

illustration: **SAMEER KULAVOOR**  
 truck art: **HAKEEM NAWAZ, AMER KHAN**  
 text: **ANJUM RANA**

This book is a tribute to very special type of popular art: Truck art from Pakistan. In the story, two friends, Chinar Gul and Zarrar have both come a long way since they started their respective careers. Chinar started as a truck cleaner and is now a truck owner. Zarrar started as a painter apprentice and now has his own shop with assistants. Chinar Gul has asked Zarrar to paint his truck, and as it gets painted through the course of this book, we find out more about Gul's life as a truck driver, and Zarrar's passion for his art.

The environment, experiences and community of truck drivers and artists all influence the art form. There is a thriving craft economy for truck art in Pakistan and this book introduces their fascinating lives to the reader. Readers are given a glimpse into a very different but not unfamiliar culture and the vibrant form of art that captures it.

Here is a set of activities, asking children to do a variety of tasks. An educator can take them through this list carefully and explain what needs to be done.

### TEXT

1. Truck Art is rooted in folk traditions that come from the communities of truck drivers and painters. It is an art form expressing a cultural identity by conveying shared community values and aesthetics – in this case, those shared by a truck driver and a truck artist. What are these values? Do they have to do with art? Or do they have to do with how each man runs his life? What sentences in the book tell you this?

2. Both Gul and Zarrar have achieved success from when they started out as helpers and apprentices. How similar – or different - are their journeys from apprenticeship to where they are today?

3. When Chinar Gul first joined the truck as a cleander, his mother packed him a pillow case filled with dry fruits from home. Besides providing him with food, it also reminded him of home for when he was homesick. Can you see any other instances in the book that tell you how, as a driver, he tries to keep home close to his heart?

4. Chinar Gul has “*Mashallah*” and “*Pappu Yaar Tu Tung Na Kar*” painted on his truck. Some other truck drivers choose to have lines of poetry written on theirs. Why do they do this? Is it just for luck? Or, do they have other reasons for doing this? Ask children If you had your own truck, or drove one, what lines would you have painted on it?

5. There are some beautiful descriptions of nature in the book: go over them once more, and then write a paragraph of a place of natural beauty that you have been to.

6. Look up the Karakoram Highway in a map. It is called the ‘Roof of the World’ because it is the highest paved road in the world. Look up the pictures of the places mentioned. Trace Chinar Gul’s journey along the map, looking for all the places he mentions.

### ART

1. Truck art is considered decorative art - concerned with the design and manufacture of beautiful objects that are also functional. This can be an ornate spoon, for example. Or a beautiful chair. Make a list 5 everyday objects that you have around you that would also count as decorative.

2. The highway connecting Pakistan and China is a road that connects the two countries – and is used mostly to trade various goods between these as well as other neighbouring countries. In ancient times, this was part of the ‘Silk Route’, which connected China, Central Asia and Europe.

Choose a neighbouring country. Find out and make a list of 5 food items imported and 5 food items exported between the two. Do you have any of these items in your fridge? Choose one of these items and draw a map of how that particular item travelled from the source to its destination.

3. Mark on a map of the world all the places mentioned in the book and note how many countries does the map cover after you’re done.

4. Choose a day to look at the trucks that pass by you in the streets. Some have legends on them, others feature slogans, or messages such as “*Horn OK Please*”, not only in English but sometimes in other languages.

Either take a picture or make a note of these signs. In some parts of the world, they are hand-lettered by an artist like Zarrar in the book. In others, they are printed or painted through other means. Observe how they use colours, add shadows and highlights. Choose one of these signs and draw and colour them on a plain sheet of paper.

5. Look through the truck art in the pages. You will see how bright colours like pink, green, yellow, blue and purple are unabashedly used to create rich designs.

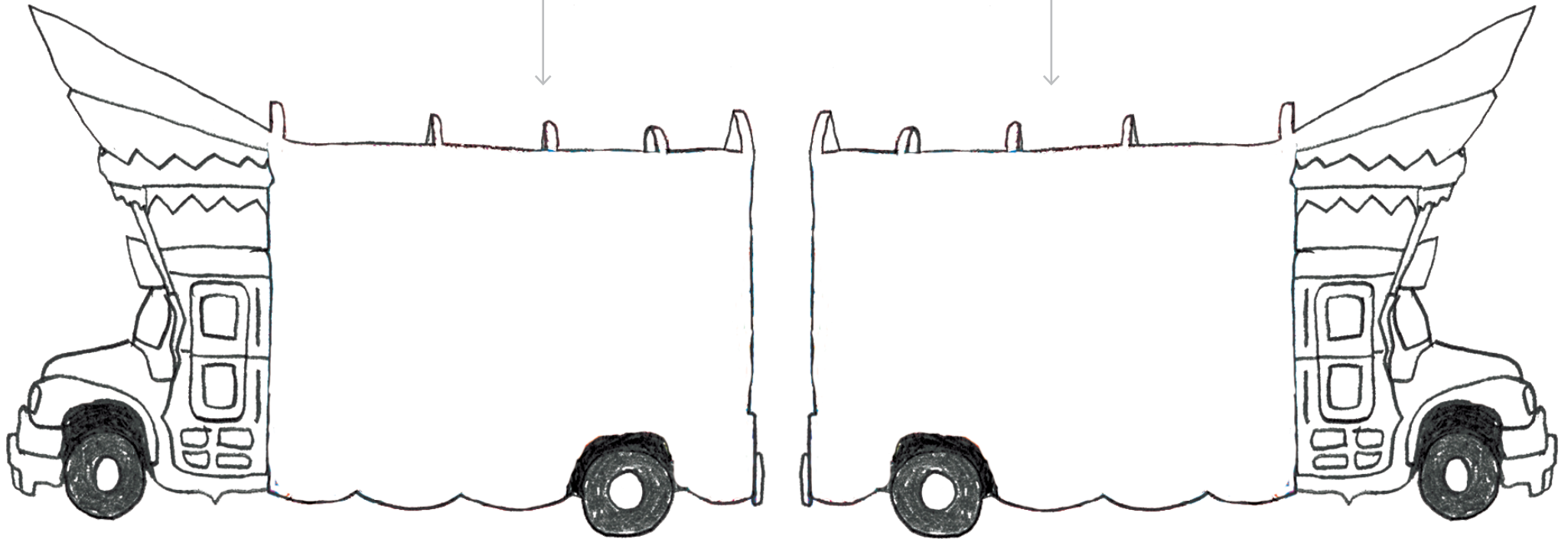
On the other side of this page you will find two outline drawings: each shows you a side of the truck.


Fill in the blank spaces with drawings, and colour them as truck artists do.


After finishing your painting, cut out the completed outline pictures and paste them on chart paper. These are now strong enough to stand.


Paste them on either side of a small box and your truck is now ready!

1. Draw and colour  
in these blank spaces



 2. Cut along the outline  
of the painted truck

 3. Paste it on chart  
paper to make it strong  
enough to stand.

 3. Paste the two outlines on  
either side of a small box and  
your truck is now ready!