

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

TRAVELING LIGHT

By

Darvish Fakhr



Stay Up, 2022
Oil on Linen
281 x 198 cm

Dubai, UAE – Leila Heller Gallery is pleased to announce artist Darvish Fakhr's solo show '*TRAVELING LIGHT*' opening on 13th November 2022.

"Finding a means to live together without violence or antagonism will take a form of imagination and invention" Edward Said said in 1978.

Being half Iranian and growing up in America during the revolution, Fakhr faced abuse and shame he didn't understand as a child. Through his paintings, Fakhr processes these complicated emotions. In this collection, he illustrates the beauty of the multi-layered cultures he was constantly exposed to, by painting over his old work and layering them. Growing up in Boston he was taught a very traditional Western technique of oil painting. By superimposing Eastern philosophies through English and Farsi texts, he aims to celebrate the juxtaposition as a creative solution to an ongoing worldly conflict. In what he calls "gentle civic disruptions," Darvish channels his influences and inspirations from Sufism to challenge our preconceived notions of culture and tolerance in performance work that strikes viewers with its surrealism, humor, and optimism. Though he is not a practicing Sufi, his work is meant to pay homage to the purity of Sufi mysticism, to the point where he describes himself as a "Sufi Skool Dropout". The guerrilla nature of such work is meant to disrupt the daily movement of our lives.

His art and lifestyle, he says is rooted in concepts of newness. "I look for various ways of straddling extremes as a test case for tolerance and creativity, by celebrating our inherent contradictions. One moment I am carefully rendering the turn of a cheek bone in space, the next I am vandalizing it. One moment I am paying homage to purity of Sufi mysticism from the East, the next I am coveting cash from the West. One moment my body is a temple, the next I am riding dirt bikes over the pews. Dance and Painting is how I am best able to split the moment and climb through to something outside of myself." Says Darvish of his art and life.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Darvish Fakhr is a half-Iranian, half-American artist whose work ranges from painting to movement art. In his practice, he amalgamates disparate cultures by overlaying various concepts and aesthetics through interference, which can take the form of movement, paint, or text. Throughout all his work, he fuses Western techniques with Eastern philosophies, such as incorporating Persian poetry into oil paintings or converting a skateboard into a flying carpet. He calls his movement art "gentle civic disruptions," inspired by the practice and image of the whirling dervish. In these works, much like the interference found in his paintings, he cross-pollinates aspects of his Iranian heritage with his Western upbringing. He challenges preconceptions by mocking stereotypes through humor and invention and uses lightness and concepts of flying as metaphors for accessing ideas of freedom.

He has exhibited and performed internationally, included at The Armory Show in New York, and is in the permanent collection of the National Portrait Gallery in London. He currently lives and works in Brighton, UK.

ABOUT THE GALLERY

Since its establishment over four decades ago in New York, Leila Heller Gallery has gained worldwide recognition as a pioneer in promoting a creative dialogue and exchange between Western artists and Middle Eastern, Central and Southeast Asian artists. It has garnered a reputation for identifying and cultivating the careers of artists leaving a lasting impact on contemporary art and culture. Currently representing a diverse roster of Western, Central Asian, Southeast Asian and Middle Eastern artists, the gallery is also active in the American, European, and Middle Eastern secondary art markets. In November 2015, Leila Heller Gallery opened its first international location in Dubai's Alserkal Avenue. At 16,000 square feet, the state of the art gallery features three exhibition spaces, making it the largest gallery in the UAE. Showcasing leading regional and international artists, many of whom will be presenting their work in the Middle East.