

Zarina Hashmi **NOOR**

Exhibition from March 26 to May 21, 2011

Opening reception on March 26, Saturday, from 3 to 7 pm



Lotus, 1982, cast paper, 22,99 x 28,98 x 5 inches, 58,4 x 73,6 x 12,7 cm. . Edition 1/3.

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City of Light and Darkness, 2010, Mosaic of silk-screened paper collaged on Arches cover white paper, 26,73 x 27,48 inches, 67,9 x 69,8 cm

First presented as part of the inaugurated exhibition in our new space in the Marais in October 2008, Zarina Hashmi was subsequently exhibited at the Gwangju Biennale in South Korea in 2008.

From 26 March to 21 May 2011, the Gallery will present an exhibition entitled *Noor*, Zarina Hashmi's first solo show in Paris with works on paper, recent installations and historic papier mâché sculptures from the 80s.

Zarina Hashmi is one of the artists selected to exhibit in India's first pavilion at the coming Venice Biennale. Ranjit Hoskote, the curator in charge of the pavilion has decided to present work based around themes of history, migration and displacement from a transcultural point of view, all of which are recurring topics in Zarina Hashmi's work.

She has further been selected for a one-person show at the next Istanbul Biennale in September 2011, exploring relations between art and politics. There is also to be a retrospective of her work in October 2011 in Los Angeles, at the Hammer Museum.

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ZARINA HASHMI
NOOR Exhibition

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ZARINA HASHMI who often simply uses her first name, Zarina, was born in 1937 into a Muslim family from Uttar Pradesh in Northern India.

As a young woman she left her hometown of Aligarh where she was brought up, and after marrying an Indian officer engaged in international diplomacy in 1958, she often relocated, moving between cities, countries and continents. These moves profoundly influenced her work, a sophisticated web of diagrams and maps that embody the memory of a place, a particular event, an atmosphere, or the momentary experience of a sound, a sight, a smell, an emotion, or an event of the mind.

Zarina's work is a sophisticated web of diagrams and maps that embody the memory of her trips.

Her large corpus of wood-block prints, her wall installations, or her paper casts pieces go with her wherever she goes, connecting the places she has visited or lived in—Bangkok from 1958 to 1961; New Delhi from 1961 to 1963 and from 1968 to 1974; Paris from 1963 to 1967; Bonn from 1971 to 1972; Tokyo in 1974; Los Angeles from 1975 to 1976 and New York where she has lived from 1976 with a break in Santa Cruz from 1992 to 1997. **Her art embraces at one and the same time architecture, sculpture and woodcuts ; tactile in the materials used, it is minimal in its expression, and dense with meaning.**



Traces, 1981, Cast paper
28,98 x 28,98 x 0,98 inches,
73,6 x 73,6 x 2,5 cm.
Edition : 6/15

Her work, like a journal of her life, deals with themes such as the house, the home, displacement, travel and memory which all echo through her continual experience of being part of a diaspora, the idea of dislocation and of what Homi Bhabha calls vernacular cosmopolitanism : such themes, metaphors for our contemporary life in which our moving from town to town, country to country through the different continents of the world at speed, distances us from any real experience of these places, and in which our identity becomes a phenomenon liable to hybridize, multifarious and ever-changing, mimetic and creative, that is borne in minutely small spaces, interstices in Homi Bhabha's words.

Zarina, an impenitent voyager and citizen of the world

So, first of all plans of apartments where the artist lived, the maps of cities entitled *Cities I Called Home*, 2010, and which had a profound impact on the artist; or *City of Light and Darkness*, 2010, a single work produced specifically for this exhibition, bearing witness to the special fondness the artist feels for Paris where she lived from 1963 to 1967, and where she studied print-making with the famous print-maker William Hayter; and again, maps of countries destroyed by ethnic violence, made by Zarina as indelible engravings as if the best way to portray the destruction etched into the human heart.

Whilst working on these maps, **Zarina, an impenitent voyager and citizen of the world, experienced the ravages frontiers can impose and in particular the one that most affected her, the Partition line between Pakistan and India, which frames the painful experience of exile and nostalgia for a land that is lost, an India that was once united and whose political borders forced her entire family to migrate to Karachi...**

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And then there is also her attachment to the practice of other religions and truths—Sufism, the predominant philosophy for Islamic India, and also Buddhism, whose luminous presence is evoked in her use of gold leaf through the exhibition.

Shadow House, 2006, is a work cut out of paper from Nepal, reminiscent of the sculpted stone friezes and screens in Islamic architecture (Jali) which allow women to see through to the outside without being seen, their play of light and shade evoking a house's ephemeral nature.

Tasbih, 2008, is a monumental set of prayer beads made from 500 sandalwood beads covered in gold leaf, associated with the divine presence.

Zarina is attached to the practice of other religions and truths (...).

Nevertheless the socio-politico-cultural context of her work is far surpassed by its poetic scope.

Indian sub-continent.

Far from being simply an archaeology of the past, Zarina's work brings forth places and atmospheres that are shaped by imagination and desire, sculpted in the light of hopes that are rooted in the paper she cuts out, a material that Zarina considers as a second skin, breathing and ageing, with its fragility and its resistance that weathers time.

A work between art and statecraft

In these works **the idea of craftsmanship is constantly present** : with extreme precision, Zarina cuts out rather than draws her journal through the woodcuts which are printed on hand-made paper from India, Japan, Nepal, paper that she knows and understands, its history, geography and chemical composition.

Her preferred media are obviously wood, which she carves, (we are showing some of these wooden printing blocks in our show), and paper, a material that she manipulates with equal dexterity and knowledge—she even went so far as to use it in papier mâché forms in the 1980s, with a technique she invented herself.

... / ...



Blinding Light, 2010
Cut Okawara paper gilded
with 22-karat gold leaf
73 x 39,5 inches,
185,4 x 100 cm

Blinding Light, 2010, a piece entirely covered with 22 carat gold leaf, whose title was inspired by the legend of Moses: on asking God to show himself, he saw all the surrounding landscape disappear in flames, which for Zarina is an allusion to the inevitable preparation for her own mortality.

Nevertheless the socio-politico-cultural context of her work is far surpassed by its poetic scope, **so redolent of sound, smell and colour, not to speak of the symmetry and equilibrium of Mughal architecture's pure structural forms**, and especially the Nastaliq calligraphy of her mother-tongue, Urdu, omnipresent in her work *Multiple Silences*, 2009, as if to underline the decline of this language.

Zarina states that she always starts a work with a word, and not an image. This calligraphy is very obviously present in her *Letters and Travels with Rani*, 2008, her sister, with their feel of nostalgia and the shared memories of travelling through the

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These sculptures, which bring to mind ancient writing tablets, gradually reveal all the marks they have borne over time, in **their pure geometric or sacred architectural form, as they plunge us deep into nature's fractal universe or the majestic world of Islamic palaces and monuments**, not forgetting the richness of texture and colour of stone that Zarina expresses through the countless varieties and mixtures of terracotta, ivory and Sienna pink, or charcoal, graphite and ochre.

The sculptures from the 1980s—entitled *Spaces to Hide*, 1980, *Steps*, 1981, *Lotus*, 1982, *Traces*, 1981, *Shelter*, 1983, *Flight Log*, 1987—all evoke Zarina's preferred themes, containing both her memory and her nostalgia, together with the immense hope that the gold thread will trace out the way along her *Via Sacra*, despite its labyrinthine nature, as is illustrated by her work entitled *Golden Route*.

Zarina's sculptures are part of her personal atlas, the many vast roads over continents and civilisations.

All these works are part of her personal atlas, the many vast roads over continents and civilisations, **cartographies of world history and a consciousness, offering the varied atmospheres that take us from the personal to the universal or from the universal to the personal.**

All these atmospheres are present in *The Ten Thousand Things*, 2009-2010, a composition of a hundred or so 'selected pieces' from the artist's previous work, an installation that is likely to continue and develop in time and which brings us to the irrevocable road to our own home, a theme so familiar and dear to Zarina Hashmi.



Golden route, 1982
Etching with gold ink
on grey handmade paper
30 x 22,48 inches,
76,2 x 57,1 cm

Zarina Hashmi has participated in many international exhibitions the most recent of which was **Mind and Matter : Alternative Abstractions, 1940s to Now at the Museum of Modern Art in New York** ; her work has also been shown in the major Guggenheim exhibition *The Third Mind : American Artists Contemplate Asia 1860-1989* in the New York Guggenheim; and also in *Gouge : The Modern Woodcut* in the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles. Her work is also included in the permanent collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, in the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, in the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, in the National Gallery of Modern Art in Delhi as well as in Amman in Jordan. Recently, her works have been acquired by the permanent collections of the Whitney Museum and the MoMA in New York.

ZARINA HASHMI, Noor Exhibition, 2011
Colour catalogue, Bilingual French/English
with Texts by Barry Flood, Islamic Architecture specialist, and Véronique Jaeger,
Director of the Jeanne-Bucher/Jaeger Bucher gallery.

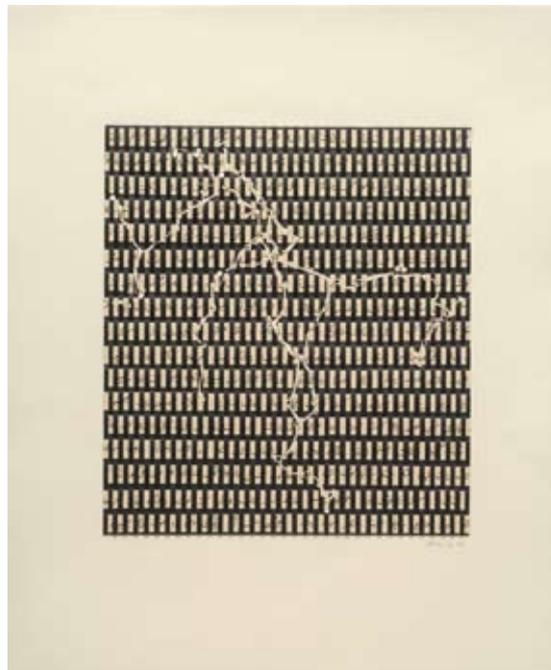
Images available for publication

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Traces, 1981
 Cast paper
 28,98 x 28,98 x 0,98 inches, 73,6 x 73,6 x 2,5 cm. Edition : 6/15



Wrapping the travels, 2009
 Wooden strips of woodcut print and text
 23,98 x 20 inches, 60,9 x 50,8 cm



Travels with Rani, 2008, Diptych. Edition : 3/25
 Left : *Travels with Rani I*, 2008, intaglio on Arches cover buff paper
 23,98 x 20 inches, 60,9 x 50,8 cm
 Right : *Travels with Rani II*, 2008, Woodcut on Okawara paper mounted on Arches cover buff paper
 23,98 x 20 inches, 60,9 x 50,8 cm

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Tasbih (Gold), 2008
Maple wood covered with formulated gold leaf and strung with leather cord. 500 units, 494 inches long, 1254, 7 cm. Each unit, 1 x 1 inch, 2,5 x 2,5 cm
Edition : 1/2



Blinding Light, 2010
Cut Okawara paper gilded with 22-karat gold leaf
73 x 39,5 inches, 185,4 x 100 cm



Shadow House, 2006
Cut Nepalese paper
69 x 39 inches, 175,2 x 99 cm



A few steps in the land of Confucious, 2008,
rubbing from woodcut on Okawara paper, 72 x 37 inches,
182,8 x 94 cm.

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City of Light and Darkness, 2010

Mosaic of silk-screened paper collaged on Arches cover white paper
26,73 x 27,48 inches, 67,9 x 69,8 cm.



Lotus, 1982, Cast paper

22,99 x 28,98 x 5 inches, 58,4 x 72,6 x 12,7 cm

Edition 1/3

Informations pratiques

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from 3 to 7 pm

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Le Boucher de St Nicolas, 1974
Collage, india ink, acrylic on paper
mounted on wood
71,65 x 81,50 inches, 182 x 207 cm

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Around three large triptychs

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Opening hours :
Tuesday-Friday : 9:30 am - 6:30 pm
Saturday from 10 am to 12:30 pm and from 2:30 pm to 6 pm

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