

Milton Keynes Gallery

Press Release

Nasreen Mohamedi: Notes

Reflections on Indian Modernism

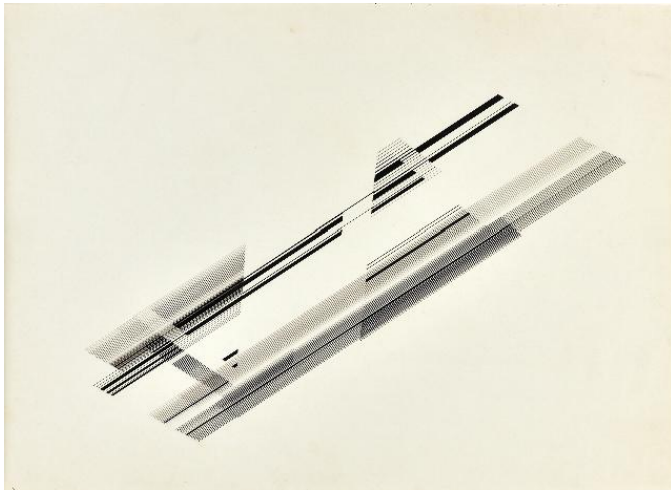
5 September – 15 November 2009

Preview: Friday 4 September 18.00-20.00

Admission free

Exhibition supported by: The Charles Wallace Trust India, The Red Hot World Buffet, The Nehru Centre , Stuart Shave/ Modern Art, the Nasreen Mohamedi Circle of Friends, and those who wish to remain anonymous

Media Partner: ArtAsiaPacificMagazine



Nasreen Mohamedi: *Untitled*, Undated. Pen, pencil and ink on paper (49.5cm x 69 cm) Courtesy Glenbarra Art Museum Collection, Japan

Milton Keynes Gallery is delighted to announce a major solo exhibition of work by important Indian artist Nasreen Mohamedi. Her diary pages, drawings and photographs combine Western influences such as Paul Klee and Kasimir Malevich with Islamic architectural forms and a South Asian sensibility, resulting in an intensely personal body of work.

Born in Karachi, India (now Pakistan) in 1937, Mohamedi created a highly developed language from the 1950s to the 1980s. Early drawings often suggest plants and trees, before the artist focused on creating variations around the grid format; later works present free-floating geometric forms that evoke futuristic, mechanical or architectural devices.

These abstract forms were often developed in intricately detailed diaries, written throughout the artist's life, where the written word morphs into personalised symbols, grids and diagonals. The artist traces or weaves regular patterns in her drawings, as if mapping a pulse or internal flow onto external phenomena. Her tightly cropped photographs seek out elemental forms such as the repetitive patterns found in the sea or landscapes as well as in the constructed world, in architecture and urban design.

Mohamedi studied at St Martins School of Art in London in the 1950s and travelled in Europe before returning to India in 1958. As well as familiarity with artists like Paul Klee and Wassily Kandinsky, she brought knowledge of Russian Suprematism, British Constructivism and American Abstraction to bear on her own South Asian references, from Sufism to the Progressive Artists Group founded by F.N. Souza in Mumbai. She died in Kihim, India in 1990.

Mohamedi was one of the major discoveries at Documenta XII (Kassel, 2007), but her work remains surprisingly overlooked and her important position in the Modernist canon is still being affirmed.

Notes to Editors

This exhibition is an expanded version of *Nasreen Mohamedi: Notes – Reflections on Indian Modernism* curated by Suman Gopinath and Grant Watson, and organised and initiated by the Office for Contemporary Art, Norway in Oslo. It includes an additional section of works from the Artist's Estate and other collections, courtesy of Talwar Gallery, New York/New Delhi. A variation of this exhibition will travel to Lunds konsthall, Sweden.

Milton Keynes Gallery is 10 Years Old

Nasreen Mohamedi's late Modernist drawings around the grid also correspond to the utopian planning of the New Town of Milton Keynes, which celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2007.

The gallery and Milton Keynes Theatre celebrate their 10th anniversary this Autumn. In that period, the gallery has presented 67 exhibitions, attracting over 292,800 visitors and engaging 186,000 children & adults through education experiences. More information can be found at www.mk-g.org.

For further information please contact Rosie Jackson, Press and Marketing Coordinator on 01908 558 302 or email r.jackson@mk-g.org.

Ends

27 August 2009