

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

Allenchey, Alex. "Melding Video and Paint, Two Iranian Artists See the Awesome, Devastating Power of Nature." *Artsy*, (March 22, 2016).

ARTSY

## Melding Video and Paint, Two Iranian Artists See the Awesome, Devastating Power of Nature

ARTSY

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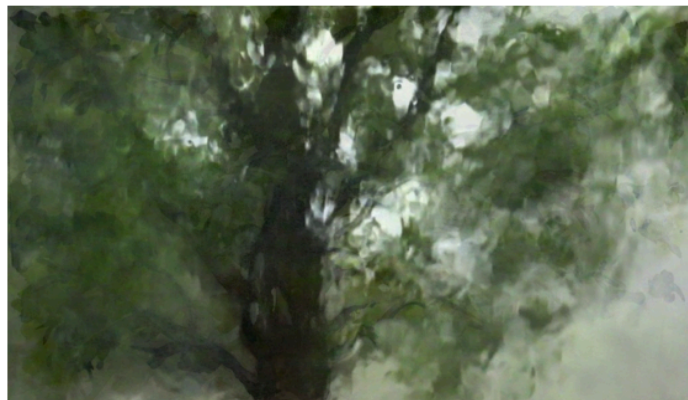


Shoja Azari and Shahram Karimi  
*Consequence I*, 2016  
Leila Heller Gallery

For their latest collaboration, filmmaker Shoja Azari and painter-poet Shahram Karimi incorporate tenets of early 18th-century English Romanticism, which railed against the cultural influence of the Industrial Revolution. Their new exhibition “The Cold Earth Sleeps Below”—itself a line from English poet Percy Shelley—uses contrasting media to highlight the vast difference between the awesome power of the natural world and the lack of respect shown to it by humans.

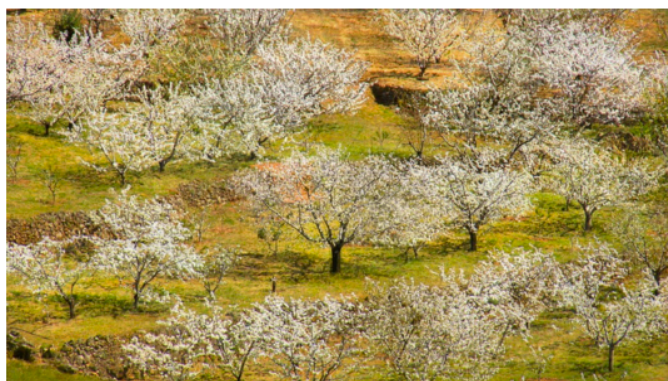


Shoja Azari and Shahram Karimi  
*Dreamscape I*, 2015  
 Leila Heller Gallery



Shoja Azari and Shahram Karimi  
*Consequence III*, 2016  
 Leila Heller Gallery

The exhibition, at Leila Heller Gallery in New York, consists of 11 assorted video-paintings: Karimi's landscape paintings are used as projection screens for Azari's videos of nearly identical subjects. When combined, the paintings and projections create an eerie, stereoscopic effect, as the seemingly animated scenes come alive.



Shoja Azari and Shahram Karimi  
*Dreamscape I*, 2016  
 Leila Heller Gallery



Shoja Azari and Shahram Karimi  
*Dreamscape III*, 2016  
 Leila Heller Gallery

Immediately noticeable are six large-scale “Dreamscapes”—serene and cheery scenes the artists located online—which subvert not only the idea of landscape as an artistic genre, but also its role in visual culture. Think, for instance, of all the rolling hills you’ve seen as desktop screensavers or tourism ads at a bus stop. In using found imagery from the Internet, the artists tap into society’s basic understanding of the natural world as something peaceful, tranquil, and under control.





Shoja Azari and Shahram Karimi  
*Consequence II*, 2016  
 Leila Heller Gallery



Shoja Azari and Shahram Karimi  
*Consequence IV*, 2016  
 Leila Heller Gallery

Such misguided assumptions, however common, are shattered by the opposing “Consequences” series. These five smaller works are hidden from sight, à la Marcel Duchamp’s *Etant Donnés*, and can only be viewed through small portals. In contrast to the Dreamscapes, these painting-videos display the awesome, unrelenting power of nature by way of a massive, cresting wave or raging forest fire. In undercutting the nearby harmonious scenes, Karimi and Azari show the catastrophes nature is capable of unleashing and how little separates a dreamy environment from a nightmare.

—Alex Allenchey