

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ADVOCARTSY PRESENTS
A SOLO EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY AFsoon
Searching for Myself in the Forest of Bewitchment



The Forest of Bewitchment, 2023. Acrylic painting collaged on printed canvas, 35.5 x 67 in.

***Searching for Myself in the Forest of Bewitchment* opens to the public
Thursday, October 19th, 2023, 6-9pm
at ADVOCARTSY's West Hollywood gallery,
Located at 434 North La Cienega Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90048**

ADVOCARTSY is proud to present Afsoon's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles, *Searching For Myself In The Forest Of Bewitchment*, with a public opening reception on Thursday October 19, 2023 from 6-9pm at ADVOCARTSY's West Hollywood gallery located at 434 North La Cienega Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90048. This presentation of a unique, one of a kind body of work synthesizes Afsoon's gift for storytelling across complex mediums— like linocut, watercolor and collage— along with decades of research, culminating in a distinctive and multifaceted visual lexicon. Her references span the near and ancient past, yet are continually looking towards the future, welcoming visitors into the perfect present of Afsoon's *Forest of Bewitchment*.

In searching for herself, Afsoon returned to some of her favorite subjects for inspiration— talismans, poetry, and fairytales from her childhood in Iran. Additionally, she rediscovered her affinity for using linocut, which was one of her earliest mediums. The intensive process of cutting

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the lino, proofing, and hand printing these selection of unique works is integral in understanding how Afsoon's use of collage signifies a return to and expansion of her roots.

Afsoon has always been fascinated by the idea of talismans and amulets and collects examples from around the world, but the majority of her collection is from Iran. In this body of work, the intricate pieces tell stories full of hope, wishes, fear and anticipation, honoring the heroism of women throughout history and folklore. These talismans are continuously referring to belief systems embedded in the cultural psyche, especially exploring the folklore of heroic women across centuries. The universality of Afsoon's artistic storytelling brings her oeuvre of original works together as one breathing entity, a theatrical collection of allegories that speak to each other as much as they do their audience.

All are welcome to attend the public opening of *Searching For Myself In The Forest Of Bewitchment* at ADVOCARTSY's West Hollywood Gallery on Thursday, October 19, 2023 from 6-9 pm, where the artist will be present.



L: *Talking Dolls*, 2023. Hand printed linocut collaged on Zerkall artist paper, 16.5 x 11.7 in



R: *Bibi*, 2023. Hand printed linocut collaged on Zerkall artist paper, 16.5 x 11.7 in



Artist Statement

I grew up in the late '60s and '70s in Iran. It was a country which was very old and very young at the same time. I was a quiet girl, always watching, always drawing. I remember I mainly drew women. I think my inspirations were the tales read to me before I was old enough to read and a collection of dolls from around the world which I was fascinated with.

As an artist, not much has changed. I still watch, draw and search. I have always been a voracious reader, and stories invariably play a big part in my art. For this exhibition, I revisited my childhood again, as it is the usual port of call in my work. I reread many of the old fairytales I loved as a child, and all have a female protagonist who wins despite everything being against her.

For instance, among others, one collage was inspired by the story of Aunty Cockroach, who searches for a husband by asking potential suitors how they would treat her after an argument. Another piece references the long-forgotten Empress Borandukht, who ruled the great Persian Empire in the 7th century. I also allude to Haft Paykar by Nizami Ganjavi, the famous 12th-century book of poetry. In this book, King Bahram Gur has seven wives, who each teach the king about love, mysticism and philosophical ideas through stories.

Thus, I found women who were strong, funny, and bright. I read about women who were survivors. Women who wore out seven iron boots to get to where they wanted to go or looked for a partner who would treat them equally. I found women who asked questions even though they would be punished. Women who knew their worth and fought for it. I found poems praising women from all parts of the world, women of different races, ages and looks, but equal and united in their intelligence and knowledge.

In this quest, like so many others, birds kept me company. Birds are the witnesses in most of my artistic journeys, forever moving, migrating, and watching alongside me.

But where did I fit in this forest? How did the little girl become the woman I am now? I found myself lost again in the mysterious land of tales looking for and finding women who are all me.

About the Artist

A self-taught artist, Afsoon spent her childhood in Iran and youth in California before settling in London in 1988. Her nomadic life is reflected in her work where East merges with West, and the result is simultaneously familiar and foreign.

Working across mediums including photography, linocut, collage and etching, Afsoon's practice aims to preserve her cultural past and explore nostalgia through visual storytelling and iconography. Her art reveals the introspective and often difficult nature of being a woman artist in the Iranian diaspora, contending with historical allusions and the artist's own carefully crafted, playful visual language.

Afsoon has exhibited internationally, and her works are held in the collections of LACMA, the British Museum, the Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent Collection, and the Farjam Collection amongst others.



L: *In the End You Can Never Play Both Sides*, 2023. Watercolor and paper collage on Arches paper, 20 x 14 in
R: *No Escaping the Past*, 2023. Watercolor and paper collage on Arches paper, 20 x 14 in

Exhibition Programming

Public Opening Reception:

Thursday October 19, from 6-9pm

Exhibition On View:

October 19 - November 18, 2023

Regular Gallery Hours: Wed - Sat 11-5pm or by appointment

For more information or to request a preview catalogue, email info@advocartsy.com.

About ADVOCARTSY

Launched in 2015, ADVOCARTSY is a contemporary art platform specializing in Iranian contemporary art. In June of 2021, ADVOCARTSY expanded gallery operations with a new exhibition space in West Hollywood.