

58th Venice Biennale

Taha Afshar – Reflections on Birth, Bounty and Joy

10 – 16 June 2019



Left to right:

Palazzo Zenobio

Rainbow: Birth, Bounty and Joy (Blue).
2019. Oil and oil pastel on canvas,
114 x 162 cm

'Painting has always been a means to reflect and a vessel from which to explore greater truths. Whilst the lake reflects the sky, the landscape carries with it reflections of internal experience. That is why I often refer to these lake paintings as "soulscapes"; the stillness and calmness of my surroundings lend themselves to reflection of the highest order.' - Taha Afshar

The Official Pavilion at *Palazzo Zenobio*, in conjunction *MUSA Contemporary* is pleased to announce *Reflections on Birth, Bounty and Joy*, the first solo exhibition of Taha Afshar in Venice. The exhibition will feature 23 new oil paintings completed in 2019. It will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with supporting essays.

Taha Afshar's work captures the delicate tension between the objective and the subjective, the particular and the universal, the momentary and the timeless. For Afshar, the process of painting seemingly operates as a form of meditation, where meaning is generated through the durational practice of working itself. Finished images thus reflect the thickness of human experience and sense perception, building layers of meaning into a single unique scene.

The following twenty-three oil paintings are divided into two main series, both of which began with an *en plein air* stage next to an isolated lake in early 2019. The landscape is nothing more than a scaffolding for the first series, entitled *Birth, Bounty and Joy*. These works are more like a series of abstract portraits of a new born child, and are further divided into two cycles: *Rainbow* and *Utopia*. The landscape is the core source of content for the second series, whose core themes are revisit, revision and reflection. These paintings aspire to capturing the sublime, whilst tapping into the creative spirit.

The *Reflections on Birth, Bounty and Joy* series can be understood to document a momentary instantiation of a continuous process of development and growth by the artist. The works point to an unending process of psychic work and meditative labour which binds together aspects of Afshar's earlier work and wider oeuvre. Repetition of themes, processes and compositions help highlight this series as part of a developing narrative: a durational process of artistic interrogation which ultimately documents the work of subjective transformation itself.

Notes to editors

About Taha Afshar

Taha Afshar is an internationally exhibited painter and sculptor born and practicing in Hampshire, England. Light, with both its physical and metaphysical properties, is often the subject matter of his landscape and figurative works.

Born in 1983, in Winchester, he studied Art and History of Art at Winchester College, graduating from University College London, and continuing to attain by a PhD. Recent exhibitions UK have included shows at Cadogan Contemporary (2016), and the Jonathan Cooper Gallery (2016). In 2017, he exhibited alongside Gagosian Gallery artist Y.Z. Kami and Monir Farmanfarmaian, in an exhibition entitled the *Garden of Mystery*, at Asia House, London, supported by a panel from the British Museum and Courtauld Institute of Art. In 2018, he was shortlisted for the *Sunny Art Prize* and *Royal Society of Marine Artists* awards. In 2018, he also exhibited in institutions across Italy, Moscow, and Germany. His work can be found in several private collections across the world.

About Palazzo Zenobio and MUSA Contemporary

Palazzo Zenobio is a monumental building, built in late 17th and beginning of 18th century, by the Venetian noble family Zenobio. Located in the heart of Venice, it has become an important exhibition venue for Venice Biennale, hosting various national pavilions, and features sumptuous Baroque interiors. MUSA Contemporary is an Italian art foundation, established in 2015 in Palermo. Its goal is to provide a stage for remarkable visual artists, and does this mostly through its annual art prize which is exhibited in the museum of the Jobs Foundation in the Palazzo Castrone di Santa Ninfa area.

Exhibition Details

Title:	Taha Afshar, <i>Reflections on Birth, Bounty and Joy</i>
Address:	Palazzo Zenobio, Sestiere Dorsoduro, 2596, 30123 Venezia VE, Italy
How to find us:	7 minute walk from Piazzale Roma and 10 minute walk from San Marco's Square.
Dates:	Monday 10 th to Saturday 16 th of June 2019.
Private View:	Monday 10 th June 2019. From noon until from 6pm until 9 pm
Opening Hours:	Monday to Saturday, 10am to 5:30pm
Admission:	Free

Website: www.tahaafshar.com

Instagram: tahaafshar

Twitter: @tahaafshar

Facebook: TahaAfshar110

#BirthBountyJoy

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