



**SORAYA SHARGHI**  
**BEYOND THE REALM**

Published on the occasion of the exhibition  
Soraya Sharghi, *Beyond the Realm*  
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Front Cover Image: *The Strength of a Symbol (Eve. 7)*, 2019  
Inside Back Cover Image: *Avoid the Incident*, 2018  
Back Cover Image: *Passage*, 2018



**Slay the Dragon**

2018

Acrylic and Gold Leaf on Canvas

78h x 44w in / 198.12h x 113.30w cm

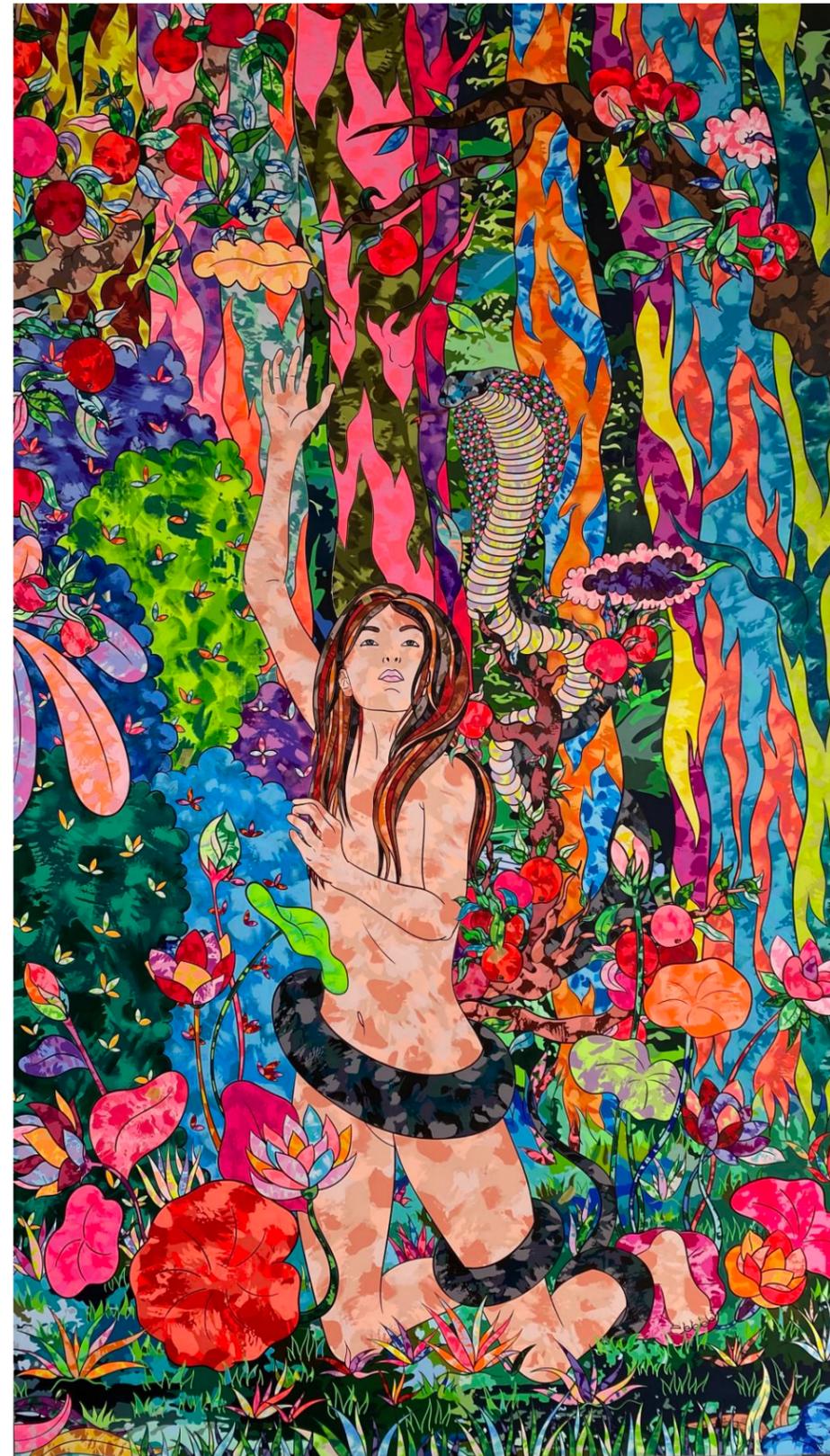
# Beyond Fate

Essay Written by Rebecca Anne Proctor

Their bodies move together, at times peacefully and harmoniously and at other times with anger, aggression and determination. Theirs is a tug-a-war dance between power and fate. The mythical creatures found in the works of Iranian New York-based artist Soraya Sharghi's latest body of works prance nude around her vibrant impressively detailed canvases, drenched in a multitude of colors and forms, which harken back to the artist's Persian heritage and the exquisite detailing found in Qajar-era paintings. Her figures fight passionately as if against fate, exploring the role of power in society and what happens when power is lost and then regained.

The female Biblical figure of Eve has long played a pivotal role in the artist's work and can be found once again in her latest paintings. Unashamed of her femininity and uninhibited in their immense size and surrounding kaleidoscope of colors, the female figures in Sharghi's works are proud, strong and bold. The artist is interested not only in mythology but in creating new mythologies, new stories that reflect our present day. Eve, in the creation myth of Adam and Eve, commits the sin after she is lured by a serpent to eat the fruit from the forbidden tree. Sharghi prefers to view the myth in another light. "Eve was brave enough to try new things—she took a risk," she says. Through her explosive cataclysmic renderings on canvas, Sharghi portrays Eve in a new manner—she is now a figure of power. Her strength lies in her own authenticity and female might. Her movements across the canvas question what happens when power is lost and then regained. Persian symbolism, in the form of carpets and even hairstyles that can be traced back to Qajar paintings, solidify the importance of Sharghi's heritage appropriating remnants from its visual history to reflect on themes pertinent to the present day. The figures, as they dance around each other, their bodies in constant dialogue and friction against Sharghi's illuminated background, appear to offer a new way forward: the artist's latest show *Beyond the Realm* is a gateway into another world, time and space. It is a way for us to retreat from reality as exists in everyday life and enter into a new and imaginative and fantasy realm, where time and space don't exist and where her subjects play out some of the most challenging subjects that man has confronted and continues to confront across time. In many ways the works of Sharghi channel what Carl Jung once called "the collective unconscious"—the deepest recesses of the unconscious mind that is genetically inherited and not shaped by personal experience. In Sharghi's works art becomes a shared medium across multiple cultures and his World divides. The paintings, done in acrylic on canvas often with flecks of expressive and regal gold leaf, lead us to question our reality versus our fantasy realm and how, as Sharghi suggests, it is perhaps in the imaginative realm of our unconscious mind that we work out mankind's deepest and most unsettling problems.

Rebecca Anne Proctor writes on art and culture frequently for *Artnet News*, *Arab News*, *Wallpaper*, and *Frieze*, among other publications.

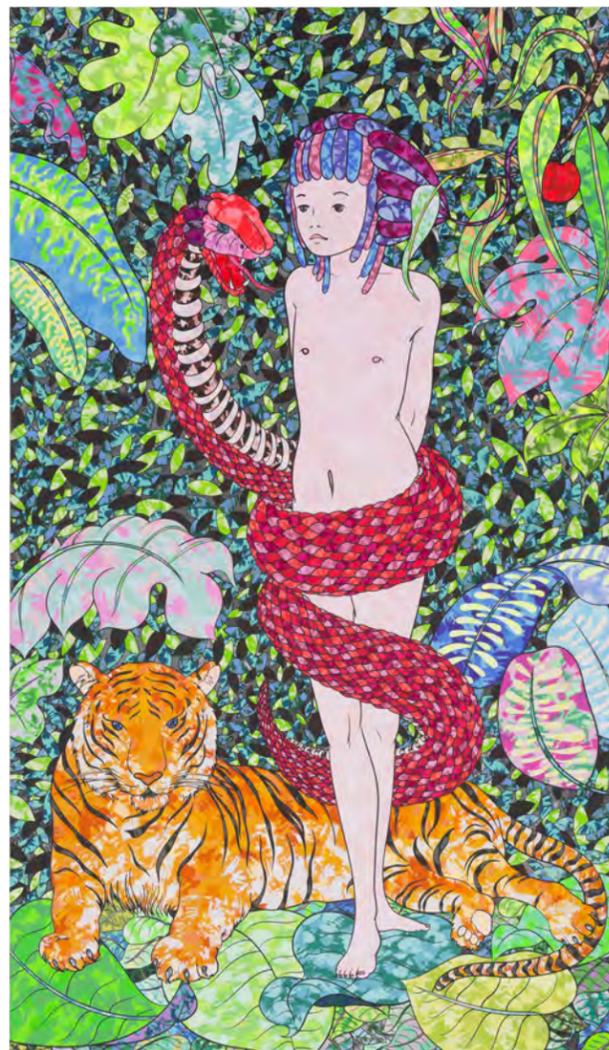


**The Resolution of a Eve (Eve.15)**

2021

Acrylic on Canvas

78h x 45w in / 198.12h x 114.30w cm



**Subdued Nature (Eve.5)**

2018

Acrylic on Canvas

78h x 45w in / 198.12h x 114.30w cm



**Revelation (Eve.6)**

2019

Acrylic on Canvas

45h x 78w in / 114.30h x 198.12w cm



**The Strength of a Symbol (Eve.7)**

2019

Acrylic on Canvas

78h x 45w in / 198.12h x 114.30w cm



**Indefinite Flow**

2021

Acrylic on Canvas

52h x 86w in / 132.08h x 218.44w cm

**Avoid the Incident**

2018

Acrylic and Gold Leaf on Canvas

63h x 51w in / 160.02h x 129.54w cm



**Out of Realm**

2017

Acrylic on Canvas

54h x 54w in / 137.16h x 137.16w cm



**Anomaly**

2017

Acrylic on Canvas

55h x 62w in / 139.79h x 157.48w cm

**Passage**

2018

Acrylic on Canvas

70h x 49w in / 177.80h x 124.46w cm



Soraya Sharghi

Education

- 2014-2016 Bachelor of Fine Arts, Painting, Soore University, Tehran, Iran
- 2008-2012 Master of Fine Arts, Studio Art, San Francisco, CA

Awards, Honors & Residencies

- 2021 New Hope Colony Artist Residency Phillips Mill Association for the Arts, PA
- 2017 Brush Creek Residency Award, Brush Creek Foundation for the Arts, Saratoga, WY
- 2016 Post Contemporary Artists Residency, Post Contemporary Arts at Woodside, NY
- CAC Merit award, Post Contemporary Arts at Woodside, Troy, NY
- Finalist for Blau-Gold Studio/Teaching Fellowship, Root Division, San Francisco, CA
- Finalist for Tournesol Award, Headlands Center for the Art, Sausalito, CA
- Graduate Fellowship Alternate Awards, Headlands Center for the Art, Sausalito, CA
- 2015 The Cadogan Scholarship, Murphy & Cadogan Contemporary Art Awards, San Francisco, CA
- 2014 MFA Fellowship, San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA

Solo Exhibitions

- 2020 Seven Labours, Setareh Gallery, Düsseldorf, Germany
- 2019 Out of Realm, Leila Heller Gallery, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Group Exhibitions

- 2021 Intersect 21, Leila Heller Gallery, Artsy-virtual
- 2019 Art Monaco, Setareh Gallery, Monaco
- 2019 Art Dubai, Leila Heller Gallery, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- 2017 Run for the Roses, Locust Project, Miami, FL
- 2017 Wallpost Artists exhibition and Award Ceremony, Today Museum, Beijing, China
- 2017 The Alternate Self, Juried Exhibition, Blue Door Gallery, Yonkers, NY
- 2016 Life is Beautiful, LD, Aziz Baker Studios, Miami Art Basel, Miami, FL
- 2016 Artist Statement, CICA Museum, International Juried Exhibition, Gyeonggi-do, Korea
- 2016 ASG, SFAI Highlights, Andrea Schwartz Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2016 Insomnia, Assar and O Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2016 Smaller Foot Prints, Juried Exhibition, Museum of Art and History, Lancaster, CA
- 2015 The Annual Murphy and Cadogan Contemporary Art Award Exhibition, SOMArts Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- 2015 Locust Project Exhibition, Miami, FL
- 2013 Lost and Found in Tehran, Columbus museum of Art, Columbus, Ohio
- 2013 Portrait, Takesh Gallery, Isfahan, Iran
- 2013 Limited Access, Aaron Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2012 Prestressed, Mah Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2012 Damoonfar Visual Art Festival, National Painting Juried Exhibition, Pardis Melat Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2011 Flowers and Bullets, Aaran Gallery, Tehran, Iran





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