

PIARTWORKS

Pi Artworks London: Parastou Forouhar: Written Room
15 – 30 July 2016
Private View: Thursday 14 July, 18:30 – 21:00

Pi Artworks London is pleased to announce it has commissioned Parastou Forouhar to create a new version of *Written Room* [1999 – ongoing] at the gallery. Previous iterations of which have been produced at the 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery, Australia; Fondazione Merz, Turin, Italy; Jewish Museum of Australia, Victoria, Australia; Kunsthalle, Saarbruecken, Germany; 4th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art, Greece; and Villa Massimo, Rome, Italy. This will be the first opportunity to see Forouhar's practice in London since the British Museum acquired her work for its permanent collection earlier this year.

Forouhar left her native Iran to study in Offenbach, Germany due to the withdrawal of freedoms she was subjected to after the Iranian revolution. She has remained a vocal critic of the regime ever since. Forouhar's practice examines the power structures within certain authoritarian political systems, paying attention to how they block oppositional discourse from entering the public sphere and the partial invisibility of women through veiling.

Yet Forouhar remains acutely aware of herself as an Iranian artist in the West and the assumptions made about her and her practice. Therefore, she works to actively undermine Orientalist clichés. In this sense, Forouhar's practice is not restricted to simply observing the realities of life in Iran but is also about holding a mirror up to the Western gaze and reflecting critically on the Western construct of the *Other*.

Written Room is one such work that makes the Western gaze on the Oriental its central theme. Over the course of three days, the artist will ink the gallery's white walls and floor with what appears to be sprawling Persian script. The disjointed text meanders around the space's uneven surfaces with no stable vertical or horizontal axis. Its legibility is further complicated by a batch of ping-pong balls also inscribed with Persian script that have been released onto the floor.

Written Room mirrors the look of Persian script, yet it is almost as incomprehensible to those who can read the language as those who can't. By defying visitors' attempts to assign it meaning, the script remains locked into its irreducible pictorial graphicness in which meaning cannot be grasped.

Parastou Forouhar, b. 1962. Major exhibitions include *Reimagining The Illusion*, Pi Artworks London, UK (2016); *Common Grounds*, Villa Stuck Museum, Munich, Germany (2015); *Recalling the Future*, Brunei Gallery SOAS, London, U.K. (2014); *Kiss Me*, Rose Issa Projects, London, U.K. (2014); 5th Moscow Biennale, Russia (2013); 4th Thessaloniki Biennale, Greece (2013); *Gothenburg International Biennial* for Contemporary Art, Gothenburg, Sweden (2013); *He Kills Me, He Kills Me Not II* (solo) Stadtgalerie, Neunkirchen, Germany (2013); *Feminist and...*, Matrass Factory Museum, Pittsburgh, U.S.A (2012); *Ornamental Structures*, Stadtgalerie Saarbrücken, Saarbrücken, Germany (2011); *Written Room* (solo) Fondazione Merz, Turin, Italy (2011); and *Parastou Forouhar*, (solo) Leighton House Museum, London, U.K. (2010).

Pi Artworks London is open Tuesday – Friday, 10:00 – 18:00 and Saturdays, 11:00 – 18:00. For information, interviews and images, please contact Neil Jefferies: nj@piartworks.com / +44 207 637 8403

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