

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

ART DUBAI

March 15 – 18, 2017

Booth A8



Shirin Neshat, *Ibrahim (Patriots)*, from The Book of Kings series, 2012,
Ink on LE silver gelatin print, 152.4 x 114.3 cm, Edition of 5 + 2 APs

Leila Heller Gallery is pleased to announce its participation in the eleventh edition of Art Dubai with a presentation in Contemporary section of the fair.

PRIVATE DAYS (by invitation only)

Monday, March 13, 6.30-8.30pm: Art Dubai Modern Preview

Tuesday, March 14, 3-9.30pm: Art Dubai Preview

Tuesday, March 14, 7pm: The Abraaj Group Art Prize Unveiling

VERNISSAGE (by invitation only)

Wednesday, March 15, 1-4pm: Ladies Day Preview (open to all ladies)

Wednesday, March 15, 4-9.30pm: VIP Opening

PUBLIC DAYS

Thursday, March 16, 4-9.30pm

Friday, March 17, 2-9.30pm

Saturday, March 18, 12-6.30pm

Art Dubai Contemporary | Booth A8

For Art Dubai 2017, Leila Heller Gallery is presenting a significant body of work by Shirin Neshat's series, *The Book of Kings*, as well as new works from artists including Rashid Rana, Reza Aramesh and Noor Ali Chagani.

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Shirin Neshat

Shirin Neshat will present a selection of work from her series *The Book of Kings* that explores the underlying conditions of power within socio-cultural structures. Originally created in 2012, the series was inspired by the sweeping momentum of political uprisings in the Arab world. Yet in the current political climate, its relevance has never been so timely.

Neshat turned to both historical and contemporary sources to generate richly provocative metaphors for the network of relations that comprises a society. The photographic series, titled *The Book of Kings*, is named after the ancient book *Shahnameh* (*The Book of Kings*), a long poem of epic tragedies written by the Persian poet Ferdowsi between c. 977 and 1010 AD. Neshat's portraits of Iranian and Arab youth comprise black and white photographs with meticulously executed calligraphic texts and drawings inscribed over each subject's face and body. These texts and illustrations—drawn from *Shahnameh* as well as from contemporary poetry by Iranian writers and prisoners—both obscure and illuminate the subjects' facial expressions and emotive intensity, intimately linking the current energy of contemporary Iran with its mythical and historical past. In this arresting body of work, Neshat returns to the confrontational nature of her iconic *Women of Allah* series, while re-focusing on themes of revolution and the bold-faced defiance of youth.

Rashid Rana

Rana's splicing and stitching technique feels violent as it tears apart and reassemble photographs of canonical art historical and contemporary imagery. Utilising the grid structure, the artist scrambles the famous compositions and rearranges them into pixelated and codified puzzles. Rana's *Transliteration Series* reimagines pre-existing imagery into digital fields of form and colour that he can play with. Rana's technique of image-making is not simply a formal device: it is an act of subversion that literally breaks apart and puts together the original image that creates a new image telling a different story. The strategy creates intended and unintended pairings whereby pictorial language from a particular time and place in history finds itself reborn and re-examined through the lens of another set of spatial and temporal coordinates.

Reza Aramesh

Reza Aramesh's interdisciplinary practice represents the abjection of human bodies sustained during armed conflict and torture. He blends classical aesthetics with anonymous figures from the contemporary moment, thereby bringing to the fore the victims who have been rendered invisible, yet at the same time questioning the traditional representation of suffering throughout the Western art historical canon. For Art Dubai, we will be showing 3 monumental marble sculptures.

It is hard to avoid the association with a traditional iconography, that of the *Ecce Homo*, the portrayal of Christ as he is presented to the crowds prior to His crucifixion. But unlike Christ in such scenes, this figure is deprived of his ability to act, even of his individuality. Behold someone that once had the human rights of a man. Images of oppression and violence have been ubiquitous in Reza Aramesh's work. These new sculpture, carved in marble, a material commonly reserved for celebratory purposes continues the artist's multi-faceted explorations of the human ability to inflict suffering.

Noor Ali Chagani

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Lahore-based Noor Ali Chagani creates works comprised of hand-made miniature terracotta bricks to demonstrate his unique take as a sculptor on the tradition of miniature painting. His work revolves around the concept of the absence of home; his quest for a personal space that he can call his own. On a very personal level, Chagani feels that bricks are a symbolic way for him to connect to the rest of the world. His brick works also demonstrate a fascination with the symbolic power of colossal walls, which connote silence and strength. In contrast, Chagani also works with the idea of self-comparison with walls, as obstructive, stagnant objects.

About the Gallery:

Since its establishment over three decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian artists. It has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European and Middle Eastern secondary art markets. In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. At 14,000 square feet, the state of the art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE. Showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work in the Middle East for the first time, the gallery is dedicated to supporting the evolving practice of established artists.

Press Inquiries:

For more information and images, please contact Jolaine Frizzell, Leila Heller Gallery, jolaine@leilahellergallery.com