

Counter Narratives: Geographies of the Unfamiliar



August 4 - August 17, 2018

Marisa Adesman
Christian Berman
Sanié Shoab Bokhari
Ada Goldfeld
Molly Kaderka
Arghavan Khosravi
Rebecca Levitan
Saif Mhaisen
Gina Gwen Palacios
Ohad Sarfaty.

Curated by Sara Reisman

Asya Geisberg Gallery is pleased to announce its late summer exhibition *Counter Narratives: Geographies of the Unfamiliar* featuring ten recent graduates of Rhode Island School of Design's MFA Program in Painting. With a diversity of aesthetics and approaches to painting as a practice, the artists in the exhibition represent a unique range of possibilities afforded by painting. A number of artists in the exhibition use photography as a starting point – referencing family photos, images of quotidian objects and interiors – in order to document origin stories, political struggle, and personal journeys that have led to unexpected places and experiences. Some of the artworks in the exhibition exploit photography to surrealistic ends, rendering unknown landscapes to make sense of the broader world. Hailing from Pakistan, Israel, Iran, Palestine, Mexico, and the United States, the artists whose works are featured in *Counter Narratives* weave together contrasting stories, reflecting on the potentials of mark making as a form of communication and connectivity.

Starting from a place of realism, Ada Goldfeld and Ohad Sarfaty work from photographs of family life – Goldfeld's photographs are still lives of her family – herself and her mother – in their home, and current events, whereas Sarfaty is working from images of family members from previous generations (as a form of indirect self-portraiture), whose lives were shaped by forced migrations. Gina Gwen Palacios' approach to painting is both conventional and experimental – several works begin with cardboard that she scores to create patterns and images in relief – based on family portraits taken near the U.S.-Mexico border. Incorporating realism and fantastic visuals, Arghavan Khosravi, Sanié Shoab Bokhari, and Marisa Adesman represent feminine perspectives that collectively offer worldly and domestic vantage points, from interior spaces – from under the dining room table, to postmodern architectural compositions that reinterpret the conventional structure of the canvas. Christian Berman and Rebecca Levitan work with familiar objects and aesthetics – a telephone, costume jewelry, textiles, pixelation – to render them unfamiliar yet dreamlike, creating a sense of *deja vu*.

Seemingly anomalous within the group of recent MFA graduates, Molly Kaderka and Saif Mhaisen's artworks reside on opposite ends of the spectrum, in terms of scale and detail. Mhaisen's *Fletcher Thermostat* is an unflinching portrait of an object that was located in his RISD studio, and Kaderka's *Abyss* is a print that suggests forms as dramatic as an abyss at an unknown scale, or the curved edge of a planet, raising questions about the global position that we're in.

-- Sara Reisman