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Kaleidoscope Eyes

Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian and Camille Utterback

April 4 - June 29, 2019

Opening Reception: Thursday, April 4, 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm



Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, *Untitled (Square)*, 2011
Mirror, reverse painted glass, plaster on wood
28 x 31.5 inches



Installation view of Camille Utterback, *Precarious*, 2018
Interactive installation
Dimensions variable
Photo by Jeff Malet

Haines Gallery is proud to present ***Kaleidoscope Eyes***, an exhibition bringing together the glittering mirrored mosaics of **Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian** and the interactive digital installations of **Camille Utterback**, creating a dialogue between these two internationally acclaimed artists. Through the use of geometric invention and computer code respectively, both Farmanfarmaian and Utterback produce works in which forms develop from a set of generative rules.

The elaborate mirrored mosaics by celebrated Iranian artist **Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian** (b. 1923, Qazvin, Iran; d. 2019, Tehran, Iran) recall both ancient Persian tradition and high Modernist abstraction. Each work comprises innumerable pieces of hand-cut mirrored and reverse painted glass, arranged into intricate curvilinear, rectilinear, and tessellated compositions. At the heart of these ornate, jewel-like works is a rigorous logic that guides the creation of complex patterns from the repetition of simple polygons, derived from the mathematic principles that have long informed Islamic design and Persian art and architecture.

Kaleidoscope Eyes features a selection of Farmanfarmaian's rare works from the early 1980s, when she was living in exile in New York in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution, as well as more recent pieces created following her return to Tehran in 2004. It includes three stunning, three-dimensional mosaics from her 2014 *Fifth Family* series, a set of related sculptures that are based on regular polygons: the triangle, the hexagon, and the heptagon. Each work is bound to the same generative and formal logic, with progressively intricate surface detailing. Mathematical precision gives way to wonder, as we find

our own reflections, and the reflections of others, in glimmering, multifaceted surfaces. Known as a visionary, charismatic, and uncompromising artist, Farmanfarmaian worked up until her recent death in April 2019, composing her complex geometries from her wheelchair even after she was no longer able to walk.

Farmanfarmaian's mirrored mosaics, which owe so much to ancient geometry and pre-digital technologies, are presented in dialogue with the cutting-edge digital works of **Camille Utterback** (b. 1970, lives and works San Francisco, CA), a MacArthur Award-winning artist whose interactive installations and reactive sculptures engage participants in a dynamic process of kinesthetic discovery and play. Through the use of custom-coded software, Utterback's works link computational systems to human movement and gesture. Overhead cameras respond to the position of the visitors within the installation space, translating the data into painterly forms that are projected onto the gallery wall. Essentially, each installation is an interactive painting, wherein algorithms generate live animations in response to audiences, constantly responding to and evolving with every movement.

Kaleidoscope Eyes includes the West Coast debut of Utterback's latest work, *Precarious* (2018). Commissioned by the National Portrait Gallery for their groundbreaking exhibition *Black Out*, *Precarious* is a contemporary reimagining of the historical practice of silhouette portraiture. Unlike the static profiles of traditional paper-cut silhouettes, in *Precarious*, our digital likeness is never fixed—Utterback's software creates colors and forms that are constantly evolving in response to our own movements, and to those of others in the space.

The exhibition borrows its title from the famed Beatles song *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*, and suggests both mathematic precision and dazzling optical effects. Bridging the contemporary and the traditional, the digital and handmade, *Kaleidoscope Eyes* presents an interactive and dynamic viewing experience, with artworks that shift and unfold in relation and reaction to the position of the viewer.

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Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian (b. 1923, Qazvin, Iran; d. 2019, Tehran, Iran) first received significant international attention at the 1958 Venice Biennale, leading to major exhibitions in Tehran, Paris, and New York. In recent years, her work has been exhibited in and collected by major international museums, including the Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY and Abu Dhabi, UAE; Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY; Chrysler Museum of Art, Norfolk, VA; Tate London, UK; and the Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK. In 2017, the Monir Museum opened in Tehran, celebrating her extraordinary career and ensuring the preservation of her artistic legacy in her home country. The artist passed away at her Tehran home in April 2019, aged 96.

Camille Utterback (b. 1970, lives and works in San Francisco, CA) is an award-winning digital artist whose works have been exhibited in and collected by leading institutions including the Stanford Art Gallery, CA; MASS MoCA, North Adams, MA; Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, D.C.; Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, NY; and the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, NY. She has public installations and commissions for the Sacramento and San Jose International Airports, CA; American Museum of Natural History, New York, NY; and Pittsburgh Children's Museum, PA, among others.