

**Diana Al-Hadid: *Falcon's Fortress*
September 16 – October 21, 2017**

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present *Falcon's Fortress*, Diana Al-Hadid's third solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition brings together sculpture, works on Mylar, and the artist's largest presentation of wall panels seen in New York, all of which are created by layered drips of material that form both their physicality and imagery. These seemingly frozen drips conjure an illusory space where landscape and architecture meld and objects dematerialize and generate simultaneously. For *Falcon's Fortress* Al-Hadid looks to the past, resurrecting ingenious contraptions while reminding us of the contributions of intrepid scholars from the Islamic Golden Age and beyond.

Al-Hadid returns to an interest sparked seven years ago in innovations in early time-telling devices, namely those perfected by the 13th century inventor and genius Al-Jazari, and outlined in his "Book of Knowledge of Ingenious Mechanical Devices." Where she previously took inspiration from him for the creation of a fictional water clock, for this show she closely examined his candle clock devices, which measure the passage of time by the decreasing weight and shortening length of candlesticks. For one such work, Al-Hadid constructed the core operational elements of the "Candle Clock of the Swordsman," adding her own design modifications to expose the internal mechanics for audiences to view. Al-Hadid activated the clock timed to the August 2017 solar eclipse, honoring the long history of Islamic scholars and astronomers, who established observatories as early as the 9th century C.E. The activation of the clock concurrently memorialized this rare event and completed the sculpture as "candle wax"—actually made with gypsum—overflowed onto the work. The alteration of the "candle wax" reflects the artist's continued play with material illusion.

Al-Hadid's unique process of controlled dripping and pooling of materials is seen clearly in her wall panels. With the panels, the structure and the skin of the work are one. In effect the brushstroke precedes the canvas, with the painted image diligently reinforced and the voids created as a result of areas left unpainted. For the works in *Falcon's Fortress*, Al-Hadid rotated her panels in the process of making, causing the drips to flow in different directions as she builds up the scenes, appearing as if woven. The resultant work is somewhere between tapestry and fresco, the image carefully stitched together and the material permeated by pigment. Architectural forms and landscapes disappear into abstraction as quickly as they emerge, drawing the viewer into a liminal space between the two.

For this series of panels, Al-Hadid looked to another Islamic polymath, the 15th-century, Bosnian-born Matrakçı Nasuh. A renowned mathematician, cartographer, and swordsman, Nasuh was also a celebrated miniaturist who traveled with the Ottoman army painting highly detailed panoramic views of the cities and suburbs between Istanbul and Baghdad, and other territories on his expeditions. His delicate collection, "Menazilname," was a vividly painted catalogue of the various edifices, campsites, waterways, flora, and fauna that populated the Empire. One such depiction is of the Citadel that dominates the city of Aleppo, the artist's birthplace, which Al-Hadid casts and bends to form a "sheath" or protective fortress around the internal mechanisms of another of Al-Jazari's candle clocks, in which balls measuring the passage of time fall through a sculpted falcon. Placed at the center of the exhibition, the sculpture connects to the other works through the recurring image of the falcon, which plays the role of observer, documentarian, and perhaps even guardian. When viewed together, the falcon appears to alight from the clock traveling through the various lands, on a journey through history and ingenuity.

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

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Diana Al-Hadid was born in Aleppo, Syria in 1981. She was raised in Ohio, and currently lives in Brooklyn. Al-Hadid's work has been the subject of one-person exhibitions at the Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Nasher Sculpture Center, Dallas; Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond; NYUAD Art Gallery, Abu Dhabi; Newcomb Art Museum at Tulane University, New Orleans; Jaffe-Friede Gallery at Dartmouth College, Hanover; Mills College Art Museum, Oakland; and San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, among others. Her work has also been included in group exhibitions at Saatchi Gallery, France; Thessaloniki State Museum of Contemporary Art, Greece; The Flag Art Foundation, New York; Barjeel Art Foundation, UAE; MASS MoCA, North Adams; Haugar Art Museum, Norway; Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa; John Berggruen Gallery, San Francisco; and deCordova Sculpture Park and Museum, Lincoln, among many others. She received a BFA in Sculpture and a BA in Art History from Kent State University (2003), an MFA in sculpture from Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond (2005), and attended the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, Skowhegan, Maine (2007).

Falcon's Fortress will be presented from September 16 through October 21 in the gallery's 509 W. 24th Street location. For more information about Diana Al-Hadid, please contact Gallery Partner Serra Pradhan at serra@boeskygallery.com or 212.680.9889. For exhibit press inquiries, please contact Alina Sumajin, PAVE Communications and Consulting, at alina@paveconsult.com or 646-369-2050.

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