



The Art Gorgeous



Sara Rahmanian's Paintings Contemplate The Ordinary And Mundane Aspects Of Life

As the artist has a series of shows opening up across the world

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The title for Sara Rahmanian's latest exhibition *Find a Needle and Let Her Die* at new art platform Across was inspired by the experience she had when a nurse thought the needle was broken during her Covid-19 vaccination. The Iranian-born

artist has spent the last year finishing her MFA at Yale, experiencing a strange kind of isolation as a recent immigrant in an environment very different to what she was previously familiar with. Within her work, Sara challenges the audience to contemplate the ordinary and mundane aspects of life, employing the first-person point of view so that her viewers can experience the emotions of the protagonist. As the artist has a series of shows opening up across the world, we spoke to her about her inspirations, her experiences over the past year and her hopes for the future.



When did you know you first wanted to become an artist?

Fortunately, I grow up in a family full of love and support for art. When I was four, I won the international UNESCO prize in children painting from Czechia country!

That prize was like a sign to my family that I have some talent in art. Since then, they took it seriously and supported me. On the other hand, when I got to 13 years old, I truly wanted to record everything that happened in my surroundings or imagine in my mind by drawing. Then I got this goal seriously and went to art schools and classes.

Where do you find your inspiration?

Life in its most ordinary, nature, even living in closed places without any special events will inspire me. I think the reason behind this is the philosophy of Iranian Islamic art. It is always like art to happen everywhere, from food to the cover of a book. With this way of thinking, which is absolutely careful, you can find art anywhere and at any time. You don't have to get dressed and enter the white cube to reach it. Art flows in life. Or it is looking for an approach and angle on life to find beauty. I also love watching documentaries about under the ocean or hanging out with the community that my world is surprisingly far away. Even sometimes, the people that we have disagreements entirely in any approach give me an idea. Persian proverbs are very inspirational to me too. Still, Anna Oberheim and a few other Russian and Polish female surrealists and post-war artists (Alina Szapocznikow, Toyen, and Emila Medková) who worked under Hitler's reign during the Nazi era have proven to be very inspiring to me.

You've recently moved from Iran to study for an MFA at Yale; what was this shift like, and how has it impacted your work?

It was complicated and challenging. Yale is an excellent chance for anyone about connection, facilities, and recourses, but we all lost most of them! My classmates and I used time as much as we can. And on top of it, immigration by itself is helping me observe my art process before this past two years and get to know more about my identity and region. It was and is a kind of frustrating process with so many lessons. But the achievement of working under the pressure of the MFA program and

immigration in covid circumstances was exciting and challenging. Still, I can't believe I am done with the program!



Dear voyeur by Sara Rahmanian

What was it like studying and making art in the middle of a pandemic?

The pandemic brought the world to a sudden halt, and just about everything had to be re-evaluated. Death lost its usual meaning, and I felt closer to the vicinity. At the

same time, suddenly, life became more valuable to me, which mitigated the vacuum in my work; the loneliness and isolation that quarantine imposed on me magnificently influenced me. It was also a tremendous challenge to re-evaluate exciting materials to work within a small space, which I believe was a long stride towards continuing to grow as an artist.



United state Every night by Sara Rahmanian

Can you tell me about your exhibition Find the Needle and let her Die?

The title is come from the day that I went to get the vaccine, but the needle broke. For 30 seconds, the nurse and I thought it was still in my arm. She was panicked, but I was surprisingly calm; her act of panic annoyed me more than the actual occasion. When she figured out everything is ok, I immediately left, but for many days, I thought, wow, I didn't feel scared because I heard the needle in the body is dangerous. I asked myself why you did not scare Sara?! That was the moment I realized how much I gave up on life! While I consciously know I will die, this accident reminds me of my mom. She is very religious; following her beliefs, she is always ready for death. I love this readiness for dying. I think this is the act of respecting the living. These two exhibitions are more about the solitude and limitation and the surreal atmosphere of it. In these paintings, objects can be read to have different meanings, and they transfer to something else. A hook could be a moustache or an octopus! Also, gender is not genuinely transparent and sometimes it is very vague.

Furthermore, these paintings are inspired by the curiosity, love, and creativity of spending a typical day for traditional middle eastern women. Which, in my opinion, in many cases, is very queer. Because there is no sign of individuality. Also, some paintings have erotic forms. I wanted to define pleasures away from conventional sexual spaces and objects. This is exactly what is typical for my culture among the mothers of my generation. The way of making love is not in the way that is common in cinema and media. It is different and creative, like poetic erotism. It happens somewhere you did not expect. I like to talk about love outside of the stereotypes, while at the same time I like to play the cliché in a creative way. Paintings want to talk about the limits of being forced through passion mixed with grief or sorrow in the imagination.



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You've also got some other shows coming up. Can you tell us about them?

Yes, I have a new upcoming solo show and another group exhibition. I like to work on surreal paintings and analyse one subject matter from a different perspective.

What are your plans and hopes for the future?

I plan to stay in New Haven and make art as much as I can! I have millions of ideas and narrations and stories to draw and make to tell. I wish I could make and create faster! Also, I am teaching a creativity class!