"My main challenge has been to rejuvenate miniature painting"

— Shazia Sikander

Moneeza Hashmi

The last distinction given to any final year thesis of a student of miniature painting in NCA was Shazia's destiny until a few years ago. "I was studying English, French and Mathematics at Kinnaird College when I decided to take up painting," her first three specialisation and she has not regretted that single moment since then.

Miniature painting, says Shazia, is a highly designed and yet an equally simplified form of art. It developed from the concept of the Islamic book illustrations and later miniaturists burnish each layer of paint as it is added, which gives the finished picture a laminated look." Shazia avoided burnishing her final work because she felt that by doing this her work would lose its painterly quality and become more like a print.

by painting the usual court scenes. "He would get very irritated with me when I discussed a new dimension of my work with him or if I wanted to include contemporary motifs or scenes in my work." But ultimately Shazia's stubbornness paid off and she got permission to
I wanted to break free but not to rebel. I wanted to branch away to achieve something which would be original but would still have roots in tradition.