

## Full Summary – “Lahore Biennale”

*When referring to averages, 1 = best/most desirable response, 5 = worst/least desirable response*

For this project, four U.S. scholars traveled to Lahore, Pakistan – Iftikhar Dadi (organizer), Esra Akcan, TJ Demos and Sonal Khullar – to host three workshops and a series of lectures at the first Lahore Biennale. This event, which was free and open to the public, took place from March 18-31, 2018 and created a space for the U.S. scholars to share with and train Pakistani scholars/professionals on the topics of art writing and curating, an aspect of the Pakistani art scene that is still being developed, as well as help foster a community of scholars and practitioners with related interests.

Surveys were distributed to participants of the “Lahore Biennale” program immediately after the conclusion of the program. To capture the longer-term impacts of the program, surveys were also distributed six and twelve months later. Responses from all three surveys showed tremendously positive and long-lasting results.

Post-program survey written responses to the “Climate Justice and Critical Aesthetics” workshop highlighted the value of the workshop to the participants, as the content was new for many of them. Both the leader’s contributions and provided readings proved to be extremely informative for the participants, and many of the responses noted how the workshop fostered ideas for future collective action to address climate change in Pakistan. One of the participants even mentioned how their students had inquired about similar topics, so they looked forward to sharing the information learned with them. Another common element in the responses was the great number of participants that appreciated the workshop as a networking opportunity and expressed the desire to remain in contact with the workshop leader in the future.

The post-program responses received from the “States of Opacity” workshop were also overwhelmingly positive, especially concerning the relevance of the workshop to Pakistan and the participants’ studies/future endeavors. On top of noting the amount of content learned in the workshop, the participants’ responses were largely reflection and application-based, signifying that the workshop was effective in helping the participants develop new ideas and priorities for the future. A large emphasis from the workshop seemed to be how the scholars/professionals could connect their lines of work with the greater public on both a national and international scale, affecting public perceptions of Pakistan. Many of the participants also commented on the leader’s effective teaching methods, which encouraged group discussion (something that is not as highly emphasized in the instruction in Pakistan) and helped expand the conversations. The lack of similar curatorial discourse in Pakistan was also noted.

Through the six-month evaluation of the “Lahore Biennale” program, we have been able to capture some of the longer-term benefits of the program. Part of the goal of this grant is to create a sustained program and connections between the workshop participants and US scholars. From these evaluations, 17 participants stated that they had been in contact with other workshop participants since the end of the program and 9 had been in contact with one of the U.S. scholars (out of 32 responses). While some of the participants may have known each other prior, it is clear from the open-ended survey responses that some of the connections were also newly formed at the workshops. A couple of the comments below elaborate on the new relationships formed:

*“I have been in contact with two of the participants in the workshop. We are trying to conduct inter-university art workshops and exhibitions.”*

*“I was invited by an AIPS workshop colleague to collaborate and work together for an exhibition of paintings that eventually traveled to China last year. Both of us traveled together for the opening. I also worked and collaborated with two other AIPS colleagues to write research proposals for a project we had in mind. The idea for this project germinated from the course readings and our mentor Iftikhar Dadi's interest in South Asian art...Another participant for the workshop also recommended my name to a newspaper that covers art related events, as a result I am now writing an art related monthly column for them in Dawn newspaper. I work with 3 other participants in the Workshop and we are using many of the readings that were used in the seminars. I would say that these workshops changed my life and opened up new possibilities for me.”*

Knowledge gained from these workshops was not exclusive to only the participants. According to the respondents, information from the workshops has been passed on to 24 instructors and 253 students, not including those who did not respond to the survey. Some added content to their curriculum as a result of the workshop, which will continue to be shared with students in the future, significantly multiplying the effect and reach of the program. Two examples are provided below:

*“I am teaching a course on the History of South Asian Design. Many of our readings/ideas/concepts have been taken from readings provided in the workshops. We even invited Iftikhar Dadi for a lecture at our department where he elaborated on concepts that we were working on in our courses.”*

*“The workshop impact was everlasting. I introduced the book which was given to us in the workshop to the curriculum. And the students' understanding towards it was great. While the whole idea of the workshop was I conveyed to my other staff members so they can instruct their students well.”*

Additionally, one of the participants shared that they had developed a National Leadership Development Program for museum professionals by incorporating some of the content from the training. This extends the program to the professional sphere as well as the academic sphere.

Though the content of the three workshops varied held in connection to this program, all three included content pertaining to scholarly research. When surveyed, 26 participants responded that the workshop they attended had sparked ideas for future research projects and 16 of them were already working on new projects that were all/partly due to the training received in the workshops. Adding to this, the workshops contributed to the research processes of three publications and five presentations since the end of the program. These exemplify some of the tangible outputs we will be gathering for our materials repository.

Results from these six-month evaluations indicated high levels of satisfaction with and effectiveness of the “Lahore Biennale” workshops as well as the desire for future/longer programming with AIPS. The program received an average rate of 1.5 for the participants’

satisfaction with the program, and when asked how likely it was that the participants would attend another AIPS-sponsored program, they scored an average of 1.15.

The 12-month survey was distributed through email to the participants; four people responded to this short, open-ended survey. While the program ended one year ago, the participants are still sharing and using the knowledge they gained:

*“In a workshop that we designed last summer, we were able to incorporate a lot of the things that were taught in the program, in particular the idea that a project needs to find its trajectory from the very people who are part of that community... The result was that it was entirely driven by the participants themselves, with us acting as facilitators only.”*

*“After attending the workshop I have made a report including all the information about the workshop and submitted that report to the head of my department.”*

*“I have shared all those ideas and views which I have learned with the students of Archaeology Department, Tourism Department and with the students of Art & Design Department.”*

Not only have the participants themselves benefitted from this program, but they also felt the need to share these ideas with their students, departments, and colleagues.

One of the respondents shared that he is still in contact with many of the Pakistani scholars from the “Lahore Biennale” program. The same respondent stated that because of the “collaborations from the initial exchange, five of [his] research papers are ready to publish.” Overall, the program has had a lasting impact on Pakistani and US networks, and, for many participants, it has assisted with their professional and academic development.

*These comments best reflect the original content from the participants’ surveys. However, due to variances in English language proficiency, grammatical errors and compilation purposes, direct responses have been paraphrased and/or edited for readability. Whenever possible, direct quotations were used and will be marked by quotation marks.*