

GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA

PARIS - BRUXELLES

SHAHPOUR POUYAN

WE OWE THIS CONSIDERABLE LAND TO THE HORIZON LINE

March 9th – May 6th, 2017

18, rue du Bourg-Tibourg - 75004 - Paris



STUDIO VIEW
CREDIT : PAULA ABREU PITA
COURTESY OF THE ARTIST AND GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA, PARIS/BRUSSELS

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is very pleased to present *We owe this considerable land to the horizon line*, the first solo exhibition in France of the work of Shahpour Pouyan.

Shahpour Pouyan was born in Isfahan in 1979, a year marked by the Islamic Revolution in Iran, and grew up in Tehran in the midst of the Iran-Iraq War. He currently lives and works between New York and Tehran.

Shahpour Pouyan's practice reflects on the workings of political power, domination and possession through the language of cultural material and forms. Through his drawings, installations and sculptures, he tackles a bifurcated experience of life in Iran and in the U.S., creating a large and significant body of work that draws on a wide range of influences, from traditions of Persian art and Iranian culture to the work of visionary architects such as Etienne Louis Boullée or Claude Nicolas Ledoux.

In the exhibition's foyer, Pouyan presents twelve miniatures based on a selection Persian miniatures depicting scenes from the ascension of Prophet Muhammad. By removing figures, aureoles, and other unreal elements of these miniatures, he transforms them into abstract images or simple architectural scenes. These modified miniatures are subsequently printed on Japanese rice paper, and the prints are further enhanced with gilding and the addition of paint and other media.

In the gallery's main space, Pouyan has installed a series of 28 ceramic domes, towers, mausoleums and monumental buildings. Each conceived and crafted by the artist, these sculptures engage a wide-ranging history of architectural forms dedicated to the display, defense, and consolidation of power. While designing the works, Pouyan drew on archetypal typologies of Islamic, Brutalist, and Fascist architecture, as well as that of 20th-century military edifices. At the same time, the absence of any apparent door, entrance or exit in most of the works lends them a resolutely sculptural quality that unsettles their architectural quality. All works are of the same color of dark sand; each pedestal is of a different height. Infused with a sense of past menace and future foreboding, they comprise the monumental topography of an uninhabited cityscape. A subtle morphing in the shapes of these sculptures caused by the high-firing process lends this landscape the impression of a melting mirage.

Just as the miniatures harness the profound influence of the past and tradition to produce abstract images divested of the human form, the sculptures represent an abandoned future built on the historical fundamentals of a past and futuristic architecture. Shahpour Pouyan creates a godlike position citiscape after Ibn Shakir, 13th century miniaturist who observed the fall of Baghdad by Mogul army from the top of a minaret.

Another important point of reference for the artist, one that seems to haunt much of Pouyan's oeuvre, is the Biblical tale of the Tower of Babel, which tells of humankind's misguided attempt to build a tower to heaven. The chimeric landscape depicted by the artist appears to warn against the utopian promises of past empire and nation-building projects, framing architecture as an interpretation of unbridled human ambition.

Shahpour Pouyan was born in Isfahan (Iran) in 1979. He lives and works in New York (United States) and Tehran (Iran).

He graduated from the Art University of Tehran (Iran, 2004-2007) where he studied painting, the Iranian Institute of Philosophy in Tehran (Iran, 2005) where he studied Neoplatonism, the Pratt Institute in New York (United States, 2012) in Integrated Practices and New Forms.

His work is currently shown at the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto (Canada), as part of the show *Rebel, Jester, Mystic, Poet: Contemporary Persians*.

Shahpour Pouyan's work has been given a number of solo exhibitions, in particular *History Travels at Different Speeds* at the Copperfield Gallery in London (United Kingdom, 2015), *PTSD* in 2014 and *Full Metal Jacket* in 2011 both at the Lawrie Shabibi Gallery in Dubai (UAE).

He has also taken part in many major international group shows, notably *Home Land Security* at the Fort Winfield Scott in San Francisco (United States, 2016), *Jameel Prize* at the Pera Museum in Istanbul (Turkey, 2016), *Memory and Continuity* at the Pera Museum in Istanbul (Turkey, 2016), *Global/Local* at the Grey Art Gallery NYU in New York (USA, 2016), *Jacob's Ladder* at the Untitled Art Fair in Miami (USA, 2015), *Young Collectors* at the Elgiz Museum in Istanbul (Turkey, 2014), *Chambres à Part VII: Dark to Light* at the Tower of London (United Kingdom, 2013).

The artist took part in many biennales such as *For an image, faster than light* for the Yinchuan Biennale (China, 2016), *Whorled Explorations* for the Kochi-Muziris Biennale (India, 2014) and the Mykonos Biennale (Greece, 2013). He will also participate in the Beijing Biennale (China, 2017) untitled *The Silk Road and World's Civilizations*.

The work of Shahpour Pouyan is present in many prestigious public collections notably the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, the Grey Art Gallery, and recently the British Museum.

Shahpour Pouyan was the winner of several awards and residencies such as the Civitella Ranieri Foundation in Umbertide (Italy, 2016), the Residency program of the Elizabeth Foundation for the Arts in New York (United States, 2014), the Pegasus Art Foundation residency in Hyderabad, India, (2011), the International Cité des Arts in Paris (France 2007).

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Manuel Ocampo
Oeuvres : 1994 - 2016
March 18th - May 6th, 2017

Brook Andrew
Assemblage
February 2nd - April 1st, 2017

Jean Dubuffet & Fabrice Hyber
May 18th - July 13th, 2017

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May 18th - July 13th, 2017

Brenna Youngblood
The Game of Life
April, 21th - May 20th, 2017

Ni Youyu
September - October, 2017

Jorge Queiroz
September - October, 2017

Agnès Varda
November - December, 2017

Seydou Keïta
November - December, 2017

Youssef Nabil
November - December, 2017

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