

# THE MINSTER GALLERY

## Taha Afshar – Letting Light In

28 September - 30 October 2018



*Light upon Light, 2016, Oil on linen, 95 x 95 cm*

*Painting for me has always been a means to reflect and a vessel from which to explore greater truths. Some of these truths are derived from nature, whilst others are more personal. Whilst the lake reflects the sky, the illustrated landscape also carries with it reflections from my own internal experience. That is why I often refer to these lake paintings as “soulsapes”, where the stillness and calmness of my surroundings lend themselves to reflection of the highest order.*

- Taha Afshar

The Minster Gallery is pleased to announce *Letting Light In*, the first solo exhibition of local British artist, Taha Afshar in Winchester. The exhibition will feature 14 new paintings completed between 2016-2018. The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue with a foreword written by Alexandra Reynolds.

Taha Afshar's work captures the delicate tension between the objective and the subjective, the particular and the universal, the momentary and the timeless. For Afshar, the process of painting seemingly operates as a form of meditation, where meaning is generated through the durational practice of working itself. Finished images thus reflect the thickness of human experience and sense perception, building layers of meaning into a single unique scene.

His latest series of works expand on earlier Swedish Landscapes, and reflects key themes and painterly strategies including duration, iteration and an alchemical merging of inner and outer worlds. These landscapes map a dialogue between inner and outer worlds, capturing light at various times of the day on an isolated lakeside in Alignsås, Sweden. The most recent work is framed by this same landscape, and was undertaken during a similarly intensive period of production. In this series Afshar retreats fully into the meditative process of working, so much so that the lakeside is barely visible in many of the canvases.

Light emanates out of this work not so much from the movement of the sun across the land, but from an inner, subjective space. Duration is primarily figured into the work through the building up and working through of material upon the canvas. In this way, its compositional setting becomes almost an intimation of itself, a sort of artistic scaffold or extension of the painter's tools.

Art historical antecedents also remain discernible here, alluding to histories of impressionism, expressionism and abstraction. However, the work's motivation for personal transformation seemingly translates and internalises these influences, rendering them an essential part of the artist's inner journey. The external world thus acts within this series as a subtle second canvas upon which to navigate and visualize internal processes, documenting an exploratory inner search for light where worldly matter and historic facticity is of little consequence.

The *Letting Light In* series can be understood to document a momentary instantiation of a continuous process of development and growth by the artist. The paintings embody a subjectivity in duration whose development is always at work and underway. As moments within this existential journey, the paintings offer up a way point in development, signalling a moment in time. However, they also point to an unending process of psychic work and meditative labour which binds together aspects of Afshar's earlier work and wider oeuvre. Repetition of themes, processes and compositions help highlight this series as part of a developing narrative: a durational process of artistic interrogation which ultimately documents the work of subjective transformation itself.

## Notes to editors

### About Taha Afshar

Taha Afshar is an internationally exhibited painter and sculptor born in Winchester, UK. Light, with both its physical and metaphysical properties, is often the subject matter of his landscape and figurative works. Born in 1983, in Winchester, Taha studied Art and History of Art at Winchester College, where he was also awarded the Drew Scholarship. From a young age, he has exhibited in local galleries and gained local awards. He graduated from UCL, followed by a PhD from the London School of Economics. Throughout this time, his painting evolved through various styles of portraiture, still life, landscape painting and sculpture. Recent exhibitions have included shows at Cadogan Contemporary (2016) and the Jonathan Cooper Gallery (2016). In 2017, he exhibited alongside Gagosian Gallery, artist Y.Z. Kami and Monir Farmanfarman, in an exhibition entitled the *Garden of Mystery*, at Asia House, London, which was supported by a panel of speakers from the British Museum and Courtauld Institute of Art. In 2018, he was shortlisted for the Sunny Art Prize and Royal Society of Marine Artists awards. His work can be found in several private collections across the world.

### About The Minster Gallery

Located in the heart of Winchester, Hampshire, facing the Cathedral, The Minster Gallery shows figurative and abstract paintings and sculpture by contemporary British and international artists. As well as a continuously changing display of work by its core artists, the Gallery organises periodic one-man shows, group exhibitions and exhibitions on specific themes.

### Exhibition Details

<b>Title:</b>	Taha Afshar, <i>Letting Light In</i>
<b>Address:</b>	The Minster Gallery, 3A Great Minster Street, Winchester, Hampshire SO23 9HA, UK
<b>How to find us:</b>	Easily accessible by car from the M3 motorway (Junction 10 or 11) and is well served by train services from London Waterloo. The Gallery is a five minute walk from the train station and is easily found off the Square facing the main entrance of the Cathedral on Great Minster Street. Parking is easily found in the center of Winchester or just outside in the Park and Ride.
<b>Dates:</b>	28 September-30 October 2018
<b>Private View:</b>	Friday, 28 September 2018, from noon until 3pm and from 6pm until 8.30pm
<b>Opening Hours:</b>	Monday to Saturday, 10am to 5:30pm
<b>Admission:</b>	Free

Website: [www.minstergallery.com](http://www.minstergallery.com)

Instagram: tahaafshar

Twitter: @tahaafshar

Facebook: TahaAfshar110

#lettinglightin

For press information and images please contact Fiona Waters.

Email: [info@minstergallery.com](mailto:info@minstergallery.com)

Tel: +44 (0)1962 877601