

## NASREEN MOHAMEDI INAUGURAL SHOW AT THE MET BREUER, NEW YORK

January 2016: A retrospective of the Indian modernist Nasreen Mohamedi (1937 - 1990) will open at The Met Breuer, the new location for The Metropolitan Museum of Art's expanding modern and contemporary art program opening to the public 18 March 2016. The exhibition is organized by The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, with the collaboration of the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi.



Nasreen Mohamedi (18 March – 5 June 2016) at The Met Breuer, New York, is by far the most comprehensive exhibition of any Indian artist in the United States. With more than 150 works by Mohamedi on display, the exhibition brings to an international audience more than three decades of her work, comprising of her few early oil paintings, collages, drawings in ink and graphite, watercolours, and photographs. Mohamedi rarely theorized or spoke about her work but documented her internal dialogue in a form of soliloquy, in tiny personal diaries and notebooks, some of which will be on display in the exhibition. The exhibition explores the conceptual complexity and visual subtlety that made her practice unique in its time.

In the history of Indian Modernism, Mohamedi remains a distinct figure who broke away from the dominant figurative-narrative mainstream practice and became one of the outstanding artists who pioneered the trajectory of non-representational and non-objective art in India, as well as creating a body of work vital to the evolution of international modernism and abstraction.

In cultivating an interiorised vision, Mohamedi sought to reflect beyond the familiar and the known, arriving at a pristine form of abstraction quite apart from her contemporaries. The grids and geometry she leaned toward in the 1970s were not without precedent though. In the West, closer to her time, were Piet Mondrian, Barnett Newman, Kazimir Malevich and the Russian Constructivists. Closer to home were the mystical traditions of the East that relied on geometry for a symbolic manifestation of the universe and its creative force. Drawing upon this range of inspirations, Mohamedi evolved her own formal vocabulary with delicate grids using only line, and this aesthetic informed and infused the photographs she took throughout her life.

Mohamedi's practice has garnered serious attention within India and globally only in the last fifteen years. Though admired in her lifetime, she remained enigmatic and elusive, quite the reflection of her work - a distilled oeuvre that does not lend itself to ordinary comprehension. Through her uncompromising singular pursuit, Mohamedi arrived at a harmonious melding of the rational and the poetic, the philosophical and the mystical.

Kiran Nadar, Chairperson and Founder of the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, "This is a momentous occasion for KNMA, having collaborated with two veteran institutions, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the United States and the Reina Sofia Museum in Spain, in bringing Nasreen Mohamedi's individualistic/distinctive practice to the western world. The museum's mandate is also focused on artists whose practice is yet to receive desiring attention and critical acclaim. We believe that their stories be told."

## PRESSRELEASE



### Notes to Editors

**About the Artist** Nasreen Mohamedi was born in 1937 in Karachi (British India, now Pakistan). Her family moved to Bombay (now known as Mumbai) in 1944, where she spent the rest of her childhood. She studied at Central Saint Martin's in London (1954–57), and subsequently spent time in Bahrain, where her father had business interests. She returned to Bombay in 1958 and had her first solo exhibition at the Bhulabhai Memorial Institute there in 1961. She was awarded a French Government Scholarship to study at an atelier in Paris (1961–63). In the 1960s she traveled extensively through India, and also to Iran and Turkey. In 1972 she moved to Baroda to teach at the Faculty of Fine Arts, M.S. University in Baroda, one of the leading art schools in India. Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, she had several exhibitions and participated in group shows including the Third Triennale in New Delhi (1975) and Contemporary Indian Art as part of the Festival of India in Britain (1982). She passed away in Kihim, near Bombay (now Mumbai), in 1990.

She has had a retrospective exhibition at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi (2013) that put together for the first time 138 works of the artist. Her works have been included in group exhibitions at the Drawing Center, New York (2005), Out of India: Contemporary Art of the South Asian Diaspora (Queens Museum, New York, 1997), Drawing Space: Contemporary Indian Drawing (Institute of International Visual Arts, London, 2000), and documenta XII (Kassel, 2007) as well as being shown alongside Piet Mondrian in a joint exhibit at Tate Liverpool (2014).

**Exhibition Credits and Catalogue** The exhibition Nasreen Mohamedi is organised by Sheena Wagstaff, Leonard A. Lauder Chairman of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Metropolitan Museum; Roobina Karode, Director of the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi; and Manuel J. Borja-Villel, Director of the Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid. The exhibition will be accompanied by a major publication, published by the Museo Reina Sofia, with new research on her work, featuring essays by Deepak Ananth, Andrea Giunta, Geeta Kapur, and Roobina Karode.

**Related Programmes** The exhibition Nasreen Mohamedi will also be a chosen focus of The Met's resident artist, the eminent jazz musician and composer Vijay Iyer. In homage to Mohamedi's devotion to Indian classical music and her improvisatory imagery that at times evokes an abstracted rhythmic notation, Iyer will present the world premiere of a new composition in honor of Mohamedi. A Cosmic Rhythm with Each Stroke will premiere on Wednesday, March 30, at 7:00 p.m., followed by a performance on Thursday, March 31, at 7:00 p.m. Tickets start at \$40. The exhibition will be featured on the Museum's [website](#), as well as on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) using #NasreenMohamedi and #MetBreuer.

**About The Met Breuer** The Metropolitan Museum of Art's modern and contemporary art program is expanding to include a new series of exhibitions, performances, artist commissions, residencies, and educational initiatives in the building designed by Marcel Breuer on Madison Avenue at 75th Street. Opening to the public on March 18, 2016, The Met Breuer provides additional space to explore the art of the 20th and 21st centuries through the global breadth and historical reach of the Met's unparalleled collection. Other programmes featured as part of the inaugural season of The Met Breuer include a major thematic survey, Unfinished: Thoughts Left Visible, which looks at unfinished works of art from the Renaissance to the present day, and a month-long performance installation by Resident Artist Vijay Iyer. Upcoming exhibitions include a presentation of Diane Arbus's rarely seen early photographic works (July 12–November 27, 2016) and the first museum retrospective dedicated to Kerry James Marshall (October 25, 2016–January 30, 2017).

**About The Metropolitan Museum of Art** The Metropolitan Museum of Art is one of the world's leading art museums, with a collection spanning more than 5,000 years of world culture, from prehistory to the present. It offers dozens of exhibitions each year, and thousands of events and programs including films, talks, performance, guided tours, and family programs. A center for art appreciation, scholarship, research, and conservation, the Met also maintains a vibrant program of publishing scholarly and popular catalogues, and utilizes new technologies to enhance the visitor experience and extend the reach and accessibility of its offerings globally.

**About the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art, New Delhi** Established in 2010 at the initiative of the avid art collector Kiran Nadar, the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA), New Delhi, is the first private museum of art exhibiting Modern and Contemporary art from India and the sub-continent. KNMA is a noncommercial, not-for-profit organisation, which seeks to exemplify the dynamic relationship between art and culture through its exhibitions, publications, public and educational programmes.

Sponsored by the **Shiv Nadar Foundation**, KNMA is plugging the social need of promoting art and instilling appreciation amongst individuals. KNMA aspires to become a place for confluence, bringing visibility and accessibility to Contemporary art through its curatorial initiative and exhibitions, school and college workshops, art appreciation discourses, symposiums and public programmes. It is focused on bridging the gap between art and the public and enhancing a museum-going culture in India. In order to activate the museum as a site for visual and intellectual dialogue, the museum aims to develop innovative programs that seek active collaborations from artists as well as the public.

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