

Press Release

Nasreen Mohamedi

13 October – 13 November, 2010

Private view Tuesday 12 October, 6-8pm

Stuart Shave/Modern Art is delighted to announce an exhibition of works by Nasreen Mohamedi. This is the first solo exhibition of Mohamedi's work in London.

Nasreen Mohamedi was born in Karachi (then India) in 1937 and raised in Bombay (now Mumbai), passing away in 1990. Mohamedi travelled to London and attended St. Martin's School of Art from 1954 – 1957, returning to India in 1958. In the decades that followed Indian independence, Mohamedi came to establish her voice as a key component in the development of Indian modernism, for which she is regarded as one of the leading artistic voices of her generation. Mohamedi's creative output was not prolific. Her body of work is modest, spare, and restrained – yet characterised by a total and coherent commitment to the languages of abstraction. Until recently little-known outside her home country, Mohamedi's unique and singular body of work is now belatedly establishing its place within the context of the Modern canon and art history's international avant-garde.

Mohamedi's austere drawings and photographs evoke an atmospheric and delicate sensibility. While the influence of first- and second-generation European modernism is a vital foundation of Mohamedi's practice, no less significant is the intersection of her formal training with her own cultural heritage, bringing to bear an appeal to metaphysicality, the influence of Islamic design and architecture, and the sensations of her environmental landscape. Careful and deliberate compositions of lines carefully drawn with an intuitive sense of translation, are laid on the structural foundations of repetitive systematic forms and intertwining grids. Tight, formal pencil grids, and fluctuating mark-marking on an intimate scale are characteristic elements of Mohamedi's drawings – elements that have frequently led to comparisons with the work of Agnes Martin (whose work was unknown to Mohamedi until very late in life).

This exhibition at Modern Art brings together a selection of Mohamedi's drawings and photographs spanning the periods of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Despite her singular and cohesive body of work being wholly unsigned and undated, phases of developmental chronology and traces of evolutionary thinking are apparent. The 9 works in this show present an essence of Mohamedi's practice; works in which a sense of the artist's sublime personal vision is expressed with humility, grace, and assured belief.

During her lifetime Mohamedi's work was exhibited in the Third Triennial in New Delhi in 1975 and Artists Indiens en France at the Centre National de Arts Plastique in Paris in 1985. Her work has since been exhibited in solo exhibitions at Kunsthalle Basel, Basel (2010); Milton Keynes Gallery, Milton Keynes (2009); The Drawing Center, New York (2005); Talwar Gallery, New York (2003 and 2008); and in exhibitions at MOMA, New York (2007); Documenta, Kassel (2007); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2004), and the Walker Art Centre, Minneapolis (2003). Mohamedi's work is to be included in a forthcoming exhibition at MOMA, New York.