

Jamil Naqsh

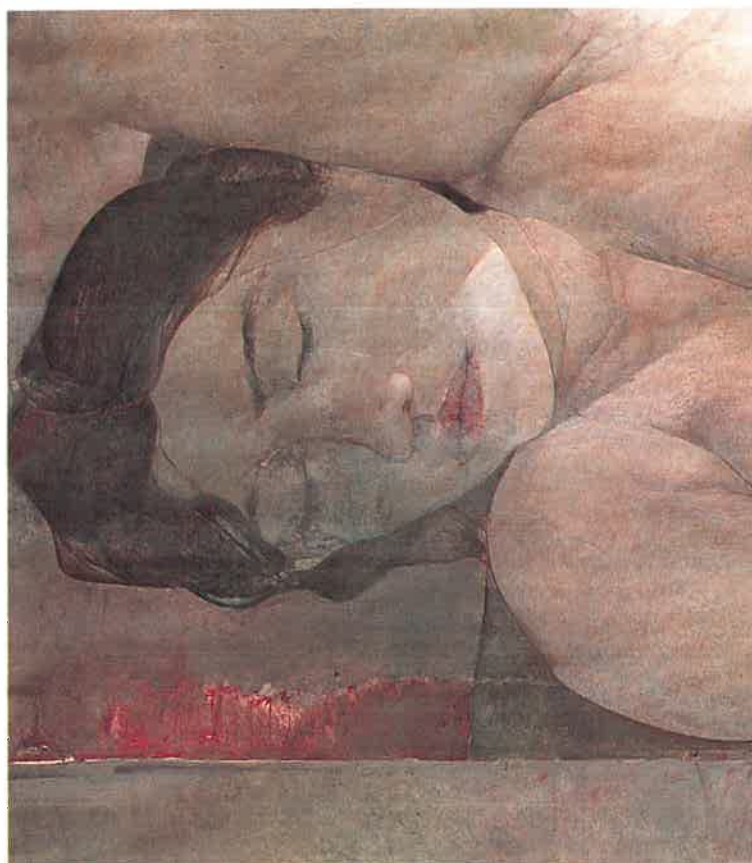


*Mobatta Palace Museum
Karachi*

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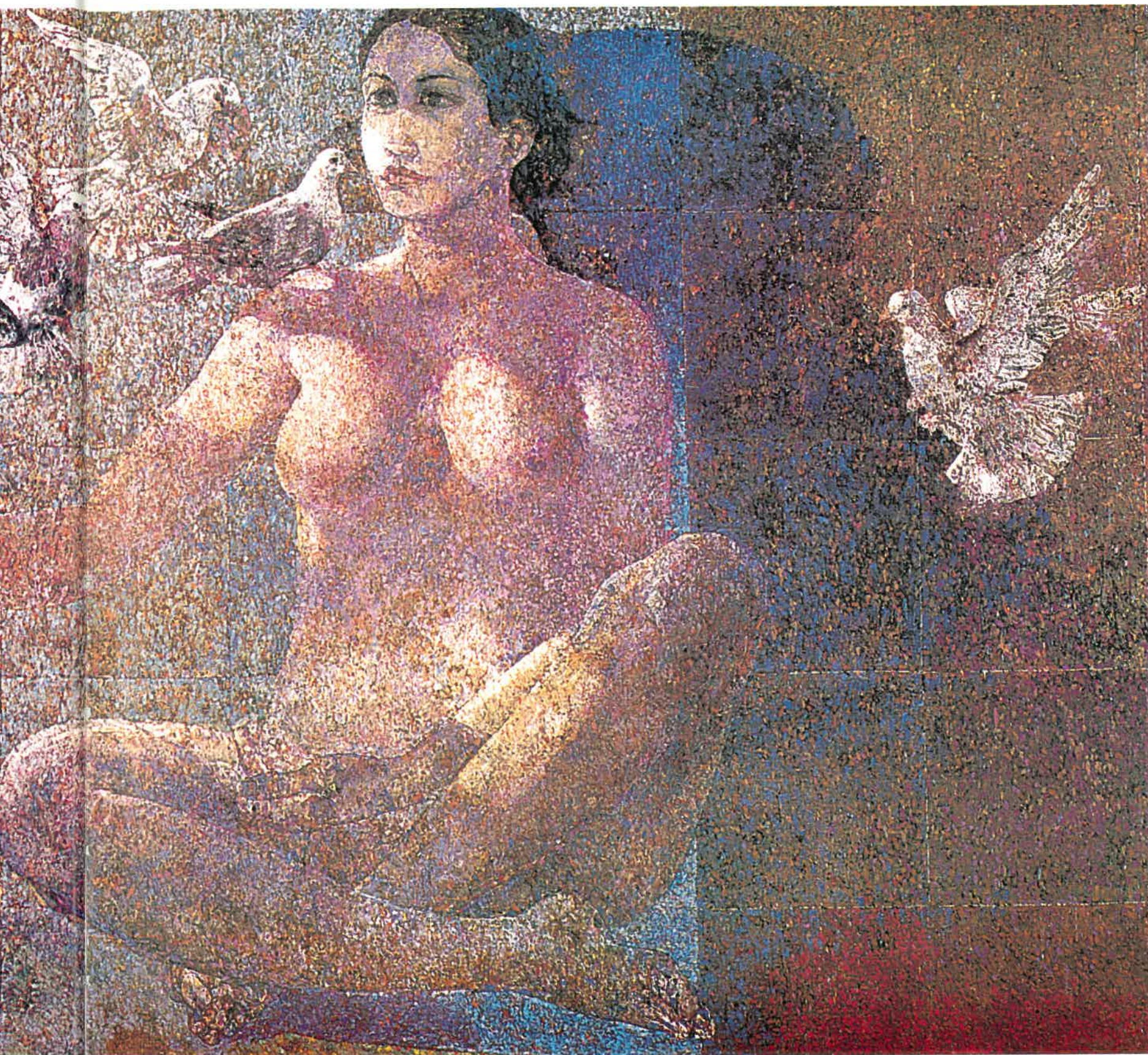


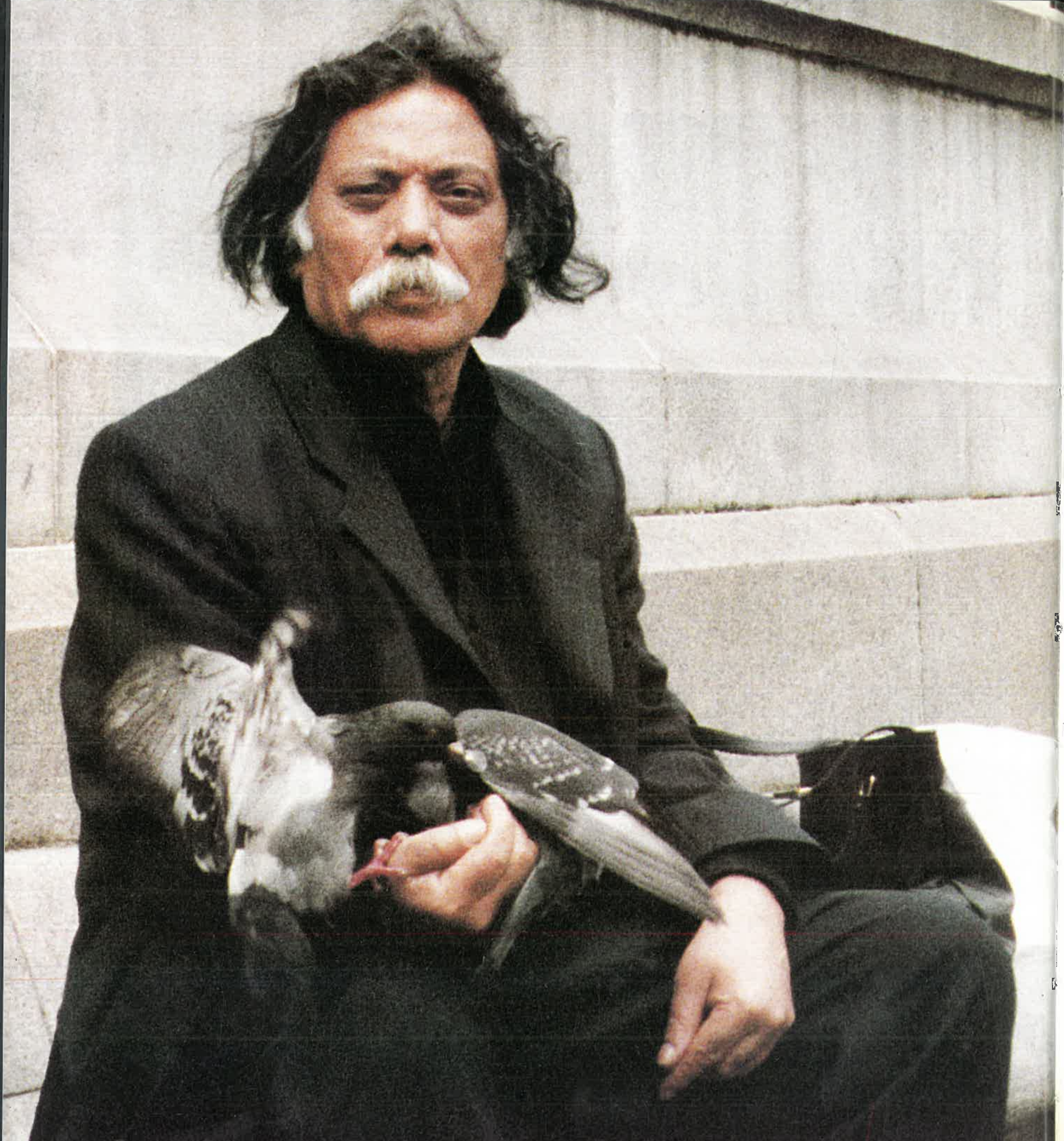
Jamil Naqsh

A retrospective

11th December 2003







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Jamil Naqsh: A retrospective

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Mohatta Palace Museum
Karachi

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Front cover: *Woman and pigeon*, oil on canvas, 1974
Courtesy Meher and Husain Sheriff

Inside front cover: *Woman* (detail), water colour, 1983
Private collection

Double spread: *Woman and pigeons*, oil on canvas, 1991
Private collection

Frontispiece: Jamil Naqsh, Trafalgar Square, London, 2001
Photograph by Shammi Ahmed

Page 270: Jamil Naqsh in his studio
Photograph by Sobia Naqsh

Photography by Abdul Wahid Khan

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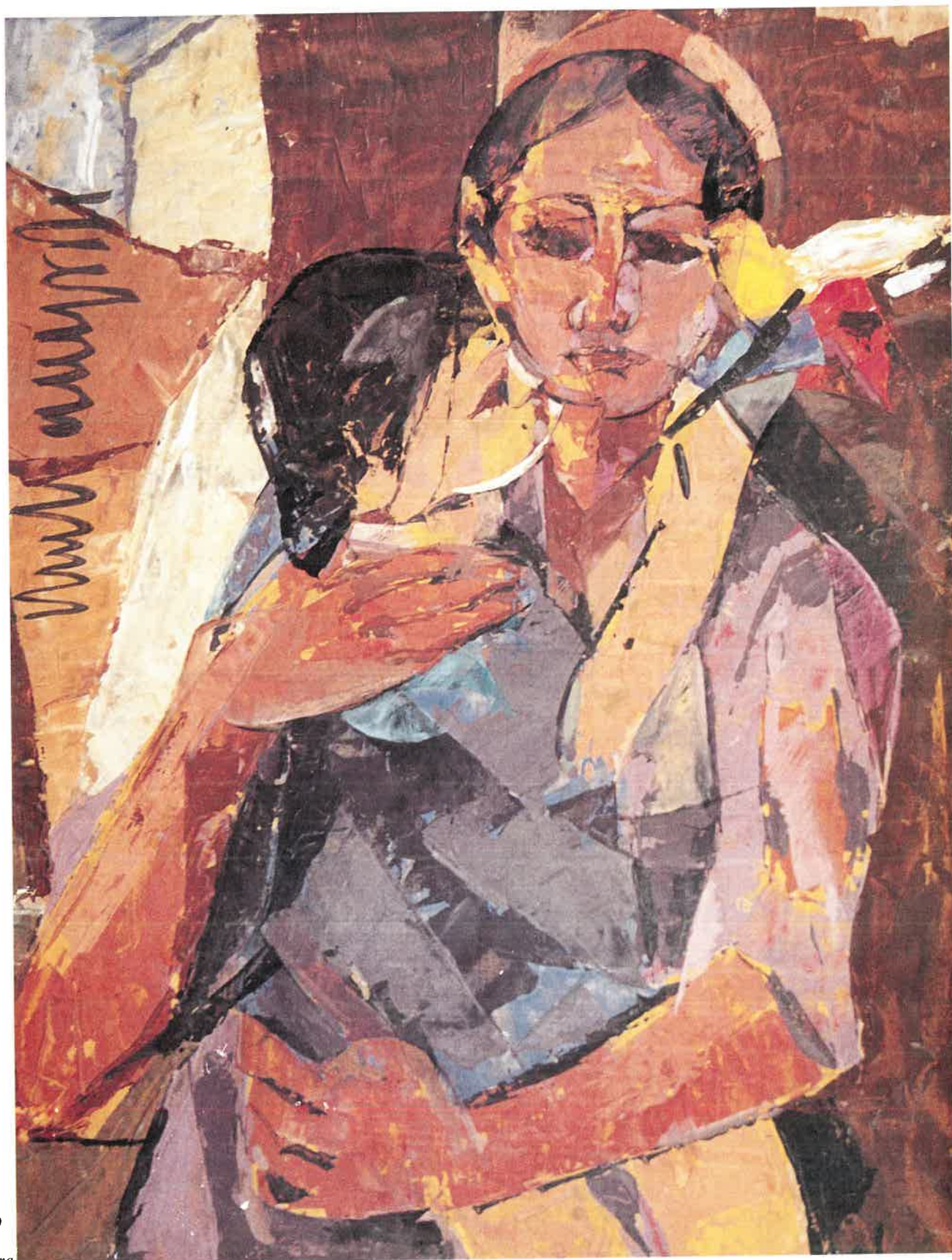
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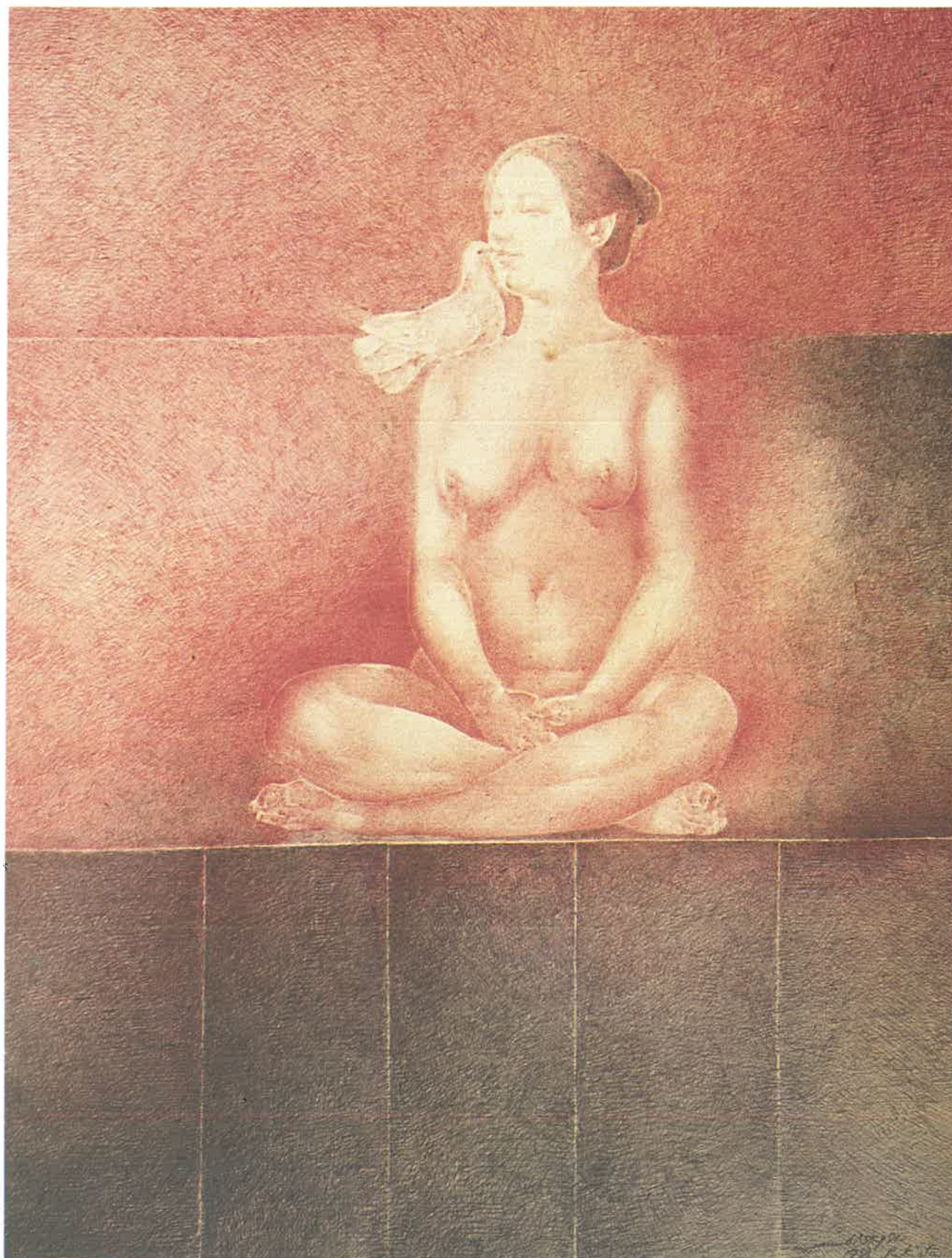
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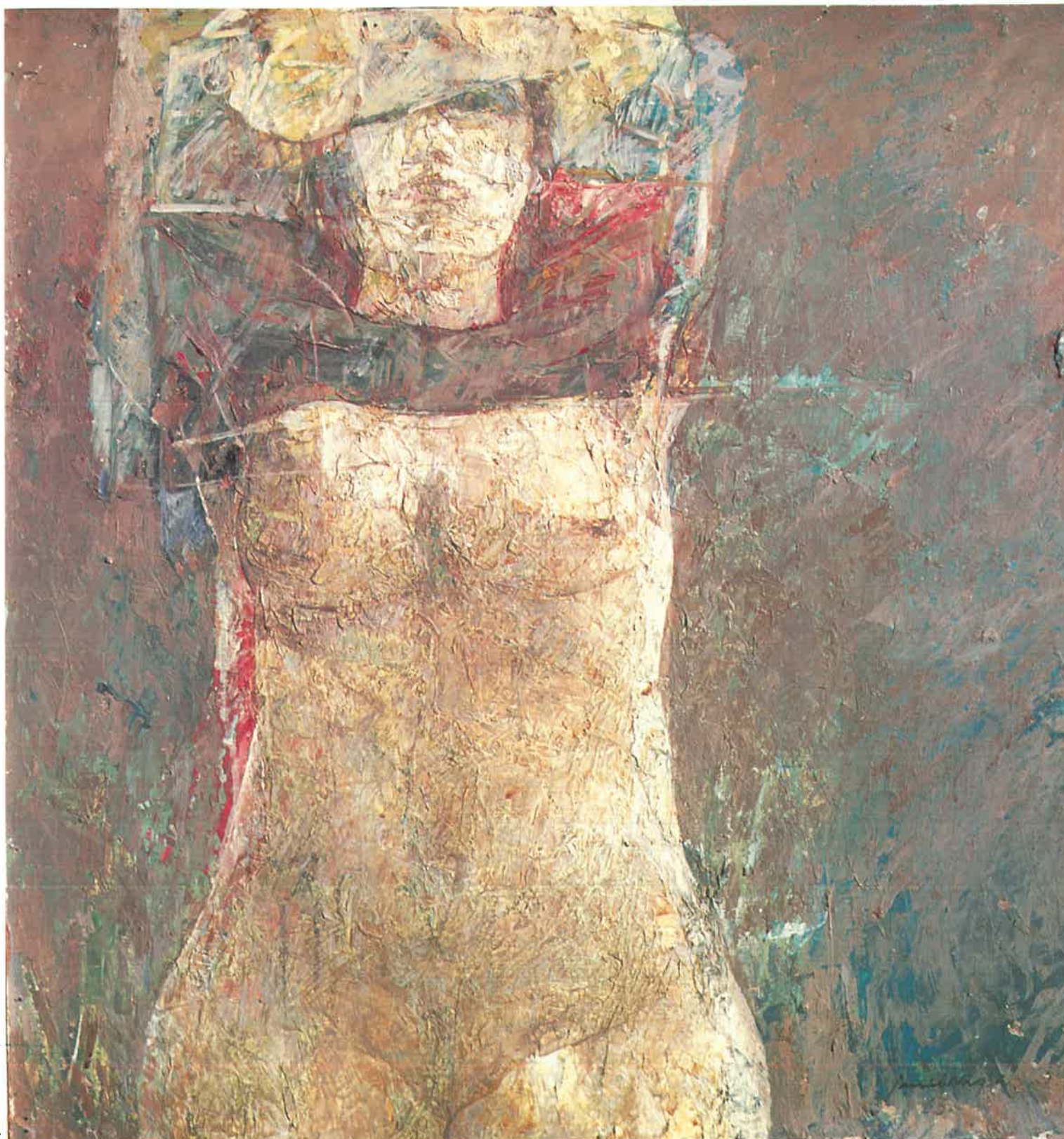
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Oil on board, 1959
61 x 47 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



2
Ballpoint pen and oil, 1986
101 x 91.5 cm
Courtesy Muzaffar Gbaffar



3

Oil on canvas, 1963
71 x 67 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura

Introduction

Transformations do not come easily; and, in Karachi, even less easily than almost anywhere else. But that is what, back in 1995, a group of people set out to achieve by establishing the Mohatta Palace Museum. They recognised that Karachi needed a cultural renaissance, a visible, material stimulus to inspire its citizens who were just emerging from a period of chronic civic strife. The transformation they sought is far from complete, but it is what we have to hope for in our galleries every day. Here we display objects that we as a nation have declared most precious and to which all have equal access. Only rarely will we know what any particular person takes away from looking at them, but there is surely value, real as well as symbolic - in insisting that there can be no rivalry for these objects - only enjoyment, a sense of pride and a reaffirmation of our shared heritage.

In this spirit, since 1999, we have displayed collections that have never been seen (*Treasures of the Talpurs: Collections from the Courts of Sindh*), through the generosity of the Talpur families, a representative collection of Gandhara art from four major museums in Pakistan (*Visions of Divinity: the Art of Gandhara*) and brought together a mosaic of costume and textiles from both public and private collections (*Threads in Time*), which is now on semi-permanent display. In addition, we have had exhibitions on calligraphy, modern miniatures, the work of British print artists in the Indus valley from 1830 -1930 and a retrospective of Pakistan's iconic artist, *Sadequain: the Holy Sinner 1954 - 1987*. This exhibition, with a commemorative catalogue, was a major exposition of the art and career of Sadequain that set new standards for the Museum. It seeks to continue the tradition of making the work of Pakistan's major artists accessible to a wider audience and Jamil Naqsh's retrospective is a part of this endeavour.

At 64, Naqsh is a formidable presence, an imposing figure with a vice - like handshake, steely gaze, and a greying moustache that covers his upper lip almost entirely. Although he shuns company (a luxury he can well afford),

Naqsh can be disarmingly attentive to visitors, regaling them with jokes and pithy anecdotes. Over the last five decades or so, he has excelled at painting nudes and pigeons that convey with matchless elegance, the nuances of romantic passion. His prolific career has been less of a commentary on the human condition than a continuing preoccupation with the women who share his life and who make up his family.

Naqsh is impassioned about the current state of political flux in Pakistan and the upsurge in obscurantism, aspects of society that he feels spell doom for modern art, but this angst does not find direct expression in his work. His paintings appear to be retreats from solitude and alienation into the company of the women he loves; as the virtuosity of his technique has grown, so have his women, their lithe young forms ripening into voluptuous, full - bodied figures. He has become, by his own admission, a polemicist, increasingly unwilling to talk about his philosophy with those whom he chooses to meet. "I have always said that we ought first to recognise and pay tribute to our own heroes, people born of this soil, and to foster their traditional values in our children before they grow to acquire the icons of modernity. I continue to pay the price for this candour."¹

Naqsh conveys the distinct impression that he paints to please himself, continually absorbed with painting, its scope, its language, its opportunities and in the infinite freedom it gives him. Obsessed with his art, he commands acceptance, dismissing any attempt at analysis or interpretation. His interest is in what paint can do and in what painting is about. Accustomed to the cult of celebrity that has sprung up around him, he maintains, "I am an ordinary person with modest abilities who merely wishes to paint."² Naqsh has moved progressively closer to abstraction from his first attempts as a figurative artist in the neo-realist tradition when he had already begun to craft a richly textured palette for his favoured subjects [Fig. 3].

He depicts Najmi Sura, his companion of 31 years, never tiring of portraying her, nor permitting his viewer to tire of her. Using pencil, ink, watercolour, oils or a ballpoint pen,³ he skilfully arranges the elements of her sensuous figure: head, arms, torso and legs, by skilfully drawing attention to each against a background organised into a variety of empty spaces [Fig. 4]. His preoccupation with pigeons leads him to paint them juxtaposed with his nudes, held closely to their breasts, carried aloft or executed on their own, in pairs, or as fluttering groups.



5
Oil on canvas, 1980
144 x 93 cm
Courtesy Salma and Mubammad Masbbood Usmani



4
Oil on canvas
90 x 152 cm
Private collection

The tumult of the birds as they commence flight, often acts as a counterpoint to his seemingly still, almost celestial women⁴. Naqsh continually reinvents his subjects, capturing their interplay in magical ways, through nuances of line, colour and texture.

As Naqsh continued to produce work through the seventies and eighties and earn critical acclaim, his style began to reflect a multiplicity of influences from art movements in Europe and America. He fused Cubist elements [Fig. 5], pointillist techniques [Fig. 6] and the geometrical division of the 'pictorial space', with striking results. In a review of his exhibition in 1976, a critic wrote, "the preciousness of his handling colour as pigments of priceless value, the texture he alone can spin and weave in a manner that is seen to have acquired the properties of fibre..."⁵ Naqsh subscribes to the view that empty space in his work is not just a means to an end but a point of departure and therefore a focal aspect.

He moved easily from oils to watercolour. His initial apprenticeship in Mughal miniature painting: the

painstaking application of opaque water colour on a carefully textured background, often with a half colouring technique for profiles, began to manifest itself in his work. His subjects however, were entirely modern in their abstraction, their lack of ornamentation and in the manner in which they related to one another. What rapidly became evident was his extraordinary capacity for assimilating modernist elements without forsaking the classical idiom of his early training. His recurrent iconography, combined with horses⁶, invited both curiosity and controversy and confounded theoretical categorisation, as it was a synthesis of a contemporary style with undercurrents of Indian mediaeval sculpture.

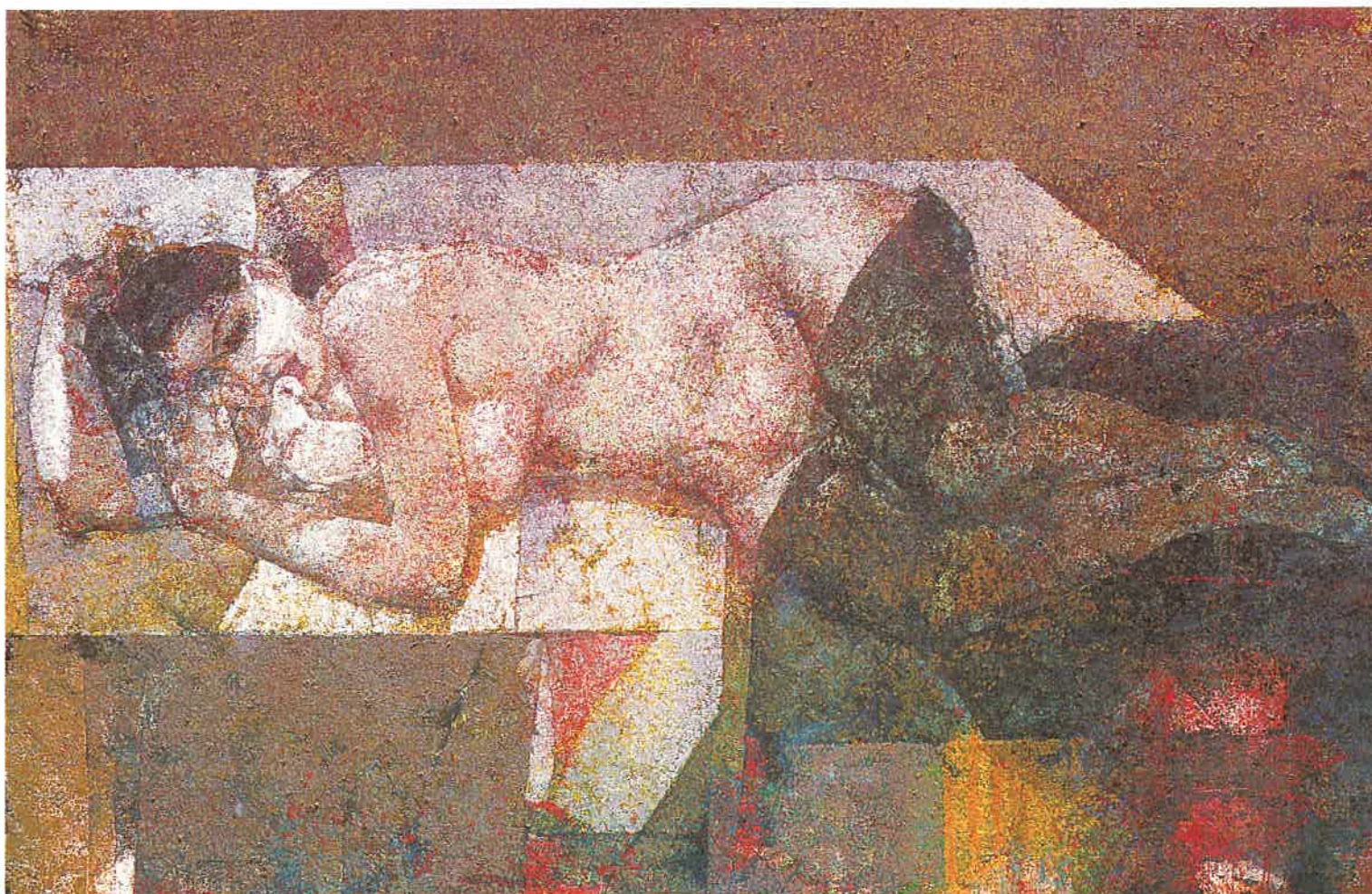
As a miniaturist, Naqsh was able to execute line and effect with a very fine brush and he used this technique with consummate skill to embellish spaces that would accentuate, frame or recede from the central figure of the nude and her pigeon. He employed colour with exquisite decorative effect by stippling, dragging, linear configurations or by imprinting objects to create the most delicate of textures. His *Mother and Child* series is worked with poignant sensuousness, entirely authoritative in its depiction, yet full of subtlety in the working. While the viewer is taken in by the apparent similarity of his innovative *Woman and Horse* series, he is compelled to observe the melding and transformation of equine and female forms that Naqsh created with variations in form. "Jamil Naqsh, besides being a superb craftsman, is a creative artist who does not reproduce forms, but who transfigures them."⁷ A simple line with his brush enabled Naqsh to morph both figure and form.

Naqsh rarely chooses to depict himself as a subject but there are a few self portraits to be found in his early work. In [Fig. 7], for example, we see an enigmatic portrait of a young Naqsh with the study of a reclining nude behind him. The rest of the picture is empty; this sums up Naqsh in all his essential consistency of contradiction and suggestion.

In 1996, inspired by the philosophical and doctrinal overtones of Arabic calligraphy and convinced that it was an art form in of itself, he produced paintings akin to classical Qur'anic manuscripts. Naqsh evolved his own version of the *maghribi*, a script that characterised the arts of the book in North Africa, Spain and parts of Central Africa from around the 11th century AD.⁸ The alphabet was meticulously rendered, as Naqsh proudly adds "without any error",



7
Ballpoint pen and oil, 1982
49 x 37 cm
Courtesy Muzaffar Ghaffar



6
Oil on canvas, 1991
137 x 215 cm
Private collection

pages of stylised miniscule script, occasionally including a colophon or *tughra* with margins devoid of embellishment. [Fig. 8]. This proved to be yet another of Naqsh's innovations, a response to the constraints of the classical tradition, by creating his own rules of proportion and balance within a clearly defined framework. Becoming a master within a tradition involves following a canonical model and learning to go beyond it judiciously. Jamil Naqsh is one such master.

The Mohatta Palace Museum retrospective features an extensive holding of his works from the Jamil Naqsh Foundation together with examples from a number of private collections. It charts the evolution of Naqsh's

oeuvre, his work from the early sixties when landscapes and scenes from both village and urban life appeared; his abstractions of the seventies and eighties; his mother and child, calligraphy and horse series of the nineties to his millennial work, where he has displayed a degree of engaging experimentation with his chosen subjects.

Nasreen Askari



8
Oil on board, 1998
39.5 x 39.5 cm
Private collection

Notes

1. Naqsh was commenting on the ethos of his early training with Ustad Muhammad Sherif, 10th December 2001, Karachi.
2. Naqsh first exhibited his work in Multan in 1953 when he was awarded the third prize and Abdul Rehman Chughtai won the first. Personal communication, 10th August 2003.
3. Between 1975 and 1980 Naqsh produced a compelling series using a ballpoint pen and oil technique on paper.
4. Naqsh underscores the harmony between his subjects and the manner in which the birds, despite their apparent chaos, act in perfect unison.
5. *Painters of the Nude*, The Sun. Dr. Akbar Naqvi, 18th April, 1976
6. Although Naqsh began to paint horses in the late 50's he produced two well known series that featured both horses and nudes titled, *A Tribute to Marino Marini* in 1995 and in 1998.
7. *Artistic Pakistan*, Syed Amjad Ali, June 1971
8. The *maghribi* script is believed to have developed from varieties of the Kufic. Geometrical shapes were used for Qur'anic scripts because they were easier to adapt to the square formats of Qur'ans popular in these areas. The commonest design in the *maghribi* script is based on a circle within a square and the circular element is generally made up of an interlace. The colophon or *tughra* that Naqsh has used in his manuscripts is taken from a verse of the Qur'an:

*And the servants of the Beneficent God are they
Who walk on the earth in humbleness
And when the ignorant address them
They say : Peace
The Criterion XXV : 63*

Translation from *Ayats and Noble Verses of the Qur'an*.
Published by The Muhammadi Trust of Great Britain and Ireland, 1985.

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*Life's unending monotony
Was unbearable
But I accepted the pain
And began to live with it
An oyster feels the agony
Caused by a grain of sand
But it covers the pain
Layer upon layer
Creating a thing of beauty
Thus I paint*

Jamil Naqsh 1997

*Jamil Naqsh:
Pakistan's modern master*

Marjorie Husain



9
Abdul Basit
Katrana, 1949



10
Jamil Naqsb and
Jigar Muradabadi



11

*Jamil Naqsh's family home
Kairana, Uttar Pradesh, India 1949*

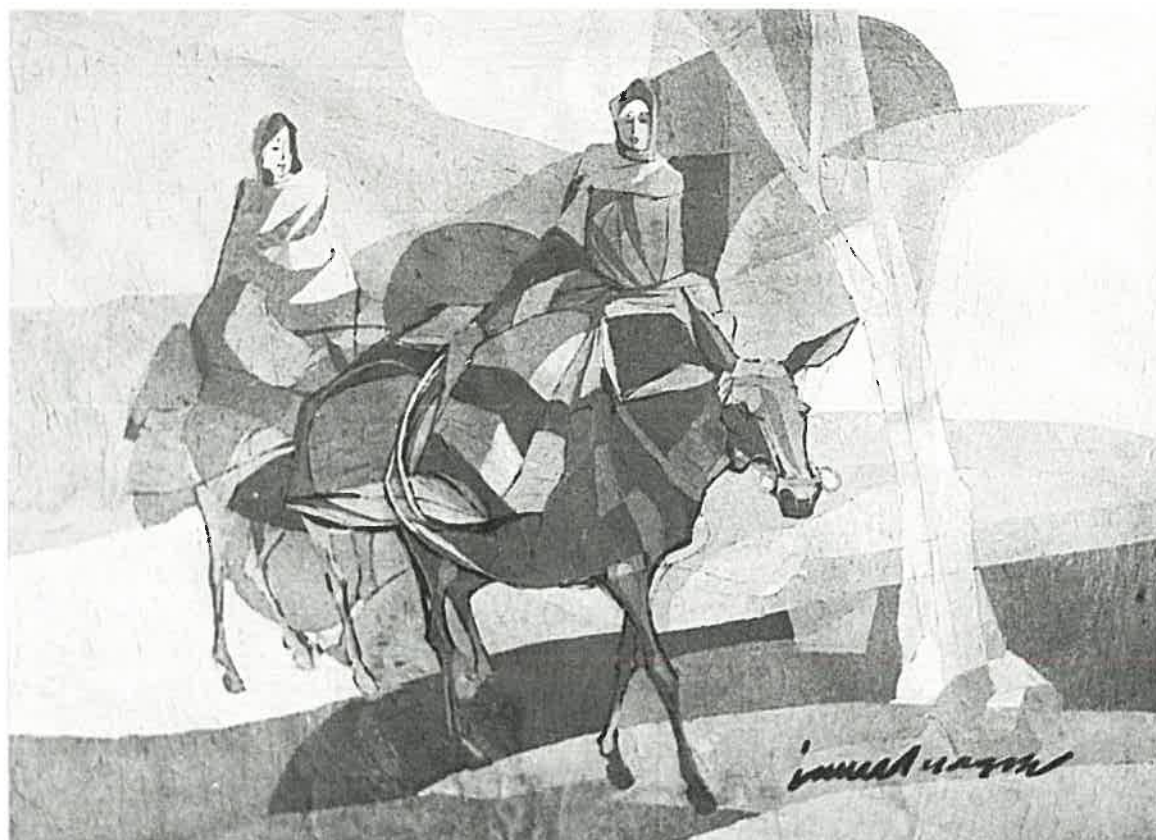
Jamil Naqsh: Pakistan's modern master

Jamil Naqsh, Pakistan's distinguished modern master is a man who lives his life for art. A long-standing devotee of meditative thought, he exercises his mind with the discipline of a *yogi*. He believes there are three energy sources that must be fused and directed towards a

goal: psychic, physical and sexual. His early training enables him to "accept the necessity of monotony". He sits cross-legged for hours at a stretch, totally absorbed in producing canvases of such depth and vitality that the end effect is magnificent.



12
Oil on board, 1959
Private collection

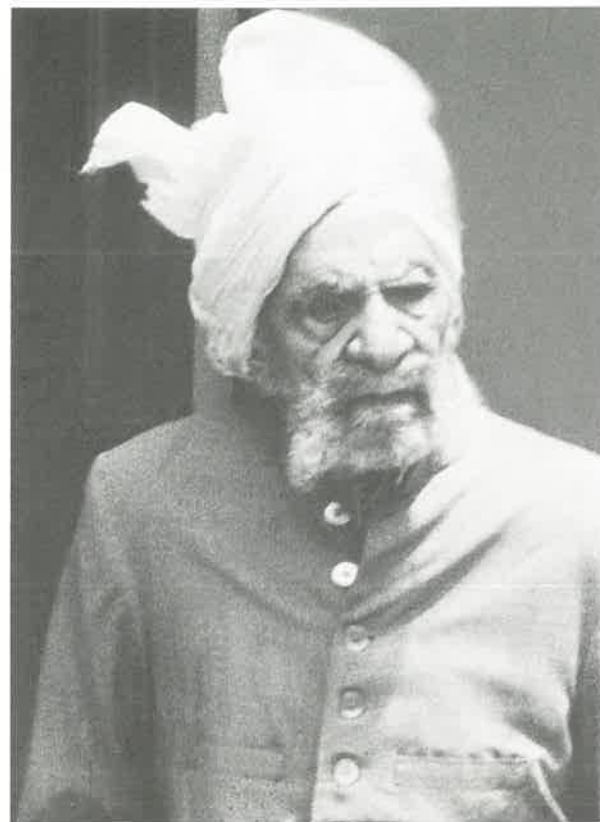


13
Oil on board, 1960
Private collection



14

Shakir Ali and Jamil Naqsh



15

Ustad Mubammad Sharif

Early days

Books, music, a link with nature bred from the soil and passed on from father to son. A gentle father, fond of art, absorbed in writing and illustrating his own words.... friends, cousins, visitors, poetry, birds....these are fragments of early impressions in the artist's life.

Born on 25th December 1939 in Kairana, on the banks of the river Jumna, Jamil Naqsh was the second youngest son of a large and lively family. Memories encompass the small town of his early boyhood, mentioned by the Emperor Jehangir in his journal, *Tuzk-i-Jehangiri*. Here, old buildings cast mysterious shadows; there were huge gates, red brick ponds and a lush green environment that was habitat to diverse birds and animals.

As a patriarch, Naqsh's father was a man of many interests, both cultural and social. Naqsh's mother was passionately fond of classical music. Well known singers were amongst the visitors to the house and until her death, when Naqsh was five years old, his mother filled the house with music.

In spite of a large and affectionate family, Naqsh often spent time alone. Animals were his best friends—stray dogs, cats, ducks, a pet goat and his uncle's docile horse. The large old family house was filled with books, manuscripts and antique furniture; there were numerous quiet corners for a small boy to hide away in.

The house in Kairana was the centre of the universe. When it was later lost to the boy it seemed the balance of the cosmos had been disturbed—Nataraja stumbling in his dance.



16

Water colour on wasli paper, 1970
28.5 x 21 cm
Courtesy Dinar and Dr. Faridon Setna



17

A tribute to Shakir Ali
Oil on canvas, 1976
184 x 292 cm
Courtesy Shakir Ali Museum, Lahore

Years later, Naqsh was to create his own universe in a house of his own design, where he now resides as the patriarch of an extended family. Aware of the fragility of time Naqsh focuses on his priority: his work. He seldom leaves his home; he often paints for seventeen hours at a stretch, with a sense of urgency. He reads avidly and contemplates art and aesthetics. Experience has honed his sensibilities into a perceptive philosophy. National awards granted in absentia, matter little. It is the ongoing aesthetic problem that is important, energy that has to be transcribed on to a dynamic surface.

Idyllic years were to pass before the tumult of Partition and the emergence of Pakistan in 1947. Naqsh, then eight years old, accompanied his older brothers to Pakistan while his father remained behind. They were never to meet again. Raised without parents he faced hardship,

learnt to make decisions early in life and extracted much that was positive from adversity. Deprived of money, Naqsh was never a pauper; the happiness and security of his early years remained integral facets of his dignity. He feels he gained a great deal of experience from the hardship he underwent and learnt the art of survival by constant struggle.

"I inherited a great deal from my parents; I am a part of the great civilization of this subcontinent, that is why I feel, think, believe and live the way I do."

Six years on, at the age of fourteen, Naqsh began a two-year trek home. A traveller without an itinerary, he learned the truth of the words, "you can never go back". His stepmother had stayed on in the Kairana house, but his home as he remembered it, no longer existed. He wandered on across Chittagong to Calcutta, from Khatmandu to Colombo and then



18
Oil on canvas, 1963
63 x 80.6 cm
Courtesy Yasmina and Sleem Majidulla

Peshawar to Karachi. In 1954, his journey ended in Lahore, where he enrolled at the Mayo School of Arts and Crafts (now the National College of Arts). A new chapter had begun.

As an art student, Naqsh was particularly drawn to the head of the Department of Miniature Painting, Ustad Muhammad Sherif, who taught history and rudiments of the classical tradition. Replicating the great albums of the past, the Ustad struggled to keep the art of miniature painting alive.

A dedicated miniaturist, Ustad Muhammad Sherif was delighted with his impassioned young disciple. He sought a vehicle to continue his work and believed (mistakenly as it happened), that he had found it in Jamil Naqsh. It was the discipline Naqsh was seeking, an ethos that became etched into his psyche and that addressed his work in the decades to follow. He left the Mayo School without obtaining a diploma. In later years, he explained that it was knowledge he craved, not a certificate.

As a full time apprentice of Ustad Sherif, Naqsh credits him with the development of his aesthetic sensibilities and not the Mayo School. Even as a student, Naqsh had begun to reveal an extremely independent point of view. Professor Shakir Ali, then Head of Fine Arts at the Mayo School, was disappointed with Naqsh's attitude. Later in Karachi, while addressing a group of young artists gathered around him, he had asked the question: "What is a line? ". Naqsh promptly replied, "a line is an element in art". This response struck a chord in Shakir Ali and from that moment on a new link was forged between them.

Practicing the intricate art of miniature painting Naqsh learnt to sit for long hours at his work. The old Ustad sat painting before an open door, absorbing the light of day. He would begin with the first rays of sunlight and stop only when the light had dimmed, often forgetting to eat. He

taught Naqsh methods of grinding stone to create colours and to make fine brushes from squirrel hair. He shared with him the secrets of the art of the classical miniature painters. Obsessed with the idea of line, the young Naqsh recognised the creative potential of the Mughal School of paintings.

In this way, a year passed in which every waking hour was spent at work. For the venerable Ustad, a student of such rare dedication and ability, one capable of carrying on the teacher's work, was fulfillment indeed. When the year came to an end in 1954, Naqsh felt it was time to move on. He bid farewell to Lahore with all its associations to make a life for himself in Karachi. Today, Naqsh still feels the pain of parting from his mentor and recalls the farewell with anguished eyes.



19
Oil on canvas, 1974
105 x 76 cm
Courtesy Owais Z. Patka



20

شماره استاد گلشن

Watercolour on wasli paper, 1970
29 x 20 cm
Courtesy Mujabida and Arif Hasan

The young artist in Karachi

Following his year of structured and disciplined study with Ustad Sherif, Naqsh decided to settle in Karachi where he sought ways to survive. The young artist explored diverse art related jobs. He cut stencils for cycle rickshaws and painted trucks, acquiring an education of a different kind; an insight into a native art form that had begun in Pakistan with Partition. He discovered that truck art had its own discipline and adapted to its new parameters, earning an average sum of eight annas a day.

As the capital city of Pakistan, Karachi was host to a number of newly established foreign missions and embassies. Second hand magazines and newspapers from the embassies found their way to book bazaars on the pavements and to markets selling used books. Kohri Gardens was a rich source of material, enticing Naqsh's meagre eight annas. He scoured magazines for articles on art and used the classified pages of newspapers as surfaces for his work in charcoal, paint, ink and graphite.

Naqsh enjoys relating how he was introduced to the work of Pierre Bonnard, through a centre-spread in an old *Saturday Evening Post* magazine that depicted the artist's painting *Martha in the bath tub*. He pored over the article on the French artist's life and work with feelings of awe and humility. He empathised with the chronic dissatisfaction that had led Bonnard to rework his painting exhibited in a museum, earning the artist a night in jail. Recalling that time, Naqsh speaks of his own critical attitude towards his work. The

consuming desire to work that possessed him was in evidence in the hours he spent analysing his paintings and despairing of ever attaining the greatness of artists like Bonnard.

The young artist's life was arduous. Adept in the use of oils and watercolour, he was hard pressed to find money for the materials he needed. Yet there were moments of elation and excitement. The future that stretched ahead was filled with promise; the country was young and the possibilities limitless. There were other artists, writers, poets and musicians settling down in Karachi. There was companionship and intellectual stimulation. Conversation flowed and hardship was diffused through a shared optimism.

A small hut situated off the Lawrence Road in the centre of the city, measuring some four by five feet and devoid of any amenities, became Naqsh's home. Every evening found him painting by the light of a kerosene lamp.

Naqsh's fortune began to change when he was offered a job in the studio of a leading advertising company. For the first time, he had a regular salary enabling him to purchase much desired art materials. Recognised today as one of the country's most distinguished artists, he has everything a man could desire, he paints superb works of art, he has been honoured with awards and lives surrounded by love and beauty, but the thrill of arriving home and unpacking the art materials bought with his first salary can never be forgotten or equalled.

Today, Naqsh lives in a spacious, artistically designed and well furnished house. His studio is on the third storey, out of bounds to all but a chosen few. Here he paints, reads, meditates, has meals and sometimes sleeps. Books surround him; the studio overlooks a roof garden that is filled with plants and birds. It is a



21
Oil on board, 1961
Private collection



22
Oil on board, 1961
Private collection

sanctum of peace and harmony, yet his chosen living space is no larger in size than the little hut that was his first home in Karachi.

It was in the mid '50s, that Naqsh met Masood Kohari, a struggling young artist who was to become Pakistan's first studio ceramist. Through Kohari, he learnt of art classes being conducted at the American Centre on Bunder Road and of the free art materials being provided to students. Naqsh recalls the delight with which he joined the Sketch Club conducted by a Japanese American artist. He was, he claims, "walking on air".

As well as providing important instruction, the centre was a vital source of reference material. Naqsh and his peers frequented the library, avidly devouring books on art and discussing them at great length. There was a great thirst for knowledge among the young artists who were keen to learn and explore modern art developments. The Sketch Club boasted a diverse assortment of talent and Naqsh formed lasting friendships with Mansur Aye, Bashir Kosar, Muhammad Ali and a number of other artists. Many of them went abroad and are therefore now unknown in Pakistan, a fact that has affected Naqsh deeply.

Through the years, countless opportunities to exhibit his work abroad have presented themselves but Naqsh has very strong convictions in this regard. He sincerely believes that an artist must work out his personal aesthetics and know where they are coming from; he must first be known and understood in his own environment before venturing further.

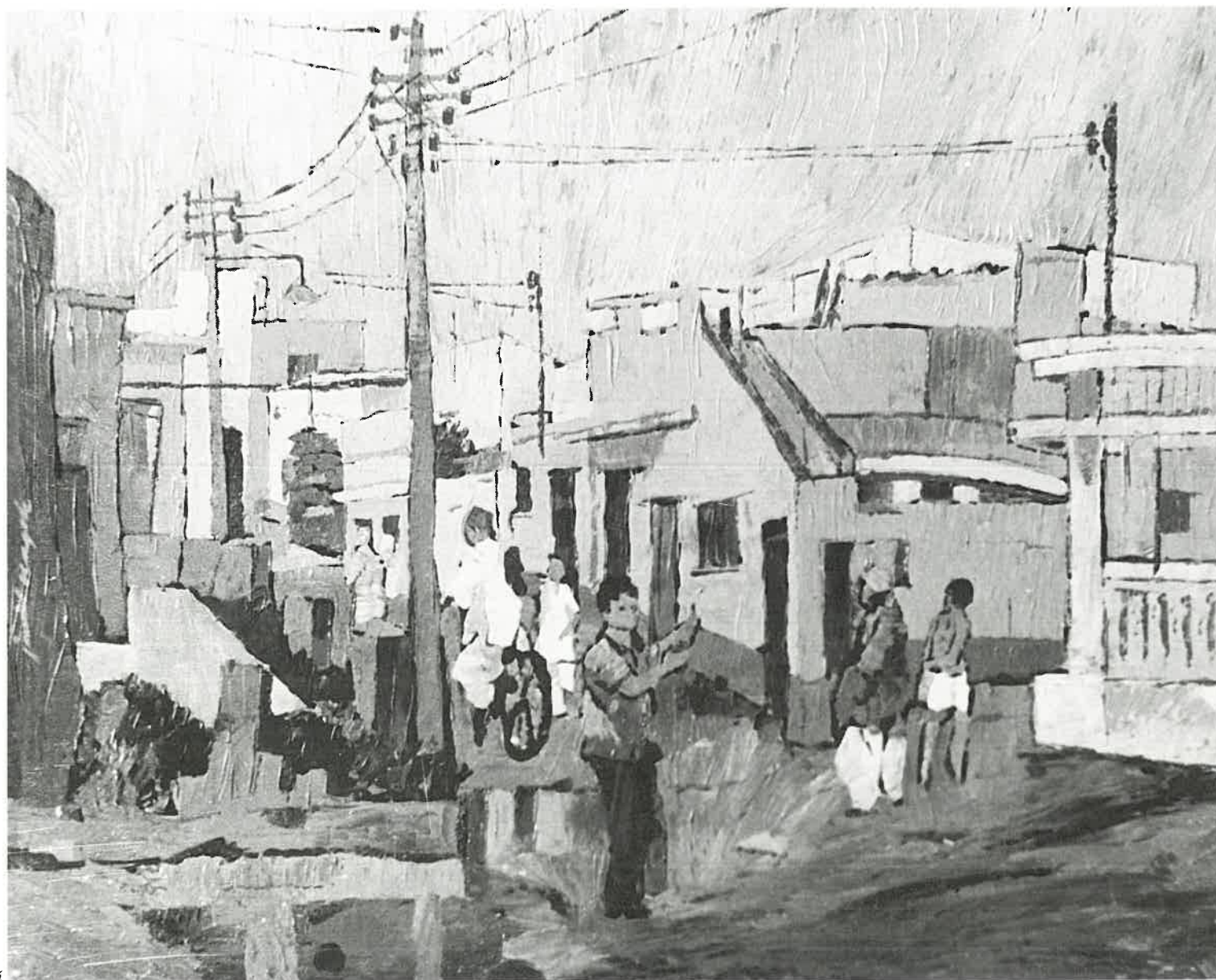
Whilst approaching the end of his tenure in Pakistan, the American Cultural Attache, Dr. Schofield, offered Naqsh the opportunity to continue his art in America. Moved by the gesture, he thought it over very carefully, but



23

*Oil on canvas, 1971
119.5 x 63 cm
Courtesy Ayesha and Akram Sultan*

finally declined. Never at any time since, has he regretted this decision.



24

Oil on board, 1962
Private collection



25
Oil on canvas, 1959
Private collection



Crayon on paper, 1962
Private collection

26

In search of an idiom

Between 1958 and 1960, Naqsh began to paint out of doors. He painted Karachi and its environs, completing over 150 watercolours, most of which were destroyed in 1959, when monsoon floods hit Karachi. He recalls nostalgically the companionable time of those years and the group of friends who worked and 'hung out' together. His friend Masood Kohari and he were inseparable, sharing books and opinions. There was a book on French artists they would study together for hours, sitting on the pavement under the streetlights on Bunder Road. A work that moved them to tears was Ingres' painting titled *La Source*. They discussed this painting in great detail and so often that it became something of an icon for both of them.

On his first visit to France, Kohari spotted it in a

museum and almost fainted with emotion. He left the museum and had to walk around for almost half a day before he was able to collect himself and return to view the painting.

Naqsh did well at work and within a space of two years, was promoted to the post of Studio Art Director. A talented group of artists passed through the studio and became his friends. They included Shahid Sajjad, Maqsood Ali, Mobeen ul Azim and Muhammad Hussain Hanjra. Naqsh longed to devote himself to painting, he resented the hours and energy spent at work but there were few options open to artists. A lack of public interest in art ensured that artists met each other in a selfless spirit of friendship and shared interests. Ruthless competition that was to drive them apart came years later, in the



27
Oil on canvas, 1967
102 x 81.5 cm
Courtesy Rumina and
Kamran Mirza

wake of a burgeoning art market.

Like his fellow artists, Naqsh struggled to evolve a personal idiom, exploring in turn, the old town of Thatta, Manora harbour, the coasts of Baba and Bhit islands, seascapes, street scenes, figures, horses and birds. Kohari describes how the two friends went out in *bunder* boats to the islands from Keamari harbour.

"Jamil was a beautiful watercolourist" Kohari says, "he painted some lovely pieces and it all seemed to come to him without effort. Once we were so absorbed in our work that we missed the boat back, but then everything was an adventure in those days....."

Naqsh was, and intrinsically remains a figurative painter. The human form continues to give him the greatest aesthetic satisfaction. "While I was struggling with my initial aesthetic problem, artists all over the world were into non-objective and non-figurative work. It seemed to me that the negation of fundamental principles and tradition was the hallmark of a modern artist. I was convinced that the path to new and meaningful art could only be achieved by way of deviation arising from fundamental principles."

Naqsh believes that all responsible artists eventually return to the great nucleus of their cultural traditions; whilst adding something new to them. This is, in his opinion, a continuous and valid practice. Globally, while many sculptors and painters are returning to their roots, he claims others have often travelled too far to make the journey back.

The diverse mysteries of life and nature are a constant source of wonderment that Naqsh continues to contemplate and analyse. He has great respect for the artists of the past, who created beautiful forms inspired by nature, arriving in the process, at new realities and dimensions. Naqsh says "these artists are my spiritual ancestors." These convictions have led him away from his peers; many of whom he

feels have wandered too far from the fundamental values. As Naqsh matured, he worked continuously, producing a large body of work that excited viewers.

With the establishment of the Karachi Arts Council in 1958, artists at last had a venue to show their work. Naqsh's first solo exhibition in 1962, was held at the Lahore Arts Council, followed by an exhibition at the Karachi Arts Council, where he was awarded a gold medal. His work attracted the attention of the media and of art critics who commented favourably on his drawing skills, use of colour and composition.

Kohari had become interested in ceramics but both he and Naqsh shared the view that it was unimportant to categorise a painting into a style, whether it be figurative or abstract. In this context, it is not easy to label Naqsh; a duality in



28
Oil on canvas, 1987
48 x 36 cm
Private collection

29
 From left to right: Shabid Sajjad,
 Jamil Naqsb, Hameed ur Rehman
 and Shakir Ali
 Karachi - 1966



30
 From left to right: Jamil Naqsb, Z.A. Bukhari,
 Shams Zuberi and Josh Malibabadi
 Karachi - 1966





31

Oil on canvas, 1965
Private collection

his psyche persists. Acknowledged as a modern artist, his ethos is firmly rooted in his early training as a miniaturist.

During one of Naqsh's regular forays into the old magazine and book markets in the early sixties, he discovered a set of a dozen Italian magazines, *Sele Arte*, carrying articles on El Greco, Marino Marini, Giacomo Manzù, Carlo Scarpa, Giorgio Morandi and several other artists. Today, four decades on, these magazines are still in his possession. They are placed amidst his impressive library of valuable books and treasured as much. His love of reading has led him through periods of experimentation, translating literary ideas into paint. He has come to the conclusion that the painter's problems differ vastly from that of the writer.

Solo exhibition in the '60's

Several solo exhibitions of Naqsh's paintings were held in the '60's. He recalls a solo exhibition held at the Karachi Arts Council in 1963, in which he displayed 80 paintings priced from a hundred to three hundred rupees. A visitor, after relentless bargaining, picked up two paintings for the princely sum of two hundred rupees and that was the sole income from the exhibition. Naqsh insists he was in no way disheartened; it was just the way things were at the time. On the other hand, there were friends like Iqbal Rashid Siddiqui, who always bought paintings at exhibitions and treated artists with respect.



32

Oil on canvas, 1963

65 x 83 cm

Courtesy Atia and Iqbal Rasheed Siddiqui

“Most certainly not in my motifs.....”

In 1971, the art critic Syed Amjad Ali, quoted Naqsh in the media: “I have no story to tell, no symphony to play, no poem to recite, no plot to carry through. No climax, no anti-climax. The uninitiated audience expects all these things of a painter. And if any painter is supplying all these elements through his paintings, then he is not only deceiving his viewers but also fooling himself. If you must find a plot or a story, music or meter, then you should find them in my treatment of colour, texture, form and composition. Most certainly not in my motifs.” After this initial attempt to explain his work, Naqsh has remained silent on the subject.

Through the years, Naqsh has remained single-minded about his work; it was and remains, the crux of his existence. His concerns address the surface of his canvas, the subject a means of manipulating space. Art lovers, sensitive to his ethos, recognize endless variations in his work, aware of infinite changes of colour, harmony and balance.

Many admirers recall an early series on pigeons, a subject he has explored for over forty years. The first painting in the sequence appeared in 1963, emerging as a facet of a personal idiom and a motif often seen in miniature painting. Studying the form, texture and colour of these early pigeon paintings helps viewers to trace Naqsh's development in exploring a specific subject.

In 1967, an exhibition of fifty-one of Naqsh's paintings was held on the theme of *Pigeons*. For Naqsh, the subject possesses numerous meanings. The birds represent domestic harmony drawn from memories of his childhood in Kairana, pigeons were frequent

visitors to the family home, flying in and out through open windows, strutting around the compound and pecking at grains scattered by girls who sifted wheat.

The first of his celebrated signature pigeon paintings portrayed five birds, two pairs and one by itself, their feathers reflecting myriad colours. In later paintings, they acted as a fluttering foil to monumental female figures; a striking contrast of movement and stillness.

Thirty years later, Naqsh returned, in spirit, to this early period when, at the Momart Gallery, he showed a collection of a hundred paintings of pigeons rendered in watercolour, each one unique. His genius in focusing on a single subject and recreating it in a variety of forms was indisputable.

By the mid-sixties, Naqsh had evolved a distinctive personal style that influenced his contemporaries. Delicately layered particles of paint created infinitely subtle tones. The female form became a leitmotif; a full-figured, classical form. Juxtaposed with pigeons it was an inspired coupling, the subject became a point of departure, revealing the artist's fascination with overlapping, weightless, transparent forms. Analysing aesthetic problems, Naqsh concluded that the subject matter was secondary to the plastic problems that had to be resolved.

During the latter half of the '60s, Naqsh stopped working for exhibitions, although his work was often seen in group displays. In 1970, Sultan Mahmood, one of Pakistan's advertising pioneers and an early collector of Naqsh's work, opened a gallery in Karachi where Naqsh's paintings from his personal collection were given pride of place. Canvases and oils on board showed the *Woman and Pigeon* series executed with intricate textural effects in shades of bright red, blue and subtly varying gradations of white.



33

Oil on paper, 1986
59 x 48 cm
Courtesy Tabinda Chinoy



34

Oil on canvas, 1969
61 x 75 cm
Courtesy Mujabida and Arif Hasan

At the inauguration of the Jamil Naqsh Museum in 1999, Syed Ali Imam, a prominent artist, critic and gallery owner, described Naqsh's work of the period in a catalogue. "This was a period when Jamil Naqsh used oil colours in a variety of unbelievable textures woven like a carpet. He used muted colours in an aesthetic division of surface, which made each of his paintings different from the other. His intuitive inner sense of design gave a new meaning to each of his creations. Although the subject was repeated over and over again, yet the division of space,

vertically or horizontally, was instrumental in giving each of his paintings a new meaning. The tactile quality of pigments and the intensely concentrated and worked surfaces added a quality, which is rarely found in the work of most of his contemporaries."

*Seated: Jamil Naqsh, Shebrezade Alam, Zaboore ul Akblaque, Baseer Asbraf and Bashir Mirza
Standing: Shabid Sajjad, Ershad Ali Bukhari, Maqsood Ali, Nabid Raza, Mansur Aye, Sabiba Asbraf, Samina and Lubna Agba. Karachi, 1970*



*Seated: Suroor Barabankvi, Shahnul Haq Haqi, Dr. Absan Farooqui, Ibn-e-Insha, Jamil Naqsh, Ubaidullah Aleem and Shair Lukhnavi
Standing: Ershad Ali Bukhari, Shafi Aqueel, Major Ibnul Hassan, Naseem Durrani, Yousuf Dehlavi and Khalid Latif. Karachi, 1971*



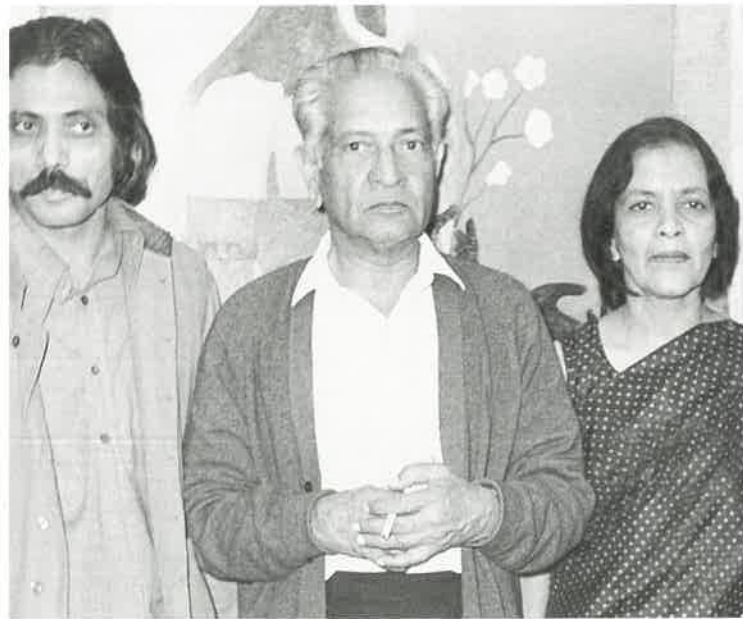
Irfan Hussain, Jamil Naqsb and Ali Imam. Karachi, 1968

37



Jamil Naqsb, Agba Abdul Hameed and Zubaida Agha. Karachi, 1968

38



39

Ali Imam, Ahmed Pervez, Ajmal Hussain, Akbar Naqvi and Jamil Naqsb. Karachi, 1968



40

Watercolour, 1973

21.5 x 31 cm

Courtesy Rehana and Saleem Asmi

The '70's: Important years

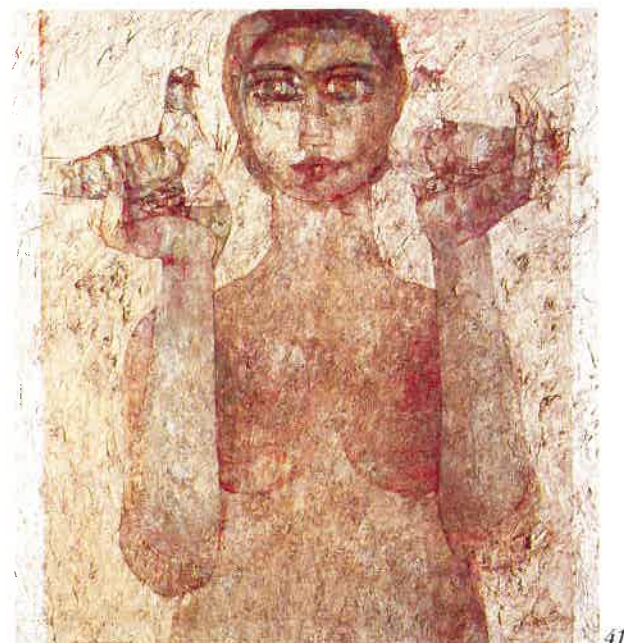
The '70's were important years for Naqsh in which his style gradually became more abstract. Nuances of curvilinear cubism dominated and sensuality assimilated problems of perception. Driven by the need to work, to study, evaluate and develop his visual philosophy through contemplative thought, he became averse to leaving his studio or to meeting people without purpose. Immersed in his own aesthetic problems, he was quite unmoved by others' opinions of his work. Critics sought to understand his single-minded concentration, to find reasons for the repetitive nature of his work and obsessive analysis of line, colour and texture. It was difficult to appreciate a single subject continually explored in minute detail and in an infinite variety of tones.

With comparatively few exhibitions to his credit, Naqsh had achieved the status of one of the country's leading artists. During this decade many of the apparently spontaneous works of art he produced were in fact virtuoso pieces. Continuously experimenting, he strove to achieve a delicate balance between the sensuous and the platonic ideal.

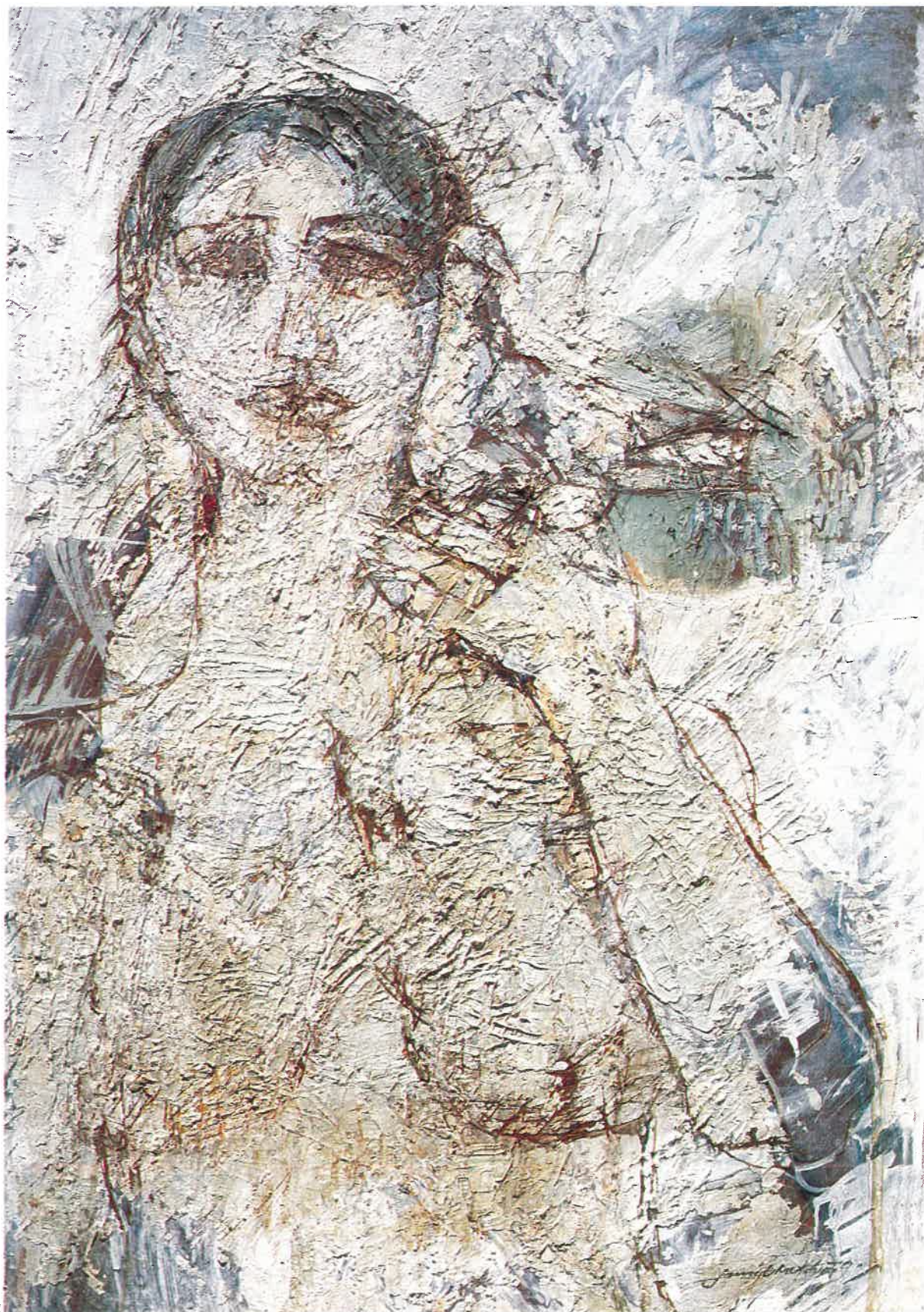
Indifferent to praise and criticism in equal measure Naqsh experienced both passion and torment in his work. Carefully conceived compositions with shape and colour were broken into segments by the skilful use of a palette knife. In dissolving form with finely applied paint was born a translucence mastered through countless hours of effort. Naqsh outlined his figures, creating sensitive lines with the side of his knife. His use of colour, though varied, was disciplined, using yellow ochre, blue and red with white subtly predominating. From these shades an infinitesimal variety of tones emerged.

Although Naqsh worked continuously he became disenchanted with the art establishment. By 1971, several art galleries had opened in Karachi and artists had begun to paint with the aim of exhibiting and selling their work. Naqsh's work ethos was entirely different; he had already developed an inner strength that underpinned his convictions. He was not willing to accept the pressure of gallery deadlines and was able to differentiate between his desire to paint and to create solely for exhibitions. His years of discipline stood him in good stead.

His statuesque women began to give way to more ethereal forms, often adorned with long necks and limbs. Sensitive, abstract patterns with light and dark shades created complex elements. The use of cubist forms evoked emotions that merged with problems of perception. The artist worked in a free modern style vibrant with energy and tonal variations that were unique and exciting.



*Oil on canvas, 1970
90.5 x 90.5 cm
Courtesy Rehana and Shakil Saigol*



42
Oil on board, 1979
92 x 54 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura

Najmi Sura became Naqsh's muse and companion in 1970. His uncle's daughter and once his student, she is now a distinguished artist in her own right. Kohari, one of the few artists who has seen Najmi's work before she began taking instruction from Naqsh, spoke highly of her early work composed in a miniature format. Naqsh encouraged Najmi to enlarge the scale and range of her work, "not to give interviews, not to exhibit her paintings and not to imitate Abdur Rahman Chughtai!"

Naqsh and Najmi have together meticulously planned and supervised the building of their three-storied family home that has taken almost ten years to complete. Watching it grow gradually day by day Najmi speaks of that period in their lives nostalgically and describes it as a

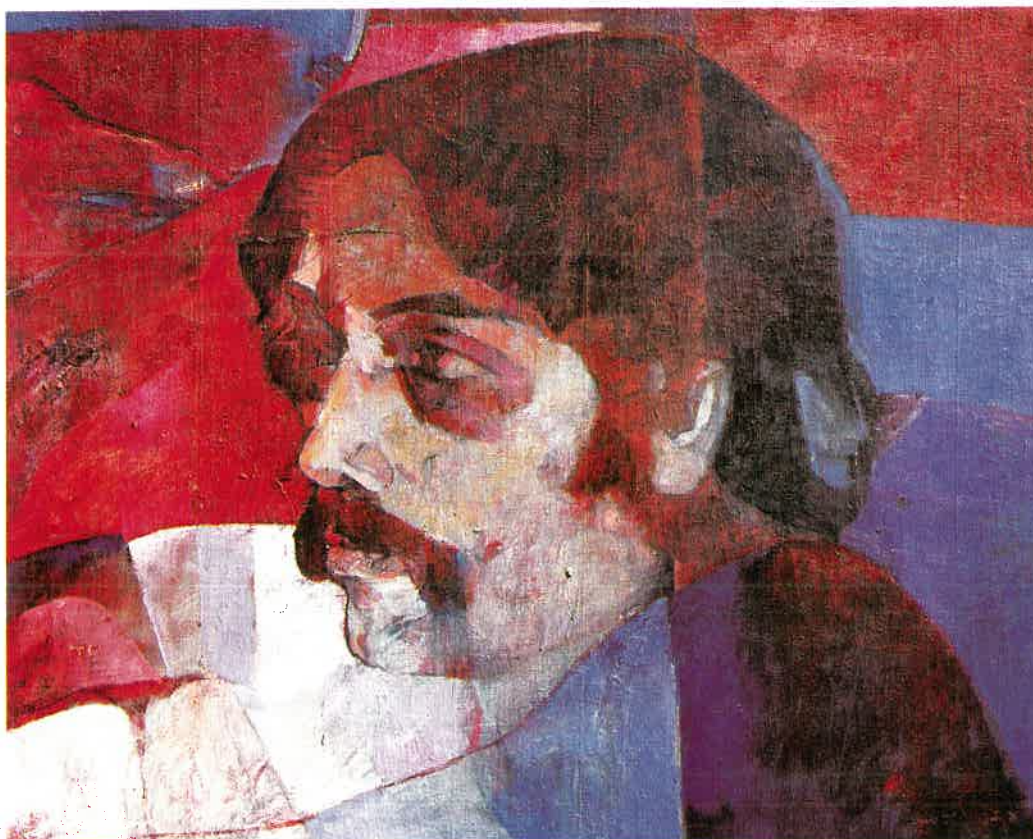
time of great expectation.

It was not until 1977, that Naqsh was able to devote his entire energies to art. Inspired by his friendship with Dr. Faridon Setna, he produced a *Mother and Child* series of twenty-five watercolours, which he donated to the Lady Dufferin Hospital. Deprived of his mother at an early age, Naqsh has mourned the loss of that special relationship throughout his life and idealises it as the only love that is unconditional. Twenty years later, he was to explore the theme again in a series of a hundred superbly executed watercolours that were displayed at a friend's residence.



43
Oil on board, 1970
88 x 121.5 cm
Courtesy Mujabida and Arif Hasan

44
Oil on canvas, 1980
 46 x 61 cm
Collection Fauzia and Khalil Ahmed



45
Oil on canvas, 1980
 46 x 61 cm
Collection Fauzia and Khalil Ahmed



Happiest working in the studio

In the mid '80's, Naqsh was disturbed to find his vision had deteriorated, newsprint had become harder to read and lines had begun to blur. He suffered a short lived depression in which he imagined that his sight had been further impaired. Fortunately, this did not happen. Prescribed spectacles, he soon regained his innate balance, but this incident led him to produce a series of immaculately detailed, realistic work eulogising the human form.

Naqsh is happiest when working in his studio where all is calm and peaceful. Through a skylight he can see the stars at night. Friends call by appointment and he is a delightful and welcoming host. He has a vast knowledge of art drawn from books and from his own measured conclusions; friends send him books and catalogues of exhibitions from all over the world. He loves to discuss aesthetics with his visitors and they are expected to appear punctually. Time is precious and he is very conscious of its swiftness.

The unmistakable quality of Naqsh's work has always been linked to his linear genius. His drawing is superb; he firmly believes that drawing is the base upon which all art is created, a philosophy he shares with Chughtai. Throughout the years, using a brush, he has produced innumerable masterly pen-and-ink drawings. Today, these have become collectors' items.

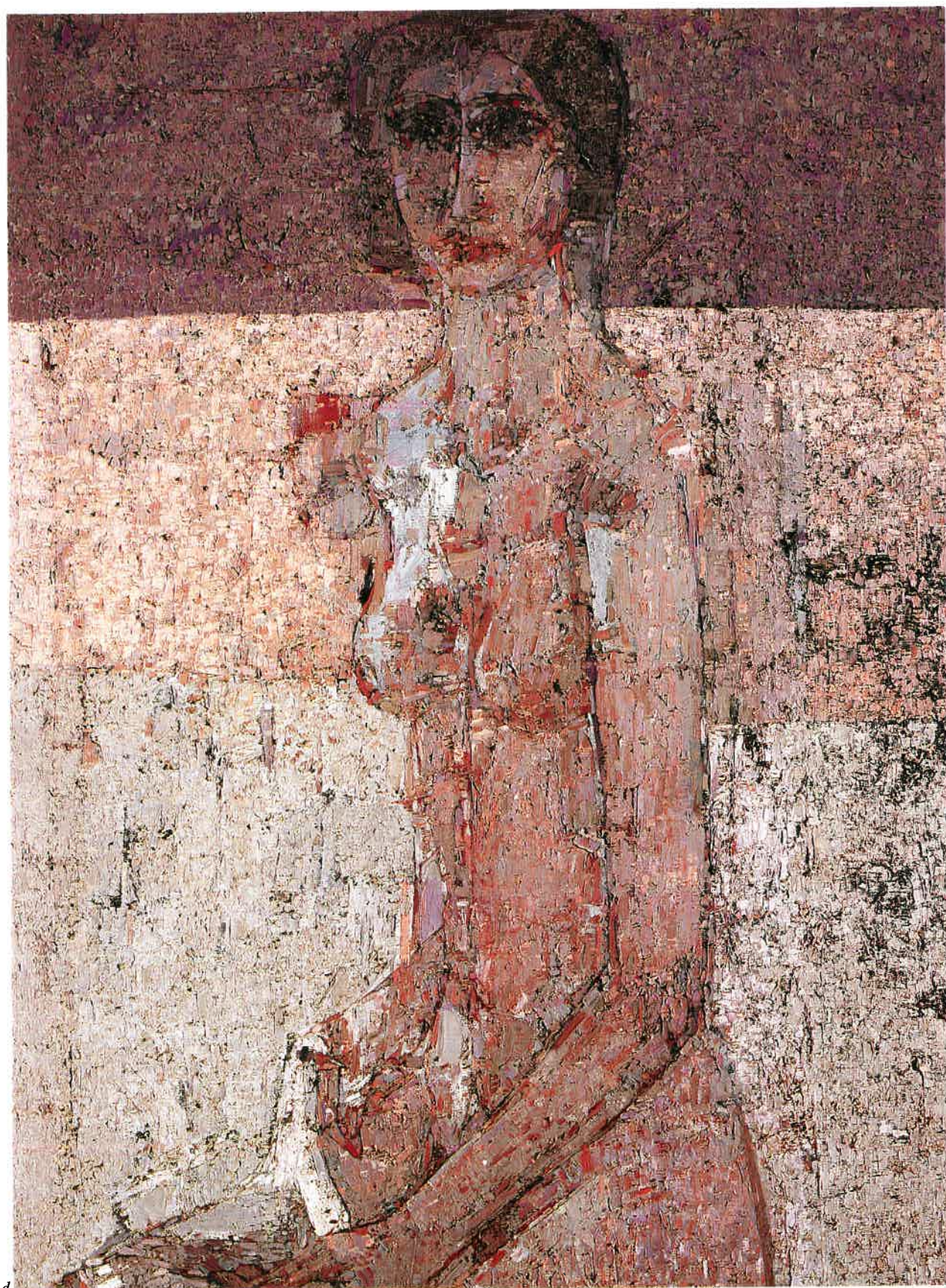
Naqsh has never attended award ceremonies; in 1980, he won the Shakir Ali Award, this was followed in 1982 by an award for 20 years of contribution to art from the Arts Council of Pakistan. In 1989, he was given the highest accolade for art in the country, the President's

Pride of Performance. The same year, he was the recipient of the Artists' Association of Punjab Award for the Pursuit of Excellence.

More precious than all these awards is a tribute by Shakir Ali. Working on a canvas some months before his death, Shakir Ali was interrupted by a visitor who showed him some recent paintings by Naqsh. Snapping his brush in two, the professor declared he no longer felt the need to paint as he had a worthy successor.



Oil on canvas, 1980
92 x 61 cm
Collection Fauzia and Khalil Ahmed



47
Oil on canvas, 1972
107 x 76 cm
Courtesy Nasreen and Riaz Mahmood



48
Oil on board, 1998
41 x 41 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation

Modern Manuscripts: Beyond words

Jamil Naqsh is a complex, multi-faceted man who seeks solace in music, poetry and books. He was one of the earliest artists to explore the dimensions of Arabic calligraphy, a subject he has studied and practiced since boyhood. Recalling his discussions with Shakir Ali and Sadequain in the '60's, Naqsh maintains that Arabic calligraphy is in essence a question of design; it was an aesthetic challenge he was to fully explore three decades later.

He has completed three hundred and eighty calligraphic works. These are dense, passionate and brilliant paintings with interlinked lines and overlapping grids in myriad directions across watercolour or oil painted surfaces. The work often evokes the translucency of stained glass windows echoing traditional elements of design found in ancient manuscripts. They are enriched by an incalculable number of tonal gradations. Vibrant highlights attract and deflect the

movement generated by unbroken strokes that curve into a central mass.

The *Modern Manuscripts* series appears to be the culmination of Naqsh's obsession with line. The tension and intensity of the work is stunning, pure energy flows across the surface. Uneven, horizontal lines are often used as a device to break the intensity through contrast.

A selection of one hundred watercolours of the *Modern Manuscripts* were exhibited in Karachi and Islamabad with the collective title: *Beyond Words*. Using the freedom of a contemporary idiom with reference to a traditional discipline, Naqsh has made a significant contribution to the history of calligraphy as an art form in Pakistan.



49
Watercolour, 1996
36 x 26 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



50

*Jamil Naqsh and Najmi Sura
Piccadilly Circus, London, 1989*



51

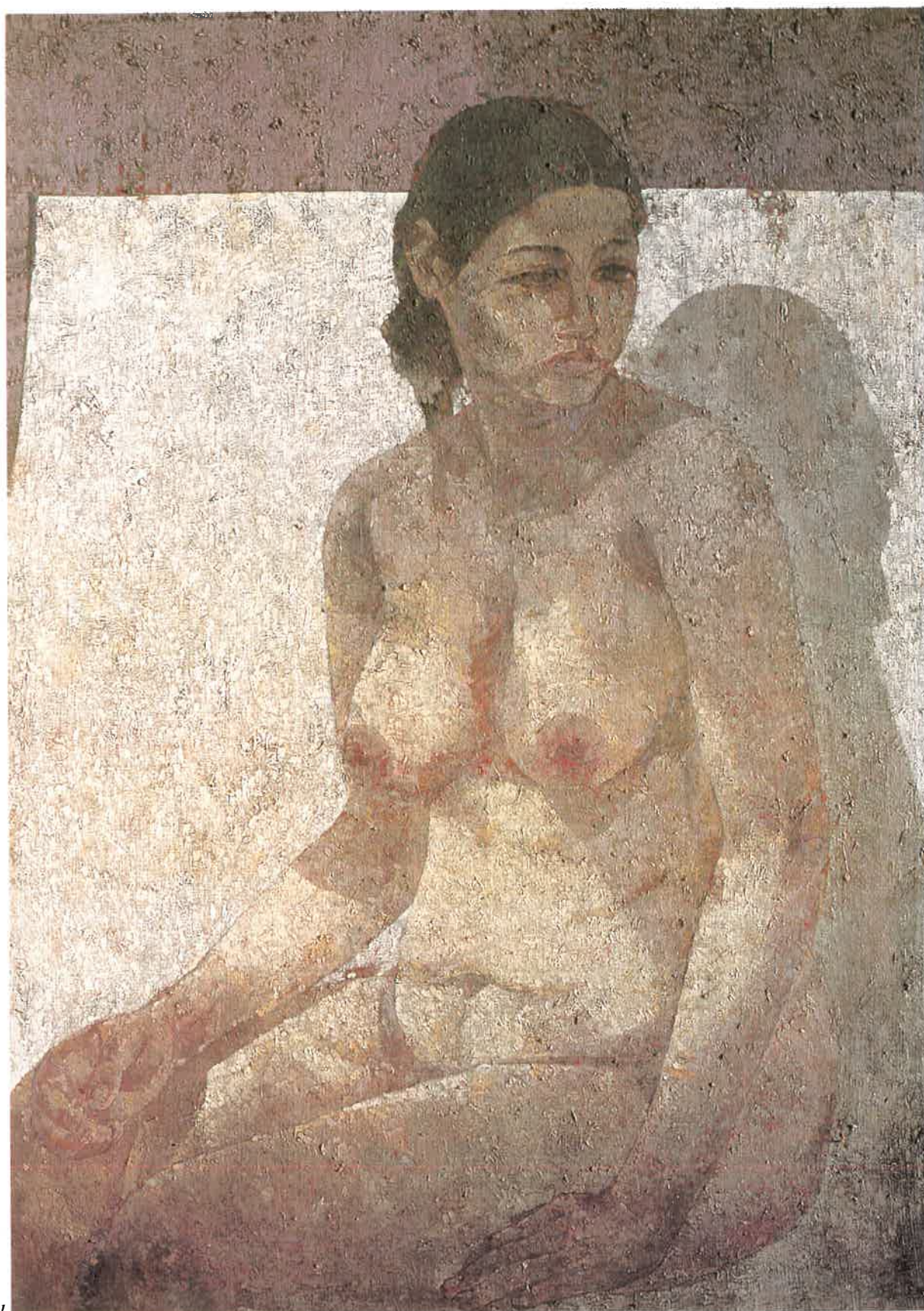
*A view of Jamil Naqsh's living room
Karachi, 2002*

Ending the millennium

1998 was the Chinese Year of the Horse and Naqsh introduced the image of the horse juxtaposed with women in his work in a unique and imaginative unity. Dedicating his work to the sculptor Marino Marini (1901-80), Naqsh exhibited one hundred and fifty works titled *Woman and Horse*. Sculptural in form, overlapping fragmented forms merge into intricate textures and patterns. Syed Ali Imam observed: "Naqsh had minutely observed the beauty and agility of the horse both personally, as well as in the illustrated manuscripts of the subcontinent and in Chinese art."

During Naqsh's study of horses, he took the

opportunity to admire Marino Marini's work first hand. Marini had not allied himself with avant-garde movements, his artistic aims remained individual and he had worked mainly in bronze on a few favourite themes, most notably the horse and rider. Marino Marini's aesthetic vision became a point of departure for Naqsh who created a sequence of compositions dedicated to him. The occasion attracted a large gathering of artists and art lovers at the Momart Gallery for a one evening show. Naqsh's thoughts were proffered in poster form to the viewers.



52
Oil on canvas, 1982
153 x 109 cm
Courtesy Rebana and Shamil Saigol

*I am a modern painter
A painter of the human form
It is said the body consists of
60 billion cells
It is said a human being is
character and intellect
Or is it a machine?
I do not have the knowledge
of the ancient Egyptian
embalmers
I only know I live within
these mysteries*

Jamil Naqsh, 1998

With maturity had come new friends and admirers and in 1999, encouraged by Najmi Sura, Naqsh established a Friends of Jamil Naqsh Foundation. One of his over-riding anxieties, inevitably, was the preservation of his work for future generations. With no desire to send his work outside the country, and little hope of an appropriate venue in Pakistan, he set his mind to finding a solution to this problem.

In an unprecedented act of generosity, he donated one thousand paintings to the Trust, which aspired to found a Museum of Art to house and display his work. On Sunday, 28th February 1999, The Jamil Naqsh Museum, in its formative stage, was inaugurated in a gallery adjacent to the Momart gallery, the first private venture of its kind in Pakistan.

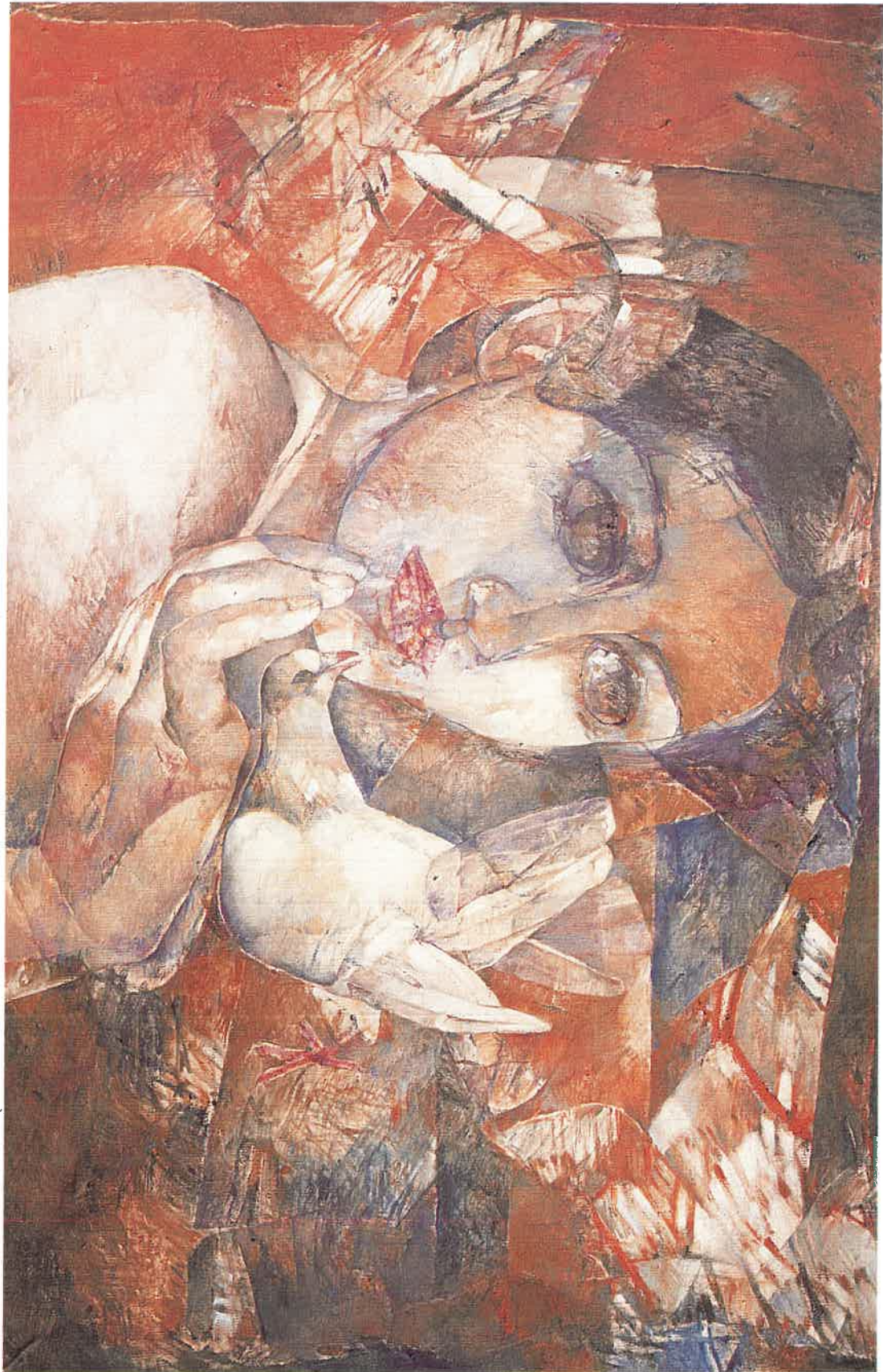
Musing on his life, Jamil Naqsh looks back at paths taken and decisions made: some wrong, some right.



Watercolour, 1983
44 x 30 cm
Courtesy Rebana and Shakil Saigol

He lists his 'right' decisions thus:

The decision to wander across India and Pakistan at an early age
To study album painting
Not to obtain an art diploma
To join the studio of an advertising company
Not to settle in America
To make the friends he did: artists, writers, musicians and poets all of whom continue to remain close.



54
Oil on canvas, 1987
92 x 61 cm
Collection Fauzia and Khalil Ahmed

Surprising their friends, Naqsh and Najmi Sura celebrated the millennium by leaving their cloistered studios for London and Paris to explore renowned museums and galleries. Further visits followed, and travel now appears to be an important element in the artists' lives.

Jamil Naqsh is a sensitive man, a thinker with his own reasoning and logic and no doubt with more surprises in store for his admirers. The retrospective of his work at the Mohatta Palace Museum, allows art lovers, for the first time, an opportunity to view a magnificent collection spanning five decades in the life of this modern master. ■



55

Najmi Sura, Jamil Naqsh and Marjorie Husain. Karachi, 1996



Woman and Pigeon



56
Oil on canvas, 1958
70 x 56 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



57
Oil on canvas, 1966
81 x 115 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



58

*Oil on canvas, 1967
76 x 89 cm
Courtesy Rehana and Shakil Saigol*



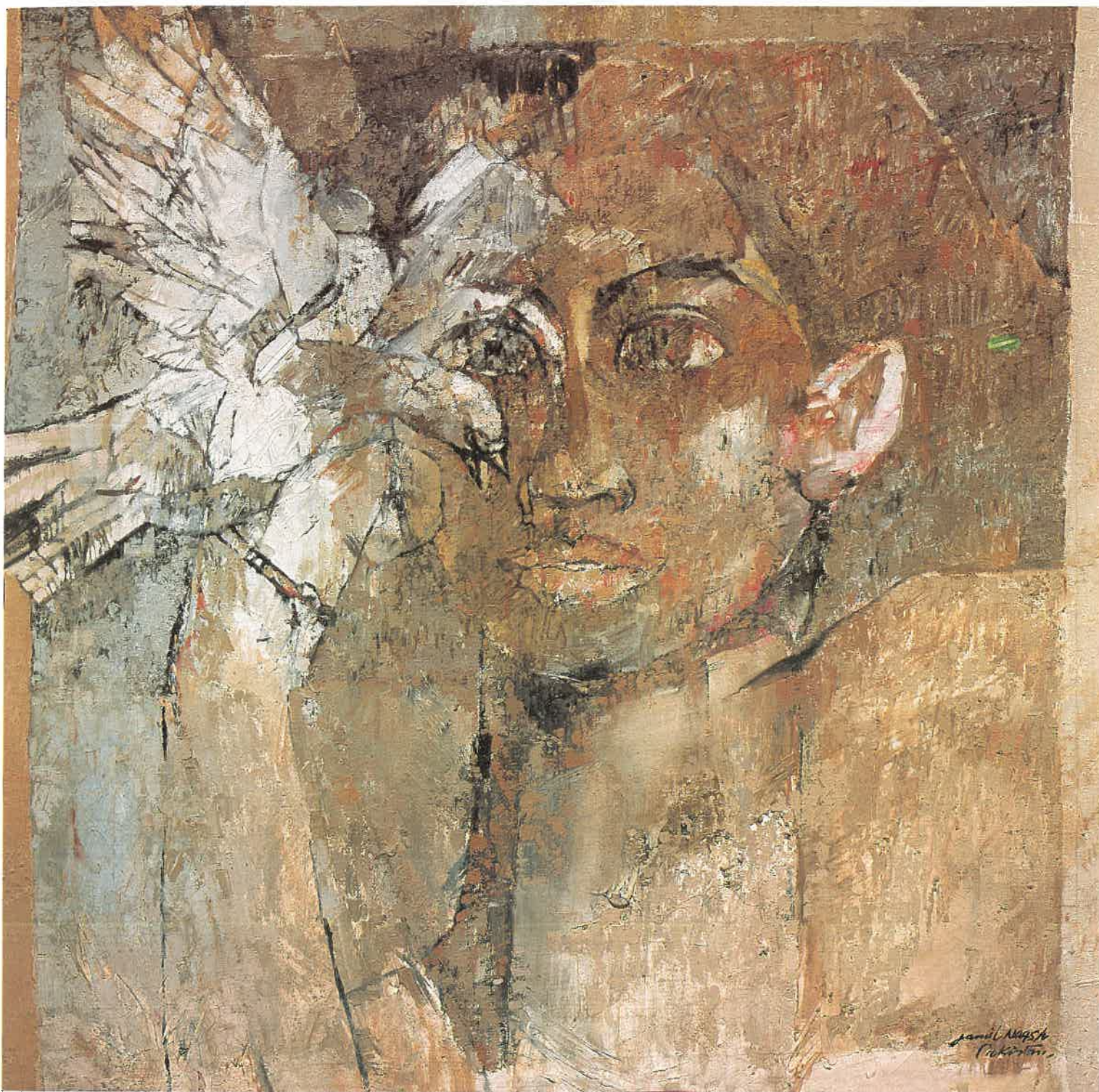
59

Oil on canvas, 1968
106 x 92 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



60

Oil on canvas, 1974
78 x 79 cm
Courtesy Meher and Husain Sheriff



61

Oil on canvas, 1972
73 x 73 cm
Private collection



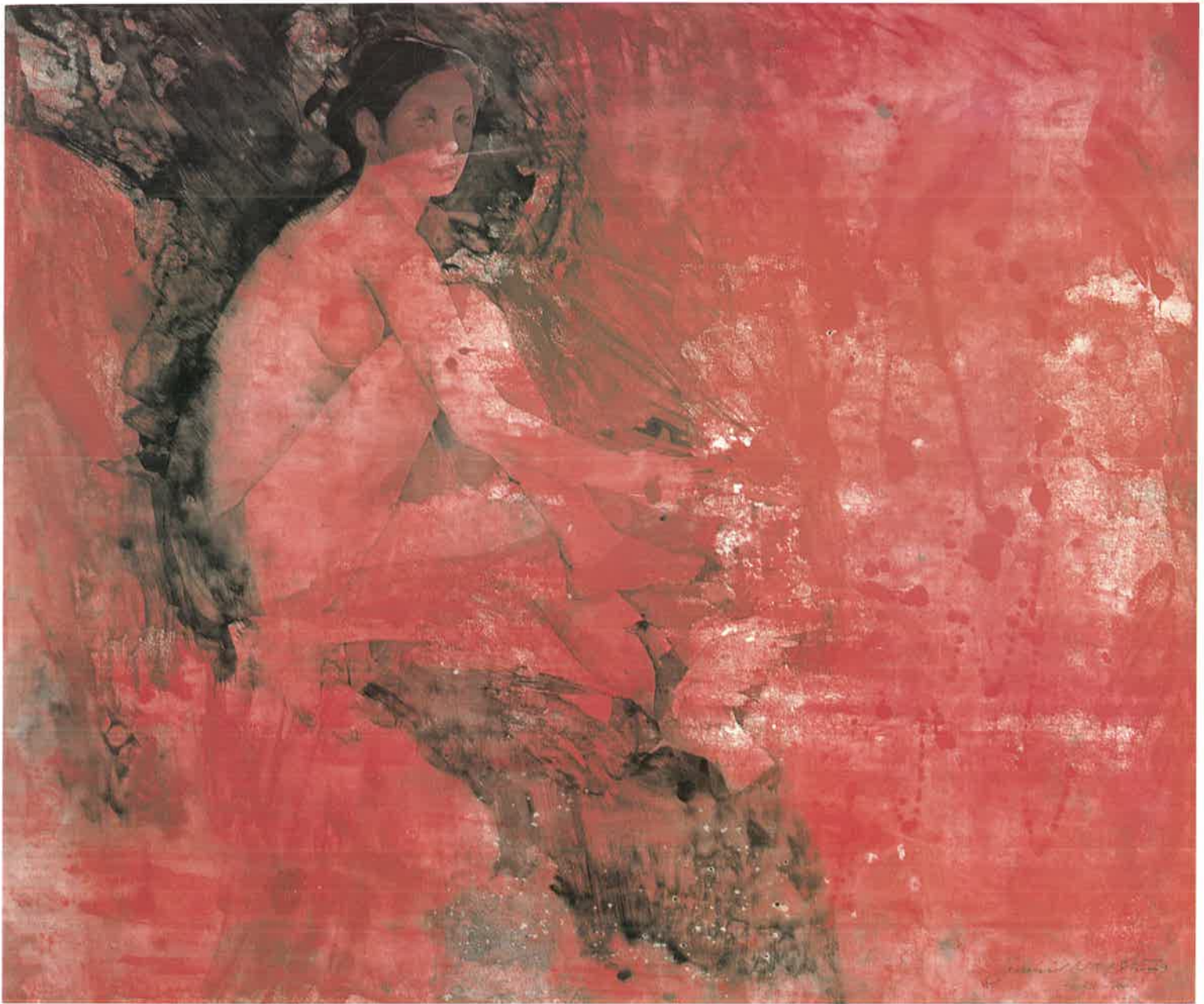
62
Oil on board, 1977
100 x 40 cm
Private collection



63
Oil on canvas, 1977
92 x152 cm
Private collection

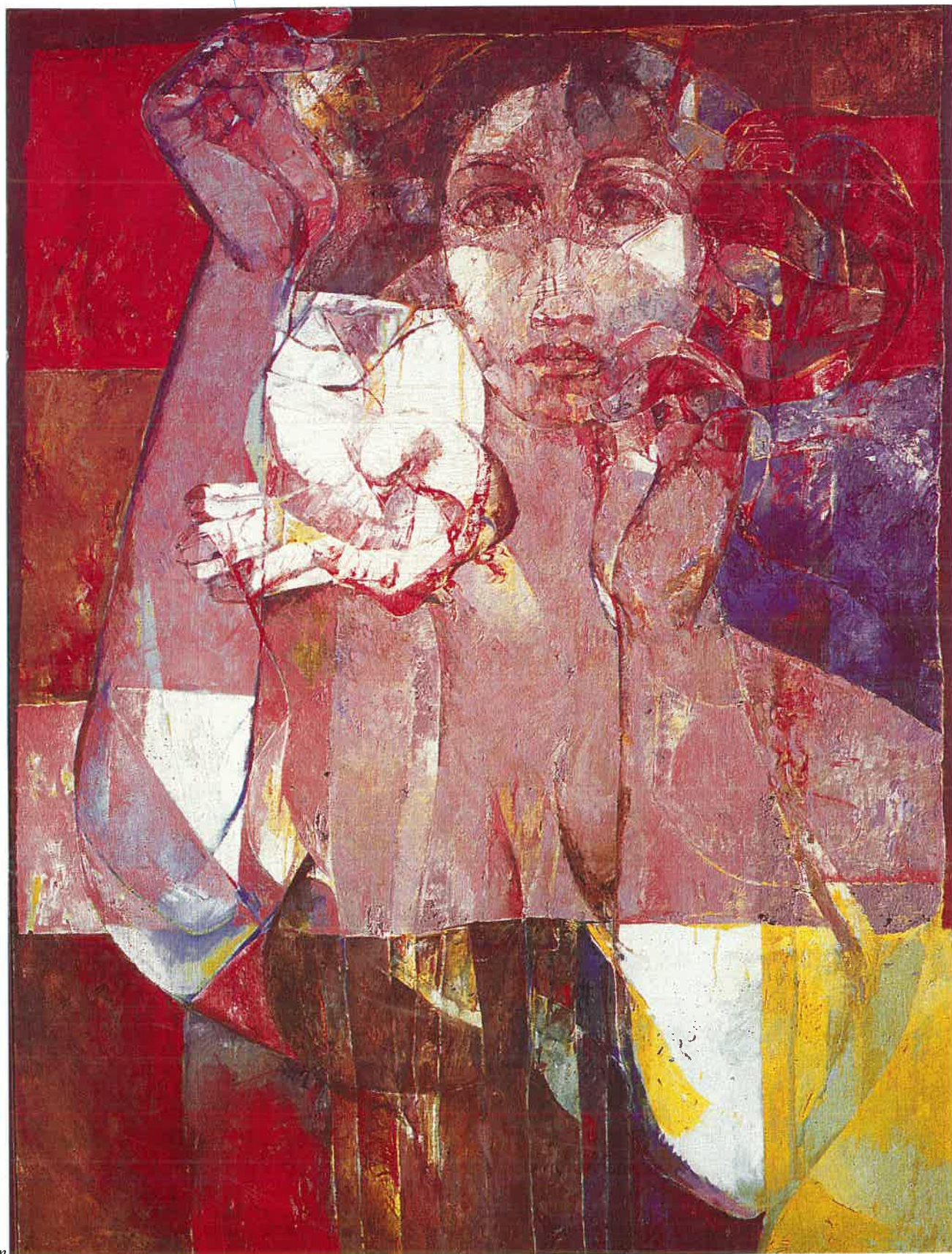


64
Oil on canvas, 1979
155 x 90 cm
Courtesy Rashida and Aftab Tapal

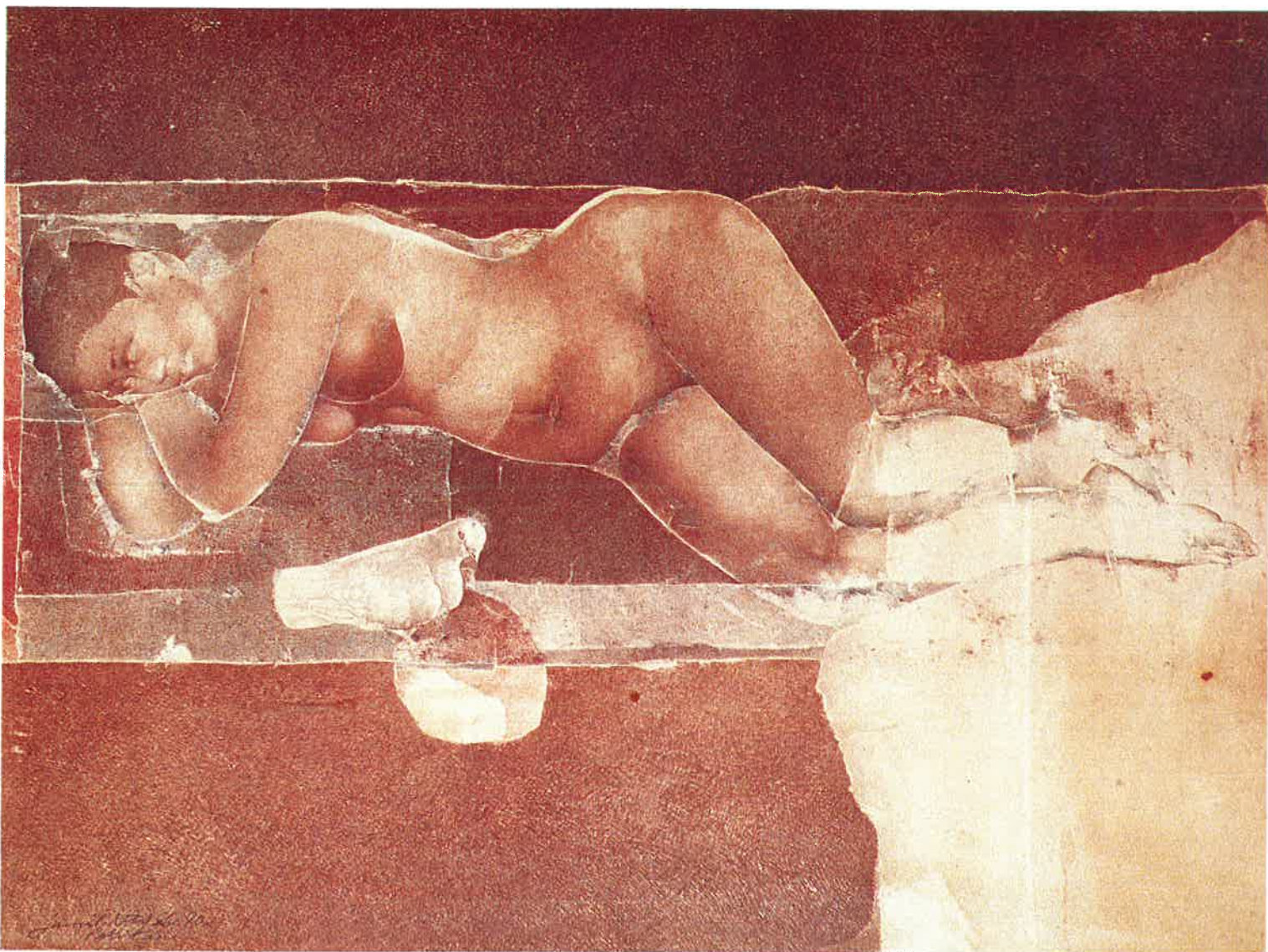


65

Watercolour, 1979
93 x 144 cm
Courtesy Salma and Mubammad Masbood Usmani



66
Oil on canvas
95 x 73 cm
Private collection



67

Oil on paper, 1980
45.5 x 60.5 cm
Courtesy Muzaffar Gbaffar



68
Oil on paper, 1980
105 x 70 cm
Courtesy Iffat and Iqbal Haider

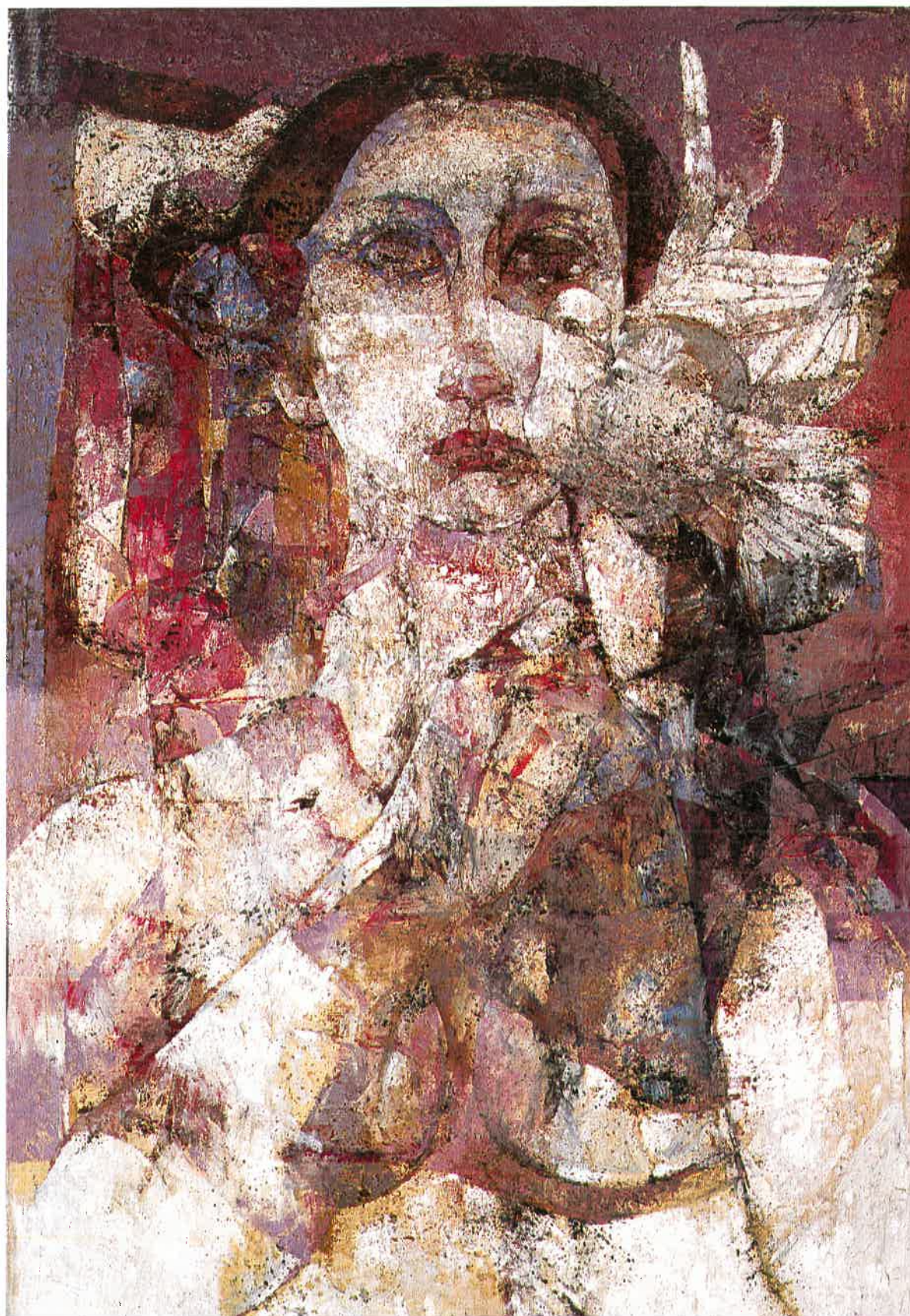


69

*Oil on paper, 1980
94 x 155 cm
Courtesy Iffat and Iqbal Haider*



70
Oil on canvas, 1981
124 x 92 cm
Courtesy Amna Sajjad



71
Oil on canvas, 1982
93 x 63 cm
Courtesy Sultan Ahmed



72
Watercolour, 1983
92 x 61 cm
Private collection



73

*Oil on paper, 1983
38 x 51 cm
Private collection*

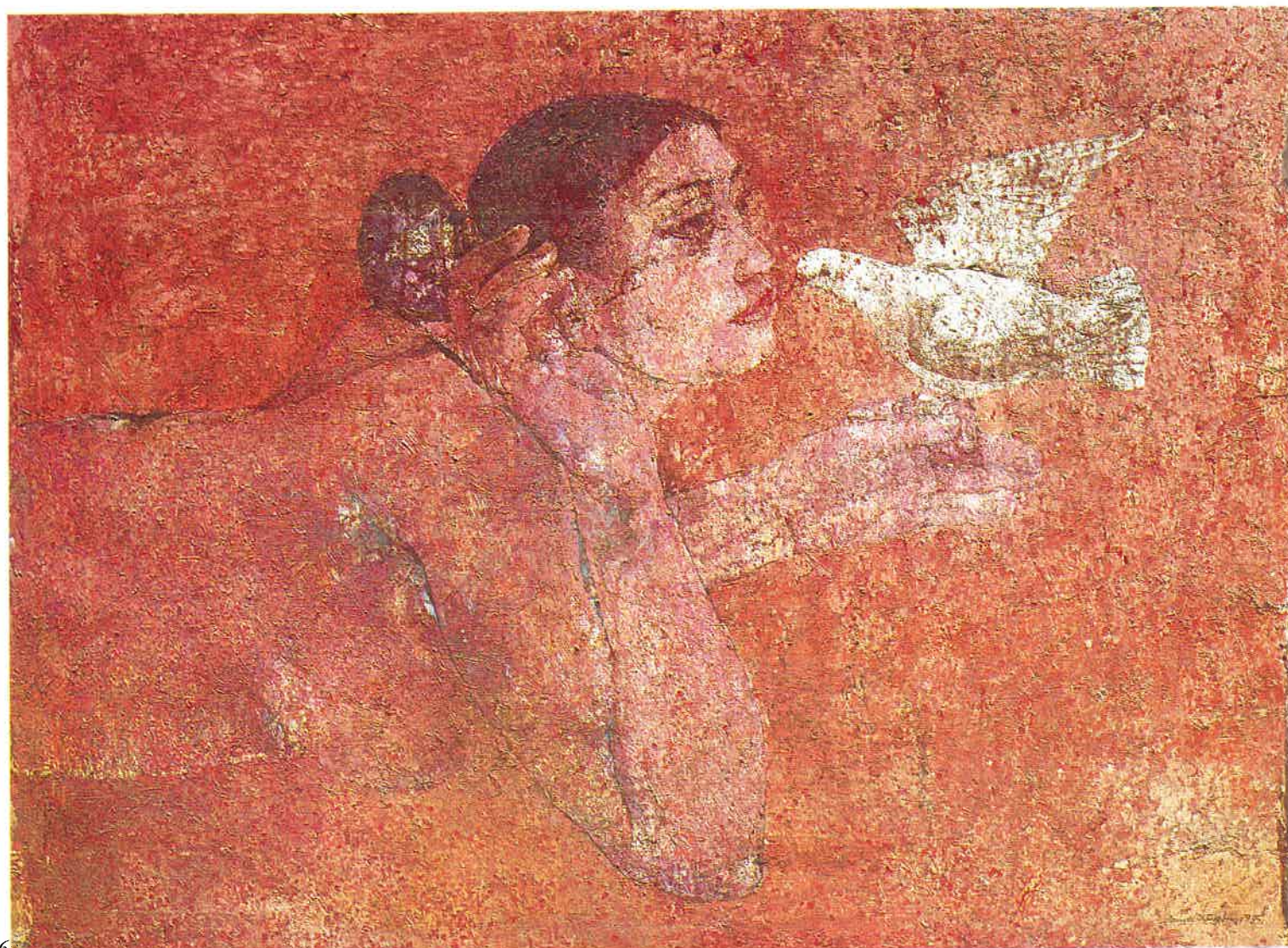


74
Watercolour, 1983
47.5 x 43.5 cm
Private collection



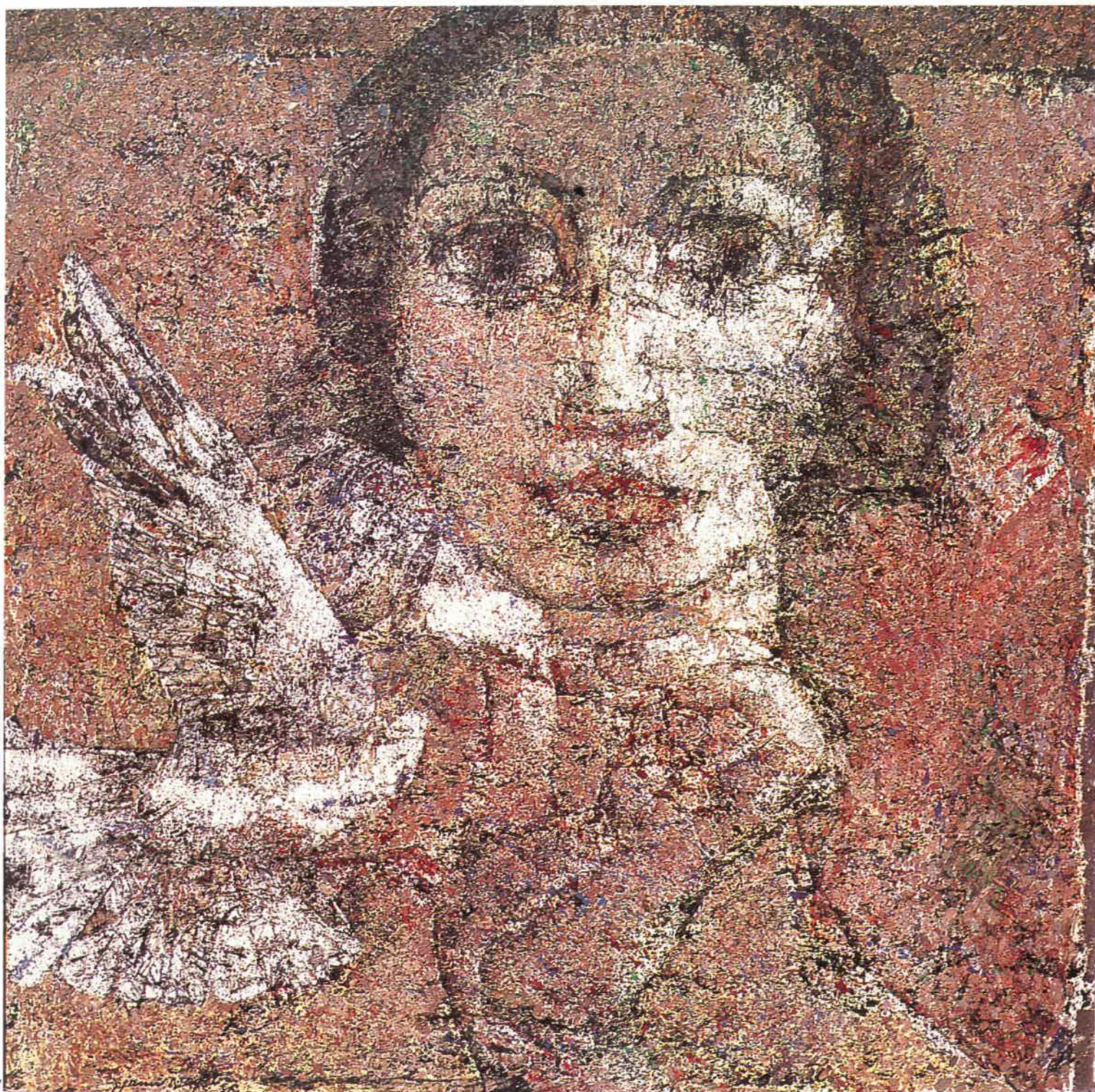
75

Oil on canvas, 1984
62 x 107 cm
Courtesy Sultana and Abbas Ahmed



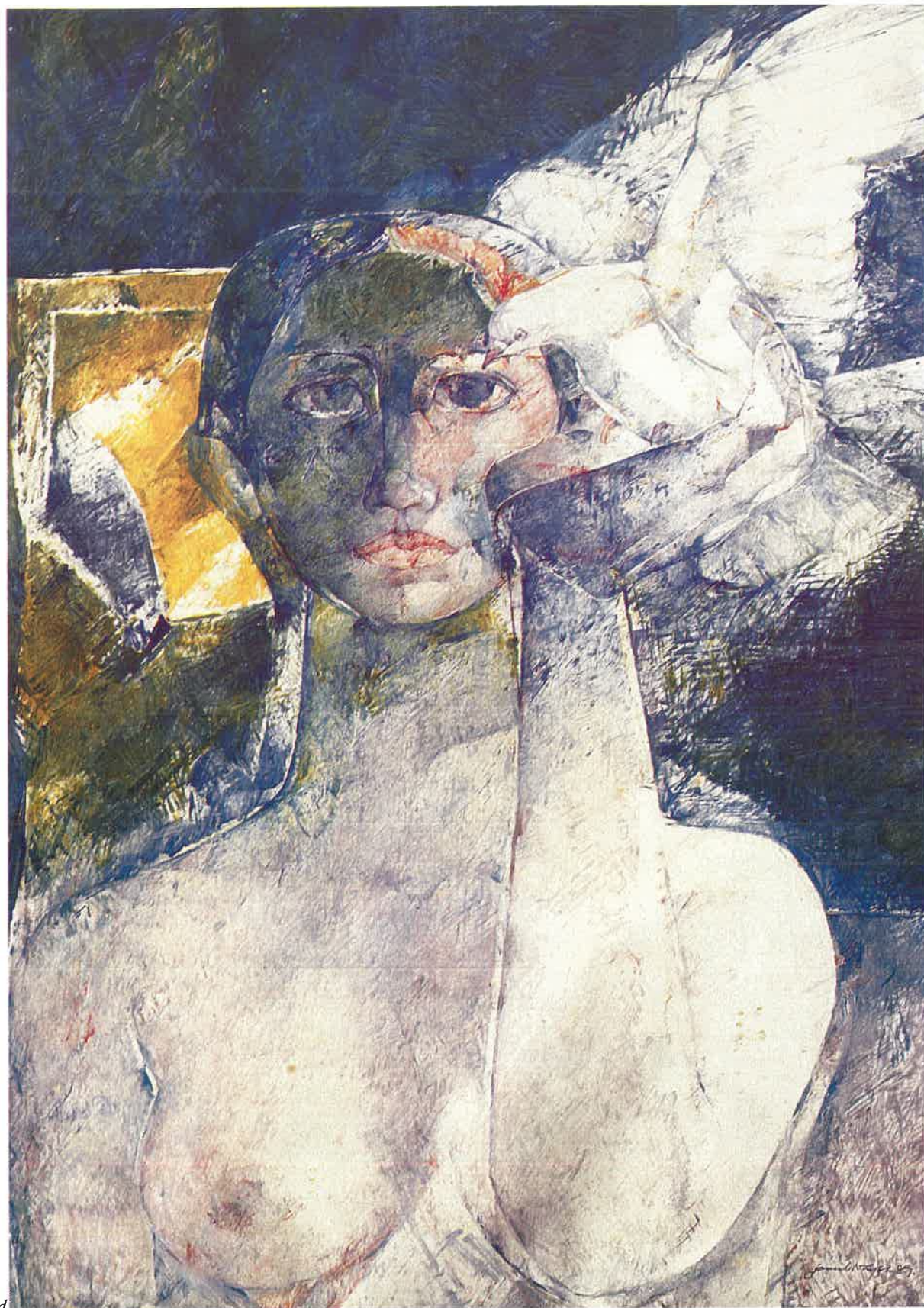
76

Oil on canvas, 1985
122 x 163 cm
Courtesy Rasbeeda and Aftab Tapal

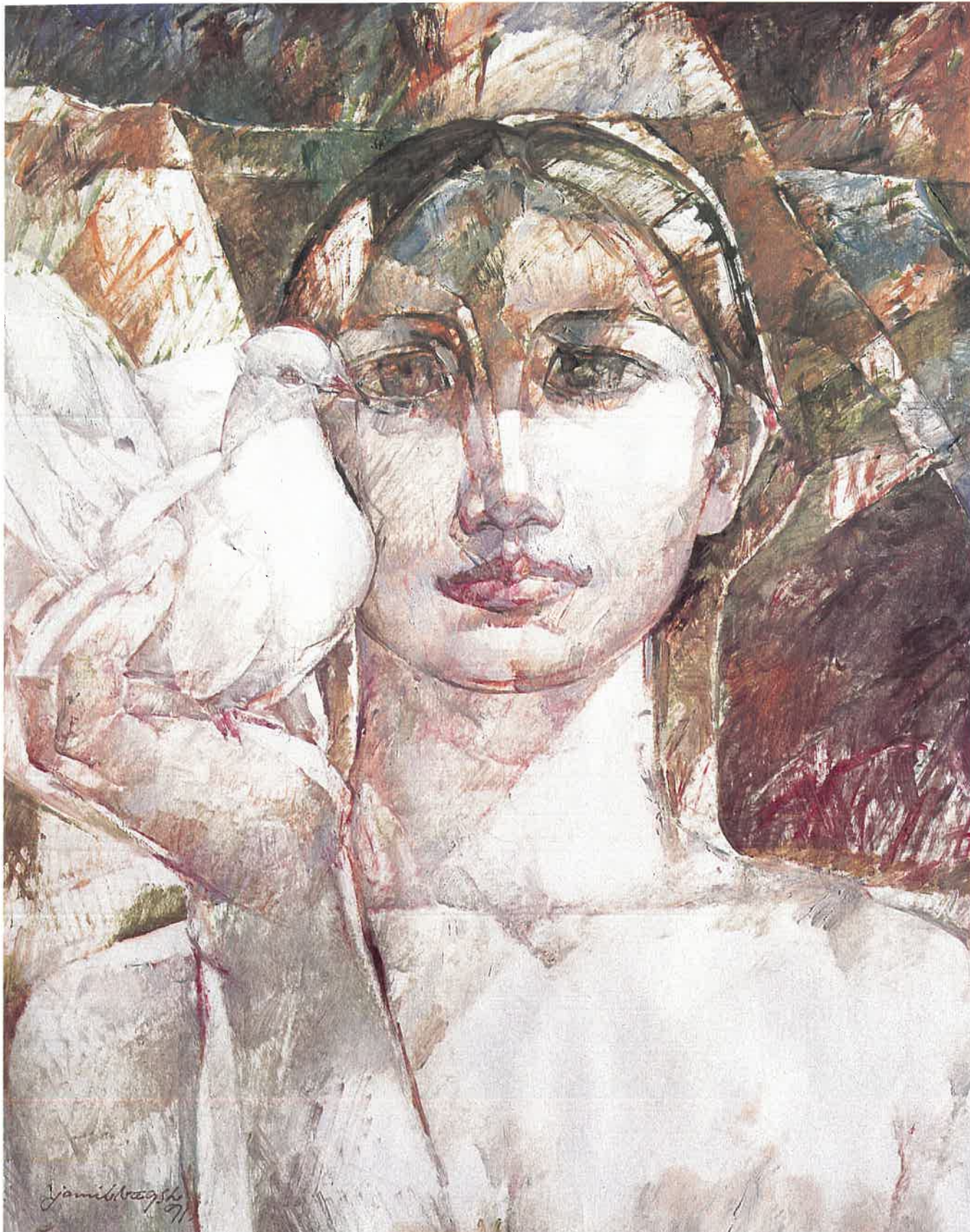


77

Oil on canvas, 1986
61 x 61 cm
Courtesy Shammi Ahmed



78
Oil on paper, 1989
113 x 85 cm
Courtesy Sultana and Abbas Ahmed

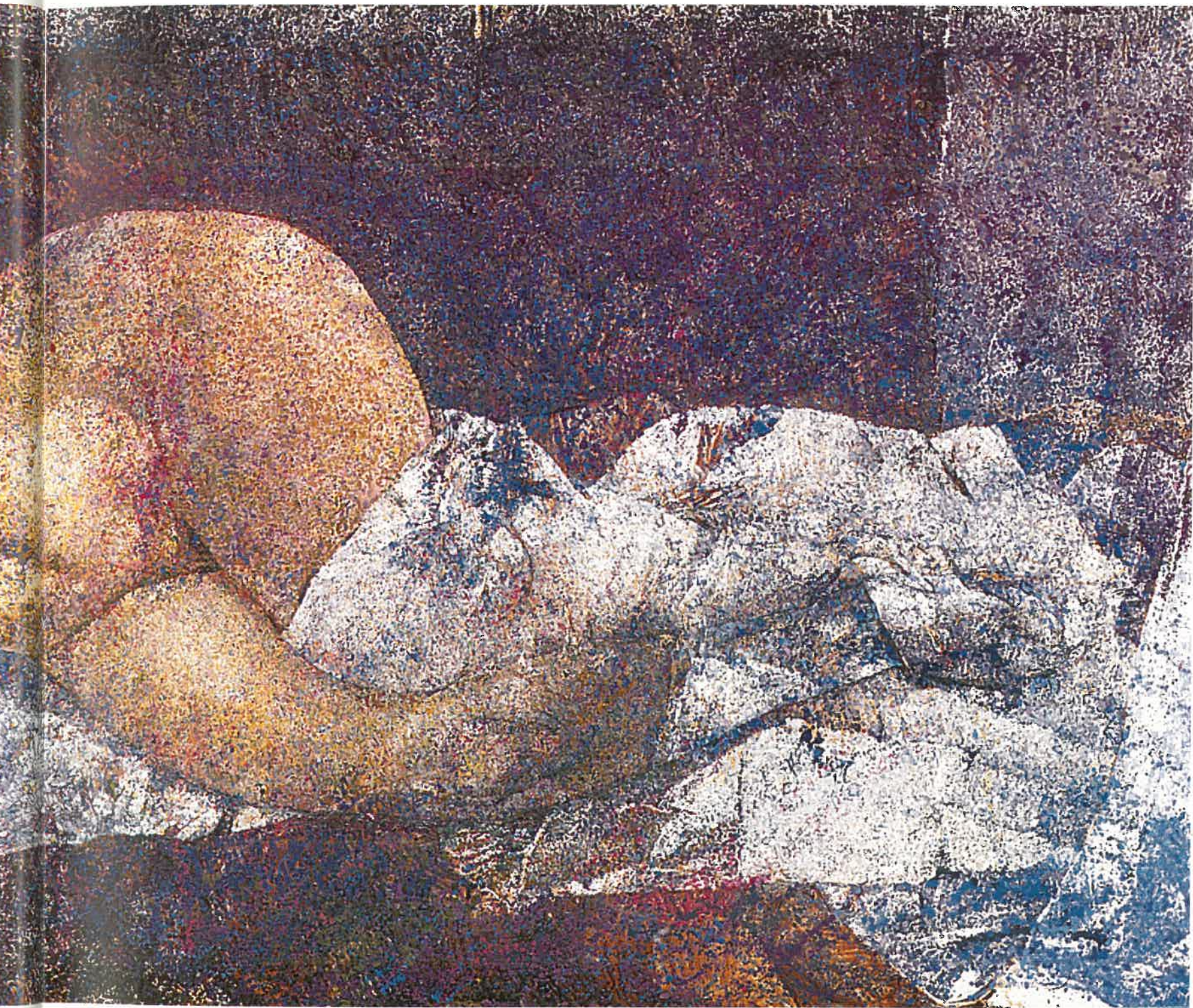


79
Oil on paper, 1991
113 x 94 cm
Courtesy Sultana and Abbas Ahmed



80

*Oil on canvas, 1991
123 x 276 cm
Private collection*







81
Oil on canvas, 1992
92 x 152 cm
Courtesy Dr. Iffat and Khursheed Yazdani

82
Oil on canvas, 1992
 93 x 153 cm
 Courtesy Salma and
 M.M.Usmani



83
Oil on board, 1993
 75.4 x 119.6 cm
 Courtesy Hilla Javeri





84

Oil on canvas, 1994
153 x 153 cm
Courtesy Dure and Akbar Liaquat Ali Khan



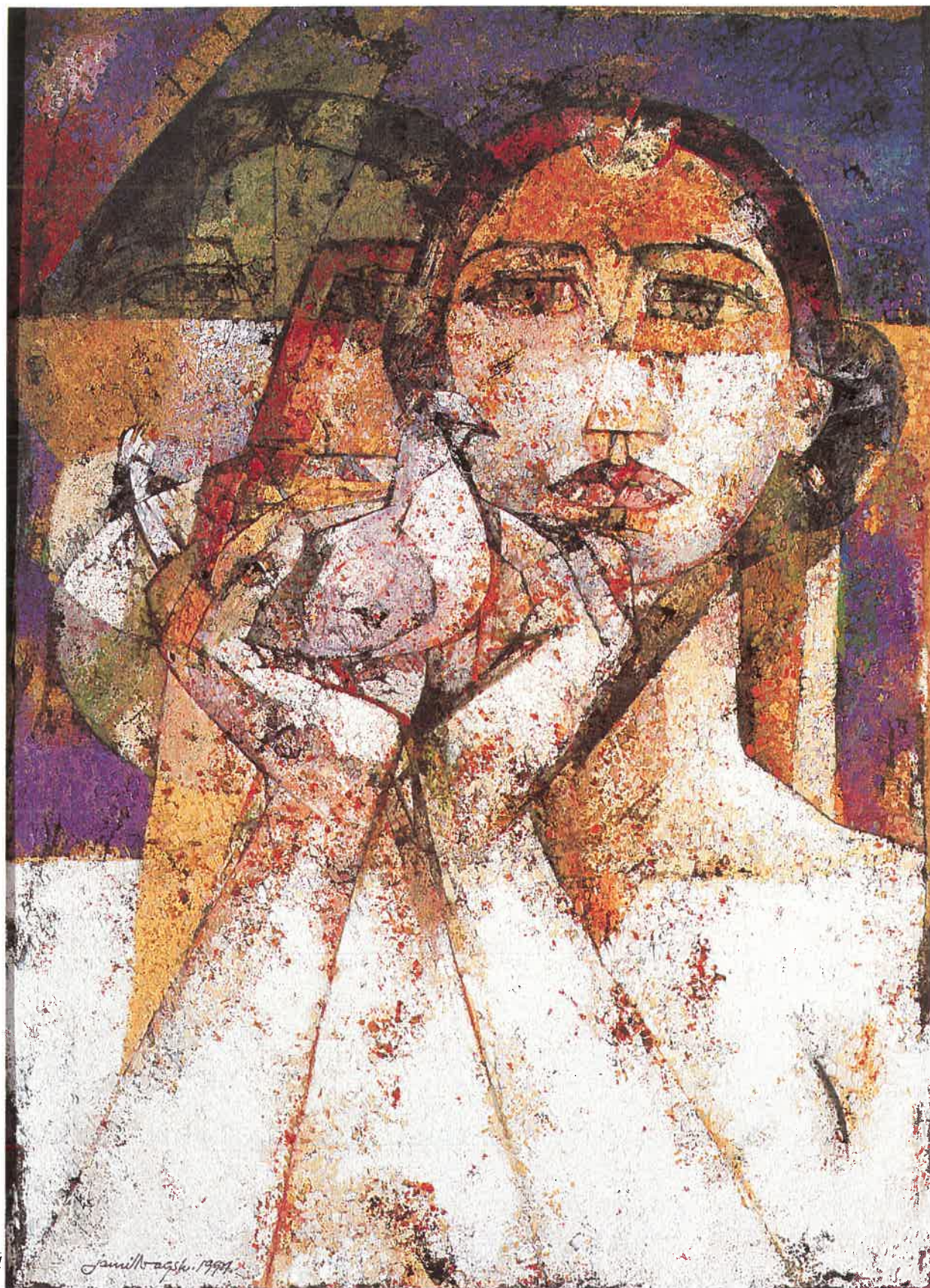
85

*Oil on canvas, 1994
90 x 120 cm
Courtesy Raana and Iqbal Hassan*



86

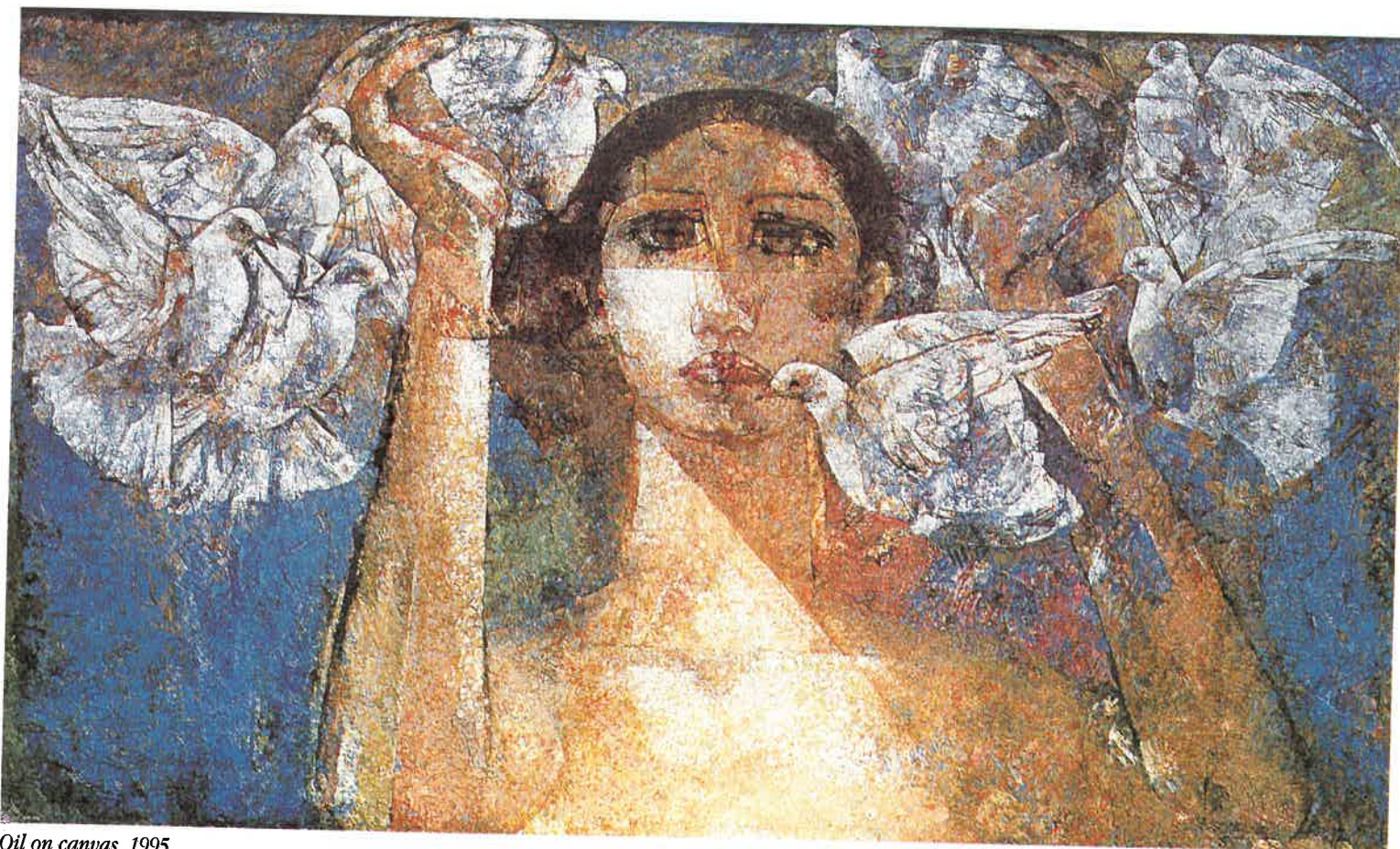
Oil on canvas, 1994
153 x 153 cm
Private collection



87
Oil on canvas, 1994
122 x 92 cm
Courtesy Dr. Rebana and
Dr. Mumtaz Mebar

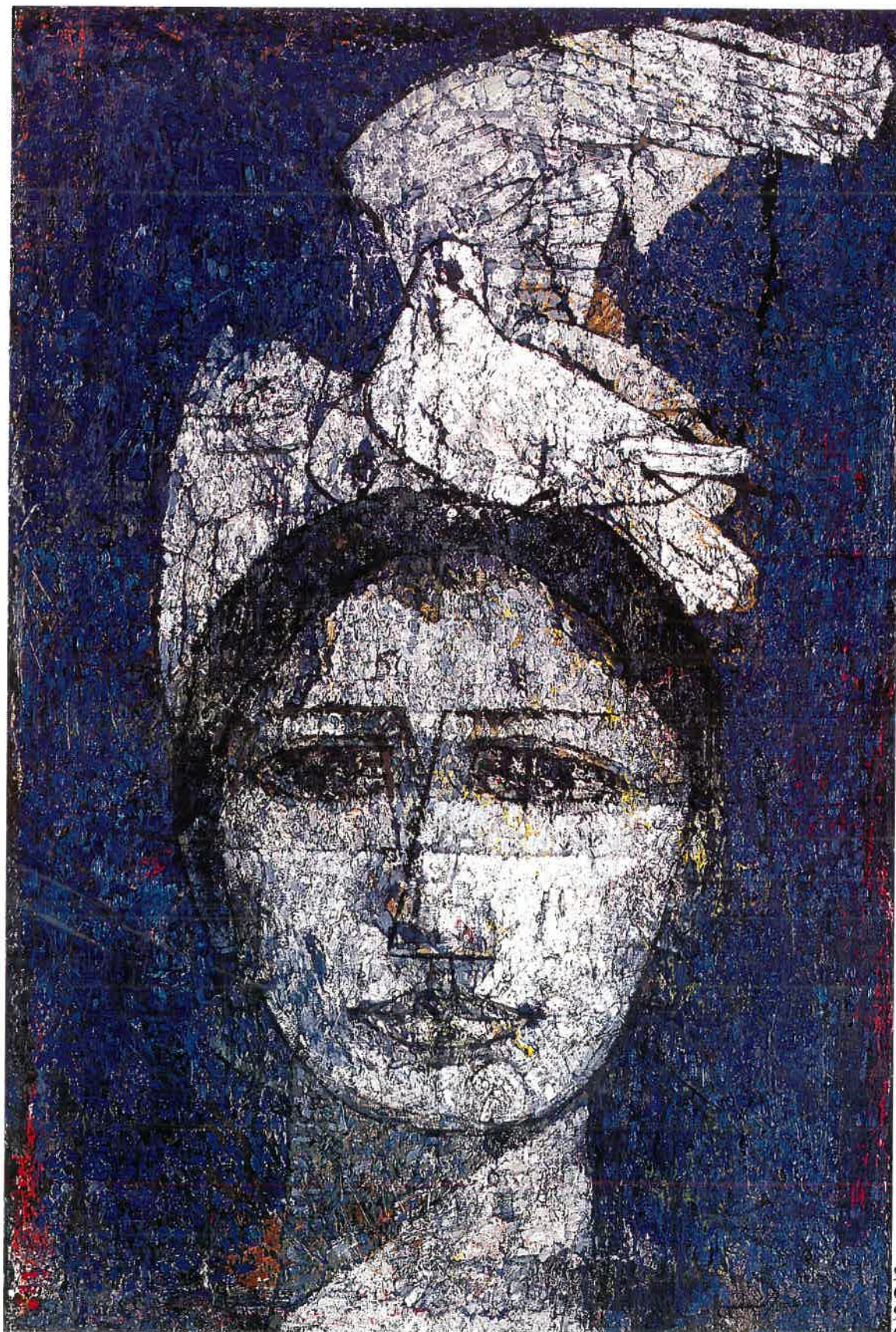


88
Watercolour, 1995
44 x 34 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



89

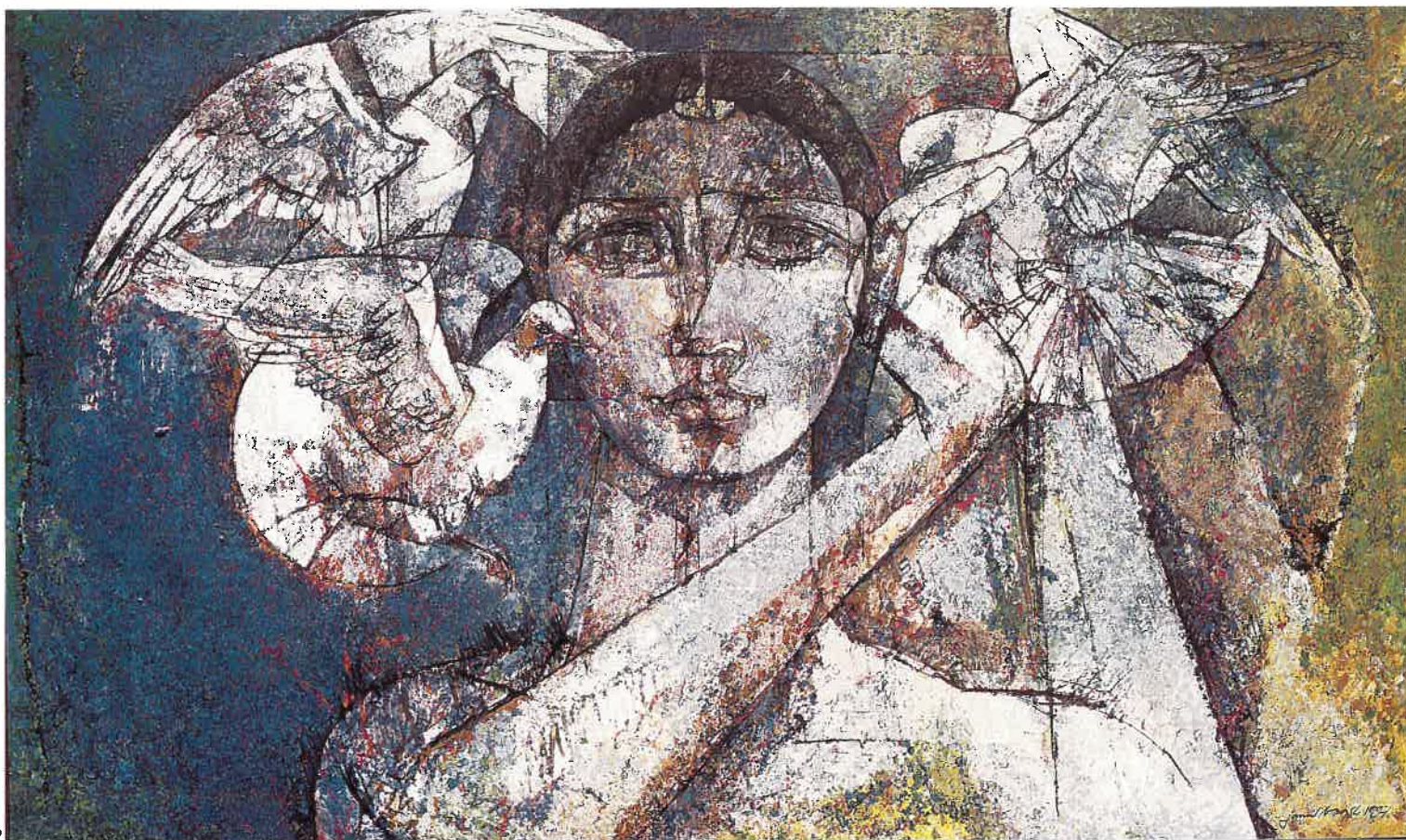
Oil on canvas, 1995
92 x 183 cm
Courtesy Zeno and Babar Tajammul



90
Oil on canvas, 1996
92 x 61 cm
Courtesy Ronak and Iqbal Lakbani



91
Oil on canvas, 1997
123 x 92 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



92

Oil on canvas, 1997
92 x 183 cm
Private collection



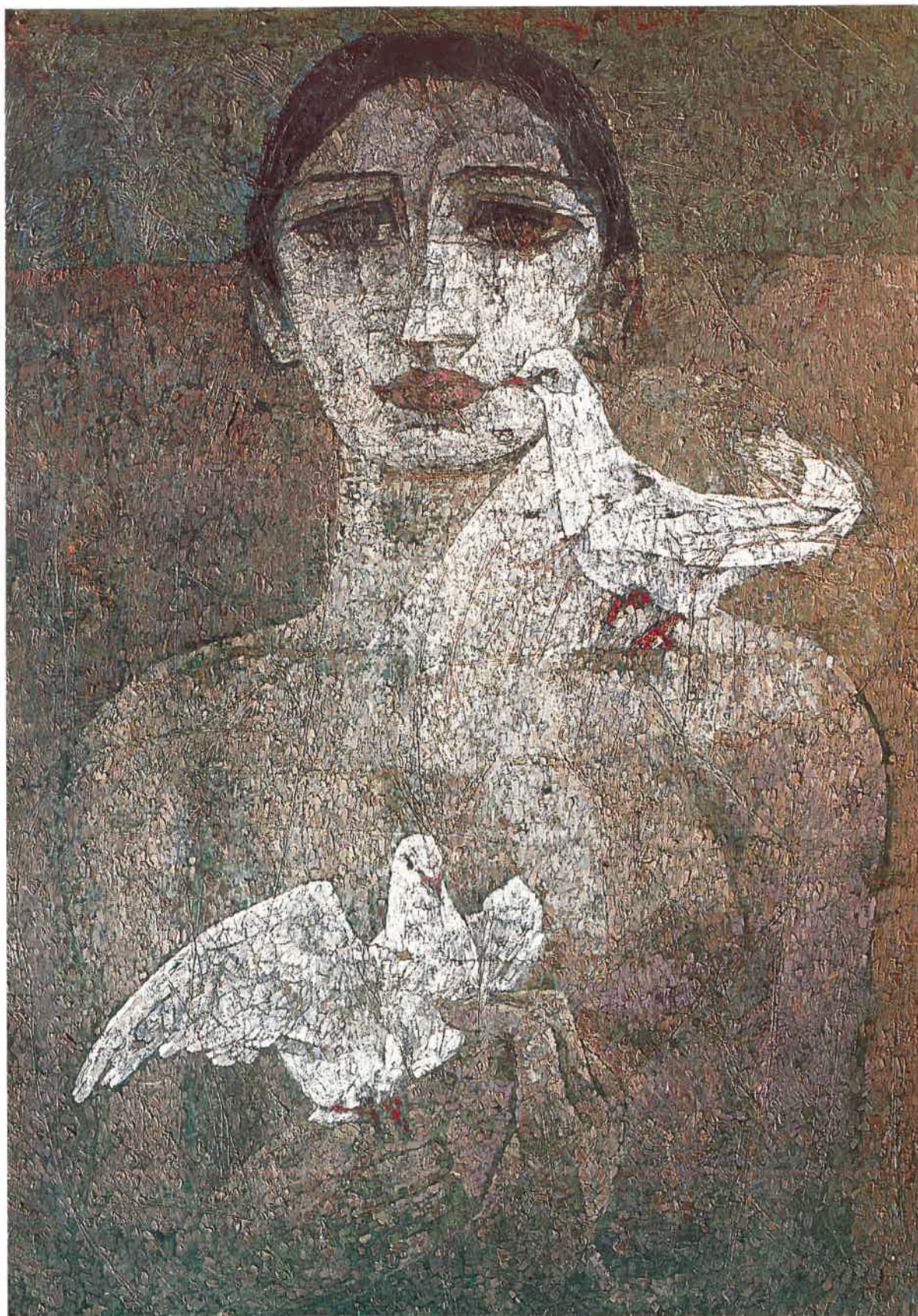
93

*Oil on canvas
153 x 153 cm
Courtesy Ronak and Iqbal Lakhani*



94

Oil on paper, 1998
61 x 91 cm
Courtesy Ismet Kablon



95
Oil on canvas, 1998
122 x 92 cm
Courtesy Saira and Amin Lakbani



96

Oil on paper, 1999
88 x 126 cm
Courtesy Salma and Muhammad Mushbood Usmani



97

*Oil on paper, 1999
68 x 89 cm
Private collection*



98

*Oil on paper, 1999
156 x 92 cm
Private collection*



99
Oil on board, 2001
102 x 71 cm
Courtesy Sobia and Cezanne Naqsh



100

*Oil on board, 2001
123 x 104 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation*



101
Oil on board, 2002
62 x 75 cm
Courtesy Shammi Ahmed



102

Oil on board, 2003

66 x 75 cm

Courtesy Busbra and Kashif Shehzad



Pigeons



103

*Oil on canvas, 1974
46 x 61 cm
Collection Fauzia and Khalil Ahmed*



104

Oil on canvas, 1981

31 x 31 cm

Courtesy Salma and Mubammad Masbhood Usmani





105
Oil on canvas, 1984
108.5 x 185 cm
Private collection



106

*Oil on paper, 1987
47 x 51 cm
Private collection*



107

*Oil on canvas, 1990
46 x 46 cm
Courtesy Najmi Syra*



108
Oil on canvas, 1991
92 x 61 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura

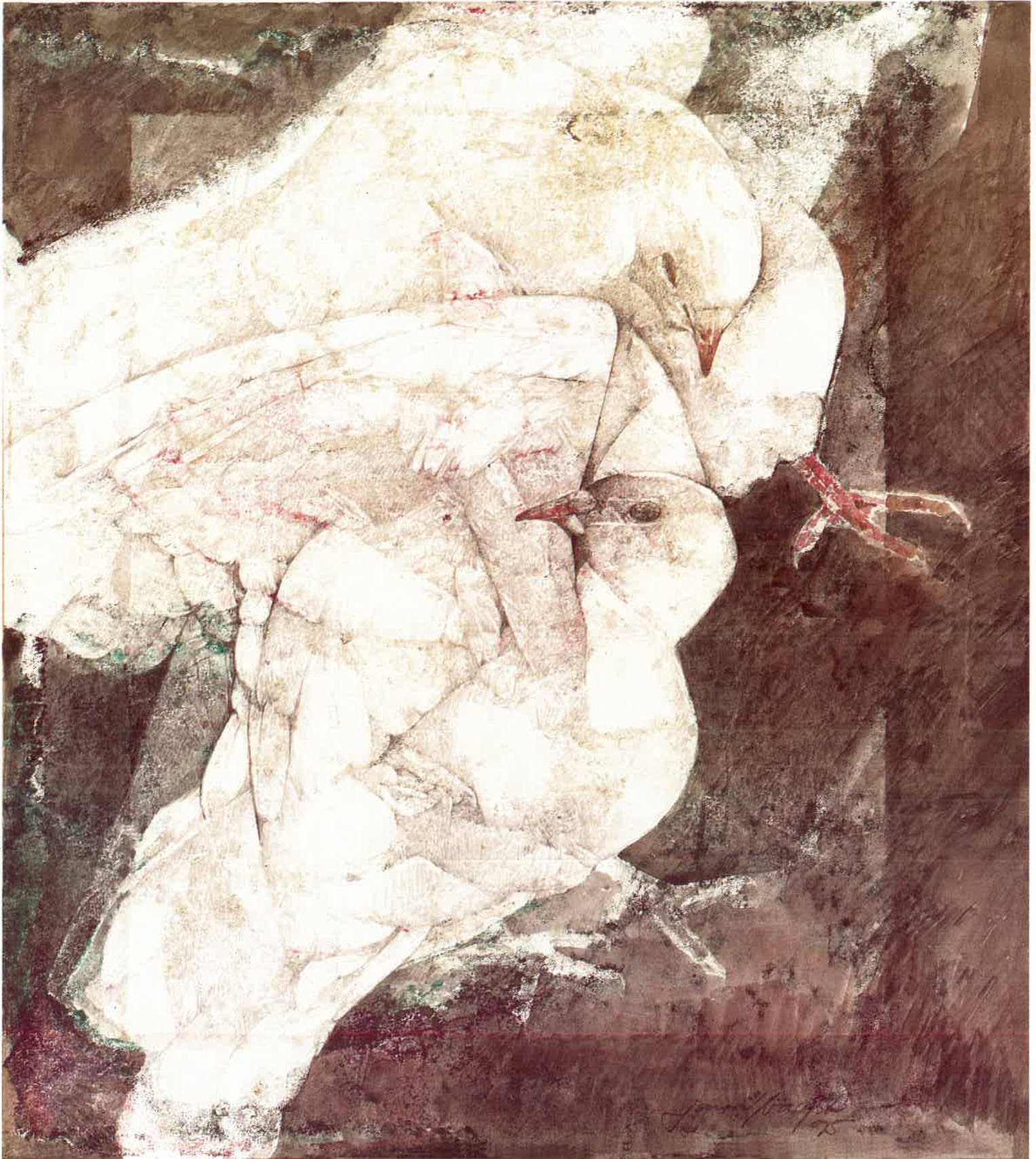


109

Watercolour, 1994
33 x 41 cm
Private collection



110
Oil on paper, 1994
67.5 x 52 cm
Courtesy Durre and
Akbar Liaquat Ali Khan



111

Watercolour, 1995
40 x 35 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



112

*Oil on canvas, 1995
92 x 92 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura*



113
Oil on canvas, 1995
91.5 x 61 cm
Courtesy Hilla Javeri



114

Oil on board
62 x 74 cm
Courtesy Shammi Ahmed



115

Watercolour, 1995
36 x 42 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura





116
Oil on canvas
91 x 152 cms
Courtesy Amina and Jabangir Tareen



117
Oil on canvas, 1997
90 x 85 cm
Courtesy Salma Khan



118

Watercolour
36 x 26 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura





119
Watercolour, 1999
29 x 29 cm
Courtesy Sharifa and Sultan Allana

120
Oil on canvas, 1999
126 x 164 cm
Courtesy Rasheeda and Aftab Tapal



121
Watercolour
58 x 43 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



122
Oil on Paper, 1999
76 x 62 cm
Courtesy Ismet Kablon



123

Oil on canvas, 1999
122 x 122 cm
Courtesy Rafiq Sheikh



124



125



126



127

Watercolours, 1991
24 x 22 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



128

Oil on board, 2002
62 x 74 cms
Courtesy Sharifa and Sultan Allana



129

*Oil on board, 2002
62 x 74 cm
Courtesy Raana and Iqbal Hassan*



130

Watercolour, 2002
54 x 41 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



131
Watercolour, 2002
61 x 92 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



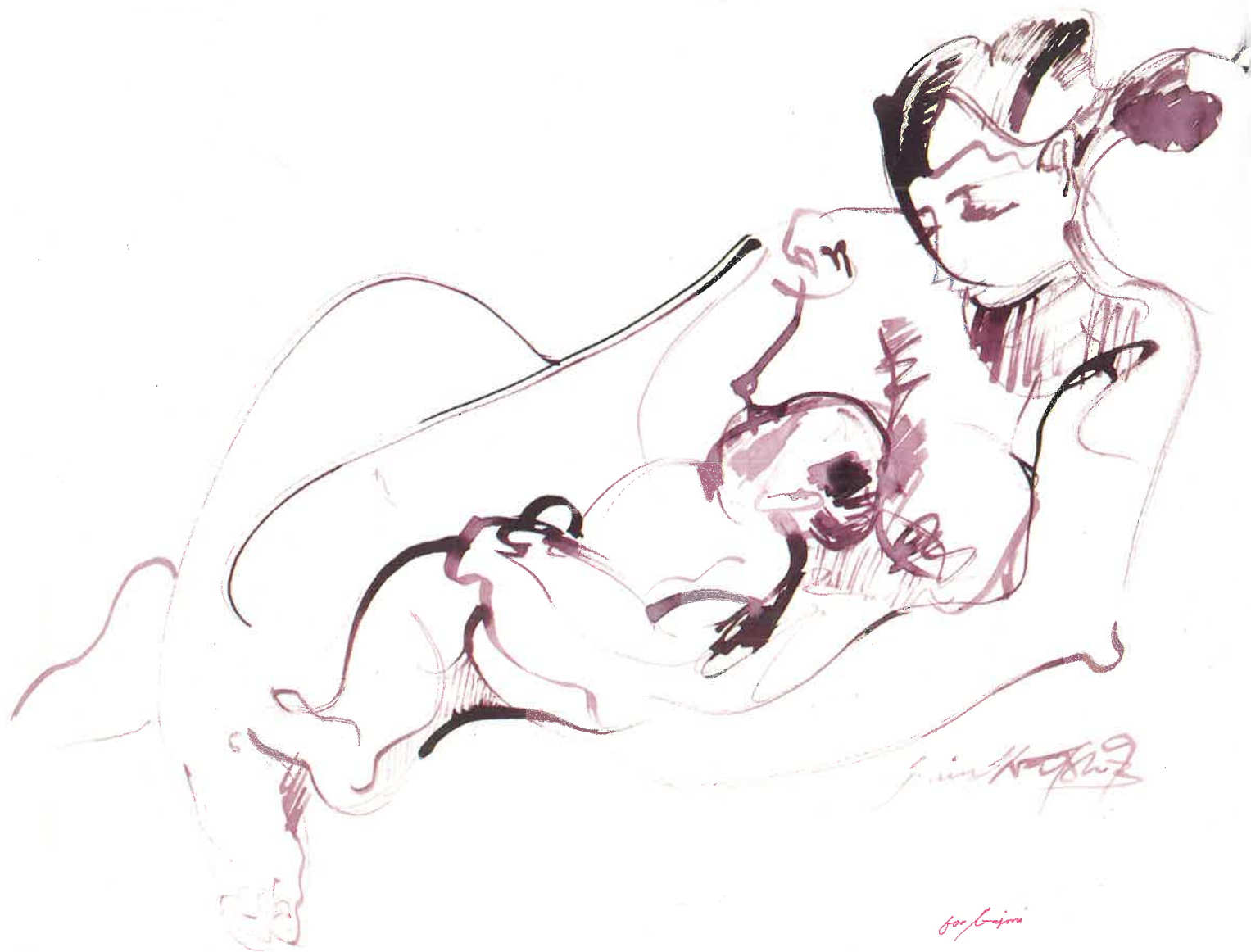
132

Watercolour, 2002
54 x 41 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



133

Watercolour
58 x 43 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



Mother and Child
Dedicated to Dr. Faridon Setna



134

Watercolour, 1995

25 x 37 cm

Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



135

Watercolour, 1995

25 x 37 cm

Courtesy Sbarifa and Sultan Allana



136
Watercolour, 1996
54 x 36 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



137
Watercolour, 1996
54 x 36 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



138
 Watercolour, 1996
 36 x 54 cm
 Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



139
Watercolour, 1996
36 x 54 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



140
Watercolour, 1996
25 x 36 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



141
Watercolour, 1996
25 x 36 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



142
Watercolour, 1996
36 x 54 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



143
Watercolour, 1996
36 x 54 cm
Private collection



144
Watercolour, 1996
36 x 54 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



145

Watercolour, 1996

36 x 54 cm

Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



146
Watercolour, 1996
36 x 54 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



147
Watercolour, 1996
34 x 27 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation

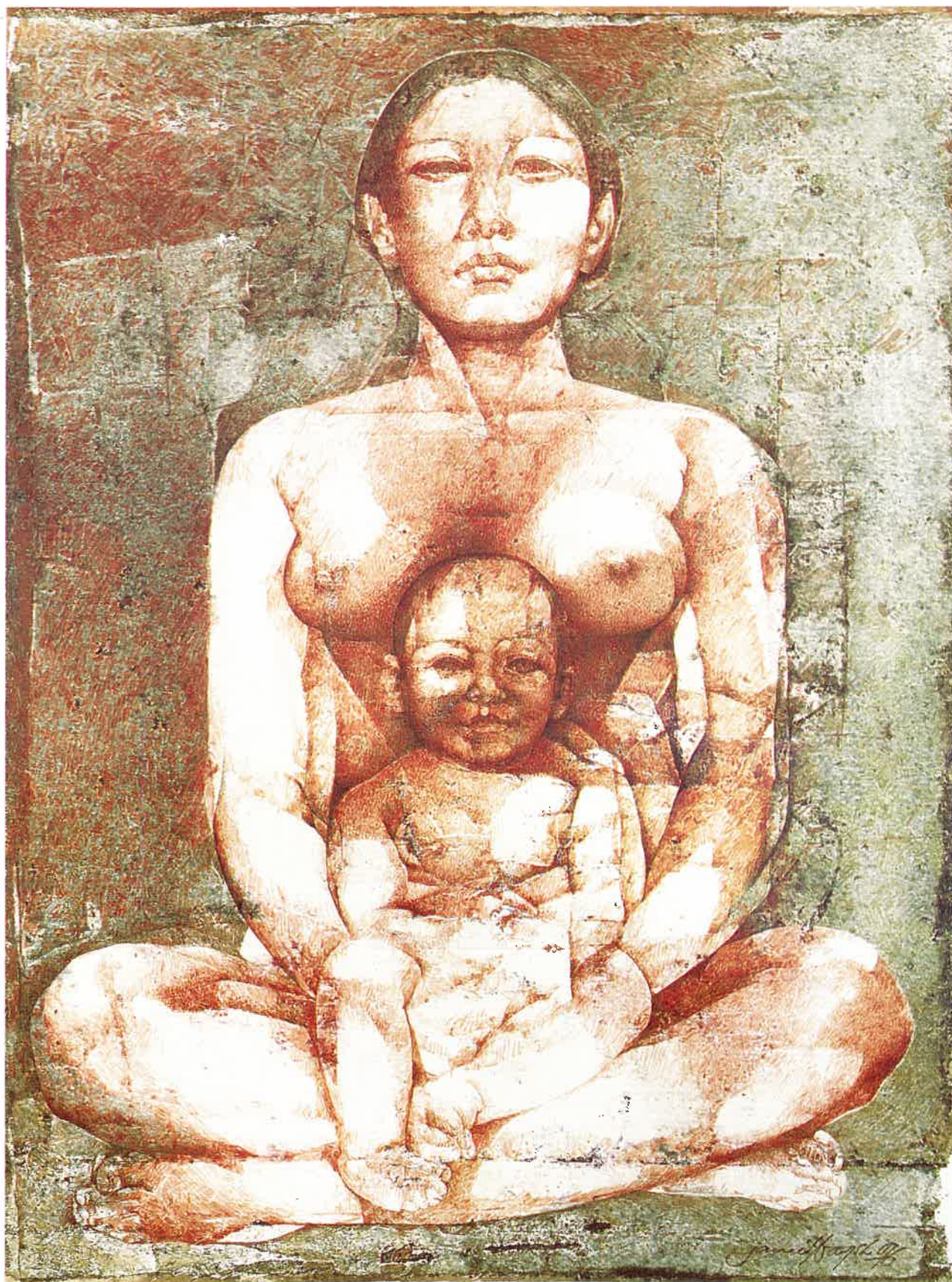




149
Watercolour, 1996
34 x 41 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



148
Watercolour, 1995
25 x 37 cm
Courtesy Sbarifa and Sultan Allana



150
Watercolour, 1996
54 x 36 cm
Courtesy Sharifa and Sultan Allana



151
Watercolour, 1996
54 x 36 cm
Private collection



152

Watercolour, 1996
48 x 37 cm

Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



153

Watercolour, 1996
54 x 36 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



154
Watercolour, 1996
33 x 52 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsb Foundation



155

Watercolour, 1996

36 x 54 cm

Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



156
Watercolour, 1996
34 x 27 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



157

Watercolour, 1996

36 x 54 cm

Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



Woman and Horse

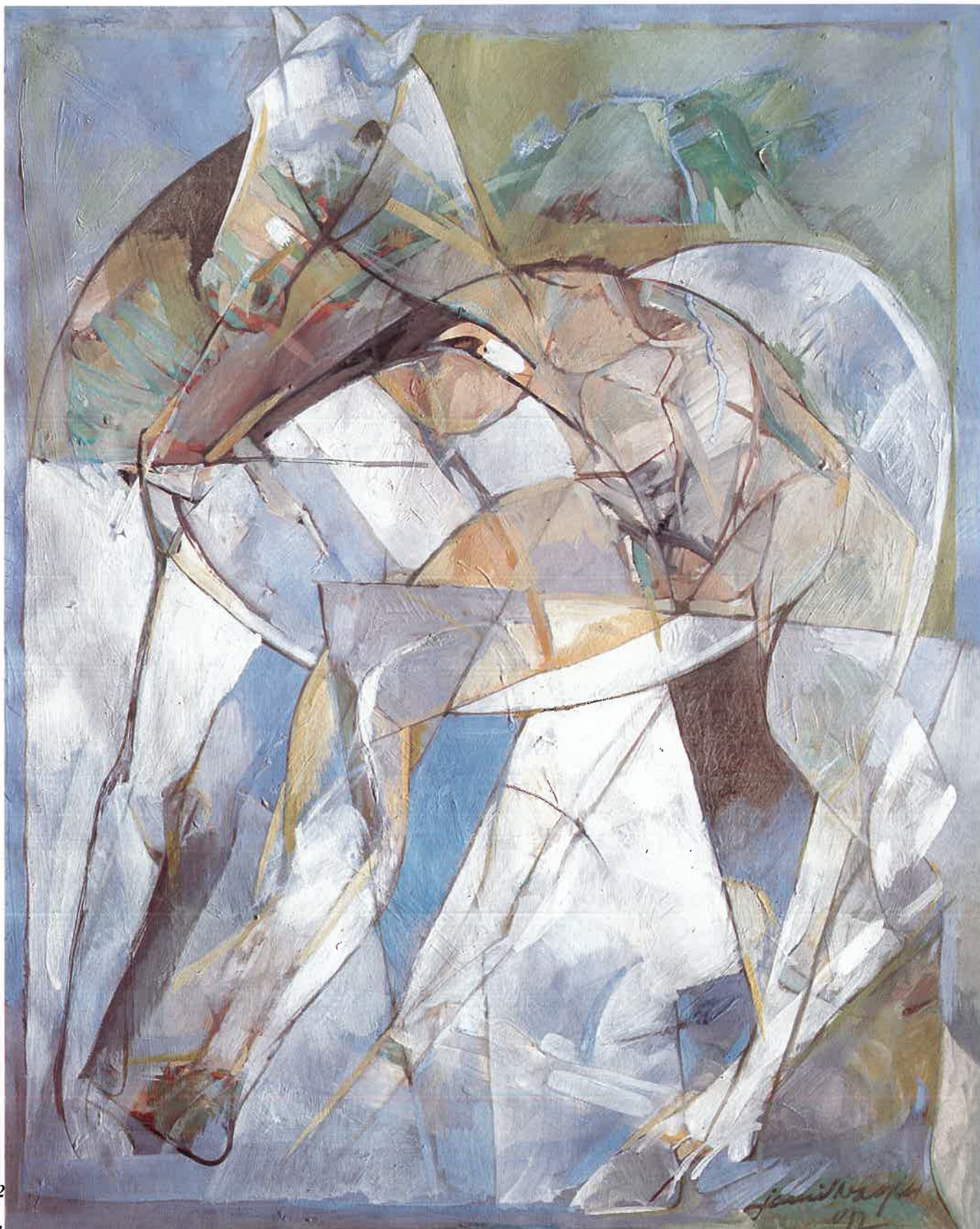
A homage to Marino Marini



158
Watercolour, 1992
56 x 75 cm
Private collection



159
Watercolour and ballpen, 1983
49 x 37 cm
Courtesy Muzaffar Ghaffar



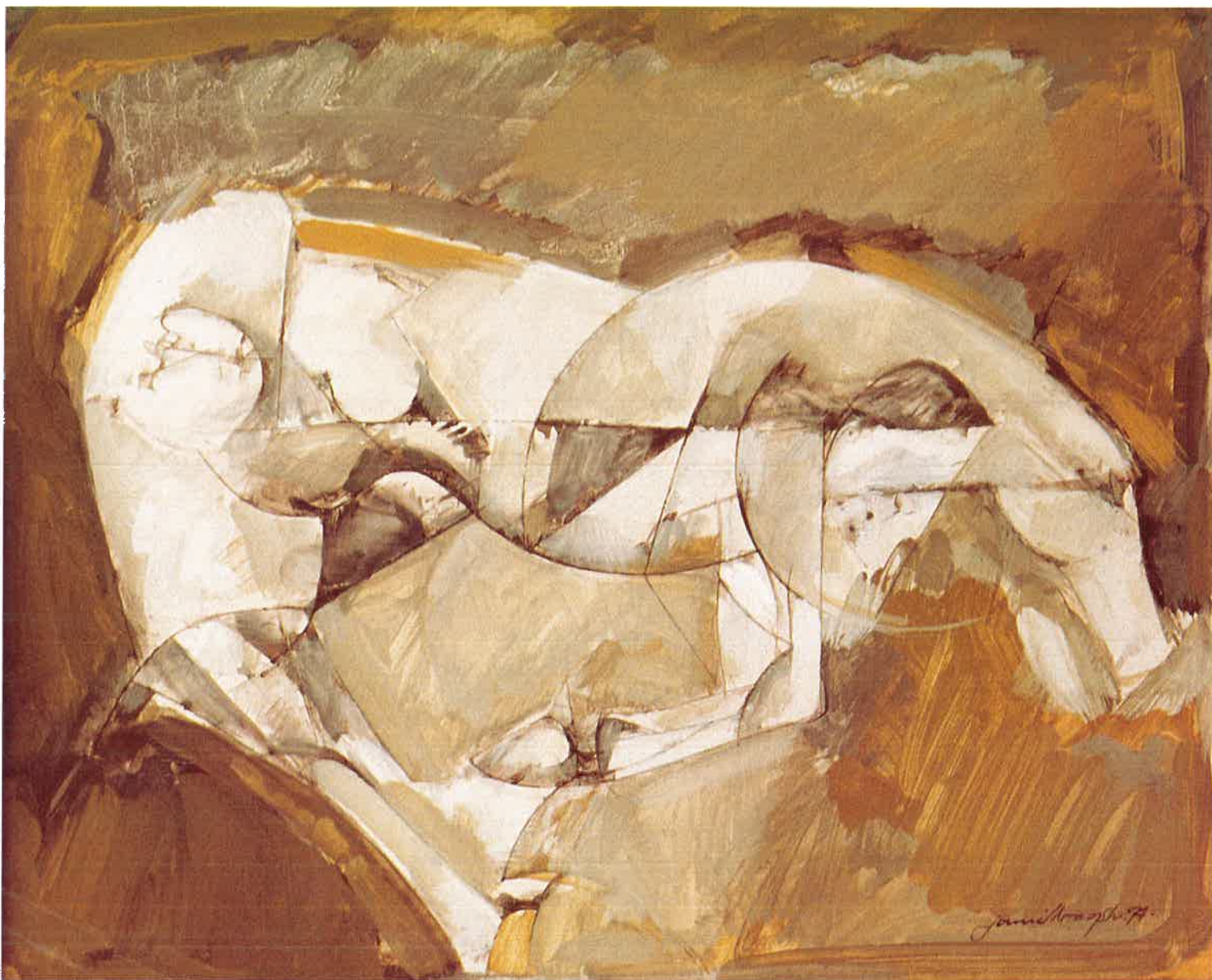
160
Watercolour, 1992
40 x 33 cm
Private collection



161
Watercolour, 1992
41 x 32 cm
Private collection

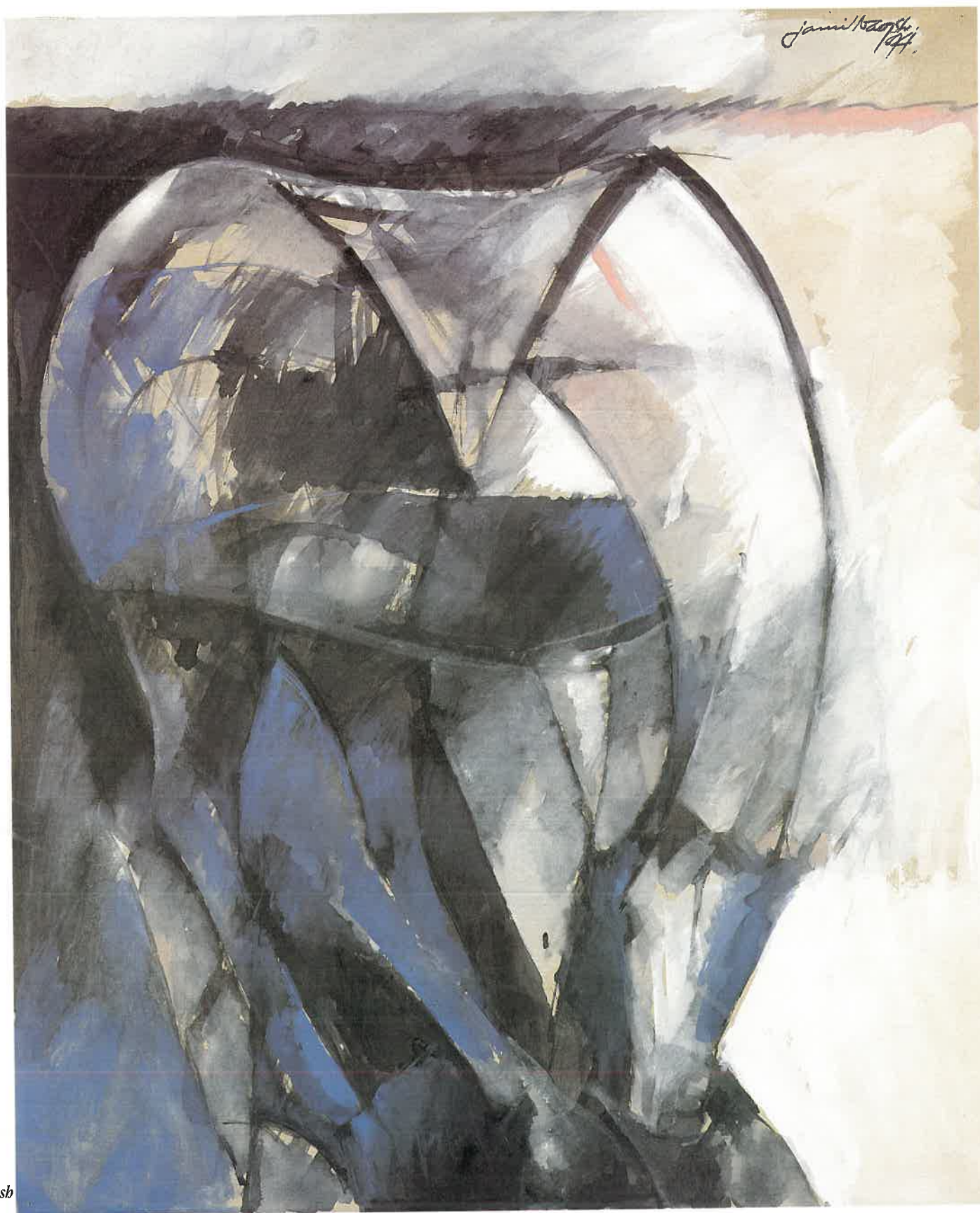


162
Watercolour, 1993
45 x 54 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation

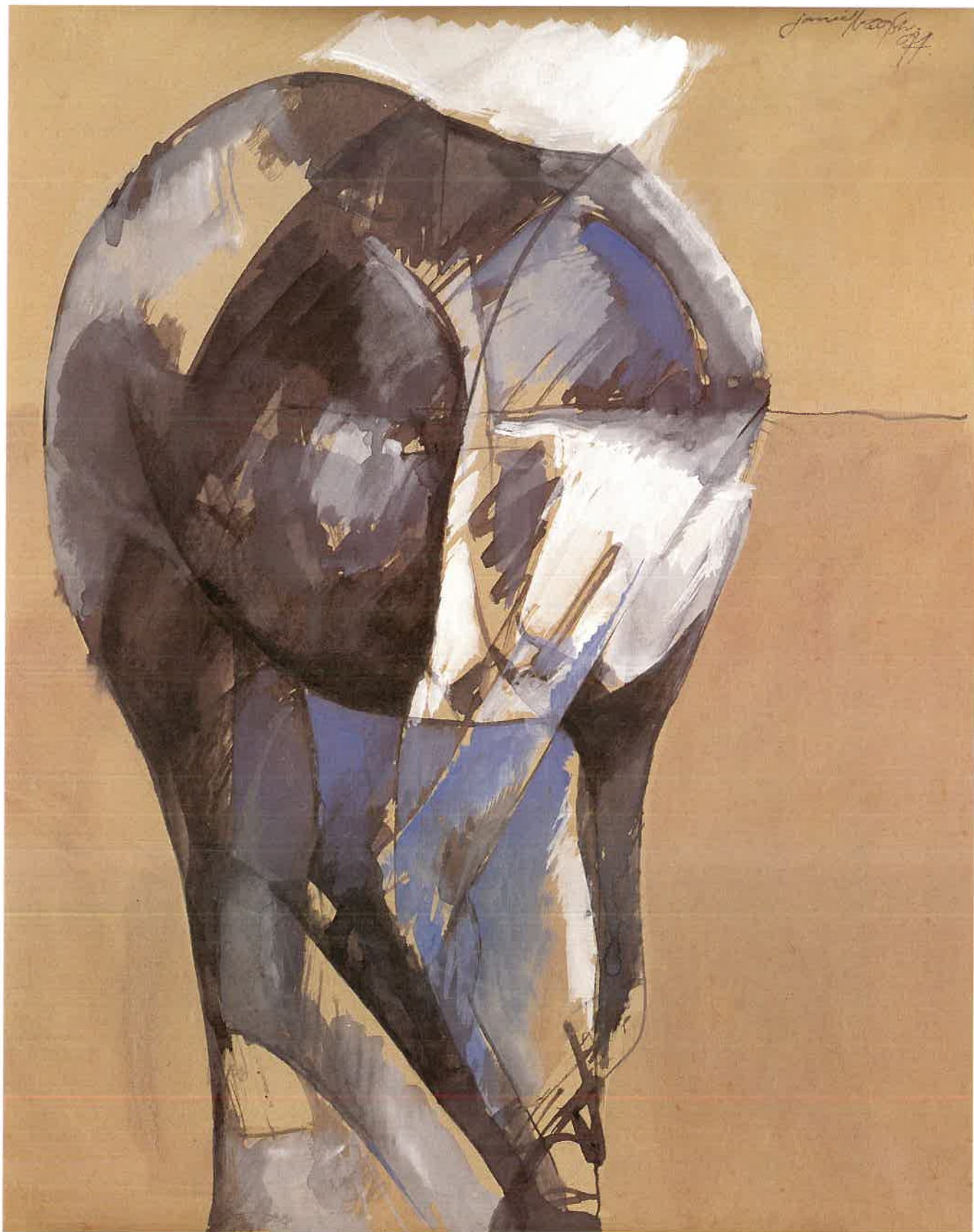


163

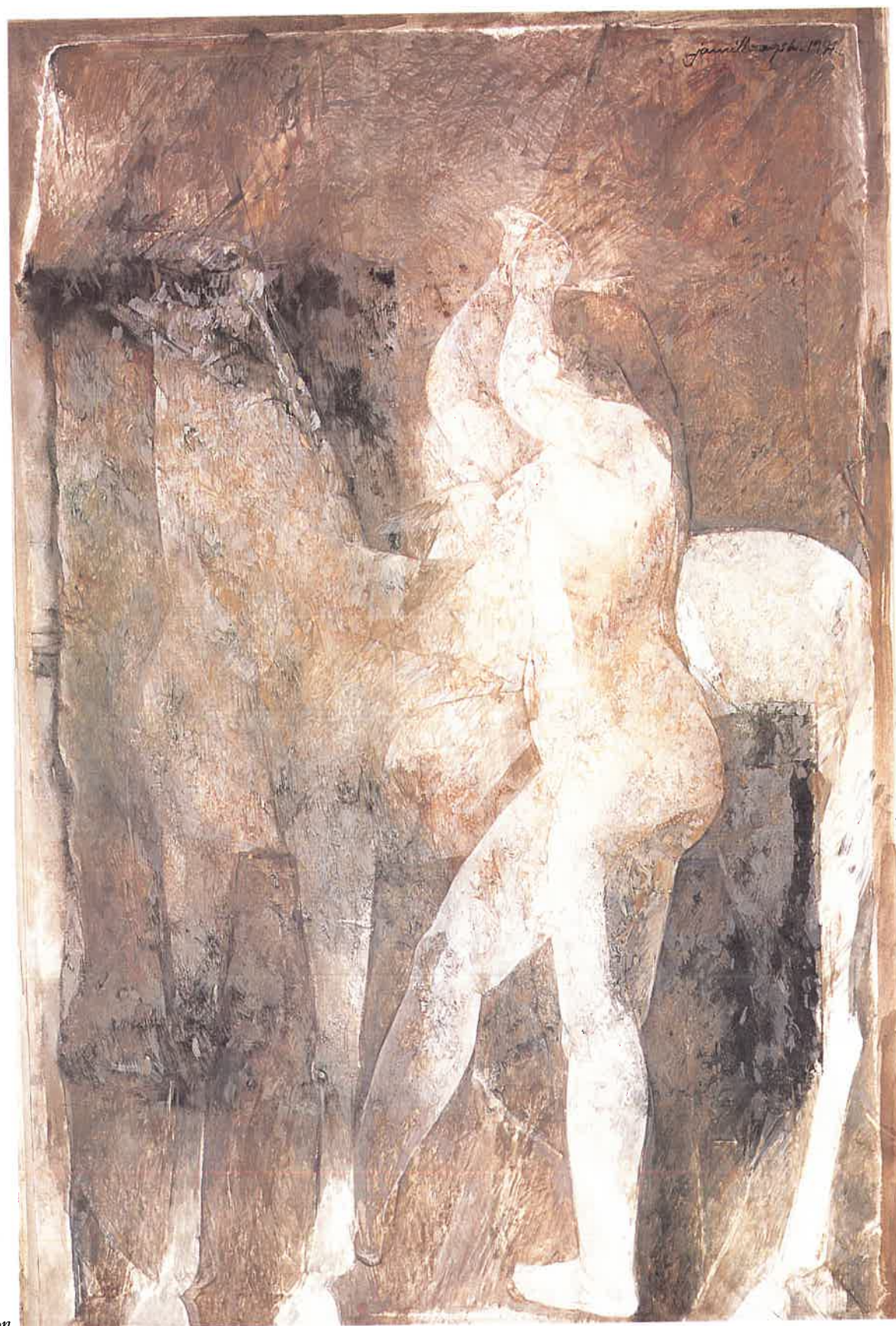
Watercolour, 1994
26 x 35 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



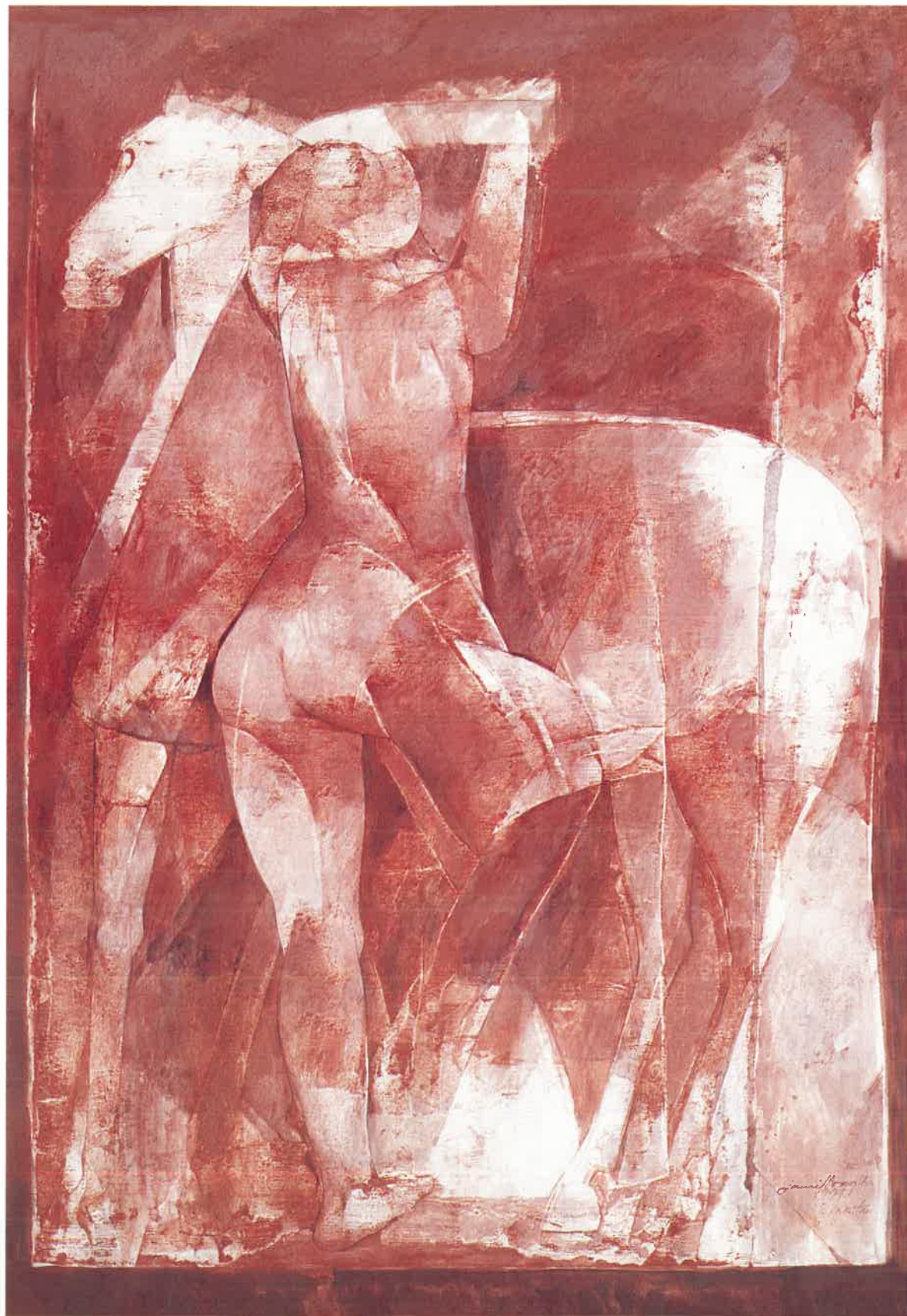
164
Watercolour, 1994
35 x 26 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh
Foundation



165
Watercolour, 1994
35 x 26 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



166
Oil on paper, 1994
74 x 48 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



167
Oil on paper, 1994
76 x 51 cm
Courtesy Iffat and Khursheed Yazdani



168
Watercolour, 1994
76 x 51 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



169
Watercolour, 1994
35 x 27 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



170
Watercolour, 1995
35 x 26 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



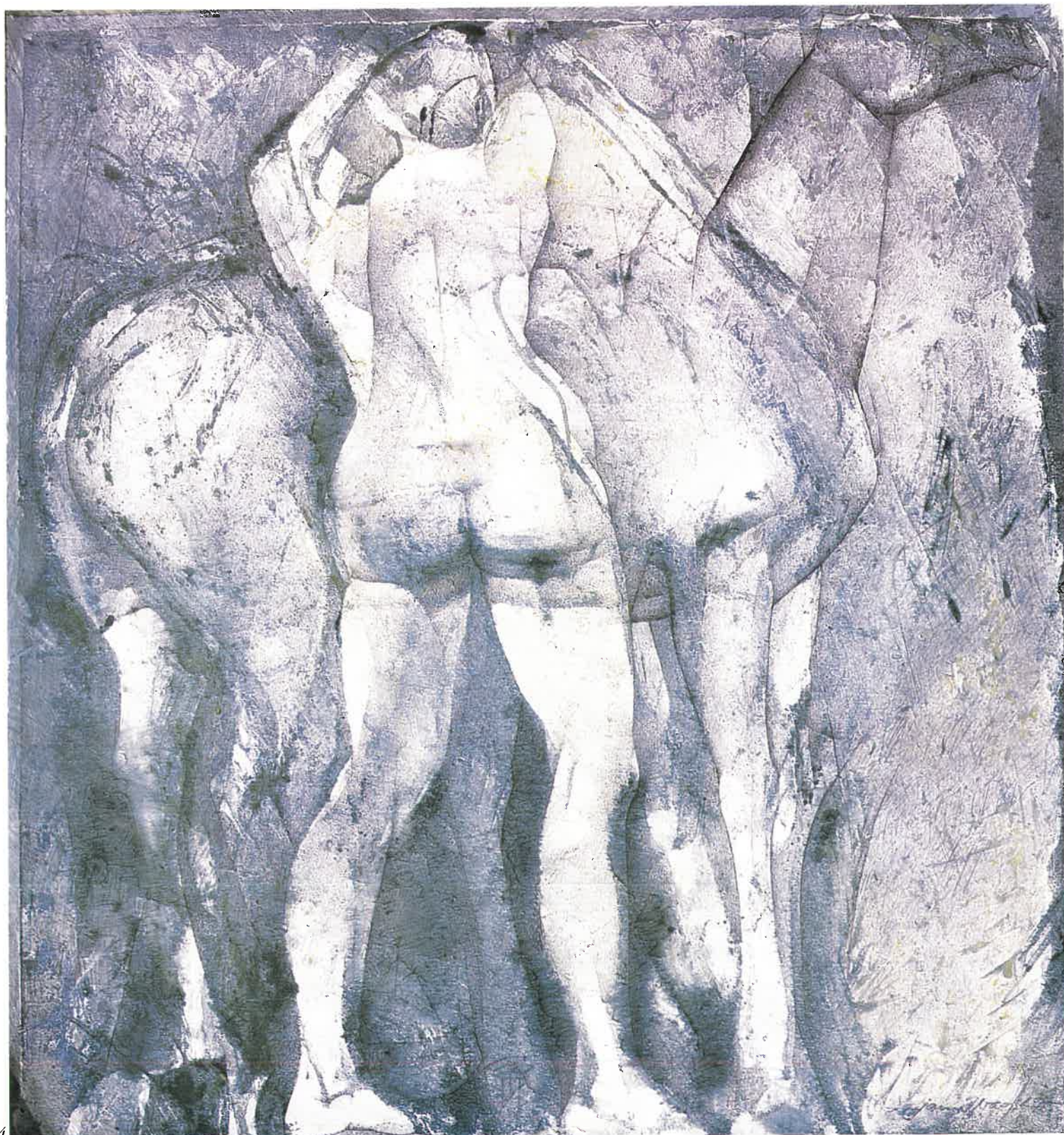
171
Watercolour, 1995
35 x 26 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



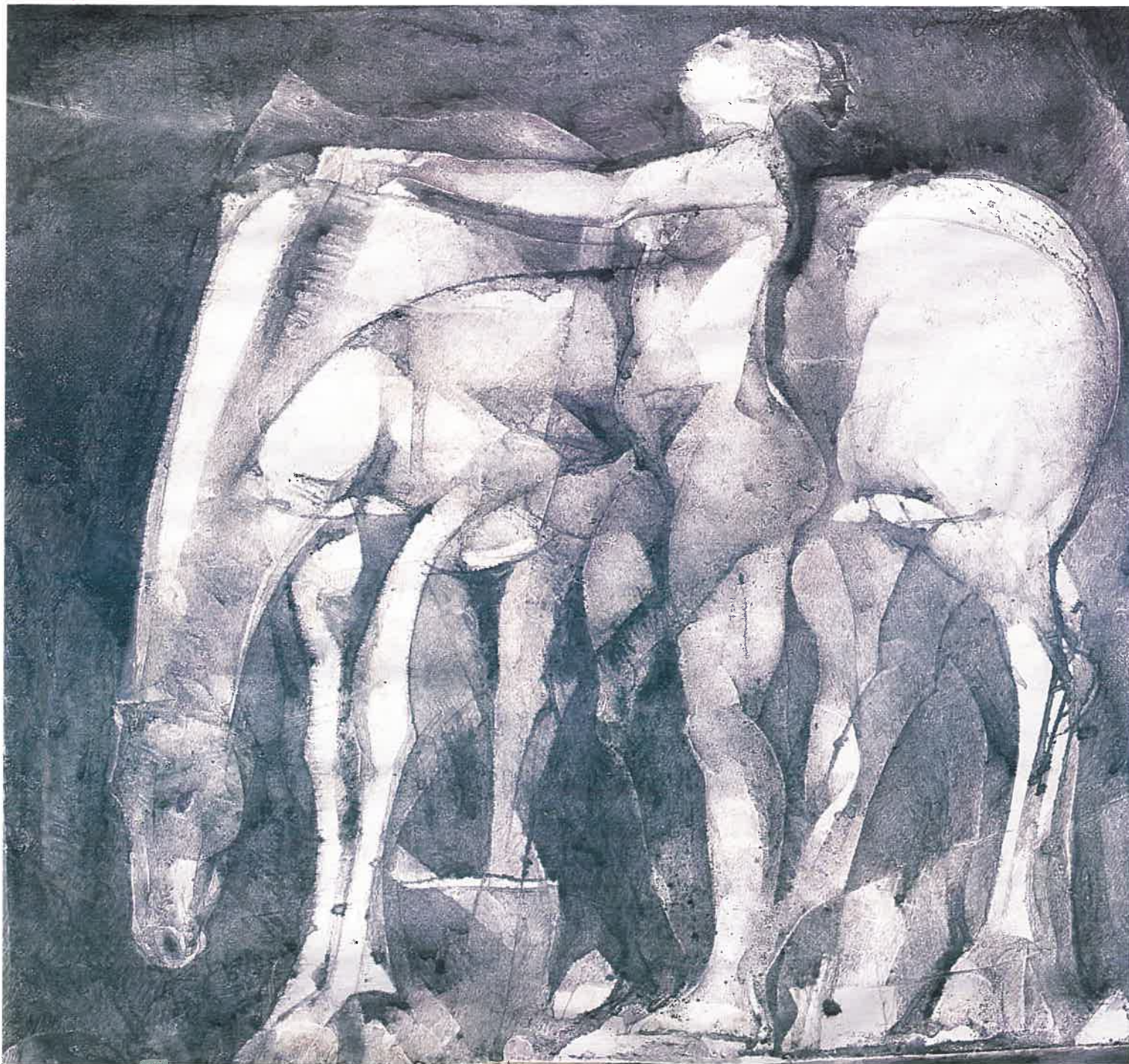
172
Watercolour, 1995
33 x 26 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



173
Watercolour, 1995
35 x 26 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



174
Watercolour, 1995
58 x 54 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



175

Watercolour, 1995
54 x 58 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



176
Watercolour, 1995
53 x 56 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation

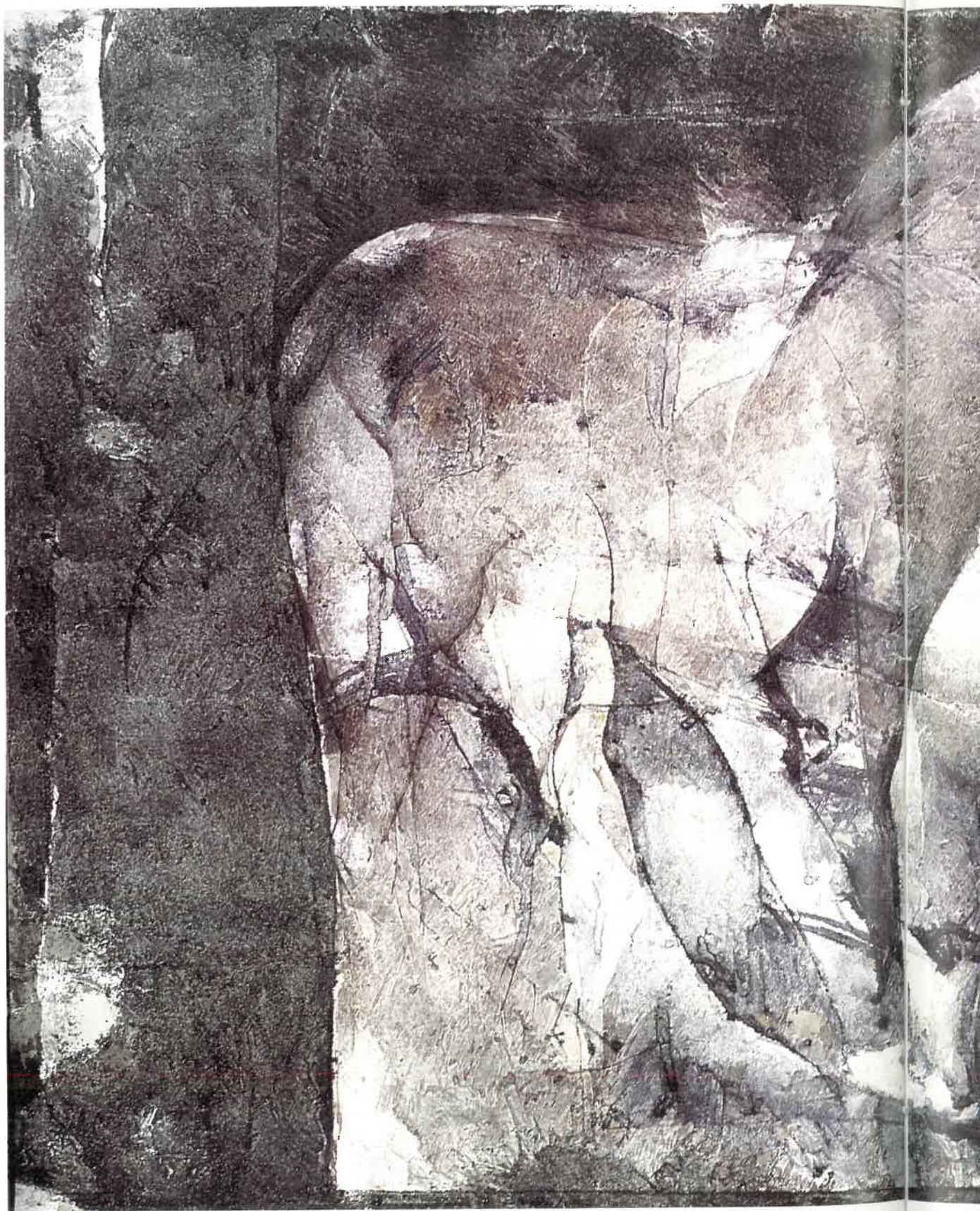


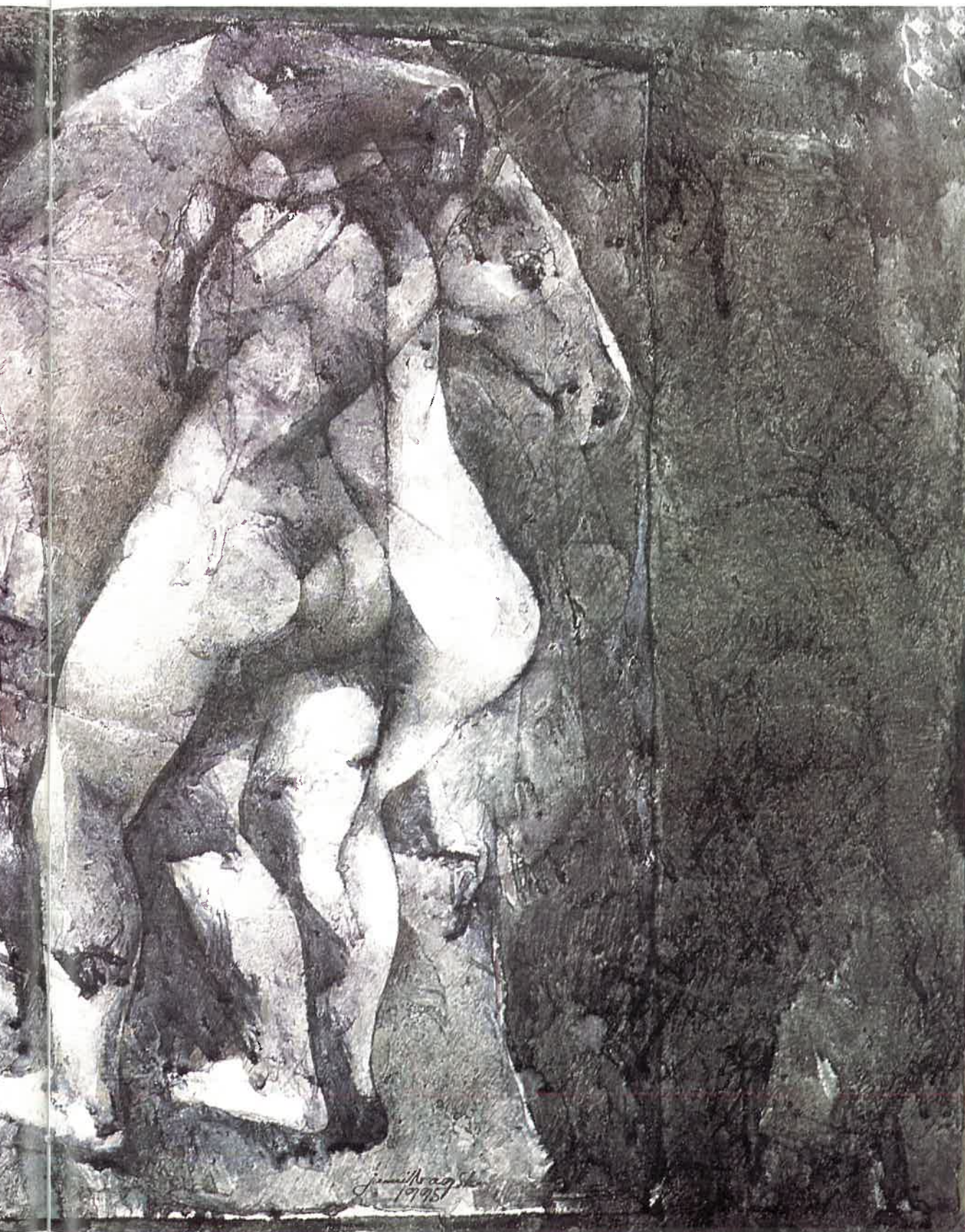
177

Watercolour, 1995

56 x 54 cm

Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation





178
Watercolour, 1995
61 x 91 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



179
Watercolour, 1995
26 x 34 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation

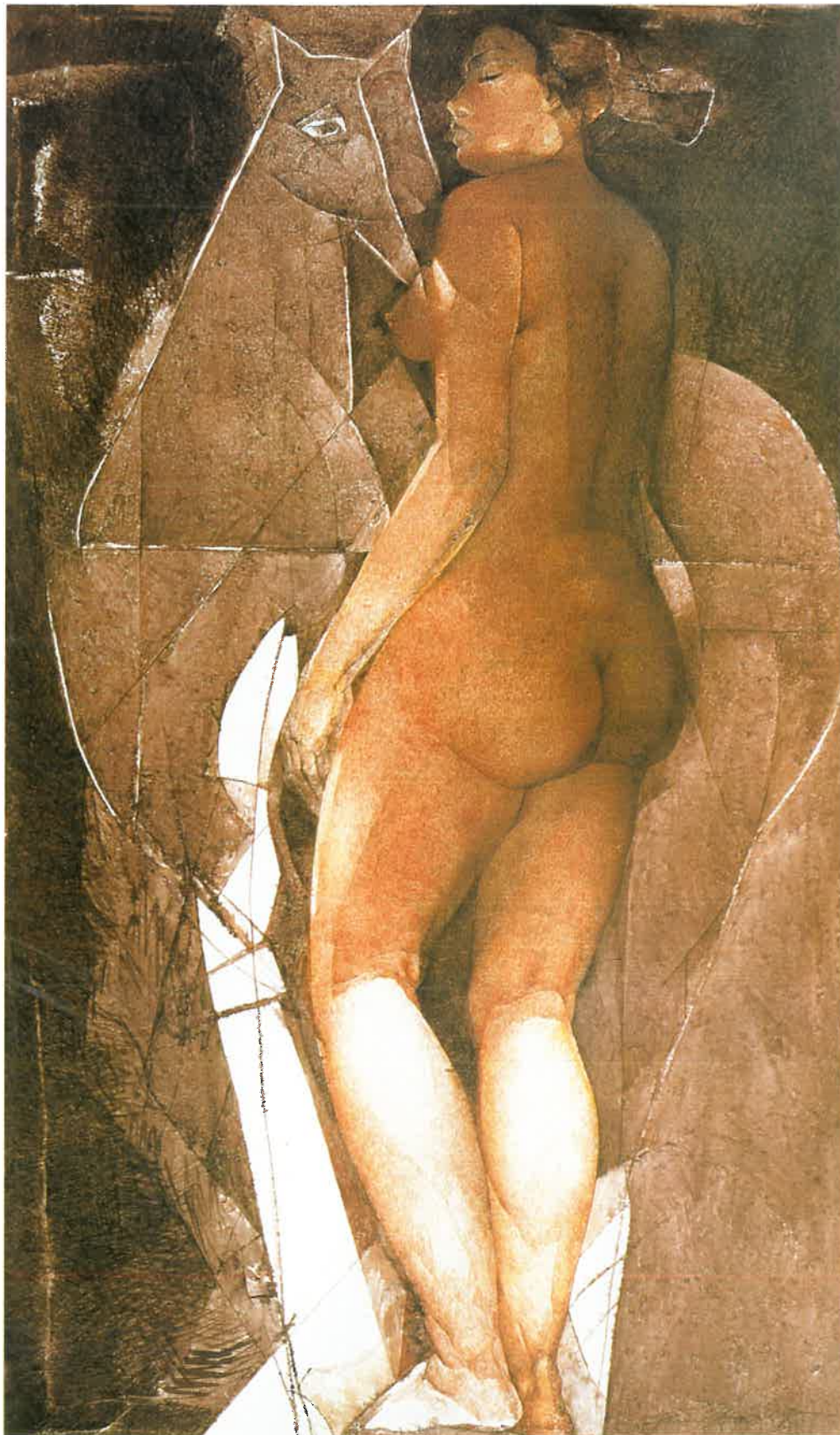


180

Watercolour, 1995
57x 54 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



181
Watercolour, 1995
54 x 36 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



182
Watercolour, 1995
76 x 44 cm
Courtesy Zebra and Javed Rizvi



183
Watercolour, 1995
54 x 36 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



184
Watercolour, 1995
54 x 36 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



185
Watercolour, 1995
54 x 33 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



186
Watercolour, 1996
54 x 33 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



187
Watercolour, 1996
33 x 22 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



188
Watercolour, 1996
33 x 22 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



189
Watercolour, 1996
31 x 22 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



190
Watercolour, 1996
34 x 26 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



191
Watercolour and ink, 1998
53 x 49 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



192

Watercolour and ink, 1998
43 x 36 cm
Courtesy Meher and Husain Sheriff



193

Watercolour and ink, 1999
66 x 57 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



194
Watercolour and ink, 1999
57 x 44 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



Prajna Paramita



196

Water colour and ink, 1979
20 x 19 cms
Courtesy Rooba Ghaznavi



197
Water colour and ink, 1979
20 x 19 cms
Courtesy Rooba Ghaznavi



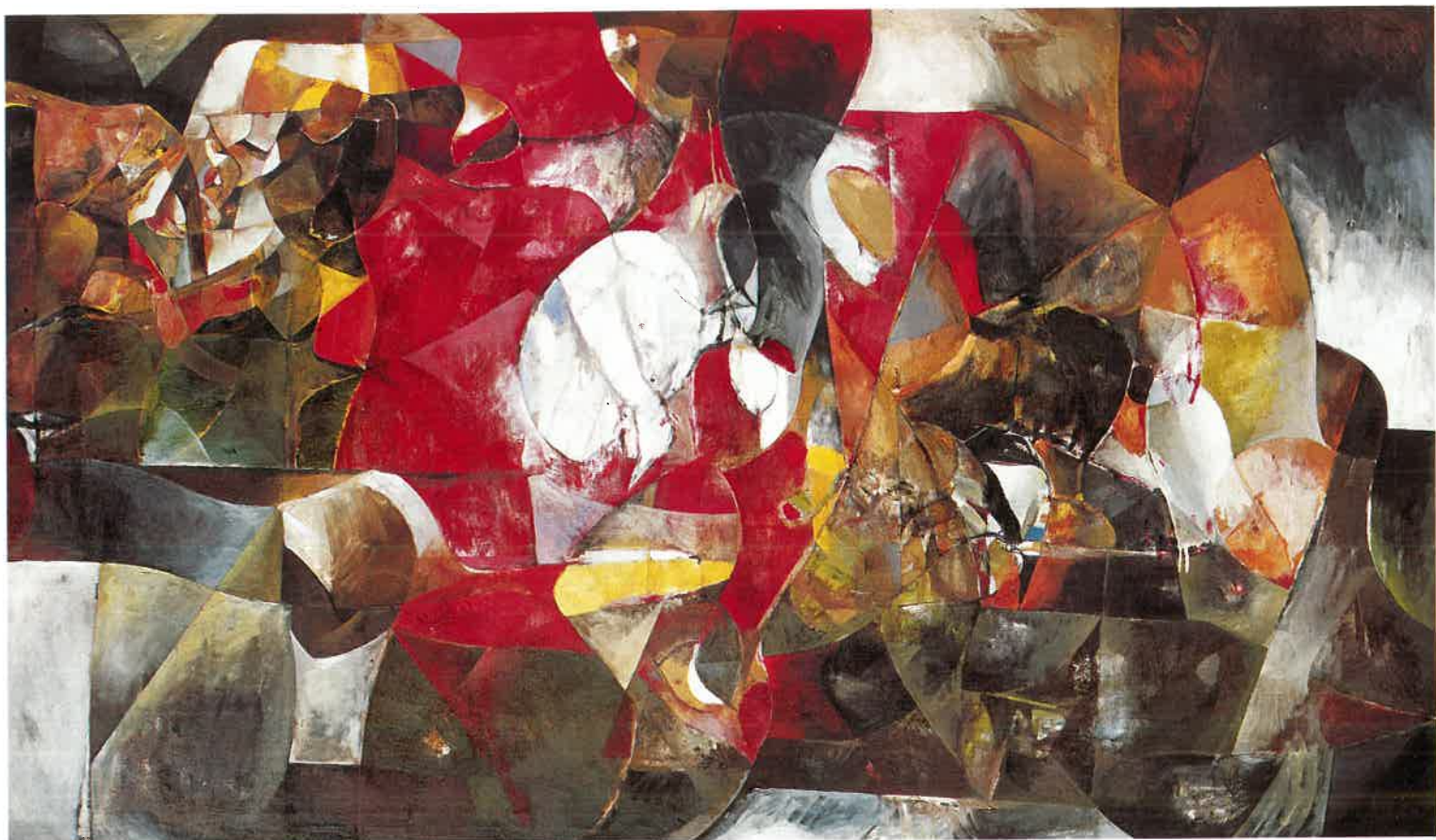
198

Water colour and ink, 1979
20 x 19 cms
Courtesy Rooba Ghaznavi



199

Water colour and ink, 1979
20 x 19 cms
Courtesy Rooba Ghaznavi



200
Oil on canvas, 1980
89 x 150 cms
Private collection



201
Oil on paper, 1983
47 x 35 cm
Private collection



202

Watercolour, 1982
36.5 x 46.5 cm
Courtesy Muzaffar Gbaffar



203

Watercolour, 1982
33 x 46.5 cm
Courtesy Muzaffar Ghaffar



204

*Oil on paper, 1984
42 x 34 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation*



205

Oil on paper, 1984
42 x 34 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



206

Oil on paper, 1984
42 x 34 cm

Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation

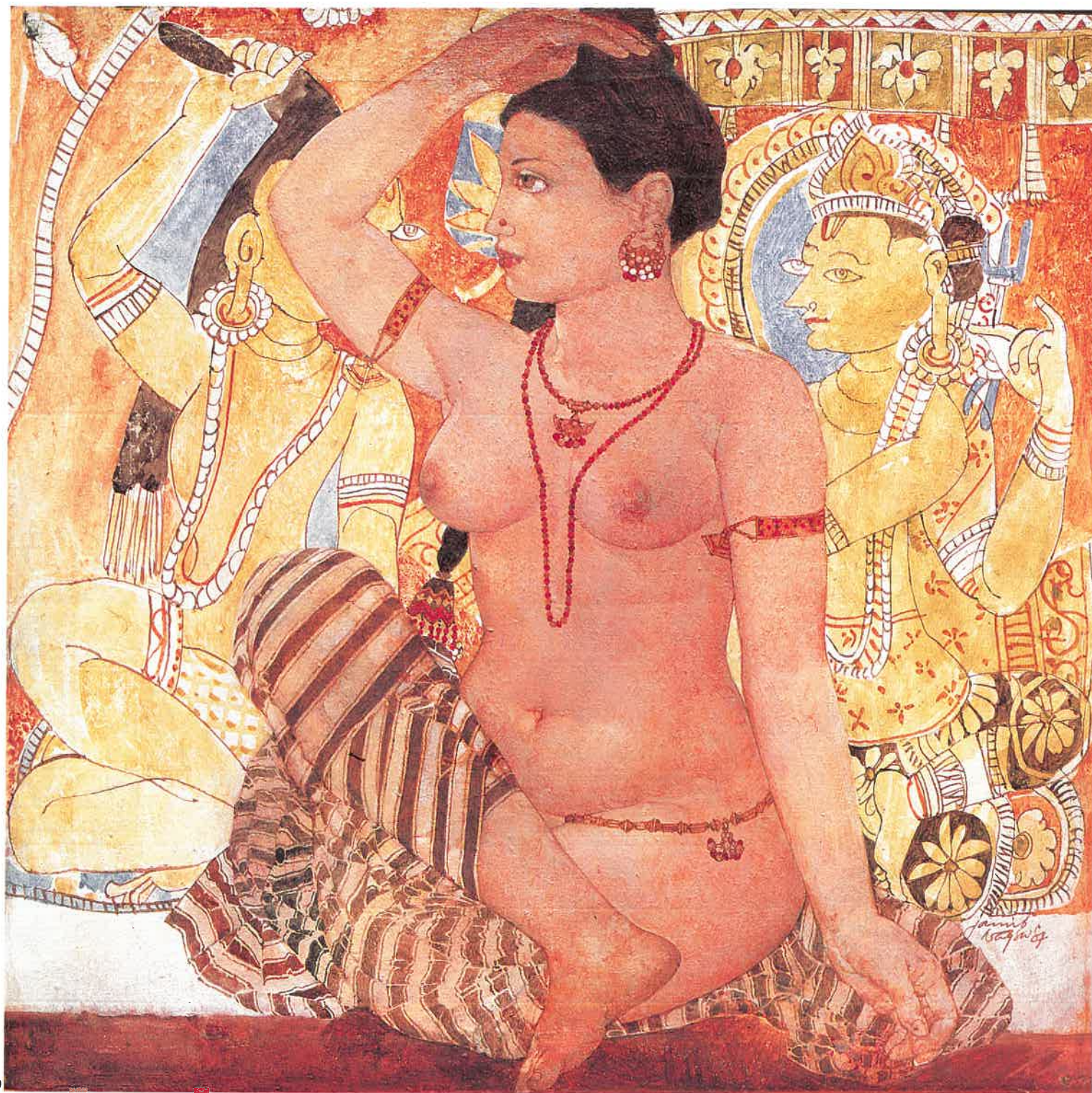


207

*Oil on paper, 1984
42 x 34 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation*



208
Jain miniature
Oil on paper, 1987
62.5 x 48 cm
Private collection

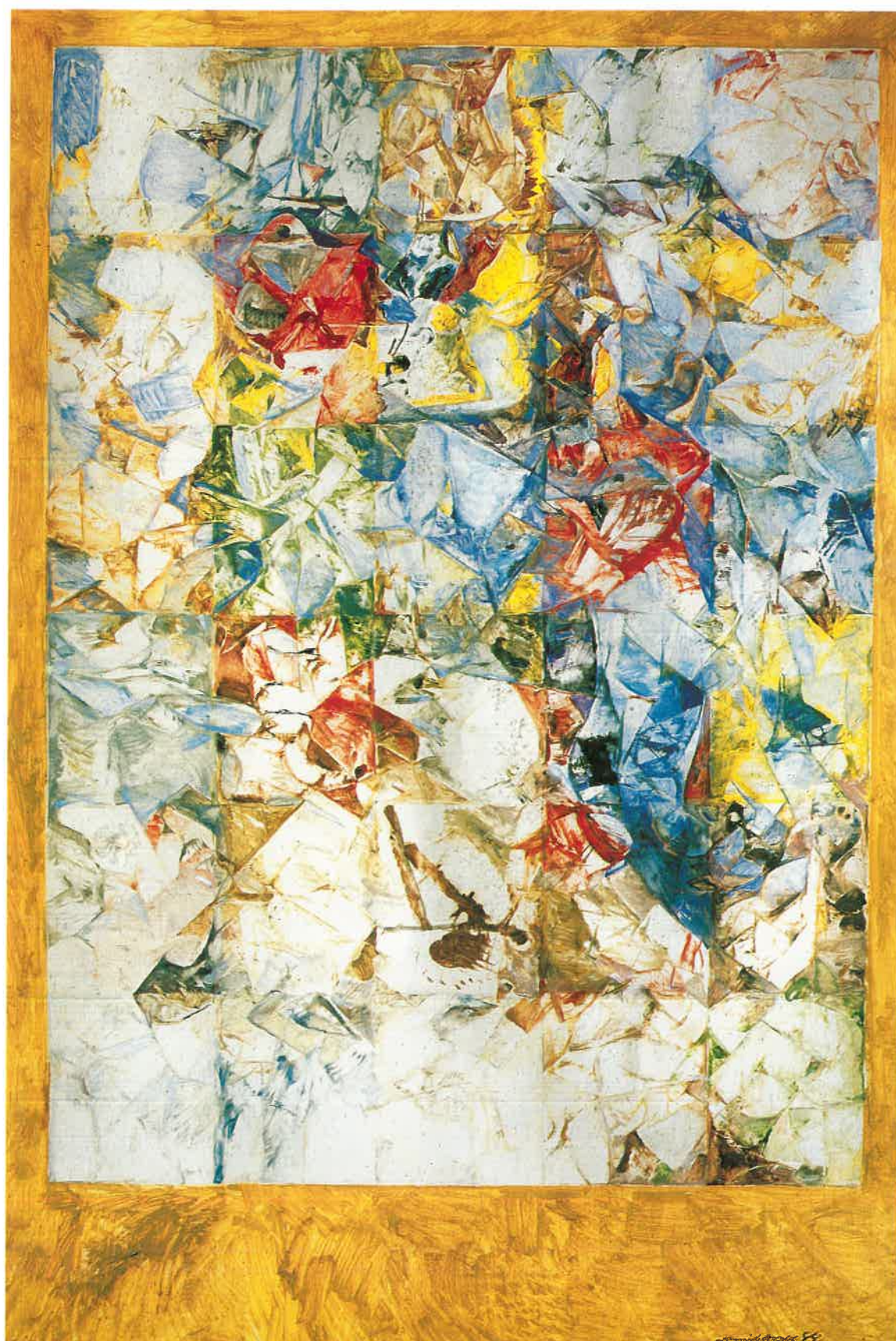


209

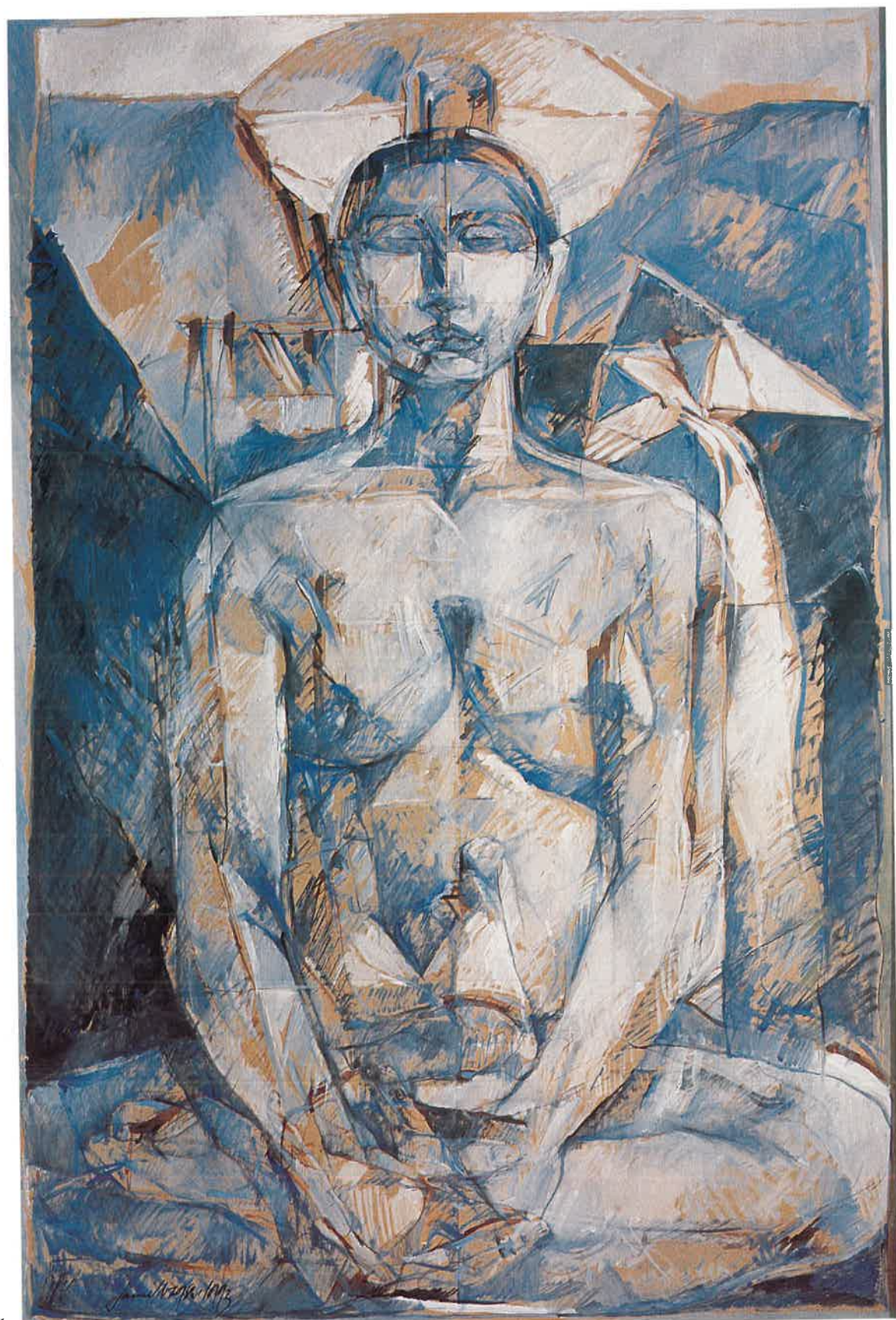
*Oil on canvas, 1981
31 x 31 cm
Private collection*



210
Oil on paper, 1988
85 x 63 cm
Private collection



211
Tantric manifesto
Oil on paper, 1988
98 x 63 cm
Private collection



212
Oil on paper, 1993
90 x 60 cm
Courtesy Meher Happy Minwalla

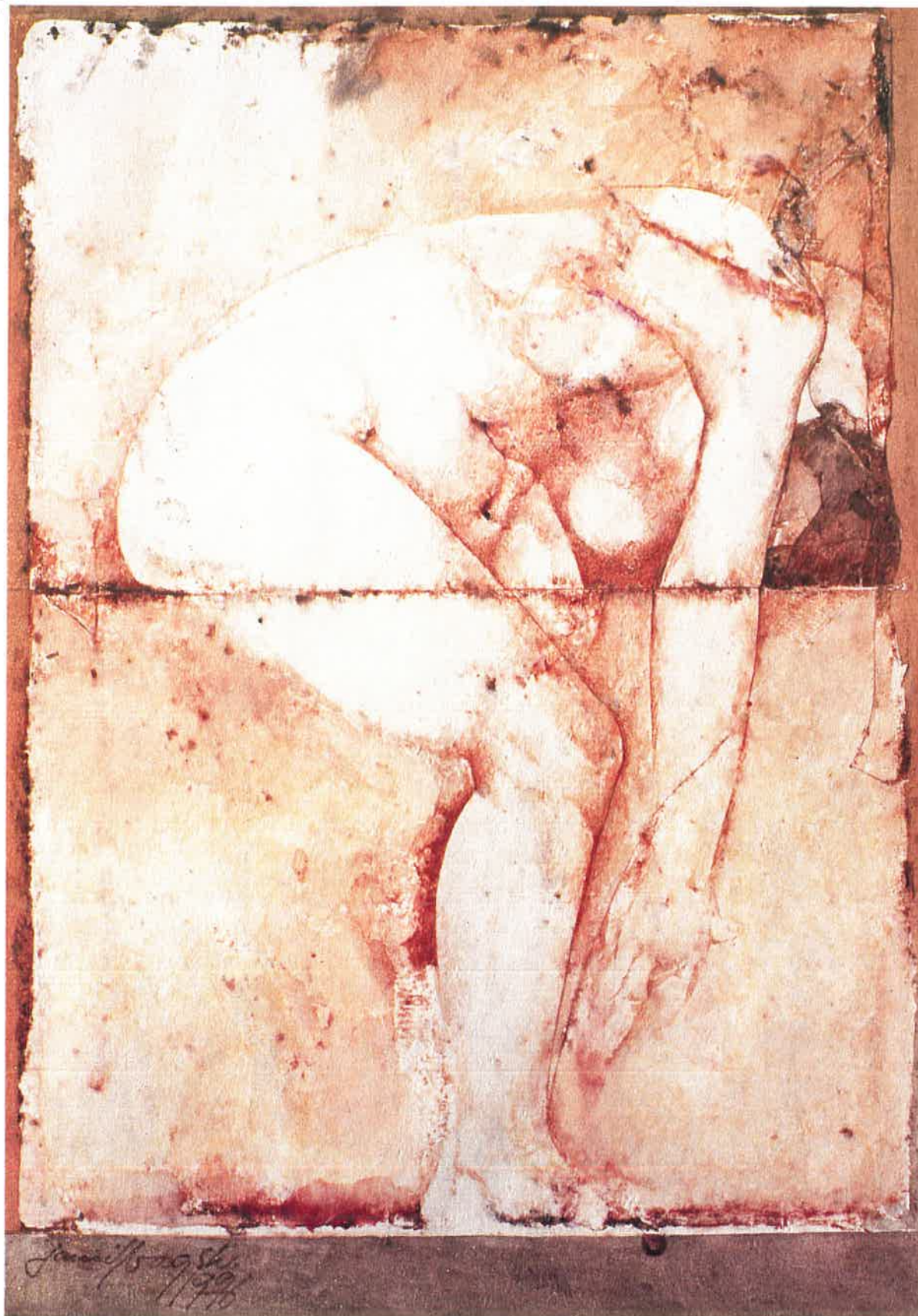


213
Watercolour, 1995
42 x 34 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



214

Watercolour, 1996
26 x 22 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation

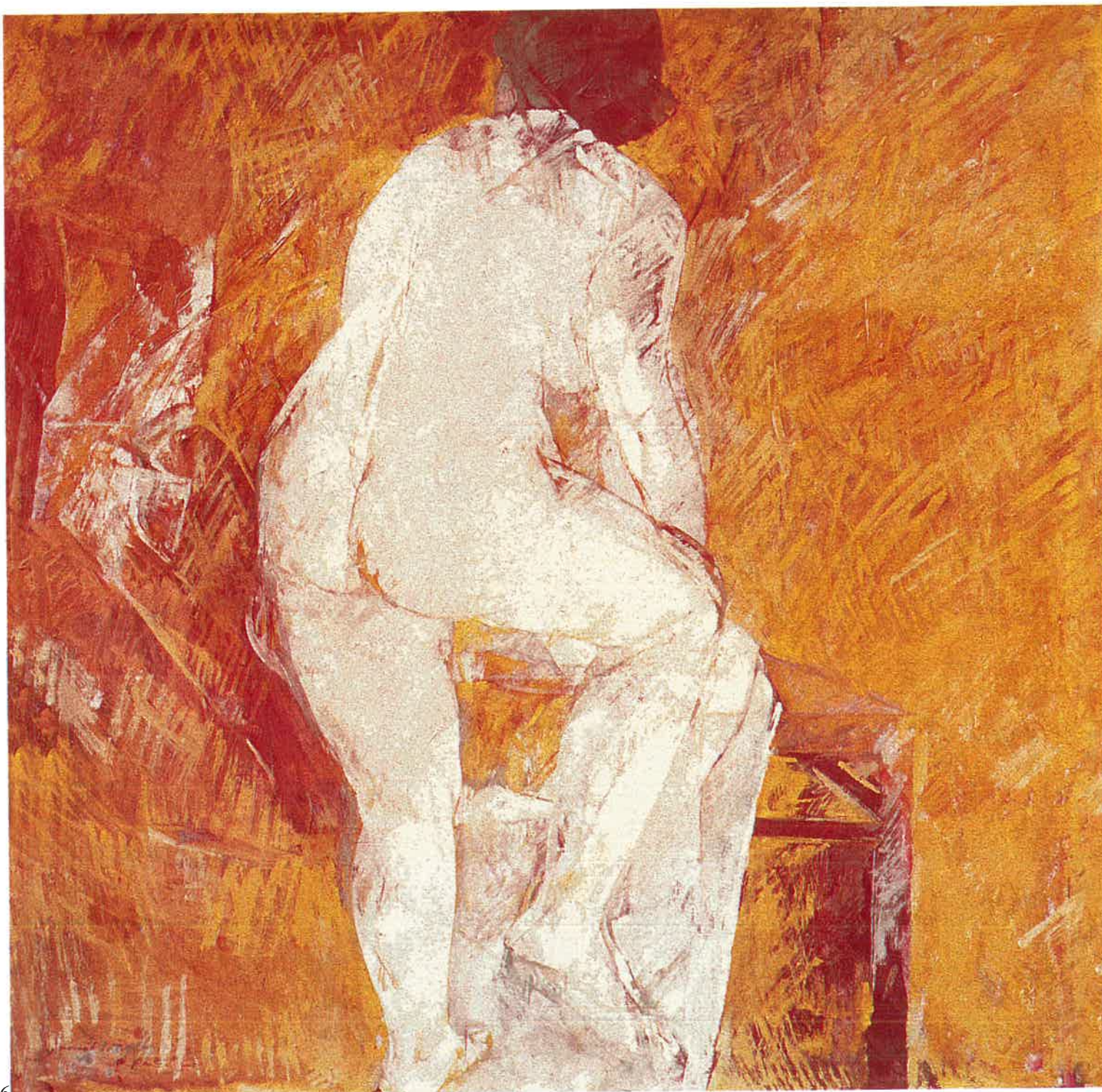


215
Watercolour, 1996
35 x 27 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation



James B. 80

Woman



216
Oil on canvas, 1986
46 x 46 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



217
Oil on paper, 1987
64 x 48 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura

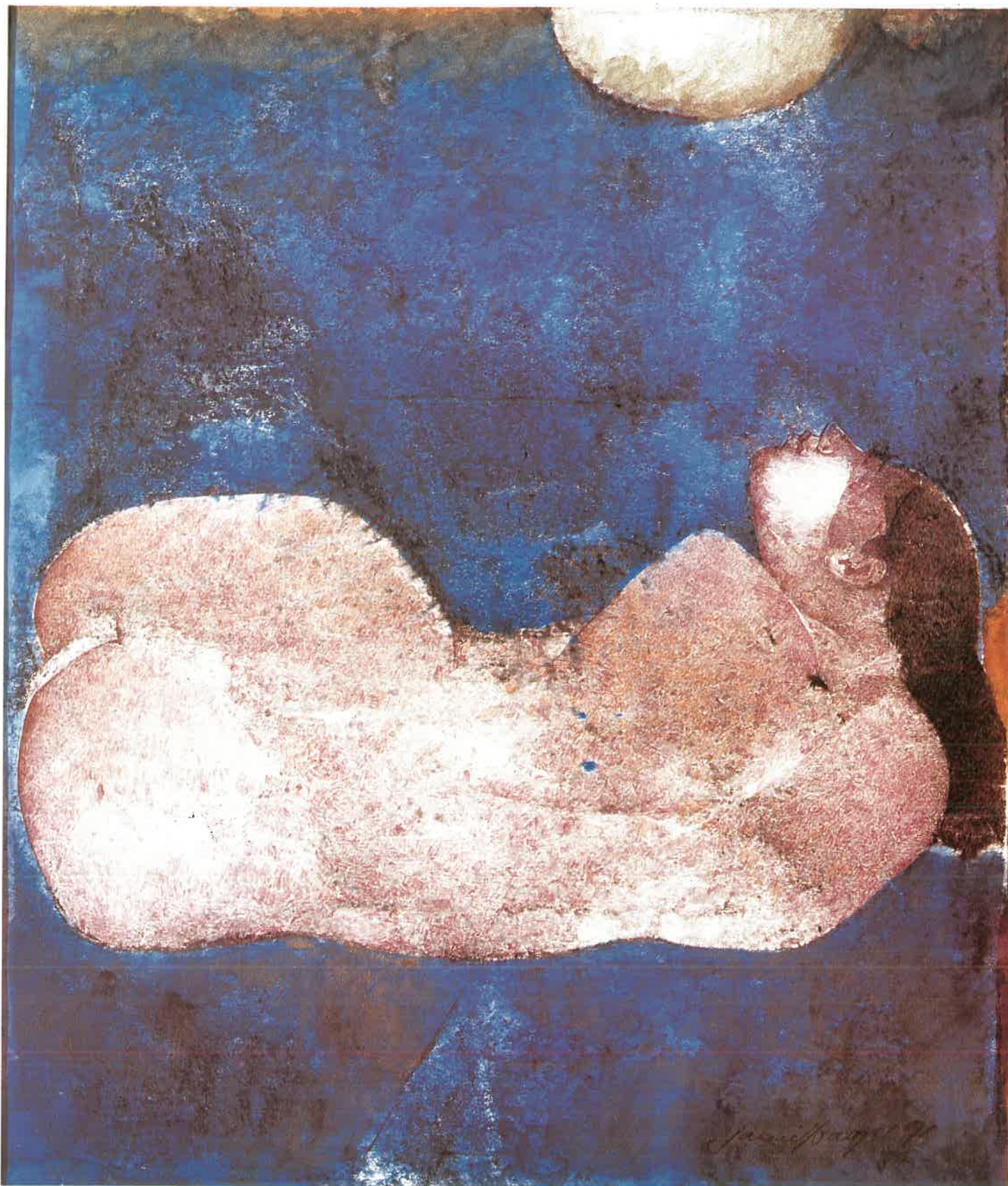




218
Oil on paper, 1991
44 x 61 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura

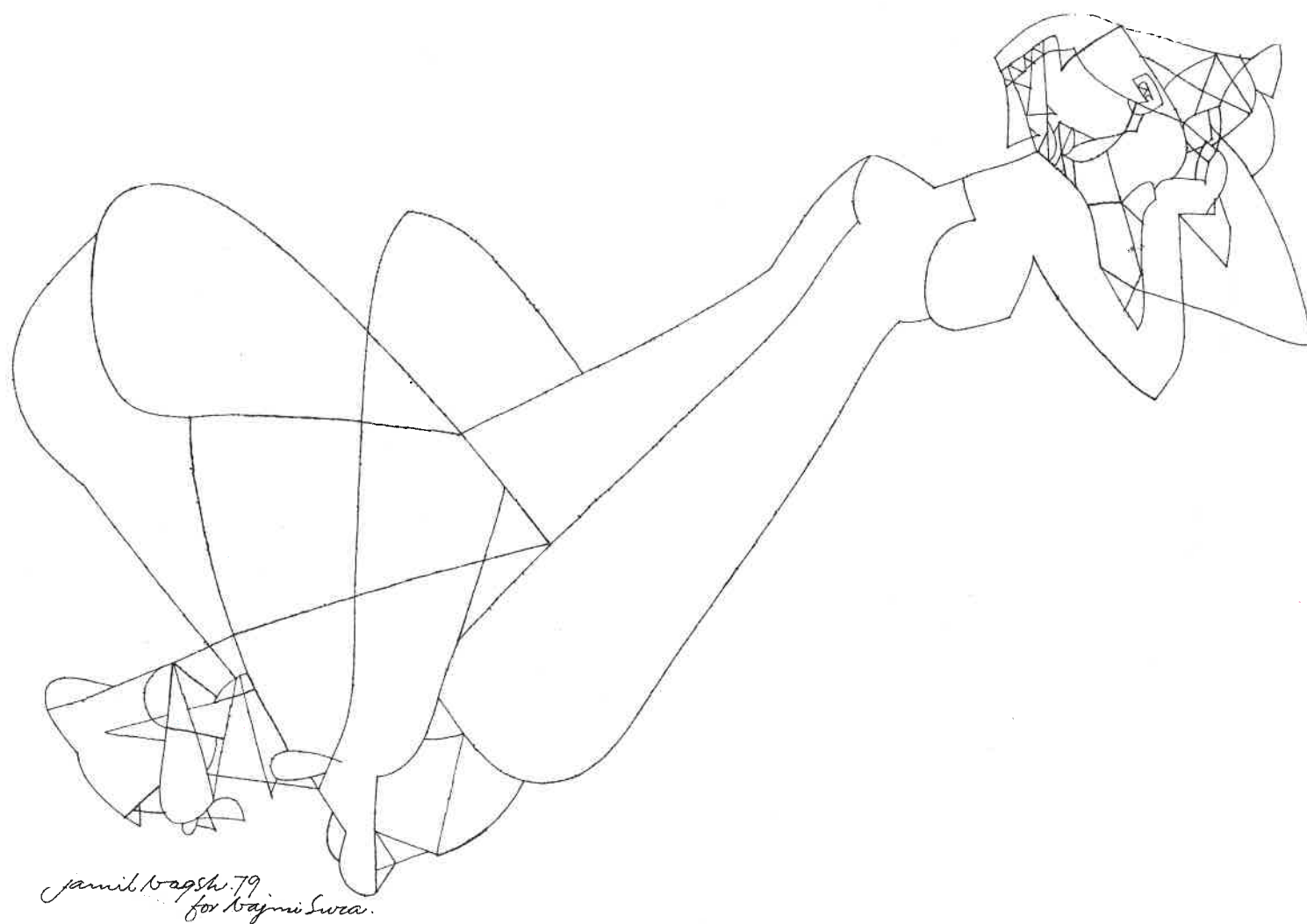


219
Mixed media, 1995
41 x 34 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



220

Watercolour, 1995
43 x 36 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsb Foundation



jamil bagshi 79
for Rajni Swa.

Drawings



221

Pen and Ink, 1989
 60 x 46 cm
 Courtesy Najmi Sura

222

Pen and Ink, 1989
 49 x 31 cm
 Courtesy Najmi Sura



222
Pen and Ink, 1998
49 x 37 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



223

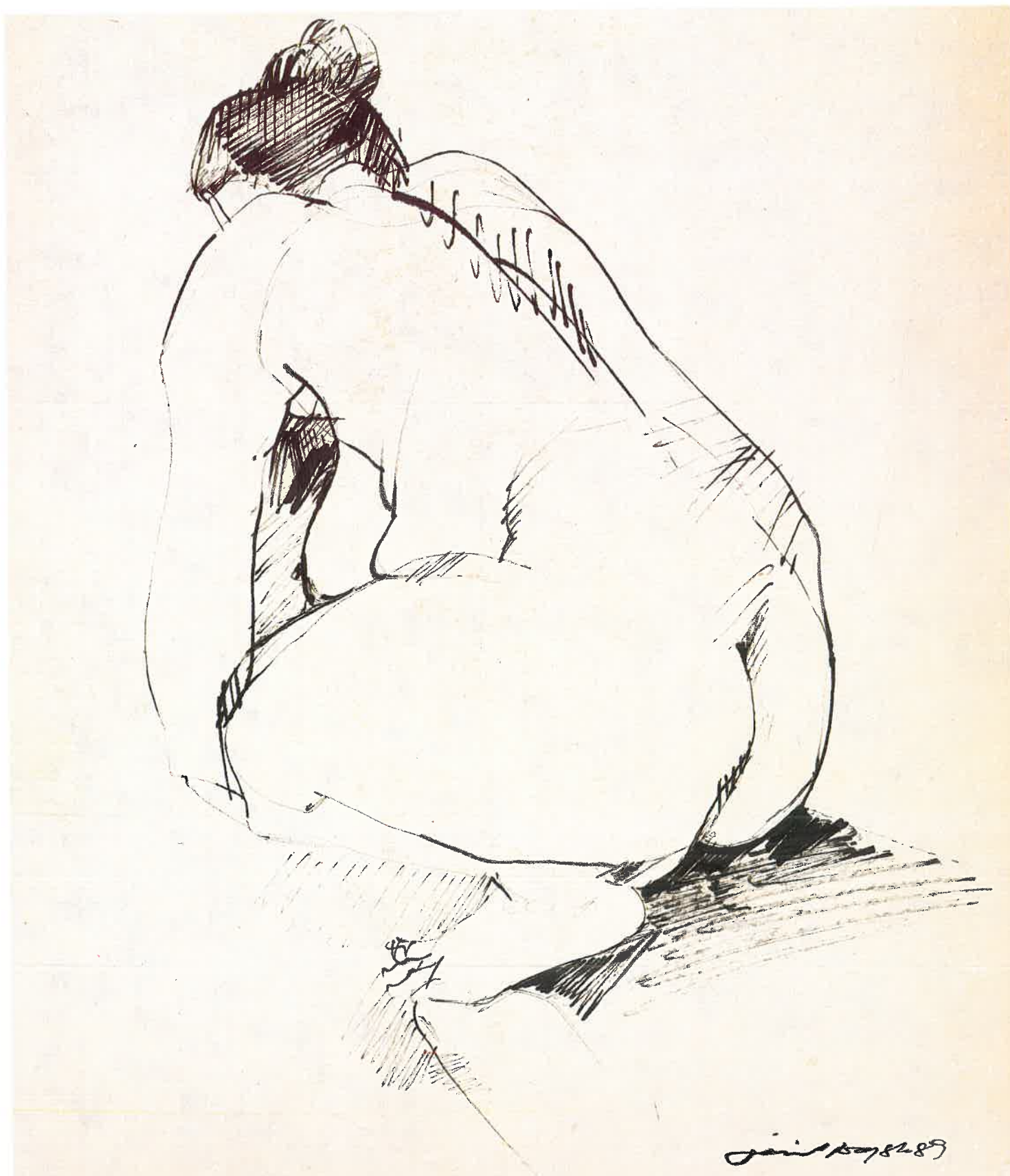
Pen and Ink
51 x 38 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



Janis Sura

224

*Pen and Ink
51 x 38 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura*



225

Pen and Ink, 1989
35 x 26 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



226

Pencil, 1990

31 x 31 cm

Courtesy Najmi Sura



227
Pen and Ink, 1992
33 x 42 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura

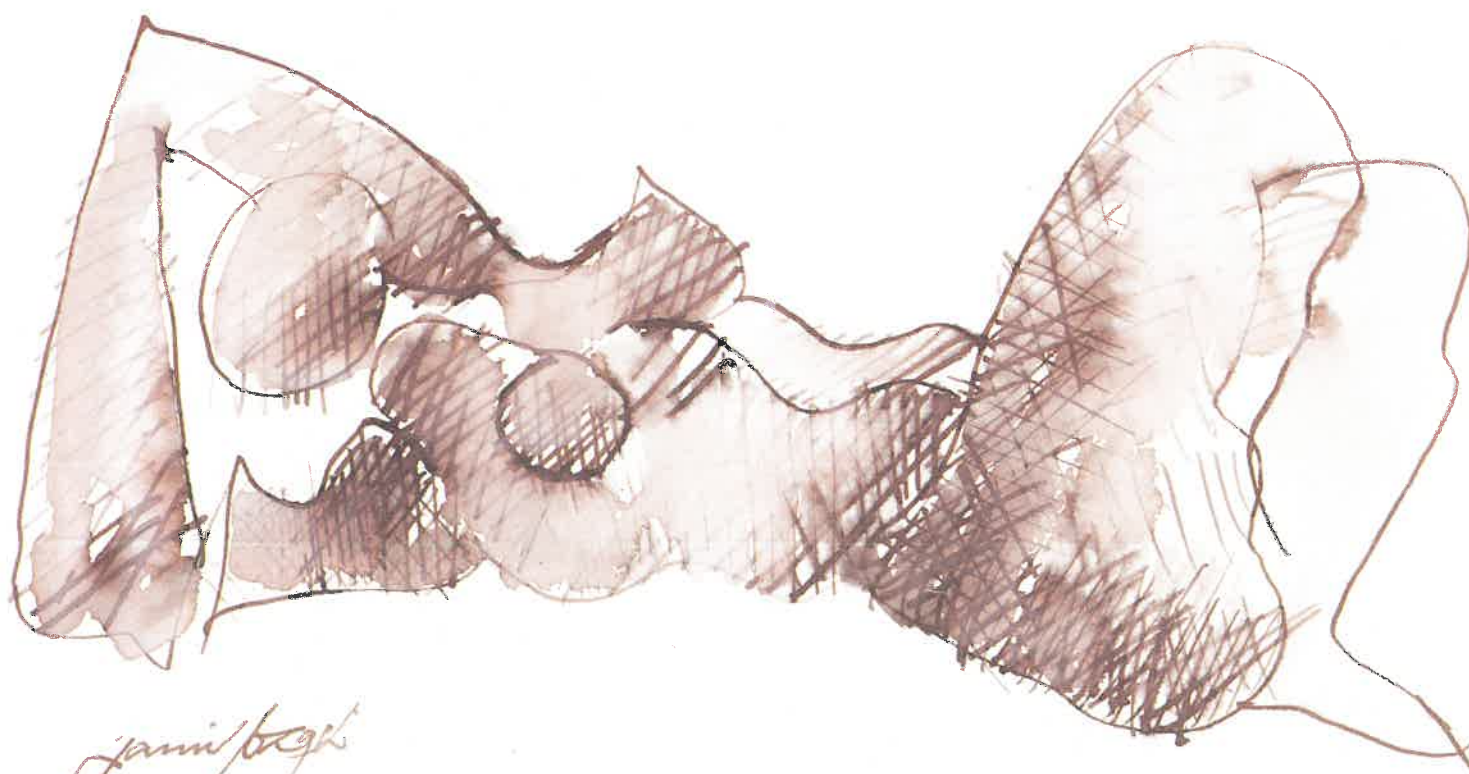


228

Pencil

20 x 20 cm

Courtesy Busbra and Kashif Shehzad



Jamini/Bagh

229



Jamini/Bagh

230

Watercolour
23 x 34 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



231
Watercolour
36 x 20 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



232

Pencil
34 x 33 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



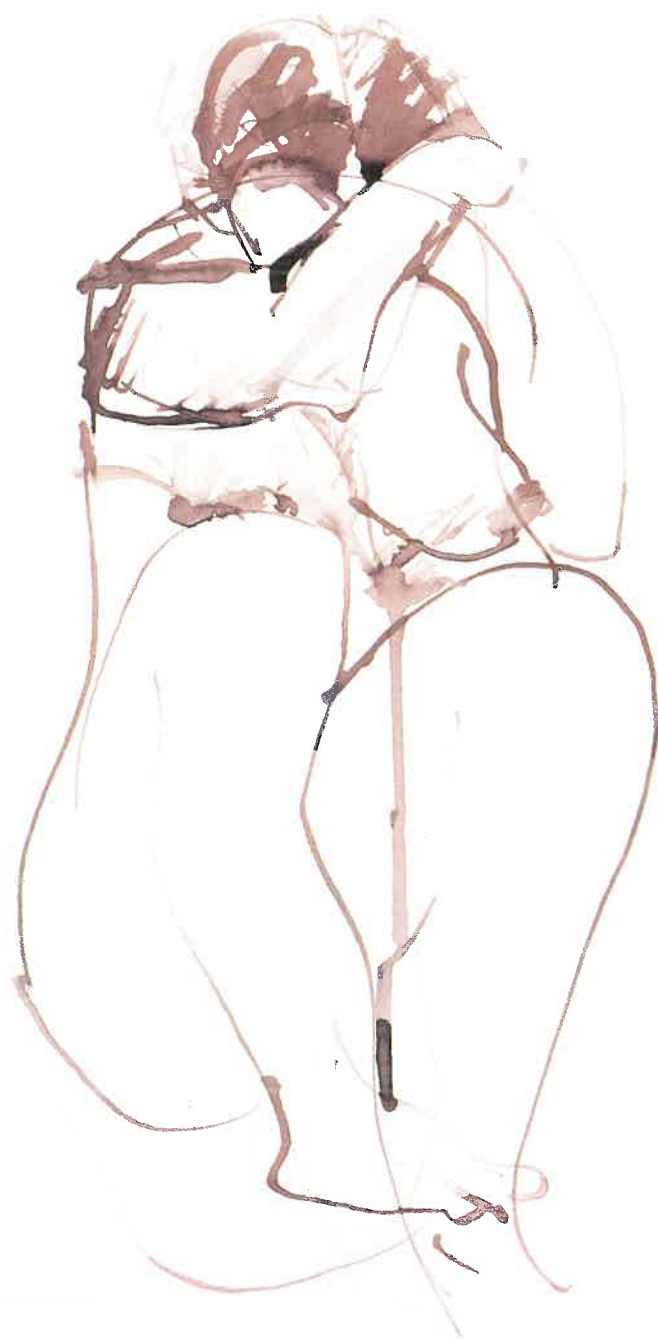
233

Pencil
22 x 27 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



234

Pencil
31 x 27 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura

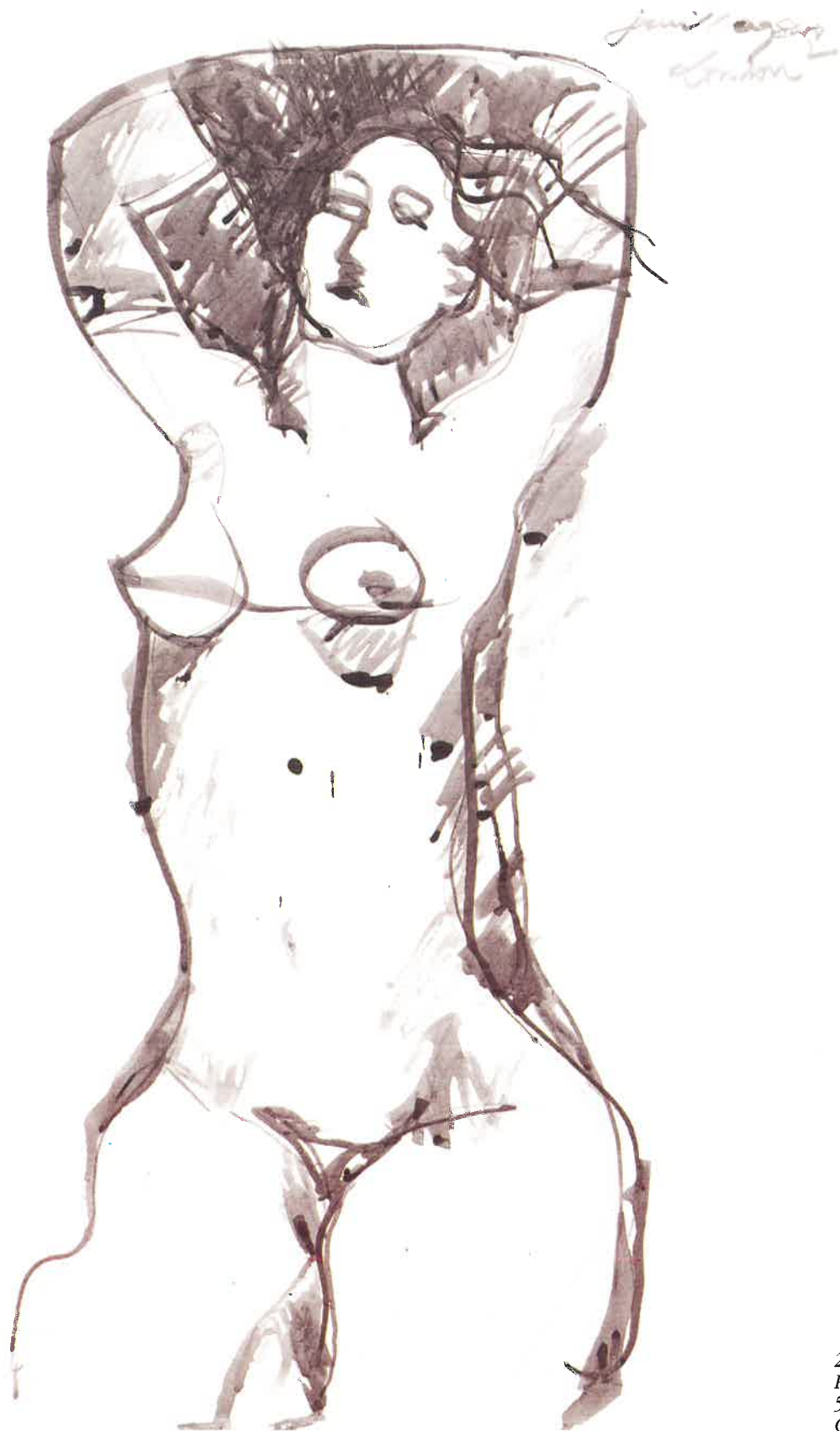


Najmi Sura

235
Pen and Ink
53 x 35 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



236
Pen and Ink
42 x 33 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



237
Pen and Ink, 2002
55 x 37 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



238
Pen and Ink, 2002
53 x 36 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



239

Watercolour, 2002
33 x 53 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



240
Pen and Ink, 2002
53 x 33 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



241
Pen and Ink, 2002
53 x 33 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



242
Watercolour, 2002
33 x 36 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



243
Watercolour
53 x 35 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura

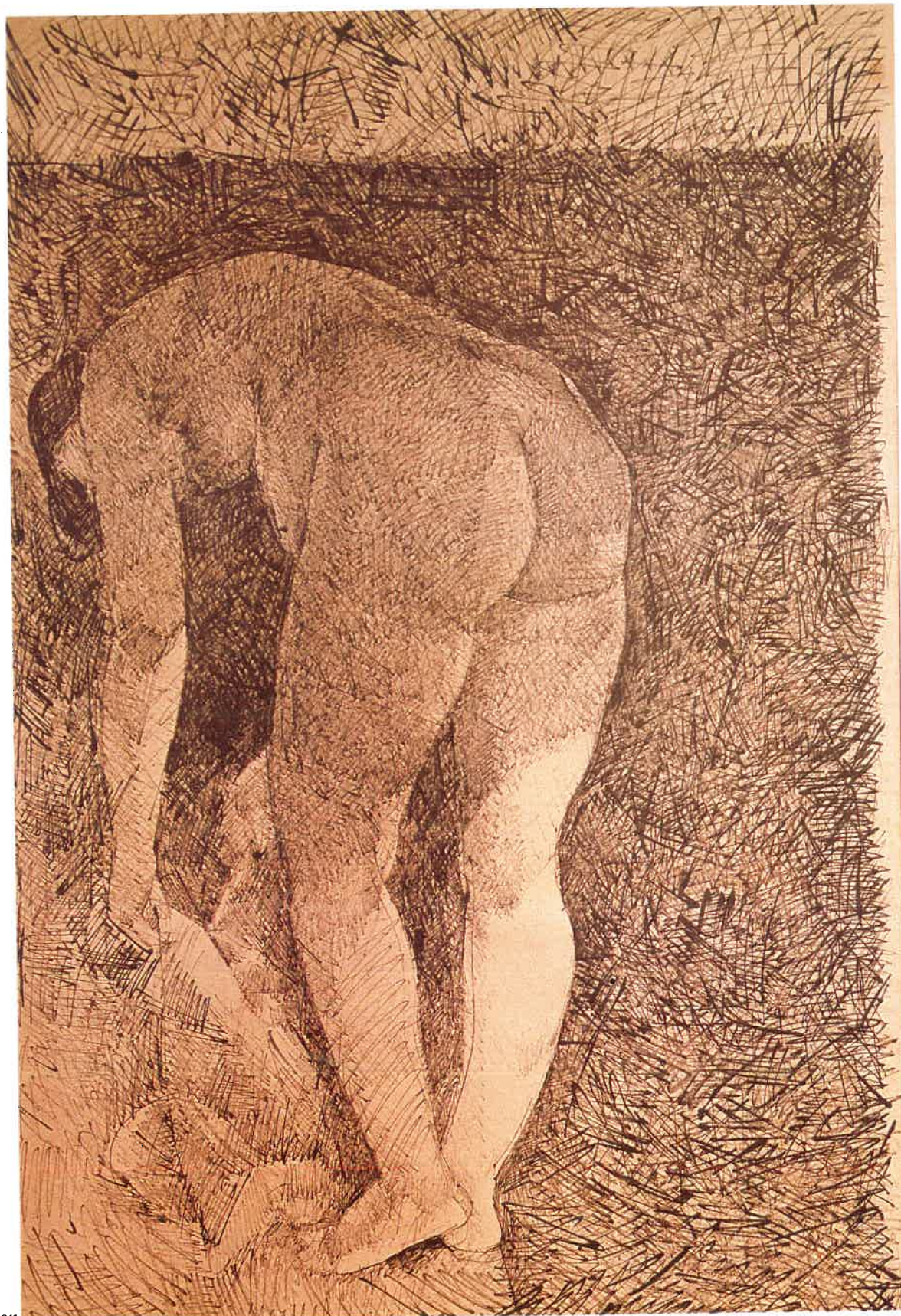


244
Pen and Ink, 2002
33 x 53 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



245

Pen and Ink, 2002
33 x 53 cm
Courtesy Najmi Sura



246
Pen and Ink
98 x 61 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsb Foundation



247
 Pen and Ink, 1987
 63 x 48 cm
 Private collection

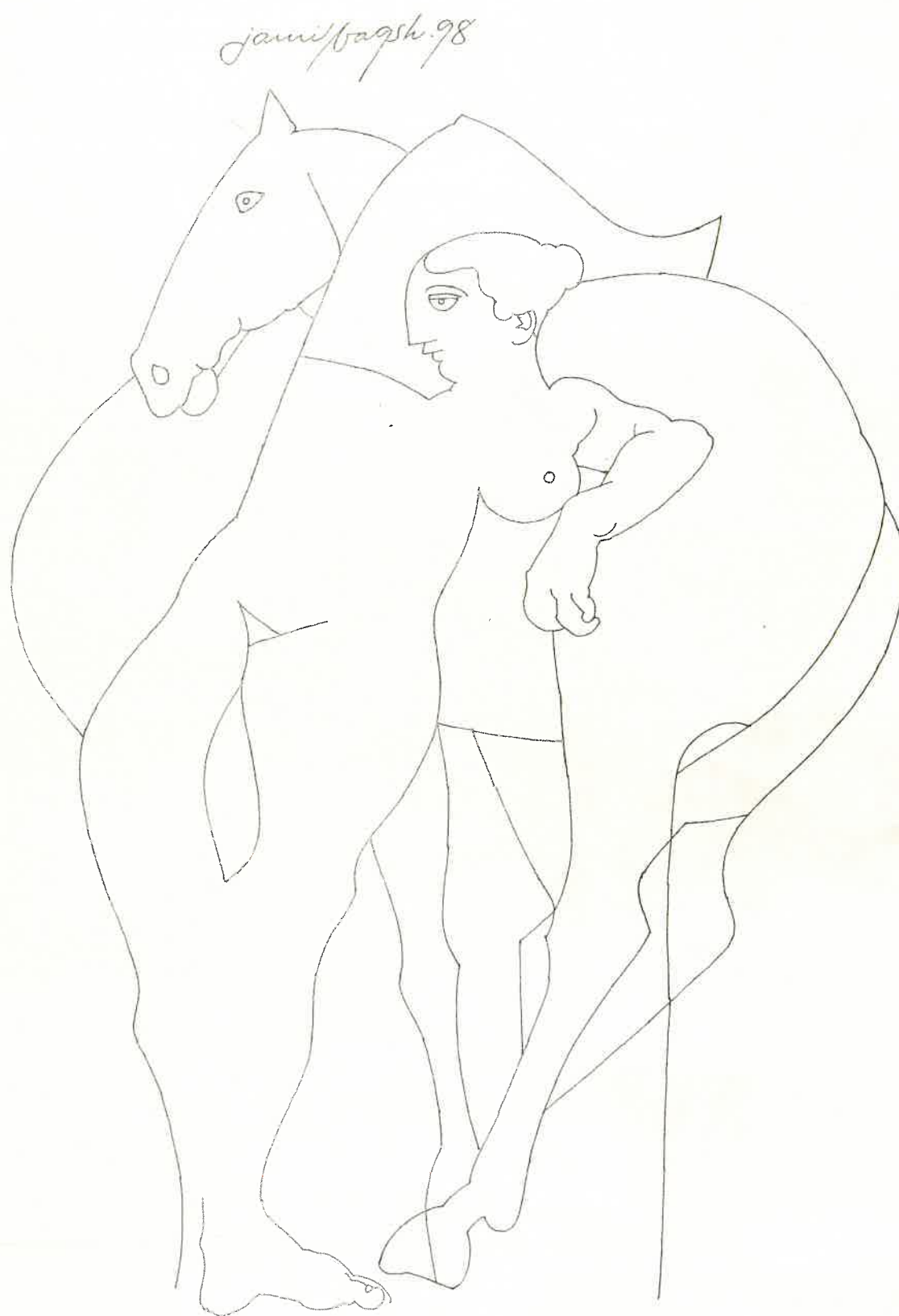


248
Pen and ink, 1998
38 x 29 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsb Foundation



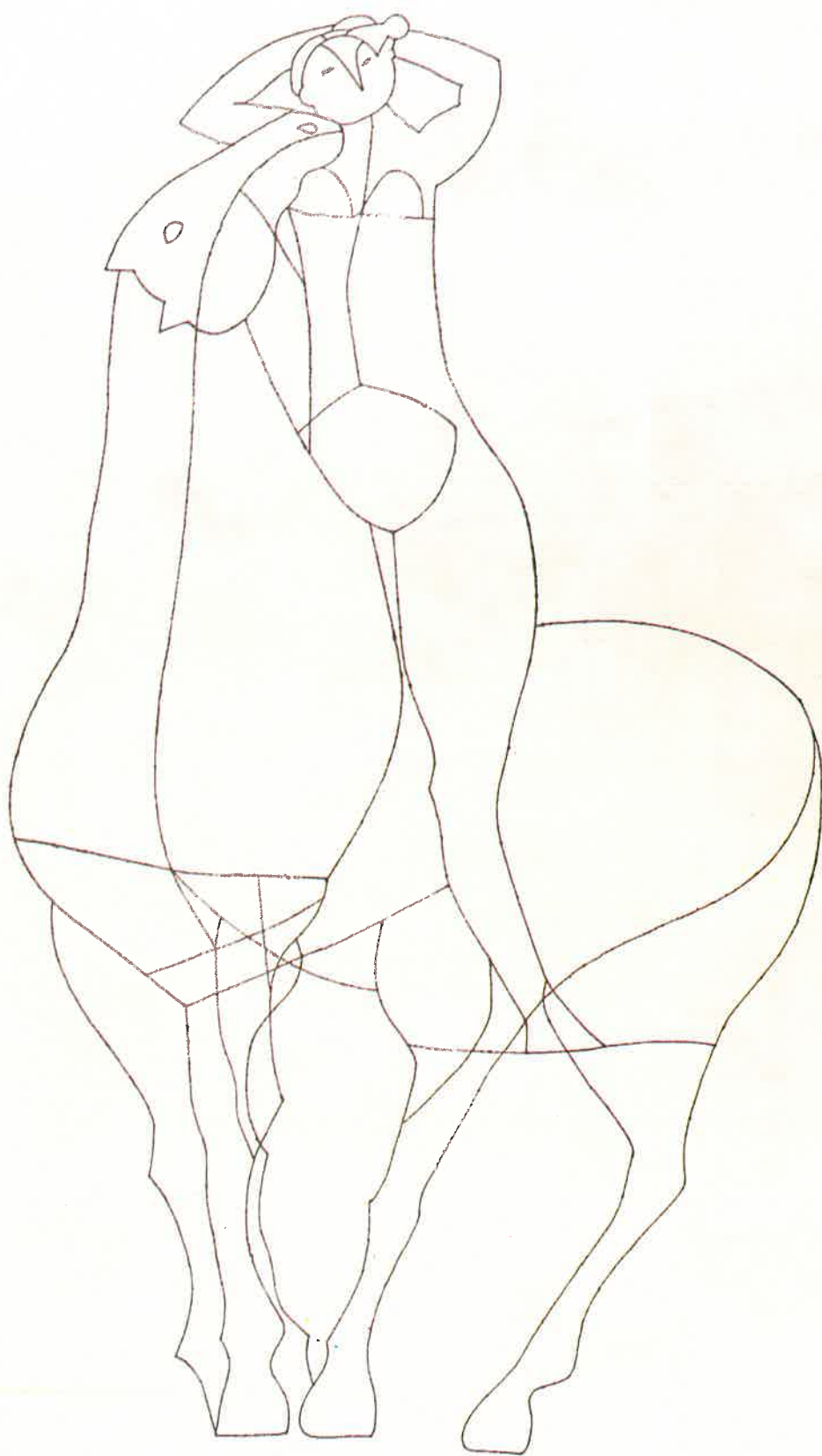
249

Pencil, 1999
38 x 29 cm
Courtesy Sharifa and Sultan Allana



250

*Pen and Ink
38 x 29 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsh Foundation*



251

Pen and Ink
38 x 29 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqsb Foundation

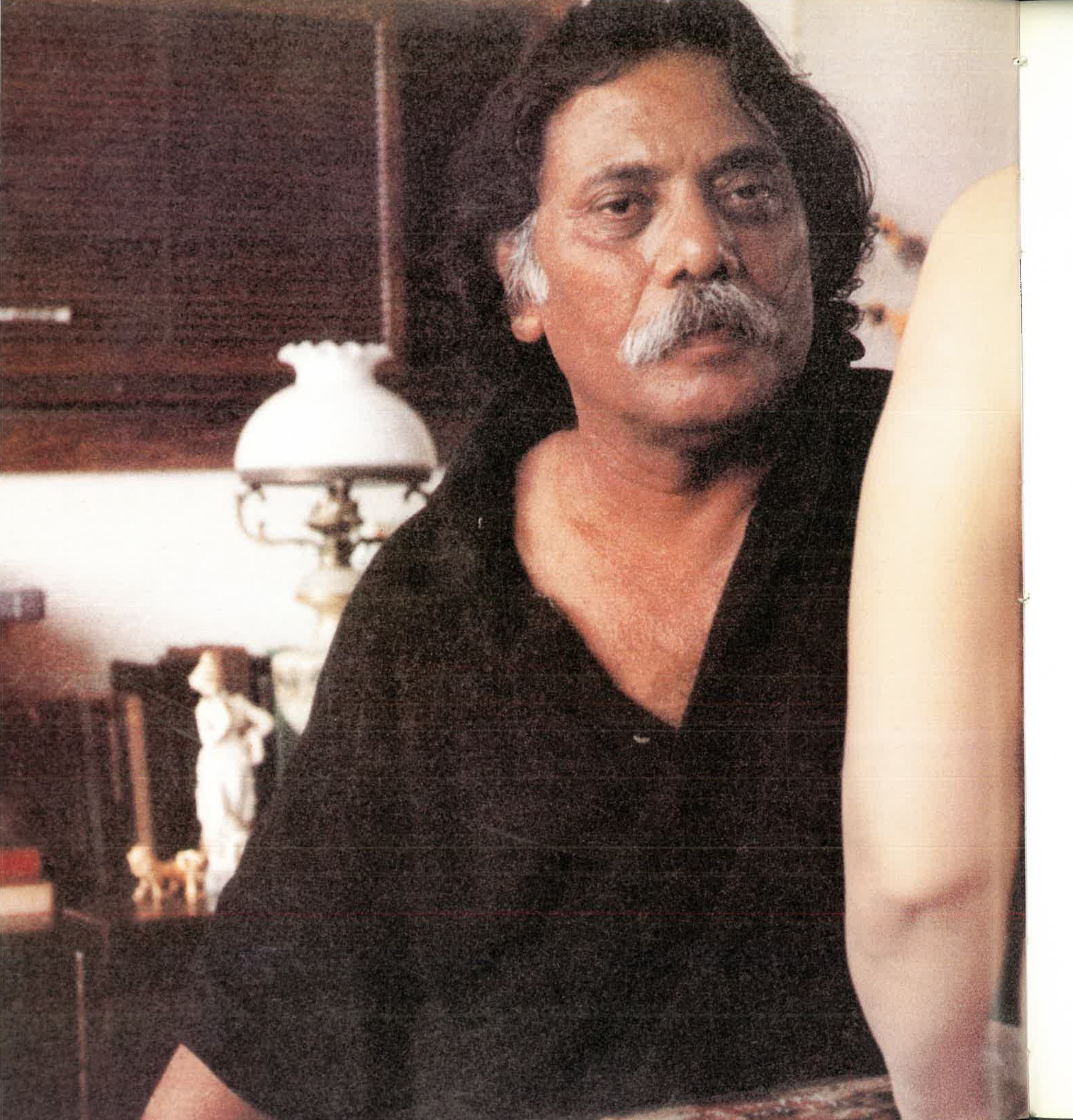
Jamil Naqvi



252
Pen and Ink, 2003
38 x 30 cm
Courtesy Jamil Naqvi Foundation



253
Watercolour, 1997
54 x 37 cm
Courtesy Bushra and Kashif Shehzad



*Formed of well kneaded native earth
Like everyone else
That forms thousands of great men
Thousands of pretty women
Millennia's civilised grace
So well kneaded and formed
Great Gautama Buddha, fair Mira Bai
and Jamil Naqsh,
Formed of well kneaded earth
To return to the same old earth
Others of the kind to be born
To confirm my being!*

Jamil Naqsh, 1997

Chronology

- 1939 25th December, born in Kairana, Uttar Pradesh, India
- 1953 Studied Indian miniature painting with the late Ustad Muhammad Sherif
National College of Arts, Lahore

Group Shows

- 1953 National Art Competition, Multan
- 1963 *Painters from Pakistan*, Nepal
- 1964 *Painters from Pakistan*, Ceylon
- 1970 Gallerie Christoph Durr, Munich, West Germany
- 1972 *Painters from Pakistan*, Pakistan National Council of the Arts in Paris,
London, Italy, Munich, New York, Sao Paulo, Tokyo, Libya, Morocco, Ghana and Sudan.
- 1992 Trivandrum and New Delhi, India
- 1992 Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, U.S.A.

Awards

- 1961 First Prize, Women's International Club, Karachi
- 1962 Gold Medal, Pakistan Arts Council, Karachi
- 1980 Shakir Ali Award, Ministry of Culture, Government of Pakistan
- 1982 Contribution of 20 years as a painter, Arts Council of Pakistan
- 1989 President's Pride of Performance Award
- 1989 Pursuit of Excellence Award, The Artists' Association of Punjab, Pakistan

Solo exhibitions

- 1962 Pakistan Arts Council, Lahore
- 1963 Pakistan Arts Council, Karachi
- 1963 The Pak-Brazil Friendship Association, Beach Luxury Hotel, Karachi
- 1967 Pakistan Arts Council, Karachi
- 1971 Pakistan Art Gallery, Karachi
- 1996 Establishment of Jamil Naqsh Foundation and Museum, Karachi
- 1996 *Homage to Marino Marini*, Momart Art Gallery, Karachi
- 1996 *Beyond Words*, The Art Gallery, Islamabad
- 1996 *Modern Manuscripts*, Momart Art Gallery, Karachi
- 1996 Private viewing hosted by Amina and Jehangir Tareen, Trustees of Jamil Naqsh Foundation, Lahore
- 1997 *Mother and Child*, dedicated to Dr. Faridon Setna, a private viewing hosted by Meher and Husain Sheriff, Trustees of Jamil Naqsh Foundation, Karachi
- 1998 *Homage to Marino Marini*, Jamil Naqsh Museum and Momart Art Gallery, Karachi
- 1999 Formal inauguration, Jamil Naqsh Museum, Karachi
- 2001 Jamil Naqsh Museum, Karachi
- 2001 *Magic of the Line*, Momart Art Gallery, Karachi
- 2003 *Private collection of Najmi Sura*, Jamil Naqsh Museum and Momart Art Gallery, Karachi

Special projects

- 1960-68 Co-editor of *Seep Urdu Literary Quarterly* and *Arts International*
- 1968 First Prize, National Competition by Hamdard National Foundation for a poster design *To find a Cure for Cancer*, for display and distribution by the W.H.O.
- 1973 Calligraphy executed in oil on canvas for the Hamdard National Foundation
- 1974 Mural executed in oil on canvas for The Cancer Society of Pakistan Karachi, for display and distribution by the W.H.O.
- 1976 Mural executed in oil on canvas for the Shakir Ali Museum, Lahore
- 1970-73 President, Pakistan Painters Guild

Lenders to the exhibition

Farzana Adamjee
Mona Adil
Sultan Ahmed
Khalil Ahmed
Sultana and Abbas Ahmed
Shammi Ahmed
Feroze Akhund
Mohammad Ali Hassan Ali
Sharifa and Sultan Allana
Nasreen and Hasan Askari
Rehana and Saleem Asmi
Feroza Avari
Babar Ayaz
Noorjahan and Aqueel Bilgrami
Tabinda Chinoy
Toxy and Cyrus Cowasjee
Jamil Naqsh Foundation
Muzaffar Ghaffar
Rooha Ghaznavi
Tyaba and Muslim Habib
Syeda and Mohamedali Habib
Iffat and Iqbal Haider
Saquib Hanif
Sana and Arif Hashwani
Mujahida and Arif Hasan
Marjorie Husain
Uzra S. Hussain
Shahine Ismail
Ketayun and Nadershaw Kabraji
Spenta and Darius Kandawalla
Seema and Taher Khan
Fatima and Zulfiqar Lakhani
Ronak and Iqbal Lakhani
Subuktagin Majeed

Meher and Happy Minwalla
Rumina and Kamran Mirza
Yasmina and Sleem Majidulla
Qaiser and M. M. Mohsin
Sobia and Cezanne Naqsh
Mona Naqsh
Pakistan National Council of the Arts
Shama and Mahboob Rawjee
Farooq Rehmatullah
Zehra and Javed Rizvi
Shakil and Rehana Saigol
Zakia Sarwar
Dinar and Dr. Faridon Setna
Meher and Husain Sheriff
Bushra and Kashif Shehzad
Rafiq Sheikh
Atia and Iqbal Siddiqui
Ayesha and Akram Sultan
Najmi Sura
Zeno and Babur Tajjamul
Rasheeda and Aftab Tapal
Amina and Jehangir Tareen
Salma and Muhammad Mashood Usmani
Dr. Iffat and Khursheed Yazdani

Acknowledgements

It all began in August 2000 when Hamid Akhund and I went to visit Jamil Naqsh. The atmosphere in the city of Karachi and in the country at large, had become a cause for concern, not many practitioners of the creative arts were prepared to take part in the debate against a rising tide of orthodoxy. Jamil Naqsh was disheartened (he had just declined an offer from a departing British High Commissioner to Pakistan for the purchase and display of his collection abroad). Naqsh did not respond to our offer of a retrospective at the Museum, but agreed that we would meet again. Almost a year went by before we could pursue the idea further. It took several meetings before he consented to the undertaking; we have not looked back since.

Naqsh has given wholeheartedly of himself to the execution of the project. With the help of Najmi Sura, he courted a number of individuals to loan their paintings to the Museum. At his behest, a group of loyal friends and patrons rose to the challenge of sponsoring an accompanying catalogue. The Museum is extremely grateful to Naqsh, Najmi Sura and their patrons for their support in making this publication possible and to the financial assistance of Engro Chemical Pakistan Limited for the exhibition.

Our lenders, most particularly the Jamil Naqsh Foundation, merit our profound gratitude as they have borne patiently with our demands.

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The staff at the Museum, as always, has worked above and beyond the call of duty to help create this tribute to Jamil Naqsh.

Nasreen Askari

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