

## ZINTA JAUNITIS This Late Hour



After letting go  
of the last bird  
I hesitate  
There is something  
in this empty cage  
that never gets released<sup>1</sup>

Zinta has been inspired by the possibilities of the folding format as an art form, and the escape it offers from the confines of the traditional rectangular page or canvas. For her, the process of drawing in a continuous flow, moving, connecting, and layering marks and drawings is something that reveals a narrative, rather than dictates one. The folding format allows Zinta to work across the page to create a dialogue with marks and elements that she might pick up again on the next page. It becomes a voyage for both artist and viewer: a journey rather than a destination.

Lebanese-American poet/artist Etel Adnan described the experience of drawing on a leporello as 'writing a river'. She says, *Everything goes by as the eye sees it, it's a very particular space, without a single perspective, with constantly changing points of view, creating a feeling of wandering, in space and time... the visual becomes poetry.*<sup>2</sup>

'This Late Hour' was inspired by a poem Zinta read on the London underground, Long Exposure by Iranian poet Garous Abdolmalekian. She says, 'It struck an emotional and visual response with me, touching on themes of loss, and the passage of time. Is the kneeling female figure holding on to something or letting go? Are the bird-like figures caught between two worlds or two states of being?'

Zinta's thoughtful approach is also applied to the making of the screen. The work uses the Japanese tradition of folding screens. The idea of hanging a two dimensional artwork on a wall is a largely Western concept. The Japanese and Chinese were less constrained by those ideas, using calligraphy scrolls to explore narrative or create more three dimensional art.

Over six months Zinta researched and made a version of a Japanese folding screen, a painstaking process which involves building up layers of strong, translucent Kozo paper stretched over a wooden frame, with paper hinges which allow the screen to lie flat or open up to either side. She explains, 'there was something very satisfying about seeing the screen





take form over time, and using materials and techniques I had never tried before. I love the tactile quality of the folding form, large or small.' It's an object which you have to hold and unfold to reveal or conceal an image. It demands careful handling which feels like a radical act in today's digital age.

The prints were created from a working drawing combining collage, blended soft pastels and charcoal. Found imagery was interwoven and layered with personal memories and the observed world around her. It was then etched onto plates, and printed onto Japanese paper using a large press. Zinta considers the screen not merely as a piece of decorative furniture but as a moving structure, carrying art and poetry.

The Japanese word for folding screen is *Byōbu*, which means 'barrier against the wind'. Perhaps, this could also be a metaphor for 'This Late Hour'.

<sup>1</sup>Garous Abdolmalekian, translated by Ahmad Nadalizadeh and Idra Novey. (2020). *Lean Against This Late Hour*. Penguin Books.

<sup>2</sup>Etel Adnan. (2020). *Leporellos*. Calerie Lelong & Co. Special thanks to Diane Hutchinson for the interview with Zinta Jaunitis in February 2024.



*This Late Hour*, 2024, 126.5cm x 64cm  
drypoint etching with watercolour on four-leaf folding screen

