

GALERIE KASHYA HILDEBRAND

ZURICH

Press Release

Reza Derakshani The Pink House Stories

29 August – 28 September 2013



Pink House on Top of the Hill, 2013, oil and glitter on canvas, 180 x 160 cm

Galerie Kashya Hildebrand is pleased to present new works from Iranian artist Reza Derakshani in his second solo exhibition with the gallery in Zurich. Derakshani is known for his driving passion to create timeless art that simultaneously addresses the deep social and cultural issues affecting contemporary Iran. He has gained worldwide recognition for his beautiful and nuanced studies – sometimes figurative, sometimes abstract, but always improvisational and spontaneous – that are political without being didactic. Best known for his large-scale and experimental use of materials, including glitter, soil, sand, tar, gold and silver leaf, he merges an unbending tradition with a wild contemporary spirit. For him, the creation of beauty is itself a revolutionary act with political consequences, especially in modern Iran. Hildebrand admires not only how Derakshani's "blending of Persian iconography with a contemporary approach allows for a sensory exploration of colour and abstraction" but also how his work always "reflects the tumultuous and changing times that we live in." What makes his work so relevant and compelling is the artist's ability to seamlessly juxtapose classical Persian motifs with

contemporary influences to evoke an underlying melancholic tone, a complex emotional hue inspired by Iran's historical moment. As he explains, "the focus of this series is the unending inspiration I have from the Persian Miniatures... they are full of life and colour and stories which are essential to us all."

This new series of work, titled *The Pink House Stories*, returns thematically to a previous body of work: *Garden Party*. Derakshani revisits a party atmosphere, depicting the excitement of celebrating the joys of life and love. Fragments of Miniature painting suffuse the works, a reference to the Miniature tradition of depicting the celebratory moments. What Derakshani is exploring is how this common desire to celebrate has been transformed, rules of conduct exist not only for public spaces but also for private celebration of any joyful moment, which can be tightly regulated. For Derakshani, the genuine fear of parties being raided – of celebration being criminal, colours and sounds being restricted affects one's mind-set, taking them to the other extreme. The faraway pink house stands not only for the dream of true celebration but also for the profound strength that people have shown to keep this fantastic fantasy alive under continued oppressive conditions. The parties continue because the spirit of joy is stronger than the force of punishment.

Derakshani's works evoke contrasting and even conflicting feelings and experiences: harmony and chaos, joy and sadness, the light and dark aspects of life. They reflect the ambiguity and fullness of life. A master of challenging techniques, Derakshani has experimented with abstraction in his new canvases, exploring significant creative and philosophical moments from his beautiful and ancient culture. These works, notable for their luminous atmospheres, also represent a reimagining of his own artistic past: images and symbols common in his oeuvre reappear, but the new mixing and layering techniques he has used here highlight the maturity and mastery he has achieved.

Painter, musician, and performance artist Reza Derakshani's work has been exhibited and collected widely throughout the world. Since his first solo exhibition at the renowned Ghandriz Gallery, Tehran at the age of nineteen, he has participated in more than 50 solo shows, group shows and performances, including his first London exhibition at the Osbourne Samuel Gallery in 2010. His works are in high-profile collections such as the British Museum, the Metropolitan Museum in New York, Leon Black in NYC, Sting and Trudie Styler in London, the Salsali Private Museum in Dubai, the Farjam Collection in Dubai, and the collection of the Royal family of Abu Dhabi. Born in Iran, Derakshani studied visual arts both in Iran and the USA after he earned a diploma in Mathematics. He currently divides his time between studios in Dubai and Austin, Texas.

Opening reception in the presence of the artist:
Thursday, 29 August 2013 from 5-8 pm

Press release and images may be downloaded under:
<http://www.kashyahildebrand.org/zurich/press/pink>

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