

# LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

## “Revealing the Unseen”

by Mehdi Farhadian



Warrior III; 2026; Acrylic on Canvas; 200 x 250 cm

Dubai, UAE – Leila Heller Gallery is pleased to present Revealing the Unseen, a solo exhibition by Iranian artist Mehdi Farhadian. The exhibition will open in Dubai on 14 March 2026.

Revealing the Unseen presents a compelling body of work in which history, imagination, and memory converge. Farhadian’s paintings unfold like scenes from an imagined travelogue, inviting viewers into layered landscapes and interior settings that exist somewhere between reality and fiction. Within these carefully constructed spaces, human figures, animals, and symbolic objects appear like performers on a stage, guiding the viewer through narratives that blur the boundaries between the visible and the unseen.

Drawing inspiration from diverse cultures, geographies, and historical references, Farhadian creates compositions that merge elements from archival photographs, architecture, and natural landscapes. Traces of the northern Caspian Sea region, notable Iranian architecture, and figures from contemporary history subtly emerge within his work. By weaving these visual fragments together, the artist constructs a rich and poetic visual language in which personal memory intersects with collective history.

Farhadian’s practice bridges figurative and abstract approaches. Meticulous detail is balanced with expressive painterly gestures, while techniques such as pouring and dripping paint introduce dynamic textures and striking contrasts. These processes produce dreamlike cityscapes and landscapes that appear both familiar and surreal. Beneath their aesthetic complexity lies a quiet reflection on social memory and the layered narratives of contemporary Iranian life.

Through this distinctive approach, Mehdi Farhadian invites viewers to step into a world where imagination becomes a means of uncovering hidden histories and emotional truths. His works ultimately explore the delicate threshold between what is seen and what remains concealed.

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## ABOUT THE ARTIST

Mehdi Farhadian's paintings effectively integrate abstract and figurative features to create dreamlike, visually stunning landscapes and city views, inhabited by people and animals commonly engaged in enigmatic acts. His personal style fuses realistic, expressive and fictional narratives, providing a potent vehicle for his highly personal subject matters, which typically demonstrate his deep concern for Iranian contemporary history. This historical approach addresses political highlights and the everyday life experienced collectively. His characteristic iconography originates from diverse sources, including the lush vegetation of the Caspian Sea region in northern Iran, notable Iranian architecture, and figures from recent history. This carefully orchestrated combination of references ultimately shapes Farhadian's entirely subjective and original visual language.

His style of painting combines a great respect for details with a powerful handling of contrasting visual effects achieved by pouring and dripping paint. By combining abstract and expressive techniques, his meticulous skill and particular subject matter have saved him a distinctive place in Iranian contemporary painting.

Mehdi Farhadian lives in an old, historically charged neighborhood in Tehran where he was born in 1980. He received his MA in painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran. Since 2010, he has taught painting and drawing at Elm o Farhang University, (Science and Culture}, Tehran. Select exhibitions include ART CAPITAL (Comparison}, Grand Palais, 2016, Paris (France); The Great Game, Iran Pavilion, La Biennale di Venezia 2015, Venice (Italy); Magic of Persia, Royal College of Arts, 2011, London (UK); and Iran Inside Out, Chelsea Museum, 2009, New York.

## 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.