

**Pouran Jinchi: *Ravaged Garden***

NYU Abu Dhabi, 19 Washington Square North

January 7, 2016 - March 16, 2016

January 28, 2016 at 6pm:

Pouran Jinchi in Conversation with Lisa Fischman, Director of the Davis Museum at Wellesley College

**On Pouran Jinchi's "Ravaged Garden"**

**By Shiva Balaghi, Ph.D.**

*I will plant my hands in the garden.  
I will grow  
I know I know I know.  
And in my hand's ink stained hollow  
the swallow  
shall lay its eggs.*

Written in the 1960s, this verse from Forugh Farrokhzad's iconic poem, "Another Birth," became a clarion call for a generation of Iranian women. Forugh drew on a centuries' old tradition of Persian poetic allusions to gardens as a place of sanctuary, relief, and spiritual communion with nature. As the philosopher Michel Foucault explained, "The traditional garden of the Persians was a sacred space that was supposed to bring together inside its rectangle four parts representing the four parts of the world. The garden is the smallest parcel of the world and then it is the totality of the world." In Forugh's modern verses, the garden became a place of creative rebirth and that creativity became a form of feminist expression. Forugh's walled gardens were places of possibility and of limits.

Like many young girls who grew up in Iran in the 1960s, Pouran Jinchi's own sense of feminism was touched by Forugh's poetic vision. In "Ravaged Garden," Jinchi presents a series of richly textured canvases that reframe the poetic feminist evocation of the garden into abstract paintings. The exhibition at NYU's New York Abu Dhabi Institute offers viewers a glimpse into Jinchi's stunning visual landscapes.

Drawing on diverse cultural sources including literature, history, and art, Jinchi has developed a visual vocabulary that inhabits the space between abstraction and calligraphy. Beginning with a sentence, a poem, or a book, Jinchi dismantles the text, ultimately disrupting visual perception. Inscription in her art becomes a visual apparatus beyond meaning. In these paintings, the effect is ethereal. Windswept, the words whirl together in dizzying fashion or scatter across the canvas like layers of fallen leaves on a garden floor. While Jinchi deliberately subsumes syntax, rendering the words illegible, the very essence of a poetic sensibility infuses her garden paintings. What emerges from Jinchi's paintings in the "Ravaged Garden" exhibit is a

layered sensibility. Some aspects of the work will forever remain obscure and hidden, while others become comprehensible at a universal level.

New York based artist Pouran Jinchi was born in Iran in 1959. After receiving a degree in civil engineering from George Washington University, Jinchi broke from familial expectations to pursue studies in art at UCLA and the Art Students League of New York. Jinchi's works are represented in prominent institutional collections such as The Metropolitan Museum, New York; Pratt Institute, New York; The Museum of Fine Arts Houston; Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, NY; Brooklyn Museum, NY; Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC; Federal Reserve Bank, NY; Farjam Collection, Dubai, and several major and international corporate collections. She's held several solo exhibitions in New York, Dubai, Japan and other international art hubs. Her work has also been included in several group exhibitions in prominent venues such as Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (2013); Asian Art Museum, San Francisco (2012); Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2010); and the Brooklyn Museum, New York (2009).