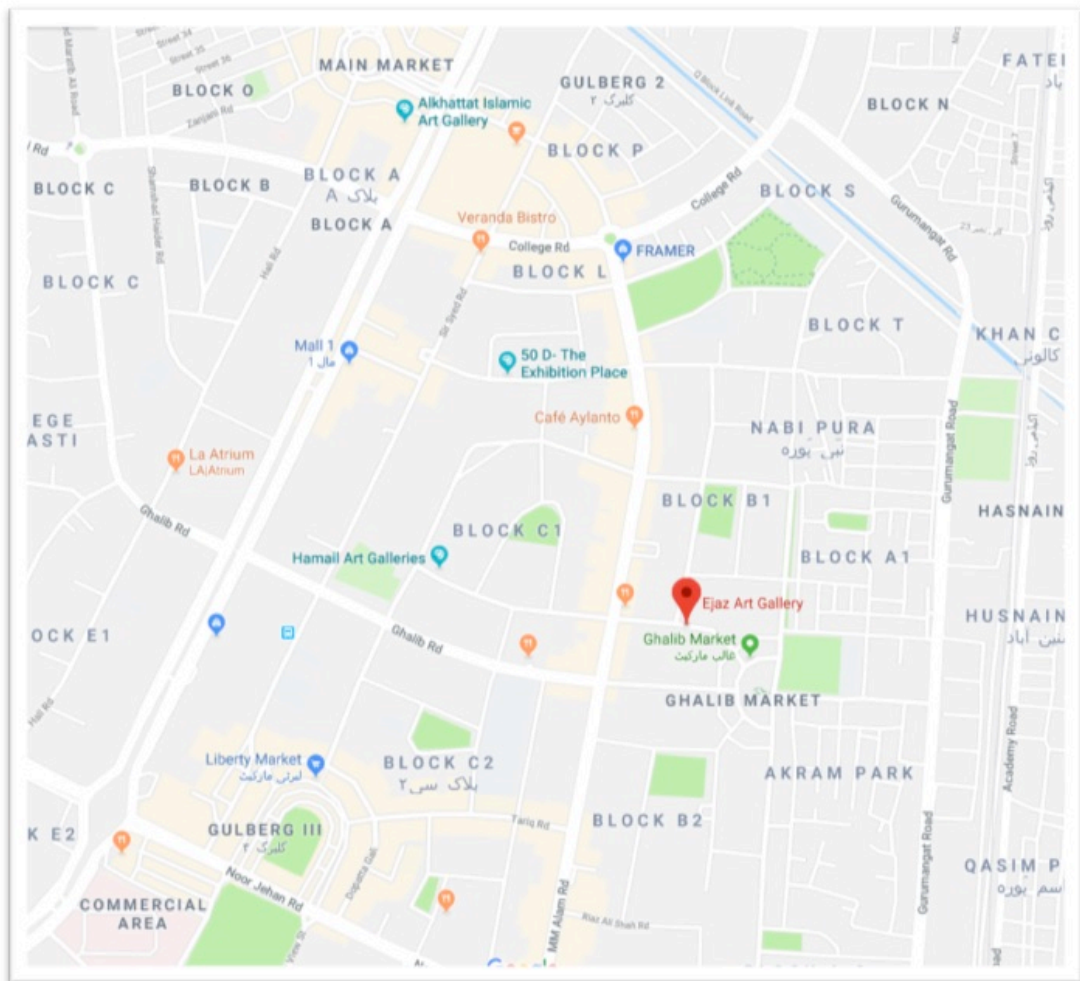
Shows: I have exhibited abroad in Washington, Stockholm, Delhi, and Sotheby's London. I have held several solo and group shows all across Pakistan.

Awards: Prize at the Punjab Painters Exhibition in 1989. Recipient of the President's Award for Pride of Performance in the field of Paintings in 1994.

Collections: Collections owned by the National Gallery of Pakistan, the National Assembly, Prime Minister's House, World Bank, Pakistan, Foreign Office and Pakistan House, Delhi as well as by many other public and private organizations.

List of Shows:

Oct 1980	Punjab Council of the Arts, Freemason Hall, Lahore.
Dec 1981	Punjab Council of the Arts, Freemason Hall, Lahore.
May 1982	Golf Galleries, G.O.R Lahore.
Sep 1982	Holiday Inn, Islamabad.
Mar 1984	6- Nisar Road, Lahore Cantt.
Nov 1985	Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore.
Jun 1986	Holiday Inn, Islamabad.
Nov 1987	Alhamra Art Gallery, Lahore.
Nov 1990	Pursuit of the Real, World Bank, Washington.
Jan 1991	Lahore Art Gallery, Pakistan.
May 1991	7th Delhi Trinale, Inida.
Oct 1992	Saarc Art Festival, Bangladesh.
Jan 1993	Lahore Art Gallery, Pakistan.
Apr 1995	Lahore Art Gallery, Pakistan.
Jun 1998	Contemporary South Asia Paintings, Sotheby's, London.
Feb 2003	Ejaz Art Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan.
Dec 2005	Group Show To raise funds for the earthquake Victims, "The Art of Giving," Long Room, Lords, London.
Feb 2007	Ejaz Art Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan.
Mar 2009	The Pool Garden." An Art Auction for The Citizen's Foundation Hall at: Ejaz Art Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan. Tanzara Gallery, Islamabad. Canvas Gallery, Karachi.
Feb 2011	Ejaz Art Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan
Mar 2011	ArtScene Gallery, Lahore, Pakistan
Nov 2014	.. Auction for The Citizens Foundation Hall at, Ejaz Art Gallery, Lahore, Frere Hall Karachi
Feb 2017	Ejaz Art Gallery, Lahore
Mar 2017	ArtScene Gallery Karachi.



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