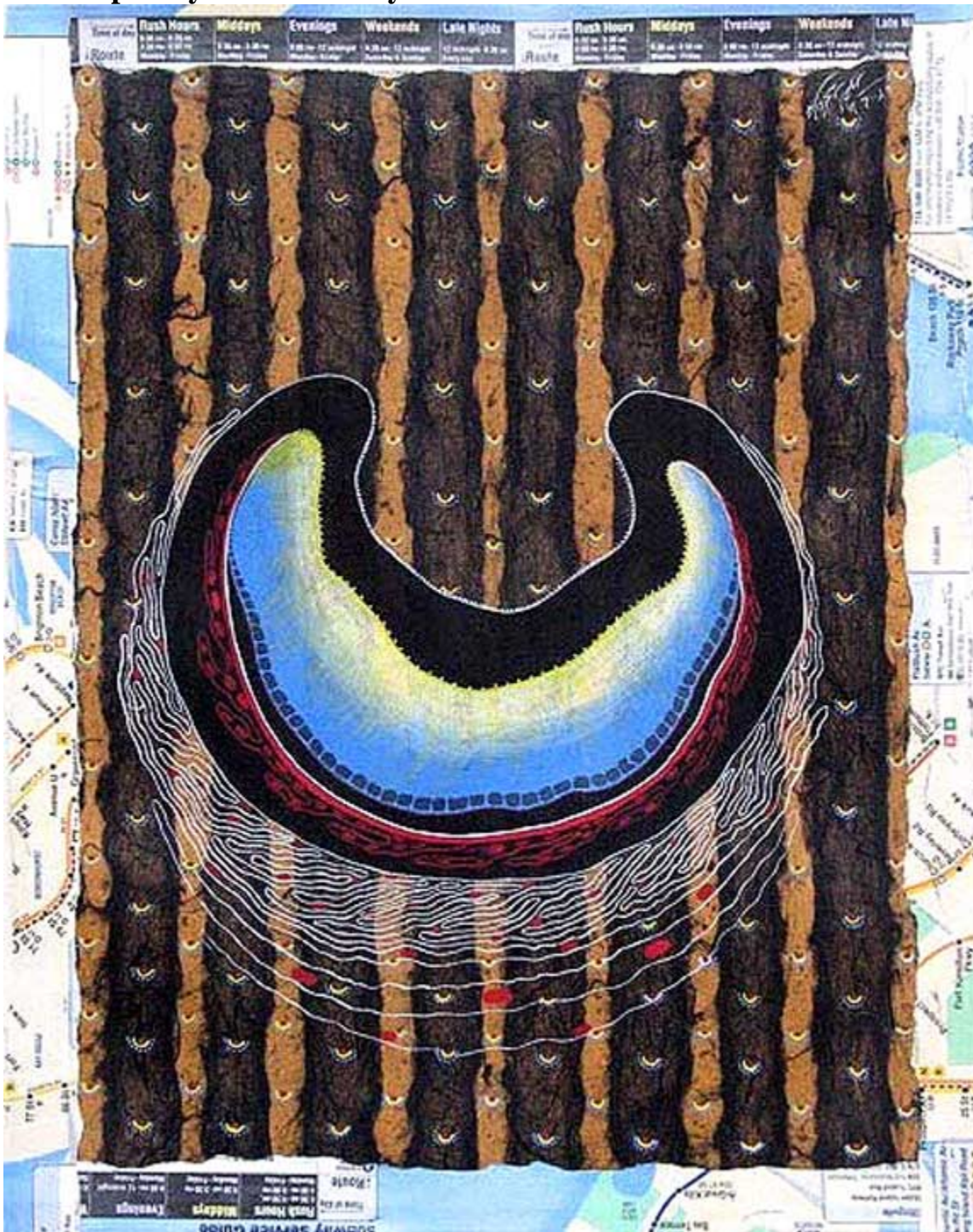


Contemporary Miniatures by Talha Rathore and Hasnat Mehmood



Talha Rathore, The Heart Settles II, 2007, Gouache on Wasli, 14 x 11 in.

LONDON.- Aicon Gallery presents Lahore Lovelies: Contemporary Miniatures by **talha rathore** and Hasnat Mehmood, on view 22 June – 15 July 2007. Miniature painting, the centuries-old atelier practice of the Mughal Empire, has had an impressive resurgence in recent years. Pakistan's oldest art school, the National College of Arts, has led this rekindled interest with one of the only Miniature Painting departments in existence.

Artists **talha rathore** and Hasnat Mehmood, along with a handful of highly-acclaimed graduates, have reinvented the tradition by breathing new life and creating a distinctly contemporary context to the form.

talha rathore (b. 1969) and Hasnat Mehmood (b. 1978) have unique, individual slants to their practice. Both artists have developed their freedom to improvise, but retain a political charge to their strategies. The visuals may appear subtle in subject matter – either in the organic forms created by Rathore or the restrained colours and appropriated imagery of Mehmood's, but strong underpinnings of innate political issues are evident in their reading. Considering the multi-layered history of Pakistan, colonisation followed by partition, then nationhood, such foundations formulate an acute sense of past and present in the artists' respective themes and motifs.

Both artists exhibited in the highly-acclaimed touring exhibition Karkhana, A Contemporary Collaboration, 2005-2007 (touring, 2007: Asia Society and Museum, New York; 2006: Asian Art Museum, San Francisco; 2005/06: The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, USA;) and in Contemporary Miniature Paintings from Pakistan, 2004 (Fukuoka Asian Art Museum, Japan)

Aicon Gallery are delighted to invite Hammad Nasar, Curator of Karkhana, to give a talk exclusively on the artists and their work on Wednesday June 20th.