

The Breeze at Dawn Has Secrets to Tell You

Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian

September 24, 2018 – November 3, 2018

The Third Line is pleased to present *The Breeze at Dawn Has Secrets to Tell You*, a solo exhibition featuring Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian's most recent body of work. While they continue to draw from Islamic cosmology, mathematics and Sufi mystic philosophies, Monir's mixed-media installations define a new step in the artist's ever-evolving practice as she for the first time experiments with kinetic art.



Monir Farmanfarmaian with disco balls at the salon of her home, Tehran, 1977

The Breeze at Dawn Has Secrets to Tell You

Don't go back to sleep!

You must ask for what you really want.

Don't go back to sleep!

People are going back and forth across the doorsill where the two worlds touch,

The door is round and open

Don't go back to sleep!

Excerpted from a poem by 13th century Sufi poet Rumi, *The Breeze at Dawn Has Secrets to Tell You* stands as a reminder that the changes we strive for lie within our hands, as thresholds that demand to be crossed, opportunities to be seized.

Reminiscent of such gates, Monir's mirror mosaic representations of geometrical figures are framed by curtains of reverse-painted plexiglass strands that one imagines could oscillate in the wind. Suspended from the frame of several works are pendants that mirror the geometrical shapes of the works from which they hang. Drawn from Monir's childhood memories of her nanny wearing a microscopic Quran page medallion pinned to her sleeve, these adornments remind us of the sacred geometry principles that have been at the core of the artist's practice for the past five decades. Each of the shapes possesses mathematical attributes and consequently, its own meaning. Thus, the triangle becomes a symbol of harmony representing the soul and the three forms of action: mental, physical and verbal, while the square is synonymous with stability, the four cardinal points and the four seasons.

To take a closer look at the reflective surfaces that host the various geometrical shapes is to realize that the mirror has been shattered in what seems like the ultimate gesture materializing both Monir's avant-garde practice and her forever young and playful spirit. The fragmented planes also hint at the historical origins of the mirror mosaics used in Iranian architecture: in the 18th century, mirrors imported from Europe that arrived broken were salvaged by local craftsmen, who reassembled cracked elements into patterns imitating traditional Iranian tiles.

Also on display will be 2018 iterations of Monir's famed 1970s Mirror Ball works—spherical sculptures comprising myriads of hand-cut mirror elements inspired by the sight of children playing football in the streets of Tehran.

In conjunction with the exhibition, The Third Line will screen *Monir*, a documentary that explores the artist's life and practice and uncovers how she came to be one of the most influential and innovative practitioners in the Middle East. *Monir* is directed by Bahman Giarostami and produced by Leyla Fakhr.

About Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian

Born in Qazvin, Iran in 1924, Monir's distinguished career has spanned more than five decades. Incorporating traditional reverse glass painting, mirror mosaics and principles of Islamic geometry with a modern sensibility, her sculptures and installations defy easy categorization.

Monir attended the Fine Arts College of Tehran before becoming one of the first Iranian students to study in the United States after World War II. She graduated from Parsons School of Design in 1949 and then became a Member of the New York Art Students' League (1950-53). Engulfed in the epicenter of the modern art world, it was here that she worked alongside many iconic contemporary American artists including Jackson Pollock, Frank Stella, Louise Nevelson and Andy Warhol, all who had an influence on her work.

In August 2018, a major solo exhibition featuring over 70 works opened at the Irish Museum of Modern Art and will travel to the Sharjah Art Foundation in 2019.

Monir's work is housed in several major public collections including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; The Metropolitan Museum, New York, the Victoria and Albert Museum's Jameel Collection, London; Tate Modern, London; The Queensland Art Gallery, Australia; The Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Iran; Swisscorp Bank, Switzerland; The Sharjah Art Foundation, United Arab Emirates; and the School of Law at Columbia University, United States.

About The Third Line

The Third Line is a Dubai-based art gallery that represents contemporary Middle Eastern artists locally, regionally and internationally. The Third Line also hosts non-profit, alternative programs to increase interest and dialogue in the region.

Represented artists include: Abbas Akhavan, Ala Ebtekar, Amir H. Fallah, Arwa Abouon, Babak Golkar, Farah Al Qasimi, Farhad Moshiri, Fouad Elkoury, Golnaz Fathi, Hassan Hajjaj, Hayv Kahraman, Huda Lutfi, Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, Laleh Khorramian, Lamy Gargash, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, Poursan Jinchi, Rana Begum, Sahand Hesamiyan, Sara Naim, Sherin Guirguis, Shirin Aliabadi, Slavs and Tatars, Sophia Al-Maria, Tarek Al-Ghoussein, Youssef Nabil and Zineb Sedira.

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