



POUYA AFSHAR:

A RETURN TO THE FLESH

Public Opening Reception:
Thursday, June 23rd 6-9 pm
On view through July 16th, 2022

*you know how dangerous it is
to wear dark skin*

—Lucille Clifton, *1984*

*Our skin is just a cover-up
For the land where none dare go,
an internal inferno,
The anathema of anatomy.*

—Wisława Szymborska, *The Onion*

Artist Biography/Statement

Pouya Afshar is an alumnus from the California Institute of Arts Character Animation department and is a graduate of University of California Los Angeles Graduate Department of Film and Television focusing in Animation and Digital Media. He has exhibited his work as a visual artist throughout the United States and Middle East, including Harold M. Williams Auditorium at the Getty Center, Bovard Auditorium at University of Southern California, Royce Hall at University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Santa Monica Art studios, 18th street Art Center, Craft Contemporary Museum, and numerous galleries and art fairs around the world. Pouya has presented his research at Stanford University, Harvard University, University of Southern California, The School of Museum of Fine Arts Boston, University of California Los Angeles, and Residency Unlimited NY. He is the creator, character designer, and producer of the animated series 'Rostam in Wonderland,' the co-creator of '1PA2PA' comics, and the author and illustrator of the graphic novel 'TEHRAN.' He is currently an associate professor of art at University of Massachusetts, Lowell.

"This exhibition includes new, old, recycled, and repurposed pieces that in some way contain flesh, skin, intestines, and other body parts. While making these pieces my mind was occupied with matters of race, specifically how the social construction of racial difference shapes emotion and cognition, marking and molding the body.

In "Letter From A Region In My Mind," James Baldwin writes, "Long before the Negro child perceives this difference, and even longer before he understands it, he has begun to react to it, he has begun to be controlled by it." The difference with which Baldwin is concerned is the distinction between white and black, a spurious pseudoscientific division at the rotten core of white supremacy, whose foremost tenet is white is might and right.

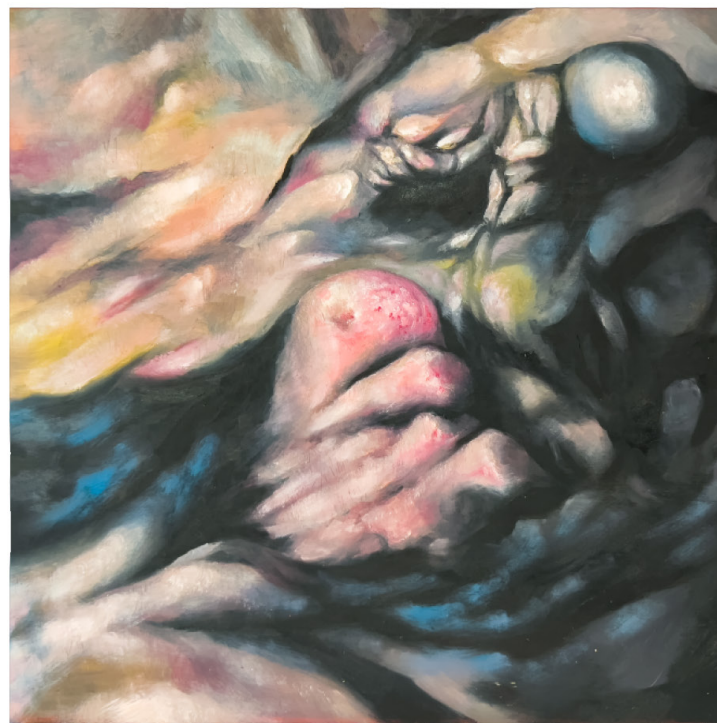
We may not be able to gauge emotional rewards and losses in the same way that we contest the value systems produced by racially discriminatory structures, but they are at work in the psychic realities of racial economies.

What I am exploring in these pieces is racialized emotion and how it manifests physically, within our flesh and skin, when we go through racially charged situations. How we metamorphose internally but also externally. How we circulate, assess, and express emotions in physical form. How we process collective guilt, pleasure, shame, or other emotional gains and losses. How the body transforms when we struggle for inclusion and how it reshapes itself when in need of racial contestation."

— Pouya Afshar



Bared #2, 2022, Pastel on Paper, 25.5 x 39 in



Bared #1, 2022, Oil on Board, 10 x 10 in each, 21 x 32 in installed



Bouquet #1 and #2, 2022, Mixed Media on Paper, 19 x 23.25 in each



Disorderly I, 2019, Oil on Fabric, 45 x 73 in



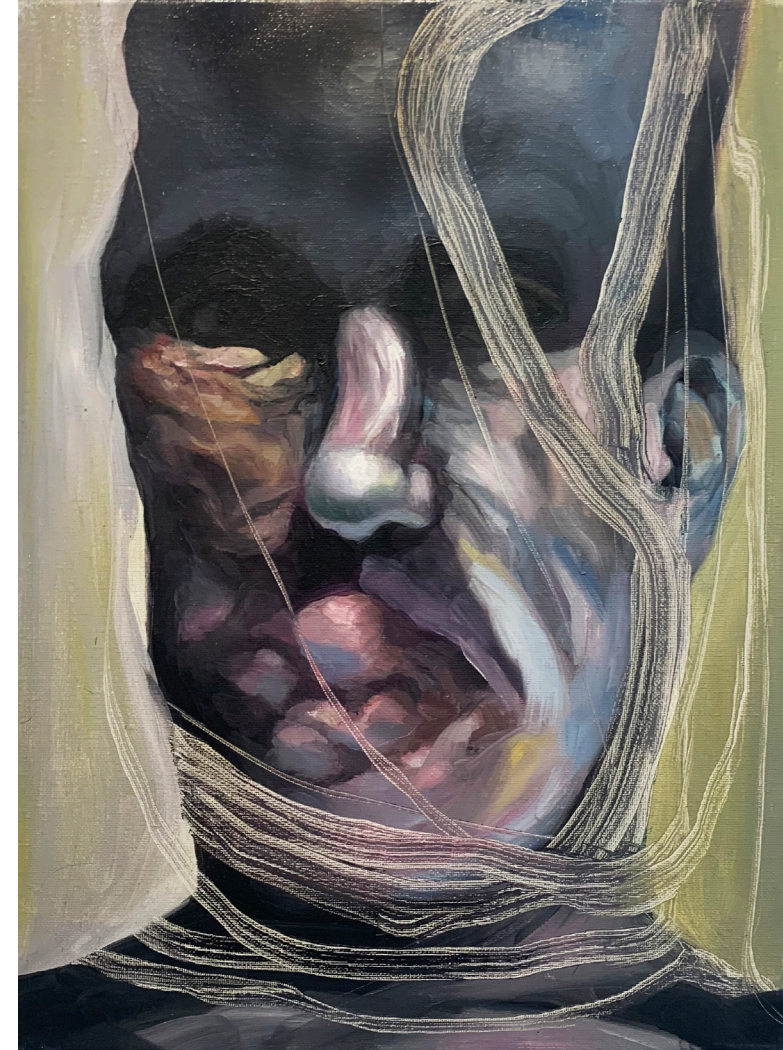
Cube #1 & #2, 2022, Pastel on Paper, 19.5 x 25.5 in each



Disorderly II, 2022, Oil on Fabric, 53 x 80 in



Sphere #1 & #2, 2022, Pastel on Paper, 19.5 x 25.5 in each



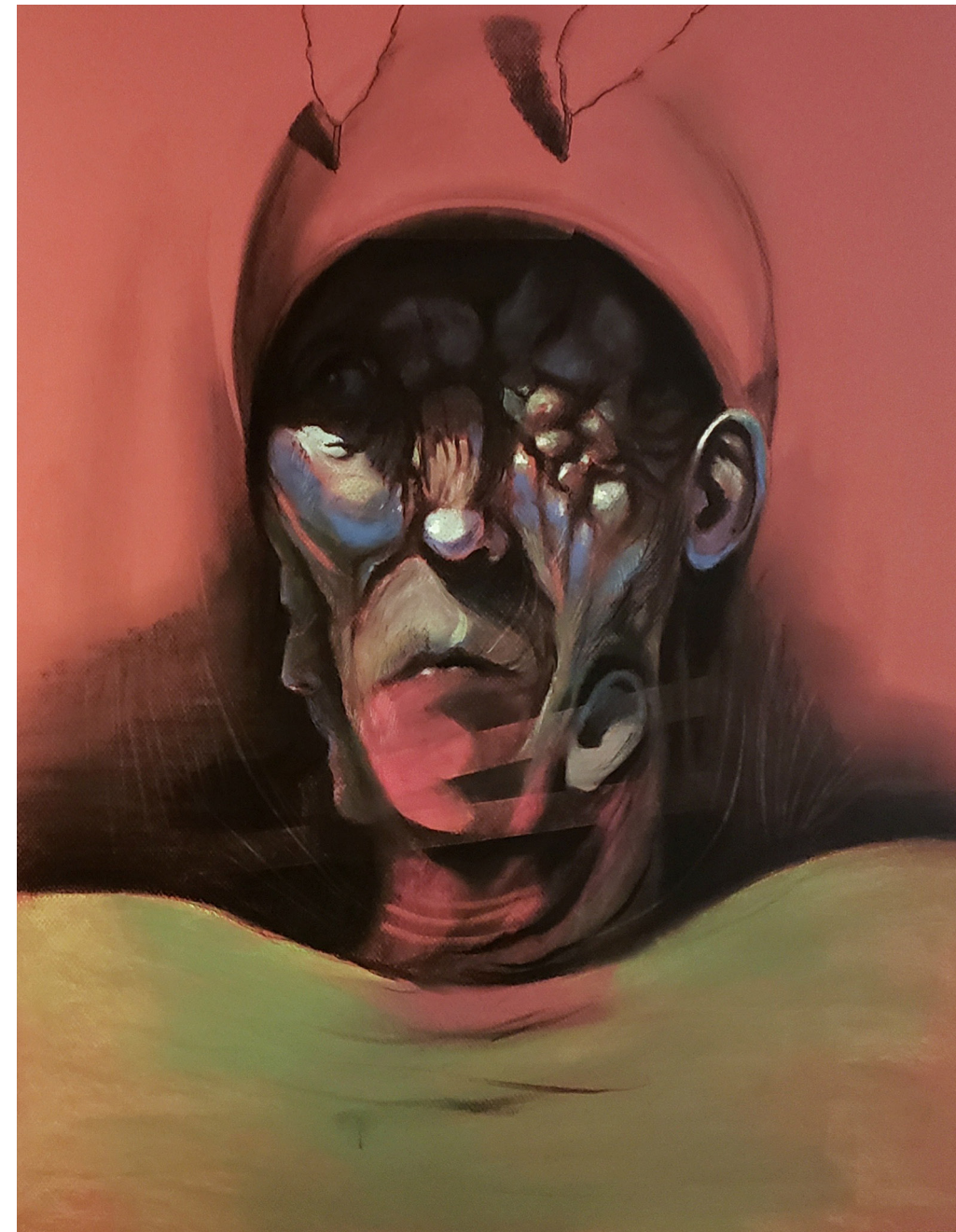
Disorderly Study, 2019, Oil on Canvas, 16 x 24 in



Disorderly III, 2019, Oil on Canvas, 50 x 44 in



Disorderly IV, 2019, Oil on Canvas, 59 x 42 in



Memories Transfigured II, 2019, Soft Pastel on Paper, 24.5 x 38 in



Prism #1 & #2, 2022, Pastel on Paper, 19.5 x 25.5 in each



Memories Transfigured IV, 2019, Oil on Canvas, 44 x 44 in each



Memories Transfigured III, 2019, Oil on Canvas, 44 x 44 in each



Memories Disintegrated II, 2017, Charcoal on Paper, 20.7 x 49 in



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