

# The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth

presents

Sounds Modern

## *The Home of My Ears*

music to celebrate the art of Shirin Neshat

Saturday, May 15, 2021, 2:00 pm

Modern Art Museum auditorium

### Program

***Vestiges*** – flute, violin, viola, cello (2017)

Aida Shirazi (b. 1987)

***Situation IV – Io E iO*** – prepared violin (2016/17)

Anahita Abbasi (b. 1985)

***Halos*** – alto saxophone and electronics (2019)

Martyna Kosecka (b. 1989)

***Oscillating Alizadeh*** – electronic work (2020)

Kimia Koochakzadeh-Yazdi: Electronics

Mahmood Schricker: Electric Setar

Reza Moghaddas: Mix and Mastering

———— ten minute intermission ————

***Ruba’i*** – electronic work (2020)

Martyna Kosecka

***The Starts and the Stops*** – piccolo and electronics (2019)

Kimia Koochakzadeh-Yazdi (b. 1997)

***Kitchen*** – voice and electronics (2017)

Bahar Royaei (b. 1992)

***White Helmets as white as death*** – flute, violin, viola (2017)

Niloufar Nourbakhsh (b. 1992)

### Performers

Sarah Ruth Alexander, voice

Kathleen Crabtree, viola

Mia Detwiler, violin

Stephen Lucas, electronics

Andrew May, violin, electronics (Sounds Modern assistant director)

Elizabeth McNutt, flutes (Sounds Modern director)

Kourtney Newton, cello

Kyle Stec, alto saxophone

## Notes

Shirin Neshat presents personal, political, and mythical narratives through images of the human form and calligraphy. Contemporary Iranian women composers embody parallel narratives through sound, human performance, and the calligraphy of music notation. To celebrate the Modern's exhibition of Neshat's works, including her series *The Home of My Eyes*, Sounds Modern presents *The Home of My Ears*, showcasing the tremendous range and inventiveness of artists in the Iranian Female Composers' Association.

## Vestiges

"Vestiges" is a surreal miniature inspired by the myth of Orpheus. I have borrowed some melodies from Claudio Monteverdi and Christoph Willibald Gluck's operas. I associate the flute with Gluck's *Melodie*, and the lyric quality of the *Melodie* to Orpheus, who could charm everyone and everything with his singing. The brief passages from Monteverdi's *Orpheus* belong to a recitative from the second act of the opera, where Orpheus grieves the death of Eurydice and promises to bring her back to life. I have always found the music and words of this recitative particularly beautiful. Orpheus sings: "... if my songs have any power at all, I will surely descend to the deepest abyss and ... will bring you back with me to see the stars again... Farewell, earth! Farewell, sky, and sun, farewell!" I have permuted the melodic materials by breaking them into small fragments, modifying their intervals and contours, disrupting their continuity, and obscuring them through timbral effects. – Aida Shirazi

## Situation IV – Io E iO

In *Situation IV* the strings of the violin are partially prepared with Blu-tac, which will allow us to enter into a whole new sound world. *Io E iO* is a manifestation of "dialogical self," of a musician with himself, a multiplicity of "self-positions," and infusion of external and internal dialogues in different kinds of situations. The work is an observation on the subject of "how and/if we are able to change identities with adding something to someone" ... At the same time, it is also highlighting the phenomena of "anything could be beautiful, special & even pleasant." We are the ones who define everything around us, giving identities and "labels." In fact, nothing is entirely fixed and pre-destined. We have the power to change everything because everything around us is constantly changing and is never still. – Anahita Abbasi

## Halos

*Hálōs*, a word originating from the Greek language, is the name for a family of optical phenomena produced by light interacting with ice crystals suspended in the atmosphere. The composition *Hálōs* cherishes the aspect of reappearing repetitive and variable motivic structures, bending - like the light structures in the interaction with crystals - this time, in their microintervallic web of sound connections. The elusiveness of the process, stubborn returns of already familiar musical patterns, is reconfigured with each repetition and creates a new network of ever-changing timbral landscapes. – Martyna Kosecka

## Oscillating Alizadeh

This piece is an "oscillation" on a piece by Hossein Alizadeh and it is our take on the *Dastgah* of *Chahargah* (arguably one of the most unique modes that is only heard in Iran). We have sought to interweave the past with the present, the acoustic with the electronic, and the known with the unknown. *Oscillating Alizadeh* is the exploration of a discovered world. – Kimia Koochakzadeh-Yazdi

## Ruba'i

*Ruba'i* is a type of short poem consisting of four lines, popular especially in classical Persian poetry. In this composition, I have used four different types of voices, reciting *Rubaiyat* by the Persian poet Omar Khayyam, and transformed the original material into a certain musical odyssey of sounds. Although the meaning of the texts is very close to my heart, I do not approach the material of Khayyam's poetry strictly semantically; I want to treat it purely sonically and create a specific color narrative, a sort of experimental phrasing by manipulating the arrangement of the particles of the musical material, in a

sense dreamed-up, imaginary, and rewritten poetry verses. The very form of the piece also refers to the quatrain, with the usually contrasting third hemistich of *rubaiyat*, which in this composition is a kind of dreamlike suspension of the musical action. – Martyna Kosecka

### **The Starts and the Stops**

We are humans capable of constructing our own mindsets and thoughts. In our everyday lives we face concepts that we do not necessarily resonate with; in times like that, we can take those ideas and shape them in a way that would fit our own psyche. *The Starts and Stops* deforms the foreseen sonic world of the piccolo and creates one of its own. – Kimia Koochakzadeh-Yazdi

### **Kitchen**

*Kitchen* is the result of a close collaboration with vocalist Felicia Chen. A well-known Kurdish lullaby from northwest Iran is deconstructed and reconstructed in this piece, moving through exploration of phonemes derived from the text, resonant space, vowel filters, and speed of airflow. The vocal sounds are supplemented with recorded sounds from a kitchen, an important place of family gathering in Iran. The composer envisions her mother sitting in her kitchen in Iran, thinking of her daughter. The text is derived from a poem by exiled poet Yadollah Royaei, who has a collection of poems that depict tombstones for various people; he wrote this poem for his best friend, Forugh Farrokhzad, who is the most famous female contemporary poet in Iran. *With every step of yours, I become divorced from the soil. One sip of the loam, and plowing is reminiscent of the horizon.* – Bahar Royaei

### **White Helmets as white as death**

Khalid Farah, former builder  
Abu Omar, former blacksmith  
Mohammed Farah, former tailor

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These are some of the names of nearly 3000 volunteers who work for the White Helmets organization, and they have saved more than 82,000 civilian lives in the mercenary-controlled Syria since 2014. Their motto is: “to save a life is to save all of humanity.” In this piece, I aimed to depict the most beautiful nature of this organization: to remain a human under the most inhumane conditions of war, which brings nothing but a thick blanket of destruction, death, and hopelessness. I searched for beauty in the most extreme and intense instrumental ranges of violin, viola, and flute, because the White Helmets have taught me that we must never give up hope. No matter how extreme the environment is, we must always fight for what’s right. – Niloufar Nourbaksh

### **Sounds Modern**

The most up-to-the-minute and least predictable concert music series in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, Sounds Modern has been exploring links between contemporary music and visual arts for over a decade. Conceived and directed by virtuoso flutist Elizabeth McNutt in collaboration with The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Sounds Modern adds a sonic dimension to the ideas represented in the galleries, and brings the artwork to life in the concert hall. McNutt also directs the Nova new music ensemble at the University of North Texas, where she teaches in the flute and composition areas. Sounds Modern assistant director Andrew May is on the UNT composition faculty.

### **Acknowledgments**

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