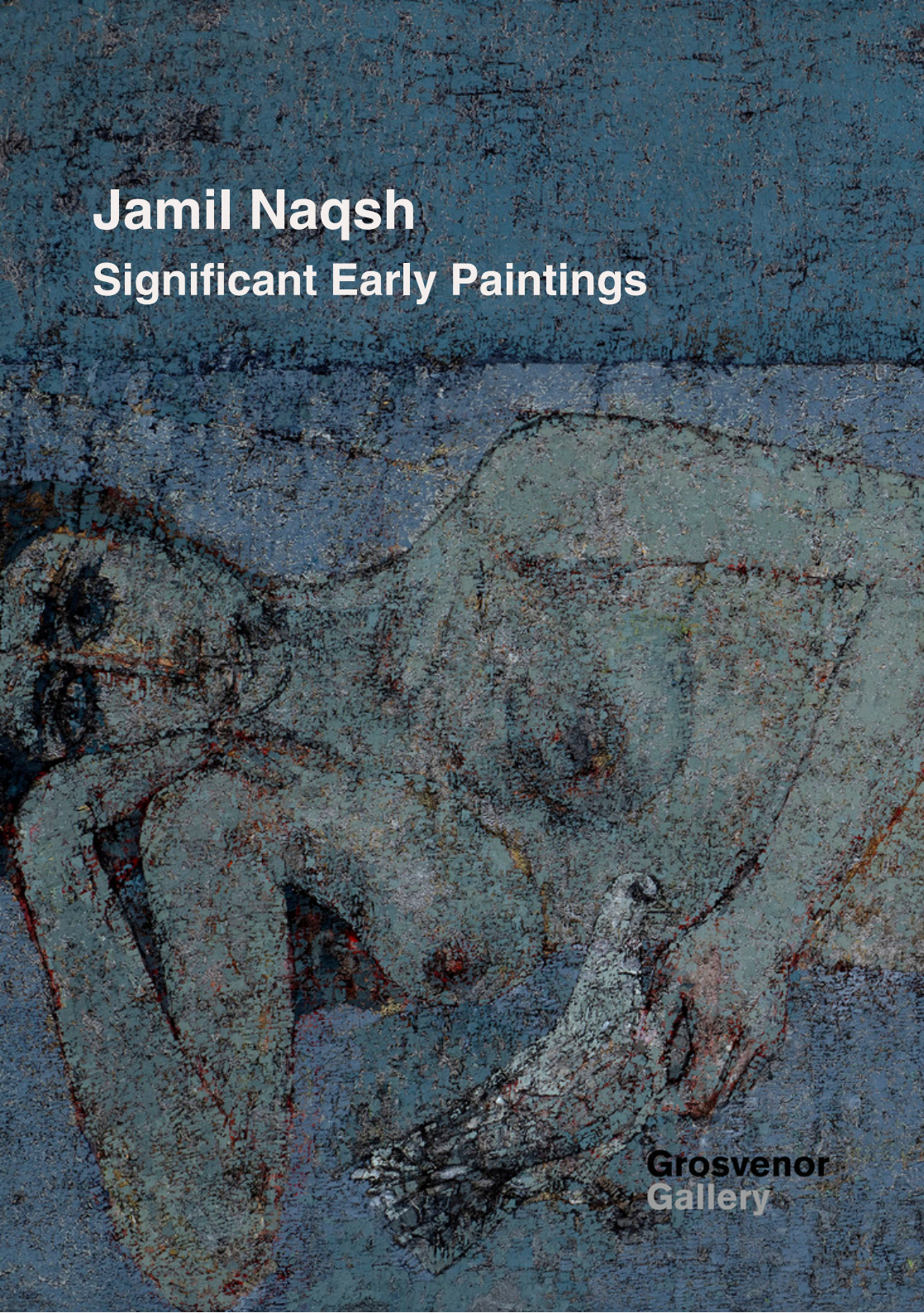


An abstract painting with a textured, layered appearance. The background is a mix of dark blue, grey, and brown tones. In the lower right, there is a white, bird-like figure with its wings spread, appearing to emerge from or interact with the surrounding abstract forms. The overall style is expressive and gestural.

Jamil Naqsh

Significant Early Paintings

**Grosvenor
Gallery**



Jamil Naqsh

Significant Early Paintings

10 - 31 July 2026

**Grosvenor
Gallery**

35 Bury Street
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Jamil Naqsh (1939-2019) was born into an affluent Muslim family in 1939 in Kairana, on the banks of the River Jumna in India. In 1947, at the age of 8, he was sent to Pakistan with his brothers, living initially in Walton Refugee Camp. With no food Naqsh would eat grass from the railway track to survive.

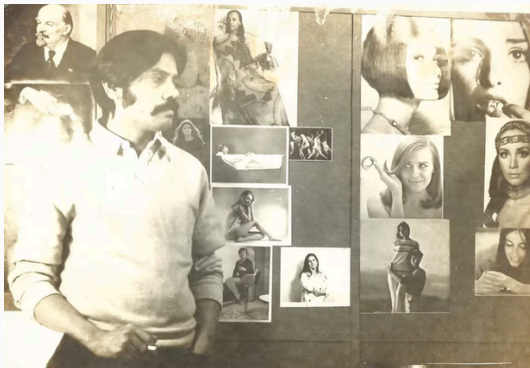
In 1951 he was taken to Peshawar by his half-brother and abandoned at the railway station and ended up living on the streets. Later that year he was taken in by his uncle and given room and lodging.

In 1954 he visited Shakir Ali at the Mayo School of Arts (National College of Arts, Lahore) and asked to enrol at the college. Ali repeatedly denied his entry, but Naqsh was later admitting by the head of the School, Sidney Spedding.

He received formal training in miniature painting under Hajji Sharif, a renowned traditional miniature painter, painting in the *pardakht* - a traditional Indo-Persian technique, similar to pointillism, where small or dots of colour build the image, adding texture and depth.

Quddus Mirza, critic, artist and form head of the NCA, Lahore, discusses Naqsh's role in modernism in Pakistan, and how his work as a 'neo-miniaturist' bridged the generations;

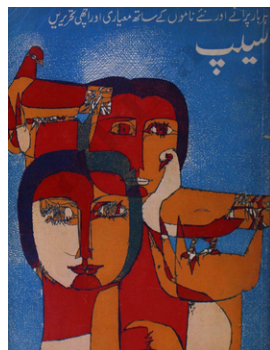
"In the middle of twentieth century, Mayo School of Art offered both formats of training. It was only a matter of fate and fortune, that Jamil Naqsh joined the classes of Haji Muhammad Sharif and grasped technique, imagery – and most of it, the aesthetics of miniature painting from a teacher who belonged to lineage of master painters, who were associated with a court and patron to produce works that now adorn museums around the world..."



Jamil Naqsh in his studio, circa 1970

‘...In these interpretation of miniature paintings, Jamil Naqsh pays his respects to his teacher, who spent years training students in the art of miniature painting at the National College of Arts (NCA), at the same instance he is part of a phenomenon, usually phrased as the revival of miniature painting. Because Jmail Naqsh is part of painters (Shakir Ali, Zahoor ul Akhlaq, Bashir Mirza) who investigated the aesthetics, imagery, and content of the traditional art of miniature (each adapting his own route).

Those who could be classified a generation, that is a bridge between A. R. Chughtai – and Shahzia Sikander, Imran Qureshi, Nusra Latif Qureshi, Aisha Khalid, Mohammad Zeeshan and several others.”



After leaving the Mayo School, Naqsh came to Karachi and worked as a truck painter by day, painting on newspaper at night and sleeping on the streets in front of the courthouse.

Naqsh eventually joined the Lintas advertising agency, where he worked for a decade as a designer and illustrator. He was also co-editor of the Urdu literary magazine *Seep*, for which his work regularly appeared on the cover - above.



Jamil Naqsh, *Sitting No. 15*, 1964
Private Collection



Jamil Naqsh, circa 1970

He had his first solo exhibition at the Arts Council, Lahore in 1961, with shows in Karachi following soon after. In the 1970s Shakir Ali would admit that he was wrong to deny Naqsh entry to the Mayo School, celebrating him as a generational talent.

Naqsh is best known for his figurative oil paintings of women with pigeons. The textured surfaces of his paintings, often rendered in muted palettes of grey, blue, and yellow, are carefully composed and demonstrate exceptional draftsmanship. During the 1960s and '70s, Naqsh explored naturalistic painting before gradually combining naturalism with abstraction, creating stylised female nudes set against empty, heavily textured backgrounds.

This technique reached its fullest expression in the 1970s and 1980s, when his canvases were constructed from countless tiny daubs of paint, recalling his training as a miniature painter, producing a chromatic effect akin to a mosaic or fractured, dazzling light. It is this pivotal period in Naqsh's career that our exhibition focuses on.

Later in life Naqsh was the recipient of the Pride of Performance and Star of Excellence awards from the Pakistani Government, followed by a retrospective at Mohatta Palace Museum in Karachi in 2003, the first living artist to be awarded the accolade.

Naqsh moved to London in 2003 and would spend the rest of his life here. A private museum was established in Karachi in 1999.

This is our first exhibition dedicated solely to his work, and will be followed by projects looking at other period of his life and career.





Jamil Naqsh

Untitled (Three Women with Pigeons), 1966-1994

Signed and dated 'Jamil Naqsh 1966.94 lower right; with partial Jamil Naqsh museum label on the reverse

Oil on canvas

80 x 113 cm

31 1/2 x 44 1/2 in

Provenance

The Artist;

By descent







Jamil Naqsh

Untitled (Reclining Nude with Dove), 1970

Signed and dated 'jamil Naqsh, Pakistan/ 20.8.70' upper right and inscribed center right

Oil on canvas

87.6 x 150.5 cm

34 1/2 x 59 1/4 in

Provenance

Private collection, USA, acquired directly from the artist



Jamil Naqsh

Untitled (Woman and Pigeon), 1971

Signed and dated 'Jamil Naqsh 1971' lower left, further signed and inscribed 'Jamil Naqsh / Pakistan Art Gallery / 39 C Block 6 / PECHS / KARACHI / Price - Rs 1500/= ' on the reverse

Oil on canvas

74.9 x 106.7 cm

29 1/2 x 42 1/8 in

Provenance

Private Collection, USA, (acquired directly from the artist, circa late 1980s)

Exhibitions

London, Grosvenor Gallery, *South Asian Modern Art 2022*, 10 June - 1 July 2022, No. 25, (illustrated in the exhibition catalogue)



Jamil Naqsh

Green Nude with Pigeon, 1974

Signed, dated and inscribed 'JAMIL NAQSH/ T-122/2 Tariq Road/Karachi. Pakistan/1974' on the reverse

Oil on canvas

90.6 x 105.5 cm

35 5/8 x 41 1/2 in

Provenance

The Artist;

Private British Collection, acquired directly from the Artist in Karachi

“[Naqsh’s works] are reminiscent of the care that a painter of miniatures on all details must use.

Every blade of grass, every strand of hair in its place, and justified.

Jamil Naqsh placed every grain of pigment as if it were precious metal or a precious stone.”



Jamil Naqsh

Untitled (Woman with Pigeon), 1974

Signed and dated 'Jamil Naqsh/ 1974 Pakistan' lower right

Oil on canvas

106.5 x 76 cm

41 7/8 x 29 7/8 in

Provenance

Indus Gallery, Karachi;

Thomas and Barbara Dimmock, UK, acquired in Pakistan in the mid-1970s;

Thence by descent

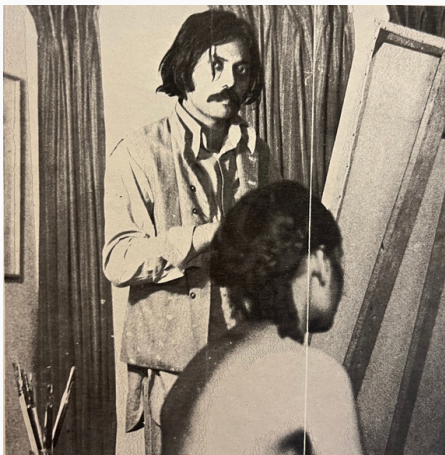
Thomas Dimmock worked as an engineer in Pakistan in the 1970s/early 1980s. He and his wife acquired *Woman with Pigeon* from Ali Imam's Indus Gallery in the late 1970s, along with a handful of other works by Pakistani contemporary painters. They left Pakistan in the early 1980s, relocating to Holland, before settling in the UK.

Exhibitions

London, Grosvenor Gallery, *South Asian Modern Art 2022*, 10 June - 1 July 2022, No. 26, (illustrated in the exhibition catalogue)

Illustrated

Pakistan Im Blickfeld, No. 3, 1976, p. 28 (illustrated in colour)









Jamil Naqsh

Untitled (Pigeons on Blue), Circa 1972

Signed 'jamil Naqsh' upper right

Oil on canvas

87.5 x 101 cm

34 1/2 x 39 3/4 in

Provenance

Private US Collection, acquired directly from the artist in the 1970s;

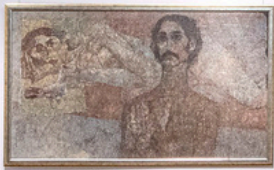
Sotheby's, *Modern & Contemporary South Asian Art*, 7th October 2014, lot 37;

Private US Collection;

Private British Collection









Jamil Naqsh

Untitled (Self Portrait with a Nude and Pigeons), 1978

Signed and dated lower left; signed and inscribed on the reverse

Oil on canvas

88 x 152 cm

34 5/8 x 59 7/8 in

Provenance

The Artist;

Private British Collection, acquired directly from the Artist in Karachi

Jamil Naqsh

Untitled (Pigeons), 1991

Signed and dated 'Jamil Naqsh 91' lower right; further inscribed on the reverse

Oil on canvas

91 x 61 cm

35 7/8 x 24 in

Provenance

The Artist;

By descent



Jamil Naqsh

Untitled (Woman with Pigeon), 1997

Signed, dated and inscribed 'jamil Naqsh, 1997, London' lower right

Oil on canvas

121 x 90 cm

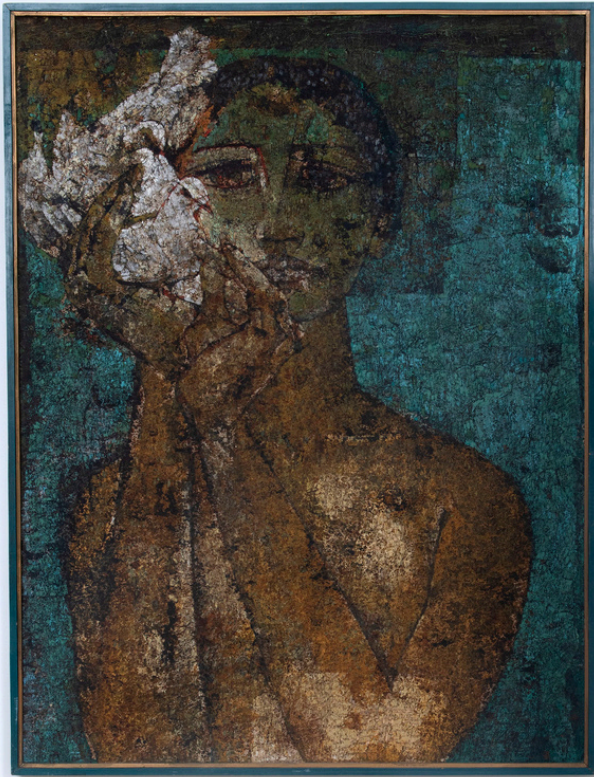
47 5/8 x 35 3/8 in

Provenance

The Artist;

By descent







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