

For immediate release

TOBA KHEDOORI

September 7 – October 27, 2012

Opening reception: Friday, September 7, 6–8 PM

Press preview: Thursday, September 6, 10:30 AM



Untitled, 2010-2011. Oil on linen, 27 ¼ x 41 ½ inches (69 x 105 cm).

David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings and drawings by Los Angeles-based artist Toba Khedoori, on view at the gallery's 525 West 19th Street space. Khedoori joined David Zwirner in 1994 as one of its first artists, and this marks her sixth solo show with the gallery.

Khedoori is known for her precisely rendered, intricate works depicting familiar objects divorced from any background. For the past two decades she has created her own atlas of solitary spaces, windows, doors, train compartments, and horizon lines always devoid of a human presence. Usually drawn, and then painted,

onto waxed paper of a monumental size, the otherwise empty compositions envelop the viewer's entire field of vision, but proportion appears autonomous from a real-life referent. The works appear at once fragile and monumental, flat and illusory.

The present exhibition includes a series of oils on canvas, a new development within the artist's practice that further breaks down the distinction between painting and drawing. Executed on a smaller scale, and at times filling out the entire surface, these works open up for a more intimate dialogue with their surroundings, onto which their own space seems to become projected. The support of the canvas lends new weight to the subject matter, while underscoring a dichotomy between the physicality of the former and the ethereal appearance of the latter.

The works in the exhibition depict ropes in various configurations along with subjects from the natural world—mountain ranges, tree branches, and rivers. A canvas with an abstract mosaic of small squares in varying shades of black and blue contrasts with the more figurative compositions, while at the same time emphasizing their own inherent abstraction. A river is distilled to an interwoven mesh of wavy lines and myriad branches overlap or are overlapped to create a sophisticated lattice in which it is difficult to maintain a distinct focus. In two paintings presenting aerial views of a mountain range, the tension between form and narrative, or abstraction and realism,

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extends into a question of difference and repetition: at a closer look, it emerges that they show the same view with the shadows inverted. A drawing depicting a large explosion evokes this tension both literally and conceptually, as the smoke captured by the soft pencil strokes appears at once decipherable and disappearing from view. The viewer's attention, in turn, is focused onto the exercise of looking.

Despite their technical and sometimes photo-realistic precision, Khedoori's works seem to present a virtual vocabulary, as if they were illustrations of thoughts. In a recent essay on her work, artist and writer Julien Bismuth notes that each of Khedoori's fragmentary subjects seems "disconnected from that which would make it complete. Imagine a language from which only a word had survived. What would this word sound like? Like a puzzle piece removed from its set and held up to the light, Toba Khedoori's works engage with a specific form of abstraction: abstraction not as 'freedom from representational qualities' but as 'the process of removing something.' In doing so, she remains bound to representational drawing, yet draws attention to its conventions by subtle yet deliberate acts of omission, remission, and subversion."¹

Born in 1964 in Sydney, Australia, **Toba Khedoori** received her M.F.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1994.

Her work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at prominent institutions worldwide, including the St. Louis Art Museum, Missouri (2003); Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin (2002); Whitechapel Gallery, London; Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel (both 2001); and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C. (1997). Her first museum solo exhibition was organized in 1997 by the Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, which traveled to the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

In 2002, Khedoori was awarded the prestigious MacArthur Foundation Grant. She has participated in a number of international group exhibitions, including the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009); Liverpool Biennial (2006); 26th São Paulo Biennial (2004); 1995 Whitney Biennial; among numerous others.

Major museum collections which hold works by the artist include the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. Khedoori lives and works in Los Angeles.

For all press inquiries and RSVP to the press preview on September 6 (10:30 AM), please contact Ben Thornborough at David Zwirner 212-727-2070 bthornborough@davidzwirner.com

Notes

1 Julien Bismuth's essay "Toba Khedoori" (2012) will appear in a forthcoming edition of *Annual Magazine*.