

M+B

ARGHAVAN KHOSRAVI

At Her Fingertips

April 27 – June 15, 2024



ARGHAVAN KHOSRAVI

Khosravi's studio practice mobilizes visual art as a vehicle for cultural transformation. She investigates the aesthetics of ancient Persian miniature paintings, which were originally used to illustrate folkloric texts. Typically, the only women they portray have a subservient or secondary role, lacking agency and social significance. Khosravi's paintings take a conscious look at how the value system transmitted by that iconography continues to shape Iranian gender politics today. The most noticeable visual characteristic of Khosravi's paintings is their multi-dimensionality. Constructed from a complex scaffolding of cut and painted wooden panels, they offer a constantly shifting perceptual experience. Visual motifs such as black plumes, rockets, and cages reference corrupted economic and political systems, while female bodies are often depicted as being shackled or with their mouths sewn shut.

Arghavan Khosravi earned an MFA in painting from the Rhode Island School of Design after completing the studio art program at Brandeis University. Khosravi previously earned a BFA in Graphic Design from Tehran Azad University and an MFA in Illustration from the University of Tehran. She has exhibited both nationally and internationally in solo exhibitions at the Rose Art Museum, Waltham, MA; Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, NH; Koenig Gallery, Berlin, DE; Stems Gallery, Brussels, BE; Kavi Gupta Gallery, Chicago, IL; Carl Kostyal, London, UK; M+B Gallery, Los Angeles, CA; Rachel Uffner Gallery, New York, NY; among others. Recent group exhibitions include *Uncombed*, *Unforeseen*, *Unconstrained*, an official collateral exhibition of the 59th Venice Biennale; as well as exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Yinchuan, CH; Orlando Museum of Art, Orlando, FL; Newport Art Museum, Newport, RI; and Provincetown Art Association and Museum, MA; among others. Khosravi's work is in the collections of the Rose Art Museum, Waltham, MA; The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts Museum; Philadelphia, PA; Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, NH; Newport Art Museum, Newport, RI; and the Rhode Island School of Design Museum, Providence, RI. The artist's work is part of collections at The Rose Art Museum, The PAFA Museum, The Newport Art Museum and The Rhode Island School of Design Museum. Residencies include The Currier Museum of Art, Manchester, NH; The Fine Arts Work Center, Provincetown, MA; the Studios at MassMoCA, North Adams, MA; Monson Arts, Monson, ME; and Residency Unlimited, Brooklyn, NY. She is a 2019 recipient of the Joan Mitchell Foundation's Painters & Sculptors Grant and a 2017 recipient of the Walter Feldman Fellowship.



ARGHAVAN KHOSRAVI

At Her Fingertips

M+B is pleased to present *At Her Fingertips*, an exhibition of works by Arghavan Khosravi. This is the artist's second solo show with the gallery. The exhibition opens on April 27 and will run through June 15, 2024.

In Arghavan Khosravi's exhibition, cultural narratives and political commentary converge within the intricate layers of her mixed-media compositions. Employing multiple techniques, Khosravi integrates trompe l'oeil effects, elements from Persian miniatures like architectural forms and flattened perspectives, and diverse materials including threads and fabrics. Throughout the multi-panel works, she weaves Persian motifs with surreal iconography, capturing the tension between East and West, past and present. Her work intertwines religious and secular imagery with a dreamlike quality that pierces the veil between reality and fantasy. The contradictions inherent in her art provide a profound commentary on the dualities Khosravi navigated growing up in Iran, where she experienced freedom in private spaces while conforming to strict governmental morality laws in public. This personal history enriches her pieces, making them universally relevant.

"Our Hair as a Weapon" and *The Bird* both resonate deeply with the *Zan, Zendegi, Azadi (Woman, Life, Freedom)* movement, which gained international attention following the death of Mahsa Amini at the hands of Iran's morality police. In response, women across Iran defiantly removed their hijabs in protest. These works transform human hair into arrows of resistance. *The Bird* further explores themes of contradiction, featuring both the symbol of a bird—an emblem of freedom, yet often caged—and delicate gold threads attached to a shackle ball, highlighting the tension between liberation and confinement.

The Black Box focuses on the lines between restraint and liberation through the striking juxtaposition of traditional Persian miniature aesthetics with modern symbolic elements. A central female figure, face obscured by a stark black box—a recurring motif in Khosravi's work—is bound by chains yet set against a backdrop of vibrant scenes from Iranian paintings, symbolizing the historical and ongoing struggles for female autonomy. This piece subtly interweaves broader socio-political upheavals into its narrative fabric.

At Her Fingertips, the work that the exhibition gains its title from, delves into the dynamics of visibility and suppression, utilizing imagery of black chains and golden keys. This artwork contrasts confinement with the potential for freedom, with the dangling key serving as a powerful metaphor for liberation. Both the juxtaposition of gold in the threads coming from her hands and light emanating from her fingers against predominately black tones and the barbed wire that as it branches out towards other parts of the canvas turns into the branches of blossoming trees underscores a thematic glimmer of hope amidst oppression. Khosravi's adept use of mixed media here articulates a nuanced commentary on the complex pursuit of liberation and the layered experiences of constraint.

The exhibition navigates complex social narratives, blending the historical with the contemporary to highlight ongoing struggles for autonomy and identity. In the work's reflection of gender, power, and repression, Khosravi is able to foster a deeper understanding of the transformative role of cultural expression in both personal and political realms.

M+B



Arghavan Khosravi | *At Her Fingertips*, 2023
acrylic on canvas over shaped wood panels, acrylic on wood panel, elastic cord, metallic thread, Styrofoam
80 1/2 x 48 x 5 3/4 inches (204.5 x 121.9 x 14.6 cm) | (AKh.23.004.80)



Arghavan Khosravi
At Her Fingertips, 2023
(detail)



Arghavan Khosravi
At Her Fingertips, 2023
(detail)



Arghavan Khosravi | *The Black Box*, 2023
acrylic on canvas over shaped wood panels, wood cutouts, poplar frame, elastic cord, Styrofoam
94 x 113 x 12 1/4 inches (238.8 x 287 x 31.1 cm) | (AKh.23.001.94)



Arghavan Khosravi
The Black Box, 2023
(detail)



Arghavan Khosravi
The Black Box, 2023
(detail)

M+B



Arghavan Khosravi | *The Black Curtain*, 2023
acrylic on canvas over shaped wood panels, elastic cord, Styrofoam
88 1/2 x 41 1/2 x 5 inches (224.8 x 105.4 x 12.7 cm) | (AKh.23.002.88)



Arghavan Khosravi
The Black Curtain, 2023
(detail)



Arghavan Khosravi
The Black Curtain, 2023
(detail)



Arghavan Khosravi | *"Our Hair as a Weapon"*, 2023
acrylic on canvas over shaped wood panels, acrylic on wood, human hair, thread, metal buckles, and leather
81 x 34 x 5 inches (205.7 x 86.4 x 12.7 cm) | (AKh.23.008.81)



Arghavan Khosravi
"Our Hair as a Weapon", 2023
(detail)



Arghavan Khosravi
"Our Hair as a Weapon", 2023
(detail)



Arghavan Khosravi | *Fractured Spaces*, 2023
acrylic on canvas over shaped wood panels, acrylic on wood panel, elastic cord, metallic thread, Styrofoam, chain
75 x 76 1/2 x 6 inches (190.5 x 194.3 x 15.2 cm) | (AKh.23.003.75)



Arghavan Khosravi
Fractured Spaces, 2023
(detail)



Arghavan Khosravi
Fractured Spaces, 2023
(detail)



Arghavan Khosravi | *The Flight*, 2023
acrylic on canvas over shaped wood panels, elastic cord
97 1/2 x 49 x 5 inches (247.7 x 124.5 x 12.7 cm) | (AKh.23.005.97)



Arghavan Khosravi
The Flight, 2023
(detail)



Arghavan Khosravi
The Flight, 2023
(detail)



Arghavan Khosravi
The Flight, 2023
(detail)

M+B



Arghavan Khosravi | *The Bird*, 2023
acrylic on wood panel, human hair, metal buckles, leather, chain, expanded polystyrene foam, and metal nails
78 x 21 1/2 x 3 inches (198.1 x 54.6 x 7.6 cm) | (AKh.23.007.78)



Arghavan Khosravi
The Bird, 2023
(detail)



Arghavan Khosravi
The Bird, 2023
(detail)

M+B



Arghavan Khosravi | *Resting in Shadows*, 2023
acrylic on canvas over shaped wood panels, elastic cord, feather
77 x 40 1/2 x 4 inches (195.6 x 102.9 x 10.2 cm) | (AKh.23.006.77)



Arghavan Khosravi
Resting in Shadows, 2023
(detail)



Arghavan Khosravi
Resting in Shadows, 2023
(detail)