



## NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

### THE FRICK PITTSBURGH PRESENTS

# ELISE ADIBI

## Respiration Paintings

**APRIL 15–OCTOBER 15, 2017**

***Site-specific installation transforms the Frick Greenhouse  
into a multisensory environment of plants and paintings***

PITTSBURGH, PA, March 27, 2017— The Frick Pittsburgh announces the first-ever exhibition of art in its greenhouse, opening to the public on Saturday, April 15, 2017. Located on a nearly six-acre site in Pittsburgh's east end, the Frick's historic grounds feature lush gardens, a diverse selection of trees, and an active greenhouse, which will be transformed by nationally recognized contemporary artist Elise Adibi into a living environment of plants and paintings. *Elise Adibi: Respiration Paintings* will remain on view through October 15, 2017. Admission is free.

## ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

*Elise Adibi: Respiration Paintings* represents a continuation of the trajectory of Adibi's work over the last several years, happily coinciding with the Frick's desire to begin to creatively activate additional spaces on its grounds and engage contemporary artists. This is the most recent in a series of collaborative projects which began nearly 20 years ago. *Elise Adibi: Respiration Paintings* demonstrates the Frick's continuing commitment to using the voices and works of artists to meaningfully engage its audience, its spaces, and its collections with issues and ideas relevant to the present day. *Respiration Paintings* marks the first time the Frick will take the art out of the museum and create a multisensory installation experience in its historic greenhouse.

The inspiration for this project developed from Adibi's frequent use of plant materials and organic matter in her studio practice. Her paintings often incorporate pigments formulated from plant oils, adding scent to the visual experience of form and color. In this installation, Adibi works with the innate characteristics of the greenhouse—making use of the natural light, seasonal changes, and elevated humidity to both display and transform her artwork. Though the heat and humidity of the greenhouse portend a most challenging environment for the paintings, Adibi acknowledges the risk, but believes the experience of viewing the paintings in the living environment is worth the uncertain fates of the pieces.

*Respiration Paintings* comprises 18 paintings installed in the north and south wings of the greenhouse and two paintings in vitrines at The Frick Art Museum. These paintings—abstractions based on the grid, oxidation paintings made with a mixture of urine on copper, and what Adibi calls "plant paintings," made by pouring pigments mixed with essential plant oils—are installed to create a visual rhythm with plantings that the artist planned in collaboration with the Frick's grounds manager, Kim Rothert. The plants were selected to resonate with the paintings in terms of scent and color. In spring, tulips bloom in the south wing—to be replaced as the season changes, while the north wing has been conceived as a rose garden. Citrus trees also add both color and scent. Viewing benches and structural stands built to display the paintings have been painted a rosy pink hue, custom mixed by the artist, and scented to create a one-of-a-kind sensory experience.

Repeat visitors will see the plants mature and change through the exhibition. Some of the paintings, particularly the oxidations, may visibly change in response to the humidity through the six-month course of the show. *Respiration Paintings* is designed to create an immersive environment of plants, paintings,

scents, colors, and images exploring the interconnection and intimate relationship between art, nature and people.

Robin Nicholson, Executive Director of The Frick Pittsburgh, says, “I am thrilled that the Frick has the opportunity to work with Elise Adibi, expanding our tradition of working with contemporary artists to engage in compelling dialogues with our historic collection in a new way that is not confined to the art museum galleries.” Beginning with a residency by renowned Brazilian camera artist Vik Muniz in 1999, the Frick has engaged contemporary artists to create work that provides fresh perspectives on the museum and its collections. In addition to Muniz, these artists include Christian Milovanoff, Linn Meyers, Aaronel deRoy Gruber, and most recently, Chris Antemann.

#### **ABOUT THE ARTIST**

Elise Adibi received an MFA from Columbia University in 2007; she also has a BA in Philosophy from Swarthmore College and a Master of Architecture from the University of Pennsylvania. Adibi is the recipient of a Fellowship at The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University (2013–14). In 2007, The Terra Foundation awarded her a fellowship in Giverny, France to live and work in the village of Claude Monet.

Her recent work has explored the intersection between the natural world and the created world, embracing the use of organic materials—like plant oils and urine—in her artistic practice. *Respiration Paintings* at the Frick is the culmination of these recent investigations. Last summer a related solo exhibition also titled *Respiration Paintings* was presented at Full Haus in Los Angeles Other recent solo exhibitions include *Substance* at Louis B. James in New York City (2014), and *Metabolic Paintings* at The Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. (2013) both of which also explored the use of plant materials and scents to create an immersive environment. In 2013 Adibi was invited to participate in The Armory Show Focus curated by Eric Shiner. Selected group exhibitions include *New York: Abstract Painting in the 21st Century* at The Art Gallery at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa (2015), *Performative Process* at Halsey McKay Gallery, East Hampton (2013), and *Gertrude’s/ LOT*, The Andy Warhol Museum, Pittsburgh, PA (2011–2012). Adibi’s work has been reviewed in *Artforum*, *The Boston Globe* and *The Harvard Advocate* among other publications. *Elise Adibi: Respiration Paintings* at The Frick Pittsburgh is her first solo exhibition at a museum.

Elise Adibi's philosophy about the interconnectedness of life and art extends to her choice of media. Her materials include: graphite and charcoal, which are forms of carbon, an element essential to all organic life; mineral pigments in oil paints; essential plant oils used for aromatherapy; rabbit skin glue, which is an animal protein; and her own urine. It is Adibi's belief that these materials interact within the painting, almost as they would in a living organism. Adibi's work is steeped in the vocabulary of abstraction—from the formalism of the grid, to expressionist gestural mark making, and process-related pouring of pigment. These structures and processes both contrast with and seamlessly integrate her interest in living matter, organic and biological processes, and even the psychology of sensory perception.

Adibi's grid is not made of perfectly straight lines and 90-degree angles, but rather is always the result of a human and bodily process. For Adibi, the painting exists not as a fixed object, but in the space between matter and cognition. Adibi aims at the relationship between subject and object by means of a perceptual engagement with the material world encountered at close range. Hers are slow paintings that resist easy translation into image reproduction and dissemination and are made to be seen in person. In her paintings, Adibi pursues the relationship between the geometric and the biologic, the subjective and the objective and the animate and the inanimate.

### **ABOUT THE GREENHOUSE**

Designed by architects Alden & Harlow, a firm based in Pittsburgh and Boston, who were also hired by Andrew Carnegie to design Pittsburgh's Carnegie Library and Museum complex, the Greenhouse at The Frick Pittsburgh is a renovation and partial reconstruction (using some of the original materials) of one that served the Frick family from 1897 through the 1970s. In the late 19th century, greenhouses and conservatories were common additions to the homes or estates of wealthy families. The Fricks used the greenhouse to grow flowers and tropical plants for Clayton year-round, as well as annuals from seed, vegetables, and mushrooms. In later years, flowers were grown in Pittsburgh and sent by train to be used in New York City.

### **EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION**

*Elise Adibi: Respiration Paintings* is organized by The Frick Pittsburgh. A 20-page, full-color, illustrated guide to the exhibition, featuring an introduction by Frick Director Robin Nicholson, a contextual essay by Frick Chief Curator & Director of Collections Sarah Hall, and an essay by the artist, accompanies the exhibition and will be available for purchase in May.

## **ABOUT THE FRICK PITTSBURGH**

Located on the Pittsburgh estate of late-19<sup>th</sup>-century industrialist Henry Clay Frick, The Frick Pittsburgh is the steward of collections left as a legacy to the people of Pittsburgh by Frick's daughter, Helen Clay Frick. The permanent collections include fine and decorative arts, cars, carriages, historic objects, and buildings. The Frick experience includes The Frick Art Museum, the Car and Carriage Museum, Clayton, the Frick family Gilded Age mansion, and six acres of beautifully landscaped lawns and gardens. Also included are an Education Center, the Frick children's playhouse (designed by renowned architects Alden & Harlow), a large working greenhouse (also designed by Alden & Harlow), The Café at the Frick, and the Grable Visitor Center, which houses the Frick Museum Store.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

The Frick Art & Historical Center is located at 7227 Reynolds Street in Pittsburgh's Point Breeze neighborhood. Free parking is available in the Frick's off-street lot or along adjacent streets.

The Frick is open 10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Tuesday–Sunday; 10:00 a.m.–9:00 p.m. Friday; and is closed Mondays and major holidays. The public should call 412-371-0600 for information, or visit the Frick online at [TheFrickPittsburgh.org](http://TheFrickPittsburgh.org).

**For additional information or images, please contact Greg Langel, Marketing & PR Manager,  
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