

HAMZIANPOUR & KIA

Farbod Elkaei

Double Take

June 17 - July 08, 2023

Opening reception: Saturday, June 17, 4:00 - 8:00 pm

Hamzianpour & Kia is proud to present *Double Take*, a solo show by Farbod Elkaei. This is Elkaei's first solo exhibition in Los Angeles; it consists of fifteen works created over the course of the past few months, and will be on view from June 17th until July 8th, 2023.

Like a long line of artists before him, Farbod Elkaei aspires to delineate nature; but his approach is situated in something rarely found in nature: geometry. The deployment of geometry's rigor to depict the most sinuous of subjects is one of the many contradictions that power his work and inspire the title of this show. The sharp lines, lucid colors, acute angles and scissor-like precision of Elkaei's forms cut against the monochromatic and/or fluid backgrounds, creating a tension that eventually brings everything full circle -- by inviting the viewer to identify organic figures within the compositions. As such, the paintings occupy a self-generated space between figuration and pure abstraction. Within this space the viewer is prompted to pause, and look again - to perform a literal double-take. In the process Elkaei disrupts and exposes the ever-increasing pace with which we pass by vistas in nature as well as works of art in an exhibition gallery.

Another sense of the show's title emerges in Elkaei's practice of representing nature in ways that are not grounded in tangible optic reality -- but rather flow from his own personal, subjective and perhaps deeper 'second take' when perceiving and understanding the world around him. Nature becomes filtered not only through the artist's eyes but through his affinity for the oblique and the abstract. It is as though he is identifying, exposing and edifying the underlying patterns and principles that engender natural forms. The result is a marriage of the sensual with the rational, an exaltation of the mathematics of form, perhaps even a hagiography of nature. But where ecstatic depictions of nature in art can lean toward the transcendental, Elkaei's work goes in the opposite direction -- indicating an inseparability of the natural world from its foundational origin, suggesting an immanence rather than a transcendence.

Many of Elkaei's paintings are, in one sense, lyrical odes to nature's most elusive of elements: Light. As with the very tradition of landscape painters like Turner, Constable, and Church, he pays tribute to this most fundamental force and its sublime power; but he does so not by trying to capture and re-create its effect on objects in the landscape; instead, he turns light itself into a landscape; a liminal, luminous space wherein light refracts, disperses and (sometimes) reconverges across a multitude of axes. This lends the paintings a kinetic playfulness as well as an otherworldly feel, like portals into an subcutaneous universe of pure, rapturous incandescent energy.

While still in school Elkaei found himself drawn to abstraction early on; as his instructors tried to push him towards figurative representation, he responded by embracing geometry and the hard-edge approach that defines much of his work today. That hard-edge style sets him apart as unique among his contemporaries, and at the same time connects him back to a tradition that emerged in the west in the 1960s. Elkaei counts Frank Stella among his inspirations,, and indeed it is easy to see the visual affinity between the work of the two artists. Stella's paintings, and the hard-edge movement in general, are known for economy of form, fullness of color, smooth surface planes, and impersonal execution. Yet Elkaei's paintings are anything but impersonal. Rather, they are expressions of his own particular and very intimate relationship with nature and its codes of conduct.

More recently, Elkaei's work has reflected his love for his home country Iran, via the presence of the red, green and white colors of the Iranian flag throughout his latest pieces. There is also a greater dynamism to the current pieces, reflecting Elkaei's newly-reclaimed energy after a quiet period of reflection in 2022. Rather than represent a static moment, the paintings pulsate with the energy of incessant motion that underlies all of nature and the infinite ripple effect of every movement, every action in the universe. That dynamism is also an expression of Elkaei's own rigorous work ethic – his practice of working on several pieces during any given timeframe, creating etudes and tirelessly experimenting with color and shape.

Farbod Elkaei was born in 1992 in Tehran, where he continues to live. He received his BFA from Sooreh Art University, and has been exhibiting paintings and sculptures in solo and group shows since 2006. Elkaei has participated in various collective exhibitions and collaborative projects in Iran, Sweden, the UAE, and Portugal.

For more information, please contact info@hamzianpourandkia.com or call (917) 751 8893.
5225 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 212, Los Angeles, CA 90036
hamzianpourandkia.com