



The Sprinkle of Light

Roya Khadjavi Projects

In Celebration of March International Women's Month

presents

THE SAFARANI SISTERS: *The Sprinkle of Light*

Solo exhibition of video- paintings by
twin Iranian visual artists

Date: March 4th-March 30th 2021

Opening reception: Thursday March 4th 5-8 pm and March 5-6th, 12-7pm

Closed on Sundays and Mondays

Place: Highline Nine Gallery 9.2 507 W. 27th St, New York, NY 10001

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Although created in Pre-pandemic 2020, Bahareh and Farzaneh Safarani's work in **Sprinkle of Light** presciently considers presence and absence, taking on two age-old challenges for artists: how to depict air, and how to depict a living, breathing person who appears still. Whether showing air, gently billowing overlaid video curtains, enlivening the scene or metaphorically standing for winds of change, or challenging breath itself, in the depiction of a still subject, the Safarani sisters treat current topics couched in art historical tropes and self-awareness.

Opening the show, **Sprinkle of Light**, introduces it. The tightly made bed, in front of the bay window, curtained on three sides is the video-projected shadowed dancers' stage. As the video curtain parts, they reveal trees in full bloom outside the window, signs of new life and new beginnings. Sunbeams illuminate and cast linear shadows on the empty bed, a stage for the future.

In the following video paintings, the Safarani sisters cooperate to produce full-size figurative paintings of a single subject, bringing self-discovery, formed with video projection, to the otherwise static depiction of a figure. The reclining figure in **Aware** (2020) seems just awakened, with open eyes, lying between two mental states: sleep, wakefulness and possibly, dreaming. Through the window opening, video-projected sunlit leaves enter the room and fall upon the floor.

In **Remember**, the figure stares longingly at an illuminated opening seemingly blocked by a roughly painted wall as a sheer curtain brightly lit, floats, a backdrop to the side of the painted figure. As she watches the opening in the wall near her, a projected shadowed figure appears behind the curtain, perhaps warning that something is imminent, but she continues to look out the window toward the sunlight. As the video projection adds an apparition to this gothic drama, the shadowed figure holds a white square; a canvas to be painted on.

In **Reflection** the figure sits, staring downward, on the third step of the staircase, barefoot. Waiting, she is going nowhere. Stuck in the space as is the figure in Remember, she is alone. The figure sits with brown-stained legs and bare feet. A video projection of shallow water ripples on the floor, overtaking and muddying her feet. She stays in place, not bothered by the surging water overtaking her feet and literally grounding her. Unmoved, she remains still to see what transpires. She is alone but would rather stay away from others to be one with her own mind and bring about her own change, believing that her hopes for the world must begin within herself.

The **Seamstress** sits creating, from whole cloth, a garment to fit the mannequin to her side, set against a red drape, matching the dress she sews. The mannequin is an empty figure, still to be dressed, to take on a personality. The seamstress will wear that garment, adding her persona to the cloth draped on the mannequin, when the garment is completed. As the video projection of a cage-like hoop-underskirt adorns the torso and legs of the mannequin, the future completed garment and shape of the person who wears it is imagined, as she imagines her place within the new world of which she hopes to be a part.

Dancing Around the Bed 1 shows an empty bed, with not even a pillow to rest a head. A chemise hangs on a hanger on a nail in a wall. The chemise blends in with the wall's color, the carpet's underneath, and matches the ruffled cover on the bed. Someone has slept there, has worn that chemise, and has left. But her shadow returns. In the video projection, she twirls, she gyrates, she dances onto the floor and around the bed, enlivening a space that was monochromatic and then quietly ends her dance.

In Dancing Around the Bed 2, we glimpse a bed in a far room backgrounded by light coming through sheer white curtains. In the anteroom in the foreground, a straight-backed chair is angled toward a fireplace, but no one sits there. A painting decorates another wall in the scene. The video-projected shadow of a dancer runs up to and parts the projected curtain, running to the back room to begin her dance. With wide open gestures, this universal, joyful figure enlivens the backgrounded puritanical space, bringing life to neutral surroundings, dancing upon and against the bed. The shadowed figure, like all shadows, in all but Sprinkle of Light, used by the Safarani's is only possible when sunlight creates it. As that sunlight brings the shadowed dancer to the formerly dark surroundings, she enlivens and commands the space which she now inhabits as her own; art and movement uniquely hers, activating the joyful scene.

These visual juxtapositions of contemplation and energy stored and held tight explode into energetic and joyful motion. Sunlight makes shadows and dances as the Safarani's, and their still figures, look forward to becoming and creating, hoping for a bright future.

The Sprinkle of the light

In their ongoing exploration of their dual identities, Farzanah and Bahareh Safarani join Roya Khadjavi Projects in celebration of International Women's Month. Through their art, they invite their audience to join and empathize with the artistic journey they have traveled, leading to resilient, intelligent artists making work expressive of their changed reality. In their latest video portraits shown in Sprinkle of Light, billowing curtains gently fold and unfold, in turn hiding and revealing their world, luring the viewer in while nature's winds dictate how much of the subject's mind and reality can be known. As sunbeams surround the relaxed figure; eyes are wide open to the sun streaming through. Light surrounds her, as walls are colored with freely brushed colorwashes.

The open-eyed gaze of the depicted sister shows knowledge of all that surrounds her while knowing how much to keep to herself, and how much is still evolving, causing her to stay quiet as she prepares to rise and take an active role in her future world.

This is work where the past, present and future intersect. Although she rests and prepares for an active life, the curtain is already opening. The artist and woman is ready to emerge to take her place, show her inner beauty, her self-knowledge and strength as the motion continues to reflect the winds of change, propel them toward knowledge of self and revelation expressed through their art.



Sprinkle of the light, Oil on canvas overlaid with video projection, 78 x 58 inches, 2020





Aware, Oil color on canvas overlaid with video projection, 120 x 72 inches, 2020





Seamstress, Oil on canvas overlaid with video projection, 72 x 60 inches, 2020





Remember, Oil on canvas overlaid with video projection, 72 x 48 inches, 2019





Dancing around the bed 1, Oil on canvas overlaid with video projection, 40 x 30 inches, 2020



Dancing around the bed 2, Oil on canvas overlaid with video projection, 40 x 30 inches, 2020





Reflection, Oil on canvas
overlaid with video projection
72x 48 inches, 2020





Beneath the Breath, Oil on canvas overlaid with video projection, 65 x 82 inches 2020

On display at Morris Museum, Morris, NJ From April 3- November 14 2021





Bahareh and Farzaneh Safarani were born in (1990) and raised in Iran. They are identical twin sisters who have been painting together since they were thirteen years old, and continue to work inseparably and separately.

The sisters studied painting, performance, video installation and conceptual art at the University of Tehran where they received their BFA in Painting from the college of fine Arts, School of Visual Arts, Department of painting and sculpture in 2013.

In 2016 the sisters received their Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art from Northeastern University, College of Media and Design in collaboration with the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA. They have shown their work extensively in solo and group exhibitions in the United States and Internationally in London, Beijing and Tehran. They are best known for their innovative and captivating video-paintings and for their breath taking performances.



EDUCATION

Northeastern University & School of the Museum of Fine Arts Master of Fine Arts in Studio Art 2016

College of Art, Media, & Design

University of Tehran

Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting

Department of Painting and Sculpture, School of Visual Arts, College of Fine Arts 2013

EXHIBITIONS

Solo Exhibition at Murriss Museum, Fall **2021**

Beneath the Breath” Installation of Video-Painting, Morris Museum, ”Morristown NJ **2021**

Scheduled-Exhibition and Artist Talk at Cube Ball, Boston, MA, **TBD**

Postponed-Group Painting Exhibition, And God Created Women, Paris, France **TBD**

VOLTA Art Fair, Roya Khadjavi Projects, New York, NY **2020**

Solo Painting Exhibition, Adelson Cavalier Gallery, Palm Beach, FL **2020**

Puppet Dance Installation of Video-Painting, Illuminus Boston, Boston, MA **2019**

Metamorphic Cinema Installation of a Large-Scale Painting Short Film, Burning Man, Black Rock City, NV **2019**

Group Painting Exhibition, Adelson Cavalier Gallery, Palm Beach, FL **2019**

Reincarnation Solo Exhibition, Elga Wimmer Gallery, New York, NY **2018**

Robotic WombInstallation, Burning Man, Black Rock City, NV **2018**

Sanctuary Solo Exhibition, Amalgam, Boston, MA **2018**

Summer Action, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA **2017**

The Salon a Group Exhibition of Contemporary Women Artists, Peabody Essex Museum, Salam, MA **2017**

Parallax Art Fair, London, UK **2016**

Work by Pairs a Group Exhibition, Distillery Gallery, Boston, MA **2016**

Solo Painting and Video Exhibition, Gallery 360 Northeastern University, Boston, MA **2016**

Solo Painting Exhibition, Adelson Gallery, Boston, MA **2016**

Boston Biennial 4, Prize winner, Atlantic Works Gallery, Boston, MA **2015**

Dualism a Group Exhibition, Abigail Ogilvy Gallery, Boston, MA **2015**

Neither Here nor There Group exhibition, Yuan Art Museum, Beijing, China **2015**

Panelist in Paramount, Main Stage, New England Graduate Media Symposium, Boston, MA Artcetera Auction, Boston, MA **2015**

Group Art exhibition, Piano Craft Gallery, Boston, MA **2015**

Group Painting Exhibition, The Massachusetts State House, Boston, MA **2014**

Solo Painting Exhibition, Golestan Gallery, Tehran, Iran **2013**

Group Painting Exhibition, Golestan Gallery, Tehran, Iran **2012**

Solo Painting Exhibition and Performance, Art and Culture Center of the German Embassy in Iran, Tehran, Iran **2011**

Solo Painting Exhibition and Installations, Mehrin Gallery, Tehran, Iran **2010**

VIDEO ART SCREENING & PERFORMANCES

Scheduled-Title TBD, Boston Calling Festival, Boston, MA **2021**

Seeking Live Performance, Iranian American Women Foundation Conference, Harvard Club of Boston, Boston, MA **2019**

The Mannequin Live Performance, Iranian American Women Foundation Conference, New York University, New York, NY **2018**

Coded Birth, Live Performance, Institute of Contemporary of Arts, Boston, MA **2018**

Nowruz Festival Live Performance, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA **2018**

Live Performance, Zero Community, Brooklyn, New York, NY **2018**

Live Performance Art, Boston Calling Music Festival **2017**

The Extent Video Performance, MMAC Theatre, Manhattan, New York, NY **2017**

The Journey Performance-Contemporary Opera, Distillery Gallery, Boston, MA **2017**

Yearning Live Performance, Yve Yang Gallery, Boston, MA **2016**

Collaborators on “The Lost Empire”, Performance by Arevik Tserunyan, Museum of America, Watertown, MA **2016**

Performers in “Hello Folly”, Performance by Pat Oleszko, The Floes and Cons of Arctic Drilling, ICA, Boston, MA **2015**

Cocoon Video-Performance, Boston Center for the Arts, Boston, MA **2015**

Naser Palangi Performance, Middle East Gallery, Tehran, Iran **2012**

Hamlet Performance, The Cinema Theater College, Tehran, Iran **2012**

Orpheus Performance, The University of Tehran College of Cinema-Theater, Tehran, Iran **2010**

RECOGNITIONS & APPOINTMENTS

Visual Arts and Dramatic Arts Teacher, Baghche (a non-profit Iranian organization for children), Brookline, MA

Artwork Collection, “Twilight Reincarnation”, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA

Artwork Collection, “Asleep”, a Video Painting (featured in numerous presses), The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA

Outstanding Artist Member, The Copley Society of Arts (America’s oldest non-profit art association founded in 1879), Boston, MA

Outstanding Intellectual Contribution to the Graduate Community, Northeastern University, Boston, MA

Workshop Leader, College of Art Media and Design, Northeastern University

Adjunct Faculty, College of Art Media and Design, Northeastern University



Nancy Nesvet is an artist and arts writer. She holds a BA in Art History and Anthropology and an MFA in Studio Art and Art Theory. Nesvet has curated several major art exhibitions in the United States, and written numerous articles for Artscope Magazine and other publications. Having represented Artscope Magazine at the Venice Biennale, Cleveland Biennale and Art Basel Fairs in Miami and Switzerland and written about international art, she is especially interested in artists from other nations than her own and welcomes the opportunity to write for this show's catalogue.



Roya Khadjavi is an independent curator and cultural producer based in New York. She has largely focused on the work of young Iranian artists working both in Iran and beyond its borders, seeking not only to support their artistic endeavors but to also facilitate awareness and cultural dialogue between artistic communities.

Since 2008, she has actively led exhibition committee efforts around the art of the Middle East for institutions including the Guggenheim Museum and the Asia Society, where she sat on the steering committee of the critically acclaimed exhibit *Iran Modern* (2013). Khadjavi co-founded the Institute of International Education's Iran Opportunities Fund and served as president of the board of New York based non-profit Art in General.

For her pioneering efforts to advance, support, and promote international education, she has been honored with the Women's Global Leadership Award by the Institute of International Education and an Order of Academic Palms (Chevalier dans L'Ordre des Palmes Académiques) by the French Minister of Education.

May the honest glory lighten my bedroom and the wind breathes out the aroma of the trees. May the breeze moderate the heavy aroma trapped into the trees and wash away the chaos. May nature sprinkle light through windows and the darkness and coldness rush to run away

Then, let's rest for a while and dream of dancing together joyfully between the trees and clear our unconscious mind of any blurry facts. And then waking up at a festive sunset with a smile that deeply reflects goodness, shouting out that "everything" is just better than before

poem by Bahareh Safarani



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*Designed by
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