

Steven Naifeh In First Solo Show At Leila Heller Gallery March 27

NEW YORK CITY — Steven Naifeh's first solo show in New York City will be on view at Leila Heller Gallery March 27–April 26. An opening reception is set for Thursday, March 27, 6 to 8 pm. The exhibition will include paintings, wall sculptures and floor sculptures that blend the patterns and colors of traditional Islamic art with the shapes and minimalism of the Geometric Abstraction movement. Additionally, LED light sculptures from Naifeh's "Uzbek" series will be featured in the gallery's 11th Avenue Windows.

A fully illustrated catalog with an essay by curator and Islamic Art specialist Heather Ecker will accompany the exhibition.

Naifeh is perhaps best known as the co-author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning biography *Jackson Pollock: An American Saga* (with Gregory White Smith). His most recent work, *Van*

Gogh: The Life (also with Smith), has been praised as "definitive" by the curator of Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam and was named "Art Book of the Year" by *The Times of London*.

Spending his childhood throughout the Middle East, including Iran, Iraq, Jordan and the UAE, Naifeh became enamored by the beauty of the geometric shapes and patterns that decorated everything from the textiles to the buildings of the Islamic world. Naifeh also became interested in the mathematical basis of these shapes and patterns, which were developed a millennium ago throughout the world of Islam. He has adapted those ancient formulas to modern purposes in conceiving his geometric, often large-scale, works.

Naifeh studied art history at Princeton and Harvard Universities, focusing on Nine-

teenth and Twentieth Century Western European and American art. At the same time, his own art began to explore the kinship between the geometric abstraction of Western art and the millennium-old tradition of Arab and Islamic abstraction. Naifeh studied contemporary art with Sam Hunter, former curator of the Museum of Modern Art and the Jewish Museum, and Islamic art with Oleg Grabar and Cary Welch. It has taken 40 years for those influences to fully emerge in Naifeh's most recent body of work.

In his "Saïda" series, Naifeh combines the satisfying resolution of geometry with the playfulness of Op Art. "Saïda III: Iridescent Copper," 2014, which will be on view, consists of numerous copper-plated steel squares formatted to create a starlike whole. The eye oscillates constantly between the stable overall design and the shape-shifting separate elements. Naifeh's use of separate pieces (sometimes wood blocks, canvases or metal plates) underscores the composition's modular nature and the strict mathematical progression that defines the relationship of the parts to the whole.

In his "Uzbek" series, Naifeh saw his challenge as making the perfect spiral that the rustic Uzbek craftsmen aspired to make but did not have the means to make. He used a computer application to iden-

tify the geometry of a specific Uzbek dome to distill its mathematical formula. Naifeh chose the media of this series — colored acrylic light boxes and LED lights — because they seemed best suited to achieving those goals. The

Uzbek images are directly inspired by the East, but the materials are completely Western.

Leila Heller Gallery is at 568 West 25th Street. For information, 212-249-7695 or www.leilahellergallery.com.

Tags & Treasures Sale

In the Webb Barn at the
Webb-Deane-Stevens Museum,
211 Main Street, Wethersfield, CT

Antiques and vintage treasures: books, silver, china, glass, linens, furniture, etc. donated by some of CT's oldest families. Also fine handcrafted items.

Saturday, March 22 • 9 am - 4 pm
& Sunday, March 23 • 10 am - 4 pm

\$5 Admission

Join Us On A
Chartered Bus Trip To

BRIMFIELD ANTIQUE SHOW

Opening Day, Tuesday, May 13th

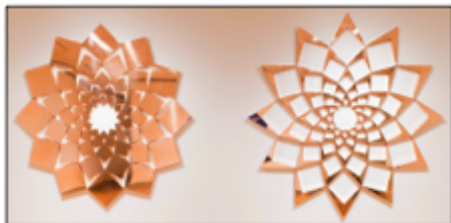
\$30 per person • Reservations Required

Call 870-664-9270

Rambling River Antiques

DECORATOR ACCESSORIES & COLLECTIBLES

172 Boston Post Rd., Westbrook, CT • Open Tues. - Sun. 10 - 5



Steven Naifeh, "Saïda III: Iridescent Copper," 2014, copper-plated steel, 84 by 168 inches.