

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

Art Dubai

April 16th – 26th, 2025



Bahman Mohasses, *Starry Night*, 1960 - 1969, Oil on canvas, 180 x 450 cm

Mina a'Salam, Madinat Jumeirah

Dubai UAE- Leila Heller Gallery is pleased to announce its participation in the eighteenth edition of Art Dubai 2025 with two booths in the Contemporary and Modern sections.

The Contemporary booth (B-12) features a selection of works by artists Aref Montazeri, Arash Nazari, Azza Al Qubaisi, Bahar Sabzevari, Behrang Samadzadegan, Darvish Fakh, Farideh Lashai, Maryam Lamei, Melis Buyruk, Morteza Darehbaghi, Morteza Khazaie, Naeemeh Kazemi, Parinaz Eleish, Sofia Yeganeh, Zeinab Alhashemi.

Presenting an international selection of emerging, established and pioneering artists, the works exhibited envelope *Resonance of Body, Soul, Faith, and Loyalty in the Romance of Leila and Majnun* explores the enduring relevance of this iconic Middle Eastern love story through a contemporary lens. Centered on the interplay between human emotion, nature, faith, and cultural politics, the Contemporary booth (B-12) presents an immersive showcase that reimagines Leila and Majnun romance as an existential and spiritual journey. Through paintings, sculptures, and multimedia works, the presentation captures the symbolic power of the natural world, particularly Majnun's exile in the desert as a mirror of longing, transcendence, and divine love. Themes of the physical body as a vessel of faith, nature as both metaphor and sanctuary, and the socio-political constraints surrounding their story invite viewers into a sensory dialogue that connects ancient narrative with modern perspectives.

Aref Montazeri is a sculptor removed from conventional practices, he pursues a novel approach to mirror art that involves large numbers of mirror cuts and meticulous attention to detail. Conceptually, he follows an approach he has termed "The MIRROR follows narrative"; Which favours materialism over ornamentalism and resilience of design over buildability. His design apparatus consists of three criteria: Narrative, Material and Technique, which is also the way he looks at art and creates it.

Arash Nazari is a self-taught Iranian artist. Nazari's works are heavily influenced by Negā rgari (Persian Miniature Art). In his paintings, he brings to notice the contrast between, unique classical art of miniature opposed to color tones from contemporary minimalist art.

Azza Al Qubaisi is an artist, designer and entrepreneur who is popularly known as the UAE's first Emirati jewellery designer. All her works reveal her prolific creativity, including, jewellery and sculptures made from gold, silver, wood, rubber tyres, palm trees and oudh incense. The works of AlQubaisi reflect her journey as an artist, as she explores her Emirati heritage.

Bahar Sabzevari is a New York-based artist known for her narrative self-portraits that explore identity, memory, and cultural heritage. Drawing on Persian motifs, mythology, and religion, her work reflects personal and collective histories, often portraying her experience as a woman in Iran. Her art has been exhibited internationally, including at Leila Heller Gallery.

Behrang Samadzadegan's work ranges from highly symbolic pieces to arrangements of stuffed-toy sculptures, to various sizes of drawings and paintings, to installations that restage ritual or historical narratives. The subject matters of his works are drawn from images and narratives of contemporary Iranian history, which he combines with fictional stories and the aesthetics of painting.

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Darvish Fahkr is an Iranian-American artist known for his expressive portraiture that bridges Eastern and Western cultures. Trained in Boston and London, his work explores identity, memory, and spirituality, often combining classical painting with poetic overlays. He has exhibited internationally, including at the National Portrait Gallery in London.

Farideh Lashai was an Iranian contemporary artist known for her multidisciplinary approach, spanning painting, literature, and video art. Renowned for her poetic and expressive works, Lashai often drew inspiration from classical Persian literature, weaving intricate narratives and rich symbolism into her pieces. Her art reflects a profound engagement with cultural heritage, while also addressing contemporary themes.

Iranian artist Maryam Lamei, creates artworks by combining historical methods of Golomorgh and her creation. She has gone beyond the traditional methods and makes her own style. She managed to gain the National emblem in 2015.

Melis Buyruk primarily focuses on large-scale floral ceramic sculptures. Buyruk identifies and subtly blends patterns of vegetation and the natural world, creating porcelain flower fields. Fluctuating between boundaries of reality and surreality, these works remind viewers of our fractured and disjointed relationship with nature, and provokes a double consciousness.

Morteza Darehbaghi is an Iranian artist known for his exploration of free, geometric, and pattern-based forms. In 2009, his *"Birth"* series marked a shift from nature-inspired works to independent forms shaped by visible and invisible forces. His art blends the structured geometry of cityscapes with traditional Persian motifs like rug patterns and tile designs, creating a balance between order and organic forms. This combination reflects his interest in the dynamic relationship between structure and spontaneity. Darehbaghi has exhibited internationally, with solo shows at Foundry in Dubai, Iranshahr Art Gallery in Tehran, and Meem Gallery in Dubai. He has participated in major events like the 54th Venice Biennale and Abu Dhabi Art. His work has earned several awards, including first place at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art and the Islamic World Biennial. His pieces have also appeared in major auctions at Christie's Dubai and Bonhams.

Morteza Khazaie is a Persian contemporary artist whose work delves into themes of transformation, resilience, and the human condition. Drawing inspiration from nature, particularly the flexibility and strength of trees, Khazaie's art often features curved forms that symbolize adaptability in the face of adversity. His choice of wood as a primary medium not only connects his work to the natural world but also imbues it with a sense of life and dynamism, reflecting the stories and experiences embedded in the material.

Naeemeh Kazemi is an Iranian artist that focuses her art on themes of environmental anxiety, feminism, and humanity and disguises them in her enchanting paintings through tokens and motifs of the natural world, classical paintings, and quotidian objects.

Parinaz Eleish Gharagozlou's works may provoke strong emotions of nostalgia in the viewer. It is the tradition of storytelling in Iran that inspires Eleish. "Though I begin each painting with a story and an idea, at the core, I hope it is the raw emotion that will carry the viewer." She says.

Sofia Yeganeh is a British-Iranian artist based in London whose multimedia work explores identity, the human body, and nature. A Parsons graduate, she combines embroidery, collage, and painting to reflect on the female form and emotional perception. Her work has been shown internationally, including in Geneva, Tehran, and New York.

Zeinab Alhashemi is a conceptual artist based in Dubai, UAE. Her multidisciplinary practice explores themes of cultural identity, heritage, and environmental sustainability. Through her site-specific installations and sculptures, Alhashemi seeks to create immersive experiences that provoke thought and dialogue about the evolving landscape of the Arabian Peninsula. With a focus on materials and structures, her work serves as a testament to the enduring legacy of cultural traditions in the UAE.

The Modern booth (M-7) features a historical presentation of work by modern master Bahman Mohasses. Bahman Mohasses (1931–2010) was a pioneering Iranian modernist artist, renowned for his provocative paintings, sculptures, and collages. Often referred to as the "Persian Picasso," he was known for his bold, surreal imagery and unflinching social critique. Born in Rasht, Iran, Mohasses studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma in Italy, where he developed a distinctive style that blended Western modernism with existential themes. His works often featured mythical creatures and distorted figures, reflecting his introspective and critical view of society. Beyond his visual art, Mohasses was an accomplished translator and theater director, bringing the works of European playwrights like Pirandello and Ionesco to Iranian audiences. He participated in prestigious international exhibitions, including the Venice, São Paulo, and Tehran Biennales, and co-founded the influential Group Panj, which played a significant role in Iran's modern art movement. His legacy endures, with his works held in major institutions like the British Museum and the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. His life and art were poignantly captured in the documentary *Fifi Howls from Happiness* (2013), offering a rare glimpse into the mind of this enigmatic artist.