

ADVOCARTSY

summer group exhibition

Once Upon a Time

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above: Tree by Mohammad Barrangi, Reverse Transfer Printmaking on Canvas, 85x94"

Public Opening: Saturday, August 28th, 11 am - 5 pm.

Exhibition on view through Saturday, October 9th.

Pouya Afshar. Afsoon. Mohammad Barrangi.

Ali Dadgar. Siavash Jaraiedi. Simin Keramati. Yassi Mazandi. Dana
Nehdaran. Dariush Nehdaran. Samira Nowparast. Hadi Salehi. Sepideh
Salehi. Shadi Yousefian.

ADVOCARTSY West Hollywood

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About ADVOCARTSY

ADVOCARTSY is a contemporary art platform specializing in Iranian contemporary art based in Los Angeles.

THE SPACE by ADVOCARTSY, ADVOCARTSY's downtown Los Angeles gallery, was launched in October 2017 as the permanent Los Angeles gallery space of ADVOCARTSY to further its mission of promoting Iranian Contemporary Art and as an extension of ADVOCARTSY's ART BRIEF series, launched in Los Angeles in 2015.

In 2021, ADVOCARTSY expanded its exhibition spaces to West Hollywood to better expand the platform's outreach and programming and to better serve the community and our roster of artists.

Our 1,800-square-foot-space is ideally situated in the heart of Downtown LA's Fashion District, minutes from the rapidly expanding arts district and LA's newest museum, the Institute of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. Our new 1,600-square-foot-space is located on the edge of the West Hollywood Design District, near the Pacific Design Center and minutes from the Mid Wilshire Museum row, including Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Craft Contemporary Museum.

Curatorial Statement

Myth, fantasy, and memory collide in *Once Upon a Time*, a group exhibition exploring the dialogue between contemporary artists of Iranian origin whose work is inspired by or acts as a reimagined form of memory or fairytale. The Persian equivalent of "Once upon a time" is "Yeki bood, yeki nabood," literally translating to "There was one and there was not one." Beginning stories with this tradition communicates an indefinite amount of time, space and duality. This exhibition is composed of artists working across various disciplines, the marriage of these disparate visual motifs crystallizes the concepts of myth, fantasy, and memory into an entity that feels alive. Through *Once Upon a Time*, we aim to traverse the common narrative body in search of a central thread woven throughout the complex tapestry of life as we understand it.

Pouya Afshar

Artist Biography

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' and the co-creator of 'IPA2PA' comics and the creator of 'TEHRAN' graphic novel. He is currently an associate professor of art at University of Massachusetts, Lowell.

Artist Statement - EN MASSE Series

"My latest project EN MASSE revolves around mourning rituals and cathartic approaches through Art and the historic elements that generate these traditions in Theatre. This series is a multimedia project that explores mourning in a personal and historical level. It dwells on the theatrical aspects of Ta'zieh or Passion Play in a non-linear format before transforming into animation and video projections as memories and dreams of the artist. This project also aims to create dialogue on how one can recover from a loved one's death and why community creates a platform to do so through Art.

Having to deal with the loss of my mentor recently, I have begun to explore sentimental relations to mourning habits and rituals. This experience has caused me to reflect upon my understanding of the reasons behind mourning rituals. To examine why theatre becomes a vehicle for individuals to move as a mass towards calm, hiding behind their role, whether on stage as actors/actresses or as the audience.

In this project, the process of creation is as equally substantial to me as the product itself and my interests often lay roots in how I aim to conclude but end up elsewhere. How I, as a mentee, am advised by my environment and his/her story. How I change in shape, texture, and effectiveness during the completion of a project is an integral emphasis in developing EN MASSE. Experiencing pain, sadness, anger, nostalgia, gratitude, joy, and anxiety during the completion of this project has pushed me to grow, both as an artist and more importantly, as a human being. It has pushed me to climb out of a protective shell into a vulnerable atmosphere. An atmosphere devoid of artistic ego. A place where I have no control over the context but can choose the form. EN MASSE is an homage. A memorial service for whomever we miss. A reminder for us to embrace life's inherited experiences and if necessary, leave them behind.

EN MASSE has started its journey in a different shape and form in Tehran, Iran and will conclude at LACMA's 'In the fields of empty days: the intersection of the past and present in Iranian art' in May, 2018."

– Pouya Afshar



Pouya Afshar, *Dissected Memories*, 2021, Ink on Layered Plexi Glass, 12 x 12 x 24 in., detail below:





Pouya Afshar
Abduction in the Time of Corona - Triptych (Self Portraits), 2021
Oil on canvas
60 x 120 in



Afsoon, *The Arrival of Her Ladyship (3/10)*, 2019,
Archival print of a mixed media collage on somerset artist paper, 23 x 16.50 in

Afsoon

Artist Biography

Afsoon is an Iranian artist. She 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.

Afsoon is unafraid to combine text and images as well as various techniques such as linocut, photography, collage and etching in a single piece. Though her art is frequently deeply personal, it contains multiple meanings and speaks to different people in a myriad of ways. Despite the layered interpretations and methods, her work is not convoluted and the viewer is easily engaged as her art can be humorous, playful and sophisticated all at once.

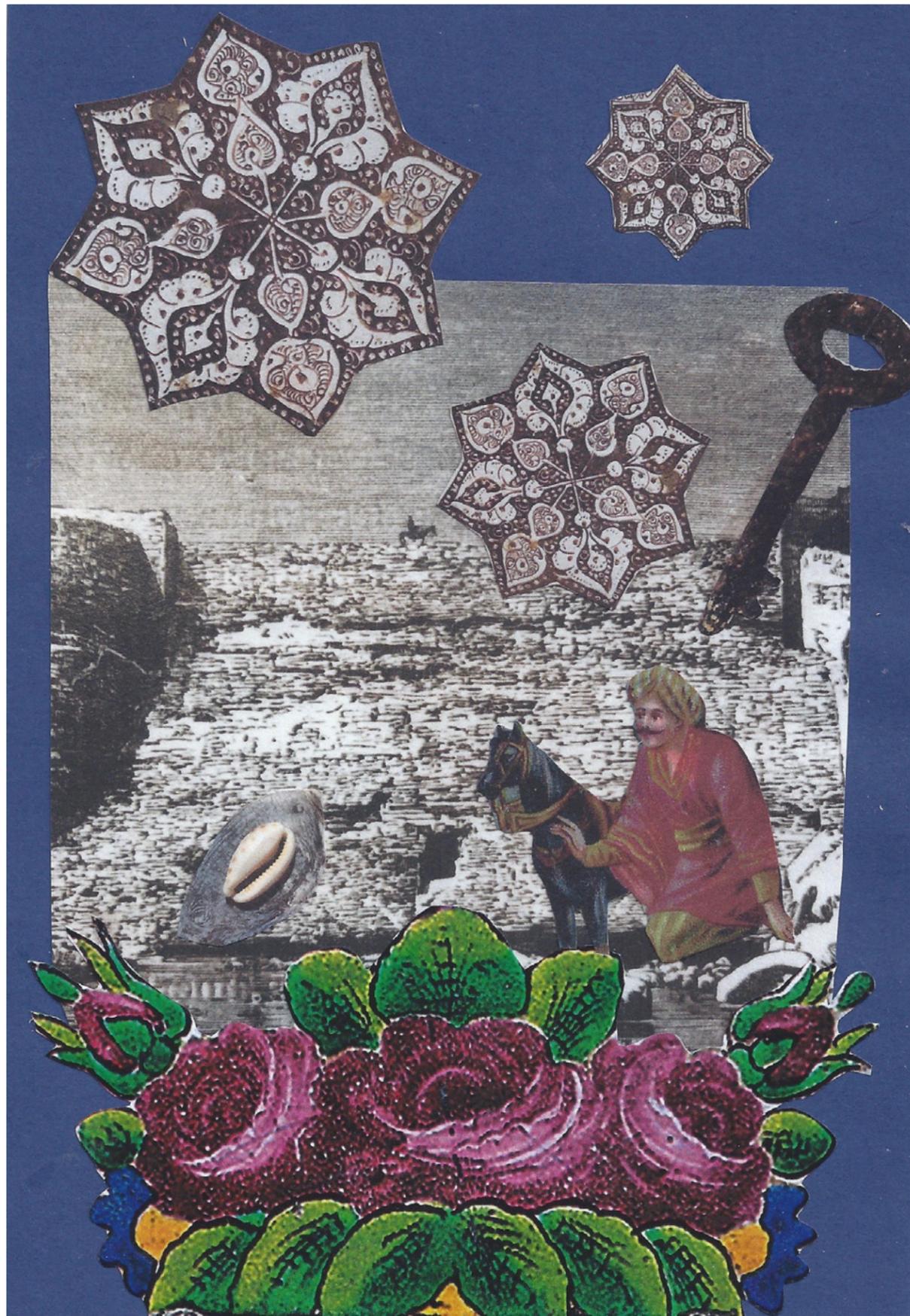
Her works have been extensively exhibited and can be found worldwide in prominent collections and museums, including the British Museum, LACMA (Los Angeles County Museum), and the Berger/YSL Collection amongst others.

Artist Statement - The Adventures of Her Ladyship

"I grew up reading fairytales like many other kids of my era. I loved how I could imagine myself being a part of the story. I could be riding horses, sailing ships, going hunting or even searching for a golden egg. However, I was always slightly uncomfortable if the tale was just about finding a prince to marry. One fairytale especially always scared me: the Little Mermaid. While some friends loved the mermaid's long blond hair in illustrations and the blue-eyed prince, I found the idea of giving up your voice to walk with painful feet was terrible. Surely it was a much better idea to be able to sing, talk, laugh and swim around the blue sea. To me having a voice was better than being able to walk!

I grew up, but I continued reading fairytales and folk tales from around the world. It was by luck that I came across the story here. The small and long out of print book of obscure Persian fairytales from the 19th century came into my hands almost 20 years ago. I was so intrigued by the overt sexuality, cruelty and the humour of all the stories that I read them many times throughout the years. However, my favourite was always *The Adventures of Her Ladyship*. I admired her confidence, resilience and, of course, her voice which would not be silenced. A voice which we all have and most would never give up for anything. And you never know, you might even catch a king with it."

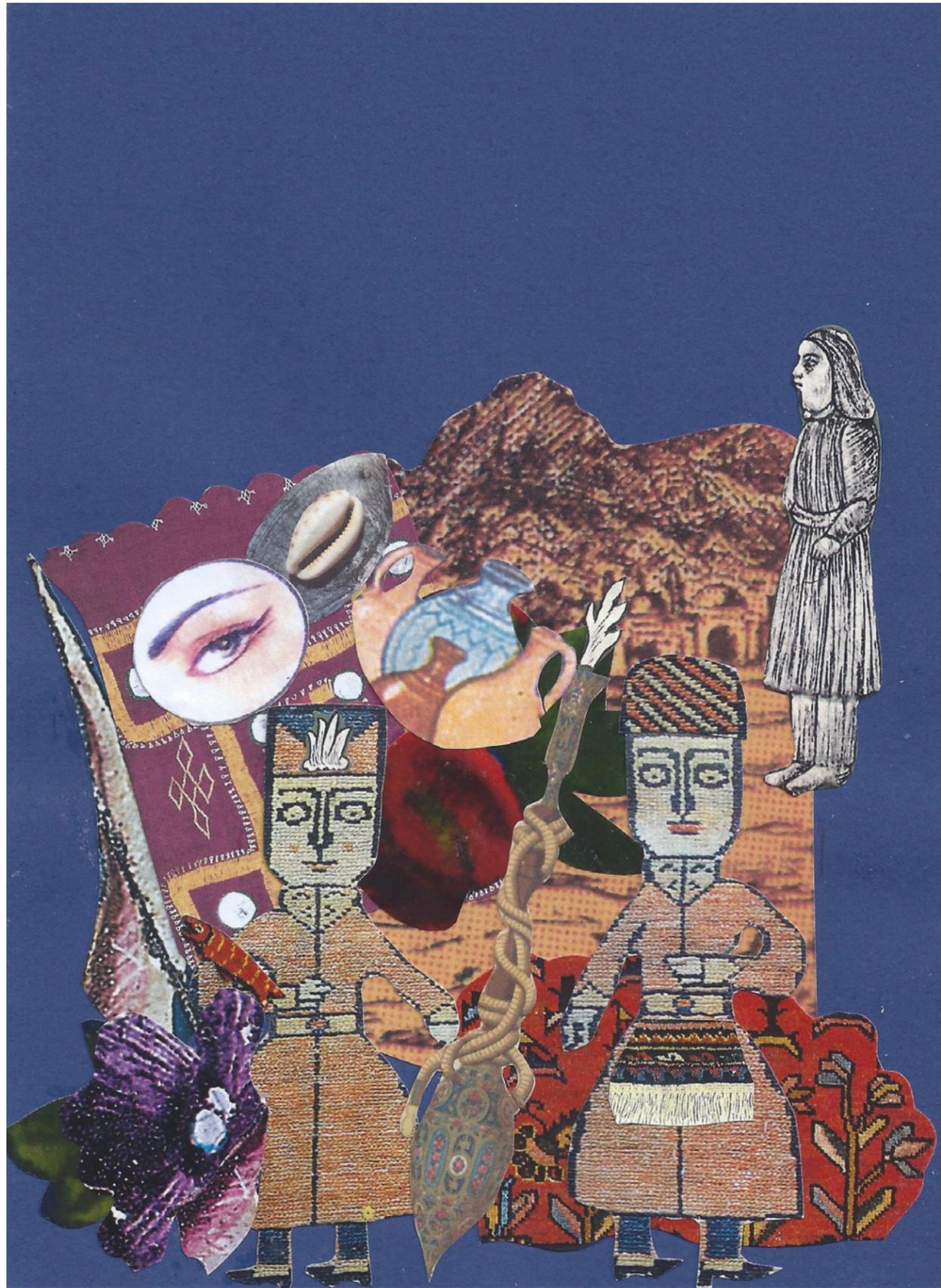
– Afsoon



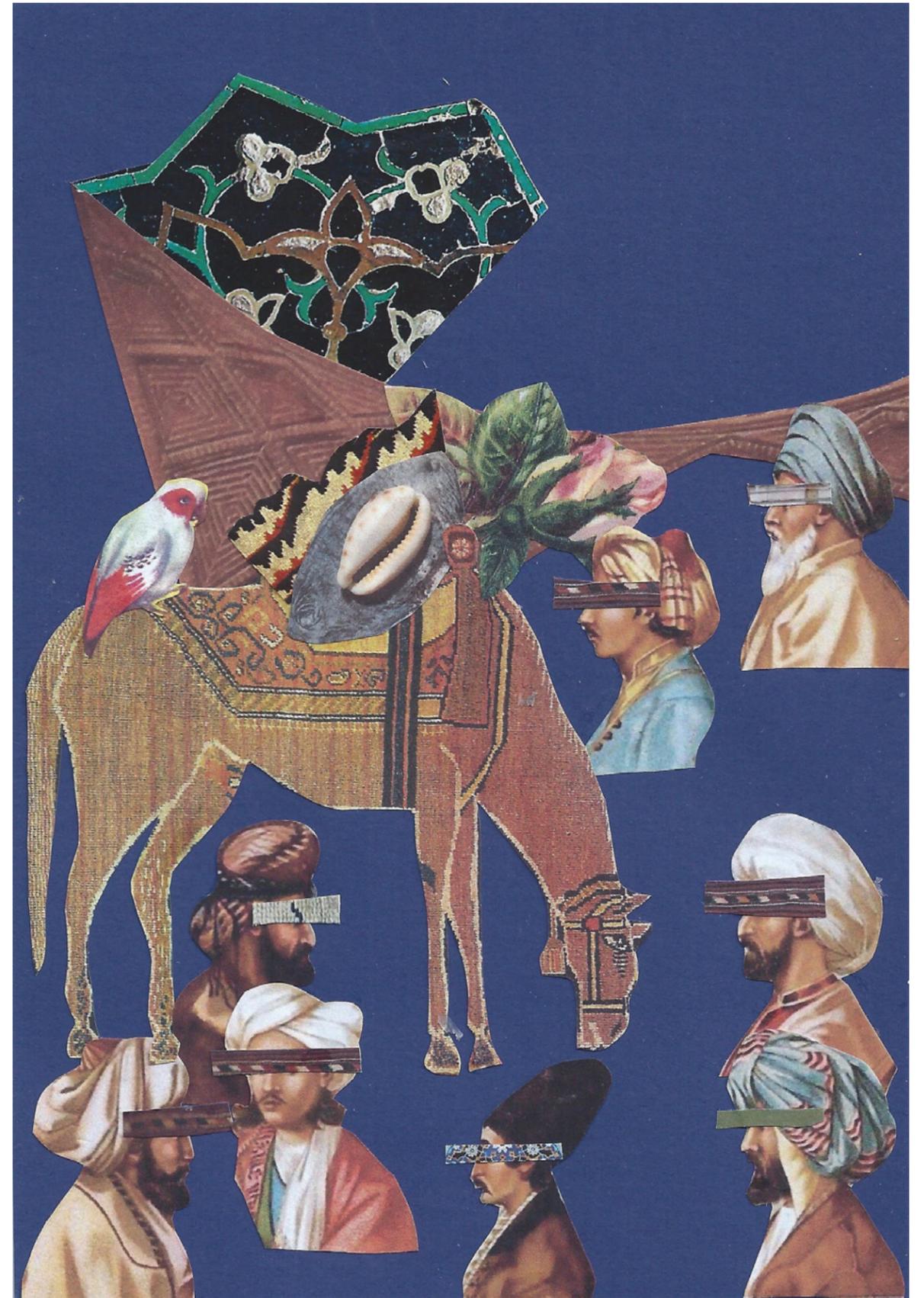
Afsoon, *Her Ladyship Meets a Young Prince* (3/10), 2019,
Archival print of a mixed media collage on somerset artist paper, 23 x 16.50 in



Afsoon, *Her Ladyship in the Golden Cage*, (3/10), 2019,
Archival print of a mixed media collage on somerset artist paper, 23 x 16.50 in



Afsoon, *The King Asks for Her Ladyship's Hand (3/10)*, 2019,
Archival print of a mixed media collage on somerset artist paper, 23 x 16.50 in



Afsoon, *Her Ladyship Visits the Hammam (3/10)*, 2019,
Archival print of a mixed media collage on somerset artist paper, 23 x 16.50 in



Afsoon, *A Fairy Grants Her Ladyship A Wish* (3/10), 2019,
Archival print of a mixed media collage on somerset artist paper, 23 x 16.50 in



Afsoon, *Her Ladyship Makes a Pact With a Hungry Cat* (3/10), 2019,
Archival print of a mixed media collage on somerset artist paper, 23 x 16.50 in



Afsoon, *Her Ladyship has a Wedding* (3/10), 2019,
Archival print of a mixed media collage on somerset artist paper, 23 x 16.50 in



Mohammad Barrangi, *Untitled (Zebra Yellow)*, 2021, Printmaking on handmade paper, 14 x 18 in



Mohammad Barrangi, *Untitled no. 90*, 2020, Printmaking on handmade paper, 12.50 x 17.50 in

Mohammad Barrangi

Artist Biography

Mohammad Barrangi is an illustrator and printmaker. Originally from Iran, he currently lives and works in Wakefield, UK.

Barrangi's artworks combine elements of Persian calligraphy, storytelling and touches of humour. Using a unique creative process with handmade traditional calligraphy pens and a blend of mark making styles, Barrangi creates small pieces that are often expanded into large scale murals. This transformation is achieved through an exploration of laser photocopying, collagraph, and collage. Fusing these elements in one process, the artist creates works that encompass a range of disparate visual motifs, each holding separate connotations of specific eras or cultures, but creating a unique cross-cultural style in combination. This otherworldly body of work is often inspired by ancient Persian scholars as well as the Persian Epic 'The Conference of the Birds' by Attar of Nishapur.

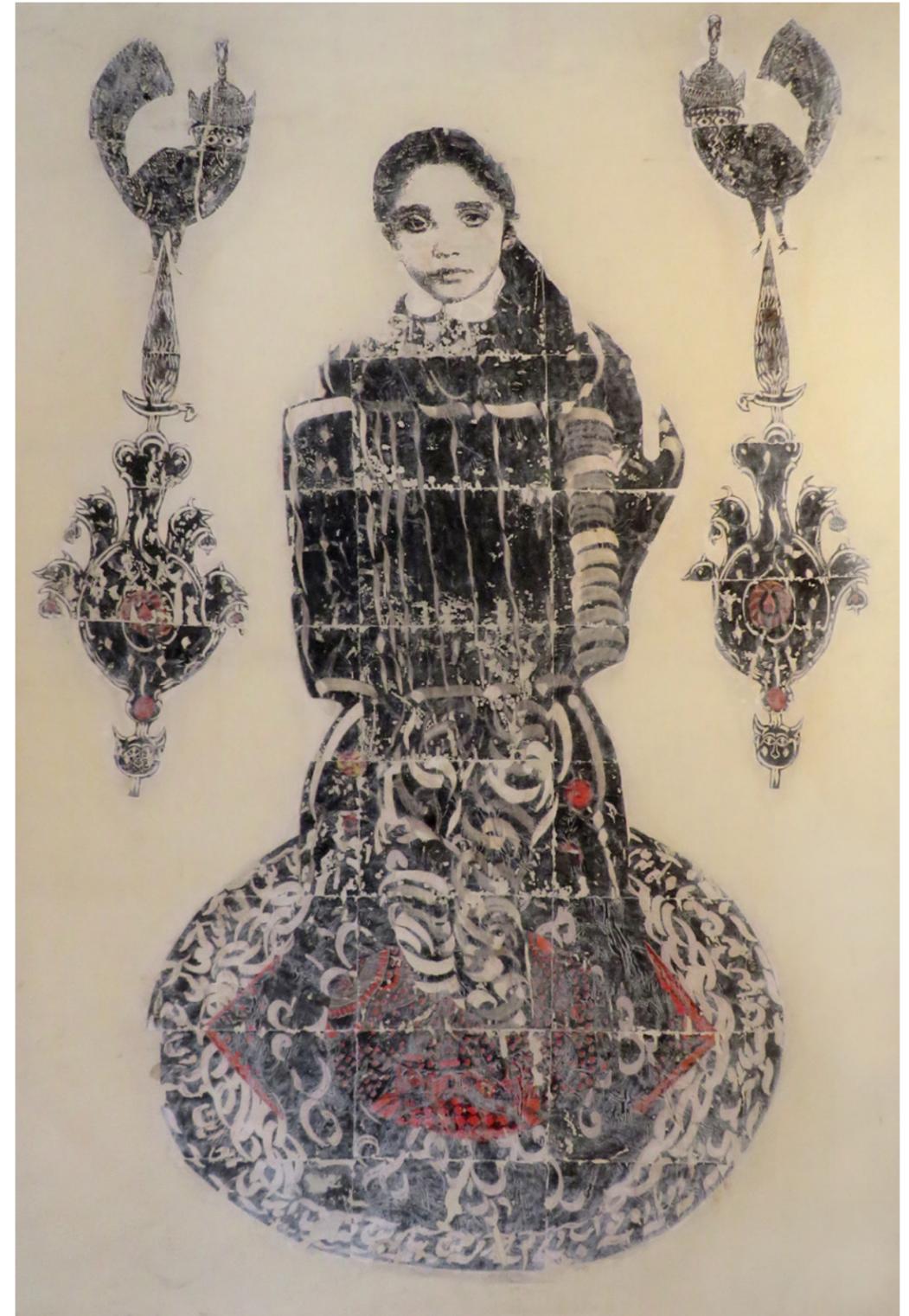
Barrangi regularly exhibits in the UK and internationally, and his work has been featured in multiple publications, festivals, and prizes. These include Muestra del IV Premi Internacional, Tragaluz; Pressing Matters; Shape Open 2018: Collective Influence; Illustrate 2018, Portugal; Art TSUM, Kiev; Ratata Festival, Macerata; The 6th International Tokyo Mini-Print Triennial; Bologna Illustrators Exhibition 2018; Story Museum, Oxford; and Hafez Gallery in Saudi Arabia 2019. As of June 2019, two of Barrangi's works have been acquired by the British Museum for their permanent collection. In 2021, two of Mohammad's works were selected for acquisition by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).

Artist Statement

Barrangi's work combines elements of Persian calligraphy, storytelling, text, and touches of humour. Using a unique creative process, with handmade traditional calligraphy pens and a blend of mark-making styles, Barrangi creates both small pieces and often expands these to large scale murals.



Mohammad Barrangi
Tree, 2021
Reverse Transfer Printmaking on raw canvas
85 x 94 in



Mohammad Barrangi
Iran, 2021
Reverse Transfer Printmaking on raw canvas
110 x 76 in

Ali Dadgar

Artist Biography

Dadgar (b. 1962) received his BFA from the California College of Arts and Crafts, Oakland, in 1989 followed by an MFA in Art Practice from the University of California, Berkeley in 2007. He was a lecturer in the Department of Art Practice at the University of California Berkeley between 2006 and 2009 and is the recipient of multiple awards including the UC Berkeley Outstanding GSI Award, 2007. His work is placed in prominent private and public collections including the University of California, Berkeley Morrison Library.

Since the late 1980s, Dadgar has exhibited extensively in both solo and group exhibitions. As part of his artistic practice, he regularly collaborates with visual and performing artists in the Bay Area and has been a member of the Berkeley-based theatre company, Darvag since 1988.

Artist Statement - Re-Oriental

Ali Dadgar's Re-Oriental series is an ongoing, mixed-media, body of work contributed to over more than a decade.

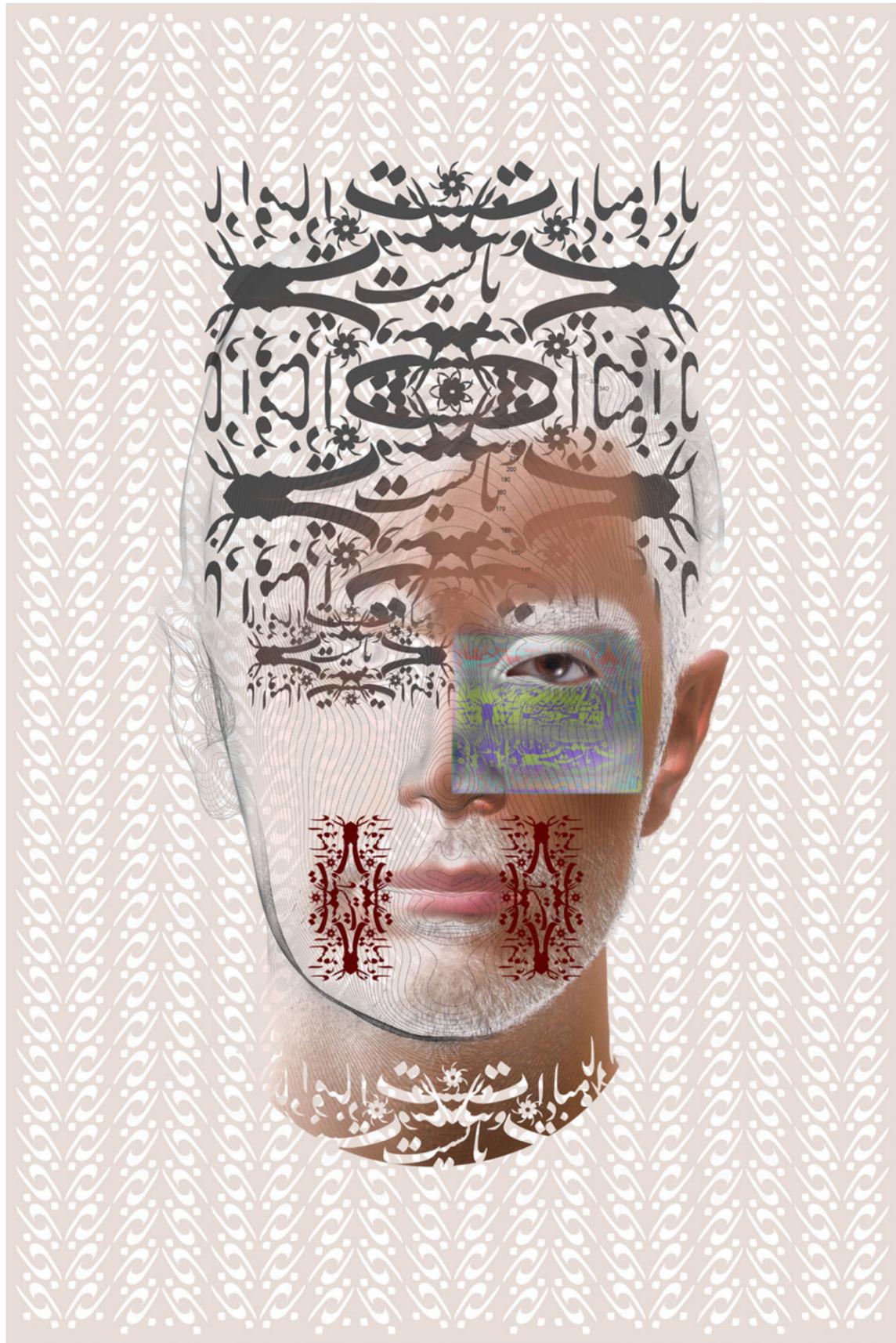
Dadgar's art is consistently created in dialogue with post-colonial discourse and forms an ongoing enquiry into ideologies, identity, cultural hegemonies, and systems of dominance departing from personal experiences in Iran and America.

Re-oriental evokes Edward Said's notions of Orientalism and 'The Other' which Dadgar translates into visual enquiry. Dadgar understands that images operate as systems of knowledge and form a visual vocabulary that has been assigned, for various social and political agendas, to the people, places and cultures subsumed within what has been termed 'the orient'. Dadgar problematizes these icons contending, as Said did, that they impose limitations and inaccurate framings upon their subjects.

The deconstruction and the erasure of detail from iconic imagery in order to unsettle the viewer's acceptance of reality is central to this series. Throughout his practice Dadgar upturns traditional printing approaches in order to expose the fragility in our systems of meaning making. For Re-Oriental the artist continues this approach by employing silk screen printing and stencilling techniques to base materials spanning velvet, wood, paper and canvas. Dadgar aims to materialise the manner in which orientalist termings gloss over detail through his manipulation of the visibility and quality of his faceless subjects



Ali Dadgar, *Moon Queen*, 2020, Mixed Media Silkscreen & Acrylic Paint on Velvet, 52 x 36 in



Siavash Jaraiedi

Artist Biography

Siavash Jaraiedi was born in 1984 in Tehran, Iran and has a Bachelor of Architecture program in Tehran (2002) and a Master's of Advanced Architectural Design at the University of Staedelschule, Frankfurt, Germany.

Upon completing his Master's degree, he returned to Tehran and continued being a sculptor collaborating with the renowned sculptor and artist Mr. Parviz Tanavoli.

Jaraiedi's artwork is influenced by his background in architecture and embraces social issues. He often incorporates his own poetry in his works.



Simin Keramati

Artist Biography

Simin Keramati is a multidisciplinary artist working with social-political themes presented through painting, drawing, video art and new media. She received her Master of Fine Arts from Tehran Art University and is the Winner of the Grand Prize from the Dhaka International Biennial 2004. Her paintings often address themes of identity, diasporic experience, and social issues.
(Toronto)

Artist Statement

I started this series of works during the pandemic, a new isolated lifestyle that caused a load of uncertainty in everybody's life.

Thinking of another world, where I can touch or feel something new or even unreal, was my first inspiration for doing this series. I believe it was Shahrzad, the storyteller from the One Thousand and One Nights, who said something like this: "close your eyes now, and dream as far as you can." Here are the twins blindfolded, wandering in their dreams.



Yassi Mazandi, *Resting Duck*, 2021, Ceramic, 5 x 9.5 x 5 in



Yassi Mazandi, *Fat Guinea*, 2021, Ceramic, 12 x 14 x 9 in



Yassi Mazandi, *Fat Turtle Camel*, 2021, Ceramic, 10 x 12 x 5.5 in

Yassi Mazandi

Artist Biography

Yassi Mazandi was born in Tehran, Iran, raised in Great Britain and lives and works in Los Angeles. She describes nature and her reaction to it, both conscious and subconscious, as the driving forces behind her art. She sculpts in porcelain, clay and bronze, and also creates works on paper and canvas. She enjoys expanding her creative frontiers with constant experimentation, including the combination of traditional hand-intensive skills with the most relevant technological innovations. In 2019, she completed her first video artwork and, in 2021, her first NFT. Her work has been the subject of several solo exhibitions, numerous group exhibitions, as well as a video interview with the BBC in 2013. In 2012, she was in the first group selected by the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation for its Artist in Residence program on Captiva Island in Florida. Her work is in the collections of the Cleveland Museum of Art, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, University of California and in other public and major private collections both in the United States and internationally.

Artist Statement

“As a child, my favorite pursuits included finding rocks and crystals anywhere I went as well as hunting for fossils on the coast of Dorset. I imagined what those ancient animals could have looked like; in the process, I wasn’t necessarily constrained by what I thought those animals did look like, sometimes I made up a total fantasy beast.

The interplay of fairy tales, fantasy and animals was a large part of my childhood. The stories I was told were often existing tales, but heavily embellished and made interactive with a view to having me describe the details of those animals as I imagined them: their qualities, strengths, weaknesses, powers, even their demeanor (hostile/friendly, smiling/grimacing). Museums and architecture provided my universe of beasts which included gargoyles on medieval churches; dragons on Chinese scrolls; and, phoenixes and other animals on Persian miniatures.

Years later, I started working with clay, experimenting without restrictions, both on and off the potter’s wheel, with a sense of total freedom; I found myself fascinated by clay’s properties of elasticity and plasticity, and that it was made rigid through fire. Clay reignited my passion and allowed me to articulate my connection to the earth.

Most of my work revolves around my core, geometric flower vertebrae. However, another still small group of work – my “Beasts” series – clearly has at its roots my exposure (by my adoptive godmother) to the works of the Amlash culture, and principally their animal vessels. Coincidentally, these originate in and around the province of Mazandaran (and Gilan), on the southern shore of the Caspian Sea.

The first of my “Beasts” series (*Beast*, 2017), was entirely Amlash in inspiration. This was followed by *Fat Guinea*, 2017, a paper porcelain interpretation of a bird of paradise / turkey hybrid. A fun opportunity arose in 2021 to expand on my “Beasts” series and this so far consists of *Fat Turtle Camel* and *Resting Duck*.”

– Yassi Mazandi



Dana Nehdaran, *(An Iranian) Princess During Qajar Era I*, 2017, Oil on Canvas, 20 x 16 in



Dana Nehdaran, *(An Iranian) Princess During Qajar Era II*, 2017, Oil on Canvas, 20 x 16 in

Dana Nehdaran

Artist Biography

Dana Nehdaran was born in Isfahan, Iran on the anniversary of his maternal grandfather's death in 1982. He took his given name, Rahmatollah, from his grandfather who was an art, antique and rare gem merchant; however, he has always been known by his Persian name, Dana, meaning wise. His grandparents' home held a marvelous collection of paintings and antiques, and his mother and father were art aficionados, traveling the world to view noted institutional and residential collections. As a child, Dana took great wonder and inspiration from this family's passion for art and became motivated to study painting after discovering an uncle's discarded box of art supplies at his grandmother's house. His mother recognized his passion and talent, nurtured by sharing images from her world travels, and enrolled Dana in private art classes with Hassanpour, a well-known artist who taught Dana fundamentals of art that would eventually lead him to study painting at the Soureh Art University in Shiraz. The most recent series of Esther's Children was shown in Tehran, Dubai and Los Angeles. Of the more than eight series that Dana has created, all have a focus on the tension between past and present. Dana has been a member of the Iranian Painter Association from 2007.

Artist Statement - Esther's Children

Dana Nehdaran's is interested in the process of painting and how it can mirror the historical flows. In the past he has addressed this directly through his choices of subject matter - historical photography that is the visual core of the series, Esther's Children. It is during the work on this set of paintings that he discovered a more subtle and material history of iron. Oxidation allowed him to create images that fade into the canvas: unstable surfaces that betray a deeply personal relationship to the images of the past. The current series take this material exploration one step further. Upon his arrival in New York, Dana was surrounded with old iron rebar, beams, storm-water covers and other iron-work that is the backbone of the city. It is the ordinary visual language, full of rust and beautiful imperfections. It is the most direct manifestation of the history of the city, the structure and the process that can be accessed by mindful observation of the everyday experience. Titled Fe 26 (the chemical symbol and atomic number for iron) this new body of work is created in a dialog with his new surroundings. This time, references to photography are gone and what we are left with is documentation of the meticulously controlled process of oxidation. The basic element shows both the history of the creation of the paintings and references its larger geographical context.

Artworks pictured on previous page.

Dariush Nehdaran

Artist Biography

Dariush Nehdaran born in Isfahan/Iran in 1984 is a contemporary visual artist who fearlessly defies the rules in order to bring multiple and complex meanings to his work. Through rhythmic juxtaposed images containing a variety of perspectives, he constructs a world between dream and reality and plays with clarity and depth to suggest an alternative way of seeing things.

Throughout his childhood, Dariush suffered from poor eyesight, but chose not to wear glasses to avoid the stigma of getting bullied. During that time, he experienced and viewed the world in a blurry and ambiguous way. When he became a teenager, the use of his grandfather's camera enabled him to see the world clearly for the first time in his life. The fact that he saw the world blurry through his own eyes and clear through the lens of the camera and the printed images has driven him to explore the subject of amphibology as the main topic in his work. By doing so, he has created a unique style that demands his viewers' attention and focus as part of the resolution in his work.

Nehdaran currently lives in San Francisco but has expanded his art internationally. His photographs and video works are available both in public and private collections worldwide including the Armando Reverón Contemporary Art Museum in Caracas-Venezuela 2018, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) in the US 2016, and the Salsali Private Museum in Dubai-UAE 2012.

Dariush is the recipient of multiple awards including the Nikon International Photo Contest in Japan 2015, the Hamghadam Photo Festival in France 2010, and the 7th Image of the Year Festival in Tehran 2010.

Artworks pictured on following page.

Artist Statement - The Stopper Series

A stopper from an old wine decanter brought back memories of my childhood and gave life to this series of photographs. In Persian literature wine is somehow portrayed as the source of enlightenment and the path to clarity, coherence and knowledge but also this elixir characterizes pleasure and oblivion, obscurity and blurriness. The stopper is an object that stops the wine from pouring out. It is therefore able to directly manage the liquid's effect on the mind. The more you pour the more blurry things get creating an alternative way for us to see the world around us.

In these photographs, the stopper covers a specific part of the image and blurs the rest. The juxtaposition of the blurriness and clarity creates three different layers in each image, the Stopper itself, what is inside the stopper and the blurry background offering a parallel universe.

Loving gymnastics as a child was probably the reason why I have been fascinated by seeing things upside down. One of my all-time favorite poses was the handstand since it offered me a different view of everything. When pictures are upside down, they provide more for the viewer. By rotating my images I try to give them an infinite meaning and by starting this conversation, I re-evaluate the relationship between right and wrong, up and down, back and forth... and like the Persian poet Hafez allow each interpreter to have his own understanding of the subject.

In this series my glass stopper has the power of showing everything upside down, but I still chose to rotate the images one more time to allow the stopper to narrate the story. These additional rotations trick the viewer into seeing an upright image through the stopper when scientifically one should see an inverted picture. By doing so, I invite my viewer to see the world in an alternative way, and I encourage him/her to discover the ambiguities and uncertainties found in our surroundings.

What makes the stopper even more interesting to me is its circular shape and the paradox it creates through the images it captivates. Like life, a circle has unlimited turns. It keeps turning until it is stopped, but ironically here, my Stopper does not keep turning. It is meant to stop the liquid from flowing. I like playing with the rules. Maybe, there is no right and wrong or good and bad. Everything in life can be seen differently through different eyes. It is up to each of us how we choose to interpret this infinite cycle.



Dariush Nehdaran, *Psychedelic Mosque -The Stopper Series (2/5+2AP)*, 2017
Digital photography on Gelatin Silver Print, 30 x 45 in

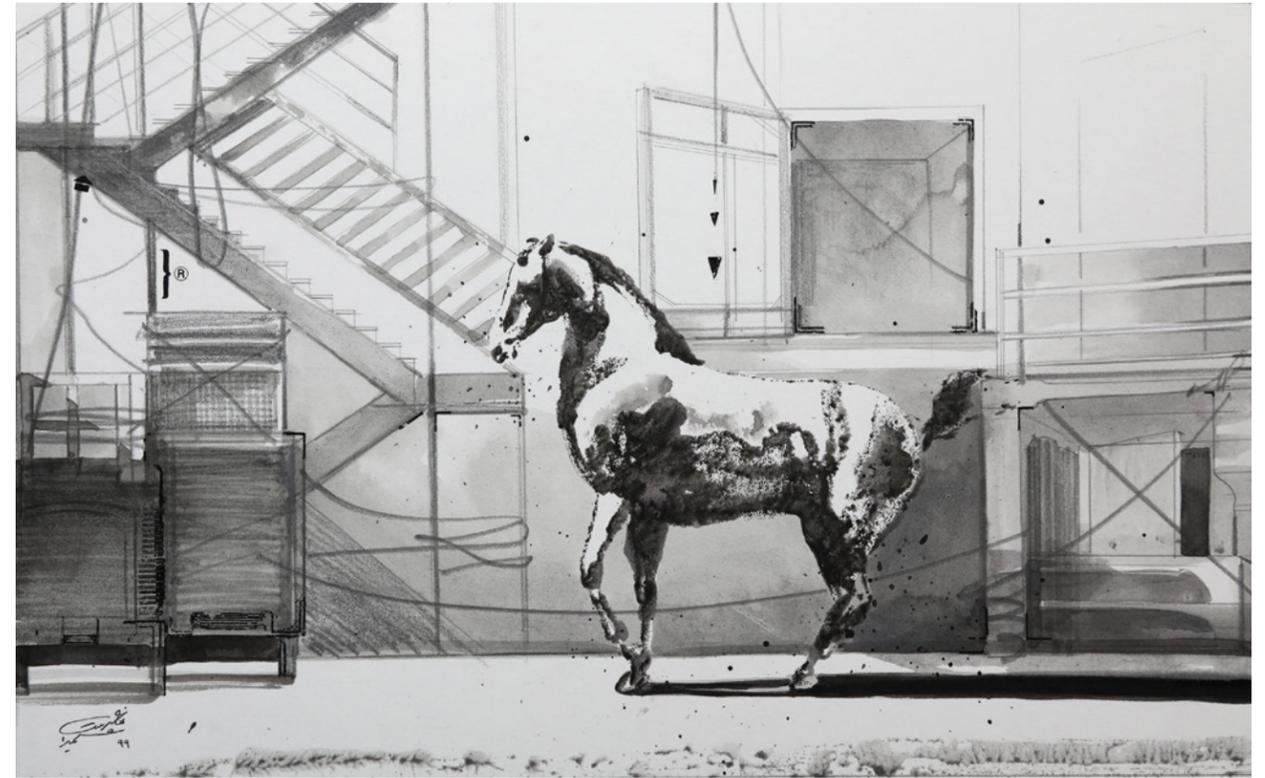
Samira Nowparast

Artist Biography

Samira Nowparast is an Iranian multidisciplinary artist who works in drawing, painting and interactive art installation. She received her Master of Fine Arts from Alzahra university and has exhibited extensively in the United States and internationally as The 3rd International Biennial of the Islamic World Contemporary Painting, Bice Bugatti Art Prize, and LA Art Show. The image of horse appears repeatedly as a symbolic motif in her compositions.

Artist Statement

Till today, horses have always been present in the “field” of my paintings. At first, the horses would stride the pasture in their own natural patterns; Yet later on, this field would become the field of my life, a space with its own geographical coordinates, language, passion and regrets. The field would become more clamoured and turbulent as the days went by... This time I gave my horses the chance to rebel or adjust themselves to the current rules of the field. One strives to be the fastest the same way its ancestors did and another blindly continues to stick with its traditional patient stride. How long will this repetition continue? Is there a meaning to it all? Will there be ascension? Is there creativity involved? Could repetition and creation become one? When did it all begin, and is all else an illusion?



Samira Nowparast, *Untitled*, 2021, Mixed media on cardboard, 9.85 x 13.75 in



Samira Nowparast, *Untitled*, 2019, Mixed media on cardboard, 11.85 x 7.85 in



Samira Nowparast, *Untitled*, 2021, Mixed media on cardboard, 17.75 x 11.85 in

Hadi Salehi

Artist Biography

Hadi Salehi was born in Chahsavar in northern Iran near the Caspian Sea. He started taking pictures in his early teens with a Russian Lubitel, which he still owns today. In 1978, he graduated from Tehran University and received a grant to study film in the United States. Upon arrival in Los Angeles, Hadi found the social climate not all that welcoming for Iranian immigrants and had to take many odd jobs while pursuing his art. Around the same time, Hadi discovered The Clash's music and the burgeoning L.A. Punk scene, which he drew inspiration from. He picked up his camera and started documenting the shows, graffiti, and chicano rights demonstrations. This eventually got Hadi noticed, and he was recruited by the Art Center of Design in Pasadena.

Hadi liked to experiment with the development process and was known to take cameras apart just to manipulate the shot or pull apart the emulsion to deconstruct and reconstruct the image. He found that he wanted to push the limits of the conventional approach to photography. This unique attitude led to acceptance from another band of outsiders: surfers. They got it and embraced him. Hadi spent the next decade traveling and shooting exclusively some of the most prolific surfers of the era and worked with quite a few legendary surfing lifestyle brands. With that validation, Hadi now had the ability to focus on his art and he traveled across the globe capturing amazing images of people and their daily lives. Eventually, he made the first of many photography inspired trips back to his native Iran to document his roots. Hadi's work is diverse but retains a common element that makes them recognizably his. His portraits are both powerful and soft leaving a haunting quality that lingers in the psyche. He wants to create a collective awareness and be a cultural messenger through his images. His career now spans almost 40 years and has closely photographed cultural innovators like Keith Haring, Tricky, Rob Machado, Kelly Slater, Martin Potter, Derek Ho, Brock Little, Dave Alvin, Questlove, and The Dead Kennedys. His client base includes: Adidas, Billabong, Gotcha!, Sony, TOOL, Nike and the Los Angeles Times magazine.

Artist Statement - Reconfigured Series

During the past year under lockdown, Hadi Salehi has had time to reflect and look inward. Early on in the pandemic, the 70 year old LA based analogue photographer began combing through his extensive archive of prints and film, eventually coming across a series of never before used photos from 2015. First, the artist developed each image by hand using the gelatin silver print process on ilford warm tone double weight fiber based paper, then Salehi began experimenting with combining the images through layering and collage.

Throughout this cathartic process, Salehi contemplates the past, reflecting on the shifting nature of memory. This became the basis of the Reconfigured series. Remembering the joys and sorrows of his life, Salehi realized that his feelings toward certain memories had changed as time went on, his present self retouching and at times reconstructing the past altogether. Salehi works to embody this complex feeling in the Reconfigured series, where images are cut, broken, and disintegrated, only to take on new life once combined with other prints.



Hadi Salehi, *The Meadow*, Unique, 2008, Layered inkjet print hand calligraphed by the artist, 56 x 42 in



Hadi Salehi, *Reconfigured 15*, Unique, 2020, Gelatin Silver Print Collage with Persian Calligraphy by the Artist, 24 x 20 in



Hadi Salehi, *Reconfigured 16*, Unique, 2020, Gelatin Silver Print Collage with Persian Calligraphy by the Artist, 24 x 20 in



Sepideh Salehi, *Mohr Portrait 4 1/3*, 2020, Photograph on wood panel with frottage on Japanese paper , 48 x 36 in



Sepideh Salehi, *Mohr Portrait 2 1/3*, 2020, Photograph on wood panel with frottage on Japanese paper , 48 x 36 in

Sepideh Salehi

Artist Biography

Sepideh Salehi is a multidisciplinary artist born in Tehran. She left Iran to attend Accademia di belle Arti in Florence Italy where she received her MFA in Visual Art and Multimedia. She works in various media and utilizes different processes ranging from painting and drawing to printmaking, photography, video art, and painting in motion. By incorporating aspects of storytelling and letter writing, Salehi recollects the experiences she had growing up in post-1979 Tehran. She weaves personal narrative and cultural history into her work, reflecting on the ways in which she, and other women, navigated the shifting social and political landscapes. Some of the venues for her shows include, *A Bridge Between You and Everything* curated by Shirin Neshat at High Line Nine, New York, *Art and Social Activism Festival*, New York, *Photo London*, Somerset House London, *Mirrored Re-Collection* at the University of Maryland Stamp Gallery, *REVEAL* at The Space by Advocartsy LA, *If So, What?* Roya Khadjavi Projects SF, *Patterning* curated by Samantha Friedman at Kentler gallery, Brooklyn, NY, *STRAPPA* Rogue Space Chelsea NY, *Craft and Folk Art Museum* LA, the *cutlog Art Fair* NY, *Tribeca Video Art* NY, *Centre for Contemporary Art* Luigi Pecci, *Virgiliano Museum* and *International Bologna Art Fair* Italy. She currently lives and works between Washington DC and New York.

Artist Statement - Mohr Portrait Series

“My individual work spans printing, photography and video, animation, and revolves around the poetics of the veil as well as the stories from my own country of origin. My work primarily relies on paper, from which I create videos, collages, drawing, photography and painting. The manual process is seminal to my language and identity as an Iranian woman; however, the topics I explore, namely the power, the violence, the identity straddling national borders and cultures, as well as the role of women in our contemporary world, raise questions that refer to a more universal way of thinking. The concept of covering up, hiding and privacy are all of interest to me. Utilizing writing and words as a form of drawing is one way I find my imagery. These drawings emerge from a union between the immediacy of line and the direct and literal communicative properties of writing. I have also used the traditional Muslim prayer stone as a starting point. I borrow the etched images on the prayer stones to create patterns through rubbing and printing. The repeated images of the stones create a rhythm leading me in the end, to an imagery revealing layers upon layers. They form a pattern, echo words that become evident through this deliberate meditative work process.”

-Sepideh Salehi

Shadi Yousefian

Artist Biography

Shadi Yousefian was born in Tehran, Iran in 1978 and moved to the United States when she was sixteen. At a time when she lacked the language skills in English to express herself, she felt drawn to art to express her longing, her vision, and her experiences. She received both her Bachelor's (2003) and Master's (2006) of Fine Arts from San Francisco State University. Shadi's work engages personal and social issues of contemporary life, particularly, cultural identity and the immigrant experience. As an Iranian immigrant, her work reflects and addresses issues that touch on universal themes such as loss, dislocation, alienation, and reinvention. All of Shadi's work to date reflects the desire to capture and distill some of the essence of her own life as an immigrant, but to also connect it to a more universal experience. Her work suggests and builds upon a kind of fragmentation and dissolution, but also the endeavor to reinvent and reconstruct a self in a new social and cultural context.

In each of the series, Shadi uses techniques that appear to destroy and distort something of the whole—cutting up letters, using only specific features of a photograph, scratching a negative, etc., and reassembles them as parts of a new image that captures both memory as passage of time, and memory as the willful looking again at something anew. This process conveys a mirroring effect of the past and present, articulating both a distortion as well as a reconstruction.

Artist Statement - Fading Memories Installation

In *Fading Memories* series, Shadi employs the same technique as in her *Self-portraits* series, creating “negative collages” by tediously cutting up her negatives from her old photo albums of friends and family into unrecognizable fragments and then reconstructing them by glueing them back in new abstracted arrangements. Looking at the resulting prints made from these negative, one can witness passage of time and fragmentation and fading of memories; memories of friends, family, celebration, travel, and other essential elements that comprise one's life. Her work in this series evokes a holistic approach—the idea that represented in each face, each place, each memory is the entire composition of a life. It is a lifetime of attachments that makes us human and whole, but we can only grasp it through a re-viewing of our memories.



Shadi Yousefian, *Fading Memories Installation 2*, 2021, Archival Prints of 20 Individual Negative Collages, 100 x 155

* Please note, while this installation is unique, each print has a second edition individually available

