

Abu Dhabi Art 2022

Farah Ossouli

Booth: M13

Date: 16 - 20 November 2022

Manarat Al Saadiyat

Website: <http://dastan.gallery/>

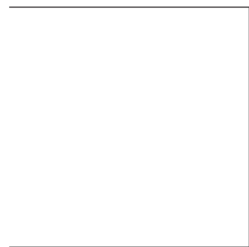
Instagram: [dastan.artgallery](https://www.instagram.com/dastan.artgallery)



At Abu Dhabi Art Fair 2022, Dastan presents a solo exhibition of works by famed Iranian painter Farah Ossouli (b. 1953). The presentation will include pieces from "Wounded Virtue" (2015) series as well as a triptych from "Listen! Do You Hear the Blowing of Darkness?" (2012) series. The works from the latter have never been publicly exhibited. An exhibition of works from the artist's "Wounded Virtue" series was first presented at Dastan+2 in Tehran. The presented pieces have been taken from the artist's personal collection and are for exhibition only. Due to the current circumstances in Iran, the gallery has decided to display works that would be representative of the current challenges in the country, aimed to offer an insight into the developing situation in Iran as well as a window to its complicated history through art.

Dastan had originally planned a different presentation for the fair that included showcasing works by five Iranian artists, Behjat Sadr (1924-2008), Mohsen Vaziri-Moghaddam (1924-2018), Koorosh Shishegaran (b. 1945), Mohammad-Hossein Emad (b. 1957), and Pooya Aryanpour (b. 1971). However, the recent events in Iran necessitated a shift of perspective, and consulting the gallery's programming team as well as the artists and the estates of the original presentation, Dastan has decided to present an inspiring presentation by Farah Ossouli, whose pieces from "Listen! Do You Hear the Blowing of Darkness?" (2012) and "Wounded Virtue" (2015) series are prime examples of thought-provoking portrayals of the history of violence and the quest for freedom.

Anyone who has sat on a Persian Carpet for more than a few minutes will know that it conjures the garden. The entwining of countless patterns —floral designs, birds, fauna— bring the garden home. The deep red or blue background occasionally make a show through a myriad of patterns to color their surroundings. Persian Painting, or as more generally known, "Persian Miniature", too is rife with intricate details and patterns that intimate a spirit. The proportionality of figures, the absence of a sense of depth through perspective, invite the viewer to recreate the depicted scene in her imagination. If the Persian Carpet summons the garden, that of Persian Painting calls for the spirit of the times to come forth. If the Persian Carpet appeals to abstraction, to point to non-human existence, Persian Painting reveals the relationships within the human realm.



Abu Dhabi Art 2022

Farah Ossouli

Booth: M13

Date: 16 – 20 November 2022

Manarat Al Saadiyat

Website: <http://dastan.gallery/>

Instagram: [dastan.artgallery](https://www.instagram.com/dastan.artgallery)



"I believe the spirit of the times reveals itself in art before it shows up in social movements." This pronouncement by Farah Ossouli is supported by a diamond-like conviction, as if the artist was a seer, a diviner. A look at the works from the artist's "Listen! Do You Hear the Blowing of Darkness?" conceived in the early 2010s, will reveal how close they are to images of Iran now making the rounds in the mass and social media. Her compositions are battlefields where forces of light and darkness are crossing paths. This duality has deep roots in the Iranian visual and textual culture. In the West, Manicheism stands for a cosmology characterized by a radical separation between good and evil, darkness and light. The battle between these forces guides the evolution of the Manichean world.

If Persian Painting was traditionally intended to engender an "ideal world", in works of Farah Ossouli we see a picture of reality informed by this battle between good and evil. If border illumination in Persian Painting hinted at a world beyond this duality, in the world of Ossouli borders are storehouses of violence; ideals have lost their luster, and the imaginary is tethered by a contentious reality —freedom is nothing but the attempt to battle limitations imposed on it.

The works from "Wounded Virtue" are based on classical European paintings (by artists such as Delacroix, Goya, David, Manet, Titan, Rembrandt, and Ingres, among others), chosen by the artist based on their historical and conceptual relevance vis-à-vis the manifestation of violence in our world today. By transforming the medium (into contemporary interpretations of Persian Painting) and figures (female holding the torch), Farah Ossouli presents the viewer with a new way of looking at the events taking place around us.

Farah Ossouli (b. 1953, Zanjan, Iran) has achieved a unique fusion of techniques, materials, themes, and narrations during her forty-year career as an artist. She has been a pioneer in introducing contemporary themes and ideas into Persian Miniature Painting. Her works have been presented in numerous solo and group exhibitions in Iran and abroad and are held at major public collections including Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; Devi Art Foundation, New Delhi; Tropen Museum, Amsterdam; Ludwig Museum, Koblenz, Germany, and Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran, Iran. Ossouli is the founder DENA, a female art collective that has organized over 30 exhibitions since 2001. A monograph on the artist is planned for publication by SKIRA Publishing.