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Quest for Selfhood: Women Artists in The South Asian Visual Arts

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Abstract.

There has been a recent increase in the country-focused publications on women artists in Southeast Asia that tends to highlight the new found interest in feminist-inspired discourses and the histories of women artists. India, Pakistan and Bangladesh share a common history and a common culture since millenniums. The socio-economic cultural patterns of lives in these three countries have been very similar including the status of women in these societies, notwithstanding the impact of religion on the lives of women in society. These three countries have traditionally suffered from poverty, illiteracy, issues of health and infrastructure, and are bracketed as third world countries on the basis of data pertaining to aforementioned criteria for determining development. My paper aims to identify and understand the challenges of women artists in the aforementioned countries and examine how these artists explore and express their identities through paintings, installation art and performances. My study will also highlight perspectives on the marginalization of women artists, suggesting lines of inquiry that might be profitable in the future.

Keywords: Art world; Feminism; Gender; Identity; Marginalization