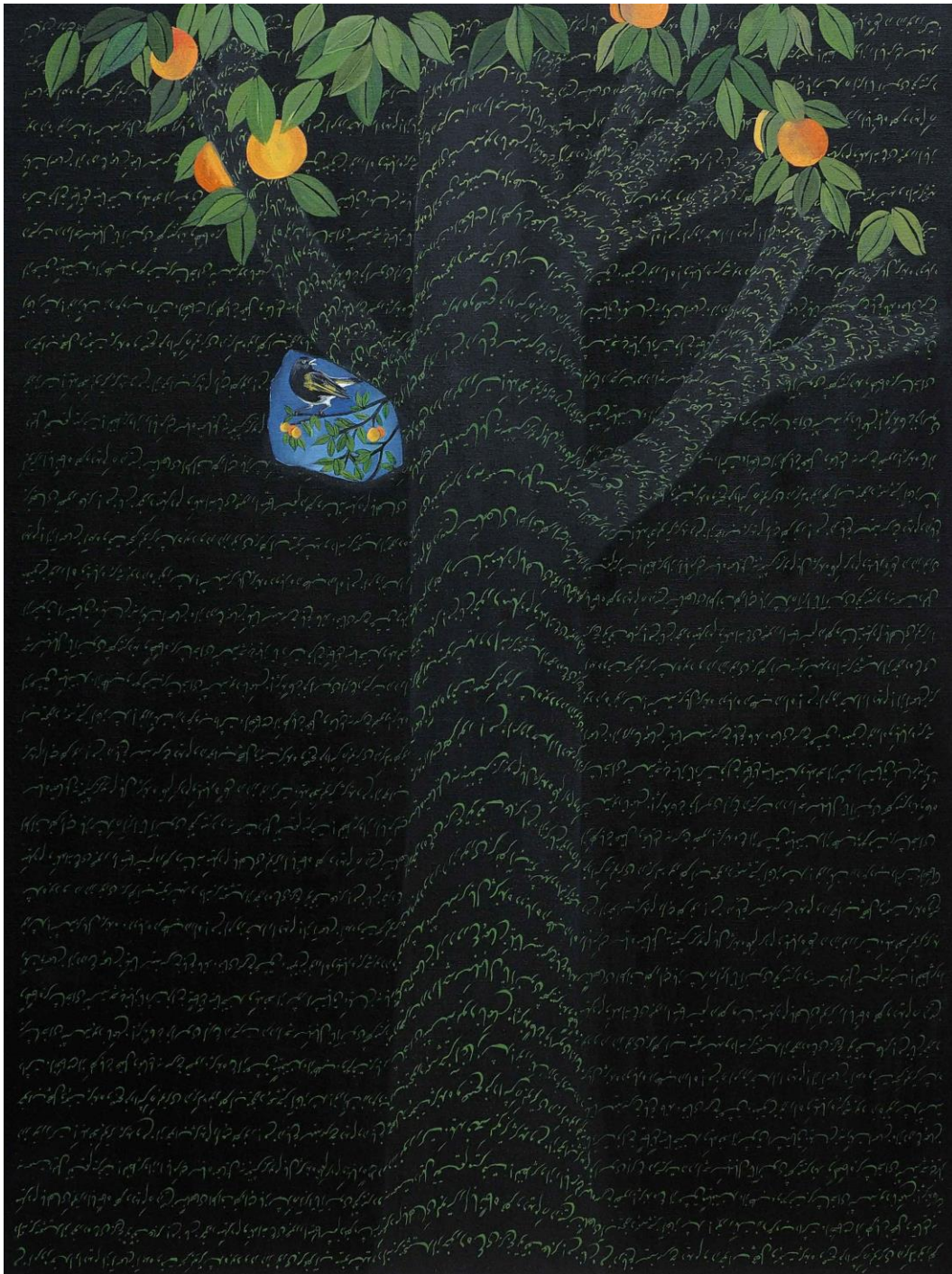


JANET RADY FINE ART

Focusing on the Middle East



The Ocean Can Be Yours | Works by Four Iranian Artists

8 February – 29 April 2017

Opening: 8 February, 4 – 9 pm

Gerald Moore Gallery, Eltham College, London, SE9 4RW

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If the dichotomy between what is visible and what is hidden grounds Iranian philosophical thought, then the convergence of visual art and poetry can only be one of its strongest vehicles. *The Ocean Can Be Yours*, an exhibition by Gerald Moore Gallery at Eltham College, curated by Janet Rady, presents Persian visual art and linguistic practices via the interpretation of international poetry through an Iranian lens. Showcasing works by Afsoon, Ghalamdar, Jason Noushin and Katayoun Rouhi, each artist explores the tradition rooted in their shared Iranian heritage as a launch platform for their diverse practices spanning performance and Calligraffiti to drawing and allegorical painting.

In a sound installation, **Afsoon** plays recordings of anonymous voices reciting poems by the twelve international poets illustrated in her colourful, playful and print-based works, allowing participants and visitors to activate and individually nuance the works. **Ghalamdar's** self-professed dive into Iranian folklore, values and heritage is deconstructed by his "wild-style" graffiti technique, a cacophonous abstraction of form, *Negar-Gari* (Persian miniature drawing) and calligraphy to create modern interpretations of epics with street art sensibility. Traditional portraiture and collage methods in muted palettes dialogue with English prose translated into handwritten Farsi in **Noushin's** works to become the basis of sculptural 2D pieces that are tactile and gently *Brut*. The fourth artist, **Rouhi**, incorporates her own poetry in larger tableaux while a smaller series based on Farid Al-Din Attar's 1177 *Conference of the Birds* (from which the show's title is derived) consists of delicate text works with sharp, vividly hued avian imagery. While reminiscent of scientific drawings, they are imbued with spiritualism and allegorical symbolism, simultaneously encapsulating the discrete realms of reality and the metaphysical.

As ideas morph into words and are expressed through each artist's fingertips, inner realities become physical visual languages of carefully layered text, form and sound. The subtly complex compositions invite closer contemplation as each element offers a visible – and then invisible – counterpart as text and image work with and against each other, slowly revealing an oscillating tension between the visual lightness of prose and contemporary art practice, against the heaviness of embedded meaning, symbolism and cultural tradition.

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*Born in 1961 in Iran, **Afsoon** has been active since 2008 and lives and works in London. Following a nomadic cross-continental upbringing, her layered, text-focused mixed-media practice reflects East-meets-West sensibilities. Having shown at numerous art venues and events from Los Angeles and London to Marrakech, Afsoon's works can be seen at the British Museum, London, as well as within the permanent collections of the Fondation Pierre Bergé, the Yves St Laurent Collection and Sweden's Cellmark Contemporary Art Collection.*

*Born in 1994 in Iran, **Ghalamdar** currently lives and works in Manchester, the UK. With a name that translates to "the writer" in Farsi, Ghalamdar draws inspiration from the Saqqaakhaneh movement of the 1960s and 70s, Shi'i iconography and folk elements that he translates through graffiti. An active member of the Calligraffiti community, his works can be seen at spaces including the Fondation Behnam Bakhtiar, Saint-Jean-Cap-Ferrat, and Emergeast Gallery, an online platform based in Dubai.*

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*Born in 1969, Iranian-British artist **Jason Noushin** lived in Tehran, Paris and London before settling in Connecticut. He works across a broad range of mediums including drawing, painting, printmaking, and sculpture, to explore the temporal frameworks of memory, displacement and cross-cultural identity while referencing socio- and geo-political elements. Noushin's work has shown at the deCordova Biennale, Massachusetts, the New Haven Museum, Connecticut, Shirin Gallery (Art Miami), and Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran, among others.*

*Born in 1965 in Iran, **Katayoun Rouhi** has lived and worked in Paris since 1985. After acquiring a Doctorate in Aesthetics and Sciences of Art at Sorbonne in 2003, her practice has focused on painting poetry, merging the pictorial with the discursive in search of their essential connection. Rouhi has exhibited across the Middle East and Europe, and her body of work can be seen in the collections of the Polychronopoulos Foundation, Athens, and the Méshkinfam Foundation and Museum, Shiraz, among others.*

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*Founded by Janet Rady in 2008 in London, the eponymous gallery represents cutting edge contemporary Arab and Iranian artists including Fereydoun Ave, Firouz Farman Farmaian and Hanibal Srouji, alongside an international roster of artists whose works incorporate Middle Eastern references. **Janet Rady Fine Art** also offers bespoke curatorial and consultancy services privately or at auction, and has been involved in projects across North America, Europe and the Middle East. Artworks by represented artists have been placed in the permanent collections of institutions such as the British Museum, London, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California, among others.*

*Rooted as a centre for modern and contemporary art with an educational focus, **Gerald Moore Gallery** works to create a community that offers innovative learning opportunities to foster meaningful experiences with art. Founded by Dr Gerald Moore in April 2012 at Eltham College in Mottingham, its programming has been generously supported by the Arts Council England and the Canada Council of the Arts, allowing the gallery to play a significant role in aiding individuals of all ages in exploring the importance of art in schools and beyond, blurring the boundaries between artist, teacher and learner.*

For more information, please contact: Janet Rady, janet@janetradyfineart.com



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