

# ROSE ISSA PROJECTS

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## PRESS RELEASE: PERSIAN FOR BEGINNERS

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### Rose Issa Projects

82 Great Portland Street, London W1W 7NW

Tuesday to Friday: 12noon - 6pm - Saturday: 1- 5 pm or by appointment

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**Maliheh Afnan - Parastou Forouhar - Taraneh Hemami - Hossein Valamanesh - Nassiem Valamanesh**

For Rose Issa Projects' first exhibition in new premises at 82 Great Portland Street we are exhibiting the work of five Iranian artists now living in Australia, California, Frankfurt and London. Each one expresses feelings of longing and belonging in subtle, beautiful, humorous and poetic ways.

**Hossein Valamanesh** followed the advice of an aboriginal artist to paint his story in *Learning to Read* (1995). This work has two components: 20 paper cut-outs of *Heech (No-thing)* facing 20 watercolour drawings of everyday objects or animals. It is a wonderful visual response to cultural misunderstanding. Though his work is usually conceptual and public art-oriented, his more "Persian" pieces are exhibited here, such as the bronze *Say No Thing* (2004) from Rumi's verses, *Big Love*, painted in saffron because love is madness and madness is yellow.

**Nassiem Valamanesh**, Hossein Valamanesh's son, combines photography, animation, text and bold imagery in his short video, *Distant Words*. This tells the story about the isolation and abandonment that comes when you lose your voice, travelling through your father's country but unable to speak its language. This work continues his engagement with themes of longing and loneliness – on this occasion the yearning or search is not for a loved one or a place but for the ability to communicate and speak one's mind.

**Taraneh Hemami's** small-format waxed paintings, *Counting the Years* and *Recounting*, are about the different times, numbers and scripts that one has to adapt to in foreign lands. Her work explores the complex cultural politics of exile through personal and collective narratives, virtual space, layers of history and projects.

**Maliheh Afnan's** *Veiled* series of drawings reveal more than they hide, hinting at names, places and, more recently, silences. Her many emigrations, far from the homeland where she never lived, have resulted in works that recall ancient relics, past times, and lost words and landscapes. Her *Veiled Agendas*, *Veiled Lies* and *Veiled Emotions* suggest that men and women throughout the world veil a part of themselves in some way, not only some Islamic women. Her mixed-media drawings, such as *Once Upon a Page*, hint at all the stories to be told - true tales and silenced tales.

**Parastou Forouhar's** *Persian for Beginners* is a series of 12 zoomorphic calligraphical prints that refer to a period in the 1990s when she was a member of a German-based artists' collective. At the time she was obliged to delineate her artistic territory and become more "Persian" – a challenge accompanied by feelings of affiliation and strangeness, which she turned into a source of creativity. their artworks.