

# Öliara

18 March – 30 April 2022  
47 Theobalds Road, London, WC1X 8SP



**A solo exhibition of Berlin-based Kazakh artist Gulnur Mukazhanova. Curated by Indira Ziyabek from Ainalaiyn Space in collaboration with Mimosa House.**

Öliara is a new site-specific installation created for Mimosa House by Gulnur Mukazhanova, born from the virus that traumatised the world and the nationwide unrest that took place in her home country in January 2022.

Translated from Kazakh, Öliara describes the ‘dark moon’, a moment within the final lunar phase in which the new moon is born. As the moon is hardly noticeable at this point, Kazakhs associated this moonless sky with a dead moment, a time when evil is set free. Kazakh writers have therefore used this lunar phenomenon as a metaphor for the hardest and darkest periods of history.

In Öliara, the artist constructs a horizon line within the gallery space using cut-out fragments of fabrics that are precariously secured together with pins. As Mukazhanova highlights: “It is not the horizon of the future, rather it is the reflection of the current period”.<sup>1</sup> For the artist, piercing the material with pins embodies the fragility and uncertainty of our current moment.

The floor is covered with a white cloth and rectangular mounds of soil that recall a burial shroud and funerary grounds. Contours of flowers are pinned into the earth; their emptiness and placement within the soil symbolise the final traces of being and loss.

Within Öliara, the artist creates a space for mourning. The horizon, like that of her homeland, becomes a landscape imbued with intricate layers of memory. In this pertinent installation, Mukazhanova articulates the transience of being and the fragility of life and the body.

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<sup>1</sup> Personal communication with the artist.

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### **About Mimosa House**

Mimosa House is an independent, non-profit gallery space in central London founded and curated by Daria Khan. Dedicated to artistic experimentation and collaboration, we support dialogue between intergenerational women and queer artists. Embracing inclusivity and sensitivity, Mimosa House is a safe and empowering space which focuses on the fluidity of identity and recognises the need for change.

[www.mimosahouse.co.uk](http://www.mimosahouse.co.uk) | @mimosahouselondon

### **About Ainalaiyn Space**

Ainalaiyn Space is a nomadic arts project based in London, founded by Indira Ziyabek. We work with international artists and curators, providing an equal opportunity for everyone, especially to those that do not have a major presence in Europe. With learning, research and experimentation at the centre of our practice, we work on a diverse range of projects which showcase contemporary art from an interdisciplinary perspective, covering science, architecture, literature, philosophy and other areas.

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### **About the artist**

#### Gulnur Mukazhanova (b. 1984, Karaganda)

Gulnur Mukazhanova is an artist who uses the materials of traditional Kazakh handicrafts to explore the complexities of post-nomadic identities, cultural alienation, and the effects of globalisation. Born shortly before the collapse of the USSR, she was raised in the volatility of the newly formed Kazakhstan. She completed her studies at the Art Academy in Almaty and the Kunsthochschule in Berlin Weißensee. Working in felt, the textile recalls and connects to the origins, traditions and customs of her native country. The artist also works with mass-produced synthetic fabrics that imitate organic silks and were originally acquired from Kazakhstan bazars. She creates vivid installations that are precariously secured with pins, raising questions of impermanence, fragility and uncertainty.