

## A Journey to Mazandaran

Curated by David Galloway | 25 April – 27 May 2017 at Beck & Eggeling in Dusseldorf

Mazandaran, gelim, mid 20th century, 375 x 207 cm © Teppichkunst Hirschberg, Cologne



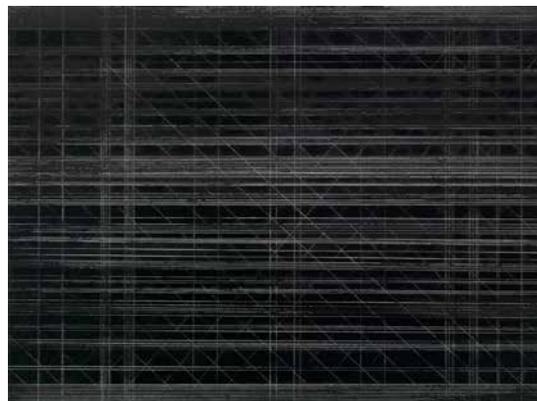
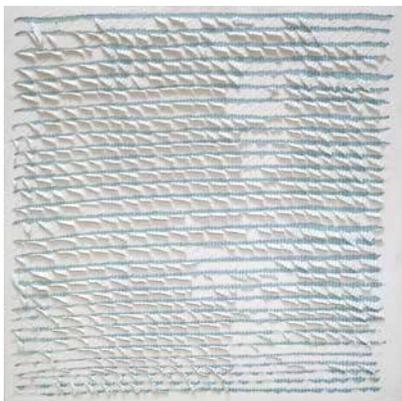
Beck & Eggeling International Fine Art presents “The Journey to Mazandaran”, an exhibition curated by David Galloway. The exceptional concept shows traditional weaving art from Mazandaran – gelims by Teppichkunst Hirschberg – along with works by the contemporary artists Milan Mölzer, Lucie Beppler and Toulou Hassani.

Galloway illustrates a universal language that emerges across time, cultural divides and mediums. For all the differences between the exhibited works of art, they demonstrate profound affinities in the structuring of the picture plane and the use of unconventional tools and materials. Many of their rhythmic compositions suggest musical scores, where point and counterpoint underlie compositions at once reductionist and lyrically inflected.

“The Journey to Mazandaran” initiates a dialogue between weavings produced by anonymous Iranian authors and works by the three artists who in turn represent three generations and three distinct cultures.

**David Galloway** is Professor Emeritus at the Ruhr University Bochum. In 1977-1978 he served as Chief Curator of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. He has curated exhibitions for the Ludwig Forum (Aachen), the Venice Biennial, the Moscow Museum of Modern Art, the Cologne Fine Art and Antiques Fair and the Saatchi Gallery (London).

In honor of his 80. birthday the opening event will take place on 6 May 2017.



left to right: **Milan Mölzer**, *Untitled (Nr. 20)*, Mixed technique (acrylic on paper, scratched, plexiglass case with wooden rear panel), undated, 59,8 x 59,8 x 5,4 cm / **Lucie Beppler**, *untitled*, Oil pen, engraving needle, ink, oil on gesso primed thick paper, 2015, 76 x 110 cm / **Toulou Hassani**, *untitled*, mechanical pencil, oil on canvas, 2016, 61 x 43 cm (Loan of the Federal Republic of Germany – Contemporary Art Collection)

**Address:** Beck & Eggeling International Fine Art, Bilker Str. 4–6, 40213 Dusseldorf, Germany

**Duration:** 25 April – 27 May 2017

**Opening:** Saturday, 6 May 2017, noon – 2 pm

**Opening hours:** Tue – Fr: 10 am – 1 pm and 2 – 6 pm, Sat: 11 am – 4 pm

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A detailed description of the exhibition concept and the artists is provided on the next page >>

## The Journey to Mazandaran

*“Everything began with textiles.”*

Gottfried Semper

Though one of the richest and most populous regions of Persia, Mazandaran province was largely inaccessible to early travelers. A semi-tropical area located between the Caspian Sea and the Elburz Mountains, it was densely forested, and its largely nomadic inhabitants were suspicious of foreign intruders. It was long believed that there was no significant carpet production here, though in fact virtually every household contained a narrow loom on which flat-weave strips were woven. Stitched together, these weavings often became floor-coverings of monumental size. Unlike the classic Persian carpets produced in urban centers according to detailed designs, such works placed no restrictions on the fantasy of their authors, who favored simple stripes, concentric squares or plain color-fields.

Though gelims have been produced in Mazandaran for at least 1,000 years, the first comprehensive study of these extraordinary weavings was not published until 2011. Entitled *Undiscovered Minimalism*, it suggests numerous parallels to the reductionist vision championed by **Kasimir Malevich** at the beginning of the last century and evolved in the 1960s by such New York artists as **Donald Judd, Dan Flavin, Frank Stella** and **Ellsworth Kelly**. The simple stripes and grids typical of works from Mazandaran suggest parallels to the minimalist aesthetic found not just in painting and sculpture but also in architecture and music of the post-modern period.

The relationship between textiles and the fine arts is both ancient and complex. An important chapter was written by the **Bauhaus**, where weaving enjoyed equal footing with traditional fine-arts disciplines. Painters from **Rembrandt** to **Matisse** were influenced by fabrics and carpets, but “The Journey to Mazandaran” is not about direct influence. Instead, it underscores a universal language that emerges across time, cultural divides and mediums. The simple horizontal line that structures a painting, a drawing or a gelim from Mazandaran can be extraordinarily diverse: still or dynamic, sensuous or coolly geometric, lyric or literal. So, too, the works of the contemporary artists – **Milan Mölzer, Lucie Beppler** and **Toulu Hassani** – presented here. For all their differences, they demonstrate profound affinities in the structuring of the picture plane and the use of unconventional tools and materials. Many of their rhythmic compositions suggest musical scores, where point and counterpoint underlie compositions at once reductionist and lyrically inflected.

*“The Journey to Mazandaran”* initiates a dialogue between weavings produced by anonymous Iranian authors and works by three contemporary artists who in turn represent three generations and three distinct cultures:

**Milan Mölzer** (\*Prague, 1937 – 1976. Düsseldorf), who studied at the Düsseldorf Art Academy after fleeing with his family from Czechoslovakia in 1968, is represented by a series of “travel drawings” that underscore the motif of exploration and discovery at the heart of “The Journey to Mazandaran.” Since his tragic death in 1976, Mölzer’s works have never before been exhibited in Düsseldorf.

**Lucie Beppler** (\*1961, Wetzlar) employs a variety of mediums and tools, including gesso, India ink, ballpoint pens, etching needles, and pencils to create intricately layered compositions in shades of black, grey and white. These polyphonic works record a process of revelation and concealment, of emergence and disappearance. Though often employing grid-like structures, they are never static but continuously enlivened by the interplay of light and darkness.

**Toulu Hassani** (\*1984, Awaz, Iran) was awarded the Sprengel Prize in 2016. Her works on canvas document a subtle interplay of painting and drawing, of emptiness and fullness. Her precise geometries often reveal unexpected breaks, hesitations and omissions that seem to tease the eye of the spectator. Critics have seen predecessors and influences in Islamic architecture and Persian miniatures, but a scholarship to work in New York in 2014 also made a significant impact on her aesthetic.