

## Armita Raafat

### Workspace Program 2021

Armita Raafat recontextualizes historical architectural and textile motifs to create new ways of engaging with traditional forms. Many of her sculptural works incorporate interpretations of Muqarnas, an ornamental vaulting element used in Islamic architecture. Raafat rotates and layers the individual fragments, experimenting with unconventional and found materials. In these new geometric structures, Raafat reframes the Muqarnas to generate new thoughts and ideas.

While at Dieu Donn , Raafat incorporated *khoos doozi*, a traditional Iranian embroidered textile technique, into her work. By embedding fragments of fabric in richly pigmented, handmade paper, Raafat creates a new form of weaving and embroidering within the sheet, again recontextualizing traditional crafts into contemporary structures.

*I created these handmade paper pieces during my workspace residency with Dieu Donne. They are made through experimentation with different materials: layering pigmented paper pulp, mesh, fabric, mirrors, and specific embroidered textiles called khoos doozi.*

*Khoos doozi, a traditional embroidery technique done by women from the Iranian island of Qeshm in the Persian Gulf, was originally used to decorate garments such as scarves. The technique for making them is passed down between women in families from generation to generation. The craft is a source of income for some of the island's women and allows them to help support their households. I received several fragments of khoos doozi over the years and kept them in my studio for inspiration. Working with handmade paper presented the opportunity to incorporate them into my work along with other collage materials. I began to work directly with five women from the island of Qeshm who created new khoos doozi according to my desired colors and designs for inclusion in my handmade paper works.*

*Working with a medium as dynamic as paper pulp has been a process of exploration and discovery for me. I use the same approach as I do with my sculptures: a constant process of adding and editing parts, layers, and fragments while also breaking and rearranging the structure to create something new out of it. While my starting compositions are planned out beforehand, my creative process is intuitive and hands-on, responding to my sources and materials.*



Top: Armita Raafat, *Untitled*, 2022, Textile, mesh, mirrors, and pulp paint on handmade cotton paper, 14 1/2 inches x 11 1/2 inches

Bottom: Armita Raafat, *Untitled (detail)*, 2022, Textile, mesh, mirrors, and pulp paint on handmade cotton paper, 14 1/2 inches x 11 1/2 inches



#### About the Artist

Armita Raafat is a New York-based sculptor and installation artist working with themes of architectural transfiguration and hybridity. She has exhibited nationally and internationally including at the MCA in Chicago, the Bronx Museum of the Arts in New York, the Noyes Museum of Art in New Jersey, Pavel Zoubok Gallery in New York, Dorsky Gallery in New York, Art in Buildings in New York and Florida, HORSEANDPONY Fine Arts in Berlin, and Al-Zahra University in Tehran. Her work will appear in an upcoming exhibition at the Children’s Museum of Manhattan. Raafat received the Peter S. Reed Foundation grant for Sculpture and a NYFA fellowship for Crafts/Sculpture. She has been in residence at LMCC Swing Space, AIM at the Bronx Museum of the Arts, Winter Workspace at Wave Hill, and Workspace Program at Dieu Donne. She currently has a studio with the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts in New York. Raafat earned her BFA from Al-Zahra University in Tehran and her MFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2008.



#### About Dieu Donn 

Dieu Donn  is a leading cultural institution dedicated to serving established and emerging artists through the collaborative creation of contemporary art using the process of hand papermaking.

#### About the Workspace Program

Established in 1990, the Workspace Program offers annual residencies to New York State emerging artists to create new work in handmade paper. The primary goals of this program are to encourage emerging artists to explore the creative possibilities of handmade paper and to develop this art form through a process of collaboration and experimentation. The Workspace Program is presented to the public through an annual exhibition of works produced in this residency program, as well as through print, digital, and online formats. For more information about the Workspace Program, or to learn how to apply, visit [www.dieudonne.org](http://www.dieudonne.org).

#### Support

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Above: Armita Raafat working in the Dieu Donn  studio with Studio Collaborator Tatiana Ginsberg, 2021.



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