



MEDIA INFORMATION

Tai Shani: Semiramis

20 July to 14 October 2018

“See it if you possibly can. Writer, director, costume designer, sculptor and all-round visionary, Shani’s chamber of the mind is spectacular.”

Review of Tai Shani: Semiramis at Glasgow International, Laura Cumming, The Guardian.

Tai Shani presents her first solo show in a public gallery, displaying the culmination of her ongoing project *Dark Continent*, which includes an immersive installation in The Tetley’s atrium, filmworks and a selection of artworks by Ariela Widzer drawn together by Shani.

Over the last 4 years Tai Shani has been developing twelve monologues that take Christine de Pizan’s 1405 proto-feminist text *The Book of the City of Ladies* as its starting point. Pizan created an allegorical city of notable women drawn from a medieval conception of history where fact, fiction and myth are blurred. Characters from fiction live side by side with female historical figures, collectively making an early case for gender equality.

At The Tetley, Shani presents here twelve characters together for the first time. The characters include The Neanderthal, The Woman on the Edge of Time, The Vampyre, The Medieval Mystic, Siren and Phantasmagoregasm, referencing women throughout history and imagine fictional possible futures through twelve monologues. Presented through text, sound, virtual reality and documentary film from her recent performances at Glasgow International, Shani has also collaborated with experimental pop duo, *Let’s Eat Grandma* to produce the original scores for the project.

Often violent, erotic and fantastical, the twelve narratives interweave science-fiction, anthropology, feminist and queer theory, to re-imagine a world with interlinked cosmologies, myth and histories. Throughout, *Semiramis* privileges sensation, experience and interiority, undermining patriarchal conceptions of narrative history to imagine a possible post-patriarchal future.

Alongside this body of work Shani has selected a series of paintings by Ariela Widzer. Born in Silesia, Poland in 1949 Widzer now lives in Lisbon, Portugal. Her career includes animation, illustration, design, interior design and art-directing in feature films. The focus of this selection is on her paintings, ranging from early pieces made in the 1970s to recent work.

Widzer’s early paintings are deeply emblematic of the psychedelic and pop aesthetics that defined the late 1960s and 1970s counterculture and incorporates elements of graphic design and illustration. Often painted on wood panels, Widzer’s work thematically evolves into figurative manifestations of the occult and mysticism. Androgynous, asexual figures on the margins of humanity embody energetic fields, the elements or the zodiac.

Co-commissioned by The Tetley and Glasgow International, in collaboration with Nottingham Contemporary. Supported by Arts Council England and the Royal College of Art.

ENDS

Millie Carroll
Marketing and Press Coordinator at The Tetley
Email: millie.carroll@thetetley.org
Tel: +44 (0)113 320 1862

Press Preview

Thursday 19 July 3pm to 5pm.

To register your interest in attending, please email millie.carroll@thetetley.org

EVENTS

Exhibition Launch

Thursday 19 July 6pm to 8pm

Tai Shani In Conversation

Wednesday 26 September 6pm, FREE, but booking essential via eventbrite

The Tetley First Gala Dinner with Tai Shani

A fundraising dinner with performance, food and music curated by Tai Shani
Friday 12 October 7:30pm, price to be confirmed, booking essential.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

The Tetley

The Tetley is a centre for contemporary art in the heart of Leeds' South Bank. Housed in the 1931 headquarters of the Joshua Tetley & Son brewery, The Tetley opened in 2013 as a gallery with a learning studio, work spaces for the creative industries, restaurant and bar. Described by the London Evening Standard as "the heart and soul of Leeds' art scene" The Tetley's programme of exhibitions, residencies and events aim to inspire and bring audiences closer to art and artists, support the production of new work and develop artists' practice. The Tetley is supported by Arts Council England, Carlsberg UK and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

Gallery opening hours: Daily 10am – 5pm, Wednesday 10am – 8pm. Admission is FREE.
thetetley.org / [@The_Tetley](https://www.instagram.com/The_Tetley) / [facebook.com/TheTetleyLeeds](https://www.facebook.com/TheTetleyLeeds) The Tetley, Hunslet Road, Leeds, LS10 1JQ

Tai Shani

Tai Shani's multidisciplinary practice, comprising performance, film, photography and installation, revolves around experimental narrative texts.

Tai Shani was born in London. Shani has presented her work extensively in the UK and abroad, recent exhibitions and commissions include: Glasgow International (2018) Wysing Arts Centre (2017); Tensta Konsthall, Stockholm (2016); RADAR commission, Loughborough University, (2016), Serpentine Galleries (2016); Tate Britain (2016); Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt (2015); Southbank Centre, London (2014-15); Arnolfini, Bristol (2013);

Matt's Gallery, London (2012) and FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais and Loop Festival, Barcelona (2011); The Barbican, London (2011); ICA, London (2011)

Ariela Widzer

Widzer studied painting at the The Bezalel Academy, Jerusalem in 1967. She has had solo exhibitions at Galerie de Licht in Berlin, Fort Art Gallery, Tourne, Belgium, National Hotel Gallery, Havana, Cuba and The Artists House, Jerusalem as well as participating in group exhibitions at Steven Malz Gallery, London, Mabat Gallery, Tel Aviv and Ein Hod Central Gallery, Israel. As well as being an artist Widzer also worked as an art director on numerous films and worked as a junior animator for the illustrious animation company "Halas and Batchelor".