

# LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

*'Upside Down'*

By

Morteza Khazaie

(Curated By Farshad Mahoutforoush)



*Untitled, 2024 , Wood, 20 x 20 x 120 cm*

Dubai, UAE – Leila Heller Gallery is delighted to announce the upcoming solo exhibition by Morteza Khazaie, titled *'Upside Down'* opening on 15th April, 2025.

“Upside Down” reflects the changes and transformations occurring both within individuals and society. The collection is inspired by nature, particularly by trees that bend in the face of wind and storms yet do not break. These trees, with their curved forms, symbolize resilience and flexibility; just as in life, people too change under pressure and harsh conditions, being guided towards new paths.

Morteza Khazaie delves into the delicate balance between vulnerability and strength. Known for his poetic and deeply emotive approach to form and material, Khazaie captures the essence of human resilience through organic, sculptural works. His unique craftsmanship and thoughtful use of wood create pieces that are both grounded and transformative, resonating with the themes of survival, adaptation, and silent strength.

In “upside down ,” the curved forms of trees are employed as symbols of adaptation and growth against the prevailing currents. Additionally, wood as a natural and living material imbues the works with a sense of life and dynamism. The use of wood in this collection, much like the trees, conveys a connection with nature and life, as wood originates from nature’s heart and carries the stories and experiences of time.

These works invite reflection on how one can bend in the face of adversity without breaking, emerging from hardships into new beauty. “upside down ” tells a story of an inner journey that, while looking back at the past and social changes, is beautifully depicted through artistic expression.

## CURATOR'S STATEMENT: FARSHAD MAHOUTFOROUSH

"Upside Down" came from an observation I've returned to often about the quiet resilience of nature. Trees that yield in storms, yet continue to grow, became a metaphor for how we as humans navigate change. This exhibition is my reflection on the ways we adapt, redirect, and find new shapes for ourselves under pressure. The use of wood felt essential: it's a material that remembers time, change, and life. Through these works, I wanted to explore how softness can be strength, and how being 'upside down' might simply mean seeing things differently.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

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.

## 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. In addition to presenting a dynamic exhibition schedule, Leila Heller Gallery actively organizes shows with world renowned curators, hosts educational panels and film screenings, and produces catalogs and books with scholarly essays. Each year the gallery participates in major international art fairs and stages off-site projects as a platform for exploring new conversations within a wider context of galleries, artists and institutions. Gallery artists have consistently participated in international museum exhibitions and biennials, and are included in leading institutional collections worldwide.