

Victoria Miro

Idris Khan: *Time Present, Time Past*

Art Basel Qatar

Booth D107, 3–7 February 2026



Idris Khan
Time Present, Time Past (Azrag III), 2025
Oil based ink and 23ct gold leaf on gesso, on aluminium
90 x 56 cm
35 3/8 x 22 in
© Idris Khan
Courtesy the artist, Sean Kelly and Victoria Miro

Victoria Miro is delighted to participate in the inaugural Art Basel Qatar with a presentation of new works by Idris Khan.

Drawing inspiration from sources including the history of art and music as well as key philosophical and theological texts, Idris Khan is widely acclaimed for works that investigate memory, creativity and the layering of experience. Comprising a series of panels painted in jewel-like hues embellished with gold leaf, this presentation continues the artist's ongoing exploration of colour, repetition and the spiritual potential of abstraction, with particular reference to the rich traditions of Islamic culture. Through many years of study, Khan has developed his exploration of colour to evoke both emotional immediacy and contemplative stillness by building layers of pigment. The colour acts as a psychological and spatial field – expansive, immersive and affecting.

In these new works, each panel is carefully inscribed with layers of musical notation or Arabic text, applied by hand using gold leaf. These inscriptions, often poetic or meditative, are overlaid repeatedly until only their edges remain legible. In this process, language folds in on itself and meaning dissolves into form. The use of gold leaf carries particular historical and symbolic significance, directly referencing the Blue Qur'an, a medieval Islamic manuscript renowned for its indigo-dyed parchment and gold Kufic script. Khan draws on this tradition not only in terms of materials and colour palette but also its deeper metaphysical implications, where sacred geometry, colour and language converge in devotional art.

As in earlier works, these new panels reflect Khan's interest in the layering of time and experience – what he describes as the 'collapse of time into a single moment.' The repeated inscriptions evoke acts of devotion, memory and ritual. The act of layering reflects thought, meditation and the passage of time, with each work serving as a visual prayer.

Collectively, the panels create an environment that is at once intimate and monumental. They evoke walls, thresholds, or portals – architectural in scale and yet deeply human in tone. This presentation encourages viewers to slow down, reflect and engage with a space where time feels suspended and meaning emerges not from isolated phrases but from accumulated impressions. The works blur the boundaries between abstraction and figuration, as well as between the personal and the universal, and between East and West. They offer a powerful expression of Khan's dual heritage and his ongoing commitment to a universal visual language rooted in repetition, history and spiritual exploration.

About Idris Khan

Born in Birmingham, UK, in 1978, Idris Khan completed a master's degree at the Royal College of Art and lives and works in London. He was appointed OBE for services to Art in the Queen's Birthday 2017 Honours List.

Khan's first career survey exhibition in the United States, Idris Khan: *Repeat After Me*, was held at the Milwaukee Art Museum, Wisconsin, USA, in 2024. Further survey exhibitions include Idris Khan: *A World Within*, held at The New Art Gallery Walsall in 2017, with solo presentations of the artist's work previously staged at national and international institutional venues including the British Museum, London, UK (2018); Whitworth Gallery, University of Manchester, UK (2016–17, 2012); Sadler's Wells, London, UK (2011); Gothenburg Konsthall, Sweden (2011); Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, Canada (2010); Kunsthaus Murz, Mürzzuschlag, Austria (2010) and K20, Düsseldorf, Germany (2008).

The artist has received numerous high-profile public commissions internationally. Most recently, Khan has been invited by the Obama Foundation to create new work for the Obama Presidential Center, opening in Chicago in spring 2026. Khan joins the latest group of ten international artists announced as part of the Center's historic campus-wide art programme. A major sculpture for London, commissioned by St George's Plc with London Borough of Southwark as part of the development of One Blackfriars, was unveiled in autumn 2019. In 2016, Khan was commissioned to make a permanent public monument, forming the centrepiece of the new Memorial Park in Abu Dhabi, which was unveiled on the UAE Commemoration Day. In 2017, it received an American Architecture Prize, a World Architecture News Award and a German Design Award. Further commissions include a wall drawing commissioned by the British Museum in 2012 for its exhibition *Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam*. In addition, for the duration of the exhibition, Khan's monumental floor installation, *Seven Times*, was installed in the museum's Great Court. Also in 2012, The New York Times Magazine commissioned Khan to create a new body of work for its London issue. Focusing on the capital's most iconic buildings and structures, Khan's image of the London Eye featured on the cover. Created in 2018 for The Albukhary Foundation Islamic Gallery, Khan's *21 Stones* was the British Museum's first site-specific artwork.

Khan has also worked on significant collaborations across art forms. In 2014 he worked with choreographer Wayne McGregor and composer Max Richter on Richter's recomposition of *The Four Seasons*, producing sets for the production which premiered at Zurich Opera House. *Lying in Wait*, 2009, a collaboration by Khan and choreographer Sarah Warsop in association with Victoria Miro and Siobhan Davies Dance, is formed of layered movement that travels between three screens.

A solo exhibition of new work by the artist will take place at Victoria Miro, London, in summer 2026.

About Victoria Miro

Centred in the belief that art creates possibilities for a greater depth and understanding of life outside of prejudice, allowing ideas to flourish freely, Victoria Miro is celebrated for its commitment to artists whose visionary and singular practices shape the landscape of contemporary art.

Victoria Miro represents over 40 artists from around the world, supporting the careers of some the most significant artists of our time from early development to estate management.

The gallery presents a programme that reimagines how art is made, accessed and experienced through exhibitions in its London and Venice spaces and on LIVE / ARCHIVE, as well as through international art fairs, museum collaborations, commissions and residencies in the Venice studio.

By advancing the use of new technologies, Victoria Miro is at the forefront of presenting art beyond gallery walls, enabling collectors, curators and the public to connect with art anytime and anywhere in the world, while significantly reducing carbon emissions.

The gallery shapes artistic inquiry by bringing together acclaimed writers, critics and thinkers to collaborate with artists on exhibitions, commissions, new writing and conversations that open perspectives on culture.

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