

THE POETRY OF COLORS: INSPIRED BY GHANI KHAN

A Visual Exploration of Poetic Themes through Painting



**By:
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(Painting)**



**DEPARTMENT OF ART & DESIGN
UNIVERSITY OF PESHAWAR
Session: 2022-2026**

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**DEPARTMENT OF ART & DESIGN
UNIVERSITY OF PESHAWAR
Session: 2022-2026**

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis, titled “**The Poetry of Colors: Inspired by Ghani Khan,**” is my original work and has not been submitted, either in whole or in part, for any degree, diploma, or other academic qualification at any university or institution.

The research, artistic exploration, and paintings presented in this thesis are the result of my own study, creative practice, and interpretation. All sources of information, references, quotations, and ideas obtained from books, articles, and other authors have been properly acknowledged and cited where appropriate.

I further declare that all artworks included in this thesis were created by me as part of this research project. The paintings are based on my personal visual interpretations of Ghani Khan's poetry and were developed through a practice-based artistic research process.

This thesis was completed under the supervision of **Ms. Sonia Rauf**, whose guidance, support, and valuable suggestions contributed significantly to its successful completion.

Dure Shahwar Asim

Date: ____/____/2026

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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the intriguing relationship between Ghani Khan's poetry and visual art, specifically through the medium of painting. Ghani Khan, a celebrated poet, is renowned for his profound reflections on themes such as love, beauty, humanity, and freedom. His poetry often conjures vivid imagery and evokes strong emotions, captivating readers and prompting deep contemplation. The primary objective of this research is to translate his rich poetic concepts into a visual format, utilizing colors, shapes, and symbols to bring his words to life on canvas.

To achieve this, a meticulous examination of selected poems by Ghani Khan was conducted, focusing on uncovering their underlying themes and meanings. Each poem was analyzed for its emotional depth and philosophical insights, which then served as a foundation for creative exploration. Various visual interpretations were generated through a series of sketches, each one reflecting the unique essence of the corresponding poem. Following this initial phase, a collection of paintings was developed, each work representing a personal and subjective interpretation of the feelings and ideas embedded in Khan's poetic narratives.

The findings of this research indicate that painting serves as a powerful medium for expressing poetic concepts and fostering a deep connection with viewers. By transcending the written word, visual art can evoke emotions and provoke thoughts in ways that resonate with a contemporary audience. This study underscores the profound interplay between poetry and visual art, revealing how Ghani Khan's timeless work can be reimagined and presented in innovative and engaging ways, making it relevant and accessible for today's viewers.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In the field of Art & Design, creativity is often influenced by different sources such as culture, literature, history, and personal experience. Among these, poetry plays a very important role because it expresses deep emotions, imagination, and philosophical ideas through words. In the same way, visual art expresses similar ideas through colors, lines, shapes, and textures. Both poetry and painting are different forms of expression, but they share a common purpose: to communicate human feelings and thoughts creatively.

Many artists have taken inspiration from poetry and transformed it into visual artworks. This process is not just about illustrating the poem, but about understanding its deeper meaning and expressing it in a new artistic form. In this context, the poetry of Ghani Khan provides a strong foundation for visual interpretation because of its richness in imagery and philosophy.

Ghani Khan is considered one of the greatest poets in Pashto literature. His poetry is not only literary but also deeply artistic and philosophical. He writes about love, beauty, humanity, nature, and freedom in a way that creates powerful images in the mind of the reader. For example, in many of his poems, he describes nature, human emotions, and spiritual thoughts in such a vivid way that they almost feel like visual scenes. This quality makes his poetry highly suitable for reinterpretation through painting.

This research focuses on reimagining Ghani Khan's poetry in the form of visual art. The aim is not to copy or directly illustrate his poems, but to understand his ideas and express them through artistic elements. By doing this, the research creates a connection between literature and painting, which is an important area in Art & Design.

1.2 Background of the Study

Art and literature have always shared a deep and natural connection. Throughout human history, poets, painters, writers, and visual artists have drawn inspiration from each other's work. They used different media, one used words, and the other used colors, but both attempted to capture the same fundamental human experiences: love, loss, joy, sorrow, freedom, spirituality, and the beauty of the natural world.

This thesis explored one of the most inspiring connections in the artistic tradition of South Asia, the connection between the Pashto poetry of Ghani Khan and the expressive language of painting. The central question of this research was simple but profound: could the deep emotional and philosophical content of Ghani Khan's poetry be expressed visually through painting?

Ghani Khan, whose full name was Abdul Ghani Khan, was born in 1914 in the Mohmand region near Peshawar. He grew up in an environment filled with beauty, struggle, culture, and tradition. His father was Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan known as Bacha Khan one of the most respected political and social figures of the Pashtun people. Ghani Khan was not only a poet; he

was also a sculptor, painter, and philosopher. He understood both the world of words and the world of art. His life itself was a bridge between literature and visual creativity.

His poetry reflected the richness of Pashto cultural thought. He wrote about the mountains of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with deep love and admiration. He wrote about the human soul, about the nature of existence, about beauty, about God, and about the freedom of the human spirit. His language was direct but deeply symbolic. His images were vivid and emotionally powerful. Readers often described his poetry as something they could not only hear but also see and feel.

This quality the visual richness of his poetic language was the primary motivation behind this research. The researcher recognized that Ghani Khan's poetry was not just literature; it was a visual experience waiting to be explored through painting. His words created images. His metaphors were filled with color. His philosophical reflections carried emotional weight that could be translated into visual compositions, textures, and color harmonies.

The title of this thesis, "The Poetry of Colors," expressed this central idea. In this research, colors were treated as a visual language a way of speaking about poetry without using words. Just as Ghani Khan used words to paint pictures in the reader's mind, this thesis used colors to translate those pictures into actual painted artworks. The result was a series of original paintings that were not illustrations of poems, but emotional and symbolic interpretations inspired by the themes, images, and feelings found in Ghani Khan's poetic work.

1.3 Purpose and Significance of the Research

The primary purpose of this research was to explore and demonstrate the creative relationship between Pashto poetry and visual art. More specifically, this study aimed to investigate how the philosophical and emotional themes in Ghani Khan's poetry could serve as a source of visual inspiration and artistic expression in contemporary painting.

This research was significant for several reasons. First, it contributed to the academic understanding of the relationship between literature and visual art in the context of Pashtun cultural heritage. While Ghani Khan's poetry had been studied and celebrated widely in literary circles, very little academic research had examined the visual potential of his work in the field of Fine Arts.

Second, this research demonstrated the value of practice-based artistic research. By combining literary analysis with creative painting practice, the study showed that artistic research could be both academically rigorous and creatively expressive. The paintings produced in this study were not just artworks; they were research outputs that communicated findings through visual means.

Third, this thesis served a cultural purpose. Ghani Khan was one of the greatest figures of Pashto culture. By creating a visual interpretation of his poetry, this research honored his legacy and presented his ideas to a new and wider audience an audience that might connect more easily with visual art than with written poetry in a regional language.

Finally, this research contributed to contemporary Fine Arts practice by demonstrating how literature could inspire painting, and how painting could give new life to literature. This kind of

creative dialogue between art forms was seen as essential to keeping cultural traditions alive and relevant in the modern world.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

- How did the philosophical and emotional themes in Ghani Khan's poetry translate into visual expression through painting?
- What role did color, symbolism, composition, and texture play in communicating the emotional and spiritual content of Ghani Khan's poetry?
- How did a practice-based research approach allow the researcher to explore the connection between literary meaning and visual artistic expression?
- What new understanding of Ghani Khan's poetic themes was gained through the process of creating visual interpretations of his work?

1.5 Scope and Limitations

This research focused specifically on the poetry of Ghani Khan and its visual interpretation through painting. The study did not attempt to provide a comprehensive literary analysis of all of Ghani Khan's works. Instead, it selected specific poems and poetic themes that were considered most suitable for visual artistic interpretation.

The paintings produced in this study represented personal artistic interpretations of the researcher. They were not meant to be definitive or authoritative visual translations of the poems. Other artists, given the same poetic material, might arrive at entirely different visual responses. This was considered a strength of the research, not a limitation it demonstrated the richness of Ghani Khan's poetry as a source of artistic inspiration.

The research was limited to the medium of painting. Other visual art forms, such as sculpture, photography, or digital art, were not explored in this study. Similarly, the research focused on the themes and symbolic content of the poetry rather than attempting to translate specific linguistic or prosodic features of the poems into visual form.

1.6 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis was organized into an introduction, three main chapters, and a conclusion. The introduction provided the background, purpose, significance, and structure of the research.

Examined the theoretical foundation of the study. It explored the historical and contemporary relationship between poetry and visual art, provided a detailed overview of Ghani Khan's life, philosophy, and literary contributions, and discussed the key themes, symbols, and visual imagery found in his poetry.

Described the research methodology. It explained the practice-based approach used in this study, outlined the creative process through which the paintings were developed, and discussed the materials, techniques, color theories, and symbolic strategies that were employed.

Provided a visual analysis and interpretation of the completed paintings. Each artwork was discussed in detail, with explanations of how it related to specific poetic themes, how color and composition were used, and what emotional or symbolic meanings were expressed.

The conclusion summarized the findings of the research, reflected on the significance of the creative process, and offered recommendations for future research in this area.

1.7 Review of Literature

A literature review is one of the most important parts of any academic research. It provides the theoretical and scholarly foundation upon which the research is built. It shows what has already been studied, what knowledge already exists, and where the gaps in that knowledge are. By reviewing existing literature, a researcher can position their work within the broader academic conversation and clearly explain why their specific study was needed and what new contribution it makes.

This literature review was written to support the research titled "**The Poetry of Colors: Inspired by Ghani Khan.**" The purpose of this chapter was to examine existing academic work related to the key themes of this research. These themes included the relationship between poetry and visual art, the life and literary legacy of Ghani Khan, the role of color and symbolism in artistic practice, the theory and practice of practice-based research in Fine Arts, and the broader tradition of literature-inspired painting across different cultures and historical periods.

1.7.1 The Relationship between Poetry and Visual Art

The connection between poetry and visual art was one of the oldest and most enduring relationships in human cultural history. Since the earliest days of civilization, human beings had used both words and images to express their inner experiences, their observations of the natural world, and their understanding of the divine and the mysterious. This close connection has encouraged artists throughout history to transform literary works into visual interpretations. The present research follows this tradition by exploring how Ghani Khan's poetry can be translated into paintings and visual compositions. (Mitchell, 1994)

The ancient Roman poet Horace famously wrote "Ut pictura poesis" a Latin phrase that meant "as is painting, so is poetry." This idea expressed the belief that poetry and painting were sister arts, both attempting to capture reality, beauty, and emotion through different but equally powerful means. Throughout the centuries, artists and poets had confirmed this truth in countless ways.

In the European Renaissance, painters like Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, and Botticelli created paintings inspired by classical poetry and mythology. Later, the Romantic movement of the 18th and 19th centuries produced a rich tradition of poetic painting, where artists like William

Blake who was both a poet and a visual artist demonstrated how powerfully the two arts could combine.

In the Islamic and Persian artistic tradition, which was deeply relevant to the cultural context of Ghani Khan's poetry, the relationship between literature and art was equally strong. Persian poets such as Rumi, Hafiz, and Omar Khayyam inspired countless miniature paintings, calligraphic artworks, and visual compositions. The poetic word and the painted image were seen as inseparable expressions of spiritual and aesthetic experience.

In the context of South Asian art, the tradition of Mughal miniature painting demonstrated how poetic texts, stories, and themes were translated into detailed visual compositions. Poets and painters worked together, and their collaboration produced some of the most celebrated works of art in the subcontinent's cultural history.

This long tradition of creative dialogue between poetry and painting provided the historical and theoretical foundation for the present research. By positioning this study within this rich tradition, the researcher acknowledged that the act of translating poetry into visual art was not a new or unusual endeavor it was, in fact, one of the most natural and deeply human forms of artistic expression.

1.7.2 Classical and Historical Foundations

The foundation of Western thinking about the relationship between poetry and painting was laid by the Roman poet Horace, who wrote the famous phrase "Ut pictura poesis" in his work *Ars Poetica*, written around 19 BCE. This Latin phrase, which translates as "as is painting, so is poetry," expresses the idea that the two arts were fundamentally similar in their purpose and their methods. Horace argued that both poetry and painting aimed to create vivid impressions in the mind of the audience and that both achieved this aim through the careful selection and arrangement of their respective elements: words in poetry, visual forms, and colors in painting. **(Horace, 19 BCE; Lessing, 1766)**

This idea was enormously influential throughout the history of Western art and literature. Simonides of Ceos, an ancient Greek poet, was reported by Plutarch to have said that "painting is silent poetry, and poetry is painting that speaks." This formulation expressed the same fundamental idea as Horace's phrase that poetry and painting were different forms of the same essential creative impulse.

Mitchell, in his important theoretical work *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, examined the complex relationship between language and image across different cultural and historical contexts. He argued that the boundary between verbal and visual representation was far more porous and unstable than it might appear, and that the two modes of expression had always been deeply intertwined in human cultural life. His work provided a sophisticated theoretical framework for thinking about how literature and visual art related to each other, and it was directly relevant to the concerns of the present research. **Mitchell (1994)**

Lessing, in his influential essay *Laocoon: An Essay on the Limits of Painting and Poetry*, attempted to define the specific boundaries between the two arts, arguing that painting was primarily a spatial art concerned with forms and colors existing simultaneously in space, while poetry was primarily a temporal art concerned with actions unfolding in sequence through time. Although this distinction was useful as an analytical framework, later scholars challenged it by

showing that the boundaries between the two arts were in practice much more fluid than Lessing had suggested. **Lessing (1766)**

1.7.3 The Romantic and Modern Tradition

In the Romantic period of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the relationship between poetry and visual art became particularly close and productive. Romantic artists and poets alike celebrated imagination, emotion, nature, and the spiritual dimensions of experience, and they frequently drew inspiration from each other's work. Blake, who was both a poet and a visual artist, represented perhaps the most perfect embodiment of this creative unity. His illuminated books combined original poetry with intricate, imaginative visual designs in a form that refused to separate the literary and the visual. **Blake (1757–1827)**

Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats, and other Romantic poets wrote poetry that was deeply visual in its imagery and its ambition. Landscape painters such as Turner and Constable created works that were deeply poetic in their emotional and philosophical dimensions. The two arts seemed to be in constant dialogue, each learning from the other and expanding its own possibilities through that dialogue.

In the 20th century, the relationship between literature and visual art became even more complex and experimental. The Abstract Expressionist movement in painting produced artists, most notably Kandinsky and Rothko, who wrote extensively about the spiritual and emotional dimensions of color and form. Kandinsky, in his foundational text *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, argued that colors and forms could communicate directly with the viewer's inner emotional and spiritual life, bypassing rational thought and reaching something deeper and more essential. This idea was closely parallel to the way that great poetry was understood to work through imagery, rhythm, and sound to reach the reader's emotions in ways that straightforward prose could not. **Kandinsky (1977)**

Rothko, whose abstract paintings were among the most emotionally powerful of the 20th century, described his work as an attempt to express basic human emotions, tragedy, ecstasy, and doom in purely visual terms. He believed that the most meaningful painting communicated at the same level of depth as great literature. This belief made the work of these painters directly relevant to the concerns of the present research, which sought to demonstrate that the emotional and philosophical depth of Ghani Khan's poetry could be expressed through the visual language of painting. **Rothko (2004)**

1.7.4 Islamic and South Asian Traditions

The relationship between literature and visual art in the Islamic and South Asian traditions was equally rich and significant. In the classical Persian literary and artistic tradition, poetry and painting were seen as complementary forms of expression that frequently worked together. The great Persian poets, Rumi, Hafiz, Firdausi, and Nizami inspired countless works of visual art, including the magnificent tradition of Persian miniature painting.

Welch, in his study of Persian and Mughal painting, showed how artists in these traditions used poetry not merely as a source of narrative content but as a spiritual and aesthetic guide. The

relationship between the poem and the painting was understood as a form of creative dialogue in which each art form illuminated and enriched the other. This tradition was directly relevant to the cultural context of Ghani Khan's poetry, which drew on the same broad Islamic and Persian literary heritage. **Welch (1972)**

In the Mughal period of South Asian art history, the relationship between poetry and painting was institutionalized in the royal courts, where poets and painters worked side by side, and their work was considered complementary. Losty and Roy documented how Mughal emperors themselves, often poets and calligraphers, commissioned paintings that illustrated or responded to poetic texts. This tradition of literature-inspired visual art was a direct historical precedent for the kind of creative practice explored in the present research. **Losty and Roy (2012)**

In the modern period, South Asian artists continued to draw on literary sources for visual inspiration. The works of painters such as Abdur Rahman Chughtai, who was deeply influenced by Urdu and Persian poetry, and Amrita Sher-Gil, who explored the emotional and social landscape of South Asian life through painting, demonstrated the vitality and richness of the literature-to-art tradition in the subcontinent.



Fig 1.7.4: Sufism in South and South East Asia.

1.7.5 Historical Overview: Literature and Painting

Throughout art history, the inspiration for painting was often found in literary sources. Ancient Greek pottery depicted scenes from the Homeric epics. Medieval European illuminated manuscripts combined sacred texts with intricate painted illustrations. The great ceiling of the Sistine Chapel was, at its core, a visual interpretation of biblical narrative and poetry.

In the 20th century, the relationship between literature and painting became even more diverse and experimental. Abstract Expressionist painters like Mark Rothko and Wassily Kandinsky wrote extensively about the emotional and spiritual dimensions of color ideas that were closely aligned with the language of poetry. Their work suggested that painting, like poetry, could communicate emotions and ideas that resisted logical or verbal explanation. **(Rothko, 2004)**

Contemporary practice-based research in Fine Arts had further strengthened the theoretical link between literary sources and visual artistic practice. Researchers and artists increasingly

recognized that literature, including poetry, could serve as a rich and legitimate source of visual inspiration, not just for illustration, but for genuine artistic exploration and emotional expression.

This context was directly relevant to the present research. The paintings produced in this study were part of this long and diverse tradition of literature-inspired art. They were rooted in the specific cultural and literary context of Ghani Khan's Pashto poetry but connected to the universal tradition of creative exchange between words and images.

1.8 Ghani Khan: Life, Legacy, and Literary Contribution

Abdul Ghani Khan was born on 20th April, 1914, in Utmanzai, Charsadda, in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region of what is today Pakistan. His birth into a remarkable family deeply shaped his intellectual, artistic, and philosophical development. His father, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, known as Bacha Khan or the Frontier Gandhi, was one of the most respected figures in the history of the Pashtun people. Growing up in such an environment, Ghani Khan was immersed from his earliest years in a world of ideas, culture, political struggle, and social awareness.

Ghani Khan received his education at Santiniketan, the famous university founded by the Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore in West Bengal, India. This educational experience was transformative. At Santiniketan, Ghani Khan was exposed to a rich tradition of learning that celebrated the unity of art, music, nature, philosophy, and spirituality. He studied literature, painting, and sculpture alongside great teachers and fellow students who came from different cultural and artistic traditions.

This unique educational background made Ghani Khan unusual among Pashto writers. He was not only a poet, but he was also a trained sculptor and painter. His understanding of visual art gave his poetry a distinctive quality. He saw the world with the eyes of both a poet and an artist. His words carried visual weight. His images were not merely metaphorical; they were, in a deep sense, painterly.

After his return from Santiniketan, Ghani Khan dedicated his life to Pashto literature, art, and culture. He wrote poetry, created sculptures, painted, and engaged deeply with the political and social life of his people. His poetry collection, most notably the celebrated work *Da Pukhtano Bard* ("The Bard of the Pashtuns"), established him as one of the greatest literary figures in the history of the Pashto language and culture.

Ghani Khan passed away on 26th January, 1996, but his legacy continued to inspire generations of poets, artists, scholars, and ordinary readers. His work was celebrated for its philosophical depth, its emotional honesty, its celebration of beauty, and its unwavering commitment to the dignity and freedom of the human spirit.

1.8.1 Ghani Khan: Scholarly Studies and Critical Reception

Ghani Khan was recognized by scholars of Pashto literature as one of the most important and distinctive voices in the entire history of that literary tradition. His work had been the subject of academic study, critical analysis, and cultural celebration since the publication of his major poetry collections in the mid-20th century. However, the scholarly literature on Ghani Khan was concentrated almost entirely in the fields of literary criticism and cultural studies. Very little had been written about his work from the perspective of visual art or art history.

1.8.2 Ghani Khan as a Literary Figure

Ghani Khan's poetry was celebrated in the scholarly literature for several distinctive qualities. First, scholars consistently noted the extraordinary visual richness of his poetic language. His descriptions of the natural landscape of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, its mountains, rivers, flowers, and birds were praised for their sensory vividness and their emotional depth. Readers and scholars alike described the experience of reading his poetry as one that engaged not just the mind but all the senses.

Rauf described Ghani Khan as a poet who saw the world with the eyes of a painter. He argued that Ghani Khan's training in visual art at Santineketan had permanently shaped his poetic sensibility, giving his language a visual precision and richness that set it apart from other Pashto poets. This observation was directly relevant to the present research, which sought to develop the visual dimensions of his poetry into actual painted artworks. **Rauf (1990)**

Khan examined the philosophical dimensions of Ghani Khan's poetry in detail, arguing that his work combined the mystical Sufi tradition of classical Persian and Pashto literature with a distinctly modern, humanist sensibility. He showed how Ghani Khan used traditional Sufi symbols, the beloved, the tavern, the wine, the candle, and the bird in new and original ways that gave them contemporary relevance and philosophical depth. This analysis of Ghani Khan's symbolic language was important for the present research because it helped the researcher to understand the deeper meanings embedded in the natural and cultural symbols that were to be translated into visual form. **Khan (2005)**

Daud studied the theme of freedom in Ghani Khan's poetry and showed how it operated at multiple levels simultaneously: political, spiritual, existential, and aesthetic. He argued that for Ghani Khan, freedom was not merely a political slogan but a fundamental philosophical principle the condition in which the human soul could realize its deepest nature and its highest possibilities. This understanding of freedom as a multilayered theme was very important for the painter who wished to express it visually, because it suggested that the visual expression of freedom needed to go beyond simple images of political liberation and reach for something deeper and more universal. **Daud (2012)**

Yusufzai wrote an important study of Ghani Khan's use of nature in his poetry, arguing that nature was not merely a backdrop or a decorative element in his work but the primary medium through which he expressed his philosophical and spiritual vision. He showed how Ghani Khan used specific natural elements, mountains, rivers, flowers, birds, and light as vehicles for deep philosophical insight, and how the meanings he attached to these elements were rooted in both the Pashto cultural tradition and the broader Islamic intellectual heritage. This study was particularly relevant for the visual artistic dimension of the present research because it helped the researcher to understand what specific philosophical meanings were attached to the natural symbols in Ghani Khan's poetry before attempting to translate them into visual form. **Yusufzai (2008)**

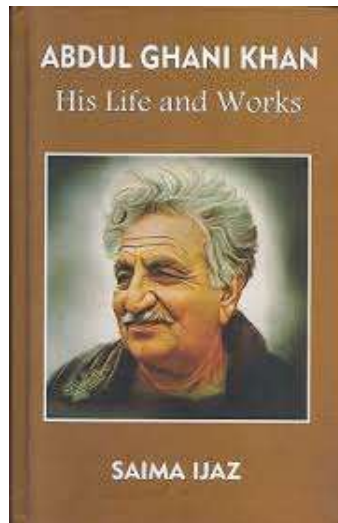


Fig 1.8.2: Ghani Khan as a Literary Figure

1.8.3 Ghani Khan as an Artist

While the literary scholarship on Ghani Khan was extensive, relatively little academic attention had been paid to his practice as a visual artist, his sculptures and paintings. This was a significant gap in the scholarly literature. Ghani Khan was a trained visual artist who had studied painting and sculpture at Santineketan under some of the most important art teachers of 20th-century South Asia. His visual artworks demonstrated the same philosophical depth, emotional richness, and creative originality as his poetry.

Ahmad wrote one of the few scholarly studies that examined Ghani Khan's visual art alongside his poetry. He argued that Ghani Khan's sculptures and paintings were deeply connected to his poetic vision, that the same philosophical ideas and symbolic meanings that appeared in his poems also found expression in his visual works. This study supported the central premise of the present research: that Ghani Khan's creative vision was inherently both literary and visual, and that his poetry was therefore a natural and rich source for visual artistic interpretation. **Ahmad (2015)**

The gap in scholarly attention to Ghani Khan as a visual artist also represented a research opportunity. By examining his poetry through the lens of visual artistic practice, the present research contributed to filling this gap and to developing a more complete understanding of Ghani Khan's creative personality and his contribution to Pashtun cultural life.



Fig 1.8.3: Celebrating a Poet: Abdul Ghani Khan lives on in Portraits

1.9 Theme in Ghani Khan's Poetry

1.9.1 The Role of Nature in Ghani Khan's Poetry

Nature was not simply a theme in Ghani Khan's poetry it was a fundamental dimension of his poetic vision. He saw nature as the greatest teacher, the most honest mirror of human experience, and the most direct expression of divine creativity. His relationship with the natural landscape of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was intimate and lifelong. The mountains, rivers, flowers, and birds of this region appeared again and again in his poetry, charged with emotional and philosophical meaning.

For the visual artist inspired by Ghani Khan's work, this nature-centered quality of his poetry was both an invitation and a challenge. It was an invitation because the natural world with its infinite variety of colors, textures, forms, and light provided an almost inexhaustible source of visual material. It was a challenge because the artist was required to find visual equivalents for natural images that carried specific emotional and symbolic weight in the poetic context.

In this research, natural elements landscapes, flowers, birds, light effects, and abstract forms inspired by natural phenomena played an important role in the paintings. These elements were used not as literal representations of nature but as symbolic and expressive tools for communicating the emotional and philosophical content of Ghani Khan's poetry.

Freedom and the Human Spirit

One of the most powerful and recurring themes in Ghani Khan's poetry was the idea of freedom. For Ghani Khan, freedom was not merely a political concept. It was a spiritual and existential state the natural condition of the human soul when it was liberated from fear, ignorance, and social constraint. He celebrated the freedom of birds, the freedom of rivers, and the freedom of the mind. In many of his poems, the image of a bird in flight became a powerful symbol of the liberated human spirit.

This theme of freedom had particular resonance in the context of Ghani Khan's life and the history of his people. The Pashtuns had historically valued independence and personal dignity above almost everything else. Ghani Khan captured this cultural reality in his poetry, giving it a universal philosophical dimension that reached beyond the specific cultural context.

Nature and Its Beauty

Nature occupied a central place in Ghani Khan's poetic imagination. He wrote about the mountains, rivers, flowers, birds, sky, and seasons of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with extraordinary beauty and emotional depth. For Ghani Khan, nature was not merely a setting or a backdrop. It was a living, breathing presence, a source of wisdom, beauty, and spiritual nourishment.

His poems about nature were filled with sensory detail. He described the color of flowers, the sound of water, the texture of rocks the changing light of the sky. This sensory richness made his nature poetry especially suitable for visual artistic interpretation. The images he created in words naturally translated into images that could be explored through color and painting.

Love and Beauty

Love and beauty were subjects that Ghani Khan approached with both passion and philosophical depth. He wrote about human love, its joy, its pain, its mystery. But his poetry also explored a deeper, more spiritual form of love, the love of the soul for beauty in all its forms. For Ghani Khan, beauty was not superficial. It was a sign of the divine. In his poetry, a beautiful face, a blooming flower, or a colorful sunset were all manifestations of a higher reality.

This philosophical approach to beauty was deeply connected to the Sufi tradition that had influenced much of classical Persian and Pashto literature. The Sufi poets wrote about love as a spiritual journey, and beauty as a reflection of divine truth. Ghani Khan worked within this tradition but gave it his own distinctive voice, direct, modern, and deeply personal.

Spirituality and the Divine

Spiritual themes ran through much of Ghani Khan's poetry. He explored the human soul's longing for connection with something larger than itself for God, for truth, for beauty, for meaning. His spiritual poetry was not dogmatic or conventional. It was exploratory, questioning, and deeply personal. He wrote about God not as a distant authority but as a presence felt in the beauty of the natural world and in the depths of human feeling.

This spiritual dimension of his poetry gave it a quality of depth and stillness that was particularly suitable for visual interpretation. The spiritual themes he explored light, darkness, transcendence, peace, longing were themes that visual artists across all traditions had explored through color, form, and composition.

Humanity and Social Justice

Ghani Khan also wrote about the human condition about poverty, suffering, dignity, and the struggle for justice. He was deeply aware of the social realities of his people and wrote with honesty and compassion about the difficulties they faced. His social poetry was not angry or bitter; it was filled with a deep love for humanity and a faith in the capacity of human beings to rise above their circumstances.

1.10 Visual Imagery in Ghani Khan's Work

Symbolism was one of the most distinctive features of Ghani Khan's poetry. He used symbols not as decorative literary devices but as vehicles for deeper philosophical and emotional truths. His symbols were drawn primarily from the natural world birds, flowers, rivers, mountains, light, and darkness and from the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Pashtun people.

The bird, in particular, was a central symbol in his poetry. It represented freedom, the human soul, the creative spirit, and the longing for transcendence. When Ghani Khan wrote about a bird in flight, he was not merely describing a natural scene he was expressing a philosophical idea about the nature of the human spirit and its desire for liberation.

Flowers especially wild flowers growing in harsh environments symbolized beauty and resilience. The desert flower, which appears in his poem Regdi Gul, was a powerful image of beauty surviving against all odds. Light was used symbolically to represent knowledge, truth, and divine presence. Darkness symbolized ignorance, oppression, and spiritual emptiness.

These symbolic dimensions of Ghani Khan's poetry were directly relevant to the visual artistic exploration undertaken in this research. The painter, like the poet, worked with symbols. Colors, shapes, textures, and compositional elements all carried symbolic weight. By studying the symbols in Ghani Khan's poetry and developing visual equivalents for them in paint, the researcher was engaging in a deeply meaningful act of creative translation.

1.10.1 Symbolic Language Explanation

Ghani Khan's poetry is rich in symbolic language. Instead of directly explaining ideas, he uses symbols to represent deeper meanings. This makes his poetry more interesting and open to interpretation.

For Example

1. Horse

The horse symbolizes strength, freedom, and the unyielding spirit of life. It represents a fearless pursuit of dreams and the ability to overcome obstacles. In many cultures, horses are also associated with nobility and power, underscoring a sense of courage.

In visual art, the horse can be depicted in dynamic motion, galloping across an open landscape. The artist might use bold and vibrant colors to evoke a sense of vitality and freedom, emphasizing the idea of liberation and the fearlessness of the human spirit.

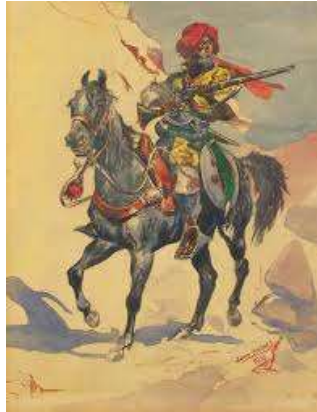


Fig 1.10.1.1: Horse in sign of Pashtun's Bravery

2. Flower:

The flower embodies beauty, fragility, and the transient nature of life. It symbolizes growth, love, and the potential for new beginnings. Flowers can also represent the delicate balance between joy and sorrow, celebrating life while acknowledging its fleeting moments.

An artist could depict flowers in full bloom, perhaps in a lush garden or a solitary flower breaking through rocky ground, illustrating resilience and the ability to thrive despite adversity. The use of soft, warm colors can evoke feelings of love and beauty, inviting viewers to appreciate life's ephemeral nature.



Fig 1.10.1.2: Cover of Reidi Gul by Ghani Khan

3. Diva (Candle)

The diva, or candle, symbolizes light, spirituality, and hope. It represents the inner light that guides individuals through darkness, illustrating the journey of self-discovery and enlightenment. The flickering flame can also signify the delicate balance between life and death, as well as the transience of existence.

In art, a candle can be depicted in a dimly lit space, casting warm, illuminating light across a scene. This imagery can evoke feelings of comfort and reflection, inviting viewers to contemplate their own spiritual journeys and the significance of hope amid life's struggles.



Fig 1.10.1.3: Dive (Candle0 Showing Self-Lightning

4. The Scale: The Balance of Human Destiny

The weighing scale (*mizan*) is a poignant symbol in Khan's philosophical musings, representing the judgment of life, the equilibrium of nature, and the constant balancing act of human emotions.

Conceptual Representation: Unlike nature symbols which are fluid, the scale is an architectural, rigid form. This rigidity serves as a perfect visual contrast to the organic flow of flowers and birds.

Dynamic Balance: The scale should not be depicted as perfectly balanced; doing so implies stagnation. By showing the scale slightly tilted, the artist suggests the *process* of decision-making and the weight of human choices. The textures of the scale perhaps rusted, weathered iron can evoke the antiquity and enduring nature of the philosophical questions Khan Addresses, grounding the ethereal themes of his poetry in the heavy reality of the physical world.

By employing these symbols in their artwork, artists can effectively communicate the complexities of human experience, mirroring the profound themes present in Ghani Khan's poetry. This fusion of literature and visual art allows for a deeper understanding of the messages carried within his work, celebrating the interplay of imagination, emotion, and philosophical inquiry.



Fig 1.10.1.4: Comparing World & Power

1.11 Ghani Khan's Poetry as a Source of Artistic Inspiration

Having examined the key themes, symbols, and imagery in Ghani Khan's poetry, it became clear why his work provided such a rich and suitable subject for visual artistic interpretation. Several specific qualities of his poetry made it especially amenable to translation into visual art.

His poetry was inherently visual. He described the world in terms of colors, textures, light, and form. His descriptions of nature, people, and emotional states were vivid and sensory. Reading his poetry felt like looking at a painting.

His use of symbolism created a system of visual metaphors that could be directly translated into the visual language of painting. The bird, the flower, the river, the mountain, the light, these were symbols that worked equally well in poetry and in visual art.

The emotional depth and range of his poetry provided a broad palette of artistic expression. His poetry moved between joy and sorrow, contemplation and passion, tenderness and philosophical boldness. This emotional range gave the artist a wide variety of moods, atmospheres, and visual qualities to explore.

The universal themes of his poetry freedom, beauty, love, spirituality, and humanity transcended cultural and linguistic boundaries. A visual interpretation of these themes could be understood and appreciated by audiences who did not know the Pashto language or the specific cultural context of the poems.

For all these reasons, Ghani Khan's poetry was not merely a suitable subject for visual artistic research it was an ideal one.

1.11.1 Source of Artistic Inspiration

Literature has always been an important source of inspiration for artists. Many painters, illustrators, and designers have used poems, stories, and philosophical texts to create their artworks. Literature provides ideas, emotions, and imagery that can be transformed into visual form.

For example, artists around the world have created paintings inspired by poets like Rumi, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, and Pablo Neruda. These artworks do not simply illustrate the text but express the deeper meaning behind the words.

In the same way, Ghani Khan's poetry offers rich material for artistic exploration. His use of metaphor and symbolism allows artists to imagine different visual possibilities. This makes literature an important starting point for creative work in Art & Design.

1.11.1.1 Simple Overview of My Research board

M Research board, is a heartfelt tribute to Ghani Khan, the Pashtun philosopher-poet. It artfully combines his image with cultural symbols from the paintings.

Key Elements:

- 1. The Visionary Center:** A large portrait of Ghani Khan and his name in bold calligraphy anchor the board and highlight his philosophy.
- 2. A Journey through the Ghazals:** The major thesis paintings are visually united, featuring the dancing woman from Zama Zama Zama, elements of the Reidi Gul story, poetry snippets, traditional pottery, a Rubab, and Pashtun fabrics.
- 3. The Collage Aesthetic:** Ripped paper textures, handwritten poetic notes, and quotes like "when Man Sits Down in Dust" create an intimate and authentic "studio archive" vibe.



Fig 1.11.1.1: My Thesis Research Board

1.11.2 Influence of Ghani Khan on Visual Thinking

Ghani Khan was not only a poet but also an artist and thinker. His way of writing reflects a strong visual imagination. His poetry often describes nature, human emotions, and philosophical ideas in a way that creates clear mental images.

For example, in many of his poems, he uses elements such as the sky, flowers, light, and human expressions to convey deeper meanings. These elements can easily be translated into visual forms such as shapes, textures, and color compositions.

His artistic background makes his poetry different from many other poets. It already contains a sense of visual design, which allows artists to reinterpret it in painting.

1.11.3 Imagination and Emotion in Ghani Khan's Poetry

Imagination plays a key role in Ghani Khan's work. His poetry is not limited to reality but explores emotions, dreams, and philosophical ideas. He often uses imagination to question life, beauty, and human nature.

For example, in his poetry, love is not just a feeling but a deeper connection between human beings and the universe. Similarly, beauty is not only physical but also spiritual and emotional.

This strong use of imagination makes his poetry suitable for artistic interpretation. Artists can use abstract forms, colors, and textures to express these ideas visually.

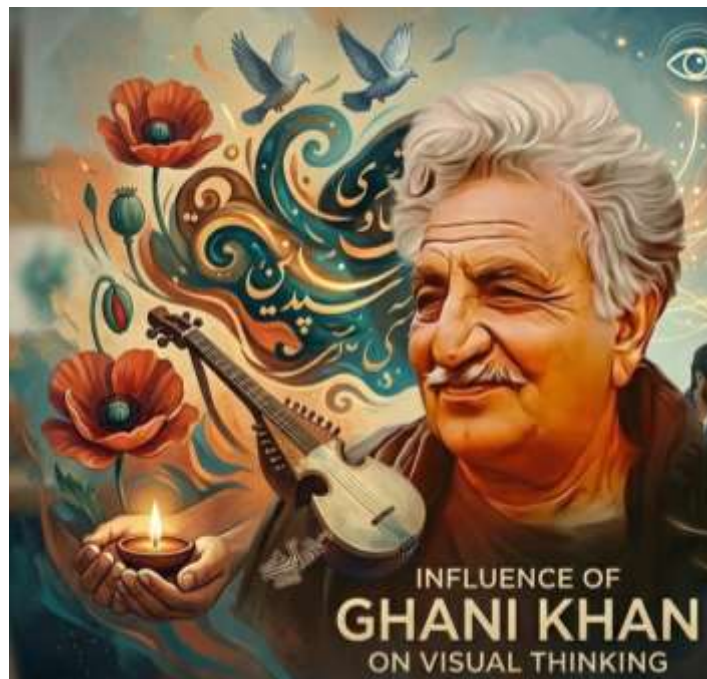


Fig 1.11.3: Ghani Khan & Poetry Imagination

1.11.4 Poetry as a Visual Inspiration

Poetry is not only something that is read; it is something that is imagined and felt. When people read poetry, they often create images in their minds based on the words and emotions described in the poem. This makes poetry a strong source of inspiration for visual art.

In the field of Art & Design, many artists use poetry as a starting point for their creative work. They take the emotions, ideas, and imagery from the poem and transform them into visual compositions. This process allows the audience to experience the poem in a new way.

Ghani Khan's poetry is especially rich in visual imagery. His words often create clear scenes and emotional atmospheres that can easily be imagined as paintings. For example, when he writes about nature, love, or human struggle, he uses descriptive language that allows the reader to see and feel the scene.

This research uses his poetry as a base for developing visual ideas. Instead of copying the poem, the artist interprets it and expresses it through colors, forms, and composition. In this way, poetry becomes a visual experience.

1.11.5 Poetic Imagery in Ghani Khan's Poetry

Imagery is one of the strongest features of Ghani Khan's poetry. He can describe emotions and ideas in a way that creates clear mental pictures. His words are not only meaningful but also visual.

For example, when he talks about beauty, he may describe it using natural elements like flowers, light, or the sky. These descriptions allow the reader to imagine the scene and feel the emotion behind it. This makes his poetry very powerful and expressive.

In painting, these images can be translated into visual compositions. An artist can take the idea of light or nature from the poem and express it through color, texture, and form. This process helps in creating artwork that reflects the feeling of the poem rather than just its literal meaning.

1.12 Color Theory and Emotional Expression in Art

Color was the primary visual element through which the present research attempted to translate the emotional and philosophical content of Ghani Khan's poetry into painting. A thorough understanding of how color worked both technically and emotionally was therefore essential for this research. The scholarly literature on color theory and emotional expression in art was rich and extensive, and it provided important theoretical foundations for the creative decisions made in this study.

1.12.1 Emotional and Sensory Experience

One of the most important aspects of Ghani Khan's poetry is its emotional depth. His poems create strong feelings in the reader, such as love, sadness, hope, and freedom. These emotions are not only understood but also felt deeply.

In art, emotions can be expressed through visual elements. Artists use colors, textures, and composition to create a certain mood or feeling.

For example:

- Warm colors like red, orange, and yellow can represent love, passion, and energy
- Cool colors like blue and green can represent calmness, peace, and reflection
- Dark tones can represent sadness, struggle, or depth

By using these visual elements, artists can translate the emotional experience of poetry into painting.

1.12.2 Concept of Color in Visual Art

Color is one of the most powerful elements in visual art. It plays an important role in expressing emotions and creating meaning. In painting, color is not just used for decoration; it is used to communicate ideas and feelings.

In this research, color is used as a language to represent the themes found in Ghani Khan's poetry. Each color is carefully chosen to match the emotion or idea being expressed.

1.12.3 Understanding Color as Expression

Colors have emotional meanings that can affect how a viewer feels about an artwork. Different colors can create different moods and reactions.

For example:

- Red can represent passion, energy, or love
- Blue can represent calmness, sadness, or depth
- Yellow can represent light, hope, and positivity

By using these colors in a thoughtful way, artists can express poetic ideas visually. This makes color an important tool in translating poetry into painting.

1.12.4 Color Symbolism in Artistic Practice

Color symbolism is widely used in art to convey meaning. Artists choose colors based on the message they want to communicate.

In this project, colors are selected based on the themes found in Ghani Khan's poetry, such as love, beauty, and freedom. For example, bright colors may be used to show joy and beauty, while darker tones may represent struggle or deep thinking.

This careful use of color helps in creating meaningful and expressive artworks.

1.12.5 Role of Light and Atmosphere

Light and atmosphere are important elements in painting. They help create mood and depth in the artwork. Light can highlight certain areas, while shadows can create contrast and drama.

For example:

- Soft light can create a peaceful and calm feeling
- Strong contrast can create tension and focus

In this research, light and atmosphere are used to express the emotional depth of Ghani Khan's poetry.

1.12.6 Foundational Color Theory

Itten, in his foundational work *The Elements of Color*, provided a comprehensive framework for understanding color relationships, color harmonies, and the expressive potential of different colors and color combinations. His work identified seven types of color contrast — contrast of hue, light-dark contrast, cold-warm contrast, complementary contrast, simultaneous contrast, saturation contrast, and extension contrast- and showed how each type could be used to achieve different visual and emotional effects. These distinctions were directly useful for the creative process of this research, in which the specific emotional quality of each poem needed to be matched with a specific color strategy. **Itten (1970)**

Albers, in his influential study *Interaction of Color*, demonstrated that the perception of color was never absolute but always relative to its context. A color looked different depending on the colors that surrounded it, and this context-dependency was a fundamental feature of color experience that every painter needed to understand and use skillfully. This insight was important for the present research because it showed that the emotional effect of a color in a painting depended not just on the color itself but on its relationships with all the other colors in the composition. **Albers (1963)**

Munsell developed a systematic method for describing and organizing colors in terms of three dimensions, hue, value, and chroma, that provided a precise vocabulary for talking about color relationships. His system was widely used in art education and provided a useful framework for the color analysis conducted in this research. **Munsell (1919)**



Fig 1.12.7: Color Wheel

1.12.7 Color Psychology and Emotional Response

The psychological literature on color and emotion supports the artistic decisions in this research. Elliot and Maier demonstrated that colors evoke specific emotional responses: red for danger and energy, blue for calmness and melancholy, yellow for joy, and green for growth and balance. These associations are partly universal and partly influenced by culture. . **Elliot and Maier (2012)**

Heller interviewed over 2,000 individuals about their emotional associations with colors, revealing strong patterns. Her findings highlighted color as a powerful tool for visual artists, confirming its intentional use in this research to reflect the emotional content of the poems. **Heller (2009)**

Birren explored cultural and historical color symbolism, showing how different cultures develop unique meanings that reflect their values. In the Islamic tradition relevant to Ghani Khan's poetry, colors like green (paradise), white (peace), gold (divine light), and blue (spiritual depth) held specific meanings, which were important considerations in this research. **Birren (1978)**

1.12.8 Color in South Asian and Islamic Art

The use of color in South Asian and Islamic artistic traditions is a rich and important area of scholarship directly relevant to this research. Goswamy studied the use of color in Indian miniature painting and showed how specific color choices in these works were always meaningful, never arbitrary. Each color in a miniature painting was chosen for its symbolic and emotional significance, and the painting's overall color palette was understood as a system of meanings that conveyed the work's spiritual and emotional content. . **Goswamy (2014)**

Brend, in her study of Islamic art, discussed the rich tradition of color symbolism in Islamic visual culture. She showed how Islamic artists across different periods and regions used color not merely for aesthetic effect but as a form of symbolic language that communicated ideas about the divine, the spiritual life, and the moral order of the universe. This tradition of meaningful color use was an important precedent and inspiration for the color strategies employed in the present research. **Brend (1991)**



Fig 1.12.8: Color in South Asian and Islamic Art

1.13 Symbolism in Poetry and Painting

Symbolism was a central feature of both Ghani Khan's poetry and the paintings produced in this research. Understanding how symbolism worked, in literature, in visual art, and in the intersection of the two was therefore an important aspect of the theoretical preparation for this research. The scholarly literature on symbolism was extensive and illuminating.

1.13.1 Literary Symbolism

In literary theory, a symbol was understood as an image, object, or action that represented something beyond itself that carried a meaning or range of meanings that went beyond its literal surface significance. Brooks and Warren, in their influential study *Understanding Poetry*, showed how the most powerful poems worked through complex systems of symbolic meaning that could not be reduced to simple paraphrase or explanation. The symbols in a great poem earned their power through the specific context in which they appeared, through the way they were developed, varied, and related to other elements of the poem. **Brooks and Warren (1959)**

Abrams, in his *Glossary of Literary Terms*, defined symbolism as a mode of literary expression in which objects, events, and characters represented meanings beyond their literal significance. He traced the tradition of symbolic writing in literature from classical mythology through the great religious texts and into the modern period, showing how symbolism allowed writers to express complex, ambiguous, and multivalent truths that resisted simple, direct statement. **Abrams (1999)**

In the specific context of Pashto and Persian literature, Schimmel provided an invaluable study of the symbolic dimensions of Islamic mystical poetry. She showed how Sufi poets, including those who wrote in Persian and Pashto, developed a rich and consistent system of symbols through which they expressed their philosophical and spiritual ideas. The beloved, the wine, the tavern, the candle, the moth, the nightingale, the rose, these and many other symbols recurred throughout the tradition and carried established meanings that informed and deepened their use in individual poems. Understanding this symbolic tradition was essential for interpreting Ghani Khan's poetry accurately, because his work drew extensively on this heritage even as it extended and modified it in original ways. **Schimmel (1992)**

1.13.2 Visual Symbolism in Art

In the visual arts, symbolism operated somewhat differently from the way it worked in literature, but the fundamental principle was the same: visual elements, objects, colors, forms, spatial arrangements could carry meanings beyond their literal, representational significance. Hall, in his *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, provided a comprehensive reference work documenting the symbolic meanings attached to specific objects, figures, and compositional elements in the history of Western art. While the specific symbols he documented were primarily from the Western tradition, the general principle of visual symbolism, that forms and objects could carry culturally established meanings was directly relevant to the present research. **Hall (1974)**

In the context of Islamic and South Asian visual art, similar systems of visual symbolism had been developed. The garden (chahar bagh), the flowing river, the cypress tree, the lotus flower,

the peacock, and many other motifs carried well-established symbolic meanings in the miniature painting tradition. Barraud and others documented these visual symbols in their study of the decorative arts of the Islamic world, providing a useful reference for understanding what visual forms would carry the right kind of symbolic resonance in the paintings produced in this research. **Barraud (1997)**

Arnheim, in his foundational study *Art and Visual Perception*, provided a more general psychological and perceptual framework for understanding how visual symbols worked. He showed that human visual perception was inherently meaning-seeking, that the eye and mind naturally organized visual information into meaningful patterns and relationships. This meant that the symbolic dimensions of a painting were not added on top of its visual properties but were embedded in those very properties in the way forms related to each other, in the direction of lines, in the weight and balance of compositions, in the qualities of light and darkness. **Arnheim (1974)**



Fig 1.13.2: White Pigeons represents Peace & Harmony

1.14 Practice-Based Research in Fine Arts

The methodology of this research was practice-based, meaning that the creation of artworks was not merely the practical outcome of the research but was itself a form of research activity through which knowledge was generated and expressed. This approach to research in the arts was well established in the academic literature, and reviewing that literature helped to provide a solid theoretical justification for the methodology employed in this study.

1.14.1 The Contemporary Approach: Art as a Research Methodology

In modern academia, this study embraces "Artistic Research" (or Practice-Based Research). This methodology asserts that the creative process itself, the sketches, the failed attempts, the material experimentation, and the final composition constitute a form of knowledge production. Rather than just analyzing art from the outside, the researcher *practices* the art to gain insights that cannot be articulated through purely analytical prose. By using painting as a lens for literary critique, this research contributes to a broader discourse on how human knowledge is constructed, interpreted, and shared across different sensory modalities.

1.14.2 Defining Practice-Based Research

Frayling was one of the first scholars to provide a systematic definition and justification for practice-based research in the creative arts. He identified three types of relationship between research and practice: research into art, research through art, and research for art. The present research fell primarily into the second category, research through art, meaning that the creative practice of painting was itself the primary means by which the research was conducted and its findings expressed. **Frayling (1993)**

Sullivan, in his important study *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in the Visual Arts*, provided a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding and justifying practice-based research in the visual arts. He argued that artistic practice was a legitimate form of research that generated knowledge of a kind that could not be produced through conventional academic methods. The knowledge generated through artistic practice was embodied, visual, and experiential it was expressed in and through artworks rather than in written propositions. Sullivan's framework was directly relevant to the present research and provided important theoretical support for its methodology. **Sullivan (2005)**

Schon, in his influential study *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*, developed the concept of "reflection-in-action," the idea that skilled practitioners in many fields, including artists, generate knowledge through the very process of doing their work. He showed how the act of making painting, designing, building, and composing involved a continuous process of experimentation, evaluation, and adjustment through which the practitioner developed an understanding that went beyond what could be articulated in advance. This concept was directly applicable to the creative process described in this research, in which many of the most important insights emerged through the process of painting rather than through prior theoretical planning. **Schon (1983)**



Fig 1.14.2: Five-Stage Practice-Based Research Process

1.14.3 Literature and Artistic Research

Within the broader field of practice-based research in Fine Arts, several scholars had specifically examined the use of literary sources including poetry as the basis for artistic research practice. Elkins, in his study *Artists with PhDs: On the New Doctoral Degree in Studio Art*, reviewed a wide range of practice-based research projects and found that the use of literary and philosophical texts as starting points for visual artistic research was a common and productive approach. He noted that the process of engaging deeply with a literary source reading it carefully, analyzing its themes and symbols, and then translating those themes and symbols into visual form produced a distinctive kind of artistic knowledge that combined literary understanding with visual artistic skill. **Elkins (2009)**

Barrett and Bolt, in their edited collection *Practice as Research: Approaches to Creative Arts Enquiry*, brought together a range of essays by practitioners and scholars who had used practice-based approaches in their research. Several of the essays in this collection were directly relevant to the present research, particularly those that discussed the process of translating literary texts into visual art and the methodological challenges of documenting and evaluating practice-based creative research. **Barrett and Bolt (2007)**

1.15 Nature as a Theme in Art and Literature

Nature was one of the most important themes in both Ghani Khan's poetry and the paintings produced in this research. Understanding how nature had been used as a subject and a symbol in the scholarly traditions of art history and literary criticism helped to deepen the researcher's engagement with this theme and to make more informed and meaningful choices about how to represent it visually.

Ruskin, the great Victorian art critic, argued in his extensive writings on art and nature that the most powerful landscape painting was not that which copied nature literally but that which captured the deeper emotional and spiritual truths that nature expressed. He argued that a great landscape painter saw not just the surface appearance of the natural world but its inner life its mood, its energy, its expressive character. This idea was directly relevant to the approach taken in the present research, in which natural elements were used not as literal subjects but as expressive and symbolic resources. **Ruskin (1857)**

Tuan, in his study *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*, provided a rich phenomenological account of how human beings experienced and related to natural environments. He showed how specific natural landscapes, mountains, rivers, open plains, forests, carried emotional and psychological meanings that arose from the direct sensory and bodily experience of being in those environments. This understanding of landscape as an emotionally and psychologically meaningful space was directly relevant to the present research, in which the natural landscape of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the landscape that Ghani Khan had written about so lovingly was a primary source of visual imagery. **Tuan (1977)**

Solnit, in her study *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*, examined the relationship between physical movement through natural landscapes and creative, philosophical, and spiritual thought. She showed how many poets, philosophers, and artists had found that walking through natural environments stimulated their imagination and deepened their thinking. This connection between

nature, physical experience, and creative insight was relevant to the understanding of how Ghani Khan related to the natural landscape in his poetry. **Solnit (2000)**

1.16 Pashto Culture, Heritage, and Visual Art

Understanding the cultural context in which Ghani Khan's poetry was written was essential for ensuring that the visual interpretations produced in this research were rooted in an accurate and respectful understanding of Pashtun cultural values and aesthetic traditions. The scholarly literature on Pashto culture and its artistic heritage provided important contextual knowledge for this research.

Caroe, in his historical study *The Pathans*, provided an important account of Pashtun history, culture, and social life. He described the Pashtun cultural values that Ghani Khan's poetry so powerfully expressed, the love of freedom, the deep connection to the natural landscape, the sense of personal honor and dignity, the tradition of hospitality, and the strong attachment to cultural heritage. Understanding these cultural values helped the researcher to interpret the themes and symbols of Ghani Khan's poetry more accurately and to make visual artistic choices that were culturally informed and respectful. **Caroe (1958)**

Spain, in his study *The Way of the Pathans*, provided a more intimate and personal account of Pashtun culture and daily life. He described the central role that poetry played in Pashtun cultural life is not just as a literary form enjoyed by educated elites, but as a living cultural practice that was woven into the fabric of everyday social life. This understanding of poetry as a living cultural form, rather than a purely academic or literary one, deepened the researcher's sense of what was at stake in creating visual interpretations of Ghani Khan's work. **Spain (1963)**

Lindisfarne, in her anthropological study of gender and honor in Pashtun culture, provided insights into the complex social and cultural dimensions of Pashtun life that Ghani Khan's poetry engaged with. Understanding these cultural complexities helped the researcher to appreciate the courage and originality of Ghani Khan's poetic vision, his willingness to question, challenge, and transcend some of the more limiting aspects of his cultural inheritance while remaining deeply rooted in and committed to the best values of his tradition. **Lindisfarne (1994)**



Fig 1.16: Pashto Culture & Ghani Khan's Poetry.

1.17 Research Gap

Having reviewed the existing scholarly literature across all the major areas relevant to this research, it was now possible to identify clearly the research gap that the present study was designed to address.

The scholarly literature on Ghani Khan was substantial but narrowly focused on literary and cultural analysis. Scholars had examined his poetry from the perspectives of literary criticism, cultural studies, postcolonial theory, and Sufi philosophy. They had analyzed his language, his symbolism, his philosophical ideas, and his cultural significance with great depth and intelligence.

However, no scholarly study had systematically examined the visual artistic potential of Ghani Khan's poetry. No research had attempted to translate his poetic vision into the medium of painting in a sustained, theoretically informed, and academically rigorous way. The connection between his training as a visual artist at Santineketan and the visual quality of his poetry had been noted by scholars but never fully developed into a practice-based research project.

Similarly, the broader literature on the relationship between Pashto literature and visual art was extremely limited. While scholars had documented the rich visual artistic traditions of the Mughal court and the broader Islamic world, the specific visual artistic dimensions of Pashto cultural and literary heritage had received very little scholarly attention.

This gap was the primary justification for the present research. By bringing together the literary tradition of Ghani Khan's poetry and the visual artistic tradition of contemporary painting, by using practice-based research methods to explore the visual potential of Pashto poetic heritage, this study aimed to make an original and meaningful contribution to both the field of Fine Arts and the broader study of Pashtun cultural life. In an era of growing global awareness and appreciation of diverse cultural traditions, making Ghani Khan's poetic vision accessible through the universal language of visual art was seen as a valuable contribution to cross-cultural understanding and communication. Visual art could speak across linguistic and cultural boundaries in ways that written poetry in a regional language could not, and this made the visual interpretation of Ghani Khan's work a culturally significant as well as academically valuable undertaking.

1.18 Conclusion

This literature review covered a wide range of scholarly works across several interconnected fields. It examined the historical and theoretical relationship between poetry and visual art, drawing on scholarship from classical antiquity through to the present day. It reviewed the substantial body of scholarly literature on Ghani Khan's poetry and identified the specific gap—the absence of practice-based visual artistic research—that the present study was designed to fill. It explored the theoretical literature on color, symbolism, and artistic practice that provided the intellectual foundations for the creative methodology of this research. And it examined the cultural context of Pashtun heritage and Pashto literature that gave the present research its specific cultural meaning and significance.

The literature review confirmed that the present research was grounded in a rich and well-developed set of scholarly traditions and that it made an original contribution by bringing those traditions together in a new and creative way. The connection between Ghani Khan's poetry and

the visual language of painting the central claim of this research was supported by the scholarly evidence reviewed here, which showed that the relationship between poetry and visual art was deep, historical, and cross-cultural.

Most importantly, the literature review established clearly that the specific research undertaken in this study, the practice-based visual artistic interpretation of Ghani Khan's Pashto poetry had not been done before. This research therefore, stood in a unique position: it was deeply rooted in existing scholarly traditions, but it moved beyond those traditions into genuinely new territory, producing original knowledge in a form that only artistic practice could produce, through the colors, forms, textures, and compositions of original painted artworks.

The following chapter describes in detail the research methodology through which this original artistic knowledge was produced.

1.19 Ghani Khan Sources

- **Da Pukhtano Bard**
- **Regdi Gul**
- **Panoos (Chandelier)**
- **Khan Sahib & The Pathans:** His notable prose books written in English and Urdu, detailing the culture, history, and social fabric of the Pathan people.
- **Da Panjre Chaghar (Chirpings of the Cage)**
- **Da Panjre Chaghar (Chirpings of the Cage):** Written between 1950 and 1953 while he was incarcerated. He considered this his best and most profound work.
- **Palwashay (Beams of Light / Moonbeams):** A celebrated collection that includes several poems from *Da Panjre Chaghar* along with new verses, published in the 1960s.
- **Panoos (Chandelier):** Another well-known collection of his philosophical and romantic poetry.
- **Laatoon (Search):** A collection of his search for truth and self-realization.
- **Kulyat-e-Ghani Khan:** The comprehensive, single-volume compilation of his collected works

Chapter 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction to the Research Process

Research methodology is an important part of every thesis because it explains how the research was carried out and how the outcomes were achieved. In the field of Art & Design, methodology is not limited to written research only; it also includes creative practice, observation, experimentation, and artistic interpretation. Unlike scientific research, which relies primarily on numbers and measurements, artistic research focuses more on emotions, imagination, concepts, and visual exploration.

This study, *The Poetry of Colors: Inspired by Ghani Khan*, follows an artistic and practice-based research approach. The research explores how the poetry of Ghani Khan can be transformed into visual art through painting. The methodology explains the complete process of understanding his poetry, developing visual concepts, experimenting with artistic elements, and creating final artworks inspired by his ideas.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain how the research was planned, how information was collected, and how poetic concepts were translated into visual compositions. This chapter also discusses the importance of artistic research in understanding literature through visual language.

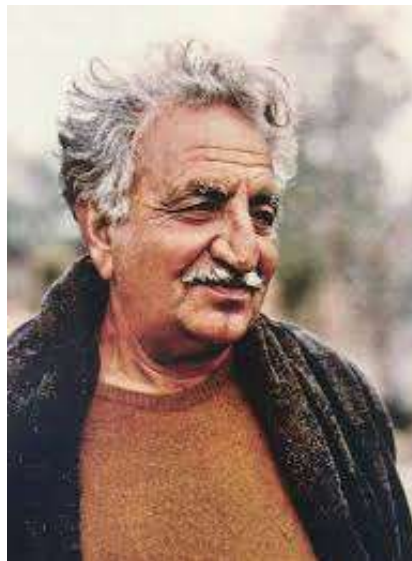


Fig 2.1: Portrait Photograph of Ghani Khan

2.2 Importance of Research Methodology in Art and Design

In Art & Design, research methodology plays an important role because it helps artists organize their creative process in a meaningful way. Artistic work is not created randomly; it develops through observation, understanding, experimentation, and critical thinking. Methodology provides direction and structure to the creative process.

In this thesis, methodology was important because the project involved both literature and visual art. Ghani Khan's poetry contains philosophical thoughts, emotions, and symbolism that require careful understanding before they can be expressed visually. Without a proper research process, the paintings would only become decorative images rather than meaningful artistic interpretations.

The methodology also helped in:

- Understanding the deeper meaning of the poems
- Identifying visual symbols and imagery
- Exploring emotional expression through color
- Developing personal artistic interpretations
- Creating a connection between literature and painting

This research demonstrates that artistic practice itself can become a form of research. Through painting, the artist explored poetic meanings and transformed them into visual experiences.

2.3 Research Approach and Artistic Direction

This research follows a **qualitative and practice-based methodology**. A qualitative approach focuses on meanings, emotions, experiences, and interpretation rather than numerical data. Since poetry and visual art are both expressive forms, qualitative research was more suitable for this study.

This research followed a qualitative approach, specifically a practice-based research methodology. Qualitative research was chosen because the study aimed to explore and understand the creative and interpretive dimensions of artistic practice that could not be adequately captured through quantitative measurement or statistical analysis.

Practice-based research was the most appropriate framework for this study because the primary aim was not only to produce academic knowledge but also to produce original creative work. In practice-based research, the artwork itself is considered a form of research output] a way of knowing and expressing that complements written scholarly analysis. The paintings produced in this thesis were therefore not simply illustrations of the written research; they were themselves expressions of the research process and its findings.

The research design integrated two complementary phases: a theoretical and literary study phase, and a practical artistic creation phase. In the first phase, the researcher engaged deeply with the poetry of Ghani Khan, analyzed its themes and symbolic content, and reviewed relevant literature on the relationship between poetry and visual art. In the second phase, the researcher translated the insights gained from the literary study into a series of original paintings through a process of sketching, experimentation, and creative development.

The artistic direction of this thesis was influenced by:

- Symbolism in Ghani Khan's poetry
- Emotional interpretation through color
- Visual imagination inspired by literary imagery
- Contemporary painting practices

This approach allowed the research to move beyond simple illustration and develop deeper visual interpretations.

2.3.1 Qualitative Research in Artistic Practice

Qualitative research focuses on understanding ideas, emotions, meanings, and experiences. In artistic research, this approach is important because art cannot be measured through numbers or statistics.

For example, the emotional feeling created by a poem cannot be scientifically calculated. Instead, it is understood through interpretation and personal response. In the same way, paintings are experienced emotionally and visually.

This study used qualitative research to:

- Analyze the emotional tone of Ghani Khan's poetry
- Understand symbolic meanings
- Explore visual imagination
- Interpret poetic ideas through painting

The qualitative approach gave freedom for creative exploration and personal artistic expression.

2.4 Artistic Research

The research was a well-established methodology in the field of Fine Arts and Design. It recognized that creative practice, the act of making art, was itself a form of inquiry. When an artist engaged deeply with a subject, made creative decisions, and developed artworks, they were generating knowledge in a form that was different from but complementary to traditional academic writing.

In this study, the researcher brought together two kinds of knowledge: literary knowledge (understanding of Ghani Khan's poetry) and artistic knowledge (understanding of painting techniques, color theory, and visual composition), and synthesized them through the process of creating artworks. The paintings that resulted from this process expressed insights that could not have been fully articulated in words alone.

This approach was grounded in the broader philosophical tradition of phenomenology, which emphasized the importance of lived experience and embodied knowledge. The act of painting, the physical engagement with materials, the choices made in the moment of creation, and the emotional responses that arose during the artistic process produce a form of understanding that was genuine and valuable.

For example:

- Some poems inspired abstract compositions
- Others suggested symbolic imagery
- Certain emotions influenced color selection and texture

This practical process helped in developing stronger artistic interpretations.

2.5 Selection of Poems

The researcher read extensively in Ghani Khan's published works, including his collected poetry in Pashto and available translations. From this extensive reading, specific poems and poetic themes were selected on the basis of their visual richness, their emotional depth, and their suitability for artistic interpretation.

The poems and themes selected for this study included:

- **Laatoon (Search):** This painting uses a sitar to symbolize artistic expression and blue pigeons for freedom and imagination, visualizing a journey of self-discovery.
- **Zama Zama Zama (On and Onwards):** Celebrating creativity and transformation, this artwork features vibrant colors representing diversity and endless possibilities in human expression.
- **Regdi Gul (Poppy Flower):** Based on a celebrated poem, this piece highlights resilience and beauty through a desert flower, emphasizing the strength found in fragile circumstances.
- **Badshahi (Kingship):** This painting explores the wealth in freedom of thought over material possessions, reflecting self-respect and inner sovereignty aligned with Ghani Khan's philosophy.
- **Pa Ranra Bandi Mayan Yam (I Revel in Light):** Symbolizing growth and renewal, this artwork represents hope and spiritual awakening through the transformation from seed to flower.
- **Chalaar (Traveller):** Illustrating an inner journey, this piece portrays a traveler guided by light, exploring themes of self-discovery and perseverance.
- **Na Ba Tol Umar Dunya We (Life Will Not Last Forever):** Reflecting on the transient nature of life, this artwork uses symbolism to express gratitude and acceptance in the face of mortality.

The selection was deliberately diverse, covering a range of emotional registers from the gentle and beautiful to the philosophical and challenging. This diversity was intended to produce a painting series that was varied in mood, color, and visual character while remaining unified by its connection to Ghani Khan's poetic vision.



Fig 2.5: Cover of Kulyat-e-Ghani Khan & Laatoon

2.6 Primary Sources

2.6.1 The Creative Process: From Poetry to Painting

The creative process in this research moved through several distinct but interconnected stages. These stages were not rigidly linear the researcher often moved back and forth between stages as the work developed, but they provided a general structure that organized the creative journey.



Fig 2.6.1.1: Visual Diagram Showing the Creative Journey

Stage One: Deep Reading and Reflection

The first stage involved deep, slow, and attentive reading of the selected poems. The researcher read each poem multiple times, in both Pashto and available translations, paying close attention to the images, emotions, rhythms, and symbolic meanings embedded in the poetic language. During this stage, the researcher kept a journal in which impressions, emotional responses, visual associations, and creative ideas were recorded.

This reflective reading process was essential. It was not enough to simply understand what a poem was about on a surface level. The researcher needed to feel the poem to allow its emotional and imaginative content to resonate deeply before any attempt was made to translate it into visual form.

Stage Two: Visual Brainstorming and Sketching

The second stage involved translating the reflective reading into visual ideas through sketching and brainstorming. Working quickly and intuitively, the researcher produced multiple rough sketches that explored different ways of visually interpreting each poem or poetic theme. These sketches were not detailed or refined — they were exploratory marks on paper, testing different compositional ideas, color moods, and symbolic arrangements.

During this stage, the researcher also collected visual reference materials, photographs of landscapes, flowers, birds, and natural phenomena from the environment of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which could serve as visual resources for the paintings. These references were not copied directly but used as a source of visual inspiration and detail.

Stage Three: Color Studies and Experimentation

Once a general compositional direction had been established through sketching, the researcher moved into a phase of color experimentation. Color studies small-scale painted explorations of color relationships, harmonies, and emotional effects were created for each planned painting. These studies allowed the researcher to test different color combinations and palettes before committing to a full-scale painting.

The color studies were guided by both theoretical knowledge of color theory and intuitive emotional response. The researcher asked, for each poem: What colors does this poem feel like? What color palette would best communicate the emotional mood and thematic content of this poem? These questions had no single correct answer, but the process of asking them, and exploring different possibilities was essential to finding the right visual approach for each work.



Fig 2.6.1.2: Warm & Cool Colors Showing Different Emotions

Stage Four: Painting

The fourth stage was the actual creation of the paintings. Working on canvas or paper with the chosen medium, the researcher developed each artwork through a process of layering, adjustment, and refinement. The initial sketch and color study provided guidance, but the painting process itself was fluid and responsive. New ideas emerged during the act of painting, and the researcher remained open to these developments, allowing the work to evolve organically.

Each painting was approached as a creative dialogue between the poet's vision and the artist's interpretation. The goal was not to produce a literal illustration of a poem but to create an artwork that captured the emotional essence, symbolic meaning, and visual spirit of the poetic source.



Fig 2.6.1.3: Inspiration background form “Pa Ranra Bandi Mayan Yam” Painting

Stage Five: Reflection and Evaluation

After each painting was completed, the researcher engaged in a period of reflection and evaluation. The completed work was examined carefully: Did it succeed in communicating the intended emotional and thematic content? Did the color, composition, and symbolic elements work together effectively? What had been learned through the creative process that contributed to the understanding of the poem and its visual possibilities?

This reflective stage was an integral part of the research process. In practice-based research, the evaluation of completed artworks was not merely an aesthetic judgment it was a form of research analysis, generating insights that could inform subsequent works and contribute to the overall findings of the study.

2.6.2 Secondary Sources

Secondary sources were used to support the research and provide theoretical understanding.

These included:

- Books about Ghani Khan's philosophy and poetry
- Research articles related to literature and visual art
- Artistic references connected to symbolic and expressive painting
- Online visual archives and exhibition studies

Secondary sources helped in understanding how literature has historically inspired visual art.

2.7 Understanding Poetic Themes and Visual Translation

A major part of the research involved identifying important themes in Ghani Khan's poetry and translating them into visual forms.

Some major themes included:

- Freedom
- Love
- Beauty
- Spiritual reflection
- Humanity
- Imagination

Each theme was explored visually through color, composition, symbolism, and texture.

For example:

- Freedom was represented through open forms and flowing movement
- Spiritual reflection was explored using light and atmospheric compositions
- Love and emotional warmth were expressed through warm color palettes

This process allowed poetry to become a visual experience.



Fig 2.7: Inspiration of Figures and Background

2.8 Materials and Techniques

A variety of materials and techniques were employed in the creation of the painting series. This variety was intentionally different poems and poetic themes called for different material approaches, and the choice of medium and technique was itself a meaningful creative decision.

Acrylic paints on canvas were used for several of the paintings. Acrylic paint offered versatility, fast drying time, and the ability to create both transparent washes and thick, textured surfaces. This versatility made acrylics suitable for paintings that needed a wide range of effects from delicate atmospheric passages to bold, expressive strokes.

Oil paints on canvas were used for the paintings that required the richest color depth, the most luminous tonal effects, and the greatest textural complexity. Oil paint, with its slow drying time, allowed for extensive blending, glazing, and layered color effects that were particularly suitable for paintings exploring themes of light, spirituality, and emotional depth.

Watercolor on paper was used for paintings that required a lighter, more transparent, and spontaneous quality. Watercolor's fluidity and translucency were particularly well-suited to themes of innocence, gentleness, and natural beauty.

Mixed media techniques were also employed in some works, combining paint with collage elements, drawing, and textural materials. This approach was used where the complexity of the poetic themes seemed to demand a richer and more layered visual response.



Fig 2.8: Acrylic Medium & Bold Strokes

2.9 Symbolism in the Creative Process

Symbolism was as central to the artistic process in this research as it was to the poetry that inspired it. The researcher consciously developed a visual symbolic vocabulary that corresponded to the symbolic language of Ghani Khan's poetry.

Birds, particularly in flight, were used as a recurring visual motif across the painting series, representing freedom, the human spirit, and the longing for transcendence. Flowers, especially those growing in unexpected or harsh environments, were used to symbolize beauty, resilience, and the creative spirit. Light, in various forms, direct sunlight, reflected light, and glowing horizons, was used to suggest knowledge, hope, and divine presence. Water, rivers, waves, and reflective surfaces were used to express the fluid, ever-changing nature of emotion and time.

These symbolic elements were not applied rigidly or formulaically. In each painting, they were integrated organically into the overall composition, working together with color, texture, and form to create a unified visual expression of the poem's emotional and philosophical content.

Examples:

- Birds symbolized freedom
- Flowers represented beauty and sensitivity
- Light represented hope and truth
- Empty spaces suggested loneliness or reflection

These symbols were visually reinterpreted through painting techniques and compositions.

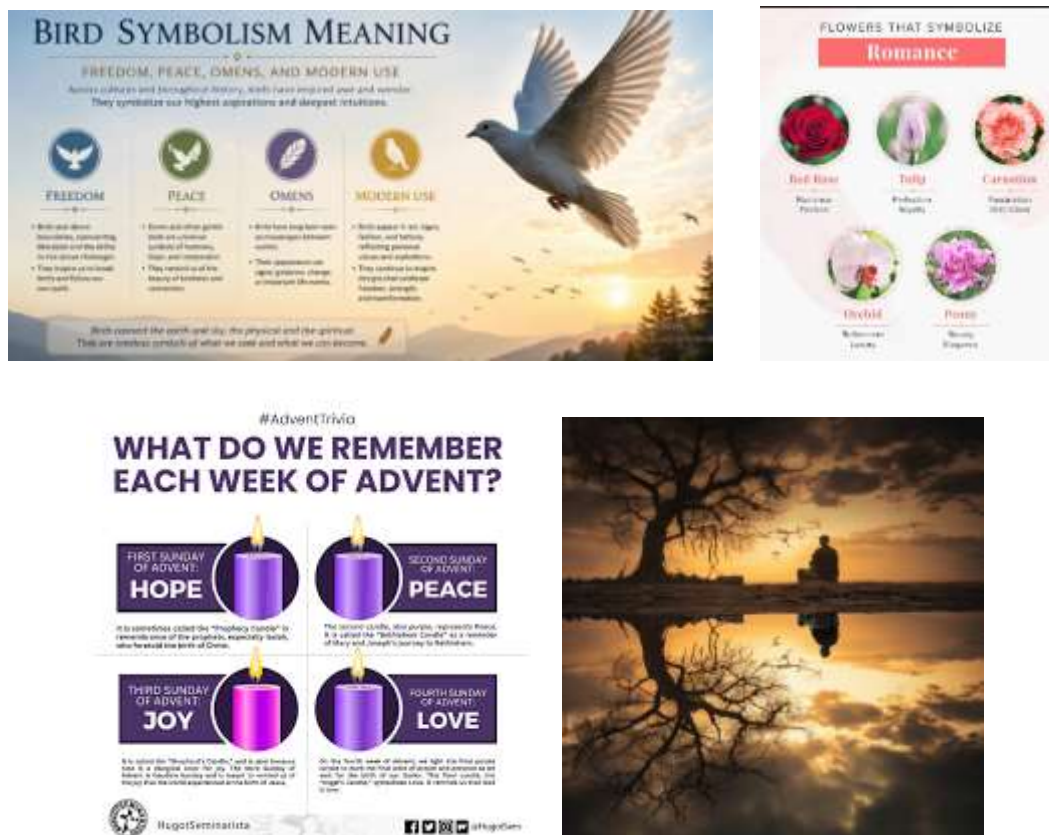


Fig 2.9: Symbolic Reference Images

2.10 Colors & Emotional Expression

Color was the most fundamental element of the visual language employed in this research. The relationship between color and emotion was a central concern throughout the creative process. The researcher drew on established theories of color psychology and color symbolism to inform the color choices made in each painting.

According to color theory, different colors were associated with different emotional states and psychological responses. Warm colors, reds, oranges, and yellows were generally associated with energy, passion, warmth, and excitement. Cool colors, blues, greens, and purples were associated with calm, depth, spirituality, and melancholy. Earth tones, ochres, siennas, and umbers evoked the natural world, groundedness, and tradition.

In the context of this research, these general principles were applied flexibly and responsively. The color choices in each painting were not mechanically derived from color theory formulas but were informed by a combination of theoretical knowledge, emotional intuition, and attentive engagement with the specific themes and images of each poem.

For example, the paintings inspired by themes of freedom and the open sky made extensive use of blues, whites, and luminous yellow colors that evoked the expansiveness of the sky, the clarity of light, and the energy of flight. The paintings inspired by spiritual themes employed deeper, more restrained color palettes, often using contrasts between light and dark to suggest the mystery and depth of spiritual experience.

For example:

- Red and orange represented passion and intensity
- Blue represented calmness and emotional depth
- Yellow represented hope and spiritual light
- Dark tones represented struggle or mystery

The emotional use of color helped create visual atmospheres connected to the poetic themes.



Fig 2.10: Color Psychology

2.11 Development of Visual Concepts

After studying the poems, the next stage involved generating visual concepts. This process included brainstorming, sketching, and experimentation.

The visual concepts were not direct illustrations of poems. Instead, they were artistic interpretations inspired by the emotions and symbolism within the poetry.

Different techniques were explored:

- Abstract compositions
- Symbolic imagery
- Layered textures
- Experimental color combinations

This stage allowed freedom for imagination and artistic exploration.



Fig 2.11: Syed Sadiqain Paintings on Allama Iqbal Inspired Poetry

2.12 Sketching and Composition Studies

Sketching was an important part of the creative process. Initial sketches helped in organizing ideas and exploring possible compositions.

Different layouts and arrangements were tested before finalizing the paintings. Composition studies focused on:

- Balance
- Movement
- Emotional focus
- Spatial relationships

This process improved the visual communication of the artworks.



Fig 2.12: Sketching and Composition Studies

2.13 Analytical Process in Artistic Research

Analysis in artistic research is different from scientific analysis. Instead of measuring results numerically, artistic analysis focuses on interpretation, observation, and visual meaning.

The poems were analyzed based on:

- Imagery
- Emotional tone
- Symbolism
- Philosophical meaning
- Visual potential

The paintings were then evaluated according to how effectively they communicated these poetic ideas visually.



Fig 2.13: Color Theory and Artistic Research

2.14 Visual Analysis of the Artworks

Visual analysis focused on understanding how artistic elements worked together within the paintings.

Important aspects included:

- Use of color
- Symbolic imagery
- Composition
- Emotional atmosphere
- Viewer interpretation

This analysis helped refine the final artworks.



Fig 2.14: Visual Analysis of the Artworks

2.15 Justification of Methodological Choices

The selected methodology was appropriate because the research combined literature with artistic practice.

A quantitative method would not have been suitable because:

- Poetry involves emotions and interpretation
- Artistic expression cannot be measured numerically
- Visual meaning depends on personal experience and imagination

The qualitative and practice-based approach allowed deeper exploration of Ghani Khan's poetic ideas through painting.



Fig 2.15: Inspiration of the Subject & the Background

2.16 Importance of Practice-Based Research in Contemporary Art

In contemporary Art & Design, practice-based research has become an important method because it allows artists to explore ideas through creative work.

This approach recognizes that artworks themselves can produce knowledge and understanding.

Through this methodology, the paintings became:

- Visual interpretations of poetry
- Creative research outcomes
- Emotional responses to literary ideas

This chapter explained the research methodology used in *The Poetry of Colors: Inspired by Ghani Khan*. The study followed a qualitative and practice-based approach that combined literary understanding with visual art practice.

Through reading poetry, analyzing symbolism, experimenting with color, and creating paintings, the research explored how Ghani Khan's poetic ideas could be transformed into visual language.

The methodology provided a strong foundation for the creative process and helped develop meaningful artistic interpretations inspired by poetry



Fig 2.16: My Concept Thesis Board

Chapter 3

THESIS PROJECT

3.1 Painting 1: Ghazal Laatoon لٽون — Search



Fig 3.1: First Painting

شرننگ د ستار، د تال مضمون گورم چار پيره رنگ کښې شنو کبوترو کښې،
ځان له جواب د خپل جمدون گورم

I seek the sitar's plucking and rhythm's rules;
In surrounding colors and blue pigeons

3.1.1 Painting 1 Description:

Medium: Acrylic on Canvas

Size: 24" × 36"

In this verse, the poet searches for dynamic movement, cosmic rhythm, and spiritual liberation to break away from physical stagnation (*Jamdoon*). The text provides a rich visual palette, directly linking musical vibrations with changing colors and flocking birds. The canvas transforms these verbal metaphors into a tactile, sensory experience where sound waves are translated into brushstrokes and color acts as an emotional language.

The background of the composition is dominated by an immersive, layered blue atmosphere that transitions seamlessly from dark midnight indigos to vibrant, luminous turquoise hues. This specific chromatic choice directly addresses the poem's reference to the infinite sky and the expansiveness of spiritual searching.

To elevate the composition beyond a standard landscape, shimmering gold accents and structured vertical paint strokes are applied across the upper registry. These metallic elements introduce a sacred, timeless texture to the canvas, mirroring the mystical undercurrents of the verse and referencing the traditional geometric and metallic embellishments found in regional Islamic and Central Asian art.

The layout is anchored by two primary symbolic motifs that balance the canvas:

- **The Rubab (The Poetic Voice):** The traditional stringed instrument, positioned on a sharp dynamic diagonal, symbolizes human creativity and artistic expression. The musician's hands are enveloped in a vibrant swirl of reds, oranges, and yellows, visually embodying the tempo and acoustic energy described by the poet as the "plucking" of strings.
- **The Pigeons (Spiritual Elevation):** Six pigeons in soft whites, ash grays, and pale blues interact with the scene. While some rest near the musical vortex, others ascend into the deep teal sky, symbolizing human thoughts or souls breaking free from worldly confines, aspiring towards a higher consciousness.

The painting relies heavily on expressionistic paint handling to differentiate between the material and spiritual worlds. The lower portion of the canvas features thick, heavy textures and rotational palette-knife marks, mimicking the chaotic, passionate velocity of sound and worldly life.

In the specific couplet you provided for your artwork: خان له جواب د خپل جمدون غورم (*I seek an answer to my own stillness/stagnation*)

The poet looks at the vibrant colors of nature and listens to the sudden, sharp plucking (*sharang*) of the Rubab because his inner self feels trapped in an existential freeze (*Jamdoon*). The music and the flight of the blue pigeons are forces of kinetic, spiritual energy capable of shattering that oppressive silence. He is searching the external universe for a spark that can revive his own stagnant being.

3.2 Painting 2: Ghazal Laatoon — Search



Fig 3.2: 2nd Painting

غرمه د اوږي، لکه شپه د ژمي، یو خاموشي او قلاري خوره ده
د کور کور کو کوکو، او چپ چاپ عالم هو وخت خپه نیولې په رکاب سور

In the summer noon, like a winter night a silence a hush prevails, the doves' cooing, a meditative, still time slackens, planted in stirrups

3.2.2 Painting 2 Description:

Medium: Acrylic on Canvas

Size: 24" × 36"

Ghani Khan's poetry is fundamentally defined by its dualistic, existential nature often termed the philosophy of **Latoon (The Search)**. Unlike conventional romantic or political verse, his writing is an intellectual battleground where conflicting realities constantly collide: the material versus the spiritual, the beauty of nature versus the cruelty of fate, and the passionate fire of human emotion versus the cold weight of absolute silence. He uses vivid, contradictory sensory metaphors to explore the human psyche, viewing life not as a static condition, but as a restless, solitary journey through a vast, untamable universe. His poetry does not merely describe emotions; it visualizes them through sharp emotional contrasts, positioning the human soul as a wandering seeker searching for meaning amidst cosmic emptiness.

In this 2nd Painting, I visually interprets this signature existential contrast, drawing directly from Ghani Khan's evocative conceptual imagery: *"In the summer noon, like a winter night, a silence..."* The canvas is split into a dramatic thermal and psychological paradox. The left register is saturated with explosive, vibrant yellows and fiery ambers that mimic the blinding, oppressive heat of a Pashtun "summer noon." This intense light dynamically collides with and surrenders to the right register, which plunges into deep, cold forest greens, raw umbers, and heavy blacks, capturing the desolate chill of a "winter night." This stark tonal transition effectively visualizes the heavy, thick silence (*Khamoshi*) described by the poet, a quietude so deep that it carries physical weight and temperature.

The iconography of the painting anchors the viewer in the cultural and philosophical landscape of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region:

- **The Rider (The Seeker):** Centrally positioned against a swirling backdrop, this figure embodies Ghani Khan's "Mad Philosopher." Dressed in a white shalwar kameez, brown vest, and turban, his calm expression and distant gaze reflect deep internal contemplation, isolating him from the chaos around him.
- **The Horse (Grounded Stability):** The powerful black stallion stands firm, reins held loosely by the rider. It symbolizes physical control and stability, with the proud posture of both horse and rider creating a point of rest amidst a turbulent sky.
- **The Dove (The Gentle Echo):** Perched on a skeletal branch, the solitary dove evokes the line "the doves' cooing." With soft details, this peaceful bird serves as a visual whisper, representing inner peace amid a vast, indifferent emptiness.

The studio execution relies on a deliberate separation of painting techniques to emphasize the divide between the physical world and human psychology. The background is treated with an expressionistic, fluid motion, using heavy paint applications and sweeping brushstrokes to suggest existential chaos and the passage of time.

Conversely, the figures of the rider, the horse, and the barren tree are rendered with sharp, disciplined realism. This intentional technical contrast serves a vital academic purpose: it isolates the internal calm of the human mind from the external turbulence of the universe, perfectly capturing the existential longing and poetic solitude that define the core of Ghani Khan's artistic legacy.

3.3 Painting 3: Ghazal Zama Zama Zama زمه زمه زمه — On On & Onwards



Fig 3.3: 3rd Painting

چه د رنگ په جهان ورشم، یو رنگین د کوډی تال شم
رنگارنگ رنگین جمال کښې، سپینه شمع شم گډیرم

If I chance upon a world of colors, I become a rainbow
In parti-colored glory, I dance like a white candle

3.3.1 Painting 3 Description:

Medium: Acrylic on Canvas

Size: 24" × 36"

At the core of Ghani Khan's poetic genius lies a restless yearning to transcend the physical limitations of the material world through absolute aesthetic absorption a concept deeply tied to the Sufi notion of Fana (the annihilation of the ego). For Ghani Khan, art, color, and beauty are not mere passive properties to be observed; they are active, divine forces capable of consuming the human soul. His poetry defines existence as a journey from the heavy, monochromatic burdens of daily reality into a brilliant, multicolored cosmic awakening. In this spiritual philosophy, the ultimate goal of the seeker is to shed their earthly identity, dissolve into the supreme beauty of the universe, and burn steadily like a sacrificial flame extinguishing the physical self to achieve eternal illumination.

In this Painting I visually manifests this ecstatic state of spiritual transformation, drawing directly from the vivid sensory imagery of the poet's couplet:

The composition captures the exact moment the seeker shatters physical limitations to step into a divine "*world of colors*." The canvas is dominated by a majestic, sweeping arch of vibrant primary and secondary hues, deep reds, fiery oranges, luminous yellows, saturated blues, and deep violets that form a dynamic, spinning vortex. These continuous, energetic brushstrokes physically visualize the poetic phrase "*I become a rainbow*," wrapping the viewer in the dizzying, ecstatic velocity of a soul entering a state of absolute creative and spiritual bliss.

The iconography balances raw spiritual expressionism with deliberate regional identity markers:

- **The Whirling Seeker:** At the absolute heart of this cosmic storm stands a female figure clad in traditional Pashtun attire, captured mid-spin during an ecstatic dance. Her closed eyes, serene facial expression, and detached posture communicate absolute detachment from worldly distractions. She personifies the soul in full flight, celebrating a moment of pure freedom and uninhibited joy.
- **The White Candle (*Spina Shama*):** Held carefully aloft in her left hand is a glowing glass candle lamp, directly interpreting the line "*I dance like a white candle*." While the background colors clash and spin in a wild, chaotic storm, the flame of the white candle remains perfectly upright, bright, and steady. This contrast serves as a powerful symbol of the pure, uncorrupted soul that burns from within, fueled by divine love (*Ishq*).

The technical execution uses a deliberate layering process to anchor this cosmic experience within a tangible cultural landscape. The lower register of the canvas features thick, painterly textures composed of deep, warm greens, earthy ochres, and traditional textile reds that fluidly blend into one another.

By grounding the figure within these regional earth tones and detailed traditional drapery, the artwork prevents the abstraction from becoming completely detached from reality. Instead, it successfully mirrors Ghani Khan's philosophy: showing the physical body, deeply rooted in the native Pashtun land, while the spirit completely melts away into universal, cosmic ecstasy.

3.4 Painting 4: Ghazal Reidi Gul رضي گل — Poppy Flower



Fig 3.4: 4th Painting

يوه ورځ، يوه صحرا کې په ښکار وتلی وم روان، يو گلاب مې ولاړ ولید پرکېنده، ښایسته خندا
زه خپه یې خوا له ورغلم، ما ویل آه زما پشان، ته هم گل یې بد نصیبه، ورک د زلفو د جانان

In a desert, once, on a hunt, did I find, with a radiant smile, a flower so fair;
Sadly, I approached and sighed, “oh! Of my kind are you too - a hapless flower from
a beloved's hair. Frail fingers wouldn't take you to a soft face so close,

3.4.1 Painting 4 Description:

Medium: Acrylic on Canvas

Size: 36" × 36"

Ghani Khan's poetry is deeply rooted in a passionate devotion to absolute beauty and a profound sense of romantic melancholy. In his literary world, true love (*Ishq*) and raw emotional truths are not found in comfort or crowded spaces; instead, they reveal themselves in the most isolated corners of existence, like a silent, barren desert. He frequently uses elements of nature—most notably the wild desert flower (*Reidi Gul*), as a reflection of the human heart, blooming beautifully despite surrounding loneliness. For the poet, beauty is bittersweet because it is always tied to a sense of loss and the fleeting nature of life. He views the human soul as an eternal seeker that finds deep companionship with nature's lonely creations, bonding over a shared destiny of beauty, separation, and deep longing for the beloved.

This artwork serves as a direct visual manifestation of one of Ghani Khan's most descriptive and emotionally moving narrative ghazals: The canvas beautifully translates the emotional atmosphere of this desert encounter. Instead of depicting a literal, empty landscape, the background is treated as a vibrant, expressive storm of color that reflects deep human feelings. The artist has combined warm desert tones with cool, luminous splashes of turquoise, soft pink, and deep purple. Thick, heavy brushstrokes create a highly textured frame around the central subjects. Across this energetic background, shimmering gold leaf accents are carefully applied like broken, glowing patterns, adding a spiritual, dreamlike quality to the physical world of the desert.

The composition unfolds a moving story of shared sorrow, beauty, and romance through three distinct visual elements:

- **The Hunter-Philosopher:** At the center sits a traditional Pashtun hunter, wearing an authentically detailed turban, a heavy shawl, and carrying a rifle across his back. Crouched low to the ground, his realistic facial expression and distant gaze convey a profound state of sadness and deep contemplation.
- **The Crimson Flower (*Reidi Gul*):** In his hand, he gently holds a single red flower. Placed exactly in the middle of the canvas, this brilliant touch of crimson becomes the emotional heart of the painting, symbolizing the lonely, vulnerable soul that the hunter recognizes as being "of his own kind."
- **The Beloved as a Mirage:** Softly appearing in the background directly behind the hunter is the fading, ethereal image of a beautiful woman with braided hair and roses. Painted as a delicate shadow, this figure perfectly visualizes the concept of a mirage, capturing the essence of the lost love and the absent "beloved's hair" described in the poem.

The strength of the painting lies in its beautiful balance between realism and abstraction. The contrast between the hunter's realistic face and the loose, swirling background highlights the connection between real life and deep human emotions. By painting the beloved as a soft, translucent shadow and the red flower as a real, tangible object, the artwork perfectly captures the exact mood of shared sadness, romance, and longing that lies at the heart of Ghani Khan's masterpiece.

3.5 Painting 5: Ghazal Badshahi بادشاهی — Kingship



Fig 3.5: 5th Painting

بادشاهي د جهان څه کړي؟ ځان له ولې زیاتي غم
د انصاف تلل مشکل دی، څه به ډېر کړي څه به کم

**What good is the world's kingship? Why multiply your care?
It's hard to weigh justice, you'd make this more than less**

3.5.1 Painting 5: Description

Medium: Acrylic on Canvas

Size: 24" × 36"

Ghani Khan's poetry is deeply marked by a strong skepticism toward worldly power, artificial titles, and material accumulation, a philosophy deeply aligned with the Sufi concept of **Faqr (spiritual detachment and humility)**. For Ghani Khan, kingship (*Badshahi*), crowns, and thrones are not symbols of success; rather, they are heavy chains that trap the human soul in endless anxiety, greed, and moral confusion. He believes that absolute justice is a divine burden far too complex for human rulers to perfectly balance. True liberation and peace of mind belong to the simple, humble individual who rejects royal illusions and chooses honest labor, self-awareness, and a life grounded in spiritual truth. His verses serve as a constant reminder that the small, ordinary things in life hold far more weight and permanence than temporary worldly empires.

This artwork serves as a direct, independent visual interpretation of Ghani Khan's famous philosophical critique of authority and materialism. The canvas masterfully captures the somber, reflective atmosphere of this poem. Instead of using the bright, opulent golds and vibrant jewel tones traditionally associated with royal themes, the background is rendered in deep, moody blues with subtle undercurrents of muted reds and earth oranges. This calculated choice creates a serious, introspective environment that instantly mirrors the poem's total rejection of superficial worldly glory, enveloping the scene in a sense of humble, quiet truth far removed from the chaotic stress of political rulers.

The composition unfolds a moving story of moral choice and inner peace through two primary visual focuses:

- **The Wise Old Man:** On the left side of the canvas sits an elderly man with a long grey beard, completely focused on the slow, meticulous task of untangling a messy ball of black and red thread. His calm dedication represents the beauty of honest, simple labor. He chooses the quiet work of organizing his own life over the heavy, unmanageable burdens of worldly kingship.
- **The Scale of Justice:** On the right hangs an old, rustic iron scale, visually interpreting the line "*It's hard to weigh justice.*" On one side sits a brilliant golden crown, while on the other side sits a collection of rough, common stones. The scale demonstrates that the artificial power of a king can never balance or outweigh the heavy, grounded truth of the earth and simple humility.

The artistic strength of the painting lies in its clear, powerful use of technical contrast. The artist uses thick, heavy paint textures and sharp details to render the old man and the rustic scale, making them feel intensely real, honest, and grounded. The background is kept soft, smooth, and dreamlike. The striking placement of a glittering crown on a dirty, common scale reinforces the core message of the artwork: that worldly power is a deceptive, exhausting trap, while true peace and spiritual balance belong exclusively to the simple soul.

3.6 Painting 6: Ghazal Pa Ranra Bandy Mayan Yam په رڼا باندې منين يم — I Revel in Light



Fig 3.6: 6th Painting

پرون تخم وم، نن گل هم
سبا بيا به خاوره کيرم

Yesterday I was a seed, today I am a flower,
Tomorrow I will become dust again.

3.6.1 Painting 6 Description:

Medium: Acrylic on Canvas

Size: 36" × 36"

Ghani Khan's poetry is deeply rooted in a bittersweet fascination with the fleeting nature of time and the absolute inevitability of human mortality. In his philosophical worldview, life is not viewed as a static possession, but as a rapid, beautiful transition between two states of absolute silence: the earth before birth and the dust after death. He uses the natural cycle of flora, the seed, the bloom, and the decaying petal, as a universal metaphor for the human condition. For Ghani Khan, acknowledging our temporary existence is not a source of despair, but a reason to experience the present moment with intense passion and spiritual awareness. His verses beautifully define human life as a brief, glorious spark of consciousness granted by the Divine, destined to burn brightly before gently returning to the peaceful soil from which it was created.

This artwork serves as a direct visual manifestation of one of Ghani Khan's most philosophically concise and universally resonant poetic couplets: ***"Yesterday I was a seed, today I am a flower, Tomorrow I will become dust again."*** The canvas beautifully captures the dramatic landscape of this existential timeline. The composition is divided across a dynamic color horizon that reflects the shifting stages of time. The lower register is saturated with deep midnight blues, rich raw umbers, and dark earthy tones, representing the quiet, protective darkness of the soil. As the eye moves upward, this darkness breaks into an explosive burst of golden yellows and fiery oranges. This intense, warm light physically visualizes the poet's passion for spiritual illumination and the rapid, burning velocity of physical time passing over the human soul.

The composition unfolds a moving, narrative journey of human life through three beautifully distinct symbolic stages:

- **The Rooted Seed (*Paroon* / *Yesterday*):** At the base, twisted, muscular roots reach deep into rich soil, symbolizing humble beginnings and childhood innocence, a pure potential untouched by the world's anxieties.
- **The Blooming Figure (*Nan* / *Today*):** In the vibrant center, a serene figure wrapped in a traditional shawl holds a colorful blossom close, embodying youthful energy and the beauty of the present moment.
- **The Fading Dust (*Saba* / *Tomorrow*):** At the edges of the form, the artist employs loose, dissolve edges with soft brushstrokes, depicting petals melting into the atmosphere, symbolizing the gentle return to earth, old age, and the peaceful surrender of physical form.

The strength of the painting lies in its calculated use of texture to express philosophical weight. The artist uses thick, heavy impasto applications for the lower earth and roots, giving the physical origins of life a tangible, heavy presence. In contrast, the upper half of the canvas is executed with fluid, feathered brushstrokes and transparent glazes that allow light to breathe through the pigments. By balancing the heavy reality of the soil with the weightless movement of dissolving light, the artwork perfectly captures the exact rhythm of shared beauty, fragile grace, and cosmic return that lies at the heart of Ghani Khan's masterpiece.

3.7 Painting 7: Ghazal "Chalaar" or "Musafar" (from Zama Zama Zama) چالار — On On & Onwards



Fig 3.7: 7th Painting

پہ یو تور او ورک جهان کې
ده خپل خود په رڼا گرځم

**In a dark and lost world
I roam with the light of my own soul.**

3.7.1 Painting 7 Description:

Medium: Acrylic on Canvas

Size: 24" × 36"

Ghani Khan's poetry is deeply rooted in the foundational concept of Khudi (Selfhood or individual soul-consciousness) and existential resilience. In his literary worldview, the external material universe is frequently described as a place of moral confusion, philosophical darkness, and spiritual loss. However, his poetry defines the human being not as a helpless victim of this external chaos, but as a sovereign entity carrying a spark of the divine intellect within. For Ghani Khan, when all external paths, societal structures, and traditional systems fail to provide direction, the individual must turn inward. True guidance, wisdom, and survival do not depend on external illumination; rather, they depend on discovering and relying upon the unyielding, self-sustaining light of one's own soul to navigate an otherwise blind and indifferent world.

This artwork serves as a direct visual manifestation of one of Ghani Khan's most philosophically empowering and introspective couplets. The canvas masterfully captures the deep environmental contrast described in this verse. The background is treated as an immersive space that embodies a "dark and lost world," utilizing layered glazes of deep midnight blues and dark, heavy teals.

To enrich the physical texture of this vast darkness, the artist has integrated cracked, weathered surfaces alongside faint, subtle Pashtun floral motifs embedded into the paint layers. Across the top and sides of the canvas, bright, fractured gold leaf accents are carefully applied. This technical choice suggests that even within a decaying, confusing world, fragments of divine and absolute spiritual beauty still persist for those who know how to see them.

The composition unfolds a clear, moving narrative of solitude and internal strength through two primary visual components:

- **The Traveler (Musafar / The Seeker):** Positioned at the absolute center of the canvas is a young Pashtun man sitting in peaceful meditation, dressed in a traditional grey shalwar kameez, a brown shawl, and a traditional prayer cap. His calm facial expression and stable posture communicate absolute fearlessness and serenity, highlighting his total detachment from the surrounding darkness.
- **The Light of the Soul (Khpal Khud):** Cradled gently within his hands is a simple, traditional clay oil lamp (Deewa), emitting a vibrant, warm golden flame. This lamp serves as a direct visual translation of the poetic line, "I roam with the light of my own soul," proving that the traveler's path is lit entirely from within his own being.

The strength of the painting lies in its highly focused, intimate use of light and shadow (Chiaroscuro). The artist has designed the composition so that the small flame of the clay lamp serves as the sole light source for the entire piece, casting a soft, warm glow onto the young man's face and clothes while leaving the outer environment in shadow.

The contrast between the rough, cracked textures of the dark background and the smooth brushwork of the traveler's features creates a visual balance. This execution captures Ghani Khan's core theme: the harmony between external chaos and inner spiritual peace.

3.8 Painting 8: Ghazal Na Ba Tol Umar Dunya We نه به ټول عمر دنيا وي — Life Will Not Last Forever



Fig 3.8: 8th Painting

دا څو ورځې ژوندون دی، جام راواچوه ساقی،
دا وعده کړې ده خدای، چې بښي به لیوني

**This life is only a matter of a few days, so keep the cup flowing, O Saqi,
For it is the promise of God, that He forgives the madly in love.**

3.8.1 Painting 8 Description:

Medium: Acrylic on Canvas

Size: 24" × 36"

Ghani Khan's poetry reaches its highest spiritual peak in his total surrender to divine mercy and his celebration of Junoon (sacred madness or intense love) over rigid, fearful dogma. In his philosophical worldview, the material world is merely a fleeting, temporary station, a matter of a few short days that shouldn't be spent in anxiety or superficial rule-following. Instead, he views the relationship between humanity and the Divine as one built on absolute love, beauty, and intoxication. He frequently uses the classic Sufi metaphors of the Saqi (the divine cupbearer) and the Jam (the cup of spiritual wine) to represent the continuous flow of divine inspiration and universal joy. For Ghani Khan, the "madly in love" (Leewani) possess a pure, unconventional sincerity that transcends formal rituals, earning them a special promise of eternal forgiveness and unconditional grace from a loving Creator.

This artwork serves as a direct visual manifestation of one of Ghani Khan's most hopeful, comforting, and spiritually liberating couplets. The canvas masterfully captures the ethereal, redemptive atmosphere of this divine promise. The background moves away from heavy, chaotic colors, presenting a dreamlike blend of soft, luminous blues and glowing, radiant golds. This specific color choice creates a sacred, welcoming horizon where the bright golden light represents the warmth of divine mercy (Rahmat). The overall atmosphere feels entirely peaceful, casting a heavenly glow across the composition that mirrors the poet's unwavering hope and faith in cosmic grace.

The composition unfolds a beautifully simplified narrative of spiritual reassurance through two primary symbolic elements:

- **The Flowing Cup (The Jam):** Emerging gracefully within the composition is a beautifully textured cup held by the hand of the Saqi. Instead of a literal liquid, the cup pours out a vibrant cascade of pure, shifting light. This continuous movement serves as a visual reminder of the line, "this life is only a matter of a few days," illustrating the beautiful, fleeting passage of earthly time.
- **The Mad Philosopher (The Forgiven):** Rested peacefully near the flowing light is a serene, dervish-like figure. His detached posture and calm expression show a complete freedom from material worries and worldly anxieties. He embodies the Leewani (the mad lover) described by the poet someone who has surrendered his intellect to find ultimate comfort, joy, and eternal forgiveness in the presence of divine love.

The artistic strength of the painting lies in the fluid, harmonious rhythm of its paint application. The artist uses rapid, energetic brushstrokes directly around the rim of the cup to convey the swift, dynamic movement of time passing by.

In beautiful contrast, the surrounding sky and the aura enveloping the dervish are executed with incredibly smooth, blended layers of glowing paint that seem to radiate light from within the canvas. By balancing the quick movement of worldly life with the timeless stillness of divine light, the artwork successfully translates Ghani Khan's message into a stunning visual celebration of spiritual peace and eternal love.

Rough Sketches & Final Painting Projects:



Fig 3.1.1 & fig 3.1.2: Sketch & Final Painting



Fig 3.2.1 & fig 3.2.2: Sketch & Final Painting



Fig 3.3.1 & fig 3.3.2: Sketch & Final Painting



Fig 3.4.1 & fig 3.4.2: Sketch & Final Painting



Fig 3.5.1 & fig 3.5.2: Sketch & Final Painting



Fig 3.6.1 & fig 3.6.2: Sketch & Final Painting



Fig 3.7.1 & fig 4.7.2: Sketch & Final Painting



Fig 3.8.1 & fig 3.8.2: Sketch & Final Painting

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF THE THESIS PROJECT

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the visual outcomes developed during the research process. It explains how the selected themes from Ghani Khan's poetry were transformed into paintings and how the artworks communicate emotional and philosophical meanings through visual language.

The chapter also discusses the relationship between poetry and painting by analyzing the artistic choices made during the creative process. Instead of simply illustrating poems, the artworks were created as personal interpretations inspired by Ghani Khan's poetic imagery, symbolism, and emotional depth.

In artistic research, the visual outcomes are an important part of the study because they show how theoretical ideas can be explored through creative practice. Therefore, this chapter explains not only what was created, but also why certain artistic decisions were made and how they connect to the themes of the research.

4.2 Development of the Artwork Series

The paintings created for this research were developed through a gradual process of observation, experimentation, and interpretation. The artworks did not appear suddenly; they evolved through reading poetry, sketching ideas, exploring compositions, and experimenting with colors and textures.

Each painting was inspired by a specific emotional or philosophical theme found in Ghani Khan's poetry. Some works focused on freedom and imagination, while others explored beauty, spirituality, human emotions, or the relationship between humanity and nature.

The purpose of the artwork series was not to create literal illustrations of poems. Instead, the paintings were intended to capture the emotional atmosphere and symbolic meaning present in the poetry.

4.3 Overview of the Painting Series

The painting series produced in this research consisted of six original artworks, each inspired by a specific poem or poetic theme from the work of Ghani Khan. Taken together, the series formed a visual journey through the central themes of his poetry from the delicate beauty of nature to the philosophical depths of the human condition.

Each painting was unique in its medium, palette, and compositional approach, but all were united by their shared source of inspiration Ghani Khan's poetic vision and by their commitment to emotional honesty and symbolic depth. The following sections provide a detailed visual analysis and interpretation of each work, explaining how the artistic choices made in each painting related to the specific poetic themes that inspired it.

It is important to note that these paintings were not intended as illustrations. They were not attempts to produce a visual equivalent that matched the poem line by line or image by image. They were, rather, creative responses personal artistic explorations of the emotional, symbolic, and visual territory opened up by Ghani Khan's poetry.

4.4 Inspiration from Ghani Khan's Poetry

Ghani Khan's poetry became the main source of inspiration for this project because of its visual and emotional quality. His poems often create strong mental images through symbolic language and expressive descriptions.

For example, when he writes about freedom, he may use the image of birds or open skies. When he discusses beauty or spirituality, he often uses light, flowers, or natural landscapes. These poetic images inspired visual compositions in the paintings.

The emotional tone of his poetry also influenced the artworks. Some paintings were created with calm and peaceful atmospheres, while others used dramatic contrasts to reflect emotional struggle or philosophical tension.

ستا په جنت باندي منين دي په تانه دي خدايه
دلته کښي هر چا د غرض په نيت سجده کړي ده

4.5 Transformation of Poetry into Visual Language

One of the most important aspects of this research was translating poetry into visual language. This process involved understanding the deeper meaning of the poems and expressing those meanings through artistic elements.

Instead of using words, the paintings communicate ideas through:

- Color
- Texture
- Composition
- Symbolic imagery
- Light and atmosphere

For example:

- Flowing forms and open spaces were used to represent freedom
- Layered textures suggested emotional complexity
- Soft light created spiritual and reflective moods

This transformation allowed poetry to become a visual and emotional experience.

موتے خاوري څنگه پټ د خُسن يو جهان کړی
يو پوکے د باد دا چمن څنگه بيبابان کړی

4.6 Thematic Development in the Artwork

The paintings were developed around several important themes found in Ghani Khan's poetry. These themes guided the creative direction of the research and helped organize the visual concepts.

4.6.1 Theme of Freedom

Freedom is one of the strongest ideas in Ghani Khan's poetry. He often encourages independent thinking and questions social restrictions and limitations.

In the artwork series, freedom was represented through:

- Open compositions

- Expanding forms
- Bird imagery
- Bright and moving color arrangements

The use of open space helped create a feeling of movement and emotional release. Some paintings also used upward movement and light tones to symbolize hope and liberation.

ستاله مرگه نه بیرپریم، زه پښتون یم
خو می تش ژوندون او هسې مرگ ته قار شي

4.6.2 Theme of Beauty and Nature

Beauty in Ghani Khan's poetry is not limited to physical appearance. He often describes beauty as something spiritual, emotional, and connected to nature. This idea influenced the visual language of the paintings. Natural elements such as flowers, sky, light, and landscapes were used symbolically to express beauty and emotional sensitivity. Soft textures and flowing color transitions helped create peaceful and poetic atmospheres. Warm and natural colors were also used to reflect harmony and emotional warmth.

ماله را کړه سو گلونه یو نیازیین غوندې جانان
یو وړوکی غوندې باغ او په خوا یې سیند روان

د دېلي تخت هېرومه چې را یاد کړم
زما د ښکلي پښتونخوا د غرو سرونه

4.6.3 Theme of Humanity and Emotion

Human emotions play an important role in Ghani Khan's poetry. His poems often explore love, sadness, loneliness, hope, and reflection.

These emotions were visually represented through expressive brushwork, layered textures, and emotional color palettes.

For example:

- Deep blues and dark tones suggested emotional depth and reflection
- Warm reds and oranges represented passion and emotional energy
- Blurred forms expressed uncertainty and emotional movement

This emotional approach allowed the paintings to communicate feeling rather than literal meaning.

زه غني شم لېونی په هغه وخت کېښې
چې اشنا کله اشنا سترگې نا اشنا کړي

4.7 Visual Composition and Artistic Structure

Composition is an important element in painting because it organizes visual elements and guides the viewer's attention. In this research, compositions were carefully planned to support the emotional and symbolic meaning of each artwork.

4.7.1 Use of Space and Movement

Space was used to create emotional atmosphere and visual balance. Open areas created feelings of freedom and calmness, while crowded compositions created tension and emotional pressure.

Movement within the paintings was developed through:

- Directional brushstrokes
- Flowing shapes
- Layered forms
- Rhythmic color arrangements

This movement helped create visual energy and emotional expression.

4.7.2 Balance and Emotional Focus

Balance was important in creating harmony within the artworks. Some paintings used symmetrical balance to create calmness, while others used asymmetrical arrangements to create tension and movement.

The emotional focus of each composition was guided through:

- Contrast
- Placement of light
- Color intensity
- Symbolic forms

These techniques helped direct the viewer's attention toward important visual areas.

4.8 Role of Color in the Paintings

Color was one of the most important expressive tools used in this project. Since the thesis is titled *The Poetry of Colors*, color became the main visual language through which emotions and ideas were communicated.

4.8.1 Emotional Meaning of Colors

Different colors were selected based on emotional and symbolic meaning.

For example:

- Blue represented reflection, peace, and emotional depth
- Red represented passion, strength, and intensity
- Yellow symbolized hope, light, and positivity
- Dark shades represented mystery and struggle

The emotional use of color helped connect the visual artworks with the poetic atmosphere of Ghani Khan's writings.

4.8.2 Color Harmony and Contrast

Having examined each painting individually, it was possible to reflect on the series as a whole and to draw some general conclusions about the way colors functioned as a poetic language in this research.

Across the six paintings, different color palettes were used to communicate different emotional and thematic content. Warm, vibrant colors reds, oranges, yellows were used to express energy, beauty, resilience, and joy. Cool, deep colors blues, greens, greys were used to express depth, introspection, movement, and spiritual mystery. Transitional colors purples, magentas, golden oranges were used to express the liminal, between-state quality of spiritual experience.

This use of color as an emotional language was directly parallel to the way Ghani Khan used words in his poetry. Just as the poet chose specific words for their emotional resonance and symbolic weight, the painter chose specific colors for the same reasons. In both cases, the choice was guided not by arbitrary convention but by a deep understanding of the emotional qualities that particular colors or words carried.

The research demonstrated that this parallel was not superficial or coincidental. Poetry and painting, at their deepest level, were engaged in the same fundamental task: the communication of human experience in its fullest emotional and symbolic complexity. Ghani Khan's poetry provided the subject and the inspiration; the paintings provided the visual response. Together, they created a dialogue between two art forms that enriched and illuminated each other.

4.9 Symbolism in the Artwork

Symbolism was an important part of the visual language used in this research. Since Ghani Khan's poetry often uses symbols, the paintings also developed symbolic meanings through visual forms.

4.9.1 Symbolic Use of Natural Elements

Natural forms such as birds, flowers, sky, and light were used symbolically throughout the artwork series.

For example:

- Birds represented freedom and imagination
- Flowers symbolized beauty and emotional sensitivity
- Light suggested truth, spirituality, and hope
- Empty landscapes represented isolation and reflection

These symbols helped create deeper meaning within the paintings.

4.9.2 Abstract Symbolism and Emotional Forms

Some artworks used abstract forms instead of direct imagery. Abstract shapes and textures allowed emotional interpretation rather than literal storytelling.

This approach gave viewers freedom to interpret the artworks personally and emotionally.

4.10 Viewer Experience and Interpretation

An important aspect of artistic research is understanding how viewers respond to visual work. The paintings in this project were created to encourage emotional and imaginative engagement.

Different viewers may interpret the artworks differently depending on their experiences and emotions. This open interpretation is an important part of contemporary art practice.

Some viewers may focus on color and atmosphere, while others may connect more deeply with symbolic meanings.

4.11 Relationship between Poetry and Painting

This research shows that poetry and painting are deeply connected forms of expression. Both communicate emotions, imagination, and human experience.

Poetry uses words to create images, while painting uses visual elements to create emotional meaning. Through this research, Ghani Khan's poetry became a source of visual creativity and artistic exploration. The paintings demonstrate how literature can inspire contemporary visual art and how artistic practice can become a method of interpreting poetry.

4.12 Challenges during the Creative Process

The research process also involved challenges and experimentation.

- Translating abstract poetic ideas into visual forms
- Balancing symbolism and abstraction
- Creating emotional depth without direct illustration
- Maintaining personal artistic style while respecting the poetry

These challenges became part of the learning process and helped strengthen the outcomes.

4.13 Artistic Growth and Research Outcomes

This project contributed to both artistic development and conceptual understanding. Through studying Ghani Khan's poetry and creating paintings inspired by it, the research expanded creative thinking and visual experimentation.

The process improved:

- Understanding of symbolic art
- Emotional use of color
- Conceptual painting techniques
- Relationship between literature and visual art

The final artworks became both artistic expressions and research outcomes.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

This research was a journey, not just an academic exercise, but a deeply personal and creative exploration. It began with a question and ended with a series of paintings. It started with words and arrived at colors. It moved from the pages of Ghani Khan's poetry to the surface of painted canvases. Along the way, it produced not only artworks but also a richer, more layered understanding of what poetry and painting could do when they worked together.

The following sections bring together the key conclusions of this research. They reflect on what was found, what was learned, what was created, and what this research means for the field of Fine Arts, for the study of Pashto literature, and for the broader conversation about the relationship between words and images in human artistic life.

Summary of Findings

This research set out to explore the creative relationship between the Pashto poetry of Ghani Khan and the visual language of painting. Through a practice-based research methodology that combined literary study with artistic practice, the study produced a series of six original paintings that offered visual interpretations of key themes from Ghani Khan's poetic work.

The findings of this research confirmed and extended the central hypothesis with which the study began: that Ghani Khan's poetry was exceptionally rich in visual potential, and that its themes, symbols, and emotional content could be powerfully expressed through the medium of painting.

Several specific findings emerged from the research process. First, the study confirmed that the relationship between poetry and visual art was not merely metaphorical or superficial but deeply structural. Both poetry and painting worked through the careful selection and arrangement of elements, words in poetry, visual forms and colors in painting to create experiences that communicated more than could be said in ordinary language.

The research demonstrated that the process of visual artistic interpretation was a form of deep engagement with a poetic text. By attempting to translate the themes of a poem into visual form, the researcher was forced to understand those themes at a level of depth and specificity that went beyond ordinary reading. The paintings produced in this research were the result of this deep engagement, and they embodied insights that could not have been expressed through written analysis alone.

The study showed that colors functioned as a genuine visual language a system of expressive elements that could communicate emotional and symbolic meanings with a directness and immediacy comparable to the language of poetry. This finding validated the central metaphor of the thesis title: "**The Poetry of Colors.**"

The research demonstrated the cultural value of creating visual interpretations of Ghani Khan's poetry. By presenting his ideas in the form of contemporary paintings, the study made his poetic vision accessible to a wider audience — including those who might not have access to the original Pashto texts or the cultural context in which they were written. This kind of cross-cultural and cross-medium communication was seen as an important contribution to the understanding and appreciation of Pashtun cultural heritage.

Poetry and Painting: A Shared Language

One of the most important things this research proved was that poetry and painting were not two completely separate things. On the surface, they looked different. Poetry used words. Painting used colors and shapes. But deep inside, both were doing the same thing. Both were trying to express what human beings feel inside the joy, the sadness, the wonder, the confusion, the love, the longing in a form that others could experience and understand.

Ghani Khan understood this truth very well. He was not only a poet he was also a trained painter and sculptor. He had spent years studying visual art at Santineketan. Because of this, his poetry already carried a strong visual quality. His words were like brushstrokes. His metaphors were like color choices. His poetic images were like compositions on a canvas.

When this research began the process of turning his poems into paintings, it did not feel like translating from one language to a completely foreign one. It felt more like finding the same idea expressed in a different form like discovering that a piece of music and a painting were both trying to say the same beautiful thing in their own way.

This discovery that poetry and painting shared a deep, common language — was perhaps the most meaningful finding of the entire research. It showed that art, in all its forms, was connected at a fundamental level. It showed that the boundaries between different art forms were not walls but bridges ways of moving from one expression to another while carrying the same essential human meaning.

The Role of Ghani Khan's Poetry in This Research

Ghani Khan's poetry was not simply the subject of this research it was the soul of it. Without his words, there would have been no direction, no inspiration, and no paintings. His poetry provided everything that a visual artist needed to begin: strong images, deep emotions, clear symbols, and universal themes.

Throughout the research process, different aspects of his poetry became important at different stages. In the early stages, his nature imagery his descriptions of flowers, birds, mountains, and light provided the basic visual material for the paintings. These natural elements gave the paintings their shapes, their forms, and their basic compositions.

In the middle stages, his emotional and philosophical themes his ideas about freedom, beauty, love, spirituality, and the human condition guided the color choices and the emotional atmosphere of each painting. The warm colors of the **Regdi Gul** painting came directly from the emotional warmth and resilience of that poem. The cool, heavy tones of the painting inspired by

Pa Ranra Bandi Mayan Yam came from the philosophical weight and emotional complexity of that poem.

In the final stages of the research, his symbolic language his use of birds, flowers, light, sitar, and the open sky as symbols of deeper truths gave the paintings their meaning. Without these symbols, the paintings would have been beautiful but empty. With them, they became conversations visual dialogues with a poet who had lived and written more than half a century ago but whose ideas felt completely alive and relevant today.

This research deeply honored the legacy of Ghani Khan. It acknowledged him not only as a great poet but also as a visual thinker a man who saw the world with the eyes of both a writer and an artist, and whose poetry will continue to inspire new forms of creative expression for as long as people are moved by beauty, truth, and the freedom of the human spirit.

Reflections on the Creative Process

The creative process of this research was itself one of the most significant sources of insight. The researcher found that the act of painting or working through visual ideas with brush and paint on canvas was a form of thinking and understanding that was irreducibly different from verbal thought. It was not simply a way of illustrating ideas that had already been formed in words; it was a way of discovering ideas that could not have been arrived at through words alone.

This experience confirmed the central value of practice-based research in the Fine Arts. The paintings produced in this study were genuine research outputs they contained knowledge and insight that was expressed visually rather than verbally. This kind of artistic knowledge was valid, important, and irreplaceable.

The researcher also reflected on the experience of creative difficulty the moments in the research process when it was unclear how to proceed, when early attempts failed to capture the intended emotional quality, when the relationship between the poem and the painting felt forced or unconvincing. These moments of difficulty were not failures; they were essential parts of the research process. They forced deeper thinking, more careful observation, and more honest emotional engagement with the poetic material.

Every painting in this series went through multiple stages before it reached its final form. There were sketches that were abandoned, color choices that were changed, and compositions that were completely restarted. This process of trial, failure, learning, and improvement was not a weakness of the research it was the very heart of it. It was through this difficult, honest, sometimes frustrating process that the researcher came closest to understanding what Ghani Khan was really expressing in his poetry.

The researcher also reflected on the deeply personal nature of artistic interpretation. These paintings were not objective translations of the poems. They were personal responses shaped by the researcher's own emotional life, cultural background, artistic training, and individual way of seeing the world. This personal quality was not a limitation but a strength. It confirmed the idea that great poetry was not a fixed, closed message but an open invitation an invitation to each reader and each artist to bring their own experience and understanding to the words and to find their own meaning in them.

Colors as a Poetic Language

One of the central ideas of this thesis was expressed in its title: "**The Poetry of Colors.**" This phrase suggested that colors, like words in a poem, could carry meaning, emotion, and philosophical depth. The research confirmed this idea in a very practical and direct way through the actual process of creating paintings inspired by poetry.

Across the six paintings in the series, colors were used not just decoratively but expressively and symbolically. Each color choice was made in response to a specific emotional or thematic quality in the poem that inspired it. The warm reds and golden yellows of the Regdi Gul painting expressed the resilience and vibrant beauty of the desert flower. The cool blues and deep indigos of the Laatoon painting expressed the depth and emotional power of moving water. The soft, luminous yellows and gentle pinks of the Badshahi painting expressed the warmth and the wishes and desires.

In each case, the color was not simply a visual effect it was a statement. It was the painting's way of saying something that words could not say as directly or as immediately. This was the true meaning of "**The Poetry of Colors**" the idea that a painting could speak with the same depth and richness as a poem, using the language of color instead of the language of words.

This finding had broader implications for the field of Fine Arts. It suggested that color theory was not just a technical subject it was also a philosophical one. Understanding how colors worked emotionally and symbolically was as important as understanding how to mix them technically. The most powerful paintings were those in which technical skill and emotional intelligence worked together and this research provided a clear example of how that combination could be achieved.

Cultural Significance of the Research

This research had a meaning that went beyond the academic and the artistic. It also had a cultural meaning a meaning that was connected to the history, identity, and heritage of the Pashtun people and their literary tradition.

Ghani Khan was one of the greatest cultural figures that the Pashtun people had produced in the modern era. His poetry was a treasure not just for Pashtuns, but for all people who valued beauty, wisdom, and the free expression of the human spirit. Yet despite his greatness, his work was not as widely known outside the Pashto-speaking world as it deserved to be. Language barriers, cultural distances, and limited translation had kept his poetry from reaching the wider global audience it deserved.

By creating visual interpretations of his poetry, this research helped to break down some of those barriers. A painting did not need to be translated. Its emotional content could be felt directly, without knowledge of any particular language or cultural context. When a viewer looked at the Regdi Gul painting and felt the beauty and resilience it expressed, they were connecting with Ghani Khan's vision even if they had never read a single line of his poetry in Pashto.

This was a powerful form of cultural communication. It showed that art could serve as a bridge between cultures a way of sharing values, emotions, and ideas across all the barriers of language, geography, and history. By honoring Ghani Khan's legacy through painting, this

research made a small but meaningful contribution to the global conversation about beauty, freedom, and the dignity of human life values that Ghani Khan had championed throughout his entire poetic career.

The research also contributed to a growing recognition of the importance of regional and non-Western artistic and literary traditions in the global art world. Too often, the art world focused on European and American traditions at the expense of equally rich and valuable traditions from other parts of the world. By placing Ghani Khan's Pashto poetry at the center of a serious academic artistic research project, this study helped to affirm the importance and relevance of Pashtun cultural heritage in the broader international conversation about art and literature.

Significance of the Research

The significance of this research extended in several directions. Within the academic field of Fine Arts, the study contributed to the growing body of practice-based research that demonstrated the validity and value of artistic practice as a form of scholarly inquiry. It showed that literary sources could serve as legitimate and productive starting points for visual artistic research.

Within the specific cultural context of Pashtun heritage and Pashto literature, the study made a contribution by creating a visual artistic response to the work of one of the greatest figures in Pashto cultural history. Ghani Khan was widely celebrated as a literary figure, but his work had rarely been the subject of sustained visual artistic research. This study helped to fill that gap.

Within the broader context of cross-cultural communication, the study demonstrated that poetry in a regional language could inspire artworks that communicated its essential themes and values to audiences far beyond its original cultural context. This kind of cross-cultural artistic dialogue was increasingly important in the contemporary world, where the ability to understand and appreciate different cultural traditions was more necessary than ever.

Finally, this research demonstrated to future students of Fine Arts that their creative practice could be academically serious and intellectually meaningful. It showed that a painting was not just an aesthetic object but a form of thinking a way of engaging with ideas, emotions, and the world that was just as rigorous and just as valuable as any written form of research.

Recommendations for Future Research

This research opened several avenues for future study that the researcher believed were worthy of further exploration. The following recommendations were offered for scholars, artists, and researchers who wished to build on the foundations established in this work.

- Future research could explore the visual artistic potential of other major Pashto poets, including Khushal Khan Khattak, Rahman Baba, and Ameer Hamza Shinwari. A comparative study of different Pashto poets and their visual interpretations could produce a richer and more comprehensive picture of the visual dimensions of Pashto poetic tradition.

- Future research could explore the use of digital and new media techniques in the visual interpretation of Pashto poetry. Digital painting, video art, animation, and interactive media offered new possibilities for visual artistic engagement with literary sources that were not explored in the present study.
- A collaborative research project involving both literary scholars and visual artists could produce richer and more rigorously grounded interpretations of Ghani Khan's poetry, drawing on the complementary expertise of both fields.
- The painting series produced in this research could serve as the basis for a public exhibition project, bringing the visual interpretations of Ghani Khan's poetry to a wider audience and creating an opportunity for community engagement with Pashtun cultural heritage.
- Future research could investigate audience responses to visual interpretations of Pashto poetry, exploring how different viewers those with and without knowledge of the Pashto language and cultural context understood and responded to the paintings. This kind of audience research would add a valuable social dimension to the artistic research.
- Research could also be conducted into the educational applications of this kind of poetry-to-painting methodology. Teaching students of Fine Arts to begin with literary sources particularly poetry and to translate those sources into visual art could be a powerful and enriching pedagogical approach.
- Future researchers could also examine the work of Ghani Khan as a visual artist in his own right his sculptures and paintings, and investigate the relationship between his visual artistic practice and his poetry. This would add a new dimension to the understanding of his creative personality and his contribution to Pashtun culture.

Concluding Thoughts

This research began with a simple but profound conviction: that the poetry of Ghani Khan was not only literary art but visual art in waiting a body of work rich in images, colors, emotions, and symbols that was ready to be explored through the medium of painting. The research process confirmed this conviction in the most direct and satisfying way possible: through the creation of paintings that felt, to the researcher, like genuine and worthy responses to the poet's vision.

Ghani Khan wrote in one of his poems about the relationship between the artist and their work, suggesting that the truest art was born from the deepest place in the human soul from a place where words and images, poetry and painting, were not separate things but different expressions of the same underlying human need to make meaning, to find beauty, and to communicate the experience of being alive.

This research confirmed that truth. Through the long and demanding process of reading, thinking, sketching, experimenting, and painting, the researcher discovered that Ghani Khan's poetry and the paintings it inspired were not separated by the difference in their forms. They were united by the same spirit the spirit of a human being reaching out to another human being through the language of beauty, saying: look at this, feel this, know that you are not alone in your joy, your sorrow, your longing, and your love.

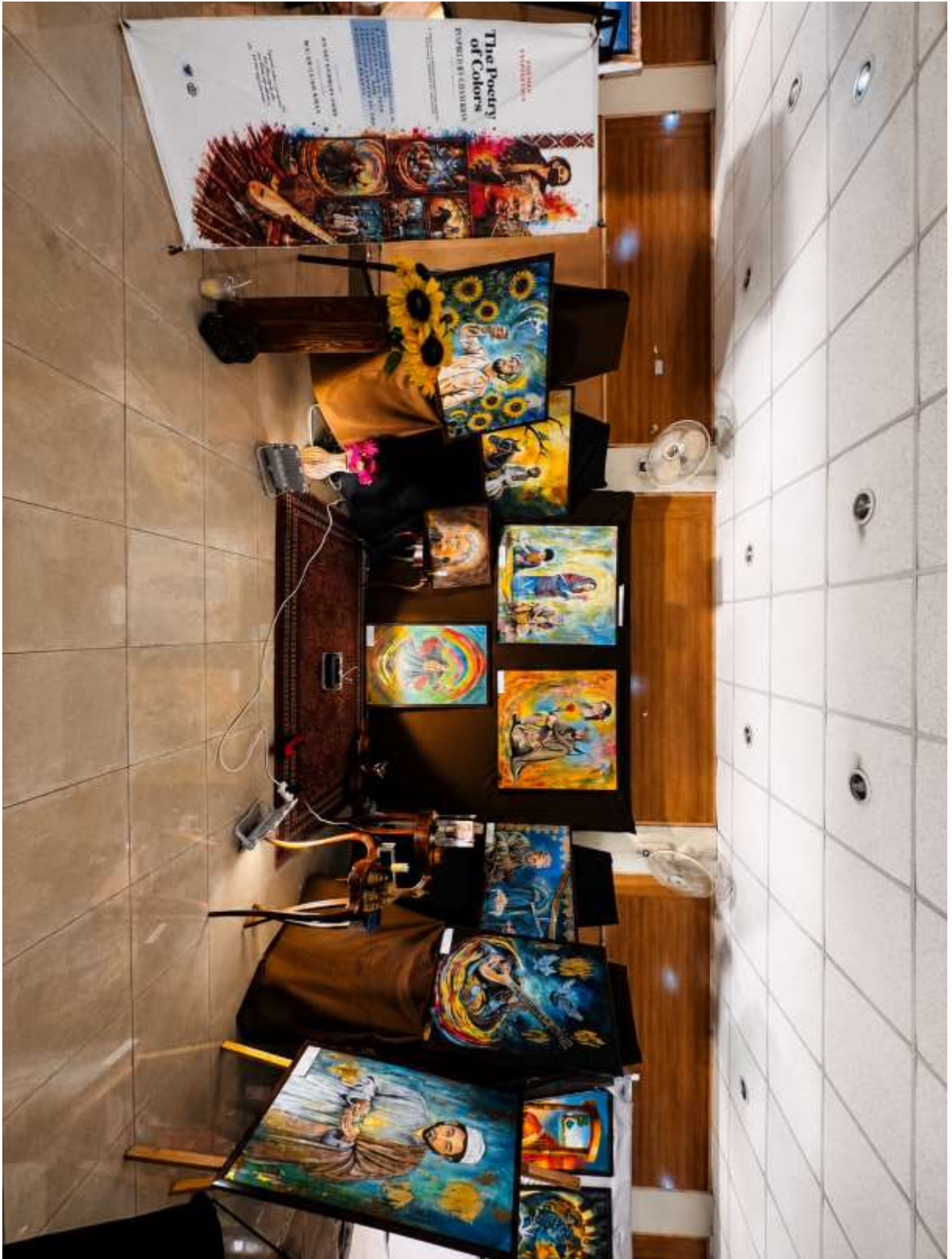
The world that Ghani Khan described in his poetry a world of mountains and rivers, of birds and flowers, of light and darkness, of freedom and longing was a world that every human being recognized, regardless of their language or culture. By translating that world into paint, this research made it visible in a new way. It gave it new colors. It gave it new shapes. It gave it a new form in which new eyes could see it and new hearts could feel it.

The paintings produced in this thesis were not perfect. No artwork ever was. They were human attempts to respond to something extraordinary to the genius of a poet who had seen the world more deeply and felt it more fully than most people ever managed to do. They were offered not as final answers but as sincere questions as honest attempts to look at Ghani Khan's words and ask: what does this look like? What does this feel like? What colors live inside these words?

If any viewer looked at these paintings and felt something even for a moment felt the freedom of an open sky, the quiet resilience of a desert flower, the weight of a human soul bending under sorrow, or the warmth of innocent joy then this research achieved its purpose. Because that was what Ghani Khan's poetry was trying to do with words. And that was what these paintings were trying to do with colors.

This thesis was offered as a contribution to that ancient and continuing human endeavor. The paintings it produced were not the final word on Ghani Khan's poetry they were an invitation to look again, to feel again, and to discover in his words the colors that were always waiting there.

Ghani Khan gave the world a poetry of colors. This research tried, with humility and gratitude, to give those colors back to the world in paint.



My Final Thesis Display Pic 1



My Final Thesis Display Pic 2 & 3

TRIBUTE TO GHANI KHAN



This research and painting series is a humble tribute to Ghani Khan, a poet, philosopher, artist, and visionary. His words inspired the colors, emotions, and ideas expressed throughout this thesis. Through these paintings, I sought to explore and celebrate the beauty, freedom, and humanity found in his poetry.

عاجله نه مري خداى گو نه مري د قلم خاوندان،
شرط پرې تېره مه تر قيامته به ژوندي وي غني

Dure Shahwar

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Practice-Based Research

Creating artwork as a method of inquiry and knowledge production, with artworks seen as valid research outcomes.

Qualitative Research

A methodology focused on exploring meaning and experience rather than numerical data.

Visual Art

Creative expression intended for visual experience, including painting, sculpture, and photography.

Symbolism

Using objects and images to represent ideas and emotions beyond their literal meanings.

Poetic Imagery

Vivid, descriptive language in poetry that invokes mental pictures or sensory impressions.

Color Theory

Principles regarding color interaction, perception, and their emotional effects on viewers.

Color Psychology

The study of how colors influence human emotions and behavior, guiding color palette selection.

Interdisciplinary Research

Combining methodologies and perspectives from multiple academic disciplines.

Composition

Arranging visual elements in a painting to create a unified and meaningful whole.

Pashto Literature

Written and oral works in Pashto, including the contributions of Ghani Khan.

Sufi Tradition

A mystical Islamic tradition emphasizing personal experience with God through art and beauty.

Research Board

A visual collection that inspires and guides an artistic project's creative direction.

Acrylic Paint

Fast-drying paint made of pigment in acrylic polymer emulsion, primarily used in these paintings.

Impasto

A painting technique that involves applying paint thickly for a textured, three-dimensional effect.

Visual Language

The system of visual elements through which an artist communicates meaning and emotion.

Cultural Memory

Shared knowledge and traditions that, help a community maintain its identity across generations.

Ghazal

A poetic form of couplets that share a rhyme and refrain, significant in Pashto and other traditions.

APPENDIX B**Poems Selected for the Research**

The following eight poems and poetic themes by Ghani Khan were selected as the primary sources of inspiration for the painting series produced in this thesis. For each poem, the original Pashto title, its English translation, its source collection, its central theme, and the key visual and symbolic elements that inspired the corresponding painting are presented.

Ghazal 1: Laatoon (لتون) — Search

Ghazal 2: Zama Zama Zama (زما زما زما) — On On & Onwards

Ghazal 3: Reidi Gul (رضي گل) — Poppy Flower

Ghazal 4: Badshahi (بادشاهی) — Kingship

Ghazal 5: Pa Ranra Bandy Mayan Yam (په رڼا باندي مين یم) — I Revel in Light

Ghazal 6: Chalaar / Musafar (چالار) — The Traveller (from On On & Onwards)

Ghazal 7: Na Ba Tol Umar Dunya We (نه به ټول عمر دنيا وي) — Life Will Not Last Forever

Note: All paintings were created by Dure Shahwar, Department of Fine Arts and Design, University of Peshawar, Session 2022–2026, Semester VII, under the supervision of Ms. Sonia Rauf.

APPENDIX C

Ghani Khan: Biographical Timeline

The following timeline presents the key events in the life of Abdul Ghani Khan, offering a chronological overview of his personal history, education, creative output, and cultural legacy. This timeline was compiled from scholarly sources on Pashto literature and Ghani Khan's published works.

Year	Event
1914	Abdul Ghani Khan was born on 20th April in Utmanzai, Charsadda, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Son of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan (Bacha Khan).
1930s	Received early education in British India. Became aware of the political and cultural struggles of the Pashtun people through his father's activism.
1930s–40s	Educated at Santiniketan, the university founded by Rabindranath Tagore in West Bengal, India. Studied literature, painting, and sculpture. This experience shaped his interdisciplinary creative identity.
1947	After the partition of India and Pakistan, they returned to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Continued work in poetry, visual art, and cultural advocacy.
1950–1953	Imprisoned for political reasons. During imprisonment wrote <i>Da Panjre Chaghar</i> (Chirpings of the Cage), considered by many scholars to be his finest and most profound work.
1958	Published <i>The Pathans</i> , an important prose work in English exploring the culture, history, and social identity of the Pashtun people.
1960s	Published <i>Palwashay</i> (Beams of Light), a celebrated poetry collection. Continued creating visual artworks, paintings and sculptures, throughout this period.
1970s	Published <i>Panoos</i> (Chandelier) and <i>Laatoon</i> (Search). Became recognized internationally as a major poet of South Asia.
1983	<i>Kulyat-e-Ghani Khan</i> published a comprehensive single-volume collection of his complete works, cementing his legacy as the greatest modern Pashto poet.
1985	Awarded the <i>Sitara-e-Imtiaz</i> (Star of Excellence), Pakistan's highest civil honor for arts and literature.
1990s	Continued to be celebrated as the poet-philosopher of the Pashtun people. His works were studied in universities across Pakistan and Afghanistan.
26 Jan 1996	Ghani Khan passed away in Charsadda, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, at the age of 81.
Post-1996	His legacy continues through ongoing study of his poetry, artistic works, and cultural contributions. His poetry remains alive in the cultural consciousness of the Pashtun people and in the work of artists and scholars who continue to be inspired by his vision.

APPENDIX D

Research Mood Board

Include your mood board here. The mood board should contain:

- Portraits of Ghani Khan
- Book covers (Laatoon, Kulyat-e-Ghani Khan)
- Pashtun cultural patterns and motifs
- Mountains, landscapes, birds, flowers, candles, horses, scales, and other symbols
- Color palette references
- Inspirational artworks and sketches

APPENDIX E

Materials and Techniques

Medium: Acrylic on Canvas

Technique: Heavy impasto, palette-knife application, layered acrylic painting, expressive brushwork, texture building, glazing, and symbolic visual composition.

Materials Used:

- Acrylic paints
- Palette knives
- Canvas
- Brushes
- Gesso primer
- Acrylic mediums and varnish

APPENDIX F

Research Process Journal Summary

Throughout the research process, the researcher maintained a studio journal documenting observations, creative decisions, challenges, and reflections at each stage of the project. The following is a summary of key entries from this journal, presented chronologically to give the reader a sense of how the research and the paintings developed over time.

Phase One: Initial Engagement with Ghani Khan's Poetry

The research began with deep reading of Ghani Khan's collections, focusing on the visual qualities of his poetry, such as color imagery and sensory language. The researcher noted that the poems acted as visual blueprints for painting.

Phase Two: Selecting Poems

The researcher selected specific poems for the painting series, guided by their visual richness and emotional depth. Sketches and color notes documented early visual brainstorming, revealing non-linear relationships between planned works.

Phase Three: Color Studies

This phase involved experimenting with various color palettes, assessing how well they conveyed the poems' emotional temperature. Journal entries recorded both breakthroughs and frustrations during the color experimentation process.

Phase Four: Painting

Entries documented the development of each painting, including compositional and color decisions. The painting process led to new insights into the poems, confirming the research value of practice-based methodology.

Phase Five: Reflection

Final entries reflected on each painting and the series overall, evaluating their success in communicating emotional and symbolic content. The researcher described the journey as enriching, enhancing her understanding of Ghani Khan's poetry and validating practice-based research

APPENDIX G

Artwork Catalogue

- Artwork 1: Laatoon (24 × 36 inches)
- Artwork 2: Gharmah (24 × 36 inches)
- Artwork 3: Zama Zama Zama (24 × 36 inches)
- Artwork 4: Reidi Gul (24 × 36 inches)
- Artwork 5: Badshahi (24 × 36 inches)
- Artwork 6: Pa Ranra Bandy Mayan Yam (24 × 36 inches)
- Artwork 7: Chalaar / Musafar (24 × 36 inches)
- Artwork 8: Na Ba Tol Umar Dunya We (24 × 36 inches)

Medium for all artworks: Acrylic on Canvas.

APPENDIX H

Image Credits and References

Primary Literary Sources:

- Da Pukhtano Bard
- Kulyat-e-Ghani Khan
- Palwashay
- Reidi Gul
- Laatoon

Secondary Sources:

Include all books, journal articles, websites, and image references used throughout the thesis according to your reference style.

APPENDIX I

Ethics Statement

Research adhered to the ethical standards of the University of Peshawar, Department of Fine Arts and Design.

Respect for Intellectual Property

All sources were properly cited, honoring Ghani Khan's works and intellectual legacy.

Cultural Respect and Sensitivity

Pashtun heritage was represented with respect, cultural knowledge, and authenticity.

Originality and Academic Integrity

The paintings and thesis analysis are original works of the researcher, Dure Shahwar.

Honest Representation of Research Limitations

Research limitations were acknowledged honestly, with efforts to mitigate biases.

APPENDIX J

Glossary of Pashto Terms Used in the Thesis

The following glossary provides English translations and explanations for the Pashto words and phrases used throughout this thesis. These terms appear primarily in the titles and quoted verses of the poems that inspired the painting series.

Pashto Term	Pronunciation Guide	English Translation / Explanation
لتون(Laatoon)	Laa-toon	Search, seeking, quest — the title of a poem and a poetry collection by Ghani Khan about the search for truth and self-understanding.
غرمه(Gharmah)	Ghar-ma	Summer noon — the title of a poem describing the paradox of solitude and stillness in the heat of midday.
ز مه ز مه ز مه(Zama Zama Zama)	Za-ma Za-ma Za-ma	On and onwards, ever forward — a poem celebrating creativity, transformation, and the continuous movement of the spirit.
رښي گل(Reidi Gul)	Rei-dee Gul	Poppy flower or desert flower — the title of a celebrated poem about beauty found unexpectedly in a harsh landscape.
بادشاهي(Badshahi)	Bad-sha-hee	Kingship or sovereignty — the title of a poem questioning the value of worldly power and celebrating inner freedom.

رنا(Ranra)	Ran-aa	Light, brightness — the word for light used throughout Ghani Khan's poetry to symbolize knowledge, hope, and divine presence.
چالار(Chalaar)	Chaa-laar	Traveller, wanderer, one who moves forward — the title representing the spiritual seeker journeying through a dark world.
دنیا(Dunya)	Dun-ya	World, the earthly realm — used in the poem title Na Ba Tol Umar Dunya We (Life Will Not Last Forever).
خپل خود(Khpal Khud)	Khpal Khud	One's own self, one's inner being — the phrase used in Poem 7 to describe the inner soul whose light guides the traveller.
ساقی(Saqi)	Saa-qi	The server of wine in a gathering — in Sufi and classical poetry, a metaphor for the giver of divine spiritual sustenance and grace.
دیوه / دیوه(Deewa)	Dee-wa	A traditional clay oil lamp — used in Painting 7 as a symbol of the inner spiritual light by which the traveller finds his way.
پشتون (Pukhtun/Pashtun)	Pukh-tun	A member of the Pashtun ethnic group — the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa whose cultural heritage Ghani Khan's poetry celebrates.
غزل(Ghazal)	Gha-zal	A poetic form consisting of rhyming couplets — the primary form in which Ghani Khan wrote, and the form from which all eight paintings in this series drew their inspiration.
کلیات(Kulyat)	Kul-yaat	Complete collected works — used in the title Kulyat-e-Ghani Khan, the comprehensive single volume of his entire poetic output.
سپینه شمع(Spina Shama)	Spee-na Sha-ma	White candle — the image from Zama Zama Zama in which the poet compares his dancing, transformed self to a white candle glowing with creative and spiritual light.

Note: Pashto is written in a modified Perso-Arabic script and is read from right to left. The pronunciation guides provided above are approximate transliterations into Roman script intended to assist readers unfamiliar with the Pashto language.