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Spotlight on young Pak talent

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NEW DELHI: Galleries from Spain to [Seoul](#) are showing their star names at the third edition of the India Art Summit but it's a small booth from across the border that's cornering some of the spotlight. Grey Noise, the first Pakistani gallery to come to the art fair, is giving Indian art lovers a glimpse of Pakistan's vibrant contemporary art scene.

There's no politics here. No guns and no terror. It's not about the breath of violence but the breath of fresh air. Don't even expect colour for, the subcontinent's colourful canvases are replaced here by subtle monochrome works that make even grey look intense. Umer Butt, the young art entrepreneur who has set up the gallery in Lahore, says he wanted the focus to shift from the miniature aesthetic. "Traditional techniques are fine but the younger Pakistani artists are using sophisticated visual language," says Butt, who has brought 10 artists, most of whom are Pakistani, in association with Jam Jar of Dubai. Mehreen Murtaza, just 24, builds her utopia digitally using a phenomenal bank of photographs while sixty-plus Lala Rukh is minimalistic with silver paint on carbon paper. Nadia Khawja, who lives in Lahore, uses art as meditation.

The 33-year-old who starts work after prayers and yoga in the morning does video as well as drawing. Her technique is her content.

Ayesha Jafri takes the references of miniature painting and then subverts them. Siyah Qalam, her diluted black ink work, is done with the squirrel paintbrush that miniature painters use. "She is critiquing a fragility of the tradition that many of her generation have rushed to embrace," explains Butt.

Fahd Burki's fingersmudged charcoal work is quite arresting while Alyssa Pheobus, an American who moved to [Lahore](#) after marriage, uses discontinued Pakistani currency to think about the past and future.

Pakistani artists are not restricted to Grey Noise though. Just a few metres away from Subodh Gupta's tiffin box work is a stainlesssteel sculpture by Adeela Suleman.

The Pakistani artist, brought here by London's Aicon gallery, seems to use almost as many bartans as Gupta.

Experimenter gallery has brought the digital works of Mehreen Murtaza.