

The European Azerbaijan Society – PRESS RELEASE



ZANN: AN EXHIBITION OF PAINTINGS AND DRAWINGS BY AZERBAIJANI ARTIST KABIRA ALIEVA



ZANN unites a collection of drawings and paintings by Kabira Alieva, the Azerbaijani artist, who brings her second solo show in the UK to a wide London audience in a quest to visually engage, educate, introduce and explore Azerbaijani identity, superimposed on a British cultural canvas. This exhibition is sponsored by The European Azerbaijan Society.

As ever, Kabira's work is charged with an ethnic undercurrent of stylised dynamic imagery, and vibrant play of line, colour and texture. Paintings breathe with soul and messages, either the artist's, or of something bigger and more powerful. Relief surface textures tease the viewer with tactile sensations for the eyes, enhancing engagement with the energy and meaning of the work.

Building on Kabira's recent solo exhibition in Azerbaijan, which explored the theme of the Zoroastrian influence on Azerbaijani culture, here Kabira presents drawings on papyrus and paper that hint at the mystical and ancient beliefs that constitute integral elements of the distinctive Azerbaijani ethnicity.

ZANN or 'zənn' is a word sometimes used in the Azerbaijani language, but is arguably derived from Arabic. Although generally used to signify 'an inkling', 'guess', or 'presumption', interestingly the *Qu'ran* describes it as a presumption of truth in a charge, although the evidence does not necessarily amount to conviction. Entitling this exhibition ZANN is a mild experiment: it is meant to evoke thought and enquiry, challenging the viewer to draw meaning from the works that they see, given enough visual evidence or not, thus sometimes resorting to their soulful inner selves. It is an experiment to see what 'presumptions' the British public will derive from this 'visiting' artwork, and how Azerbaijanis living far from their home country will reconnect with anything visually or emotionally familiar. ZANN will be accompanied by music from *UnVeiled*, the first record by the Sabina Rakcheyeva Ensemble, with a booklet illustrated by Kabira.

Kabira Alieva was born in Baku, Azerbaijan, and started drawing from the tender age of three. Drawing became an integral part of her life and has accompanied her studies in art and biological sciences. Kabira's work was also strengthened by various cultural influences, as her family moved from Azerbaijan to Turkey, and finally settled in the UK. Kabira currently lives and works in London. Her work has been exhibited in Azerbaijan, Turkey, Switzerland and the UK, and is kept in many private collections.

Exhibition: ZANN – An exhibition of paintings and drawings by Azerbaijani artist Kabira Alieva
Venue: Mall Galleries, The Mall,
London, SW1

Dates: 5–10 September 2011
Monday, Wednesday–Saturday 1000–1700hrs
Tuesday 1000–1930hrs
Private view: 5 September 1800–2100hrs
www.kabira-alieva.com

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