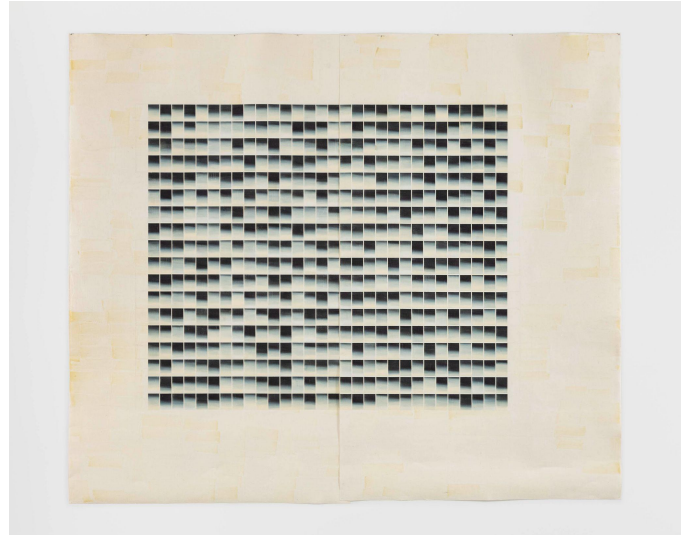


Toba Khedoori

September 14–October 21, 2023
537 West 20th Street, New York



Toba Khedoori, *Untitled*, 2021. © Toba Khedoori. Photo: Evan Bedford.
Courtesy the artist, David Zwirner, and Regen Projects, Los Angeles

David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of new and recent work by Toba Khedoori at the gallery's 537 West 20th Street location in New York. Following the artist's extensive survey at the Fridericianum, Kassel, Germany, in 2021–2022, this exhibition will feature the major works that Khedoori has made since 2019.

Through a meticulous, time-consuming process that blends painting and drawing, Khedoori creates intricate, contemplative compositions depicting façades, plants, grids, windows, and doorways, among other subjects, that appear arrested in time and space—as though existing in a liminal state. Primarily done on immense sheets of waxed paper, her work espouses a neutral language of objecthood and natural forms versus one of figurative or gestural expressivity and narrative forms. Though Khedoori's emphasis on the fragment reinforces associations with the photographic, her work's singular visual and experiential qualities evade direct analogy to other media and formats. As artist and writer Julien Bismuth notes, each of Khedoori's fragmentary subjects are "both self-contained and 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, Khedoori's works engage with a specific form of abstraction: abstraction not as 'freedom from representational qualities' but as 'the process of removing something.'"¹

The works in this exhibition demonstrate the same level of exacting and exquisite detail and methodical rigor that Khedoori has pursued throughout her three-decade-long career. Several feature branches, leaves, vines, or palm fronds that are grouped densely in some areas and sparsely in others. Khedoori equally prioritizes the leafy trees or twisted vines and the surrounding negative space, creating a perceptual push and pull between figure and ground. The works convey a sense of movement, not by means of gesturalism, but by accentuating the bound energy latent within the natural imagery. In all of

¹ Julien Bismuth, "Drawing by Design: On a Recent Exhibition of Works by Toba Khedoori," *Toba Khedoori*. Exh. cat. (New York: David Zwirner, 2013), p. 9.

the compositions, the degree of detail, the scale, and the delicacy of the artist's palette make for nuanced viewing experiences that change as one approaches or withdraws from the work.

Two recent large-scale geometric grid works will also be included in the exhibition. A motif that Khedoori has returned to repeatedly over the course of her career, the grid—a foundational modernist construction intended to rid the picture plane of any narrative resonances—emphasizes the inherent play between figuration and abstraction within the artist's oeuvre and calls into question the distinction between these two visual modalities. The contrast between the grids and the other works in the exhibition subtly evokes the constitutive antagonism between geometric and biomorphic abstraction in modern art. As with her natural subjects, the discrete precision of Khedoori's grids enhances their visual intensity. The serial repetition of a limited set of shades of blue in the first of the two works, and of individualized grayscale gradients in the other, transform the inherently static form of the grid into active, pulsing grounds.

Further mediating these registers of the organic and the geometric in the exhibition is a small oil-on-canvas painting showing a fragmentary view of a succession of partially collapsed buildings. For this work—which was based on a photograph of war-torn eastern Ghouta in Syria—Khedoori inverted the tonal values of the source imagery, thus highlighting the interiors of the buildings. Here, the structure of the buildings, with their grid-like arrangement of windows, veers into disorder through the legibility and invocation of the social and political, underscoring how Khedoori explores and engages with reality by abstracting or displacing her subjects from it.

Khedoori was one of the first artists to exhibit with David Zwirner, in 1994, the year after the gallery opened on Greene Street in New York; this will be her seventh solo exhibition with the gallery and her first in New York since 2012.

Toba Khedoori was born in 1964 in Sydney and received her MFA from the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1994. In 2002, Khedoori was awarded the prestigious MacArthur Foundation grant.

In 2019–2020, a large selection of works by Khedoori was presented in a group exhibition titled *Resonating Spaces* at Fondation Beyeler in Basel. In 2016, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art organized a major solo exhibition of Khedoori's work, marking her first museum survey in over a decade. The show traveled to Pérez Art Museum Miami (PAMM) in 2017.

In addition, Khedoori's 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 (2001); Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel (2001); and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC (1997). Her first museum solo exhibition was organized in 1997 by The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles, and traveled to the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Khedoori has participated in a number of international group exhibitions, including the 53rd Venice Biennale (2009); Liverpool Biennial (2006); 26th São Paulo Biennial (2004); and the 1995 Whitney Biennial, among others.

Work by the artist is represented in major museum collections worldwide, including The Broad, Los Angeles; Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, DC; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Museum of Contemporary

Art, Los Angeles; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Öffentlichen Kunstsammlung Basel; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. She lives and works in Los Angeles.

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