

## **MONIR FARMANFARMAIAN:**

Born in Qazvin, Iran in 1922, Monir's distinguished career has spanned more than five decades. Incorporating traditional reverse glass painting, mirror mosaics and principles of Islamic geometry with a modern sensibility, her sculptures and installations defy easy categorization.

Monir attended the Fine Arts College of Tehran before becoming one of the first Iranian students to study in the United States after World War II. She graduated from Parsons School of Design in 1949 and then became a Member of the New York Art Students' League (1950-53). Engulfed in the epicenter of the modern art world, it was here that she worked alongside many iconic contemporary American artists including Jackson Pollock, Frank Stella, Louise Nevelson and Andy Warhol, all who had an influence on her work.

Monir's mirror and reverse glass painting mosaic sculptures are built around principles of Islamic geometry. Through wall based panels and free standing works, she presents both a detailed craft and contemporary abstraction that employs an interaction of surface texture, light and reflection, color and form. The characteristic mirror mosaic of Monir's work is an Iranian decorative form known as aineh-kari. The technique dates back to the sixteenth century, when glass was imported from Europe and would often arrive broken. In Monir's work, the intricate mirror mosaic and reverse-glass painting moves beyond a craft to explore the forms of the medium in a contemporary way. Along with drawings in felt marker, pen and ink, Monir has also used Plexiglas to combine her exploration of geometric forms with her long standing interest in architecture in layered works of colored lines that explore the forms of nomadic tents, minarets, and models for architectural sculptures.

Her most recent solo exhibitions include *Sunset, Sunrise* at the Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin (2018) that will travel to Sharjah Art Foundation in 2019 and *Infinite Possibilities* curated by Suzanne Cotter at the Fundação de Serralves, Porto, Portugal (2014) and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2015). Other solo exhibitions include *Lineages*, Savannah College of Art and Design Museum (2017); *Monir Farmanfarmaian: Infinite Geometry, The Third Line*, Dubai (2016); *Jef Geys/Monir Farmanfarmaian*, WIELS, Brussels (2013); *Convertibles and Polygons*, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX, USA (2012); *Geometry of Hope*, Leighton House Museum, London, UK (2008); *Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian: Mirror Mosaics*, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK (2007).

Her work has been included in several prominent group exhibitions including Liquid City, Brugge Triennial, Belgium (2018); Rebel, Jester, Mystic, Poet: Contemporary Persians, Aga Khan Museum, Toronto, Canada (2017); DECOR, Villa Empain, Boghossian Foundation, Brussels, Belgium (2016); Seeing Through Light, The Guggenheim Abu Dhabi Collection Opening exhibition, Manarat al Saadiyat, Abu Dhabi, UAE (2015); Iran Modern at Asia Art Society, New York, USA (2013); Trade Routes, Hauser & Wirth, London, UK (2013); Contemporary Iranian Art from the Permanent Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (2012); The Future of Tradition, Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany (2010). She has participated in four editions of the Venice Biennale, where she was awarded the Gold Medal in 1958, 1964 and 1966. She also participated in the 6th Asia Pacific Triennial at Queensland Art Gallery, Australia.

In 2011, Monir launched her artist's monograph titled Cosmic Geometry at the Royal College of Art in London. Published by Damiani and The Third Line, and edited by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Karen Marta, Cosmic Geometry is the first substantial survey of Monir's acclaimed geometric works, and features an in-depth interview by Obrist; critical essays by Nader Ardalan, Media Farzin, and Eleanor Sims; warm tributes by Monir's friends Etel Adnan, Siah Armajani, caraballo-farman, Golnaz Fathi, Hadi Hazavei, Susan Hefuna, Aziz Isham, Rose Issa, Faryar Javaherian, Abbas Kiarostami, Shirin Neshat, Donna Stein, and Frank Stella; an excerpt from The Sense of Unity: The Sufi Tradition in Persian Architecture by Nader Ardalan and Laleh Bakhtiar (1973); and an annotated timeline of Monir's life by Negar Azimi.

Monir's work is housed in several major public collections including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; the Metropolitan Museum, New York, the Victoria and Albert Museum's Jameel Collection, London; The Queensland Art Gallery, Australia; The Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Iran; the Sharjah Art Foundation; and the School of Law at Columbia University, America.

In December of 2017, the Tehran University inaugurated the Monir Museum. Housed in the historic Negarestan Museum Park Gardens, the institution pays homage to her life and work.

Source: The Third Line