

## Grey Noise, Dubai

### **PRESS RELEASE**

*Assemblage; 1980 – 1985*  
Hossein Valamanesh

March 16 – April 25, 2015

Hossein Valamanesh's works are composed of elemental substances: earth and water, light and dark, heaviness and lightness are brought into a precise formal harmony that belies their conceptual complexity.

*Assemblage; 1980 - 1985*, the artist's second solo presentation at Grey Noise, gathers together many of the persistent preoccupations of his career: how the individual locates themselves in relation to their environment, ephemeral and material encounters with the world and an exuberant desire for connection, each traceable to Rumi's influence on the artist.

In each work, visual conversations are initiated, and the viewer experiences a dynamic encounter with the world. This dynamism is guaranteed in works that appear poised precariously: pyramids of taut ropes, a low-relief cube that tricks the eye, water suspended above the gallery floor. The harmony of geometry is the counterbalance to the ephemeral – accurate without becoming stagnant.

Structured by tension, works like *Pyramids with Light (1982)* and *Suspended Water Level (1982)* gesture skywards but are also bound to the earth. *Light Within II (1982)* describes a place of lightness: softly veiled and swaddled, the impossibly suspended oil-burner is the locus and, like the moth's committed, frustrated dance, the viewer is compelled to draw close, but will always be situated beyond reach. This desire occupies *The Untouchable* also, in which singed bamboo reaches across a vast black void, aching towards the central flame. At the circumference sand, collected in ceramic bowls, is the grounding, the earthly balance, which yearns towards an unknowable, mystic core.

Opening up a space for play, Valamanesh establishes immaculately constructed, yet precariously balanced sites for contemplation and encounter. That which is evasive and ephemeral, found between the transcendental and the every day, is distilled and made tangible.

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### **About the Artist**

*b. 1949, Tehran, Iran / Lives and works in Adelaide, South Australia*

Hossein Valamanesh graduated from the School of fine art in Tehran in 1970. Between 1968 and 1971, he worked with the renowned theatre director, the late Bijan Mofid. He later immigrated to Australia in 1973 arriving in Perth. In 1974, he travelled to central Australia with Round Earth Company where he worked with Aboriginal children at a number of different settlements for four months. In 1975, he commenced further studies in visual arts at the South Australian School of Art, and since graduating; he has exhibited frequently in Australia and overseas including Germany, Poland, Finland, Japan, UAE and UK.

He has completed a number of major public art commissions including Knocking from the Inside (1989), Adelaide; You just sit here... FARET Tachikawa (1994), Tokyo. His collaborations with Angela Valamanesh include An Gorta Mor, memorial to the Great Irish Famine (1999), Hyde Park Barracks, Sydney; 14 Pieces on North Terrace, in Adelaide and also completed the Ginkgo Gate, a new western entrance to the Botanic Gardens, (2009 – 2010), Adelaide.

Hossein has received numerous awards – the most recent being the *Adelaide Film Festival Art + Moving Image commission* in 2015. He also received the *Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship* in Washington DC in 2014, the *Australia Council Fellowship* in 1998 and the *Australia Council Residency* in Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin in 1991.

A monograph on his work, written by Paul Carter, was published in 1996 by Art & Australia and a major survey of his work was held at the Art Gallery of South Australia in mid 2001 with an accompanying catalogue which included essays by Sarah Thomas, Ian North & Paul Carter. A survey of his work was also held at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney in 2002. In 2011, a monograph titled *Hossein Valamanesh, Out of nothingness*, was published by Wakefield Press with essays by Mary Knights and Ian North.

In 2007, he had completed a residency at Aomori Contemporary Art Center in Japan and a number of his works were shown in Prism, Contemporary Art from Australia at the Bridgestone Art Museum, Tokyo. He completed the stage design for *When the Rain Stops Falling* in collaboration with Brink Productions, Andrew Bovell and Quinton Grant that was first performed in 2008 Adelaide Festival of Arts.

His work is included in most major public Australian art collections and was acquired by the Kadist Art Foundation in Paris in 2014.