

LEILA PAZOOKI

THE SAME LIGHT

17th MAY to 20th JUNE

This exhibition presents three interconnected bodies of work by Leila Pazooki (b. 1977, Tehran), operating through language, images, and systems of representation to examine how collective perception and imagination are constructed.

The exhibition reflects on the role of collective consciousness—historically present across cultures and time—as a condition that actively participates in shaping reality, despite often being reduced or overlooked in contemporary discourse.

Following her 2025 solo exhibition *And You and Me Again* at Dastan's Basement, this marks Pazooki's second solo exhibition in the region in recent months. Her work has been shown internationally in museums, biennials, and institutions including the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, ZKM Center for Art and Media, Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art, Mediations Biennale, Louis Vuitton Hong Kong, National Museum of Western Art, Museum Kunstpalast, and Setagaya Art Museum.

In *The Same Light*, Pazooki continues a research-based practice that explores how images, language, and systems of circulation construct perception. The works focus on the suspended moment in which an image is not yet fully formed—such as screenshots taken while visuals are still loading on Instagram—where meaning has not yet stabilized and perception remains open.

In this brief interval, images exist as fields of data, color, and possibility before recognition and interpretation settle. The works engage this threshold state as a space in which perception is not yet directed, and imagination has not yet been captured by the continuous acceleration of visual information.

Today, we move rapidly between images, headlines, and fragments of information. Each arrives already structured with emotional tones, associations, and implied meanings. Through repetition, images generate language, and language reinforces images, forming a continuous loop that shapes collective perception. Over time, even the most improbable narratives become familiar and absorbed into shared consciousness.

The exhibition reflects on how contemporary visual culture not only shapes what is seen, but also structures what can be imagined. In this process, perception becomes a translation system between image and language, endlessly reinforcing itself and constructing shared frameworks of meaning.

At the same time, *The Same Light* insists on the possibility of another mode of imagination: one that is not only produced through systems of circulation, but that remains open as an active collective force—capable of imagining alternative forms of reality beyond those continuously presented.

CALL YOU BY MY NAME!

This body of work continues a long-term research-based practice examining how artists, institutions, and cultural production from so-called “periphery” countries are repeatedly described through comparison to Western references, as though their value can only be understood through already familiar frameworks.

The research began in 2011 with an earlier neon installation focusing on the repeated linguistic pattern of comparison, where artists are described through Western analogies such as “Dalí of Bali” or “Indian Damien Hirst” (in reference to Subodh Gupta). These formulations reveal how cultural specificity is often translated into familiar reference points.

The installation gathers widely circulated phrases such as “Chinese Elon Musk,” “Tehran’s Harvard,” or “Wall Street of Asia,” drawn from media, headlines, and public discourse. While presented as descriptive shortcuts, these comparisons reduce complex cultural, scientific, and economic realities into recognizable equivalents.

Over time, the research expanded to show how this comparative logic extends beyond art into institutions, education, technology, finance, and science. In some cases, these comparisons are even adopted locally as strategies of visibility and legitimacy.

Together, these phrases reveal a repetitive linguistic structure through which perception, familiarity, and value are constructed and circulated.

Leila Pazooki (b. 1977, Tehran) is an interdisciplinary artist working across installation, video, performance, photography, collage, and painting. She lives and works between Berlin and Dubai.

Her work has been exhibited internationally, including at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, ZKM Center for Art and Media, Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art, Mediations Biennale, Louis Vuitton Hong Kong, National Museum of Western Art (Tokyo), Museum Kunstpalast (Düsseldorf), and Setagaya Art Museum (Tokyo).

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LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

