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SARKIS' EXHIBITION *STAYS TOGETHER* AT DIRIMART LONDON

Stays Together

Sarkis

Opening: 25 November 2025

Venue: Dirimart London

This exhibition can be visited from 25 November 2025 to 10 January 2026

(Mondays by appointment; Tuesday – Saturday, 10am – 6pm)

LONDON, 11 NOVEMBER 2025 – Dirimart is pleased to announce *Stays Together*, the first London solo exhibition by acclaimed Turkey-born Armenian artist Sarkis (b. 1938, Istanbul), opening on 25 November.

One of the most significant voices in conceptual contemporary art, Sarkis represented Turkey at the 56th Venice Biennale (2015) and participated in the Armenian Pavilion's group exhibition the same year. His work has been shown at leading institutions, including the Centre Pompidou, Paris, and the Guggenheim Museum, New York. With more than 500 exhibitions worldwide since the 1960s, *Stays Together* unites twenty-four works created across different periods, employing diverse techniques and gestures, and demonstrates the wide variety in Sarkis's oeuvre. Rich in imagery, the works form a cycle of questions and responses that explore what keeps us connected.

In his practice, Sarkis personifies each work and seeks its approval for inclusion in exhibitions. Produced in his Villejuif, Paris studio, every piece carries its own context while entering into dialogue with its surroundings. The intricate relationships among his works create a silent, multivocal resonance.

At the centre of the exhibition is *In the beginning, candle (to Christian Bernard)* (2023), an installation that brings together artworks between 1969 – the same year Sarkis created a piece for the renowned Institute of Contemporary Arts' (ICA) exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form* – and 2023, in one composition. The installation offers a visual narrative of how these works have gathered over time: candle holders, a piece of lead resting on water, seven colours evaporating in white cups, Sarkis's glass bust as a cosmonaut, a Curtis photo transformed into stained glass, and mirrors awash with rainbow hues. The entangled conversation between these works creates a chorus that resonates across times, spaces, and beliefs.

Observing this dialogue is Sarkis's recent series, *85 Screams: After Munch* (2023). Inspired by the figure in Munch's *The Scream* – a fascination which has engaged Sarkis since his first encounter with the work in a newspaper as a child – the rapidly executed oil paintings, applied directly to paper without a brush, can be seen as self-portraits. He later transforms these artworks into stained glass, zooming in on the floating faces that are then dispersed throughout the exhibition.



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The date of Sarkis's works is always 'today'. Artifacts from different centuries – such as the image of a female figure from the Neolithic era, a sixteenth- to seventeenth-century stone face, and a 1941 Leica camera – are all reinterpreted through techniques he has developed or invented and juxtaposed with everyday scenes. Through these encounters, he evokes the shared psyche of contemporary experience, drawing forgotten memories and collective hardships to the surface.

Although Sarkis has not exhibited in London since 1969, he maintains that, in his world, there is no notion of departure or return, as his homeland resides in his memory.

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Sarkis (b. 1938, Istanbul) graduated from the State Academy of Fine Arts. He held his first solo exhibition at Istanbul Art Gallery in 1960. He moved to Paris in 1964. Sarkis' works have been exhibited at prestigious institutions, including Centre Pompidou, Paris; Guggenheim, New York; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Kunst-und Ausstellungshalle, Bonn; Louvre Museum, Paris; Bode Museum, Berlin; Fondazione MAXXI and Kunsthalle Düsseldorf. In 2015, he represented Turkey at the Turkey Pavilion of the 56th Venice Biennale. His recent solo exhibitions include *Five Icons Framed in Edirne-style Wooden Ornamentation*, Dirimart, Istanbul (2025); *Future Lies Ahead 1993–2023*, Daejeon Museum of Art, Daejeon (2023); *85 Screams: After Munch*, Dirimart, Istanbul (2023); *7 Tage 7 Nächte*, Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, Baden-Baden (2023); *ENDLESS*, Arter, Istanbul (2023); *Çaylak Sokak*, Arter, Istanbul (2019); *Mirror*, Dirimart, Istanbul (2017) and *L'ouverture*, Istanbul Modern, Istanbul (2009). Among the significant exhibitions and biennials he participated in are the 6th Mardin Biennial, Mardin (2024); the 2nd, 4th, and the 14th Istanbul Biennials, Istanbul (1989, 1995, 2015); the 10th Lyon Biennial, Lyon (2010); the 2nd Moscow Biennial, Moscow (2007); the 3rd Shanghai Biennial, Shanghai (2000); the 4th and 8th Sydney Biennials, Sydney (1982, 1990); *documenta VI and VII*, Kassel (1977, 1982) and *When Attitudes Become Form*, Kunsthalle Bern (1969). Additionally, in 2015, he participated in the group exhibition at the Armenian Pavilion of the 56th Venice Biennale. Sarkis' works are part of major collections, including Centre Pompidou, Paris; MAMCO, Switzerland; and Istanbul Modern, as well as various private collections. Sarkis lives and works in Paris.