

NICODIM

Shoora Majedian: DAMAVAND

Nicodim Upstairs, Los Angeles

May 7 – June 18, 2022



Shoora Majedian
Weaving the Red, 2021

When a flow is suppressed, an eruption is inevitable. The intensity of the imminent burst of Damavand embodies a sudden motion and vibration, an eventual change. The fire sparks in my fingers, the water ripples in my eyes, and they merge with my brush. My brush is Damavand; it is ready to blast. It is prepared to form a metamorphosis.

— Shoora Majedian

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Mount Damavand, an active stratovolcano beneath Tehran, is the most elevated peak in Western Asia. Its cultural significance stems from Persian mythology and the text *The Shahnameh*, an epic poem written by Ferdowsi between 977 and 1010 CE. Mount Damavand has thus come to represent Iranian resistance against despotism and foreign rule in Persian poetry and literature. Geologically it is a paradox—the flowing lava inside the volcano is contrasted with thick layers of ice and occasional mist that blanket it.

Shoora Majedian's artistic practice mirrors this divergence. She examines personal memories while also considering both the emancipation and restrictions of her figures and the spaces they inhabit in her paintings. A comparative language emerges in the works, influenced by her embodied experience pre-and-post-migration and her own childhood—she emigrated to Canada after spending her first thirty years in Iran. Painting from memory rather than reference allows Majedian to experiment with the fluidity of the medium through color and mark making, centering herself more distinctly inside the worlds of her canvases.

Though Majedian's subject begins with moments distinct to her heritage, she also includes identifiers and utilitarian objects that are immediately relatable. Most of Majedian's practice starts off this way, as she negotiates a comparative storytelling pulled from and related to her past and present. *Association With Fire* (2019) brings to light the artist's relationship with her grandfather, a baker, who she describes as a religious man, ever-fearful of the afterlife. Majedian created two versions of this scene, a work on paper and a large work on canvas, each loosely depicting his flatbread bakery in Tehran. Heat envelops the composition of both works, the elder man's form absorbing into the intense smoke emanating from a burning brick oven. Majedian captures the labor of the bakery in conversation with visual articulations of hell through fire and smoke, sin and eternity.

It is the small, uncomfortable moments that excite Majedian. Where some find security in the routine aspects of life, she sees uneasiness and complication. Born during the second year of the Iran-Iraq war, the artist characterizes her upbringing as one where multiple sociological, historical, and political crises converged. Her paintings unpack the complexity of what she calls her "social memories" of that time, living in an immediately post-revolution Iran. While each painting tells a distinct story, Majedian balances relatability, shock, and discomfort, to pose questions about generational memory combined with painterly experimentation.

Text by Rachel Keller

Shoora Majedian (born Tehran, 1981) emigrated to Toronto in 2011, and now lives and works in Vancouver, BC. She spent most of her childhood in Iran living with her grandparents, who are often subjects in her work. Raised within a religious society, Majedian uses her painting practice to dissect and interrogate accepted norms within Persian and Muslim culture. Now having a chance to view her adolescence from a distance (both through age and geography), her practice references the absurdity and contradictions she experienced growing up as a woman living in a Muslim country. Majedian mainly paints from memory as a way to construct individual and collective narratives that shed light on the socio-political elements of her heritage.

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Shoora Majedian

° Born 1981, Tehran, Iran

Lives and works in Vancouver, Canada

Education

2021 MFA, Emily Carr University, Vancouver

2018 Post Baccalaureate, SAIC, Chicago

2009 MA, University College of Fine Arts Tehran

2005 BA, Alzahra University, Tehran

Selected Solo Exhibition

2022 *DAMAVAND*, Nicodim Los Angeles

Awards and Residencies

2022 Artist Residency at Griffin Art Projects, Vancouver Canada

CENTRUM RESIDENCY PROGRAMS, Fort Worden WA

2021 Greenshields Elizabeth Foundation Award

2019 Entrance Scholarship Emily Carr University

2017 Merit Scholarship SAIC

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