

FARHAD MOSHIRI

Iranian, born 1963



Farhad Moshiri was the first Iranian artist to achieve a price of over \$1 million at auction (with *Eshgh - Love*, a work with crystals and glitter on canvas with acrylic) and is one of the most celebrated artists of the region. Moshiri is incredibly active both nationally and internationally, having already held 20 solo exhibitions throughout the world. His work is in great demand and is a favourite at the most important art fairs such as Basel and Art Dubai.

Moshiri was born in Shiraz and later moved to California to study at the Californian Institute of Arts. It was in the States that he started to experiment with installations, sculpture, film and painting. He first became known for his monumental jars and bowls painted on canvas with their richly textured surfaces. These grand vessels represent

containers of desire, life and memory. The calligraphic text which appears throughout Moshiri's work and on his pots can be read as extracts from poems, or vernacular words used in daily life in Tehran. The varying colours used in his pots have their own nostalgic significance as they relate to childhood associations with foods and drinks. The form of the pot reflects for him a fascination with archaeology. The surfaces of his canvases are highly worked to achieve a fragmented, aged look which resembles the naturally glazed or unglazed stoneware vessels of 13th-century Iranian potters.

Moshiri is constantly changing his artistic interpretation and vision and has more recently been pushing the boundaries of his materials, using cake icing dispensers, Swarovski crystals, and knives to make works of art that incorporate increasingly textured and sculptural approaches. Beyond his choice media, it is his mastery of Iranian visual vernacular, as well as his acute awareness of popular culture and art history which has earned him worldwide attention over the last 8 years.

Brief Biography

Moshiri travelled from Iran to the USA in the early 1980s to study at the California Institute of Arts, from which he graduated in 1994. He now lives and works in Tehran but sells his work throughout the world.

Moshiri's work has become a regular and extremely popular feature in the contemporary Middle Eastern & Arab art auctions over the last couple of years. His work has also featured in over 18 solo exhibitions, including Leighton House in 2003 and in galleries in Rome, Geneva, Dubai and London. His work can be seen in The British Museum's collection and was exhibited in the *Word into Art* travelling shows in London and Dubai, curated by Dr. Venetia Porter, in 2006 and 2008.

He is best known for his painted jars, and ironic interpretations of hybrids between traditional Iranian forms and those of the consumerist and globalised popular culture widespread in his country. Moshiri is interested in the reaction of traditional Middle Eastern culture to some of the more superficial aspects of 21st century western culture, and believes we are at the sociopolitical crossroads where various paths can be chosen. He clearly hopes that his culture retains many of its indigenous features.