

Parasol unit

foundation for contemporary art



La Biennale di Venezia

58. Esposizione
Internazionale
d'Arte

Partecipazioni Nazionali

PRESS RELEASE

THE SPARK IS YOU: Parasol unit in Venice

Collateral Event of the 58th International Art Exhibition

La Biennale di Venezia

Conservatorio di Musica Benedetto Marcello di Venezia

9 May – 23 November 2019

Press Pre-opening: Wednesday 8 May, 10am–3pm

In celebration of its 15th anniversary, **Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art** is delighted to present, through a prism of classical Persian poetry, an exhibition of works by nine contemporary Iranian artists at the **Conservatorio di Musica Benedetto Marcello di Venezia** from 9 May to 23 November 2019.

**Morteza Ahmadvand | Nazgol Ansarinia | Siah Armajani | Mitra Farahani
Sahand Hesamiyan | Y.Z. Kami | Farideh Lashai | Koushna Navabi | Navid Nuur**

Curated by **Ziba Ardalan**, Founder, Artistic and Executive Director of Parasol unit, London, ***THE SPARK IS YOU: Parasol unit in Venice*** exhibition has at its heart the need to develop mutual respect and understanding between different nations and cultures. Fittingly, this exhibition coincides with the 200th anniversary of *West-östlicher Divan* (West-Eastern Divan), 1819, a book of lyrical poems written by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in homage to the fourteenth-century Persian poet Hafez.

The nine artists, all of whose vision looks beyond the ordinary, were selected for the affinity with openness, respect and human interconnectedness that is evinced in their work. Stemming directly from a long and magnificent tradition of Persian poetry, this philosophy of life is a fundamental element of the Iranian/Persian character. Dialogues open up across the exhibition, not only between the different generations of artists and the geographical regions from which they now draw inspiration, but also through a common desire to interact openly and respectfully with others. And, just as Goethe through his poetry sought to bridge East and West, these artists too seek to communicate mutually across all borders.

THE SPARK IS YOU: Parasol unit in Venice exhibition of paintings, sculptures, installations, multi-media and film brings together Iranian artists of different ages, who now live and work either in or outside of Iran. Having had a similar early education and grounding in classical Persian poetry they have all benefited from thought processes that are rooted in concepts such as the use of metaphor, openness, dialogue and figurative thinking. Shown together, their works create a sense of exchange that is felt in many ways across and beyond the exhibition, not only between the art works but also in the desire of the artists to communicate with thinkers from other cultures, and finally between art and music.

Venice, with its renowned history of being central to so many connections between East and West, is an ideal setting for ***THE SPARK IS YOU*** exhibition. Presented at the Conservatorio di Musica in Venice, visual art and music interact harmoniously, a reminder that different art forms are all part of a single discourse. Each artist presents their work in a separate room or an outdoor courtyard, which allows ample mental space for viewers to reflect on the exhibition and create their own dialogue with and between the works.

THE SPARK IS YOU: Parasol unit in Venice exhibition highlights the vital importance of open dialogue in the development of greater understanding between all nations. Particularly in the tumultuous and uncertain times of today, this exhibition is timely and informative in ways that we hope will further engender curiosity, understanding and appreciation of other cultures and stimulate more conversations.

THE SPARK IS YOU: Parasol unit in Venice exhibition will be accompanied by a comprehensive publication, and poetry readings performed by Narguess Farzad and Matt Addis at the Conservatorio di Musica Benedetto Marcello di Venezia, on 9 and 10 May 2019.

Parasol unit appreciates the generous support of **Soudavar Memorial Foundation, Mohammed Afkhami Foundation, General Atlantic Foundation, KayhanLife, Iran Heritage Foundation** and **Iran Society**. Further support has been provided by organisations and private individuals from around the world.



EXHIBITION DETAILS

Promoted by: Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art, London

Curator: Dr Ziba Ardalan

Address: Conservatorio di Musica Benedetto Marcello di Venezia, Campo Santo Stefano, San Marco 2810.
Close to Accademia Bridge

Vaporetto stop: San Samuele or Accademia

Opening times: 10am–6pm Monday – Saturday. Closed on Sundays

Press Pre-opening: Wednesday 8 May, 10am–3pm

Catalogue: A publication with essays by Oliver Basciano, Narguess Farzad, Maryam Monalisa Gharavi, Mahan Moalemi, Maria Porges, Sarah Thomas and John Yau, will accompany the exhibition – available in June 2019.

For further information or visual material please contact:

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