

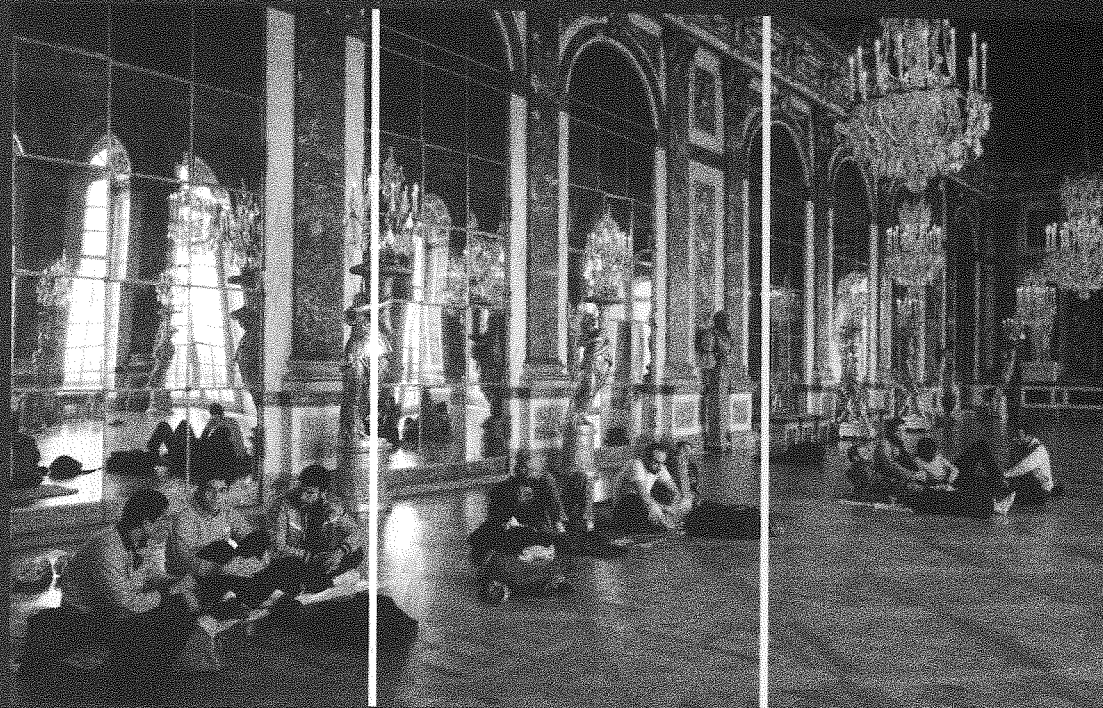
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Reza Aramesh, *Action 121*, 2013.
6.8 x 106.3 in., 195 x 270 cm
Edition of 3 + 1 AP

Leila Heller Gallery

at The Armory Show, New York
March 7 – 10, 2013
Booth 734, Pier 94



On 7th March at The Armory Show in New York, Leila Heller Gallery will debut new work by Ayad Alkadhi, Reza Aramesh, Rachel Lee Hovnanian, Leila Pazooki, Hadieh Shafie and will feature a recent video work by Farideh Lashai.

New York City-based painter Ayad Alkadhi will reveal two monumental paintings from his new body of work in which he explores the process of societal reconstruction through the radical political, social, and economic shifts occurring after revolutions, invasions, or wars. Layering depictions of machinery, limbs, and skeletons, Alkadhi references not only the fragmented struggles of his homeland Iraq, but also of the burgeoning young democracies and governments that have come to power since the Arab Spring in 2011. His subtle use of frigidly fluid imagery blends both the harsh realities of countless failures linked to national reconstructions in addition to the lingering glimmers of hope that continue to fuel visions of a more just future.

London-based sculptor and photographer Reza Aramesh will be exhibiting a photograph from his Action series and a new sculpture at The Armory Show for the first time. Aramesh's photographs and sculptures are highly choreographed combining emotive and haunting figures seemingly disconnected and alienated from their surroundings. They combine depictions from violent journalistic war photos and Renaissance and Baroque master paintings which are re-staged using amateur models. He carefully mixes and reconfigures scenes from various sources which are then rendered into a hand-carved sculpture or a hand-printed gelatin photographic

triptych. Aramesh's oeuvre is the unraveling of a universal collective memory of horror and misery rendered into discomforting yet undeniable works of art.

Texas-born, New York based interdisciplinary artist, Rachel Lee Hovnanian, will continue to explore the blurring of reality and the narcissistic side of digital life in her presentation at The Armory Show. On view will be three new works from her Mirror Motherboard series, industrial sheets of steel covered in thousands of hand sculpted metal narcissus flowers. Also on view will be the third version of Hovnanian's Dinner for Two installation, entitled Dinner for Two: Wedding Cake, a work that highlights the replacement of real-life interactions with technological means of communication and digital social media. Hovnanian's long, elegant dining table alludes to a traditional idealized family dinner, however, at either end of the table, the apparent husband and wife are absent figures replaced by LCD panels affixed to their chairs while the recognizable tunes of "angry birds" and "words with friends" chime from both sides of the table.

Leila Heller Gallery will pay an homage to contemporary Iranian artist Farideh Lashai (1944 – February 24, 2013) with a new version of her video-painting, *Le Temps Perdu*. The subject matter is Edouard Manet's *Le déjeuner sur l'herbe*, a painting that sparked massive controversy after its completion in 1863 due to its depiction of a naked woman casually lunching with two French male figures. However, in Lashai's video, the painting slowly morphs into an image of three identically placed figures, with the exception that they are Iranian and that the woman who was once naked is now clothed. Just as Manet's work caused scandal in moving away

from classical Renaissance based art to a Modernist artist sensibility, Lashai's piece marks a decisive distancing from an imposing European artistic standard, and instead presents a Contemporary Iranian aesthetic.

Berlin-based artist Leila Pazooki will be featuring a new Neon work part of a larger series in which she explores the religious concept of animism present in various traditions such as Hinduism and Buddhism. As animism seeks to blur the borders between the worlds of material inanimate objects and spiritual energy, so too does Pazooki by superimposing two physical neon works comprising of the words "spiritual" and "prostitution." Pazooki demands her viewers to ponder the significance of a physically produced objects and the idea of their spiritual essence. In addition to this is the added dimension of the dialogue Pazooki creates regarding the actual definitions related to these seemingly disassociated words. She puts forth the multiple layers of meaning present in her work and challenges her viewers to contemplate her piece within a conceptual framework.

Brooklyn and Maryland based artist Hadieh Shafie will debut five new works including three works from the new series of work, *Ghalb* (heart). Shafie's intricate paper scroll pieces represent a re-interpretation of the tradition of calligraphic script and design repetition present in Iranian and Islamic art and design. Her newest series is influenced by the Turkmen "Asyk", an abstract heart-shaped pendant worn by married Turkmen women as a bidding of good health and fertility. For the Armory, Shafie transforms this traditional tribal symbol into captivating and multidimensional works bursting with color.