

## Idris Khan: *Words Beneath Words*

Opening reception: Saturday 26 October, 5:30–7:30pm

Exhibition 26 October–14 December 2019

**Victoria Miro Venice**, Il Capricorno, San Marco 1994, 30124 Venice, Italy

Idris Khan  
*A fundamental pause*, 2019 (detail)  
Oil Based Ink, Glass and Aluminium  
165 x 140 x 18 cm, 65 x 55 1/8 x 7 1/8 in

### **Victoria Miro presents an exhibition of new paintings on glass by Idris Khan.**

Idris Khan is acclaimed for works in a variety of media that inhabit the space between abstraction and figuration, and speak to themes of history, cumulative experience and the metaphysical collapse of time into single, cohesive moments. For this latest body of work, Khan uses wood blocks, stamping oil-based ink on to the surface of panes of glass floating within an aluminium armature to create images of intense power and presence.

To create these new works, Khan stamps texts on to each pane of glass. In doing so, he gradually builds up a surface where words and phrases – a series of personal reflections by the artist often inspired by key philosophical and poetic texts – begin to break down as textual information, remaining legible only at the very edges of the composition. The resulting abstract radial compositions evoke forces of great energy.

Questions of repetition and superimposition have always been central to Khan's practice. The act of repetition and layering, meditative, at times even cathartic for the artist, invites a range of responses from the viewer. It is in this contemplative space that both the processes of Minimalist art and allusions to the role of repetition in the world's major religions are brought into focus – as a vehicle for transcendence and a conduit of the sublime. The philosophical and material qualities of these works, each completed in a different jewel tone, poised between transparency and opacity, and activated by the play of light across them, find special resonance in Venice with its centuries-old history of glass making.

## **New Publication**

The exhibition is accompanied by a special collectors' edition book, published by Victoria Miro, featuring an essay by Nick Hackworth.

## **About the artist**

Born in Birmingham in 1978, Idris Khan completed his Master's Degree at the Royal College of Art and lives and works in London. The survey exhibition *Idris Khan: A World Within* was held at The New Art Gallery Walsall in February 2017, with solo presentations of the artist's work previously staged at national and international institutional venues including the Whitworth Gallery, University of Manchester (2016– 2017 and 2012); Sadler's Wells, London (2011); Gothenburg Konsthall, Sweden (2011); Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto (2010); Kunsthaus Murz, Murzzuschlag, Austria (2010) and K20, Düsseldorf (2008). His work has also been included in group shows at the National Gallery of Art, Washington (2015); Bass Museum of Art, Miami (2014 - 2015); Tel Aviv Museum of Art (2014); Jeu de Paume, Paris (2013); Museum of Contemporary Art, Jacksonville, Florida (2013); The British Museum, London (2012); National Museum of Contemporary Art, Oslo (2012); Fundament Foundation, Tilburg (2011); Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York (2010); and Martin-Gropius Bau, Berlin (2009).

Commissions include a wall drawing commissioned by the British Museum in 2012 for its exhibition *Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam*. In addition, for the duration of the exhibition, Khan's monumental floor installation, *Seven Times*, was installed in the museum's Great Court. Also in 2012, The New York Times Magazine commissioned Khan to create a new body of work for its London issue. Focusing on the capital's most iconic buildings and structures, Khan's image of the London Eye featured on the cover. Khan's major commission for a permanent public monument, forming the centrepiece of the new Memorial Park in Abu Dhabi, was unveiled for UAE Commemoration Day in November 2016. In 2017, it received an American Architecture Prize.

Idris Khan's *21 Stones* is currently displayed in The Albukhary Foundation Islamic Gallery, which recently opened at the British Museum, London. *21 Stones* is the British Museum's first site-specific artwork.

Idris Khan was appointed an OBE for services to Art in the Queen's Birthday 2017 Honours List.

**A major new public sculpture for London by Khan, commissioned by St George's Plc with London Borough of Southwark as part of the development of One Blackfriars, will be on view in autumn 2019.**

## **For further press information please contact:**

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