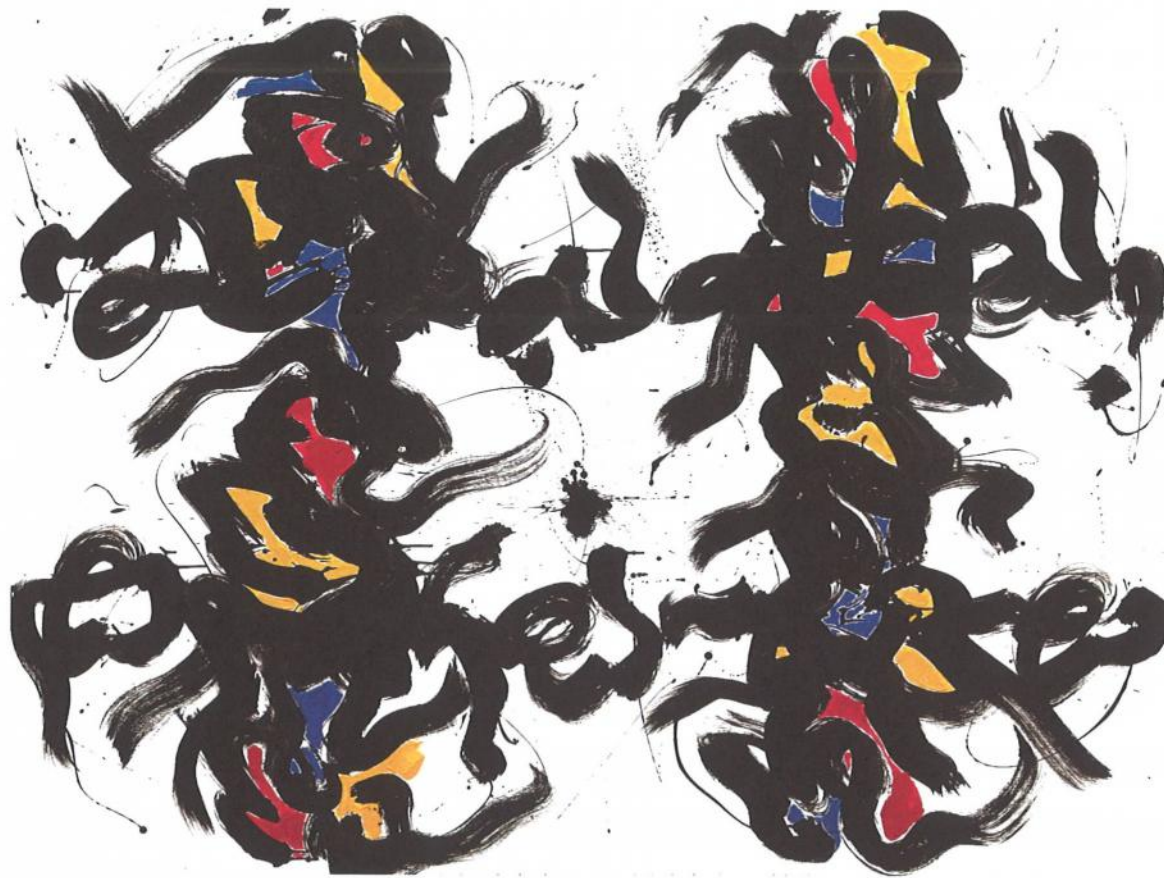


Pearl Lam Galleries  
Shanghai, China  
Until 10 November 2013

# GOLNAZ FATHI



Golnaz Fathi  
**Untitled**, 2012  
Acrylic on canvas  
150 x 200 cm

The first solo exhibition of influential Iranian artist Golnaz Fathi in China

# The Living Road



**T**he *Living Road* features 23 new works in a variety of media including pen on canvas, acrylic on canvas and LED light works, alongside two historic acrylic on canvas works which have been exhibited at Art Forum in Wiesbaden, Germany in 2011 and the Tehran Pavilion at the Shanghai Biennale in 2012 respectively.

This important exhibition illustrates the growing interest worldwide in Iranian art, initiated by major exhibitions at the Barbican Gallery, London; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; LACMA, Los Angeles, and the forthcoming exhibition 'Iran Modern' at Asia Society, in New York.

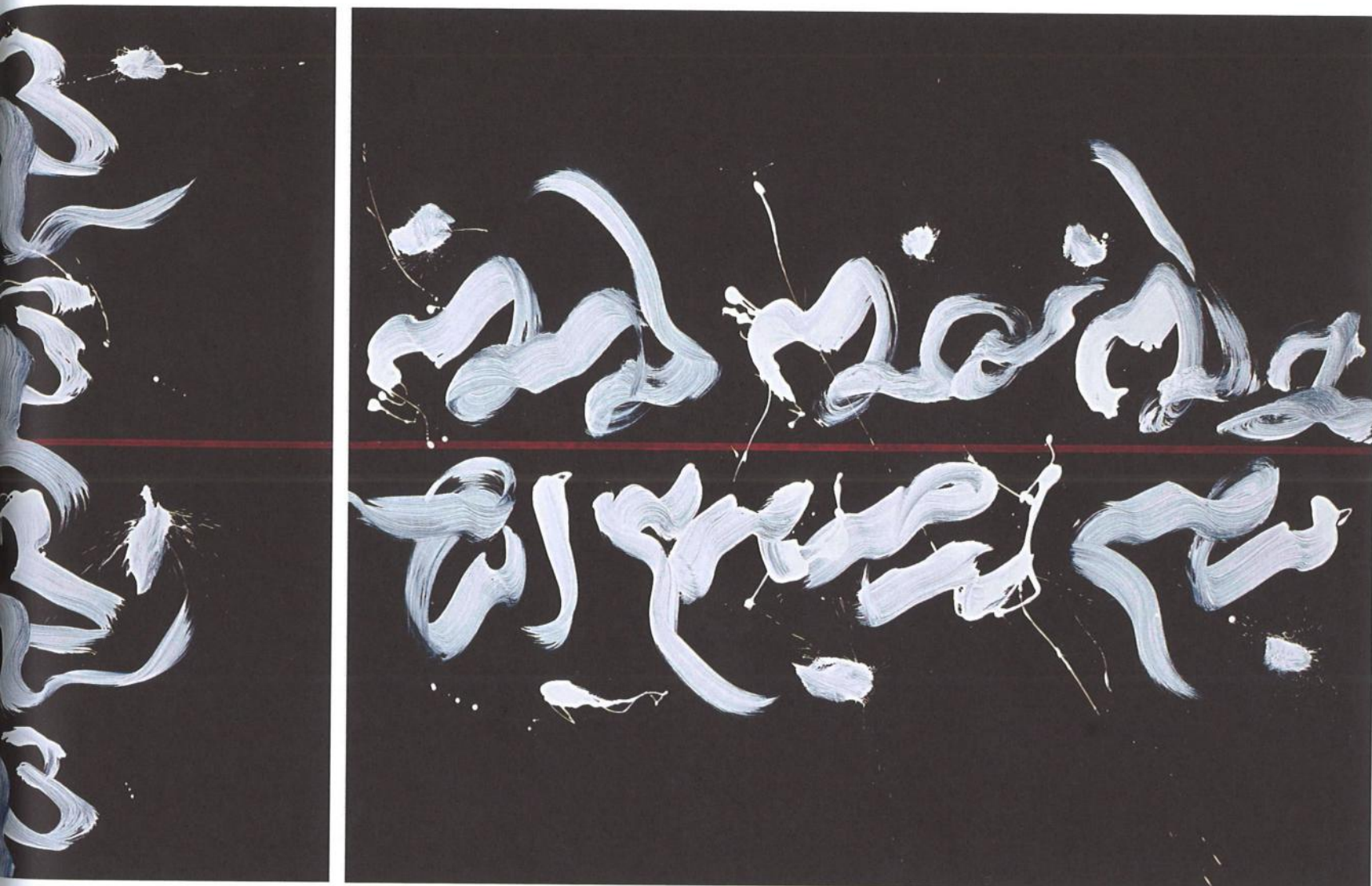
Golnaz Fathi's work draws on the discipline of Persian calligraphy reinterpreted through an abstract gestural style.

Her work draws inspiration from Abstract Expressionism and the work of Middle Eastern Modernists from the 50s and 60s who employed the written word as a pictorial element. Fathi's work has been collected extensively by major public and private collections including the British Museum, London; the Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi, India; The Farjam Collection, Dubai and the Asian Civilisations Museum, Singapore.

**The Living Road** features a series of pen on canvas works inspired by the technique of Shiah Mashgh, which translates literally as 'black practice', the calligrapher's warm-up exercise, whereby letters are repeated over and over again until the paper is entirely covered in black ink. Golnaz Fathi sees this process as the most artistic part of traditional calligraphy: "My artistic aim has been to transform

*calligraphy from words into forms, I treat the letters as a form, I make them float or dance on my canvas. Like a journey of sorts I take the words up and down, moving to different places that end nowhere. The origin comes from my meditations, perhaps sometimes it ends in stillness, a stillness that talks. They can be read as a visual meditation or a form of prayer. Being restricted by so many rules in traditional calligraphy made me break all the rules and treat the letters just the way I want to. This inspiration comes from my own culture. I am proud of my country's very rich cultural heritage which in turn has greatly inspired me."* Amongst the other media represented in the exhibition, the light boxes particularly highlight the unique forms in Fathi's work as the glow of the letters and lines emerge from the bold black boxes.

Born in Tehran in 1972 the Islamic Revolution and the Iran-Iraq war were predominant elements in the



Golnaz Fathi  
**Untitled** (2010)  
 Acrylic on canvas  
 (triptych)  
 144 x 470 cm

background of Fathi's upbringing. The disturbing effects of these events cannot be dismissed from her work, which asks for pause and contemplation. She studied classical calligraphy at the Iranian Society of Calligraphy in Tehran, practicing writing Persian for up to eight hours a day for six years and is one of very few female Iranian artists to have trained to such a high level. She has received a number of awards including the Best Woman Calligraphist in Ketabat Style in 1995 by the Iranian Society of Calligraphy in Tehran and was chosen as one of the juries at the Sharjah Calligraphy Biennale in 2011. She has also exhibited in museums and galleries in Hong Kong, New York, Paris, Dubai, Korea, Germany and London. In 2012 she was granted a residence permit in France and she currently lives and works between Tehran and Paris.

**Golnaz Fathi** was born in Tehran, Iran in 1972. Her work is transnational both in conception and execution, as it incorporates her extensive training in traditional Iranian calligraphy, graphic design, painting, and autobiography. Her paintings carry traces of meaning that have no known coded alphabet. The strength of her work stems from the drive to express emotions that cannot be pinned down into words. Her solo exhibitions include *Doha Series* (2009) at The Third Line in Doha, Qatar; *My Freedom* (2008) at Xerxes Art, London; *Beyond Words* (2007) at La Fontaine Centre of Contemporary Art, Bahrain; and *Golnaz Fathi* (2006) at The Third Line in Dubai. She has also exhibited widely in galleries and museums in South Korea, New York, Geneva, Dubai, London, Tehran, Paris, Chicago, and Padova. Her work is part of the permanent collection of Brighton & Hove Museum, England; Carnegie Mellon University in Doha, Qatar; Islamic Art Museum, Malaysia; Asian Civilizations Museum, Singapore; The British Museum, London; Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi, India and the Farjam Collection, Dubai. She has also received numerous fellowships and grants, including resident scholarships to study at Fabrice (Treviso, Italy) and Cité Internationale des Arts (Paris, France).