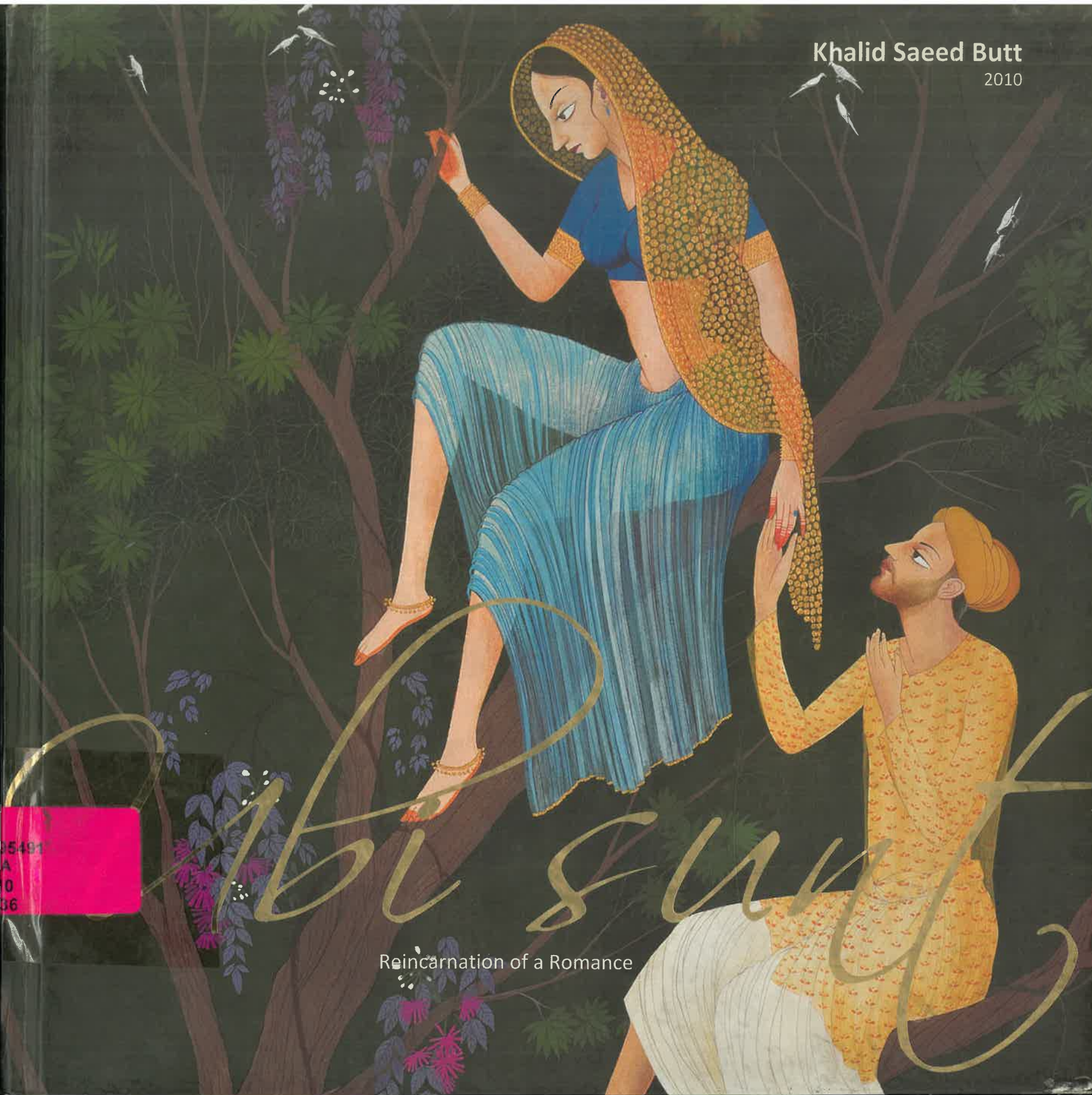


Khalid Saeed Butt
2010



Reincarnation of a Romance

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Khalid Saeed Butt Introduction

Linearity is what I was obsessed with right from the moment I got to know the forms of expression. Consequently, it caused me to lay hands on a degree of a graphic designer, but that was not all! The curves and the flow, the congeal impact and the liquidity, and above all the force of line, spelled me bound to explore lines at horizon, lines curving over green mountains, lines creeping over the smooth skins of human figures and lines wrapping these figures in shimmering and glistening drapery. Ultimately, all these lines with opaque and translucent fill and feel within, led me to the mysterious and unfathomable world of miniature painting.

Today I feel that I cannot paint anything other than miniatures. The sensuous curvatures and the transparent folds over and across the dexterity of figures breathing out of "*wasli*" are what, that take me away from all the depressions and anxieties, with a feel of lightness and tranquility. To me, my miniature paintings look as if they are musical compositions, soaked in the romance of symphony, soft and subtle without a single high note. And sometimes, the surface of my miniatures got blushed with the shyness that I ever possessed.

Khalid Saeed Butt is a distinguished and celebrated figure in the art of traditional miniature painting in Pakistan. He studied painting at Government College Lahore and then proceeded to complete his MFA in Graphic Design from the University of the Punjab, Lahore. Amongst the numerous subjects he studied, it was miniature painting in particular which appealed to his heart. This traditional style of painting had such a profound influence on him that it became his life's vocation and avocation.

In search of excellence, during the course of his training, he learnt all the fundamentals of miniature painting, but it is also possible, at the same time, to discern the strong influence of previous training (in other disciplines) in his work. Khalid Saeed Butt seems always to have followed his own instincts as far as technique, theme, and subject are concerned and has never been driven by commercial pressures to innovate chaotically.

The development of Khalid Saeed Butt's work may be divided into three phases: In the first phase there is a coexistence of the naturalistic approach and the features of traditional miniature painting. In the second phase his work approaches, more singularly, the conventions and principles of traditional miniature painting. It is only in the third phase that Khalid's work acquires its own distinct characteristics and style in the use of colour, shape, subject matter and composition; distinguishing him from his contemporaries.

A detailed analysis of his work leads us to conclude that, as an artist, he is greatly inspired by scenic beauty, folk stories and the romance of his past. His compositions are not congested and are thriftily crafted. A few figures often dominate the foreground encircled by flowery bushes and tufts of grass along with animals and birds which, help in developing a mood closely associated with the main subject. His figures are intentionally elongated, exaggerated and sometimes even anatomically distorted to achieve his objectives. To any spectator who may have reservations regarding these points, it would suffice quoting the example of Matisse who was accosted by

a female viewer of his painting as she protested "I never saw a woman look like that!" Matisse replied, "Madam that is not a woman that is a painting!" therefore a woman must be viewed as a woman, and a painting as a painting.

It is also noteworthy that in Khalid's work, the colour schemes are very harmonious and subdued. He often adds a touch of complementary strokes to break monotony, if present in colour, which enlivens it aesthetically, and creates greater interest in the composition. Gold is used appropriately, according to the requirements, and not as mere adornment.

Khalid Saeed Butt's paintings show his profound love for Nature, especially in the prolific use of floral drapery with natural details. Sometimes we feel that the objects in space are presented in an inconsistent way, but when we look closely, it is revealed that this is because the artist's main concern lies in surface embellishment and not in the depiction of objects naturalistically. The objects are not flat, but show subtle modeling and handling.

There is no doubt that this artist is in full command of his technique. He has a special pictorial consideration and to achieve this; he distorts shapes. The flow of the line, following a linear rhythm in his work, convinces the viewer that he is more than successful in conveying, not only the sensuousness, but also the sensation itself.

I am of the view that the painter treats his subjects with great reverence, and through this he tries to communicate and replicate the visual pleasure, he experiences, during the process of creation.

Matisse has said that, "A work of art should be for the tired businessman no less than for the literary dilettante, a cerebral sedative like a comfortable chair".

Zulqarnain Haider

Paintings are one of the most creative modes of self-expression. But they gain historical importance only if they manage to depict the conditions, and more importantly, the thought of their times. Miniature paintings on the other hand generally go for historical, legendary, fantastic and romantic themes. This aspect has long been associated with the art of miniature painting. Miniature paintings are, therefore, the most authentic storytellers of all times. Beneath their colorful veneer, hides stories of love, wars and religious themes. *Shirin-Farhad, Kalila wa Dimna, Shahnama, Mi'rajnama, Materia Medica et al*; all fall in the above mentioned categories. Khalid Saeed Butt's miniatures tell us themes spreading on a variety of subjects and they have the aroma of romance, poetry and history.

It was the arrival of the British which gave a death blow to the art of miniature painting. The British brought with them new techniques including those of perspective, depth and skiagraphy. To these scientific methods, indigenous painter of the subcontinent was almost a novice for almost two hundred years. Thus a very formidable art form went into a limbo.

Creation of Pakistan and the growth of Fine Art Department at the University of the Punjab then rose to the occasion. First it was the art of calligraphy which was revived by Pakistani painters and then the students and teachers went a step further and affected a Renaissance of the art of miniature painting. Masters like Khalid Saeed Butt are the product of this Renaissance and the Fine Art Department of the Punjab University, Lahore.

Born on August 9, 1950, Khalid Saeed studied fine arts at the Fine Arts Department and did his MFA in 1976 with distinction. Right from the very initial stages of his career as a painter, he showed inclination towards drawing and miniature work. Today he has over 30 year experience in painting miniatures. His miniatures have become a much sought-after jewel which every art lover and every connoisseur of art loves to possess. His miniatures today decorate quite a few important venues like the American Consulate, Lahore and the Goethe Institute, Karachi. Personalities like Air Marshal Shamim Alam Khan, Tariq Saigol, Asif Saigol, Nadeem Mumtaz, Wasif Ali Khan, Nawabzada Naushad Ali Khan, Jahangir Tareen, S. M. Zafar and Asif Kamal, are the proud possessors of Khalid Saeed's miniatures.

Khalid Saeed has revived this noble art form and has given a new life to it. He has generated a new spirit among his students. Traditions may go into a slumber for a while, they may become dormant for a while, but they never die and this has amply been proved by Khalid Saeed Butt who has duly substantiated himself by his untiring zeal and unwavering enthusiasm.

Dr. Shaukat Mahmood

HEC Professor

College of Art & Design, Punjab University Lahore

Khalid Saeed Butt; a self indulgent miniature painter par excellence has almost 30 years of experience of painting miniatures, from strictly traditional to an innovative modern style, evolved over the years of painstaking effort in experimentation and logical progression in South Asian traditional Miniature Painting; almost a dying art from in our subcontinent. His present miniature style is an outcome of various phases in his professional work. Khalid Saeed's miniature style has been undergoing a change, while he relentlessly has stuck to the technique which remained unchanged over the centuries. Although, he broke many miniature rules like the size of the painting as well as the scale of the human figures in his frames. His technique of using gold leaf was subjected to a variety of innovative phases. In his middle phase he was using thick impasto like gold leaf; giving an extra ordinary texture.

His themes did not vary from the traditional concepts, yet his style bespeaks of his incredible mastery of line and form. I have been fortunate enough to be his colleague as well as a documenter of his changing styles. It is needless to say that miniature painting requires inexhaustible energy and patience. His present style which I call the 'ochre style' has minimalist's approach. His subject matter revolves round relationship of love between man and women. His backgrounds are dreamlike; focusing on few figures, but even then yet emphasizing the ambience, making the mood of the painting equally effective. I remember telling him that the stylization of his figures remind me of El Greco paintings. The addition of symbolic background on a bigger format, delicate textures and dreamlike postures of the figures lend an irritable aura of subtle eroticism while he stands back with the surprised indolence of child.

Most of his paintings have a light color background as opposed to few where night plays an important role. Love companionship or loneliness is the main themes of these paintings. His paintings have the quality of pulling the onlooker into the atmosphere or the ambience of the paintings. His paintings tug at the inner self of the audience inciting the base emotions of love, or loneliness. No wonder his success as a master miniature painter, and the demand of his paintings never allowed his work to be accumulated for a solo exhibition. Fortunately his adamant refusal to sell his work for a specific period has resulted into this solo display of work. In spite of his modern style, he identifies himself with eastern tradition, a tradition in which boundaries are measured by creative standards. I hope a person like Khalid Saeed Butt would keep on working and inspiring students and art lovers. Whilst, he remains a man in search of himself! His inexhaustible appetite for Eastern self expression of his feelings leaves a thirst every creative artist craves for.

Sohail Wali

Department of Product Design
University of Engineering & Technology

 here was a time about three and a half decades ago when miniature painting was not so popular. In fact it had almost become a taboo. Other than a few *Ustads* like Haji Muhammad Sharif and Sheikh Shuja Ullah, who carried the tradition forward, there were no painters in that genre. The technique was painstaking and laborious and the product had no market value. Khalid Saeed Butt was among those few young miniature painters who were faithful to the technique and were not satisfied with making replicas of the old masters.

In 1980 he made a series of full figure soldiers wearing uniforms of their respective regiments. These were sensitive drawings with intricate details of the dresses, medals and decorations. From that very point, there emerged the idea that miniature is capable of supporting subjects that are not necessarily from the mythology or Mughal history. It was realized that an effort should be made to introduce modern day subjects in miniature painting style while keeping the technique entirely traditional. Cityscapes, *darvishes* and female figures were carried out with this modern concept. The door had been opened for experimentation.

Khalid was a graphic designer, but he started teaching miniature and insisted that his students give up copying the traditional miniature paintings. He also continued to paint himself very regularly and has never stopped ever since. He is a prolific painter who has even damaged his eyesight, and sacrificed the muscles of his hand in doing minute and highly skillful rendering, so crucial for this technique. He never compromised the intricacy and finesse of his work to increasing commercial demand.

His subjects have been highly romantic from the start. Lately he seemed to focus on the atmospheric quality, so unique and alien for traditional miniature painting. His landscape settings, including rocks, trees, water and skies, where his lovers engaged in romantic encounter, were rendered with incredible depth and feeling.

Shahnawaz Zaidi

Khalid Saeed Butt is an artist whose work has maintained its singular popularity for almost decades. He is renowned for his unique approach to the art of miniature painting, inspired by the romance pervading ancient legends and folk stories with origins lost in antiquity. His work may be interpreted as positive Romanticism in its commitment to the artist's absolute right of expression, freely fusing traditional and contemporary artistic subtleties. Through Butt's work we enter into an exotic land of fantasy, landscapes of trees acting as havens to colourful birds and star crossed lovers, inhabited by slender heroines, elegant with elongated limbs glimpsed through translucent drapery. They are matched with splendid heroes, captured together in a moment of time that is exquisite in its impermanence and fragility. The stuff the dreams are made of!

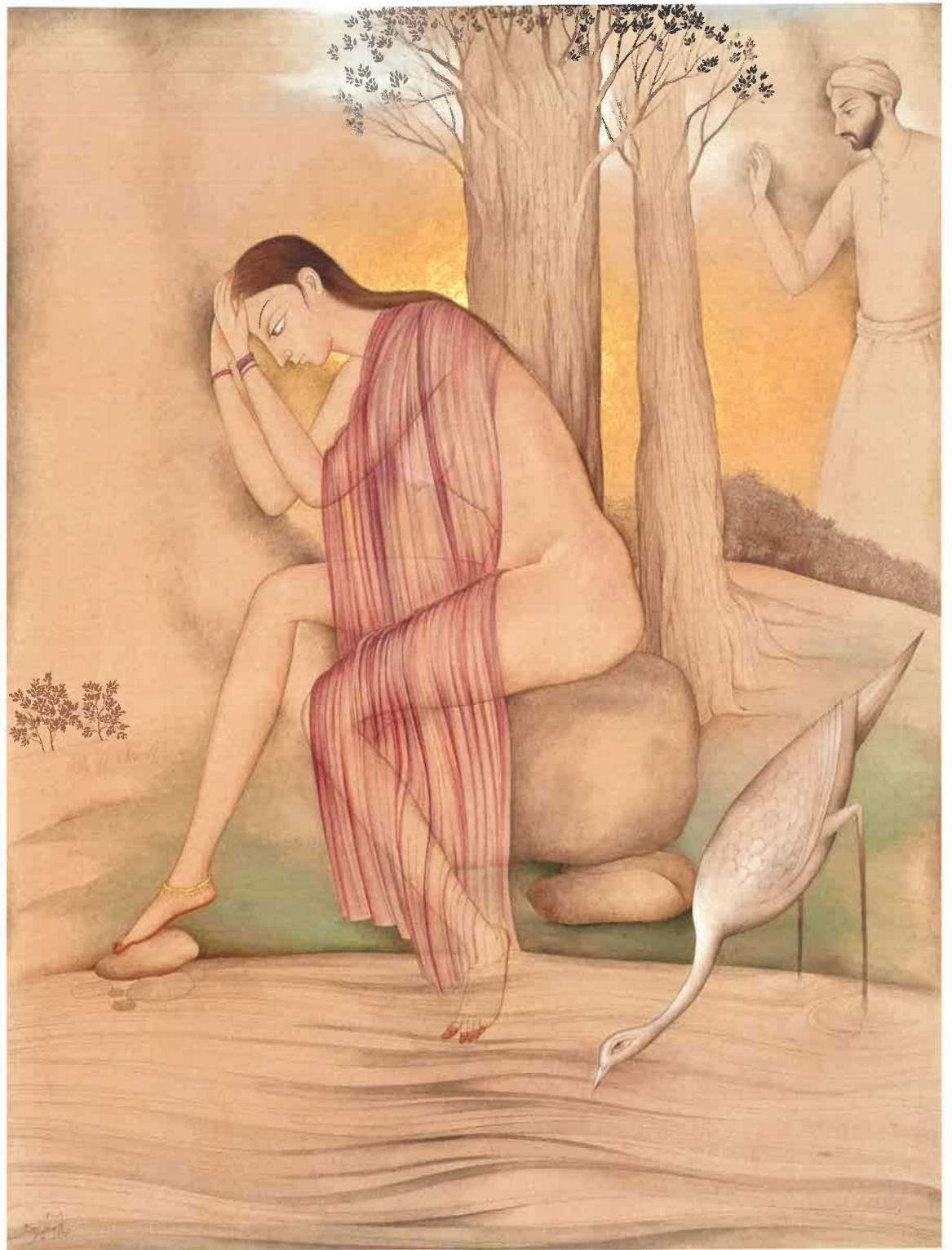
Marjorie Husain

The Love Admission
Water colour on paper 21" x 14"



The Bath

Water colour on paper 22" x 16"



The Lovers

Water colour on paper 21" x 13"



Raga Kokab Bilawal
Water colour on paper 12" x 8"



The Time Flies

Water colour on paper 21" x 16"



The Promise
Water colour on paper 16" x 21"





Domination

Water colour on paper 16" x 12"



A Love Potion

Water colour on paper 26" x 14"



The Temptation

Water colour on paper 21" x 13"



The Thinker
Water colour on paper 22" x 14"



The Soul Mates
Water colour on paper 16" x 11"



The Love Spectres
Water colour on paper 14" x 20"





The Purity
Water colour on paper 22" x 17"



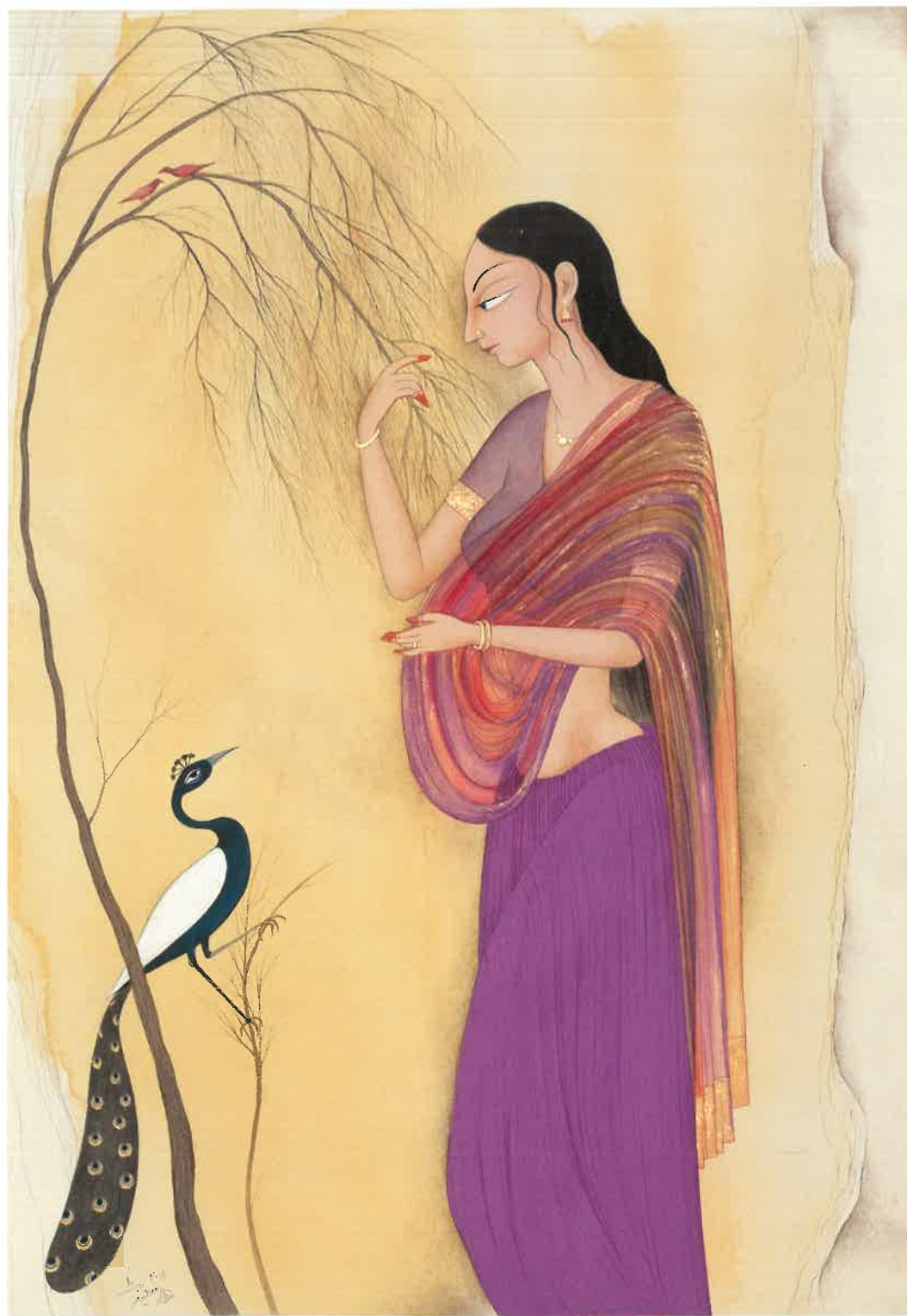
The Touch
Water colour on paper 12" x 10"



The Lonliness

Water colour on paper 21" x 15"

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The Sharing

Water colour on paper 10" x 12"



Euphoria

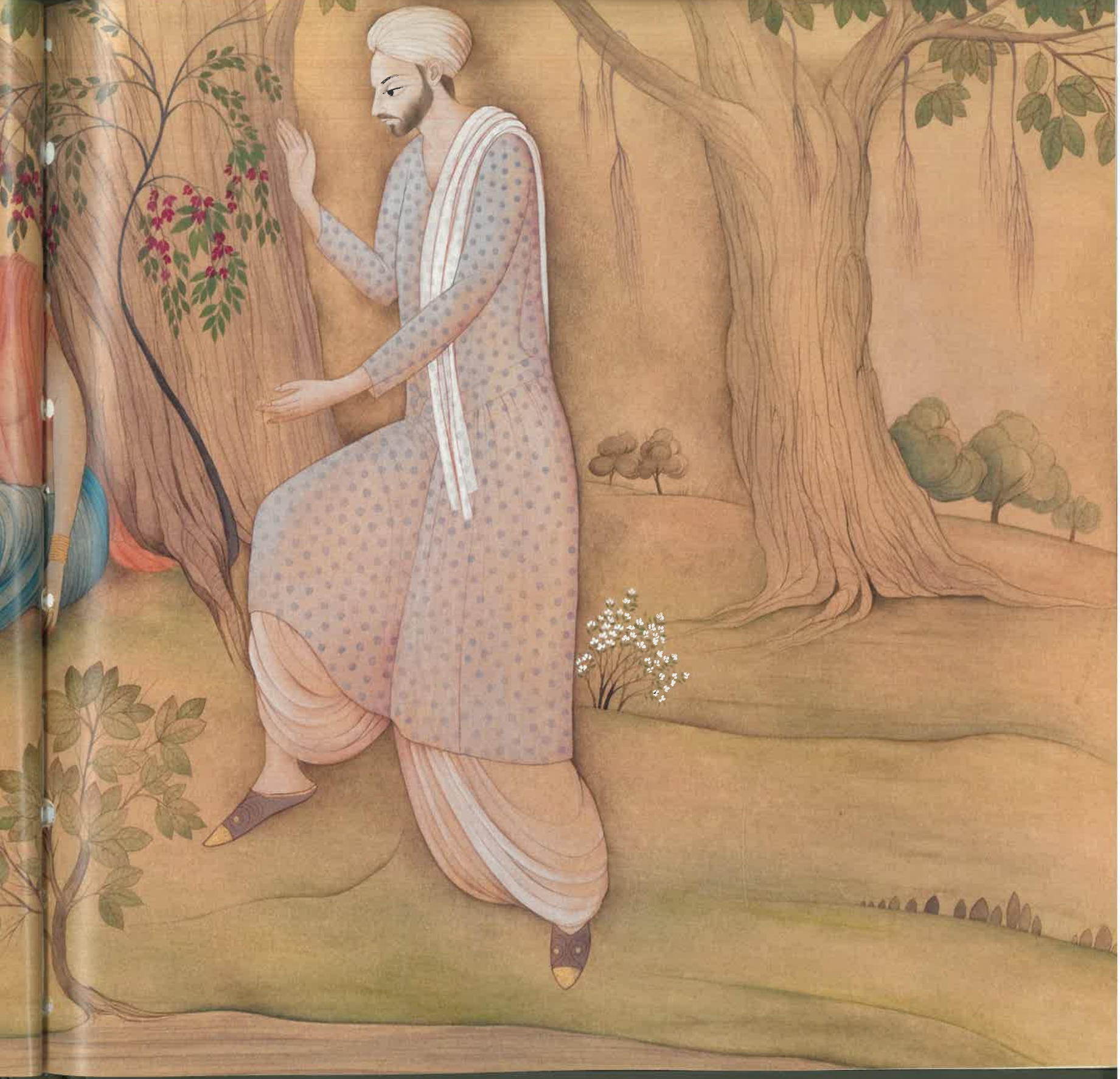
Ghouch 24" x 42"





The Home-coming

Water colour on paper 14" x 21"



Cognition

Gouache on canvas 27" x 42"



The Cue

Water colour on paper 20" x 14"



The Love Birds

Water colour on paper 21" x 13"

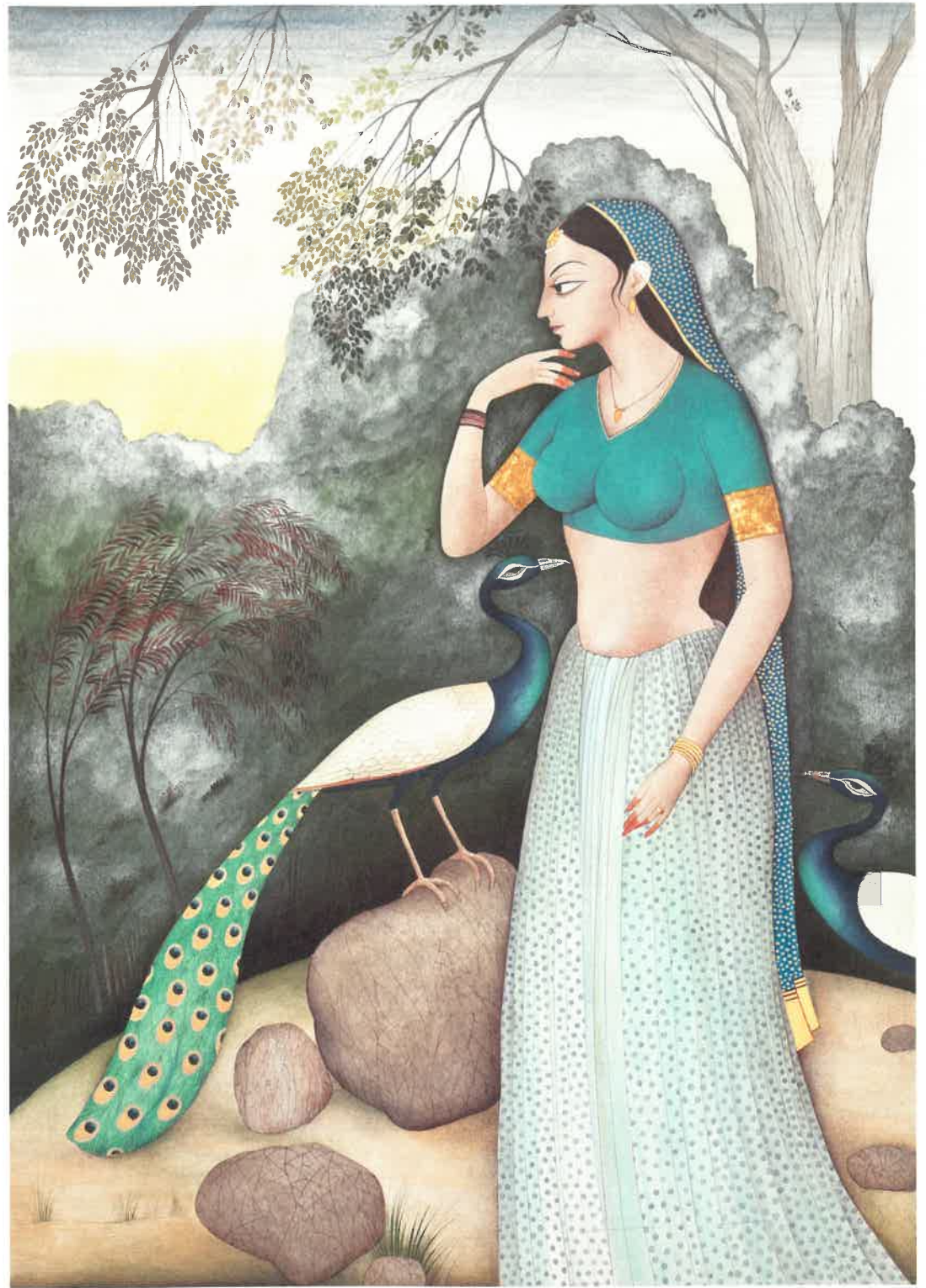


The Fantasy
Water colour on paper 21" x 14"



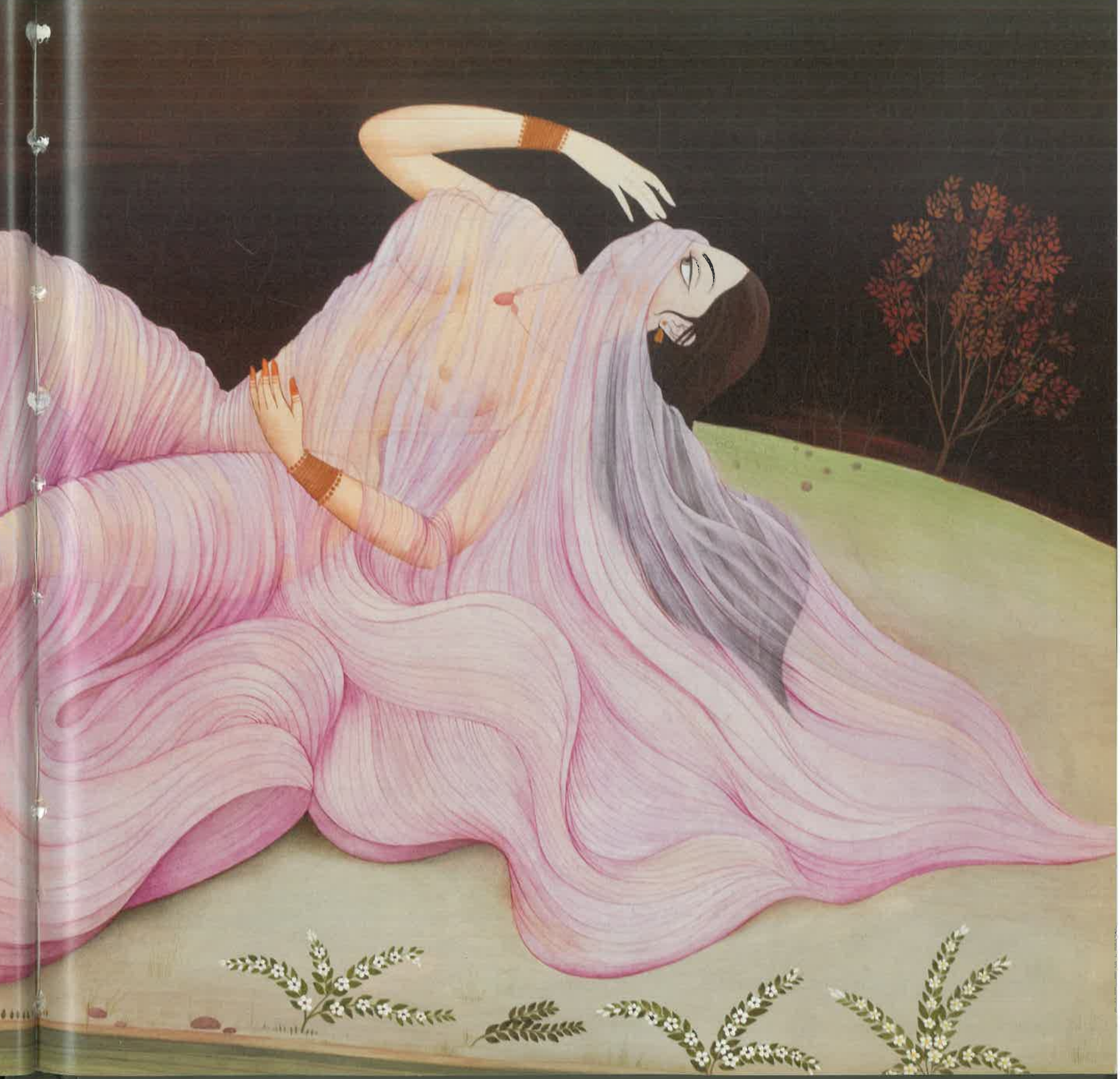
The Remorse

Water colour on paper 16" x 12"



The Veil
Water colour on paper 12" x 18"





The Longing

Water colour on paper 28" x 14"



The Water Carrier

Water colour on paper 12" x 10"



The Waiting

Water colour on paper 15" x 7"



The Wish

Water colour on paper 16" x 8"



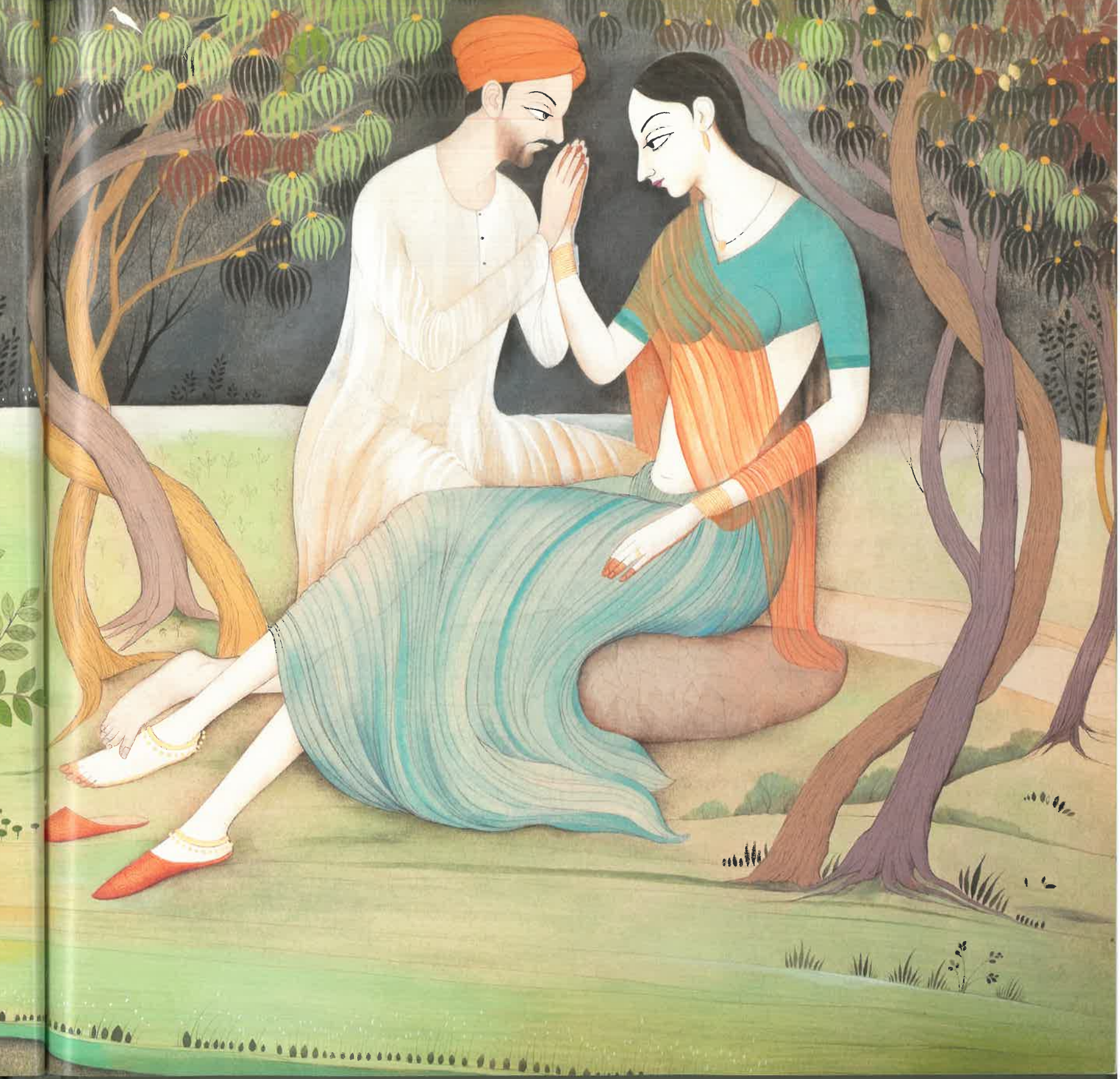
The Beckoning

Water colour on paper 11" x 7"



The Love Nest
Water colour on paper 14" x 21"



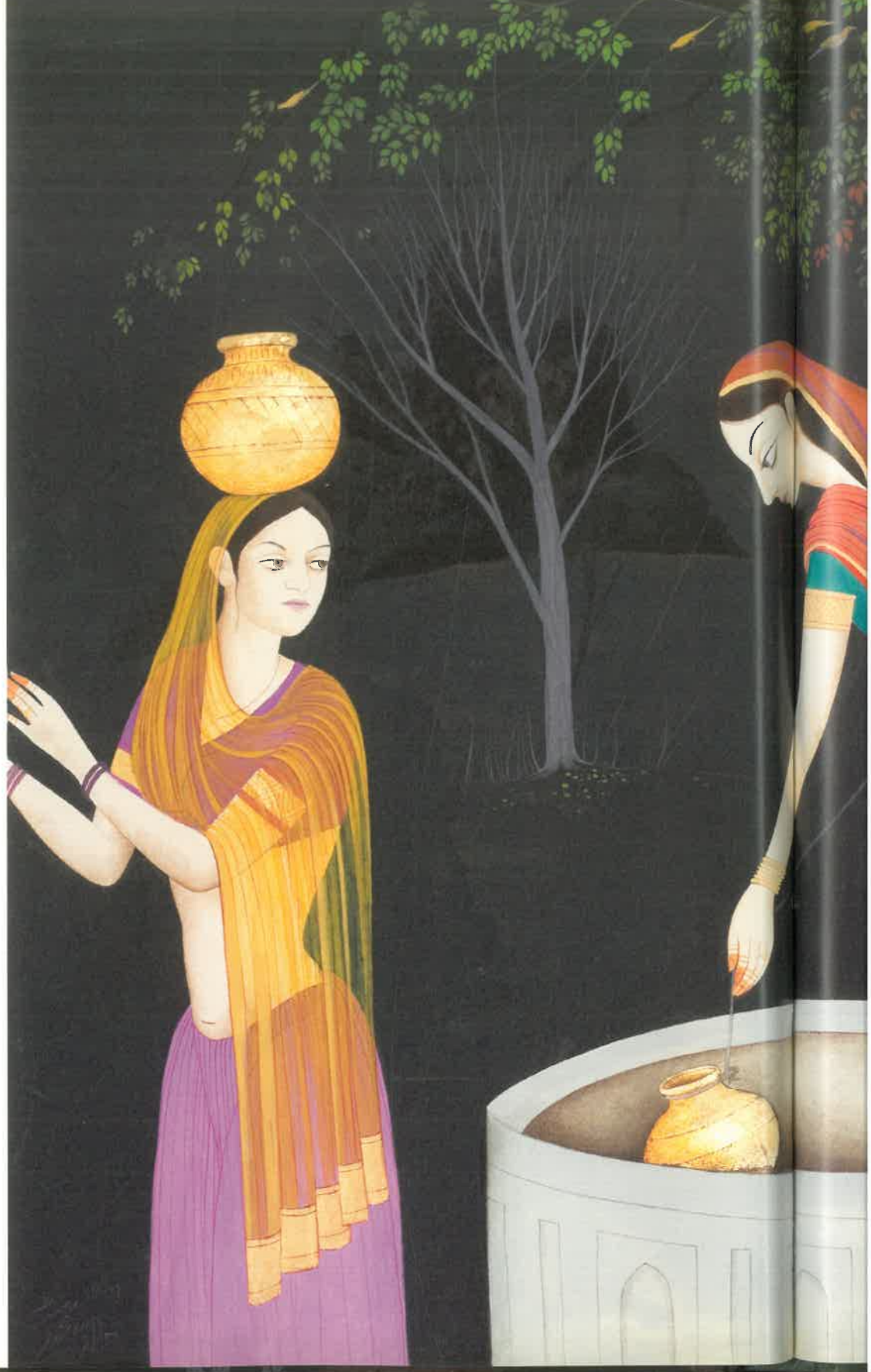


The Ecstasy

Water colour on paper 14" x 21"



The Well
Water colour on paper 14" x 21"





The Passion Unveiled
Water colour on paper 12" x 16"



Anguish

Water colour on paper 16" x 12"



Bougainvillea

Water colour on paper 11" x 7"



The Sweet Nothings
Water colour on paper 12" x 16"







The Meeting
Water colour on paper 18" x 8"

The Water Saga
Water colour on paper 17" x 7"



The Whisper

Water colour on paper 11" x 7"





KHALID SAEED BUTT
August 9th, 1950
Assistant Professor

DISTINCTIONS

1. In B.F.A. (Graphic Design) got First Class First.
2. In M.F.A. (Graphic Design) got Second Position in the University of the Punjab.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- a) Teaching as Assistant Professor in the University College of Art and Design University of the Punjab Lahore.
- b) Have been teaching Miniature Painting and Drawing since 1979.
- c) Worked as visiting Lecturer in the Institute of Education and Research, University of the Punjab, Lahore (1981-82).

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

- Six year Pictorial Research on the uniforms of Indian Cavalry Regiments from 1860 to 1947; a unique project executed in traditional Miniature Painting depicting minutest details of figures and uniforms.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- a) Have been working as Miniature Painter since 1976.
- b) Worked as a Cartoonist in daily "Azad" and weekly "Pas-e Parda" (1977-1980)
- c) Worked as an Illustrator in Urdu Digest, (1980-1981).
- d) Supervised the pictorial aspects of Mass Gymnastic display with collaboration of South Korean experts in 1976, arranged by the Ministry of Education, Government of Pakistan.

EXHIBITIONS IN PAKISTAN

1. Participated in an International Exhibition arranged by Pakistan National Council of the Arts, Islamabad in 1988.
2. Participated in the National Exhibitions arranged by PNCA in 1977, 1982 and 1984.
3. Participated in Provincial Exhibitions arranged by Punjab Council of Arts in 1982, 1984, 1988 and 1991.
4. Exhibitions of Paintings arranged by Artists Association of Pakistan at Lahore in May 1984, May 1985, March 1986, November 1986, February 1987, January 1988, May 1988, February 1989, May 1990, May 1991, 1992 and October 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1998, 1999.

EXHIBITIONS ABROAD

- Participated in group show at Notices Art Gallery, Singapore.
- Pakistan Day Exhibition in China.
- Painters of Pakistan Exhibition in London, England.

PRIZES

1. Best Miniature Painting prize in Provincial Exhibition held in 1991 at Al-Hamra Arts Council Lahore, arranged by Punjab Art Council, Lahore.
2. Exhibition Award in 1994 and 1999 by (AAP) Artists Association of Punjab.
3. Miniature Painting selected by the Pakistan National Council of Arts for the portfolio "Miniature Painters of Pakistan"

COLLECTIONS

1. American Consulate, Lahore.
2. Goethe Institute, Karachi.
3. Air-Marshall (Rtd) Shamim Alam Khan.
4. Mr. Tariq Saigal, Lahore.
5. Mr. Asif Saigal, Lahore.
6. Mr. Nadeem Mumtaz, Fazal Din & Sons, Lahore.
7. Wasif Ali Khan, Lahore.
8. Rocco Dairy Products, Lahore.
9. Nawabzada Noushad Ali Khan, America.
10. Mr. Jahangir Tareen, Lahore.
11. Mrs. S.M. Zafar, Lahore.
12. Mr. Asif Kamal, Newage Cabels, Pakistan and many others

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