

Maryam Hoseini
After You

21 November 2020 - 7 January 2021

In her first solo exhibition at the gallery, New York-based Iranian artist Maryam Hoseini presents paintings on geometrically shaped, vertically oriented panels that draw the viewer into these abstract containers. Within these spaces, Hoseini's equally abstracted figures – cast between the human and the animal – contest their confinement, displacement, and subjugation.

Hoseini's dramaturgical plotting of space, both in the composition of the paintings and in their placement in the gallery, yields dreamscapes where bodies float between abstraction and figuration. The large panels simultaneously evoke the shapes of abstracted human forms and familiar architectures, while the shadows cast against the walls highlight the theatricality and fluidity in their relationship to the viewer. One becomes strangely body-conscious encountering the work - simultaneously connecting to the human scale of the panels while being alienated by the flatness of their surfaces.

A sequence of small-scale paintings elaborates on the oneiric experience of this spatial encounter. It begins with an abstracted architecture in which a checkered floor is legible but other elements are vaguely defined, and Hoseini's signature warped bodies are set at a distance in a landscape. As the sequence progresses, the perspective of each successive painting gradually recedes to reveal more of the architecture while the figures diminish. As we study each painting, the effect is one of sharing our position as viewers with a ghostly third-person observer within the space of the paintings themselves – a voyeuristic experience of looking and being looked at as the definition of inside and outside shift.

This shifting of perspectival space within the paintings has implications on notions of historical time. As history is abstracted from its linear narratives, the landscapes and architecture depicted in the paintings hint at possible futures that evolve without the support of a coherent present, instead rising out of the cyclical ruins of the past. Some of Hoseini's hybrid figures appear headless in their scenes; others exceed the scale of the picture plane. Each contests the workings of power that would control them: though many coyly retain gendered characteristics, the headless figures resist a narrative reading that would determine their possibilities along the lines of identity; the large-scale figures burst out of the spatial bounds of their confinement. The paintings resist the gravity that would tether them to the past and hamper their visions of alternate futures. In the shifting terrain of these quasi-visionary realms, we meet the physicality of these paintings, at once defined by their material conditions and set free by the imagination the material forms contain.

Artist Biography

Maryam Hoseini (b. 1988, Tehran, Iran) earned a BA from Sooreh Art University in Tehran, Iran and dual MFA degrees from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and Bard College, NY, USA simultaneously (2016).

Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include: *After You*, Green Art Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2020); *Yes Sky!*, Rachel Uffner Gallery, NY, USA (2020); *Body Armor*, MoMA PS1, New York, USA (2018) and *Of Strangers and Parrots*, Rachel Uffner Gallery, NY, USA (2017). Recent group exhibitions include: *Fables of Resurrection*, Deborah Schamoni, Munich, Germany (2020); *Open Call*, The Shed, New York (2019); *Heartbreak*, curated by Tamara Chalabi and Paolo Colombo, Ruya Maps, Venice, Italy (2019); *Notebook*, curated by Joanne Greenbaum, 56 Henry, New York (2019); *Night at the Museum*, MOMA PS1, Long Island City, NY, USA (2016) among others.

She currently lives and works in New York.