



**For Immediate Release:**  
**ARMITA RAAFAT | *TRACES AND SILENCES***

**September 8 - October 15, 2023**  
**Artist Reception: Friday, September 8, 5-8PM**

**High Noon** is pleased to present **Armita Raafat's** debut New York solo exhibition, ***Traces and Silences***. Formally and conceptually, Raafat's multimedia sculptures and handmade paper works assert a collaborative sensibility between cultures, movements, and crafts. Blending seemingly disparate forms and materials— such as Muqarnas from historic Islamic architecture and subway tiles from New York, where she lives and works— Raafat liberates structure and material from their static associations.

While a silence is a pause between events, a trace can be either a precursor to an event or what remains between an event and an eventual disappearance. The images they conjure in the mind— a trail, a flicker, or a fragment— are all part of Raafat's formal considerations, from the flash of light in a shard of painted antique glass to the negative wall space that activates the silhouettes. The push-and-pull of what is presented versus what is latent or transient in the work welcomes discovery and deliberation.

By utilizing found and hand-crafted objects interchangeably, Raafat opens up the potential for multiple reads that operate as a framework of contradictions contained within a single work, exploring the interplay of opposites through material metaphor. Maintaining a tension between past and present, classic and contemporary, low-brow and high-brow, she builds on the legacy of movements like Arte Povera and post-minimalism, addressing the hierarchy of media throughout art history, which is inextricably linked to class and access.

The Muqarnas in Raafat's sculptures are cast resin rather than the traditional materials that date back to the 11th century. The styrofoam and iridescent fabrics that accompany glass mosaic and tiles in the structural facades are handled with such acuity that the viewer's mind bridges the gaps in the media. This dissimulation elevates craft beyond the domestic and commercial contexts in which it's been precariously canonized. By vacillating between when to engage and when to reject classical modalities, Raafat's work manages to exist unassumingly outside of time. Light shifts at different vantage points, imbuing the works with an ephemeral quality, simultaneously coming into, and going out of, being.

The handmade paper works were started from a residency at Dieu Donne in 2021. They fuse layers of dyed pulp embedded with segments of khoos doozi, a style of embroidery traditional to the Hormozgan Province in southern Iran, originally used to embellish garments. Raafat is working directly with women on Qeshm Island to create patterns which are deconstructed and collaged into architectural compositions that recall cellular structures, art deco, science fiction, and 8-bit forms. The delicacy of the pulp elicits a unique physical response; it's a dynamic material, inherently carrying its own traces of tactile energy.

Though not specifically autobiographical, ***Traces and Silences*** as a whole carries the authority of someone whose aesthetic sensibility has been shaped by a continuous inquiry of what it means to exist between two cultures with a complex ideological tension. Raafat's ability to visually articulate ambiguity within the system she has developed welcomes the viewer's projections free of didactic influence.

**Armita Raafat** is a New York-based sculptor and installation artist. Born in Chicago and raised in Iran, she earned a BFA from Al-Zahra University in Tehran and an MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. She has exhibited nationally and internationally including at the MCA Chicago, the Bronx Museum of the Arts, the Children's Museum of Manhattan, the Noyes Museum of Art, New Jersey; Pavel Zoubok Gallery, New York; Dorsky Gallery, New York; Art in Buildings; New York and Florida; HORSEANDPONY Fine Arts, Berlin; and Al-Zahra University, Tehran. Raafat received the Peter S. Reed Foundation grant for Sculpture and a NYFA fellowship for Crafts/Sculpture. She has been in residence at LMCC Swing Space, AIM at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, Winter Workspace at Wave Hill, and Workspace Program at Dieu Donne. She currently has a studio with the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts in New York.

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