

GALLERY 2

ALMOST HOME

Amir H. Fallah

May 24 – July 1, 2017

Amir H. Fallah returns to The Third Line with a new body of work titled *Almost Home* reflecting on the idea of belonging outside one's country of origin. The exhibition shows a series of the artist's signature style landscapes and portraits, respectively referencing floral Persian ornamentation and Iranian-American immigrants who have not returned to Iran since their departure several decades ago. Amir works deeply from his own experience, and explores what it means to exist outside the homeland.



The Filmmaker's Reflection, 2017, acrylic, colored pencil and collage on paper mounted on canvas, 122 x 183 cm

Almost Home looks at narratives that seem congruent in the immigrants' lives. The concept of a *home* takes on a new meaning: it is fluid, transient, constantly evolving; it is not one grounded in old land, seeped with the history of generations that have passed through it. A new home, then, is rebuilt holding on to constants that people of migration identify as markers of a culture that they need to perpetuate in newer landscapes. The impermanence of these new homes is a reflection of a very stark reality of modern day mobility and livelihood.

The Filmmaker's Reflection displays Amir's bold style of portrait painting. The subject's identity remains anonymous, though it is surrounded by an assortment of items, primarily personal belongings and memorabilia. These pieces of clothing, jewellery and mementos reference the home, the subject's roots and cultural heritage. Along the edges of the painting is an elaborate tangle of flowers and vines similar to the ornate borders found on Persian rugs. Amidst the paintings one finds Farsi lyrics to the Simon & Garfunkel song *Homeward Bound*. The calligraphic text was converted using Google Translate, deconstructing the song throughout the process. By combining aspects of American culture with the historical tradition of Persian calligraphy, the text mirrors the subjects' experience of getting lost in translation.

In creating this surreal window into a highly schematic vision of typified memories, Amir plays what it means to be away from one's home and country of origin, and creates an ironically tourist book condition of displacement. Adding a second layer of meaning to the exhibition, Amir chooses to exhibit the works in this *home* in Dubai, a city that has become a safe haven for thousands of Iranians. Many of Amir's American-Iranian subjects cannot return to Iran, but by bringing their portraits to Dubai, Amir imagines it as one step closer to their homeland. And so, bringing them *almost home*.

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About Amir H. Fallah

Amir H. Fallah was born in Tehran, Iran in 1979. He received his BFA from Maryland Institute College of Art in 2001 and his MFA from University of California Los Angeles in 2005. Amir's artistic oeuvre encompasses painting, photography, sculpture, and installation combined with a visual vocabulary that includes collage and complex patterning. The works present a critical observation of the deconstruction and appropriation of portraiture in its various forms. Amir's practice presents an alternative perspective to entrenched art historical portraiture traditions and the dynamics of modern day art collection and art making. Intertwined with these concerns are his reflections upon identity and personal narrative.

Amir has exhibited widely in solo shows across the United States and in the Middle East. These include *Unknown Voyage*, Schneider Museum of Art, Oregon, USA (2017); *The Caretaker*, Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland, USA (2015); *Perfect Strangers*, 18th Street Arts Center, Los Angeles, CA, USA (2015); *The Collected*, The Third Line, Dubai, UAE (2013); *Spaced Case* (Bing Rips, Magical Potions, Mystical Potions, Mystical Flora and Avatars), Baer Ridgeway Exhibitions, San Francisco, CA, USA (2010); and *Make it Believe*, The Third Line, Dubai, UAE (2009).

His numerous group exhibitions include *Diverge/Convene: Contemporary Mixed Media*, San Diego Art Institute, California, USA (2017); *We Must Risk Delight-Twenty Artists from Los Angeles*, 56th La Biennale di Venezia, Venice, Italy (2015); *I'll Show You Mine*, Palo Alto Art Center, Palo Alto, USA (2014); *Theory Of Survival: Fabrications*, Southern Exposure, San Francisco, CA, USA (2014); *SUPERCALLAFRAGILEMYSTICEXTASY-DIOECIOUS*, Lancaster Museum of Art and History, Lancaster, CA, USA (2013); *Show Off*, Salsali Private Museum, Dubai, UAE (2011); and *Provisions for the Future*, 9th Sharjah Biennial, Sharjah, UAE (2009).

Amir is a 2017 recipient of the California Community Foundation Fellowship for Visual Artists and a 2015 recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation Painters and Sculptors Grant. His works are part of several private and public collections, including the Microsoft Art Collection, USA; the Nerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Overland, KS, USA; and the Salsali Private Museum, Dubai, UAE.

Amir lives and works in California, USA

About The Third Line

The Third Line is a Dubai-based art gallery that represents contemporary Middle Eastern artists locally, regionally and internationally. The Third Line also hosts non-profit, alternative programs to increase interest and dialogue in the region.

The Third Line's book publishing division Works on Paper collaborates with associated artists from the region to publish and co-publish content. Projects include *Presence* by photographer Lamy Gargash (2008), *In Absentia* by Tarek Al-Ghoussein (2009), *Cosmic Geometry*, an extensive monograph on Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, edited by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Karen Marta (2011), and the self-titled treatise Huda Lutfi about the artist's Cairo based practice.

Represented artists include: Abbas Akhavan, Ala Ebtakar, Amir H. Fallah, Arwa Abouon, Babak Golkar, Farah Al Qasimi, Farhad Moshiri, Fouad Elkoury, Golnaz Fathi, Hassan Hajjaj, Hayv Kahraman, Huda Lutfi, Joana Hadjithomas & Khalil Joreige, Laleh Khorramian, Lamy Gargash, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, Poursan Jinchu, Rana Begum, Sahand Hesamiyan, Sara Naim, Sherin Guirguis, Shirin Aliabadi, Slavs and Tatars, Sophia Al-Maria, Tarek Al-Ghoussein, Youssef Nabil and Zineb Sedira.

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