

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

Leila Heller Gallery at Art Platform – Los Angeles, September 27 – 30, 2012



Rachel Lee Hovnanian, *Motherboard 1 (detail)*,
Steel, cast metal, leather, in artist's frame

Leila Heller Gallery is pleased to participate in Art Platform – Los Angeles, the modern and contemporary art fair for Los Angeles, which debuts its second edition at the historic Barker Hangar at the Santa Monica Airport from September 28 to 30. Located at booths 719 and 706 within the hangar, the gallery will feature artworks by Rachel Lee Hovnanian, Hadieh Shafie, Ran Hwang, Ayad Alkadhi and Farideh Lashai.

In her interactive installation piece, *Café 2012*, presented at booth 706, Rachel Lee Hovnanian presents a small neighborhood café in Texas. Or is it? There is what seems to be an authentic café aroma, but the fare is decidedly untraditional. The milk white liquid posing as coffee smells and tastes real, but is actually a chemical substance created in a lab. Also on view in the gallery's main booth are works from Hovnanian's *Gates of Narcissus* series.

The multi-dimensional works of Hadieh Shafie resonate with the calligraphy and designs in Persian and Islamic art design and architecture. The realization of each composition is a painstaking process, resulting in art bursting with color, echoing the Sufi meditative prayer of the heart known as 'kikhr', which consists in repeated invocations of a single word, 'love'. Displayed in concentric circles, Shafie's work invites the viewer to become immersed in the color of the scrolls, capturing the spirit of the prayer.

Ran Hwang's *Rest II*, 2009, depicts a Buddha covered with layers of lustrous silver buttons and beads intricately patterned to form the ornate figure. Hwang contrasts the figure's solid form with a spattering of buttons and beads that fall from the edge of the work into the negative space that surrounds it. This notion of the artwork's deterioration is common practice in

Hwang's repertoire as she reminds the viewer of the dichotomy of permanence and impermanence, and ultimately, the transience of life.



Ayad Alkadhi, *Thetis*, 2012
Charcoal, acrylic, pen and pencil on canvas
72 x 48 in / 183 x 122 cm



Farideh Lashai,
Down the Rabbit Hole from *Rabbit in Wonderland* (video still), 2010
Video projection with sound on painted canvas
63 x 73 in / 160 x 185cm

In his turbulent mixed-media imagery, U.S.-based Iraqi artist Ayad Alkadhi probes the intersection of Eastern and Western culture and politics. Drawing from the tradition of Arabic calligraphy, Alkadhi works predominantly in charcoal, acrylic, pen, and pencil, layered on top of Arabic newspaper applied to canvas. Using cuttings of reports of war, Alkadhi critiques the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, alluding frequently to Iraqi casualties, and in one series to the prisoners of Abu Ghraib. Gas pumps are also a regular motif, the gas nozzle heads modified to look like guns or male genitalia.

The map in the shape of a cat is the artist Farideh Lashai's *Down the Rabbit Hole* from *Rabbit in Wonderland*, 2010, a landscape where it is hard to find a way into. Tens and hundreds of rabbits struggle to enter and make it their own. But *Down the Rabbit Hole* is a land of trials and challenges. The cat-shaped map opens its mouth, a rabbit-hole emerges and one rabbit falls therein and emerges into the Wonderland of Iran. It leaps across the country and paves the way for others. The map of Iran implodes with Lashai's rabbits with their ears pricked up and eyes wide open to danger.

On Saturday September 29 at 5pm the Gallery will present a panel discussion on collecting contemporary Middle Eastern Art. The panel will be moderated by Leila Heller. For additional information please contact the gallery, 212-249-7695.

For more information, please contact Lauren Pollock at Lauren@leilahellergallery.com, or call 212-49-7695. Press Contact: Ricky Lee, Communications Director, ricky@leilahellergalley.com