

KASHYA HILDEBRAND GALLERY

London

London, UK, June 6, 2013 – Kashya Hildebrand is pleased to announce the grand opening of her gallery in London with an inaugural exhibition of Reza Derakshani.

Press Preview
Wednesday, June 26
12-3pm

Private Preview – Reza Derakshani
In the presence of the Artist
Wednesday, June 26
6-9pm

27 June – 31 August 2013
The Pink House Stories



Just Like a Buddha, 2013, mixed media on canvas, diptych, 195 x 180 cm

Kashya Hildebrand is relocating her gallery from Zurich, Switzerland to London, UK, where it will join the thriving group of galleries in the area of Fitzrovia. The gallery's curatorial programme unites an ethnically diverse group of artists spanning from Asia through Iran and the Arab world to Europe. This diversity reflects Hildebrand's own experience as a global citizen: she has lived and worked on three continents, and the range of art she has encountered has inspired her. The gallery has sought out young emerging artists dedicating time and energy to give them an international platform.

Before embarking on her career as a gallery owner, Hildebrand worked for a prestigious hedge fund for 14 years. During her financial career, she lived in New York, Paris and London – and she discovered art. After so many wonder-filled encounters in galleries and museums around the world, she found the art world irresistible. She opened her first gallery in Geneva in 2001 and later had galleries in both New York and Zurich. The inspiration of working in the global financial markets and covering markets in three time zones inspired her to seek out an eclectic stable of artists for her gallery that reflects the globalised world we live in. Born in Pakistan to a Pakistani father and an American mother and marrying a Swiss husband has also influenced her gallery program. She is deeply affected by her Pakistani heritage and the cultural divide between Pakistan and the West. In addition, her participation in the first Dubai art fair 7 years ago broadened her vision dramatically: she recognized the burgeoning talent of emerging artists from the Middle East and Iran. She found art could become a conduit and bridge for cultural exchange.

In 2002, Hildebrand's gallery was the first outside of Iran to exhibit Farhad Moshiri's now-famous jars painted with lyrics from pop songs. In 2004, Moshiri curated an exhibition titled Welcome for Hildebrand's New York gallery, introducing pop-infused critiques from like-minded Iranian artists to the New York scene. Well-known artist Andrei Molodkin, who represented Russia at the 2009 Venice Biennale, first showed his Russian crude oil sculptures with Hildebrand. This exhibition was a timely comment on how oil had become a substitute for his cultural heritage and the exhibition was awarded a prize from Mayor Bloomberg for adding Cultural Life to the City. Lisa Ross's exhibition, who currently has a solo exhibition at the Rubin Museum in New York, is a well known for her photographs of Uyghur shines in China and has received critical acclaim. The gallery also exhibits the 2007 National Young Artist of the Year HC Berg, 2010 Abraaj Prize Winner Marwan Sahmarani's, Jameel Prize Candidate Hadieh Shafie, and others.

Through participation in art fairs around the world (Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Taipei, Singapore, Seoul, India, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Istanbul, Cologne, Basel, Madrid, Miami, and New York) and as a result of its tenacious efforts to discover talent internationally, the gallery will showcase well-known masters alongside emerging artists in order to create a continuum of interaction between the artists and their works of art within a larger global context. Hildebrand looks forward to welcoming the international and cosmopolitan diversity of the London art community and is excited to have a platform here.

For its inaugural exhibition, the gallery will present world-renowned Iranian artist Reza Derakshani in his second solo exhibition in London and, serendipitously, his second solo exhibition with the gallery. 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.

Vibrant glossy colours and a combination of figurative and abstract textures dominate the works in this exhibition — a stark contrast to Iran's current political situation and a significant departure from the form and tone of his work in the last year, including his recent exhibition at the Salsali Private Museum in Dubai. This new embrace of colour comes from his deep-rooted love of classical Persian Miniatures. After a period of darkness, he has made a nostalgic return to colour, finding something essential in the light that suffuses his art and the traditional art of Iran. 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.

The Pink House Stories runs from 27 June – 31 August 2013 at Kashya Hildebrand Gallery, London, UK

About Reza Derakshani

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.

About Kashya Hildebrand

Born in Pakistan in 1961, Kashya Hildebrand worked for a prestigious hedge fund for 14 years. During her financial career, she lived in New York, Paris and London – and she discovered art. After so many wonder-filled encounters in galleries and museums around the world, she found the art world irresistible. She opened her first gallery in Geneva in 2001 and later had galleries in both New York and Zurich. The inspiration of working in the global financial markets and covering markets in three time zones inspired her to seek out an eclectic stable of artists for her gallery that reflects the globalised world we live in. Born in Pakistan to a Pakistani father and an American mother and marrying a Swiss husband has also influenced her gallery program. She is deeply affected by her Pakistani heritage and the cultural divide between Pakistan and the West. In addition, her participation in the first Dubai art fair 7 years ago broadened her vision dramatically: she recognized the burgeoning talent of emerging artists from the Middle East and Iran. She found art could become a conduit and bridge for cultural exchange.

Kashya Hildebrand Gallery is located at 22 Eastcastle Street London W1W 8DE

Both Kashya Hildebrand and the artist are available for interview.

For press information and images, please contact:

Jolaine Frizzell

+41 44 210 02 02

jolaine@kashyahildebrand.org

www.kashyahildebrand.org