

Shiva Ahmadi: In Focus

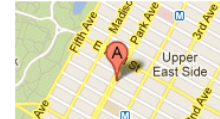
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Asia Society Museum has invited the artist Shiva Ahmadi to create a new work as part of its ongoing *In Focus* series. Ahmadi's practice is informed by the tradition of miniature painting. Her jewel-like compositions feature allegorical narratives that serve as a critique of contemporary political conflicts and the abuses of power that accompany them. For this exhibition the artist will present *Lotus*, a new single-channel animation, commissioned by Asia Society and based on two traditional Buddhas from the Asia Society Museum Collection. This new work will be Ahmadi's first significant animation to date and marks an important shift in her practice. The animation is based on the artist's 2013 triptych painting *Lotus* (image above). The artist appropriates the image of the Buddha as the representation of a wise, forgiving deity to illustrate the devolution of a pure and well-intentioned ruler into an irresponsible and corrupt despot under the influence of absolute power. Bombs, grenades, and other explosives evocative of the accessories of war slowly infiltrate the narrative, and serve as a metaphor for the volatile political atmosphere of our contemporary time. This narrative springs from the artist's own experience of war, political corruption, and global instability, first encountered during her childhood in Iran in the 1970s and later as an adult in the 1990s.

Shiva Ahmadi was born in 1975 in Tehran, Iran, and currently lives and works in Northville, Michigan. She received a BA in painting from Azad University in 1998 and MFA degrees from Wayne State University in 2003 and the Cranbrook Academy of Arts in 2005. She also participated in a residency at the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture in 2003. Since then, the artist has been the subject of numerous solo and group exhibitions. *Shiva Ahmadi: In Focus* is Ahmadi's first solo museum exhibition in New York.

Asia Society's *In Focus* series invites contemporary artists to select objects from the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection of the Asia Society Museum Collection as inspiration for a new artwork to be shown in the Museum's galleries. *Shiva Ahmadi: In Focus* represents the first time a contemporary Iranian artist has participated in the program.