



Hossein Valamanesh remembered as a powerful and poetic international artist

The Art Gallery of South Australia remembers the life and career of leading Iranian-born Australian artist Hossein Valamanesh (born 2 March, 1949), who passed away suddenly on Saturday 15 January 2022.

AGSA Director, Rhana Devenport ONZM says, 'Hossein's passing leaves us all deeply shocked and saddened at AGSA – it has been a great privilege for AGSA to work so closely with him over decades and to witness the extraordinary impact he has had nationally and internationally. We have lost a true poet.'

Born in Iran in 1949, Hossein entered the Tehran School of Art at the age of 15, graduating in 1970 with a focus on political and socially charged work. Hossein immigrated to Australia in 1973 and graduated from the South Australian School of Art in 1977. Drawing on the cultural and natural worlds of his birthplace and his adoptive home of Australia, Hossein explored the entwined spheres of love, spirituality, and nature with frequent references to the artist's abiding interest in poetry, especially the texts of Persian poet Djalâl ad-Dîn Rûmî.

Hossein's work, in his words, often explored 'notions of an essential connection to place, the nature of being, and the ephemerality of existence'. His practice embraced a wealth of materiality including sculpture, text, photography, installation, architecture, large-scale public art and moving image.

Hossein and his wife and frequent collaborator of 46 years, Angela Valamanesh have been leaders in the national and international arts community. The art of Angela and Hossein Valamanesh will feature strongly in the 2022 *Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Free/State*, curated by Sebastian Goldspink, opening on 4 March at AGSA.

'Despite Hossein's tragic passing, his legacy will continue to inspire, astonish and resonate with our visitors every day here at AGSA. We are grateful to Angela for soon presenting her and Hossein's collaborative work as part of the *Adelaide Biennial of Australian Art: Free/State*, which once again demonstrates their rich artistic and personal relationship,' Rhana Devenport said.

Hossein presented more than thirty solo exhibitions around the world and his work has been witnessed in Canada, France, United Kingdom, Switzerland, India, United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Japan and Iran.

AGSA

MEDIA RELEASE

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Hossein's major European solo exhibition *Puisque tout passe* (This will also pass) is currently showing at the Institut des Cultures d'Islam (ICI) in Paris until 13 February – with the accompanying publication now available in the AGSA store.

Several of Hossein's works are on display at AGSA, including *Untitled*, 1994 and *After rain*, 2013. Hossein's work is held in many significant collections in Australia including the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Kadist Art Foundation, Paris, Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, Wellington, and Sara Hilden Art Museum, Finland.

His public art commissions are installed in Australia and Japan. Hossein was awarded the Grand Prix at the Biennale in Dhaka, Bangladesh in 1998, a Member of the Order of Australia in 2011, the Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship in Washington DC in 2014 and the Adelaide Film Festival's Art Moving Image Commission in 2015.

A memorial to celebrate Hossein Valamanesh's life will be held with details to be announced at a later date.

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Image caption: Hossein Valamanesh, born Tehran 1949, died Adelaide 2022, *Untitled*, 1994, Adelaide, lotus leaves on gauze, synthetic polymer paint, 60.0 x 145.0 x 3.5 cm, Faulding 150 Anniversary Fund for South Australian Contemporary Art 1995, Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, © Hossein Valamanesh