

TRACY WILLIAMS, LTD

NEW YORK

ALYSSA PHEOBUS MUMTAZ

*GHOSTS OF THE GREAT HIGHWAY*

12 SEPTEMBER - 11 OCTOBER 2014

RECEPTION: 12 SEPTEMBER, 6-8 PM



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tracy Williams, Ltd. is pleased to announce *Ghosts of the Great Highway*, Alyssa Pheobus Mumtaz's third exhibition with the gallery. Taking archaeology and the interior life of artifacts as points of departure, the works assembled in the exhibition reflect the artist's peripatetic movements between cultural landscapes and modes of representation. Since 2009 her practice has become increasingly seasonal and nomadic, responding to the circumstances of her frequent travels through South Asia, Europe and the American west. Juxtaposing monumental works with intimate, manuscript-sized paintings on paper, the exhibition presents a first look at new possibilities emerging within Pheobus Mumtaz's oeuvre.

Moving fluidly between abstraction and allegory, Pheobus Mumtaz's graphic language is steeped in mythological and cosmological analogies. Her recent work meditates on the metaphysical symbolism of travel and the fact that every passage--spatial, temporal or ontological--is a confrontation with the ever-present reality of death.

Many of the artist's recent works take inspiration from burial sites discovered along the historic Silk Road that once stretched from China to the Mediterranean. *Travelers*, a new series of drawings composed on surfaces of watermarked handmade paper and

handwoven tussar silk, suggest fragmentary textile relics and abstracted human traces. A frieze-like companion work, *Longboat*, presents an enormous pictographic vessel evocative of ship burials uncovered in ancient Britain and Scandinavia.

On a more intimate scale, Pheobus Mumtaz employs materials and techniques culled from the traditions of sacred book arts. *Constellations*, a suite of 11 paintings selected from a larger ongoing series, depicts prayer beads using 24-karat illuminator's gold on burnished handmade indigo paper. Like luminous artifacts, the beads are arranged in graceful shapes that recall guiding stars, calligraphic letterforms and cyclical paths through space.

Born in Maryland in 1982, Alyssa Pheobus Mumtaz attended Yale University (2004) and completed her MFA at Columbia's School of the Arts (2008). Her work has been exhibited worldwide, including recent solo exhibitions at Jhaveri Contemporary, Mumbai, India (2014); Tracy Williams, Ltd., New York, NY (2012, 2009); La Caja Blanca, Palma de Mallorca, Spain (2012); and Bellwether, New York, NY (2009). Many of the works in the exhibition were made possible through the support of the Santa Fe Art Institute, the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation. A selection from her new project, *Constellations*, will be included in the upcoming *Art on Paper 2014: The 43rd Exhibition* at the Weatherspoon Art Museum in Greensboro, North Carolina. She currently lives and works between Charlottesville, Virginia and Lahore, Pakistan.

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