

tracing transcendence
2018
Pierced copper
Courtesy the artist

Shireen Taweel's large-scale installation *tracing transcendence*, comprising copper, light and sound, represents imagery of tranquility and mysticism. The two suspended circles reference the holy spaces where heaven and earth join in unity, subtly celebrating the very beginnings of mosques in Australian architectural history and vernacular. Utilising the universal symbol of the circle, the two floating, loop forms in *tracing transcendence* allude to The Eternal, Islamic decorative arts, the landscapes of remote Australia, as well as the spirals that circle within one's own heart and body. The smaller circle (closest to the bay window) was originally entitled *Translated Roots*, and was exhibited by itself at Sydney's Verge Gallery in 2017, in the lead up to *Next Wave* festival in 2018. Since the festival, it is the first time the pair of circles has been exhibited in Sydney together.

Inspired by the first mosque constructed in the remote South Australian landscape of Marree and a subsequent mosque in Broken Hill, the soundscape that accompanies *tracing transcendence* is a compilation of field recordings made by the artist in the two locations.

These places are deeply interconnected with Australian Islamic history as the earliest recorded mosque lies in Maree. Broken Hill's 'Ghantown' mosque is the only one of its kind that has survived since Afghan cameleers, otherwise known as 'Ghans', traversed and traded supplies in the Australian outback during the 1860s.

On close examination of *tracing transcendence*, the intricate and delicate nature of the installation's geometric patterns reveals itself. The soundscape is reminiscent of the *adhan*, the Islamic call to prayer, and silhouettes projected from the copper engravings embody otherworldly presences and absences, shifting and changing as the natural light floods the gallery, moving and fading from hour to hour. The shadows cast from the work change and evolve throughout the day, acting as a quiet homage to time and the sacred, secular spaces and past traditions. Here, Taweel offers us moments of cross-cultural dialogue, introspection and contemplation on the past, present and the possible futures that lay before us.

SUPPORT

In light of the recent disaster in Beirut, we encourage anyone who would like to make a contribution to Shireen Taweel's designated organisation, Beirut fundraiser Nation Station (@nationstation_).

Their collective work supports Beirut locals with food and sanitary supplies during this time.

Scan below for details.

