



Georgia O'Keeffe, 2023, Acrylic on canvas, 120 x 100 cm

ROSHANAK AMINELAHI

Faces of Resilience

14 November | 2 January 2024

Ayyam Gallery is pleased to present *Faces of Resilience*, a solo exhibition featuring Roshanak Aminelaahi's recent body of work. This will be her second solo exhibition at Ayyam Gallery, following her first exhibition in 2017. Please join us for the vernissage on November 14th from 6 pm - 9 pm, in presence of the artist.

About the exhibition

This exhibition illuminates the stories of women who navigated a male-dominated society and persevered through adversity. Women who have empowered political, economic, and cultural development. Women who simply inspire.

The selected women come from diverse backgrounds, spanning different generations, continents, and life paths. Each woman carries her unique story, yet collectively, they embody a universal tale of courage. Portraits of ordinary citizens are placed next to queens and idols, highlighting the irrelevance of roles; their commonality is that extra mile they walked to bring forth bold changes. Roshanak highlights a multitude of defining acts of courage, including speaking up against racism, enforcing political and environmental activism, and normalising female leadership. These acts of defiance entail the biases these women have faced. The representation of these women amplifies the voices of resilience and reflects the systemic nature of discrimination and the varied and limitless ways women have had to resist over the years.

Throughout Art history, women have consistently been fetishised and idolized for their physical form. The artist here hides their facial traits and focuses solely on the beauty of their achievements and character. Roshanak avoids the potential for objectification or stereotyping by depicting them within intricate settings and embellishments. Using pointillism and color-blocking techniques, Roshanak captures the distinctive features of these remarkable women. Despite the faceless portrayal, the women are still identifiable, proving they have established themselves by fulfilling their roles as key personas in their respective journeys. The portraits symbolize feminine energy and stand as a testament to societal advancement forged through years of resilience and fight for equality by women worldwide.

A series of drawings with similar strokes to the pointillist technique is also displayed. The artist employs this technique to create a horned figure chasing after the love of a bird. This is inspired by Ahmad Shamlou's poem, "The butcher was weeping, he had fallen in love with the little canary". The poem resonates with the recurring element of storytelling in this exhibition. The tales we discover within faceless figures and their pursuit. Both personal and social pursuits are woven together to form a shared story of resilience.

About the artist

Roshanak Aminelahi is an Iranian artist who primarily works in painting and drawing. Aminelahi initially trained in graphic design at Alzahra University (1995) and Azad University (2000) in Tehran, and then pursued a second graduate degree in illustration from the Academy of Art University in San Francisco, California. In Iran, she studied under influential artists such as Hannibal Alkhas and Bahram Kalhornia. In 2013, she began working closely with Reza Derakshani in Dubai. Aminelahi has worked as a professor and lecturer at several colleges, in both Tehran and UAE.

Aminelahi's expressionist paintings range from abstraction to figuration, and often use allegory and symbolism to address urgent themes, such as the subject of war or social conflict. Ancient mythology and poetry, particularly the Shahnameh, have been central to her recent works, which are executed with heavy layers of paint and thick brush marks that create textured, multidimensional imagery. Aminelahi's tactile surfaces recall the sculptural approach to painting that was pioneered by twentieth-century San Francisco Bay Area painters like Jay DeFeo, while her pointillist works on paper are reminiscent of the mosaic tile work that can be found throughout the Islamic architecture of Iran.

Aminelahi has widely exhibited at art spaces and institutions in Iran, including Azad Art Gallery and the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Arts. In addition to her career as an artist and academic, she has worked as a graphic designer and art director for over two decades. Recent solo exhibitions for the artist include Etemad Gallery, Tehran (2019 and 2015), Ayyam Gallery Al Quoz, Dubai (2017), Zangar Art Gallery, Tehran (2006 and 2005) and Aban Art Gallery, Tehran (2004). Aminelahi's work was also highlighted in a collective exhibition at the Salsali Private Museum in 2016.

About Ayyam Gallery

Founded in 2006, Ayyam Gallery is a leading arts organization that manages the careers of diverse established and emerging artists. Blue-chip art space in Dubai, a series of collaborative projects in the United States, Europe, Africa and Asia, and a multinational non-profit arts program have furthered the gallery's mandate of expanding the parameters of international art. With its widely respected multilingual publishing division and a custodianship program that manages the estates of pioneering artists, Ayyam Gallery has also contributed to recent efforts that document underrepresented facets of global art history.

Exhibition Facts

Exhibitions Dates: 14 November | 2 January 2024

Regular Hours: Monday - Friday: 10 am - 7 pm

Saturday: 12 pm - 6 pm

Location: Ayyam Gallery, B11, Alserkal Avenue, Street 8, Al Quoz 1, Dubai

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