# THE PURPOSE OF LIGHT

## TAHA AFSHAR

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### The Minster Gallery 3A Great Minster Street

3A Great Minster Street Winchester Hampshire SO23 9HA United Kingdom The Minster Gallery is pleased to announce "The Purpose of Light" a new exhibition of works by Taha Afshar. This collection features oil paintings previously shown in 2019 at his solo exhibition in the 58th at the Venice Biennale.

His paintings seek to capture 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. Recent landscape paintings have drawn inspiration from Nordic landscapes, where he visits to paint. He makes reference to the acutely self-reflective nature of his work, citing a certain proximity to surrealist techniques of automatic writing.

The oil paintings from this exhibition span a period of 4 years between 2015 and 2019. With the exception of one series of British seascapes from Hayling Island, in Hampshire, the most of the rest of the paintings are Swedish landscapes. All of the paintings were started *en plein air*, and some finalised in his Hampshire studio.



*2:30 pm (Take care)*, 2015 Oil on canvas 62 x 62 cm



*4pm*, 2015 Oil on canvas 62 x 62 cm



*This Is Our Garden*, 2016 Oil on linen 110 x 110 cm



*Unity's Sanctuary*, 2016 Oil on linen 65 x 65 cm



Blue Snowscape with Orange Writing, 2018 Oil on canvas 71 x 71 cm



Abstract Simple White Snowscape, 2018 Oil on canvas 92 x 112 cm



Hayling Island- Let Love Go, 2018 Oil and oil pastel on canvas 40 x 40 cm



Hayling Island- Tide Turning, 2018 Oil and oil pastel on canvas 40 x 40 cm



*Hayling Sterling Island Seascape,* 2018 Oil and oil pastel on canvas 40 x 40 cm

*Like a Bird on a Wire,* 2018 Oil and oil pastel on canvas 40 x 40 cm



Need to make my soul a more beautiful place for me and you, 2018 Oil and oil pastel on canvas 53 x 53 cm



Sometimes when we love, 2018 Oil and oil pastel on canvas 62 x 62 cm



*When can you love,* 2018 Oil and oil pastel on canvas 40 x 40 cm



Hayling Island- Close from a Distance, 2018 Oil and oil pastel on canvas 53 x 53 cm



Silently Like Thoughts the Snowflakes Fall, 2019 Oil, oil pastel and mixed media on canvas 65 x 65 cm

*Repeated Writing Gold on Blue I,* 2019 Oil and oil pastel on canvas 92 x 112 cm



*Rainbow: Birth, Bounty and Joy (Yellow),* 2019 Oil and oil pastel on canvas 114 x 162 cm



Pure painting right in front of our eyes, 2019 Oil and oil pastel on canvas 110 x 110 cm



*It simply is,* 2019 Oil and oil pastel on canvas 110 x 110 cm



*Reflect, Revise, Revisit (2 of 5),* 2019 Oil and oil pastel on canvas and board 40 x 40 cm



*Reflect, Revise, Revisit (3 of 5),* 2019 Oil and oil pastel on canvas and board 40 x 40 cm



*Reflect, Revise, Revisit (4 of 5),* 2019 Oil and oil pastel on canvas and board 40 x 40 cm



*Two trees by a lake in Sweden,* 2019 Oil on canvas and board 62 x 62 cm



Four trees by a lake in Sweden (1 of 2), 2019 Oil on canvas and board 62 x 62 cm



It is not the event but what you do with it which determines the quality of your life, 2020 Oil on canvas 92 x 92 cm Taha Afshar is an internationally exhibited painter and sculptor born and practicing in Hampshire, England. Light, with both its physical and metaphysical properties, is often the subject matter of his work.

Born in 1983, in Winchester, he studied Art and History of Art at Winchester College, graduating from University College London, and continuing to attain a PhD. Recent UK exhibitions have included shows at Cadogan Contemporary (2016) and the Jonathan Cooper Gallery (2016). In 2017, he exhibited at Asia House, London, supported by a panel 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. 2018 saw his work exhibited in Italian, Russian, and German institutions. He had his first solo exhibition at the Venice Biennale in 2019.

His work can be found in many private and public art collections, such as the Hampshire County Council Contemporary Art Collection, Portsmouth Museum Art Collection, Winchester College, Monir Farmanfarmaian collection, Rose Issa collection, Ellen MacArthur Foundation, Leonardo Di Caprio Foundation, Pickwell Foundation, and the Rockefeller Foundation.

	2021	Revise, revisit, reflect, Paul Smith Gallery, Mayfair, London.	
SELECTED	2020	Daydreaming, Group exhibition, Tom Faulkner Gallery, Mayfair, London.	
EXHIBITIONS	2019	<i>58th Biennale di Venezia,</i> Solo exhibition, Official Pavilion Palazzo Zenobio, Venice, It <i>Malamegi Lab 11</i> , ImagoArs, Venice, Italy.	aly.
	2018	Present, Perfect, Continuous, Zverev Contemporary Art Centre, Moscow, Russia.	
		We Contemporary Art Show, Museum of Jobs Foundation, Palermo, Italy.	
		Singularity of Peace, Group show, Uthink Creative, London.	
		Letting Light In, Solo exhibition, Minster Gallery, September, Winchester.	
		Artsdepot, Group show, London.	
		Hampshire Open Studios, Hampshire.	
		Fascination of World Art and Colour, "Kulturbunker", Cultural Center Cologne-	
		Mülheim, Cologne (March), Weißenthurm (April) and Kobern-Gondorf Town Halls	
		(May), Germany.	
	2017	Garden of Mystery: 700th Anniversary exhibition. Group show, featuring works by Mor	ıir
		Farmanfarmaian and Y.Z. Kami. In collaboration with the Gagosian Gallery, The Thi	rd
		Line Gallery, and Rose Issa Projects. Asia House, November, London.	
		Letting Light In, Solo show, Foyer at Asia House, May, London.	
		Vices and Virtues, Group show, Notes Gallery, April, Southampton.	
		Solent Faces, Group show, Solent Showcase Gallery, February, Southampton.	
		Swedish Landscapes, Group show, Minster Gallery, September, Winchester.	
		2017 Gala Auction Items, Farhang Foundation, Los Angeles.	
	2016	Spring Show, Group show, Cadogan Contemporary, April, London.	
		New English Art Club, Annual exhibition, Mall Galleries, June, London.	
		Green and Pleasant Land, Group show, Jonathan Cooper Gallery, Park Walk, July,	
		London.	
		Swedish Landscapes, Group show, Minster Gallery, September, Winchester.	
	2002	Tuscan Landscapes, Angelus Gallery, July, Winchester.	
	2001	Autumn show, Bell Fine Arts, Winchester.	
	2000	Maltby Art Gallery, Winchester	29

	2018	Talk and Q&A on <i>Letting Light In</i> solo exhibition. Minster Gallery, Winchester.	
SELECTED ARTISTS TALKS			
	2017	Panel discussion on The Garden of Mystery, 700th anniversary and the influence of	
		Sufism in contemporary visual arts. Other panelists: Dr Ladan Akbarnia, Curator,	
		Islamic Collections, British Museum; Dr Sussan Babaie, Andrew W. Mellon	
		Reader in the Arts of Iran and Islam, <i>The Courtauld Institute of Art.</i>	
	2018	Royal Society of Marine Artists, Shortlisted.	
		Sunny Art Prize, Shortlisted.	
PRIZES & AWARDS		Artsdepot, Shortlisted.	
	2017	Nature Art Award, Special Recognition Artist, painting category.	
		Palm Art Award, Nominee.	
		National Open Arts, Shortlisted.	
		Royal Society of Marine Artists, Shortlisted.	
	2016	New English Art Club, shortlisted.	
	2001	Awarded Drew Art Travel Scholarship, Winchester College.	
	2000	Maltby Young Artist prize, Winchester.	
	2018	Smith, Sandra. "Soulscapes", <i>Hampshire Life</i> , September.	
		"Letting Light In", Wall Street International, September.	
SELECTED PRESS		Circle Quarterly Art Review, Featured Artist, Winter 2018.	
		Graham, Daniel. "Soulscapes and Success: The Extraordinary Art of Taha Afshar." <i>Art Aesthetics</i> .	
	2017	Bekhrad, Joobin. "Divine Mysteries at Asia House", <i>Apollo Magazine</i> , November. Biglari, Tara. "Monir Farmanfarmaian, Y.Z. Kami Star in London Sufism Exhibition", <i>Kayhan Life</i> . November.	
		Art of Design Magazine, "The Garden of Mystery: 700th Anniversary	
		Contemporary Art Exhibition at Asia House, London" November.	30

2018 *Letting Light In*, (second edition), with essay by Alexandra Reynolds, published by Minster Gallery.

#### SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

2017 *Garden of Mystery: 700th anniversary*. Exhibition catalogue. Essays by Mariam Neza, Taha Afshar, Joobin Bekhrad. Published in association with Asia House. Letting Light In. Essay by Alexandra Reynolds.

 Taha Afshar: Selected Works. Featuring following essays: Alexandra Reynolds.
Reflection: Landscapes; James Bevan, Brushes with Nature: from Early Influences to Recent Processes; Josh Bradwell, These are the Soul.
Swedish Landscapes, Taha Afshar, with essay by Alexandra Reynolds.