

## Jamil Naqsh and the eternal feminine

28 July – 27 August 2017

Opening reception Thursday 27 July | 6–8 pm

**Jamil Naqsh's new series of images reaffirms his reputation as a master draughtsman, with a sidelong glance at established Western traditions to which he both does and doesn't belong.**

What he now offers are close-up portraits of beautiful young women, of a type familiar from the romantic dream world of classic Mughal miniature painting, but enlarged to life-size, or maybe a little beyond that and presented in warm sepia monochrome. The immediate impression one gets is that these are works on paper, subtly aged. It suggests a relationship with the drawings that have come down to us from the great masters of the Italian Renaissance – precarious survivors whose presence before us both emphasizes and denies their air of fragility. Yet this is an illusion. These are in fact works made in oil on canvas – triumphant examples of trompe l'oeil. By deceiving us, Naqsh emphasises both the essential contemporaneity of the work, and – simultaneously – its organic connection with the great art of the past.

The subject matter of the series is deliberately restricted. Beautiful, isolated human creatures are seen accompanied by pigeons, which are traditional signifiers of love in the culture Naqsh comes from. This romantic love, however, is of a particular kind, whose expression is prompted by separation from, not union with, the love object. Sentiments of this sort are also pervasive in ghazal poetry, a literary form that has flourished in Urdu, just as also, somewhat previously, in Persian. Pigeons are messengers, flying free, able to speak vicariously for those forever locked in solitary confinement.

In fact, it is not too much to say that these new images are offered as icons for meditation about the essential solitariness of the human condition. In two of the images, the pigeons appear alone, without a human companion. Here, one may imagine, the spectator herself or himself becomes the prisoner of love, confined within the limits of the composition.

Taken as a whole, the series offers a touching footnote to the culture from which the painter comes, but which he has now left behind, to live in near isolation within the boundaries of a very different cultural situation.

Yet, at the same time, the paintings speak eloquently of the romantic feelings held in common by individuals in multiple cultures throughout the globe. They say, among other things, that art continues to triumph over language. A ghazal has to be translated, these do not. It's not hard to get the message the pigeons bring.

– Edward Lucie-Smith  
Art Historian, Author and Critic



**Harmony**  
2017 | Oil on Canvas | 101 x 76 cm (40 x 30 in)



**Tower Flock**  
2017 | Oil on Canvas | 122 x 92 cm (68 x 36 in)

# Pontone

GALLERY

## JAMIL NAQSH

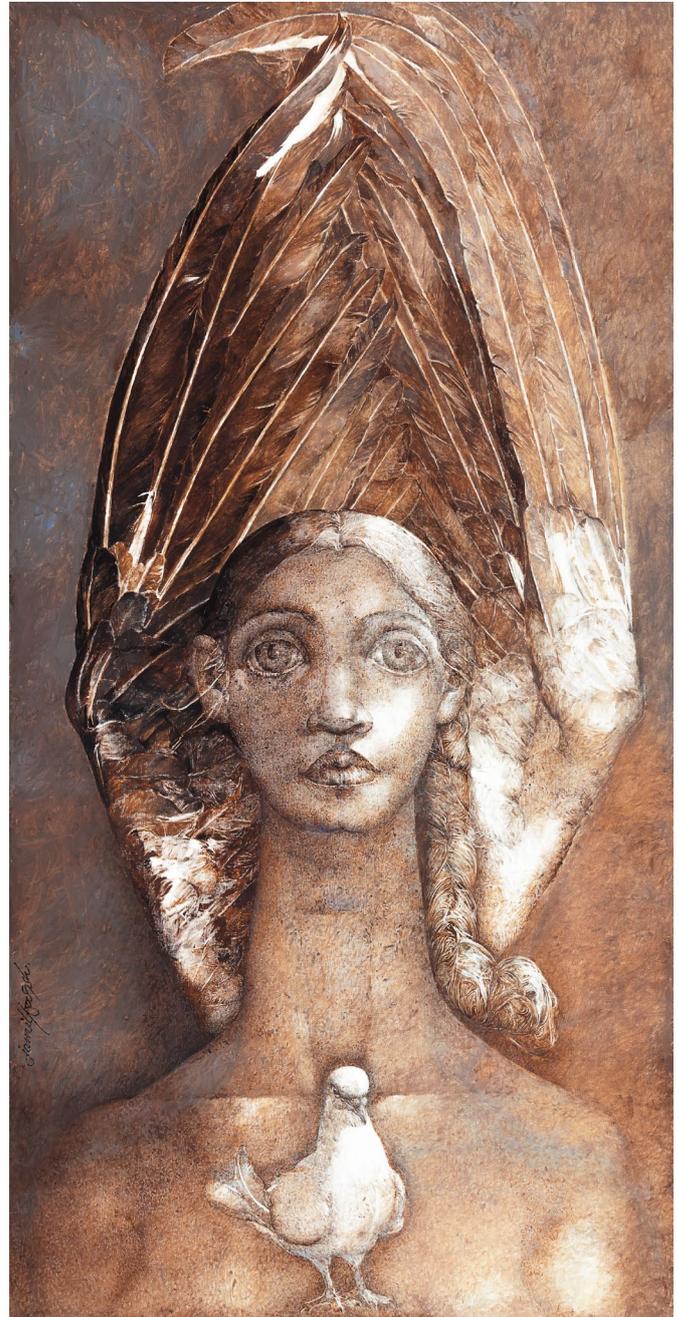
1937 25 December, Born in Kairana Uttar Pradesh, India

## EDUCATION

1953 Studied Indian miniature painting with Ustad Mohammad Sharif, National College of Arts, Lahore

## SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2017 Jamil Naqsh – and the eternal feminine, Pontone Gallery, London
- 2016 Jamil Naqsh – an artist between three cultures, Albemarle Gallery, London
- 2015 Art Bahrain, Bahrain, Albemarle Gallery
- 2015 The Muse, Messengers & Miniatures, Albemarle Gallery, London
- 2014 An Epic Romance, Albemarle Gallery, London
- 2013 The Painted Word, Albemarle Gallery, London  
The Painted Word, DIFC Atrium, Dubai  
The Painted Word, Asia House, London
- 2012 Homage to Picasso, Albemarle Gallery, London  
Doves and Pigeons, Albemarle Gallery, London  
Homage to Picasso, Asia House, London
- 2011 A Retrospective, Albemarle Gallery, London
- 2010 Pigeons and a slice of light, Momart Art Gallery, Capital Club, Dubai  
Pigeons and a slice of light, Momart Art Gallery and Jamil Naqsh Museum, Karachi
- 2009 Homage to Picasso, Momart Art Gallery and Jamil Naqsh Museum, Karachi
- 2008 Homage to Picasso, Nitanjali Art Gallery, at Galerie Romain Rolland, Alliance Francaise de Delhi
- 2005 Studio Glass Art Gallery, London
- 2003 Jamil Naqsh: A Retrospective, Mohatta Palace Museum, Karachi  
Jamil Naqsh for Najmi Sura, private collection of Najmi Sura, Jamil Naqsh Museum and Momart Art Gallery, Karachi
- 2001 Magic of the Line, Momart Art Gallery, Karachi  
Jamil Naqsh Museum, Karachi
- 1999 Jamil Naqsh Museum, formal inauguration, Karachi
- 1998 Homage to Marino Marini, Jamil Naqsh Museum and Momart Art Gallery, Karachi
- 1997 Mother and Child, dedicated to Dr. Faridon Setna, a private viewing hosted by Meher and Husain Sheriff, Trustees of Jamil Naqsh Foundation
- 1996 Private viewing hosted by Amina and Jehangir Tareen, Trustees of Jamil Naqsh Foundation, Lahore  
Modern Manuscripts, Momart Art Gallery, Karachi  
Beyond Words, The Art Gallery, Islamabad  
Homage to Marino Marini, Momart Art Gallery, Karachi  
Jamil Naqsh Foundation and Museum, established in Karachi
- 1971 Pakistan Arts Gallery, Karachi
- 1967 Pakistan Arts Council, Karachi



**Emissaries**  
2017 | Oil on Canvas | 183 x 92 cm (72 x 36 in)