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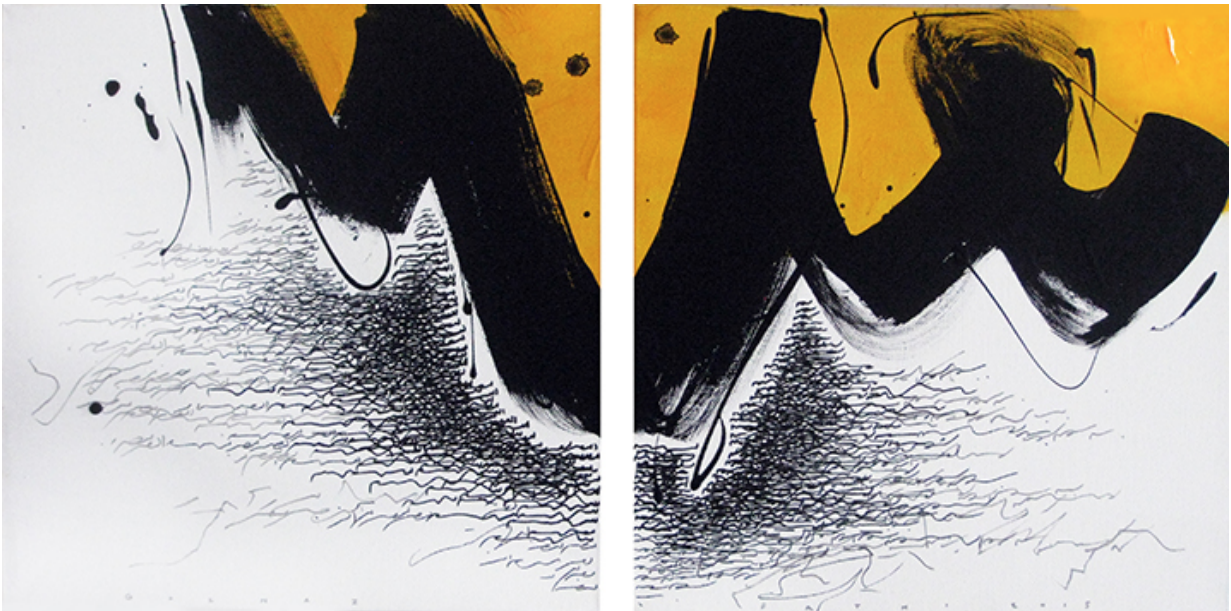
IRANIAN ARTIST GOLNAZ FATHI PRESENTS ABSTRACT PAINTINGS ROOTED IN PERSIAN CALLIGRAPHY

Exhibition title: *Every Breaking Wave*

Exhibition dates: November 4 to December 6 2015

Private preview: Wednesday, November 4, 6:30 to 8:30 pm

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Untitled, 2015, acrylic and pen on canvas, 11.8 x 23.6 inches/30 x 60 cm

Hong Kong, October 4, 2015—Iranian artist Golnaz Fathi, who divides her time between Tehran and Paris, presents new and recent paintings on canvas for her debut solo exhibition in Hong Kong.

Drawing on her extensive training as a classical calligrapher, Fathi uses texts and letters as formal elements, transforming traditional calligraphy into a personal artistic language. Using fine pen, mostly on varnished raw, rectangular, polyptych canvases, Fathi draws thousands of minute marks that echo the curvilinear forms of calligraphic letters and words.

The basis of Fathi's current practice is a reinterpretation of *siah-mashq* or "black practice," a traditional exercise in which the calligrapher writes large, cursive letters repeatedly across the page in a dense, semi-abstract formation. This is the calligrapher's practice sheet and the letters are not meant to form legible words or convey meaning, but rather strengthen the skill and the hand of the scribe. For Fathi, this is the most artistic aspect of the revered tradition of calligraphy because each sheet has a degree of freedom and uniqueness unseen in the finished script.

Drawing inspiration from various Western and Eastern sources, including American Abstract Expressionism, as well as the work of Iranian and Middle Eastern modernists who pioneered the use of the written word as a pictorial element in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Fathi transforms *siah-mashq* into intricate compositions. Lines coalesce across, up, down and off the edge of the canvas. The compositions are a result of intense time commitment and mental and physical dedication, as well as a form of meditation. To viewers, they become polysemic and are often read as landscapes, electronic transmissions or atmospheric phenomena. Fathi encourages free reign of interpretation and prevents preconceived notions by refraining from giving titles to her works.



Untitled, 2015, acrylic and pen on canvas, 11.8 x 23.6 inches/30 x 60 cm

Prior to working with pen on canvas, Fathi worked with acrylic in the form of action painting, creating large, gestural brushstrokes in a limited palette of red, blue and yellow. A recent development in her practice is the pairing of these approaches. The color and sweeping brushstrokes represent an impulsive feeling she feels compelled to translate; the monochromatic areas represent calmness. By skillfully combining these elements, she has created a distinctive visual language with universal appeal.

Born in Tehran in 1972, Golnaz Fathi has a Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design from Azad University, Tehran, and a Diploma in Iranian Calligraphy from the Iranian Society of Calligraphy. For six years she underwent a rigorous and disciplined study to master the ancient script before establishing her own style of working.

She is the recipient of the Best Woman Calligraphist in Ketabat Style, Iranian Society of Calligraphy, in recognition of her achievements as a young female calligrapher in a field traditionally dominated by men.

Golnaz Fathi has works in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; the British Museum, London; The World Bank, Washington D.C.; Chelsea Art Museum, New York; Brighton & Hove Museum, England; Carnegie Mellon University, Doha; the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur; the Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore; and The Farjam Collection, Dubai. Her work is currently on view in *Frontiers Reimagined*, a collateral event of the 56th Venice Biennale.

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