ABSTRACT

This dissertation looks into the impact today’s rampant consumerism has had on art in Pakistan, in terms of usage of symbolism and imagery. Aided by American journal articles, books and some authentic Pakistani literature, I delved into the history and development of Pop culture and Pop Art since the 1950s in the USA and Pakistan (though not limiting it to these countries), since these movements are inter-related and directly influenced by consumerism. To make this discourse specific and give it direction, I narrowed down the symbols analysed to currency, brands and celebrities- three elements that either propagate, or are a result of, the mass-media and consumerism. I focused on qualitative research by analysing, with the aid of interviews and my secondary readings, one particular relevant art work of six well-known Pakistani artists. All artists included have been working since the 90s, as according to my findings, symbols of consumer culture became more commonly incorporated in Pakistani art during and after that period. I developed my argument by uncovering the significance these artists attach to the symbols incorporated in their art and delved into the meanings and connotations they ascribe to them, while also understanding their take on consumerism as a movement.