

Meliksetian MB Briggs

Shagha Ariannia
It's a Date

Organized by Luana Hildebrandt

May 28 - July 18, 2020

By Appointment



Meliksetian | Briggs is pleased to present *It's a Date*, an exhibition of new paintings by Los Angeles-based artist **Shagha Ariannia**. The exhibition is organized by Luana Hildebrandt and marks the artist's first solo exhibition at the gallery.

In this new body of work, the multidisciplinary artist Shagha Ariannia continues to engage in the political paradigm present in her earlier video installations, choosing, this time, to examine the politics of the body. Stemming from ideas drawn from a collection of literary texts layered over the artist's personal intimate framework, this new series of paintings form a non sequitur narrative, the artist's own collection of dispersed experiences that reflect upon the female body and its desires in relation to culturally encoded power dynamics.

Born and raised in Iran, a country with a rich poetic tradition, Ariannia's artistic interests were rooted early on in poetry and language. Influenced by her permanent move to Los Angeles in 2001, Ariannia's practice makes use of the process of translation as a way to playfully evoke the stark contrasts between the two cultures.

The artist chooses to title each work in the exhibition with a verse reminiscent of Kathy Acker's *Persian Poems*, a feminist literary work that takes a stance on poetic license and its use as a form of cultural censorship. In the painting *a chair and a room and a window and a window and a window and a window*, 2020, Ariannia alludes to one of Acker's poems, in which, via the process of purposeful mistranslation from English to Farsi, the message is depleted of any sexual connotation. The meaning is altered completely, each body part translated to an object. Mimicking the same juxtaposition of the two texts, the exhibition provocatively places raw moments of eroticism next to depictions of interiors, pointing out how sexuality is culturally expressed or repressed. Throughout the exhibition, forms fluidly morph into one another: spreading legs become an open book, a rug becomes a leg, in a game of free association. In contrast, the painting *It's a Date*, 2020 produced recently during quarantine, interrupts this interplay, humorously filtering our current times: social distancing from personal desires.

Text by Luana Hildebrandt, May 2020

Born and raised in Iran, Shagha Ariannia (b.1984) is an interdisciplinary visual artist. Her works have been exhibited at the Vincent Price Art Museum, Los Angeles, the University of California, Irvine; LAXART, Los Angeles; 18th Street Art Center, Santa Monica; Commonwealth and Council, Los Angeles; the Torrance Art Museum, Torrance, CA, Galerie der Hochschule, Braunschweig, Germany and Gallery MOMO, Cape Town. She received her Master of Fine Arts from the California Institute of the Arts / CalArts and Bachelor of Arts from the University of California, Irvine. She is a 2016 recipient for the California Community Foundation Fellowship.