

Hossein Valamanesh
Heart of the Fire

I RECALL THAT, since the age of fifteen when I decided to my parents' horror to go to Art School, I have stepped into the path of love. Not thinking too much about the consequences, I have followed my passion. Love is one of the most used and misused words. Buddha talks about how we confuse love and desire or attachment. For us mortals, it is likely we can only learn from experience. In my mind, devotion is another matter. I feel that this concept can carry aspects of religiosity and blind faith that can go against love and freedom.

When I was young, in Iran in the 1960s, I was concerned with social and political change, and Marxism seemed to show the way. In the late 1970s I became interested in studying Buddhism. In both instances I felt I was devoted to these ideas, and as my devotion became stronger I became more dogmatic. I felt that I was losing the freedom that I mentioned earlier but as I let go of these ideas I learned more from them.

Over the past 45 years I have carried with me a book of selected poems by Rumi and, no matter what my state of mind or beliefs at the time, these poems that talk of love have guided and inspired me.

Through his poetry Rumi encourages us to follow the path of love and to go into the heart of the fire like the moth. Being an artist is a little like that as we follow our passion and practice what we love. For this publication I have chosen seven images of my work from the past twenty years that reflect my preoccupation with the subject of love.



Hossein Valamanesh, *In My Mother's Hands*, 2011.
Digital print on paper, 75 x 60 cm, edition of 5+1AP.
Private collection, Adelaide, photographer unknown.

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Hossein Valamanesh,
Homa, 2000.

Inkjet print on paper, palm leaf,
180 x 82.3 cm.

Collection Art Gallery
of South Australia.

Photo: Michal Klivanek



Hossein Valamanesh,
Open Book, 1993.

Paper, binding, ribbon,
48.5 x 52 x 12 cm.

Collection Queensland
Art Gallery.

Photo: Michal Klivanek



Hossein Valamanesh,
Longing Belonging, 1997.
Colour photograph, 99 x 99 cm.
Private collection, Adelaide.
Photo: Ric Martin



Hossein Valamanesh,
The Lover Circles his own Heart, 1993.
Silk, electric motor,
210 x 210 x 210 cm.
Collection Museum of
Contemporary Art, Sydney.
Photo: M. Michalski and B. Wojcik

All Images courtesy of the Artist, Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide:
BREENSPACE, Sydney, and Rose Issa Projects, London.



Hossein Valamanesh,
Untitled, 1999.
Lavender bush, oil burner,
82 x 80 x 58 cm.
Private collection, Adelaide.
Photo: Michal Klivanek



Hossein Valamanesh,
Practice, 2006.
Saffron on paper, 20 components:
375 x 375 cm overall.
Collection National Gallery of
Australia, Canberra.
Photo: Tadasu Yamamoto