

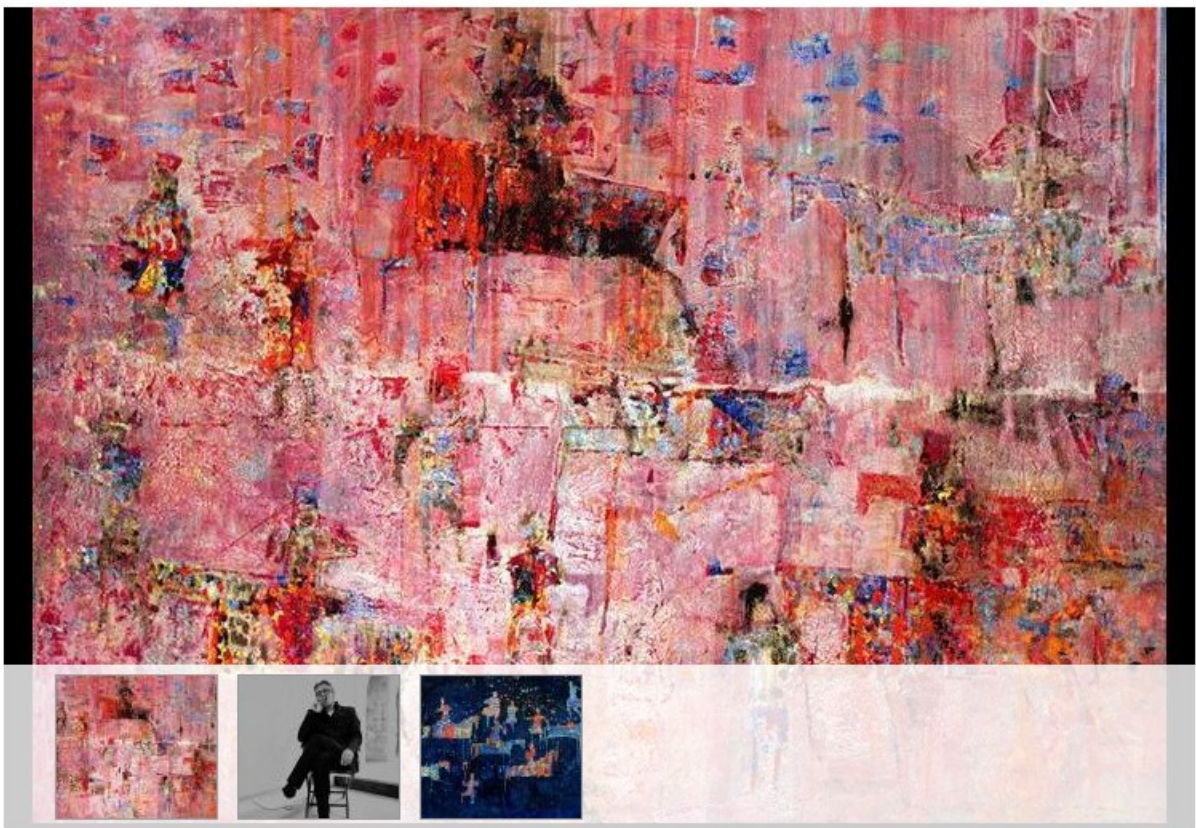
ASIAN ART

NEWSPAPER FOR COLLECTORS, GALLERIES AND MUSEUMS

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Reza Derakshani

by administrator, Saturday, March 26, 2016 - 12:17



A new gallery dedicated to the art of the Middle East and Iran has opened this month in London's Mayfair. Sophia Contemporary Gallery kick-starts its exhibition programme with a series of paintings by the Iranian artist Reza Derakshani.

The exhibition features new works from Derakshani's ongoing 'Hunting' series, which he first began in 2007. These recent pieces showcase Derakshani's continuing concern with colour and texture. His brushwork displays the precision of traditional Iranian practice, yet is imbued simultaneously with a dynamism that recalls the work of the Abstract Expressionist movement. The artist lived in New York in the 1980s and became involved in the Neo-Abstraction movement alongside friends including Cy Twombly and Shirin Neshat which has had a lasting impact on his treatment of paint and surface. The 'Hunting' canvases see the convergence of abstraction and figurative elements. The motif of the horse-riding hunter is repeated across each piece, and is reminiscent of ancient pottery decorations, even prehistoric cave paintings. Derakshani gives this subject a freshness through his treatment of abstraction, creating a series of vibrant, affecting paintings.

Sophia Contemporary's aim is to promote an ongoing dialogue between the contemporary art and artists of the Middle East and their Western counterparts. Although this first exhibition is a solo show, the main focus moving forward is to promote and expose contemporary Middle-Eastern and Iranian art, by presenting it alongside Western pieces. This exposure will also be facilitated through an ongoing events and lecture series.

Reza Derakshani was born in 1952 in Sangsar, Iran. His artist practice encompasses painting, poetry, music and performance. He graduated from the University of Tehran in 1976. He continued his studies at the Pasadena School of Art in California, and returned to Iran to teach at the University of Tehran and the School of Decorative Arts. He left Iran in 1983 following the Islamic Revolution and lived in New York for sixteen years. The artist subsequently moved to Italy before returning again to Iran for seven years. He now divides his time between Dubai, UAE and Austin, USA.

A young prodigy, he held his first solo show at the age of 19 at the Ghandriz Art Gallery in Tehran, going on to exhibit internationally. His work features in many public art collections including the British Museum, London; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. Derakshani also performed as a musician in numerous museums and festivals such as the Brooklyn Museum and the Montreux Jazz Festival among others.

Until 23 April 2016, at Sophia Contemporary Gallery, 11 Grosvenor Street, London W1K 4QB
www.sophiacontemporary.com

SARAH BOLWELL