

Press Release

Shirazeh Houshiary

55 Main Street
East Hampton, NY
August 18 – 28, 2022

For the latest exhibition in East Hampton, Lisson Gallery presents a selection of paintings by Shirazeh Houshiary. Following her [solo exhibition at the London gallery](#) last year, the presentation marks the artist's 14th exhibition with the gallery and offers an intimate look at a group of works spanning a 20-year period.

Shown in the United States for the first time, *Forgetting the Word* (2020) offers a form of abstraction that is both corporeal and dreamlike. The surface buzzes with labyrinths of delicate pencil-work over a plumage of blue pigment. Mesmerizing and voltaic, the painting is the result of Houshiary's meditative practice that employs breath as both medium and conceptual structure.

Houshiary's process, developed over the artist's forty-year career, begins by placing the canvases flat on the floor. Carefully moving around them, Houshiary produces layers of inscriptions on top of the sediments formed from pouring water mixed with pure pigment. Two words, the physical manifestation of breath, are repeated, layered and interwoven. *Web of Light* (1999), *Untitled* (2008), *Presence V* and *Presence VII* (both 2012) feature these careful markings in stark contrast with a black ground. 'These paintings are very contemplative and encourage the viewer to look within. Here, synchronicity is the point of connection between the inner and outer event,' Houshiary says of this body of work.

This October, Shirazeh Houshiary will be featured in the special section at Frieze London titled Indra's Net. Curated by Sandhini Poddar, Adjunct Curator at the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, Indra's Net features 10 dedicated presentations as well as a number of cabinet-style displays throughout the main section of the fair from October 12 – 16.

Lisson Gallery's East Hampton space continues its focused format featuring both influential, historical artworks and debuting new bodies of work in an experimental, intimate setting. Following Shirazeh Houshiary exhibition, the gallery will present a selection of archival work by [Peter Joseph](#). The gallery is open to the public each Thursday through Saturday, from 11am to 4pm, Sundays from 11 – 4pm and Wednesdays by appointment.

About Shirazeh Houshiary

Since rising to prominence as a sculptor in the 1980s, Shirazeh Houshiary's practice has swelled to encompass painting, installation, architectural projects and film. "I set out to capture my breath," she said in 2000, to "find the essence of my own existence, transcending name, nationality, cultures." Veils, membranes and mists are leitmotifs in work that tries to visualise modes of perception, spanning the scientific and the cosmic while drawing on sources as wide-ranging as Sufism, Renaissance painting, contemporary physics and poetry. Houshiary finds succour in the transformation of material: Arabic words, one an affirmation the other a denial, are pencil-stroked onto canvas so lightly, and clouded over by finely wrought skeins of pigment, that they morph in front of the naked eye and defy reproduction. So too, aluminium armatures and elliptical brick towers, charged with dynamic tension, appear different from every angle, as if negating their own presence; her commission for the East window of St Martin in the Fields, London, presents a cross, warped and spanning from a circular motif, as if reflected in water. "The universe is in a process of disintegration," she says, "everything is in a state of erosion, and yet we try to stabilise it. This tension fascinates me and it's at the core of my work" (2013).

Shirazeh Houshiary was born in Shiraz, Iran in 1955, where she attended university before moving to London, UK in 1974. She has a BA from Chelsea School of Art (1979) and lives and works in London, UK. She has had solo exhibitions at Lisson Gallery, London (2021), Shanghai (2020), and New York (2017); Singapore Tyler Print Institute, Singapore (2016); The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin, Ireland (2007); Tate Liverpool, UK (2003); Islamic Gallery, British Museum, London, UK (1997); Magasin-Centre national d'art contemporain, Grenoble, France (1995); University of Massachusetts, Amherst, MA, USA (1994); Camden Arts Centre, London, UK (1993); Musée Rath, Geneva, Switzerland (1988); and in 2013, her exhibition 'Breath' was a celebrated Collateral Event of the 55th Venice Biennale in Italy.

Recent group exhibitions include: 'Artists and the Rothko Chapel: 50 Years of Inspiration', Moody Center for the Arts, Rice University, Houston, Texas, USA (2021); 'Abstraction and Calligraphy – Towards a Universal Language', Louvre Abu Dhabi in collaboration with Centre Pompidou, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2021); 'Spirit and Endeavour', Salisbury Cathedral, Salisbury, UK (2020); Jesus College, Cambridge, UK (2017); Fondazione Palazzo Albizzini, Collezione Burri, Citta di Castello, Perugia, Italy (2016); University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor, MI, USA (2014). Her work has been included in major group exhibitions since the 1980s including: Dayton Art Institute, Dayton, OH, USA (2011); Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY, USA (2007); Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, Italy (2002); Rijksmuseum Kröller-Müller, Otterlo, Netherlands (1990); Centre Pompidou, Paris, France (1989); Louisiana Museum, Humlebaek, Denmark (1986). She has also participated in numerous biennials including Cartagena deIndias, Colombia (2014); Kiev Biennale, Ukraine (2012); the 17th Biennale of Sydney, Australia (2010); and the 40th Venice Biennale, Italy (1982). She was nominated for the Turner Prize in 1994.

About Lisson Gallery

Lisson Gallery is one of the most influential and longest-running international contemporary art galleries in the world. Today the gallery supports and promotes the work of more than 60 international artists across two spaces in London, three across New York City and East Hampton, and one in Shanghai, as well as the newest location in Los Angeles, opening in autumn 2022. Established in 1967 by Nicholas Logsdail, Lisson Gallery pioneered the early careers of important Minimal and Conceptual artists, such as Art & Language, Carl Andre, Daniel Buren, Donald Judd, John Latham, Sol LeWitt, Richard Long and Robert Ryman among many others. It still works with many of these artists as well as others of that generation from Carmen Herrera to the renowned estates of Leon Polk Smith, Dan Graham, Lawrence Weiner and Roy Colmer.

In its second decade the gallery introduced significant British sculptors to the public for the first time, including Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Shirazeh Houshiary and Julian Opie. Since 2000, the gallery has gone on to represent many more leading international artists such as Marina Abramović, Ai Weiwei, John Akomfrah, Susan Hiller, Tatsuo Miyajima and Sean Scully. It is also responsible for raising the international profile of a younger generation of artists led by Cory Arcangel, Ryan Gander, Haroon Mirza, Laure Prouvost, Pedro Reyes, Wael Shawky, Hugh Hayden, Van Hanos and Cheyney Thompson.

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