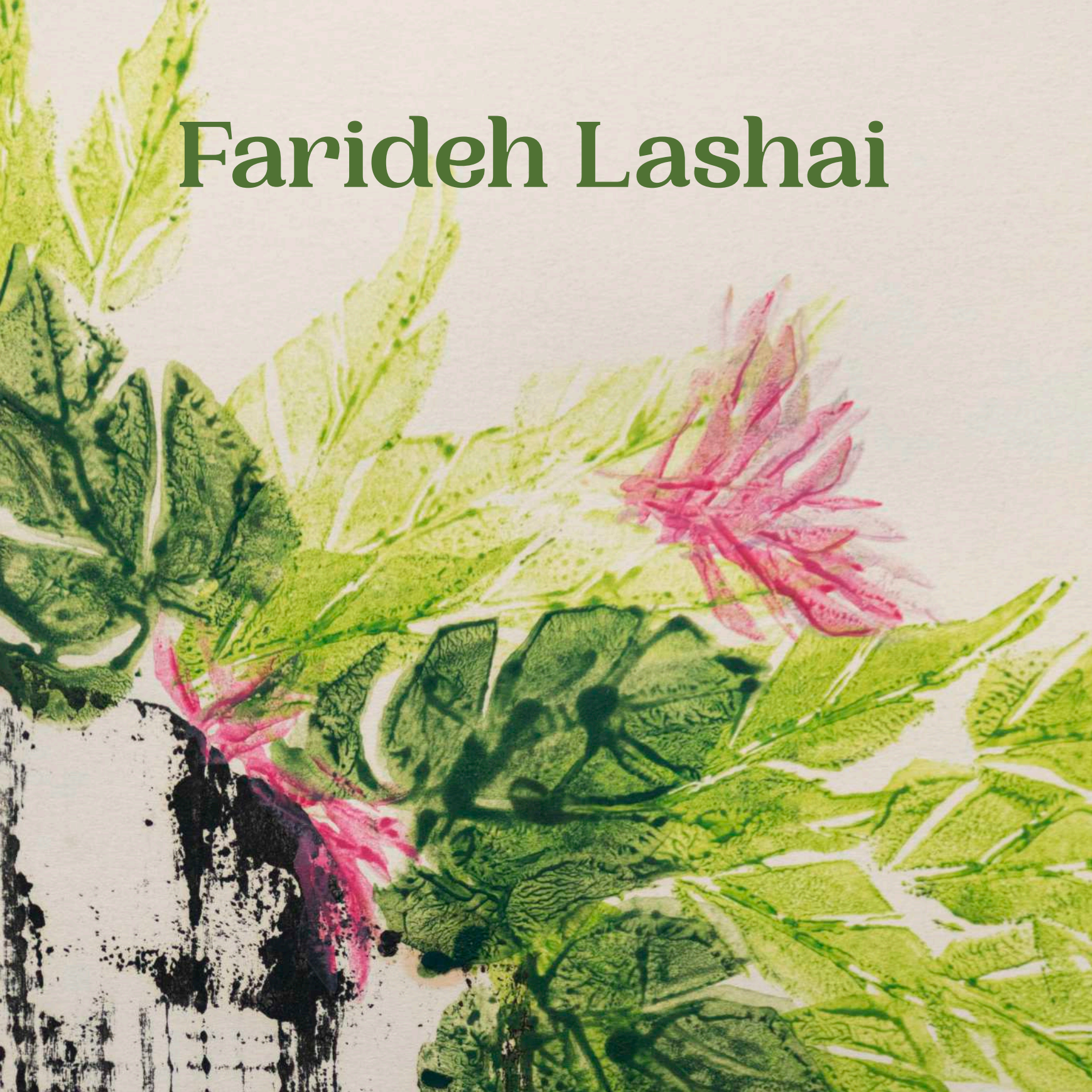


Farideh Lashai



Farideh Lashai Between the Flower
and the Mountain:
Woodcut Prints and
Darbandsar Mountains
1981-1987



**Between the Flower and the Mountain:
Farideh Lashai, Woodcut Prints and
Darbandsar Mountains, 1981-1987**

Throughout her illustrious artistic career, which spanned five decades, Farideh Lashai (1944-2013) was an interdisciplinary artist who worked across painting, sculpture, video, animation, crystal design, and prose. The artist's multi-disciplinary aesthetic practice cannot be confined to a single medium, and instead experiments with the ways in which mediums permeate one another. Deeply invested in the critical ideas behind figures of everyday life, Lashai's work plays with the expression of lines, colors, shapes and their materiality to reflect on aspects of the unconscious over and above the symbolic world of representation. Trained in critical theory and literature and inspired by the poetic and philosophical writings of Sohrab Sepehri, Nima Yushij, and Bertolt Brecht, among many others, Lashai is an artist whose work across genres is infused with a poetic sensibility. Well-known for her abstract depictions of nature including the recurring presence of tree-branches, pomegranates, flowers, skies, and mountains, Lashai carried a life-long preoccupation with the relationship between nature's sublime qualities and its ongoing poetic revelations. Nature is neither a backdrop nor solely the context of her work but a constant source of inspiration. It is the force that carries the world's violent and generative rhythms, its wounds and desires, its tumult, as well as its beauty.

Across Lashai's work, nature serves as a portal to contemplate the psychic world and the unknown, both personally and collectively, often registering the effects of History including war, revolution, political uncertainty in Iran and across the globe. As Lashai described herself "The essential being of nature: freshness, beauty, the endless life and

death, this wondrous cycle of the breathing earth and time (zāmin vā zaman), this tumult and at times stillness of nature motivates me to work." Nature, for Lashai, is a starting point, it is the poetry that surrounds us, and the catalyzing force behind her work as an artist. The works presented in this exhibition gather rarely seen paintings and prints, including a series of hand-painted monoprint and monotype flower vases, the artist's iconic tree-branch paintings, and a series of abstract paintings of the Darbandsar Mountains in northern Tehran, Iran. Shown together, these works reflect the artist's engagement with aesthetic abstraction, formal technique, and the relationship between images and poetry as a way of being in the world.

Included in this exhibition are Lashai's monotype woodcut prints, a series of works created through the monotype process in which a single originary woodcut is hand pressed with oil paint on paper. In this series, Lashai uses this effect to effectively reproduce a vase across multiple works on paper. What emerges from this technique are impressions or ghostly reproductions, carrying the imprint of the original, while each print is marked by its own unique variation. Against the context of the age of reproduction and the scarcity of revolution and war, Lashai's use of the monotype reflects both a response to economic conditions and an experimentation with the medium and the idea of the copy. While Lashai plays with the idea of reproducibility in the vase series, she also counters the ghostly reproduction of the vase by innovating and transforming the flowers throughout each painting, exposing the possibilities within the monotype form. At first glance, the vase with flowers appears as Donna Honarpisheh a rather

ordinary household image, but it is through Lashai's use of materials, a vase created with woodcuts recurring across each work, potatoes used as stamps to create leaves and flowers, and the artist's brush stroke adding her own detailed marks to each print, that we come to realize the complexity of each work. Each composition includes the woodcut print of a black vase, varied by a burst of color and shapes that mix the organized quality of a flower with its singular beauty. Playing with nature's characteristic features of extraordinary repetition, Lashai combines printmaking and painting, creating a form that marries the reproducibility within industrial modernity with the cosmic particularity of her floral designs.

In addition to the material experimentation within these works, these small works on paper play with the idea of recurrence and perspective, or, what it means to encounter a daily scene and to reflect on its shifting evocations through time, process and perspective. A vase of flowers is like a poetic verse that reveals itself anew with each daily encounter. Lashai's brushstroke plays with this subtle idea of stillness and change, by returning to the same image and presenting it to the viewer with minor variations in color and position. Lashai paints the experience of these small daily transformations, expanding the viewer's sense of perception, and quietly attuning us to detail. By attending to the ordinary objects of everyday life, Lashai's works on paper reflect on the profundity of seeing, perceiving, and reflecting, therefore expanding the object beyond its symbolization to allow the viewer to reflect on the poetic act of seeing and being in the world.

Alongside these works, this exhibition also includes selections of works on paper of the Darbandsar mountains, located in northern Tehran, a landscape that was beloved to the artist and her family. This landscape is for Lashai both familiar and extraordinary, a scene she lived in and returned to throughout her life, and which had a profound effect on her. These mountains along with the shores of the Caspian Sea are described with painterly detail in the autobiographical novel she published in 2003, *Shâl Bâmo* (The Jackal Came) in which the Iran-Iraq war is the backdrop. The novel tells the story of multiple generations of women living between revolution and war with references to the city's bombings and a broader feeling of a nation in mourning. Just as in Lashai's paintings, her prose describes a thunder that consumes the mountains, covering all of its flowers and life. As reflected in both her paintings and prose, the northern mountains of Tehran were a constant pole for Lashai, a place to return, a measure of time, a pillar of stability and change all at once. Lashai reflected on this sense of intimacy with the figure of the mountain: "I want to become intimate with the mountain -- that sense of stability, the sound of stream, the ululation of waves -- rather than draw a mountain. Intimacy gives me ideas. Through them, I find my lost cause."

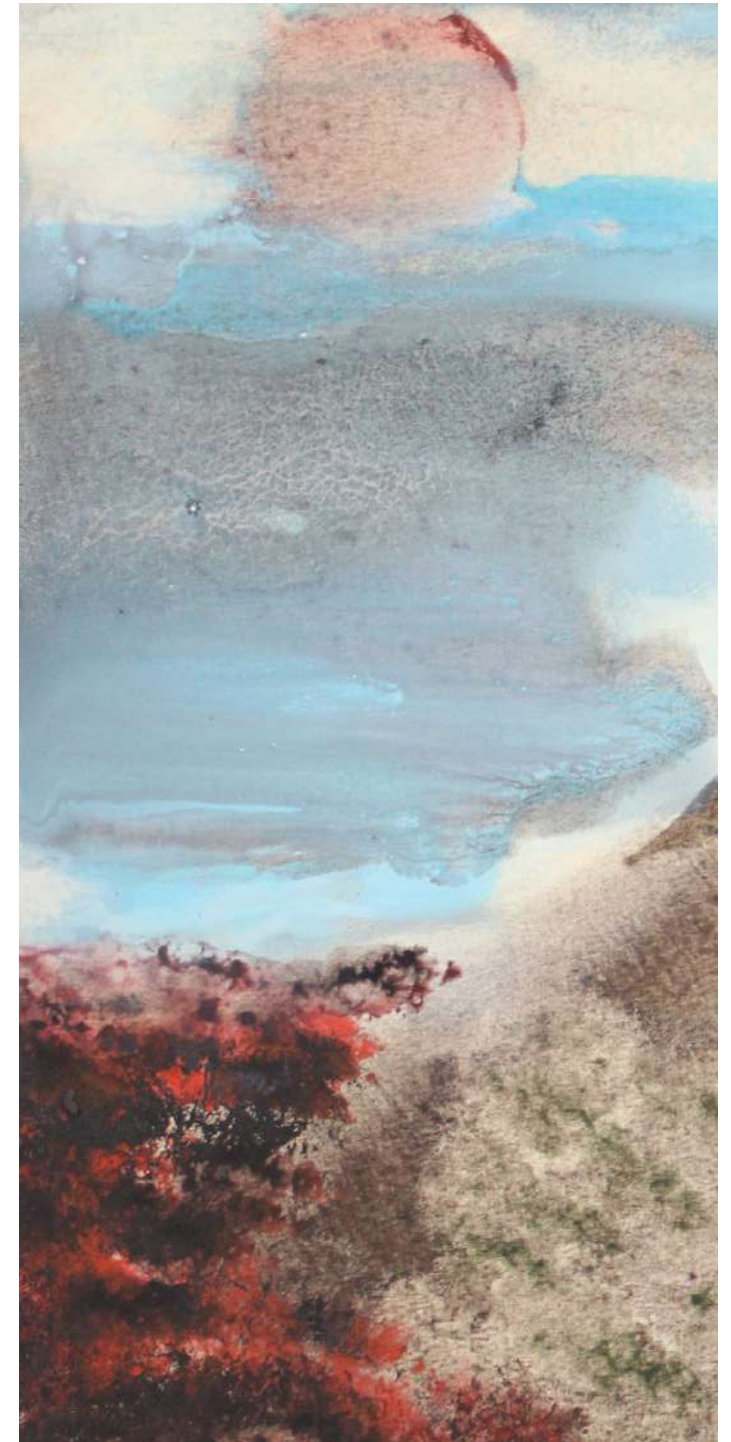
It was in the decade of turbulence following the revolution in Iran, a period of uncertainty and immediately after the violent thunder of the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88), that Lashai painted these mountains. Through this period of change, Lashai's mountain reflects a constant, but, as Lashai's expressive works on paper display, these mountains are no mere reflections of nature as a serene place of refuge, but

rather, they are reflective of nature as a witness to the world. In the paintings, these mountains are textured, creating a stone-like quality; they are layered with gray, green, yellow, Donna Honarpisheh and red. The abstracted blurred red color that covers the foothills of the mountain doubles as flowers and evokes a tortured feeling of fear and bloodshed. The mountains appear intimately close and distant at the same; they take up almost the entirety of the page, leaving little blue sky at the corner of the page, evoking a distance between the viewer and what lies beyond. These works register the psychic tumult of the period and the mountain as a witness, a protector, a border, and a companion.

Brought together for the first time in this exhibition at Leila Heller Gallery in Dubai, Farideh Lashai's small works on paper are an offering from the artist to reflect on the encounter between nature and poetry, form and materiality, and the ordinary and the extraordinary in everyday life.

Written by Donna Honarpisheh

Associate Curator of Modern and Contemporary Art and Research at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Miami, a scholar of Comparative Literature and Critical Theory, and the host of ICA Miami's podcast, Tomorrow is the Problem, which covers pressing issues in art and culture. She earned her PhD at UC-Berkeley where she wrote a dissertation on modernist Iranian aesthetics in a global context. She has taught undergraduate courses in Global Modernisms at Fordham University, Sarah Lawrence College, and UC-Berkeley.





Untitled
From The Vase Series
Wood block on paper
1987
46 x 34 cm



Untitled
From The Vase Series
Wood block on paper
1987
46 x 34 cm



Untitled
 From The Vase Series
 Wood block on paper
 1987
 46 x 34 cm



Untitled
 From The Vase Series
 Wood block on paper
 1980s ca.
 46 x 34 cm

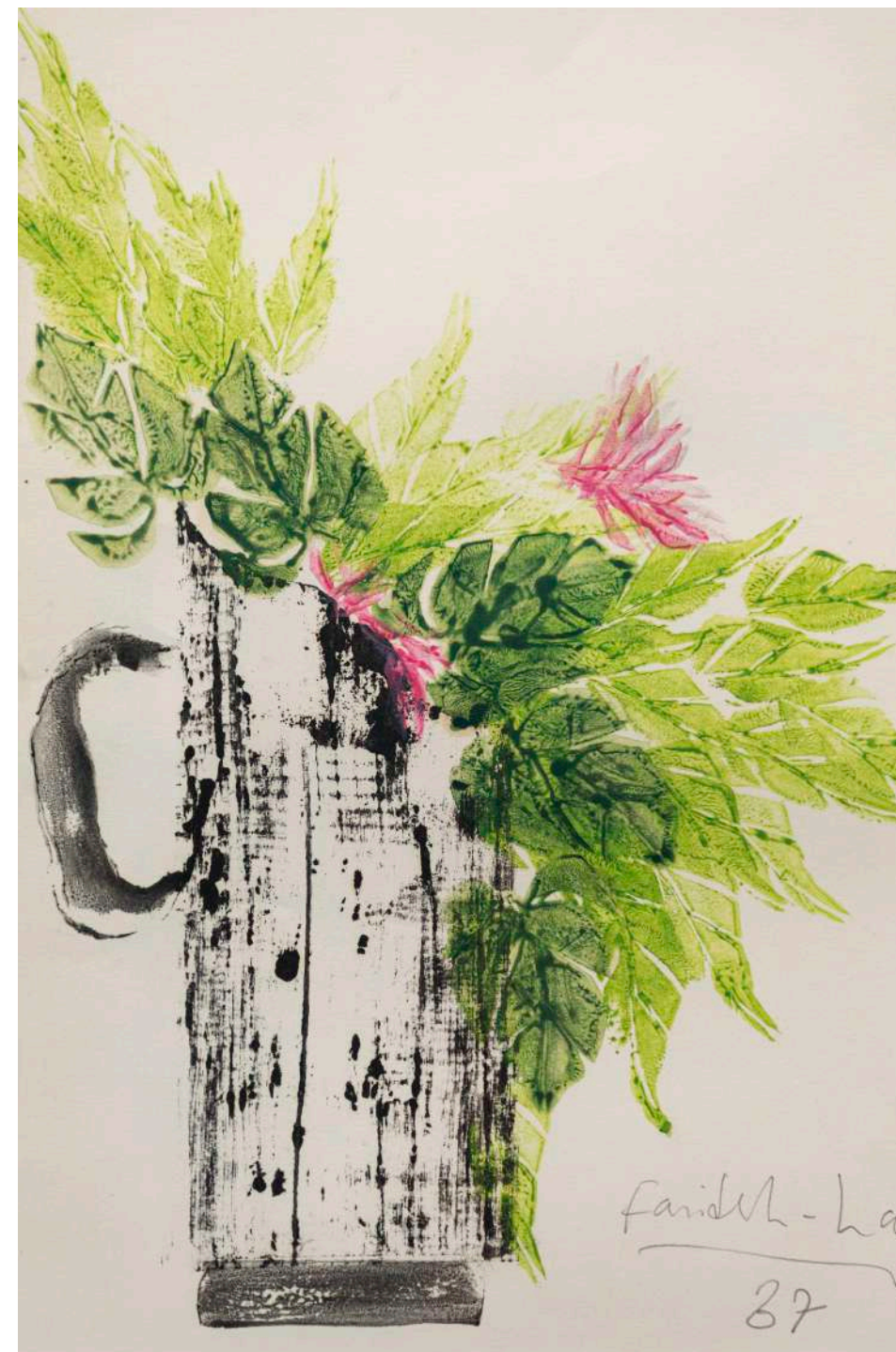


Untitled
 From The Vase Series
 Wood block on paper
 1987
 46 x 34 cm





Untitled
 From The Vase Series
 Wood block on paper
 1987
 46 x 34 cm





Untitled
 From The Vase Series
 Wood block on paper
 1987
 46 x 34 cm



Untitled
 From The Vase Series
 Wood block on paper
 1980 ca.
 46 x 34 cm



Untitled
 From The Vase Series
 Wood block on paper
 1987
 46 x 34 cm



Untitled
 From The Vase Series
 Wood block on paper
 1987
 46 x 34 cm



Untitled
 From The Vase Series
 Wood block on paper
 1987
 46 x 34 cm



Untitled
 From The Vase Series
 Wood block on paper
 1980 ca.
 46 x 34 cm



Untitled
 From The Vase Series
 Wood block on paper
 1987
 46 x 34 cm



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Wood block on paper
1987
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Untitled
From The Vase Series
Wood block on paper
1987
46 x 34 cm





Untitled
 From The Vase Series
 Wood block on paper
 1987
 46 x 34 cm





Untitled
 From The Darbandsar
 Mountains
 Oil on paper
 1967
 37 x 27 cm



Untitled
 From The Darbandsar
 Mountains
 Oil on paper
 1967
 37 x 27 cm



Untitled
 From The Darbandsar
 Mountains
 Oil on paper
 1967
 37 x 27 cm



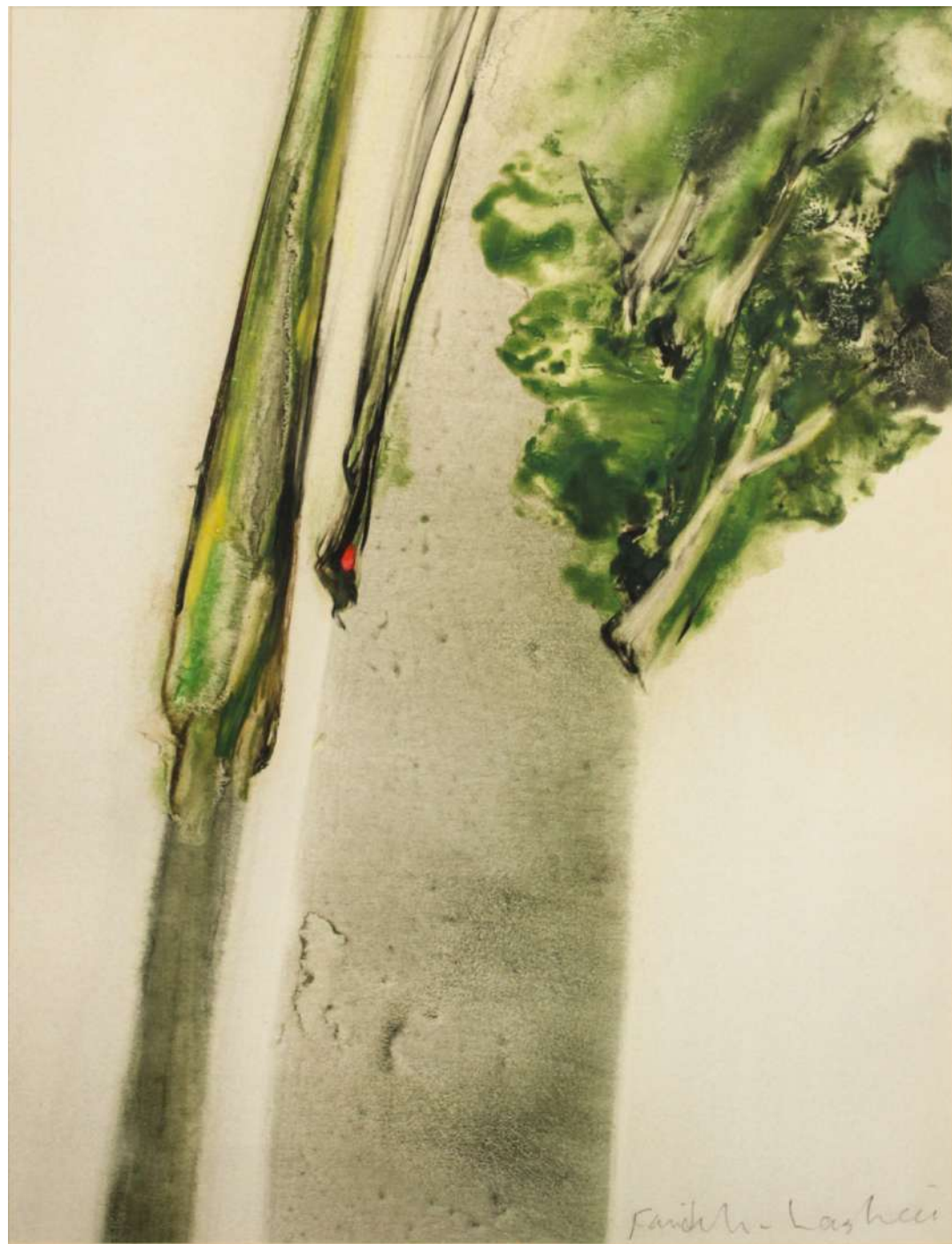
Untitled
 From The Darbandsar
 Mountains
 Oil on paper
 1967
 37 x 27 cm



Untitled
 From The Darbandsar
 Mountains
 Oil on paper
 1967
 37 x 27 cm



Untitled
 From Tree Series
 1987
 Oil on paper
 56 x 66 cm



Untitled
 From Tree Series
 1987
 Oil on paper
 56 x 66 cm



Untitled
 From Tree Series
 1987
 Oil on paper
 56 x 66 cm



Biography

Farideh Lashai was born, in the year 1944, amid the lush, jungly, and foggy Caspian Sea coast—a landscape that would seep into her life and work for years to come. In 1950, the Lashais moved to Tehran and Farideh started school in the Gholhak neighborhood. As a child, she painted furiously. At home, her nickname became *nakhash bashi*, a riff on the Persian word for painter. She took lessons from Jafar Petgars. Before long, the walls of the Lashai home were festooned with her various paintings and drawings.

In 1962 she went to Germany with a will to study literature. In Munich, she enrolled at a school for translation, where she encountered the worlds of Heinrich Boll and other members of the famed Group 47 literary circle that came to prominence in the aftermath of World War II. But it was the epic theater of Bertolt Brecht that most captivated her.

In 1966, Farideh took time off her studies and went to work at Riedel Studios, a celebrated glass manufacturer in Kufstein, Austria. There, she was trained in the art of crystal design and carving. Two years later, she had her first exhibition—it featured works made from crystal in a two-man show alongside Claus Riedel—at Milan's *Crystelleria Duomo*. Also that year, she began work at Rosenthal in Bavaria, one of the world's leading crystal manufacturers, where she further specialized in traditional arts.

Alongside her art, literary projects occupied much of Farideh's time. In 1968, her translation of Brecht's *The Good Person of Szechwan*, the chronicle of one woman's uncommon quest for spiritual fulfillment, was published. It was the second translation of Brecht into Farsi. Mr. Puntila and his man Matti and *The Days of Commune* followed. Some of her own poems—full of love and longing and mystical verve—were published in a literary magazine called *Jahan-e No*.

Farideh had her first solo show at Tehran Gallery in 1973, at least in part a meditation on nature. In these and others, the wild northern Iranian environments of her youth appear as a tangle of shapes and forms of colors, teetering between figuration and abstraction, coming and unbecoming.

Then, in 1974, her brother's political transgressions caught up with Farideh, and she was arrested. In 1976, Farideh was released and married afterwards. Farideh and her husband had a child, divorced not long after, and she and her young daughter moved to America, where she was miserable. In spite of the war, Farideh returned to Iran.

Farideh held many exhibitions in and outside Iran. In the later 1990s and into the 2000s, she reengaged the art scene of her native land. In 2004 She participated in, an exhibition called 'The Gardens of Iran' at The Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. More and more, Farideh gravitated toward the moving image, concocting elaborate animations that would, in turn, be projected onto the surface of her paintings. In the ensuing years, Farideh produced dynamic works based on Goya's *Disasters of War*, Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, and Pasolini's 1966 film *Hawks and Sparrows*. She also revisited her childhood love for the vexed figure of Mohammad Mossadegh.

In 2003 she published *Shal Bamu* (*The Jackal Game*), an idiosyncratic stream of consciousness memoir that, like her best paintings, evoke a psychic whirlwind of love and loss and memory.

In her last years, she was steeped in readings about surrealism—the favored mode of artists and writers who had tried to escape the horrors of this world by imagining a hallucinatory alternative. At the time of her death from cancer at the age of 68, she was in the midst of reading Luis Bunuel's *My Last Sigh*.

Curriculum Vitae

Farideh Lashai | 1944-2013 | Rasht, Iran – Tehran, Iran
BA, German Literature, University of Frankfurt, Frankfurt, Germany
BFA, Crystal Design and Carving, University of Applied Arts,
Vienna, Austria

POSTHUMOUS SOLO EXHIBITIONS

2023	Farideh Lashai, Srudies for Crystal and Glass Design and other work, curated by Roshi Rahnama, Advocartsy, LA, USA	Eyewitness: Farnccisco Goya & Farideh Lashai, curated by Catherine de Zegher and Johan De Smet, Museum of Fine Art Ghent, Ghent, Belgium
2022	Farideh Lashai: Afloat Over Undulations, curated by Sam Samiee, Manarat Al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi art, Abu Dhabi, UAE	Between Motion/and the Act/Falls the Shadow, curated by Paloma Martin Llopis, Edward Tyler Nahem Gallery, Madrid, Spain
2019	Farideh Lashai. A Land Called Ideology, curated by Paloma Martin Llopis, Tabacalera Promocion Del Arte, Madrid, Spain	2016 Farideh Lashai Retrospective, curated by Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi, Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE
2017	On Violence and Beauty: Reflections on War, curated by Venetia Porter, British Museum, London, UK La Obra Invitada: Farideh Lashai, Cuando cuento estás solo tú... pero cuando miro hay solo una sombra, curated by Ana Martinez de Aguilar, Prado Museum, Madrid, Spain	2015 Towards the Ineffable: Farideh Lashai, curated by Germano Celant and Faryar Javaherian, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran, Iran Only a Shadow, curated by Lisa Fischman, Davis Museum, Wellesley College, Boston, USA

SOLO EXHIBITIONS (SELECTED)

2013	Thus in Silence in Dreams’ Projections, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, USA It is It, and It is Only Now..., Edward Tyler Nahem Gallery, New York, USA In Memory of Farideh Lashai (1944-2013): An Exhibition Honoring the Life and Work of Farideh Lashai, Farjam Foundation, Dubai, UAE In Memory of Farideh Lashai: Between the act / And the motion / Falls the Shadow, Art Dubai Projects, Art Dubai, UAE Catching The Moon, Book Launch and Exhibition, JAMM Gallery, Dubai, UAE	Dubai, Albareh Gallery Dubai, UAE
2008	i don’t want to be a tree, i want to be its meaning, Contemporary Istanbul Art Fair, Istanbul, Turkey	
2001	Farideh Lashai, Cultural Center, Barcelona, Spain	
1998	Espace Galant, Avignon, France Chapelle De l Hôtel de Ville, Vesoul, France	
1994	Golestan Gallery, Tehran, Iran	
1993	Gallery Aum Hufeisen, Dusseldorf, Germany	
1992	Golestan Gallery, Tehran, Irany	
1990	Libertas Gallery, Dusseldorf, Germany	
1988	Gallery Demenga, Basel, Switzerland	
1987	National Museum of Fine Arts, La Valletta, Malta Demenga Gallery, Basel, Switzerland Golestan Gallery, Tehran, Iran Classic Gallery, Tehran, Iran	

1984	Clark Gallery, Bakersfield, USA	Humburg, Germany Art Dubai Modern, Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, Leila Heller Gallery, Dubai, UAE
1977	Cultural Center of the Na- tional Iranian Oil Company, Khoozestan, Iran	
1976	Tehran Gallery, Tehran, Iran	2021 Hungry for time: An invitation to epistemic disobedience, curated by Raqs Media Collective (Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula, Shuddhabrata Sengupta), in the art collections of the academy of fine arts, Vienna, Austria
1975	Iran-America Society, Teh- ran, Iran	ASIA NOW, curated by Nicolas Bourriaud, Paris
1974	Tehran Gallery, Tehran, Iran	Asian Art, Paris, France
1973	Sayhoon Gallery, Tehran, Iran	Epic Iran, curated by Tim Stanley and Dr John Curtis OBE FBA as CoCurators; Ina Sarikhani Sandmann as Associate Curator; Sarah Piram as V&A Project Curator; Alexandra Magub as V&A Project Assistant; and Astrid Johansen as Cultural Heritage Manager, Iran Heritage Foundation, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK
1968	Studio Rosenthal, Selb, Germany	Reflections: contemporary art of the Middle East and North Africa, curated by Venetia Porter, London, England When I Count, There Are Only You..., curated by Hoor Al Qasimi,
1967	Gallerie Duomo, Milan, Italy	
POSTHUMOUS GROUP EXHIBITIONS (SELECTED)		
2023	Abstraction Iranienne, curated by Leyla Varasteh, Salons du Trocadero, Paris, France Another Birth, curated by Sanza Askari, Dubai, UAE	
2022	In the Heart of Another Country, the Diasporic Imagination in the Sharjah Art Foundation Collection, curated by Omar Kholeif, Deichtorhallen	

	Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah, UAE	2015	New Presentation of Modern Collection, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France Islamic Art Now, curated by Linda Kamroff, LACMA, Los Angeles, USA Great Game, curated by Marco Meneguzzo and Mazdak Faiznia, 56th International Art Exhibition, la Biennale Arte di Venezia, Venice, Italy
2020	Between the Sun and the Moon, Lahore Biennale (LB02), curated by Hoor Al Qasimi, Lahore, Pakistan		
2020	ARCOMadrid International Contemporary Art Fair, Madrid, Spain		
2019	The Spark Is You: Parasol unit in Venice, Collateral Event of the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia, Conservatorio di Musica Benedetto Marcello di Venezia, Venice, Italy Moon: A Voyage Through Time, curated by Christiane Gruber, Agha Khan Museum, Toronto, Canada	2013	Bolshe Sveta / More Light, 5th Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art, curated by Catherine de Zegher, Moscow, Russia Calligraffiti 1984/2013, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, USA
		GROUP EXHIBITIONS (SELECTED)	
2017	Iranian Picnic, curated by Faryar Javaherian, Golestan Palace, Tehran, Iran	2012	all our relations, curated by Catherine de Zegher and Gerard McMaster, 18th Biennale of Sydney, Australia The Elephant in the Dark, curated by Amirali Ghasemi, Devi Art Foundation, Delhi, India ARCOMadrid International Contemporary Art Fair, Edward Tyler Nahem Gallery, Madrid, Spain
2016	Frozen World of the Familiar Stranger, curated by Heidi Rabben and Sitara Chowfla, Kadist, San Francisco / KHOJ International Artists' Association, New Delhi, India		

	Zona Maco Mexico Arte Contemporaneo Art Fair, Mexico City, Mexico		Society, Environment-Group, Assar Gallery, Tehran		Tehran, Iran		Meridian International Center, Washington DC, New York, Belleville Illinois, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Texas, Florida
2011	Identity Crisis: Authenticity, Attribution and Appropriation, The Heckscher Museum of Art Regarding Iran the apparent acquiescence of conceptual poetic, curated by Shaheen Merali, Guild Art Gallery, Mumbai, India Art Dubai, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, USA		Across the Persian Gulf, curated by Charles Merewether, Hong Kong International Art Fair, Hong Kong Movers and Shakers in Iranian Contemporary Art, curated by Layla Diba, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, USA Abu Dhabi Art Fair		Liu-Haisu Art Museum, Shanghai, China Yan-Huang Art Museum, Beijing, China Hubei Art Museum, Wuhan, China Kokkola Museum, Kokkola, Finland Festival Femmes en Iran, Evry City Hall, Evry, France Haagse Kunstkring Gallery, Den Haag, the Netherlands Caisa Cultural Center, Helsinki, Finland Sala Uno Gallery, Rome, Italy City Hall Gallery, Radhuset, Oslo, Norway Esfahan Museum of Contemporary Art, Esfahan, Iran	2003	Amber Gallery, East-West Foundation, Leiden, the Netherlands
2010	Hope!, curated by Ashok Adiceam, Palais des Arts, Dinard, France Art Dubai, Isabelle van Den Eynde Gallery, Dubai, UAE	2008	Conference of the Birds Exhibition, Berardi & Sagharchi Projects, London, UK Just Paper, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, USA			2000	Museum of Fine Arts, Caracas, Venezuela Rome Expo, Rome, Italy International Drawing, Biennial, Tehran, Iran
2009	Iran Inside Out, curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, DePaul University Art Museum, Chicago, USA Iran Inside Out, curated by Sam Bardaouil and Till Fellrath, Chelsea Art Museum, New York, USA Selseleh/Zelzeleh: Movers & Shakers in Contemporary Iranian Art, curated by Layla Diba, Leila Heller Gallery, New York, USA 101: Oil & Its Aftermath- Politics, Modernism,	2007	Warsaw Museum, Warsaw, Poland		Iranian Contemporary, Christie s King Street, London, UK Villa del Cardinale, Naples, Italy Fabien Fryns Fine Arts, Marbella, Spain Palazzo Reale di Napoli, Naples, Italy Vigado Gallery, Budapest, Hungary Cultural Center, Berlin, Germany	1999	9th Asian Art Biennale, Bangladesh
		2006	Cultural Foundation, Abu Dhabi, UAE Persja Two Swiaty Galleries, Karkow, Poland			1997	Shilpakala Academy, Biennial, Dacca, Bangladesh
		2005	Ludwig Museum, Koblenz, Germany			1996	Meeting of Korea-Germany, Korea
		2004	Persian Gardens, curated by Faryar Javaherian, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art,		A Breeze from the Gardens of Persia, New Art from Iran, Traveling exhibition,	1978	Art Basel, Basel, Switzerland
						1975	Four Women Artists Exhibition, Iran-America Society, Tehran, Iran
						1977	Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran

- 1971

Iranian Women Artists
International, Tehran, Iran
International Exhibition of
Tehran (as a member of the
Austrian Pavilion),
Tehran, Iran
- 1968

International Young Artists,
Ostend, Belgium

INSTITUTIONAL COLLECTIONS (SELECTED)

- Tehran Museum of
Contemporary Art,
Tehran, Iran
Centre Pompidou,
Paris, France
Sharjah Art Foundation,
Sharjah, UAE
Los Angeles County
Museum of Art,
Los Angeles, USA
British Museum,
London, UK
National Museum of Fine
Arts, Valetta, Malta,
Abu Dhabi Department of
Culture and Tourism,
Abu Dhabi, UAE
Jordan National Gallery
of Fine Arts, Jordan
Devi Art Foundation in
New Delhi, India
Farjam Collection,
Dubai, UAE
Demenga Galleries
Public Collection, Basel,

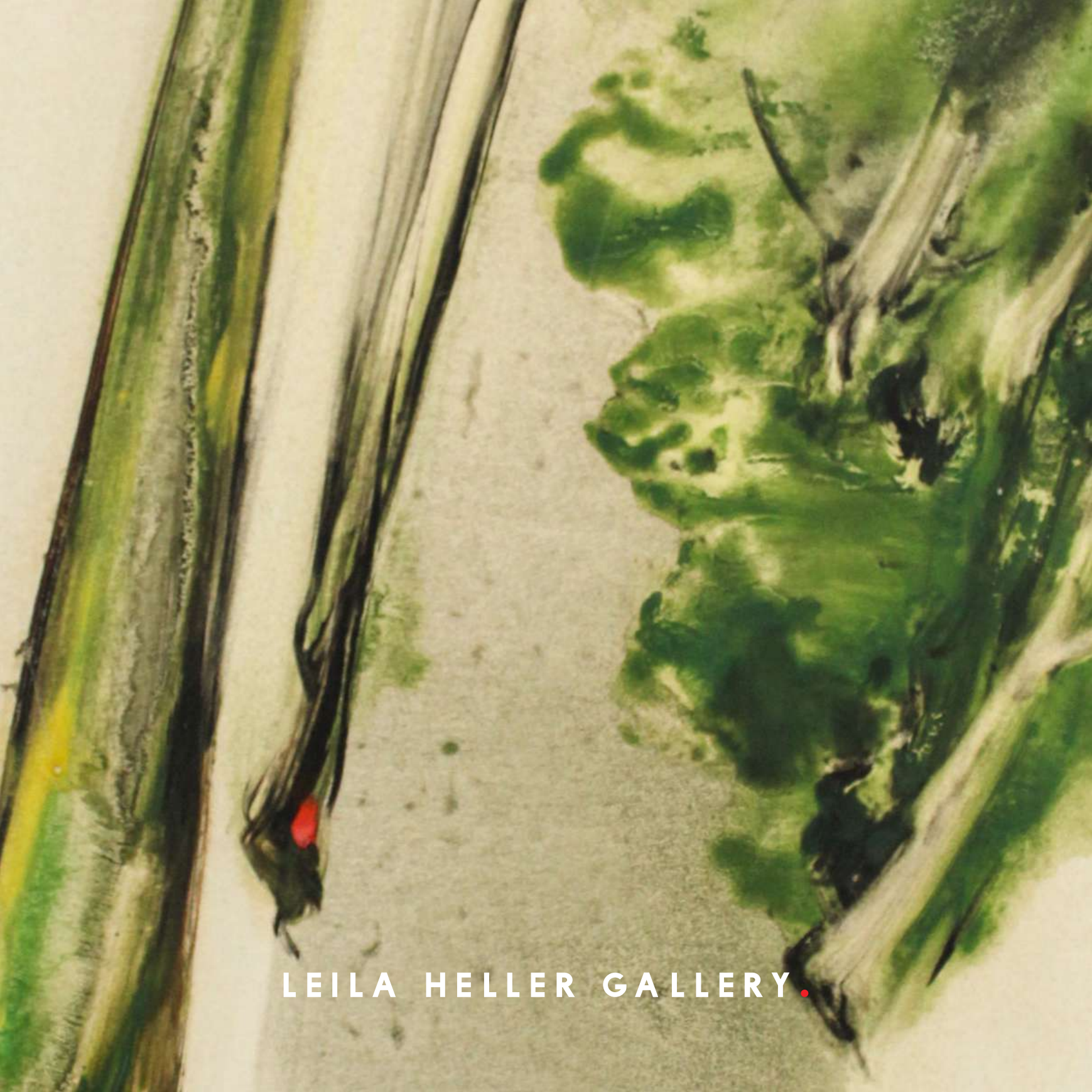
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of Iran, Tehran, Iran
Deutsche Bank,
Berlin, Frankfurt,
Düsseldorf, Germany
Credit Suisse, Geneva,
Dubai offices, UAE

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