

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

*'NIGHT CONVEYS THE LIGHT,
EVERY DAY & EVERY NIGHT.'*

By

Reza Derakshani



*scent of a fig tree
thick in the summer air,
shadows of her beautiful hands,
like Shiva,
kneading the darkness, dancing.*

*drops of sweet white juice
on the way back from school
in the summer heat
the desert shining like a silver sky*

*through the long night,
this longing for you ripens and thickens
we dive toward insanity*

*you pluck my chords,
and the song echoes the universe.
each day, each night.*

*the night you made a promise:
the day of reunion,
I count up the days,
every day and every night.*

*thirst near to my eyes,
drops of sweet white juice,
the shadow of a fig tree
quiets my soul.*

- Reza Derakshani

Leila Heller Gallery presents a series of new and never before seen paintings by Iranian-American artist Reza Derakshani in "Night Conveys the Light, Every Day & Every Night," open March 7th to September 7th, 2022.

In his paintings, Derakshani recalls forgotten tales and symbols of Iran's cultural heritage, at a time where traditions and practices are under threat and often outlawed. Through a rich iconography drawing from medieval Persian poetry, classical literature, miniature painting, and sacred architectural sites laden with meaning, Derakshani's work celebrates both ornamentation and color fields, as the artist finds a space for figural representation in abstract aesthetics.

This new series of work is from his *Day and Night* and *Fig Tree* series, in which Derakshani explores opposing themes of the world. While aesthetically ornamented, the paintings express a duality of experiences and reflect the fullness and ambiguity of life. Derakshani's paintings often mimic poetry and music. For the artist, painting is a spiritual process that allows for a return to physicality and beauty, in a rejection of the irony that often permeates contemporary painting. With Russian culture and literature heavily incorporated into his early education, the artist notes the parallels between Iran and Russia's ornate and metaphorically heavy classical cultural backgrounds.

ABOUT THE ARTIST:

Persian-American artist Reza Derakshani is a renowned painter, poet, musician and performance artist. Born in 1952 in Sangsar, a small village in the North East of Iran. Derakshani studied at Pasadena School of Art, going on to teach at the University of Tehran before leaving the country in 1986 to Italy and subsequently to New York. Reza Derakshani's work is featured in many public art collections including the British Museum, London; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the State Russian Museum; the Museum Gunzenhauser, Germany; the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art and numerous private collections including those of the Sheikha Salama Bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation, Abu Dhabi; SPM, Salsali private museum, Dubai; Leon and Debra Black collection, New York; the Farjam Foundation, Dubai; Trudie Styler & Sting collection, London and Italy; the Freymond Foundation, Geneva; the Royal family of Morocco; and the Eisler Foundation, amongst many others. Derakshani also performed as a musician at the Brooklyn Museum of New York, the Montreux Jazz Festival, and the Dubai Stadium in the UAE, among others. He now spends his time between his studios in St Petersburg, Russia; Texas, USA and Istanbul, Turkey.

ABOUT THE GALLERY:

Since its establishment over four decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting a 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, Central Asian, Southeast Asian 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 16,000 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.