

## Two, Not Together

One may view Aisha Abid Hussain's recent work as a cabinet with many drawers, to be slid open, one by one, exposing the carefully assembled private chronicles.

The coming together of two individuals in holy or unholy bonds of marriage is a rapidly altering episode in human relationships. In 'Two Not Together' the artist interrogates our assumptions, our clichés and yes, our romance with the institution of marriage. She contrives a staged moment, replete with the finery and the trimmings of attire and dreams. The farcical underpinnings of the charade do not escape scrutiny. Her delight in baroque role-playing only emphasizes the patent ridiculousness of each person's expectations. Yet there is a tinge of sadness here. The inevitability of decay, both physical and emotional is at the core of Aisha Abid Hussain's image-making.

The relief prints in the same series constitute another aperture in the cabinet of domestic bliss. Utopia has imploded unto itself, leaving only traces of the fantasy and the relationship it nurtured. These lace-like vestiges from another time are almost poetic in their deterioration, stubbornly clinging to life in a last ditch show of strength.

'Love is a wasted vigil' series on the other hand, are culled from a trove of crisscrossing visual memoirs. The tactile gentleness of the prints is absent. This drawer of the cabinet is steeped in carnage, conflict and desolation. Against such a backdrop the passivity of the matrimonial couple proclaims the strength of humankind and it's ability to delude itself.

Each layer, each strata, discloses the complexity of men and women, their inter woven power play, their betrayals, unmasking's and tenacity. It is apparent that Aisha Abid Hussain is loathe to be partisan. Eventually, tenderness casts its delicate shadow over her determined cross-examination and ardent inquiry.

Salima Hashmi



If license of marriage existed, there would have been three of its kind. White card for those who want to be together day and night, Pink card for those with worldly reasons for example, to avoid loneliness or to spare parents from embarrassment and so on and Green card for those who want to obtain a license for perpetual species. Only the Green card would be permanent and rest of the cards would need a renewal after every two to three years.

Bano Qudsia

The recent body of my works comprising of digital Photographs, relief prints and paper collages continues with the interest in gender discourse. Multiple layers of cultural specific symbolism are a repertoire to be explored. The keen interest in human relationships with one another and with surroundings is been immensely inspiring for me. The idea of celebrating love and companionship by signing an agreement/contract stamps marriage to be an archaic concept. Like various cultures, with in South Asian context, the idea of celebrating marriage is something of great importance. The staged performance of Bride and Groom is loaded with stereotypical attributes. The power politics between the two apparent on the very day of marriage is something fascinating to observe. In this series of staged photographs, prints and collages, nostalgia is created with an intended pun inspired by the archive of old family photographs.

Aisha Abid Hussain