RESEARCH INFORMATION
This practice based thesis proposes that spirituality is an inherent part of the human substance and as a result becomes apparent in all artistic endeavours which address the eternal relationship of man and his existence. The centrality of this project lies in embodying the spiritual in figural imagery from the position of a contemporary female art practitioner working in Pakistan. The research encompasses the historical, cultural and political position of Pakistan in a broad sense as well as contemporary practices. An ambivalent attitude prevails regarding figurative art in the Muslim context; an effort has therefore been made to underpin religious and cultural perceptions. Art, music and literature have drawn deeply from Sufi philosophy or Islamic mysticism in Pakistan. Exploring the influence of Sufism, through site visits to Sufi shrines, which also has an autobiographical reference, is an area of significance in this research. The study is therefore interconnected. Both the historical aspect of the enquiry and the research by practice are embodied in this thesis.

ABOUT
Rahat has an MA in Fine arts from the University of Punjab, Pakistan, with a distinction, having attained a first class first position and a gold medal in the University. She did another Master degree in Art and Design from Kingston University London and is now completing her practice based Fine arts doctoral degree at Kingston. She is a faculty member of the College of Art & Design at the University of Punjab, Lahore.

She has participated in numerous exhibitions in Pakistan her home country and has represented Pakistan in the Sharjah Biennale and exhibitions held in Iran, Dubai, India, London and Korea. She is a figurative artist and her main interest is in layering the work in cultural and social metaphors. She has won awards in her home country from the Artists Association of Punjab, Punjab Council of the Arts and the Fatima Jinnah Medal in the field of painting.