

Peybak and Mamali Shafahi
Frieze Los Angeles 2023
Booth: A16
Date: 16 - 19 February 2023
Address: Santa Monica Airport
Los Angeles, USA
Website: <http://dastan.gallery/>
Instagram: [dastan.artgallery](https://www.instagram.com/dastan.artgallery)

FRIEZE LOS ANGELES

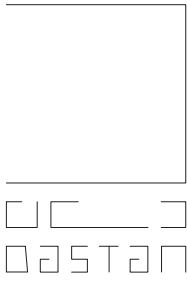
At Frieze LA 2023, Dastan presents a duo presentation of artworks by Mamali Shafahi and Peybak that includes paintings, three-dimensional relief and a center-piece sculpture that seek to create a sensory experience for the viewer. The experience aims to take the viewer into a temple-like setting and display visual input that aims to synesthetically induce haptic, somatosensory and auditory reactions. This is Dastan's second display at the prominent art fair in Los Angeles.

The booth at Frieze LA displays an experience that seeks to present alternative interpretations of the 'exotic' and the 'barren' in the works of Mamali Shafahi and Peybak. Works of Shafahi touch on some archaic cords. They bear the distinct mark of an era in human culture when fear had a substantial external counterpart, though they may hint at hidden chimeras, and include ambiguously playful elements, or at least hints at childhood dreams.

In Shafahi's "Deep Throat..." we run into gorillas and snakes, primal fears that summon instinctive reactions. Perhaps they make us cringe. What keeps this fear in place, or acts as an agent of distantiation, is the veneer coating of these sculptures. Glittery, matted, and crude, these flocked epoxy sculptures have all the hallmarks of modern fascination with fabrication. They provide us with the irreality of artifice.

For Mamali Shafahi life is a magic that hides its charm and he is the instrument by which this magic incarnates. This may be why his works are suffused with an electric energy. And this is perhaps the reason a cerebral outside observer can say plenty about them – the way they link the archaic with the contemporary, their power to lay the groundwork for a new mythological ethics, their ability to connect with their viewers on a primal level of understanding.

Barren landscapes of Peybak are populated by creatures at once: familiar and repulsive, smooth-bodied and emaciated, angelic and fiendish, cuddly and loathsome, amphibian and terrestrial, this- and other-worldly... and the list of opposites can go on. To some, these landscapes may appear as large question marks. Some of fade into the horizon and some twist to converge into a void, a singularity perhaps representing



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either infinity or nothingness, leaving the viewer pondering on their very being, even as illusory creatures.

Contrary to the gorillas of Shafahi, there is nothing exotic about the fauna of Peybak. Perhaps what the work of (Shafahi and Peybak) both exude is a sense of imminent doom (there is no flora whatsoever in the work of Peybak); if so, they do so in totally dissimilar ways (flora teems in Shafahi's work). Peybak's larger canvases play with the viewer's sense of magnification (landscapes appear unbound), both in terms of how scale is perceived and how sociopolitical references to present day events within the country are recorded, put into memory, or even metaphorized. Smaller works draw attention to a particular scene sentinelled by a creature on the frame. These also draw attention to the precision that has gone into drawing the details of larger works – each micro-fauna is in fact a fully formed character and further investigation may reveal intimate commonalities with our everyday, shifting personas. Could it be that these creatures are all one organism in its infinite manifestations?

Mamali Shafahi (b. 1982, Tehran, Iran) is a sculptor, filmmaker and installation artist based in Tehran. His practice, varying from installation to sculpture and film, includes a deep fascination with the impact of emerging technologies on life and art. His current work aims to evoke mysterious new universes, growing out of childhood memories and deep roots in Persian culture, to link present to past and the digital future.

Peybak (Peyman Barabadi and Babak Alebrahim Dehkordi, both b. 1984, Tehran, Iran) is the acronym of two artists who have been working together as a "unified duo" since December 20, 2001. The duo work on every piece together, each taking on different parts until they both declare it finished. Peybak's works are inspired by Persian poetry, mythology, and miniature painting.

Both artists have been featured in several exhibitions, art fairs and presentations by Dastan: Mamali Shafahi's work has been featured in over fifteen, with his most recent solo at the gallery being "Judgment Night: Daddy Kills People" (2022), and Peybak's over twenty, with the latest solo being "Xa La" (2021) at +2 Gallery in Tehran.