

## Bare the fact, bear the fact

Introduction text to the catalogue by Salima Hashmi

Subtexts emanate like shooting stars in Naiza Khan's latest works on paper. She invents curious affinities between apparently unconnected – disparate, objects. Provocative alliances are formed, invoking manifold messages and potential contradictions. All of these are addressed in the fluid fluent mark making which lies at the core of her art making process.

Naiza Khan's lexicon is not entirely instinctual. She researches, deliberates and draws from historical, visual sources as far apart as Rembrandt and Utamaro.

Those familiar with the artists' previous work will note the absence of the female body from centre stage. But not quite. The intimate garment having been shed, and detached from the body becomes an even more potent presence. Fabric entices the gaze, shimmering with missives and memories.

In this new chapter, Khan may appear to be distancing herself from the intensely personal. Crossings are negotiated between the referential and the purely formal concerns of space and structure. Yet as the kimono rearranges itself into gentle folds, its surface speaks of many yearnings. The empty camisole undulates with patterns suggesting the unknowability of what lies beyond the form. Lingerie, frail in material, is substantial in its message. Straight jackets contain and unleash desire. Here Naiza Khan looks at Rembrandt's wondrous Hendrikje Bathing, seeking reassurances perhaps of the authenticity of the artistic impulse. She sifts through the visual and emotional imperatives propelling the work and uncovers latent connections to her own imagery. An intelligent painter, Khan strives to fathom the cryptic undercurrents that enrich and intrigue the viewer.

Naiza Khan's interrogation into the 'constellation of attire' lead her right back to the deep and dangerous contours of feeling, woven into the tapestry of her earlier work. It is an inevitable but welcome paradox.