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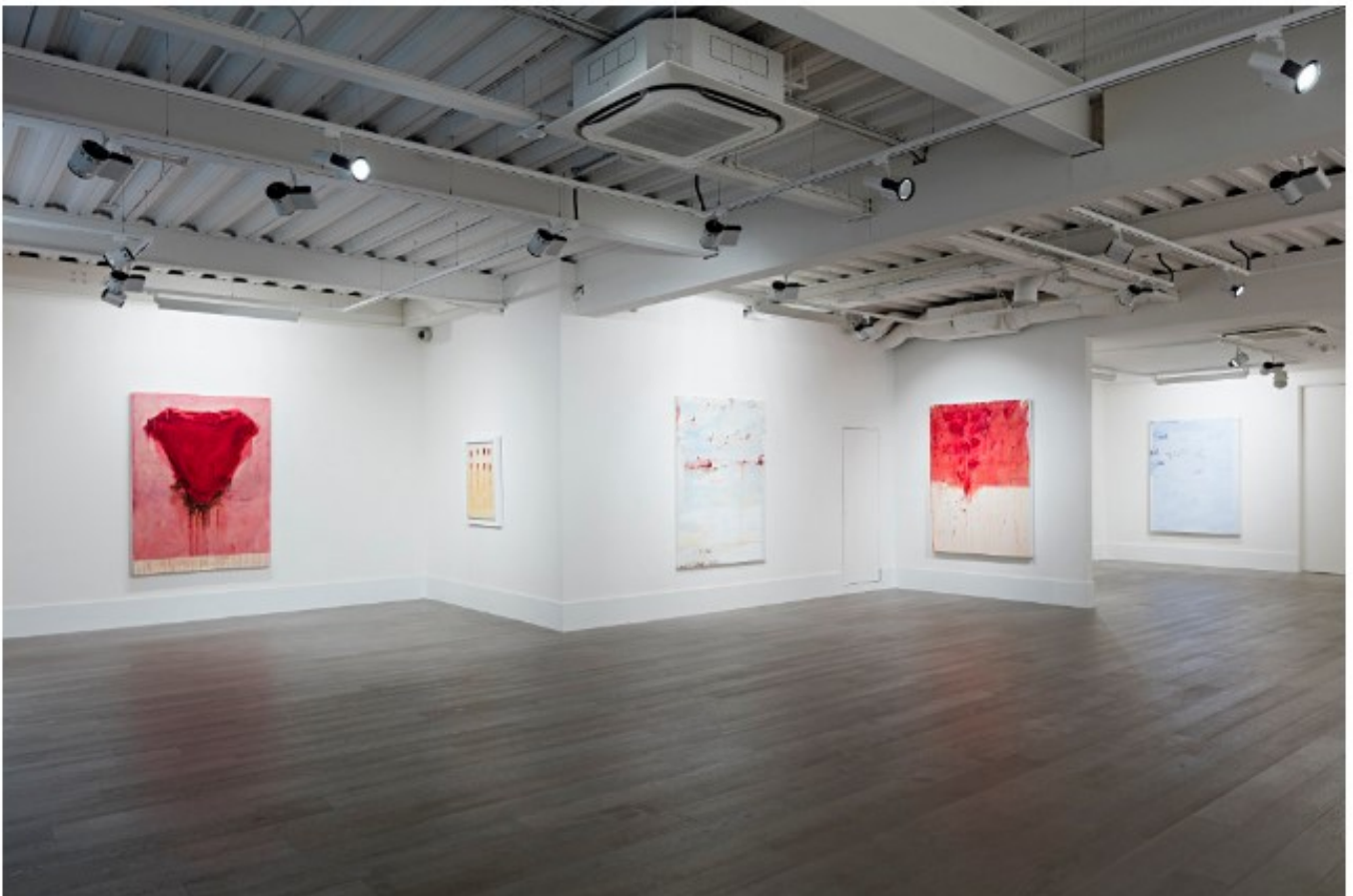
## Azadeh Razaghdoost: Recipe for a Poem

Thu 24 Nov 2016 to Fri 10 Feb 2017



exhibition • selected work

Sophia Contemporary Gallery presents 15 recent paintings by Iranian artist Azadeh Razaghdoost for her first solo exhibition in the UK.







Azadeh Razaghdoost's practice refers to 19th century European poems of the Romantic Age. The poem 'The Sick Rose' (1794) by British poet William Blake and the volume of poetry 'Les Fleurs du Mal' (1857) by French poet Charles Baudelaire have infused the artist's work over the years. The contradictions inherent to human nature are at the core of the artist's work, which she conveys in a sensual, lyrical and allegorical language. By focusing on the emotional properties of the colour red, a leitmotif in the artist's oeuvre, Razaghdoost evokes poetic associations with love, passion and blood in order to explore contrasting existential states and impulses: health and sickness, life and death, love and lust...

Coloured pigments are masterfully poured and arranged onto the white canvass in an artistic gesture reminiscent of Action Painting and Abstract Expressionism. Life is spattered in a whirlwind of emotions, and colour radiates an unrestrained eroticism culminating in glowing hearts and feminine attributes set on a pure white background. Contrasts collide and grapple with each other in a visually enthralling yet tender language. At times, existential dualities seem to be so closely knit together that contrasting desires and the looming danger of decay become a single whole.

Razaghdoost repeated use of flowers and letters, epitomized in the title of her major series, explores the vanishing concepts of blossom and transience. The existential tensions at the centre of her art materialise in painterly dualities, a cool and laconic accentuation of forms masterfully fusing with an expressive and sensual contamination of colours. By interrogating the essential tensions underpinning existence and exploring the emotive properties of colour, Azadeh Razaghdoost creates a truly poetic and idiosyncratic visual language at the confluence of life's most fundamental impulses.

The exhibition at Sophia Contemporary Gallery will comprise works from the *Sick Rose* and *Letters* series as well as stand-alone paintings such as *Recipe for a Poem* (2009).

Azadeh Razaghdoost (b. 1979, Tehran, Iran) is an Iranian painter based in Karaj, Iran. Razaghdoost received her BA in Painting from Tehran's University of Art in 2002. Her work is in the permanent collection of the Vallpalou Foundation, Lleida, Spain and has been widely exhibited internationally, including at the Kunstzeughaus Museum in Zurich and Isfahan Museum of Contemporary Art in Isfahan, Iran.