

Shoja Azari Explores Perceptions of the Middle East in New Show at Leila Heller Gallery

BY DALE EISINGER | NOV 22, 2013 | 10:18 AM | [PERMALINK](#)



Image via Leila Heller Gallery / Queen of Houries (The King of Black), 2013, Lenticular 3D depth on acrylic sheet, 30 X 41.5 in / 76.2 x 105.41 cm



Iranian artist **Shoja Azari** explores the idea of Western perception of the Middle East in a new show, on display now at **Leila Heller Gallery**. In "FAKE: Idyllic Life," Azari has been working over the last seven years to meld Iranian mythology and culled imagery of violence and turmoil grabbed from YouTube videos. In this show, on view now until December 14, he explores the distorted perception of the West through multilayered works.

The new show collides painting and video, where he projects video loops on to canvases that have already been painted. The work is colorful, at times abstract, always vivid, recalling **Chagall** and **Rousseau**, but with an obvious perceptual overlay that mimics the limitations of media distribution—there's always something biased and slightly off-putting about these images, even as objectively beautiful as they are.

As the artist describes it:

"Faced with an increasingly hostile world governed by identity politics, I approached this new series as a way to examine assigned and reassigned identities in relationship to power, by finding the proper visual and literary context as it relates to now and to the past. As roles and assignments shift, I wanted to ensure that a thread of visual continuity exists while also bringing new context and meaning within each historical epoch."

Leila Heller Galler is at 568 West 25 Street in New York City. Get more information [on their site](#). Check out a few of the works above.

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