

Before into Dust We Descend

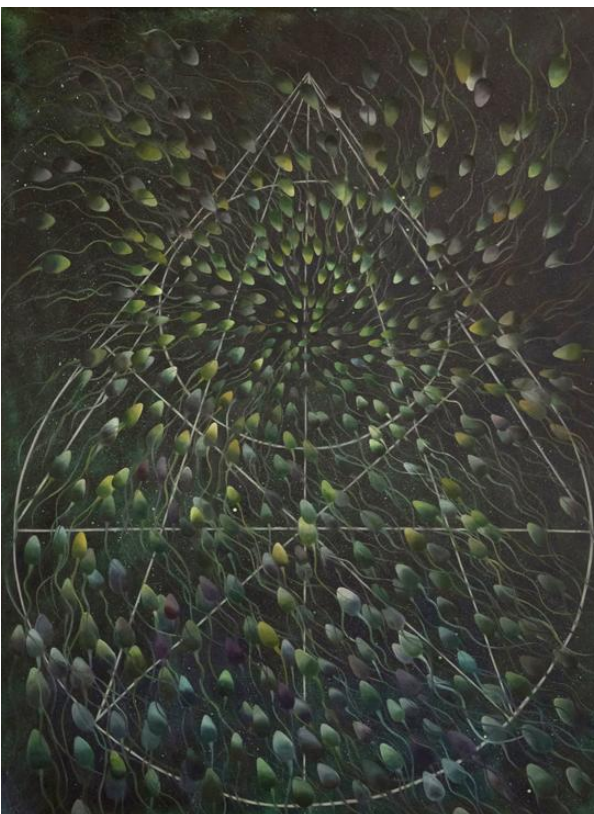
26.10.2023-05.12.2023



Safa
Amirmoghadam

Mina Ghafari

Fariba Mirsaedi



Agrin
Lotfollahzadeh

Private View: 26th October 6pm-9pm

Liliya Art Gallery is delighted to present *Before into Dust We Descend*, an exhibition in four parts, showcasing solo exhibitions of work by four female artists from Iran. These artists draw upon the rich tapestry of Iranian culture, whilst simultaneously exploring contemporary concerns related to womanhood, freedom, and truth. Working in the medium of painting in vastly different ways, each artist grapples with these important concepts through a distinct lens.

Iran has one of the oldest cultures in the world, with an ancient civilisation dating over two and a half thousand years. A country with an abundance of religious, philosophic, and artistic influences over centuries, it is fitting that contemporary art from this region mirrors these complexities. Each artist brings their lived experience to their practice, presenting the dualities of tradition and progression, ancient and modern attitudes. The exhibition takes its title from a translated verse in the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám, the famous Persian polymath, poet, and astronomer.

The work of these four artists resists neat categorisation. An exploration of freedom is at times manifest in seemingly opposite poles, such as science and spirituality. **Safa Amirmoghadam** is interested in biological processes and the movement and flow of energy. Her series of paintings entitled '**Genesis**' express the creation of life through sperm and atomic elements, infusing her pictures with a dynamic quality. Though outwardly futuristic in their geometric composition, the works convey timeless facts of existence. In **Agrin Lotfollahzadeh's** show '**The Eternal Secrets**', questions of eternal life and the immortality of the soul are a principal theme, represented by the shadows

and unveiling seen in her portraiture. These veils are both literal and metaphorical. She is influenced by classical literature, in particular the poetry of Omar Khayyám. Though seemingly contrasting, both artists' work are devoted to understanding existence and universality in different forms.

A multitude of art historical references are seen in the selected works of *Before into Dust We Descend*, paying homage to Iran's unique visual culture. **Fariba Mirsaee**'s collection of work titled 'Woman and Rhythm' challenges the traditional notion of the frame, which is treated as an independent pictorial element seen throughout Iranian art. Her paintings waver between figurative and abstract, presenting sculptural, feminine bodies that traverse canvasses replete with fluid, loose brushwork and marking. The frame is not just an artistic boundary but a societal one which the artist surpasses and defies. **Mina Ghafari**'s exhibition 'Nowwhere' envisions women in a state of both vulnerability and empowerment as they ask themselves questions, naked and bare. Her treatment of the female figure and dramatic juxtaposition of light and darkness speaks to an unveiling of truth that underpins these works.

The selected works aim to illuminate the personal and artistic stories of each artist, challenging each viewer with the vast scope of their concerns and styles which reach far beyond the parameters of their geographic location.