

For Immediate Release

**Duddell's Hong Kong to Present  
'I Was Not Invited (The Organ Grinder's Canto)' by Leila Hekmat  
in Collaboration with Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin**

30 March – 28 June 2018



Leila Hekmat, *I Was Not Invited*, 2018, colour photograph, various dimensions. Photography by Sven Gutjahr.  
Courtesy of the artists and Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi, Berlin.

**(Hong Kong, 14 February 2018)** Hong Kong's leading cultural and social destination, Duddell's, in partnership with Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi (Berlin) is proud to announce a site-specific musical performance created especially for the city by Leila Hekmat, '*I Was Not Invited (The Organ Grinder's Canto)*'.

This occurrence is scheduled at 10pm on both Thursday March 29<sup>th</sup> and Friday March 30<sup>th</sup> this year, and will extend into an exhibition within Duddell's, where costumes and photographs reflecting the performance will remain on display until June 28<sup>th</sup>.

Hekmat's performance serves as a milestone for the year-round Duddell's Art Programme. It marks the first time a major performance art project has been housed over a more static exhibition format. It is a form of art celebrated for the way in which it engages directly with social reality, identity politics and the specifics of space, and it is an ability to defy boundaries and ask questions about how art relates to people.

In '*I Was Not Invited (The Organ Grinder's Canto)*', those questions will be set to a song cycle inspired by Franz Schubert's '*Winterreise*', Barthe's '*A Lover's Discourse*', the poems of Mallarmé and Baroque costumes. This special performance is a development from the initial piece performed at Le Zèbre in Paris and at Ballhaus in Berlin.

The performance centres around the search for humour through the darkness of human suffering. It uses the themes prominent in Schubert's work – death, loneliness and a yearning for closeness and affection, to create an intimate setting for storytelling. It is a setting intended to create a connection between the audience and two characters; the singer and the pianist, with the role of the pianist equal to that of the singer.

In the Hong Kong version of '*I Was Not Invited*', the singer is depicted as a prisoner of his own life, seeking reprieve from his suffering. He performs a monologue, accompanied by the pianist, describing four scenes in which he imagines his own mortality as a means of escape from facing the negativity he encounters in everyday life. Each of these four songs takes cues from one of the characters' sources of pain and emotional conflict. It describes a death which aids liberation.

At the time of composing '*Winterreise*', Schubert was gravely ill, confined to bed. He was affected deeply by a melancholic frame of mind, as well as a deteriorating physical and mental health. Performed within the hospitable context of Duddell's celebrated Ilse Crawford interiors, '*I Was Not Invited (The Organ Grinder's Canto)*' chooses these themes as a source to find light and humour.

It is a lightness heightened by the parallel presence of Duddell's soon to be launched cocktail programme, a joint development from the recently appointed Bar Manager Masumi Tomioka and JIA Group's Beverage Specialist, James Barker. Served upon entry to those attending the premiere, the new programme contains four sections, each exploring concepts derived from Eastern wisdom through the lens of natural imagery and proverb.

Contributing to Hong Kong's position as one of the world's leading arts hubs, Duddell's is dedicated to giving local and international contemporary art practitioners an alternative and innovative platform to experiment with new forms of exhibition making, as well as explore fresh ways to connect with an audience.

"Leila Hekmat's work, the first ever performance art project for Duddell's, speaks to what we wanted the Art Programme to be from its inception in 2013 – a format that is both tangible and intangible where

boundaries could be pushed, and people and projects combined to create collaborations that excite and intrigue” says **Yenn Wong, Co-Founder of Duddell's and CEO of JIA Group**.

“For the premiere in Hong Kong, there will be a completely newly developed performance, which will extend into an exhibition featuring photographs and sculptures that relate to elements of the performance,” says **Isabella Bortolozzi, founder, Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi**.

Hekmat's solo exhibition will be on view in the Duddell's Salon and Library from **30 March to 28 June, 2018**. The exhibition is part of the Duddell's Art Programme, which includes a calendar of exhibitions curated by respected forces in the international and regional art community, art lectures, film screenings and salon discussions.

It is a programme now mirrored in the recently opened Duddell's London, the first restaurant of the brand to open outside of Hong Kong. Set in the historic St. Thomas Church in the heart of London Bridge, it is minutes from the Borough Market and The Shard.

– ENDS –

#### **About Duddell's**

Duddell's is a cultural and social destination created for people who have an active appreciation of the arts. Founded by Yenn Wong, Duddell's is neither museum nor gallery – it is an inspiring backdrop against which ideas are shared and developed, connecting art and people in a new way.

Open to all art enthusiasts, Duddell's features a year-round art programme spearheaded by cultural leaders. The programme includes world class exhibitions curated by prominent art personalities as well as a continuous series of art talks, performances, film screenings and other events by Hong Kong's cultural innovators.

With interiors as noteworthy as the art on its walls, entering Duddell's feels like into the home of a great art collector – one that also happens to have an in-house Michelin-starred Cantonese chef, a lush 2,000-square-foot Garden Terrace, and sophisticated salon with artisanal cocktails and vintage champagne. Conceived as the perfect instrument to enable other events and experiences to happen, the interior architecture and design are by London-based Ilse Crawford - awarded AD Spain International Prize 2013 for Contribution and Influential Work in Architecture, Design and Interior Design.

Duddell's is operated by co-founder and entrepreneur Yenn Wong, founder of the hospitality based JIA Group which includes restaurants 208 Duecento Otto, Aberdeen Street Social, 22 Ships, Chachawan, Ham & Sherry, Meen&Rice 粥粉麵飯, MakMak, Rhoda and Commissary.

**About Leila Hekmat**

Leila Hekmat (b. 1981 in Los Angeles) is an artist, director, performer, photographer and costume designer, who lives and works in Berlin. Her performance '*I Was Not Invited*' with Roman Ole and Roman Lemberg has been presented most recently at Ballhaus Berlin and at Le Zèbre de Belleville in Paris, both co-produced by Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi. In 2017 her experimental theatre piece 'Pedicula' was debuted at Galerie Isabella Bortolozzi in Berlin and in 2016 her play 'The French Mistake', produced by Calla Henkel and Max Pitegoff was performed at the Glasgow International. For Duddell's Hong Kong, the artist will present exclusive adaptation of the Berlin performance entitled '*I Was Not Invited (The Organ Grinder's Canto)*', which will extend into an exhibition within the venue, where costumes and photographs reflecting the performance will be on display.

**About Ruinart: (Principal Art Patron – Duddell's Hong Kong Art Programme)**

The House of Ruinart was founded in 1729 by Nicolas Ruinart. His uncle, a learned Benedictine monk called Dom Thierry Ruinart had incredible insight. He foretold that this new "wine with bubbles", developed in his native region of Champagne and which the royal courts of Europe adored, was destined for a bright future. Driven by a constant quest for excellence and the absolute, the House selected Chardonnay, a rare and fragile grape variety, as the common thread for all its cuvées. Dom Ruinart's vision and heritage of excellence has been passed down and continues to be a core value and tradition at the House of Ruinart.

The Maison Ruinart has a long standing relationship with the arts, dating back to 1895 when artist Alphonse Maria Mucha was commissioned to illustrate a poster of Ruinart that was to cause a sensation. More than a century later, Ruinart has collaborated with several other timeless artists and continues to develop close links with the art world, playing a role in numerous international art events including the Carré Rive Gauche, Masterpiece London and Art Basel in Basel, Miami and now, Hong Kong.

**About Duddell's London Art Programme**

Following the inaugural project 'Human Rhinovirus 14', a mixed media installation by Hong Kong-based artist Nadim Abbas in June 2017, Duddell's London will present 'Doubting Thomas', its first group show in April 2018. This site-specific exhibition, guest-curated by Kwok Ying will bring together artists from both Hong Kong and the United Kingdom, as they explore the concepts of truth and belief in the former St. Thomas Church.

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For hi-res images, please click [here](#).

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