

## **Shirazeh Houshiary**

Lisson Gallery Milan

Via Zenale, 3

6 June – 27 July 2012

Shirazeh Houshiary's work mediates between presence and absence, being and not-being. Utilising various media ... painting, sculpture and animation, Houshiary's work strives to capture the intangible essence that underlies existence.

Her compositions of finely wrought skeins of pencil and pigment, armatures of aluminium, or fleeting digital apparitions, evoke impossible topographies: the microscopic or cosmological. Though elusive and visually confounding, these works are invested with an energy that, while exposing the limits of human perception, register as an intensely physical presence.

Houshiary's paintings both insist on and deny being read. Beginning with a black or white aquacryl ground, she uses pencil to inscribe layers of text derived from two words – one an affirmation, the other a denial – crushed upon one another until transformed into intricate webs and diaphanous veils, which are then laced with bursts of pigment.

In *Right of Spring*, a new painting located in the main gallery, these inscriptions snake and swirl around a series of ruptures in the painting's textual web from which vaporous plumes of vivid blue pigment unfurl so that the surface of the work appears to swell and then recede into infinite space.

Similarly in the painting *Deluge*, a network of capillary-like pencil marks and flushes of colour fade and intensify like gradations in bruised flesh.

Houshiary's recent sculpture, while achieving a clear and compelling physical presence, is underpinned by something inherently fugitive: the centripetal or centrifugal forces that cause it to appear constantly poised to dissipate.

The wall-based work *Lacuna*, made of interweaving ribbons of lacquer coloured steel, exceeds the limits of its materiality by replicating itself in shadows: multiple spiraling forms that are both turbulent and tranquil.

With the sculpture tower *White Shadow* the interplay between absence and presence is critical. Formed from rotating columns of hollow painted aluminium bricks, each brick acts as both an essential structural building block and a moment of caesura. As the viewer moves around the sculpture, architectural form transmutes into void and back into architectural form.

### **Notes to Editors**

#### **About the artist**

Shirazeh Houshiary was born in Shiraz, Iran and has lived and worked in London since the mid-1970's. She studied at Chelsea School of Art and has been awarded Professorship at the London Institute. She was nominated for the Turner Prize in 1994. Her work can be found in major public collections worldwide including MoMA, New York, Guggenheim, New York, The British Council Collection, London and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Prato, Italy. Houshiary has created the East Window for St.Martin-in-the-Fields and she has worked on a new altar for the church, which was inaugurated in late October last year.

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L I S S O N G A L L E R Y

**Exhibition Facts**

**Opening Hours:** Monday – Friday, 9.30am – 1pm and 3pm- 6pm. Saturday - by appointment only

**Location:** Via Zenale, 3, Milan

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