

Zarina Hashmi

— *Life Lines*

EXHIBITION

from September 17 to
November 5, 2016

Marais Space

OPENING

Saturday, September 17
from 3 to 7 pm

The first Fall exhibition will be devoted to the recent works of Zarina Hashmi, represented by the gallery since 2008.

The work of the artist, born in India in 1937 and referred to as Zarina, is made of a sophisticated fabric of diagrams and maps embodying the memory of a place, of an event, the memory of an atmosphere or of an experienced instant, whether it be sonic, visual, olfactory, or emotional. It is an echo of the life of the artist, whose journey is both personal and familial - she accompanies her husband in his diplomatic missions all around the world - as well as social and political, in her numerous travels to cities, countries and continents. Her trips allow her to follow the teachings of great masters of engraving like Toshi Yoshida in Japan and Stanley Hayter in the Atelier 17 in Paris. Zarina works mostly on wood engraving, with papers coming from all around the world; she maps out, during her stays in these countries, multiple political conflicts and their collateral effects: the partition of India when she was 10 years old; the progressive loss of Urdu, her mother tongue; and wars of religion or the alteration of borders, especially that of separated India, which led to the migration of her entire family to Karachi, causing irrevocable nostalgia for the lost land.



Tied to the Sky I, 2014. Woodcut printed on BFK light paper collaged with gold leaf and gold thread, mounted on Arches Cover buff paper, 15 × 15 in. Edition of 2.
Courtesy Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris

At the crossroads between architecture, sculpture, and xylography, her engravings on wood, her one-of-a-kind works on paper placed as mural installations, and her casts sculpted in paper pulp accompany her life journey; her work, whose main material is paper which she “*considers as a second skin which breathes, grows old, can be stained, or else pierced and molded*”, is rich in the tactile quality of the materials whose numerous possibilities the artist explores. Her attachment to the practice of other religions and truths is primordial, from Sufism, the predominant philosophy of Islamic India, to Buddhism.

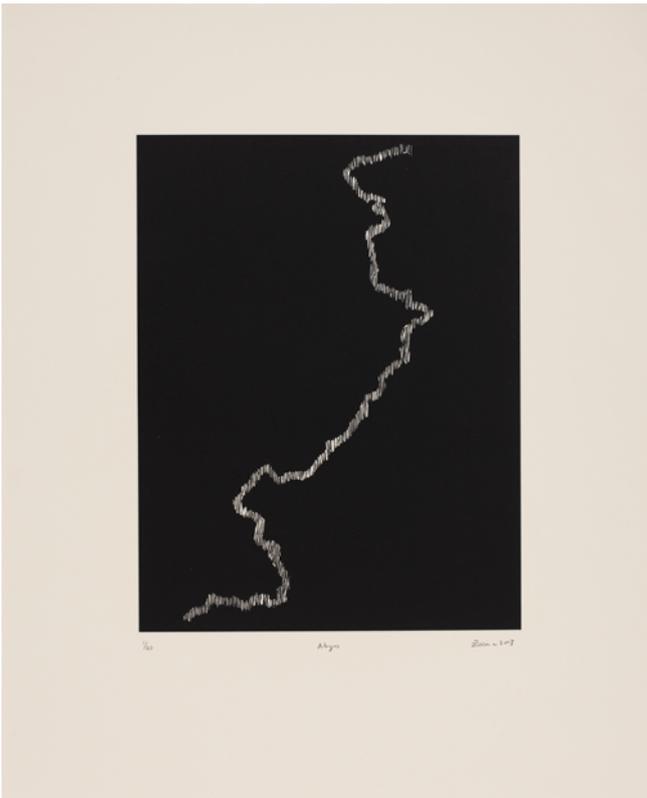
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The poetic significance of her work far surpasses its socio-political-cultural context, as it offers reminiscences of sounds, colors and odors, and emphasizes the symmetry and balance of the pure structural forms of Moghul architecture, and, above all, the Nastaleeq calligraphy of her maternal language, Urdu, omnipresent in her work, always preceding image.

Far from limiting itself to an archeology of the past, Zarina's work brings into being places and atmospheres shaped by imagination or desire, sculpted and sized to the light of hopes rooted in the material of paper, which has the capacity to at once breathe and to grow old, a fragility and a resistance that have traversed time. Her favorite materials are wood, which she carves, and paper, which she manipulates with extreme precision and knowledge, to the point where she knows the materials' entire history. Evoking ancient writing tablets, her sculptures in paper pulp let one glimpse all the marks of their time, in their pure form as geometry or sacred architecture, plunging us at once into the fractal universe of nature and the majestic universe of Islamic palaces and monuments. They also display rich textures and colors of stone that Zarina expresses through innumerable varieties and mixes of terra cotta, ivory, Siena pink, charcoal, graphite, and ochre pigments. A *memorial parchment*, Zarina's work is the expression of a personal atlas, of vast and multiple paths across continents and civilizations.



Abyss, 2013. Woodcut on BFK light paper, mounted on Somerset Antique paper. 27,5 × 22 in.
Edition of 20. Courtesy Jeanne Bucher Jaeger, Paris

As Zarina is moving forward in age and further along her spiritual path, her work has been shifting towards the location of her last trip, which she translates through her research on the divine light *Noor*, that has found shape through the use of gold leaf, obsidian ink and Sumi ink, and black or white prayer necklaces and *tasbeih* in pearl or onyx-marble. Her recent works reveal a peace and light that leave behind all the winding paths of life.

Zarina's work is represented in major public collections, most notably in the US at the MOMA, Whitney, Guggenheim, and Metropolitan Museums in New York; at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Menil Foundation in Houston, and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles; in Europe at the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the Tate Gallery in London; and in India in the Contemporary Art Museum in Delhi. Her first exhibition in Paris dates back to 2008 for the inaugural exhibition in our new space, followed in 2011 by her solo exhibition "Noor". A retrospective traveling exhibition of her work, entitled "Zarina: Paper like Skin", was presented in the United States in 2012, first at the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, then at the Guggenheim in New York and at the Chicago Art Institute. It was accompanied by a catalogue presenting some sixty of her works from 1961 until today.