



"Perfect Strangers: Leyly Matine-Daftary and Manoucher Yektai"

Curated by Negar Azimi

Date: 5 - 21 September 2024

Preview: 5 September, 2024

Location: London, UK.

Address: 9 Cork Street, London, W1S 3LL

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

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

FRIEZE
NO.9 CORK STREET

Dastan is pleased to announce the opening of "Perfect Strangers: Leyly Matine-Daftary and Manoucher Yektai" at Frieze No.9 Cork Street, London. The exhibition will be on view from September 5 through September 21, 2024.

Curated by Negar Azimi, editor in chief of Bidoun, this exhibition pairs the works of Manoucher Yektai and Leyly Matine-Daftary, two iconic Iranian artists of the modern period who each turn genre painting on their heads. Rarely seen works by both artists will be on view, comprising landscapes, portraits, and still lifes –Yektai's heavily impastoed canvases in dialogue with Matine-Daftary's flat, brightly rendered canvases.

Leyly Matine-Daftary (b. 1937, Tehran, Iran; d. 2007, Paris, France) was a pioneering Iranian artist of the modern era. In the 1950s, she studied painting and sculpture under Lucian Freud at the Slade School of Fine Arts. She returned to Iran in 1959 and lectured at the Fine Arts Faculty of Tehran University until 1965. She also began to make the work that she would come to be known for—flat brightly rendered canvases marked by a taut and deceptive simplicity. In their conjuring of the inner lives of everyday objects, they occasionally evoke Japanese Shijo painting. She tended toward people and still lifes in her art, and yet to characterize her as a mere figurative painter would be misleading; traditional ideas about pictorial space were jettisoned as she used blocks of color in both foreground and background to create new dimensionalities. Her works were exhibited in the second, third, and fifth Tehran biennials, taking an award at the fifth biennial. Her first solo exhibition was at Tehran's Borges Gallery in 1966. Matine-Daftary's works have been showcased in numerous solo and group exhibitions both inside and outside of Iran.

Manoucher Yektai (b. 1921, Tehran, Iran; d. 2019, New York City) was a Persian-American artist of the New York School whose painterly impasto works capture still lifes, portraits, and color fields with equal expressiveness. His intense, lyrical pieces move between naturalism and abstraction. Yektai worked on his paintings from the floor, a feature that contributed to their visual dynamism and channeled a mid-century sense of artistic freedom. Invigorating bursts of color, sharp slashes, and wedges of impasto register these expressive gestures. Recognized as a founding member of the New York School of Abstract Expressionism, Yektai's practice was shaped by interactions with contemporaries such as de Kooning, Pollock, Kline, and Rothko. Yet his celebration of quotidian beauty is elevated by a vivid blending of cultures. His work was equally informed by his studies in Paris—where he was influenced by the textures of Cezanne, Vuillard, and Bonnard—and by his Persian origins. Yektai studied at the École des Beaux-Arts and at the Atelier of André Lhote in Paris, as well as at the Art Students League of New York with Robert Hale.