

## **Mohsen Vaziri Moghaddam**

*The Iranian Pioneer of Modern Abstraction*

2 March - 14 April 2018

Opening Reception: 1 March 2018, 7 pm

Mohsen Vaziri Moghaddam (\*1924) is an Iranian painter and professor of art. He lives and works in Rome. His works have been shown in numerous solo exhibitions in Italy (Rome, Milan, Florence), Germany (Düsseldorf, Munich), and Iran, at the Venice Biennial (1958, 1960, 1962, 1964), at the Tehran Biennial (1960, 1962), at the Rome Quadriennale (1960), at the São Paulo Biennial in Brazil (1962), at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (1964) and at the Shiraz Art Festival, Iran (1969).

Born in Tehran in 1924, he begins a three-year study course at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Tehran in 1943. Here he attends classes taught by Ali Mohammad Heydarian and Madam Amin Far. By the year 1955 he leaves for Rome, where he studies at the Academy of Fine Arts until 1958. In April of 1956 Vaziri opens his first Italian exhibition, displaying his figurative paintings at the Portonovo Art Gallery in Rome. In the same year, he exhibits in galleries in Düsseldorf and Munich, Germany.

Towards the late 1950s he begins to experiment with abstraction. This time coincides with the establishment of European Informel and American Abstract Expressionism. Vaziri can without doubt be described as the pioneer of modern abstraction from Iran. Throughout his oeuvre he feels driven as an artist to seek out new, subjective means of representation: „Painting is not a reconstruction of objective reality, but the artist has to create something that never existed before“. His intense reflections on the nature of materials, textures and surfaces lead to the creation of some of his most important works: the *sand paintings*. Different types of sand are applied to the canvas, both in their natural state and mixed with colour. His fresh and innovative approach catches the attention of some of the most prominent Italian art critics of the time, including Giulio Carlo Argan and Palma Bucarelli. Between 1958 and 1964, Vaziri takes part in the Venice Biennale four consecutive times. In 1962, he presents 3 works at the 31st Venice Biennale, including his *Black Sand* painting, which receives critical acclaim.

Contemporaries and critics alike meet Vaziri's artistic pursuits with great respect and enthusiasm, ascertaining the deep and long lasting significance his work has for Rome and beyond. He gains formal recognition from the City of Rome in 1958, as well as from the then Prime Minister Segni in 1959 (International Art Competition, Ravenna), and is awarded the Senate Gold Medal in Sassoferrato in 1962. In 1985, he moves to Italy permanently and settles there his wife and two children.

To this day, Vaziri's artistic fervor remains unaffected. In May 2004, he exhibited at the Contemporary Art Museum in Tehran with Gerhard Richter and was hailed as the best Iranian artist of the century. He is still creatively active and continues his exploration of shapes and colours.

SETAREH GALLERY is pleased to present Vaziri's first solo show in Düsseldorf after 60 years with an accompanying catalogue.

## MOHSEN VAZIRI MOGHADDAM

(\*1924 in Tehran, IR, lives and works in Rome, IT)

### EDUCATION

- 1964-1978 Professorship at the Faculty of Decorative Arts and the Faculty of Fine Arts, Tehran, IR  
1955-1958 Academy of Fine Arts, Rome, IT  
1943-1946 Faculty of Fine Arts, Tehran, IR  
Masterstudent of Ali Mohammad Heydarian and Madam Amin Far  
1943 Diploma at the Agricultural Institute, Tehran, IR

### GRANTS & AWARDS

- 2006 European Character 2006, Prize from the City of Rome, IT  
2004 Recognition as the best Iranian artist of this century, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, IR  
1968 Annual Scholarship for the "Citè des Arts" in Paris, Ministry of Arts and Culture, FR  
1962 First Prize (Gold Medal) and Special Citation from the Jury at the III Art Biennial in Tehran, IR  
1961 Gold Medal of the "Senate of Rome" on the occasion of the International Art Competition "Piccola Europa", Sassoferrato, Ancona, IT  
1960 Frist Prize (Imperial Awards) for the painting at the II. Tehran Art Biennial, IR  
1959 Diploma of Honor and Art Prize of the Italian Prime Minister Segni on the occasion of the International Art Competition, Ravenna, IT  
1958 Gold Medal at the I. Tehran Art Biennial, IR  
Diploma of Honor 'San Vito Romano' and Silver Medal from "Ente Provinciale per il Turismo" of the City of Rome, IT  
Encyclopedia of Worlds Arts, Publishes His Figurative Painting  
Bronze Medal at the VIII. Art Fair in Via Margutta - International Art Association, Rome, IT  
1957 Medal of Mayor of Rome at the VII. Art Fair in Via Margutta - International Art Association, Rome, IT

### SOLO SHOWS

- 2018 Mohsen Vaziri Moghaddam. The Pioneer of Modern Abstraction, Setareh Gallery, Dusseldorf, DE  
2015 Mohsen Vaziri Moghaddam - Retrospective 1959-2015, Etemad Gallery, Tehran, IR  
Art Dubai, Modern Section, Etemad Gallery, Dubai, AE  
2014 Tarrāhāne Āzād Gallery, Tehran, IR  
Intuition of color, Khāk Gallery, Tehran, IR  
2012 Tarrāhāne Āzād Gallery, Tehran, IR  
2011 A Selection of Mohsen Vaziri Moghaddam's Art Works, Fravahr Art Gallery, Tehran, IR  
2010 Ahwaz Museum of Contemporary Art, Ahwaz, IR  
2009 Elahe Gallery, Tehran, IR  
Hoor Art Gallery, Tehran, IR  
2008 Hoor Art Gallery, Tehran, IR  
Tarrāhāne Āzād Gallery, Tehran, IR  
2007 Arte Dove Gallery, Florence, IT  
2006 Dey Gallery, Tehran, IR  
Parvaz Gallery, Yazd Art University, Yazd, IR  
Hoor Art Gallery, Tehran, IR  
2005 Asia Gallery, Tehran, IR  
Shiveh Gallery, Shiraz, IR  
2004 Fourth exhibition Pioneers of Iranian Modern Art: Mohsen Vasiri Moghaddam, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, IR  
2003 Works from 1947 to 2003, Gallery Seyhoun, Tehran, IR  
1993 Barg Gallery, Tehran, IR

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- 1985 Italian Institute of Culture, Tehran, IR  
1984 Retrospective (1953-1983), Khāneye-Sabz Gallery, Tehran, IR  
1980 Karteh Gallery, Tehran, IR  
1977 Exposition at the Goethe Institute, Tehran, IR  
Santoro Gallery, Rome, IT  
Karteh Gallery, Tehran, IR  
1976 Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran, IR  
1975 Pardis, Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran, IR  
Retrospective (1953-1974), Takhte-Jamshid Gallery, Tehran, IR  
1974 Litho Gallery, Tehran, IR  
1973 10 years of Mohsen Vaziri, Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran, IR  
Keyhan International, Tehran, IR  
1972 Transition of Forms – Wooden Sculptures, Tyler School of Art, Rome, IT  
1971 Transitional Forms, Iran American Society, Tehran, IR  
1968 Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran, IR  
Royan Art Festival, FR  
1965 Saba Gallery, Rome, IT  
1963 George Lester Gallery, Rome, IT  
1962 Gallery Numero, Milan, IT  
Farhang Hall, National Bureau of Fine Arts, Tehran, IR  
1961 Gallery Numero, Rome, IT  
1960 Deutscher Buecherbund, Munich, DE  
Maerkisches Museum, Witten, DE  
1959 Trastevere Art Gallery, Rome, IT  
1958 Schneider Gallery, Rome, IT  
1957 Stenzel Gallery, Munich, DE  
Brucke Art Gallery, Dusseldorf, DE  
1956 Portonovo Art Gallery, Rome, IT  
1955 German Cultural Center, Goethe Institute, Tehran, IR  
1953 Iran-America Society of Tehran, IR

## GROUP SHOWS

- 2018 Modernism in Iran: 1958-1978, Griffin Art Projects, Vancouver, CA  
2017 Abu Dhabi Art Fair, Setareh Gallery, Abu Dhabi, AE  
2016 IRAN ART NOW, Setareh Gallery, Dusseldorf, DE  
Iran Masters, e1 artgallery, Tehran, IR  
BLU GOLD, Etemad Gallery, Tehran, IR  
2014 Artevida Corpo, Fundação Casa França-Brasil, Rio de Janeiro, BR  
Art 14, Meshkati Fine Art & Austin/Desmond Fine Art, London, GB  
2013 Iran Modern, Asia Society Museum of New York, US  
Iranian Masters of Abstract Painting, ATBIN Art Gallery, Tehran, IR  
2009 Perspectives: Arab & Iranian Modern Masters, Saatchi Gallery, London, GB  
2008 Teramo Città Aperta al Mondo: Happening Culturale Internazionale 4th ed., Teramo, IT  
2007 Clusters of Light, Part of the cycle: Six Weeks of Iranian Art, Toronto, CA  
2004 Rassegna Internazionale d'Arte Contemporanea, XXXI. Sulmona's Award, Sulmona/Aquila, IT  
2003 Palestina chiave di cultura e di pace, International Exhibition of Contemporary Art, Mole Vanvitellina, Ancona, IT  
2001 Iranian Contemporary Art, Barbican Center, London, GB  
1978 International Art Fair, Basel, CH  
1977 Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, IR  
1976 Two Performances from a painting of: Picasso, Mondrian, Reza Abbassi, Klee, M. Vaziri, Modigliani, produced by Bahman Jahangiri, Tehran, IR  
1971 International Art Festival, Cagnes-sur-Mer, FR

# SETAREH GALLERY

- 1969 Shiraz Art Festival, IR  
1966 Recent Acquisitions: Painting and Sculpture, Museum of Modern Art, New York, US  
1964 Storm King Art Center, New York, US  
The 1964 Pittsburg International, Museum of Art, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburg, US  
Museum of Modern Art, New York, US  
1963 Oltre l'informale, IV. Biennial in San Marino, San Marino, IT  
Museum of Modern Art, Paris, FR  
Museum of Modern Art, Brussels, BE  
Museum of Modern Art André Malraux, Le Havre, FR  
1962 XXXI. Venice Biennial, IT  
III. Tehran Art Biennial, IR  
Sao Paulo International Biennial, BR  
Piccola Europa, XI. PREMIO di Pittura G.B. Salvi, Sassoferrato, IT  
100 Selected Artistis, Drian Gallery, London, GB  
I.C.A. Library, Institut of Contemporary Art, London, GB  
Summer Exhibition, Redfern Gallery, London, GB  
A Hundred Abstract Artists, Pistoia Museum, Pistoia, IT  
1961 Salon of Autumn, Gallery San Marco, Rome, IT  
International Abstract Arts, National Gallery of Pistoia, IT  
10 Foreign Artists, Gallery Numero, Florence, IT  
1960 XXX. Venice Biennial, IT  
II. Tehran Art Biennial, IR  
Quadriennial of Rome, IT  
1959 Maggio di Bari, IX. Contemporary Painting National Exhibition, Bari, IT  
1958 XXIX. Venice Biennial, IT  
I. Tehran Art Biennial, IR  
1956 XXVIII. Venice Biennial, IT

## BIBLIOGRAPHY (selection)

Moghaddam, Mohsen Vaziri: The Iranian Pioneer of Modern Abstraction, (exhib.cat.), Setareh Gallery, Dusseldorf 2018

Moghaddam, Mohsen Vaziri: Autobiography, will be published soon

Scheiwiller, Staci Gem: Performing the Iranian State. Visual Culture and Representations of Iranian Identity, New York 2014

Grigor, Talinn: Contemporary Iranian Art. From the Street to the Studio, London 2014

Herda, Isabel/Torcelli, Nicoletta: iran.com - Iranian art today, (exhib.cat.), Städtische Museen Freiburg / Museum für Neue Kunst, Freiburg i. Br. 2006

Moghaddam, Mohsen Vaziri: Method of Painting, 2nd Volume, Tehran 2001

Moghaddam, Mohsen Vaziri: Drawing methods, 2nd Volume, Tehran 2000

Moghaddam, Mohsen Vaziri: Translation of Werner Haftmann's 'The Mind and Work of Paul Klee', 1999

Moghaddam, Mohsen Vaziri: Method of Painting, Tehran 1981