



Triple Disk Lotus (Here I Have Returned), hand cut paper, ink, gold leaf, acrylic paint, 2018. Courtesy of the artist / Photo: Panic Studio LA



Azbakeya (Sun Disk), hand cut paper, gold leaf, acrylic paint, 2018. Courtesy of the artist / Photo: Panic Studio LA



Bint al-Nil, brass, wood, acrylic paint, color pencil, gold leaf, 2018. Courtesy of the artist / Photo: Panic Studio LA

SHERIN GUIRGUIS: OF THORNS AND LOVE

SEPTEMBER 30, 2018 – JANUARY 6, 2019

LOS ANGELES — The Craft & Folk Art Museum announces ***Sherin Guirguis: Of Thorns and Love***, the first solo museum exhibition in Los Angeles of the Egyptian-born, L.A.-based artist. Known for her investigations into **marginalized and forgotten histories**, Guirguis' new body of work represents her focused exploration of Egyptian feminist activist and poet Doria Shafik (1908-1975). Shafik was instrumental in securing political rights for women in Egypt, but her legacy has been erased by generations of governmental leadership. For this exhibition, Guirguis presents **paper-cut paintings, sculptures, and a site-specific adobe structure** that make visible Shafik's place in history, collective memory, and in contemporary feminism. Curated by CAFAM exhibitions curator Holly Jerger, *Sherin Guirguis: Of Thorns and Love* is on view from September 30, 2018 through January 6, 2019.

"Sherin Guirguis is an important L.A. artist whose work thoughtfully reflects on feminist histories," says **CAFAM executive director Suzanne Isken**. "Her abstract work elegantly merges concept-based art with handcraft practices, and we are so pleased to present her first solo museum exhibition in L.A."

"Sherin's work is crucial because she is collecting, preserving, and bringing awareness to histories that will likely fade away as time goes on," says **CAFAM exhibitions curator Holly Jerger**. "She also presents **a necessary expansion to the Western-focused discourse surrounding feminism and contemporary art** in the United States. Her research and visual work beautifully discredits the prevailing notion that feminism is only a Western construct or that it cannot exist within Muslim-majority regions of the world."

Guirguis gives presence to Doria Shafik by using architecture, site, and ornamentation to represent significant moments in Shafik's activist history. A series of three paper paintings called *Azbakeya* (2018) represent the gate surrounding Cairo's Azbakeya Gardens, where Shafik gave her first feminist speech in 1928. Guirguis has hand-cut the design of the garden's gate into the paper and woven in Shafik's poems as calligraphic text, alternately using gold leaf and deep indigo paint. The indigo palette throughout the gallery space references the Nile River, which appears as a significant motif in Shafik's poetry and in ancient Egyptian culture.

Shafik famously stormed the Egyptian Parliament in 1951 with over a thousand women, demanding women's political rights. This act is represented in the paintings *Storming Parliament I/II* (2018), with hand-cut details of Parliament's gate awash with deep indigo. The standing sculpture *Bint al-Nil* (2018) is named after the women's political party and journal that Shafik founded.

In recent years, Guirguis has been integrating adobe architecture into her installations, based on the SuperAdobe method of sustainable building invented by Iranian-American architect Nader Khalili (1936-2008). The adobe structure she builds for *Of Thorns and Love* will capture the spirit of the Egyptian desert and serve as an interactive space of reflection.



Storming Parliament II, hand cut paper, ink, acrylic paint, 2018. Courtesy of the artist / Photo: Panic Studio LA

Sherin Guirguis was born in Luxor, Egypt (b. 1974) and immigrated to the United States in 1988. She earned a B.A. in painting and sculpture from the College of Creative Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara in 1997 and an M.F.A. in painting from University of Nevada, Las Vegas in 2001. Her work has been exhibited in group and solo exhibitions across the United States, Europe, and the Middle East, including *Islamic Art Now* at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (2016), CA; *The Avant-Garde Collection* (2014) and *California Biennial* (2010) at the Orange County Museum of Art, CA; and *Color Dialogues* at the Sharjah Art Museum in the United Arab Emirates. She was also included in *We Must Risk Delight: Twenty Artists from Los Angeles*, an official collateral exhibition for the Venice Biennale, Italy and the *Desert X Biennial* in Coachella Valley, CA.

OPENING RECEPTION

An opening reception for *Sherin Guirguis: Of Thorns and Love* takes place on Saturday, October 6 from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m. The reception is free for CAFAM members and open to the public for a \$12 entry fee.

CREDITS

This exhibition is sponsored by the Fellows of Contemporary Art (FOCA).

CATALOGUE

The exhibition is accompanied by a fully-illustrated catalogue with essays by Andy Campbell, assistant professor of critical studies at the University of Southern California; Heba El Kayal, independent journalist based in Egypt; Holly Jerger, exhibitions curator at CAFAM; and Anuradha Vikram, artistic director at 18th Street Arts Center. The catalogue will be available at the CAFAM Shop or at cafamshop.org.

LIMITED EDITION PRINT

A limited edition print by Sherin Guirguis will be available for sale through the CAFAM Shop. The silkscreen and gold leaf print was produced at Self Help Graphics & Art.

PROGRAMS

CAFAM will offer exhibition-related workshops and events in conjunction with the exhibition, including CraftNight on the first Thursday of the month from 7:00 – 9:30 p.m. and CraftLab family workshops on the second Sunday of each month from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Artist Talk with Sherin Guirguis

Sunday, November 18 | 1:00 p.m.

Political Poster Workshop with Sherin Guirguis

Saturday, December 8 | Time TBD

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