

FROM PAKISTAN WITH LOVE

“We are all one,” says Pakistani artist Muhammad Zeeshan, who is in Hyderabad as an artist in residence at a city gallery. Our food, people, and culture have wowed him, he tells Hyderabad Times



Muhammad Zeeshan

PASSING THROUGH

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In the city to exhibit his works, acclaimed Pakistani visual artist, Muhammad Zeeshan, admits, “Hyderabad and its people make me feel at home”. Apparently, *mana* Hyderabad is “very famous” back in Pakistan. “A lot of folks back home have relatives here. They told me to go visit this place, that place; try this dish, that dish! Hyderabad is exactly as they said it would be — delicious food, delightful people and just a really good vibe. I’ve been going on a tasting spree across the city — *chutneys*, *dosas* and *haleem*, you name it, I’ve had it. Every day I try out a new food joint.”

The food might be wowing Muhammad every day, but it’s people of Hyderabad, and India in general, that has pleasantly surprised him. “It’s just the same as Pakistan. I don’t even feel like I’ve come to another country. It feels so weird when it’s like that. The other day, I was asking a random guy on the road for directions, and was like “*bhaiya aapko maalum hain na who raastha toh bandh ho chuka hain, uske baaju wala road lelo.*” I was zapped! This guy has never seen me before, but he treated me like I was from this place. We’re not that different after all, are we? The food is similar, the language is the same. The people here treat you with so much love and care. Even though I have a lan-

guage barrier when it comes to Telugu, it doesn’t seem to matter,” says 36-year-old Karachi resident.

Muhammad is all praise for the Indian art scene. “It’s quite big. You have major art fairs and get to interact with international artists. The people over here have always welcomed my art,” he says, adding that he takes influences from wherever he goes. “A creative person is like a transistor which picks up different frequencies everywhere you take it. So, if I have to showcase my art in different places, I adapt my art to the frequency of that place and its people. And that has never limited me. Every place is new to me and is unique. So, it’s always exciting.”

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Muhammad took some time out to interact with the students of University of Hyderabad at an open talk. Speaking about making art in a restrictive social climate, Muhammad said, he liked to work within boundaries and yet bring out something beautiful and contemplative. The budding artists had a lot of questions for him, which he answered patiently.