

FARHAD MOSHIRI

FIRST SNOW

SALZBURG VILLA KAST

27 Jan 2018 - 03 Mar 2018



**Opening: Saturday 27. January 2018, 11 am - 1pm
with the artist present**

Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to announce *First Snow*, an exhibition of recent work by Iranian artist Farhad Moshiri. Running from 27 January to 3 March 2018, this is the second solo show of the artist at our Salzburg gallery.

With *First Snow* Moshiri introduces a new visual vocabulary in his work. For the first time, the artist is using his own photographs as a starting point for his compositions. The black and white photographs of snowy trees have been taken by the artist in a forest near his studio, in the city of Lavasan outside Tehran. Their graphic quality led Moshiri to confront with abstraction, while enhancing the vibrant texture inherent to his bead-woven works. First drawn on canvas before being embroidered with black and white beads by Iranian craftsmen, the high contrasts in the landscapes reveals a cinematic style similar to the one found in the photographic work of Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami (1940-2016).

As Moshiri recently stated in an interview: "It was never my intention to show the differences between Iran and America. When I got up in the morning and saw everything covered with a layer of fresh snow, I grabbed my camera and went outside. What I was seeing in my viewfinder was a complex composition not unlike Jackson Pollock's *splash paintings*. That set the tone for the entire photo shoot, which was capturing a powerful composition, void of any cultural symbols."

Bare of all artifice, Moshiri's black and white compositions invite contemplation. There is also an aesthetic joy and a tactile softness in the dream-like landscapes, which walk the thin line between abstraction and figuration but also between fantasy and reality.

The dense tangle of branches provides no contour-defining lines; rather, the white areas of snow lying heavy on the branches seem to shift the balance in the picture. The mass of snow-laden branches forms an impenetrable mesh. By representing a lush nature with no temporal and spatial reference, Moshiri allows for the forest to stand as a counterpart to civilisation. The series could be seen as a meditation on the essence of nature, or as an allegory of an inner world.

Born in Shiraz, Iran, in 1963, Farhad Moshiri spent a portion of his formative years in California where he went on to study art and film making at the California Institute of the Arts, with mentors such as John Baldessari and Don Buchla. Moshiri returned to Iran in the early 90s and currently lives and works between Teheran and Paris. Internationally renowned for his innovative approach to the Neo-Pop style, Moshiri often draws his visual sources from cartoons, films, comics, children's books or advertising, shrewdly associating these to phrases drawn from classical poetry, popular love songs or catchy slogans. Rather than distilling antagonisms between East and West, he underlines the permeable nature of identity.

On view at The Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh from October 13, 2017 to January 14, 2018, the artist's first US mid-career survey *Farhad Moshiri: Go West* brings together several bodies of work created over two decades, exploring the artist's varied subject matter and wide-ranging materials and methods. Moshiri's work has been featured in the 54th and 55th Venice Biennale as well as in the 6th Sharjah Biennial. Prominent group exhibitions include *One Way*, Bass Museum, Miami (2014); *ARTandPRESS*, Martin Gropius Bau, Berlin (2012); *The World Belongs to You*, Palazzo Grassi, Venice (2011); *Iran Inside Out*, Chelsea Art Museum, New York (2009); *World into Art*, British Museum, London (2006). Moshiri's work is present in many public collections including the British Museum, London; Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha; The Guggenheim Museum, Abu Dhabi; The Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond and The Pinault Foundation, Venice.