

LUIS DE JESUS LOS ANGELES

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SHERIN GUIRGUIS: *A'aru // Field of Reeds: Gathering*

November 4 – December 22, 2023

Opening Reception: Saturday, November 4th, 4:00 to 7:00 PM.

Luis De Jesus Los Angeles is very pleased to announce **SHERIN GUIRGUIS: *A'aru // Field of Reeds: Gathering***, an exhibition of carved paper, mixed-media paintings. This will be the artist's first solo exhibition with the gallery, and her first in Los Angeles since 2018. The exhibition will be on view from November 4 through December 22, 2023. An opening reception will be held on Saturday, November 4th from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Sherin Guirguis' new works are an expansion of *A'aru // Field of Reeds* which the Egyptian-American artist exhibited during her 2023 residency at Shangri La Museum of Islamic Art, Culture & Design in Honolulu, Hawaii. Continuing her dialogue with contemporary and historical antecedents, Guirguis posits cultural identity and intersectional feminisms through an integration of oral histories, abstracted motifs and a consideration of minimalism and ornamentation in Egyptian aesthetics.

In this series, Guirguis draws inspiration from communal gatherings which she participated in during the COVID-19 lockdown—organized and guided by artist Amitis Motevalli—in which she and a group of women and women-identifying artists, poets, writers, and activists, from different backgrounds took turns reading Farīd al-Dīn Aṭṭār's 12th-century Sufi poem, *The Conference of the Birds (Manṭeq al-tayr)*. This epic Persian narrative tells the story of a group of birds who set out to find God and enlightenment. They journey through seven mystical valleys, each of which requires the birds to confront some inner weakness and moral failing.

Throughout the centuries, the poem has been adopted by generations of artists, writers, and poets who, inspired by their own search for meaning, beauty and truth, find a deeper universal message of personal development and discovery within their communities. In *A'aru // Field of Reeds: Gathering*, we experience the transformation in Guirguis' artistic practice which was formed from these simple acts of communal care. The artist channels her ancestors, personal experiences, and agency as a woman to draw parallels between Aṭṭār's story of self-awareness and kinship, and the mythologies of ancient Egypt's sacred birds. Guirguis transforms designs of centuries-old Egyptian dovecotes (giant earthen towers built to house pigeons) into abstracted avian forms, bringing to light overlooked and silenced voices.

The works employ an array of sumptuous inks, watercolors, opaque gouaches, and gold leaf on layers of hand-cut paper that are floated on painted panels—each work embodying an intimate vessel. The carved paper holds a distinguished presence with intricate patterns revealing an inner glow. Through these meditative and shifting patterns, adapted from ancient Egyptian architectural and literary motifs, Guirguis examines the intricate ties between people, collective trauma, and her newfound pursuits in understanding the past and envisioning the future.

Sherin Guirguis (b. 1974, Luxor, Egypt) obtained her MFA in painting from the University of Nevada in 2001 and her BA in art from the College of Creative Studies at the University of California Santa Barbara in 1997. Guirguis' work has recently been featured in solo museum exhibitions nationally and internationally, including *A'aru//Field of Reeds: Chapter I* at Honolulu Museum of Art, Honolulu, HI, and an artist residency with a site-specific installation, *A'aru//Field of Reeds: Chapter II* with the Doris Duke Foundation at the Shangri La Museum, Honolulu, HI; *Here I Have Returned*, The Minnesota Museum of American Art, St Paul, MN; *Bint El*

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Nil, Tahrir Cultural Center, American University, Cairo, Egypt; *We Must Risk Delight*, Official Collateral Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy; *Of Thorns and Love*, Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA.

Guirguis has exhibited site-specific installations at internationally recognized sites, including, *Forever Is Now*, *Art D'Égypte*, UNESCO World Heritage Site: Pyramids of Giza, Cairo, Egypt; *Desert X Biennial*, *AlUla*, Saudi Arabia; and *One I Call*, *Desert X Biennial*, Palm Springs, CA. Notable group exhibitions include *Women Defining Women in Contemporary Art of the Middle East and Beyond*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA; a public art commission for METRO Los Angeles, Aviation Station, K Line, Los Angeles, CA; *Converging Lines: Tracing the Artistic Lineage of the Arab Diaspora in the U.S.*, Middle East Institute Gallery, Washington, DC; US Expo Pavilion, Dubai 2020, Dubai, UAE; *Making Time*, Craft Contemporary, Los Angeles, CA. Guirguis has been awarded several prestigious grants and fellowships, including the Zumberge Diversity and Equity Award 2021, the 2014–2015 City of Los Angeles Individual Artist Fellowship, the 2012 California Community Foundation Visual Artist Fellowship, and the Investing in Artists Grant from the Center for Cultural Innovation.

For further information, including images and previews, please call 213-395-0762, or email: gallery@luisdejesus.com.

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