

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

Shoja Azari and Shahram Karimi

Magic of Light

September 29 – Dec 2013



Shoja Azari & Shahram Karimi, Spring, 2007-2008, Video projection on painted canvas, 50 x 89 in

Opening Sunday, September 29, 12 pm - 6 pm

Mana Contemporary: 888 Newark Ave

Jersey City, NJ

Transportation provided from Milk Studios (450 W 15 Street)

Departing every half hour, starting from 12 pm

Jersey City, NJ – Mana Contemporary, in collaboration with Leila Heller Gallery, will feature the works by artist and filmmaker Shoja Azari with painter Shahram Karimi, in the exhibition, *Magic of Light*, opening September 29, 2013 and going through December 28, 2013. The show will feature three collaborative video-painting series by Azari and Karimi, as well as a video installation by Shoja Azari. The *Magic of Light* emphasizes the subtle ways in which motion, texture, and light are used in all the works to further convey inherent emotions of loss, fear and nostalgia. Azari's feature film *K*, based on three short stories by writer Franz Kafka, will also be on view for the duration of the exhibition.

Azari and Karimi's groundbreaking four piece series, *Silence*, consists of carefully filmed abstract images of natural landscapes projected onto canvas that has been painted in a precise, hyper-realistic manner each depicting one season of the year. Imbued with an ethereal elegance, these works encompass the nostalgic emotions of the passing of time through the lenses of Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer. The perfectly aligned installation connects the two mediums of painting and video to

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

produce subtle movements and bring to life the flat surface, thereby suggesting an element of real time onto an otherwise frozen moment.

Magic of Light will feature the latest collaboration between the Azari and Karimi. Each piece from this 4-panel video-painting series, entitled *Forsaken*, depicts metanarratives based off a story of a family in the midst of deterioration. The perspectives of a father who has abandoned his home, a heart-broken wife attempting to decipher her state of being, and a neglected child fleeing the site of his broken family, all develop throughout the video-paintings. A sense of irrevocable damage lies heavily across the body of work, as the final panel depicts the child solemnly walking down a road towards his uncertain destiny.

On view is also Shoja Azari's, *There Are No Non Believers in Hell*, a video installation informed by the timelessness of Renaissance art seen through the lens of contemporary existential anxiety. The video work, projected on two sides of cross hanging from the ceiling, creates a powerful yet disturbing experience: famous old Master paintings including Caravaggio's *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas* and Rembrandt's *Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac* burn in front of the viewers eyes. As the paintings melt away into darkness, the voices of evangelical radicals preaching about hell as a reality on earth are heard throughout the room instilling a troubling sense of religious fervor.

Shoja Azari is an artist and filmmaker who has been living in New York since 1983. His works have been exhibited globally, with solo shows throughout Europe and North America. Azari has participated in international exhibitions at Museums such as the Haus der Kulturen in Germany and the MUSAC in Spain, and at world renowned exhibitions such as the 55th Venice Biennale. His works are in the permanent collections of various Museums and foundations, such as the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Los Angeles and the Farjam Collection in Dubai. Since 2006, Azari has also been collaborating with painter Shahram Karimi on video paintings, a medium which explores the juncture between film and fine arts.

Born in Shiraz, Iran, **Shahram Karimi** has been living and working between Germany and New York since 1988. Primarily a painter, he produces powerful and intriguing works often containing subtle political messages. Karimi is also an accomplished production designer and has collaborated with artist Shirin Neshat on the award-winning film, *Women Without Men*, and the piece *Overruled* for the 2011 Performa 11 Biennial in New York. Since 2006, Karimi has also been collaborating with filmmaker Shoja Azari on video paintings, a medium which explores the juncture between film and fine arts.