



[Blue Noon] Mehdi Chitsazha

September 8 – 22, 2023

SARAI Gallery is pleased to present Blue Noon, Mehdi Chitsazha's new solo exhibition of oil paintings and first solo collaboration with SARAI Gallery. Blue Noon opens on Friday, September 8, and it will be on view until September 22, 2023.

Mehdi Chitsazha (b. 1973, Iran) has been preoccupied with the notions of the urban environment and modernism for the past twenty years, exploring the social and urban realms through various media including writing, making documentary films, and, more recently, painting. He is particularly interested in revisiting these spaces through the lens of childhood. Nostalgic, richly textured, and sometimes claustrophobic, Blue Noon is a tapestry of contrasts and contradictions we often visit in a typical aging neighborhood in populated cities in many developing countries: a rather tight array of old and newly reconstructed building facades of various heights and the traces of time that appear like bluish veins running underneath plastered walls and through brick gaps; shiny stone finishes versus bare bricks, humble rectangles versus elaborate window panes, and the utility poles and wiring that visually connect all this wild variety caused by an unstoppable urban sprawl. The only presence belongs to little figures, a lonely child or a stray dog wandering around through chaotic, winding alleys and streets. Their less-than-excited expressions seem to channel the drowsy mood of long middays many youths living in these busy neighborhoods tend to be familiar with.

Initially aiming to recreate the atmosphere he has subconsciously retained from a childhood spent in those allies - what the artist would refer to as a sort of "mysterious reality" - Chitsazha would see new dimensions being revealed to him as the series developed: "It's like standing on the boundary between the form and narrative of a painting, between modern and pre-modern, between imagination and reality, between the vulgar and the sublime." Ultimately, he discovered the transitional quality of these spaces between 'home' and 'the streets out there' to be charged with fascination and an ideal vessel for introspection and creative expression.

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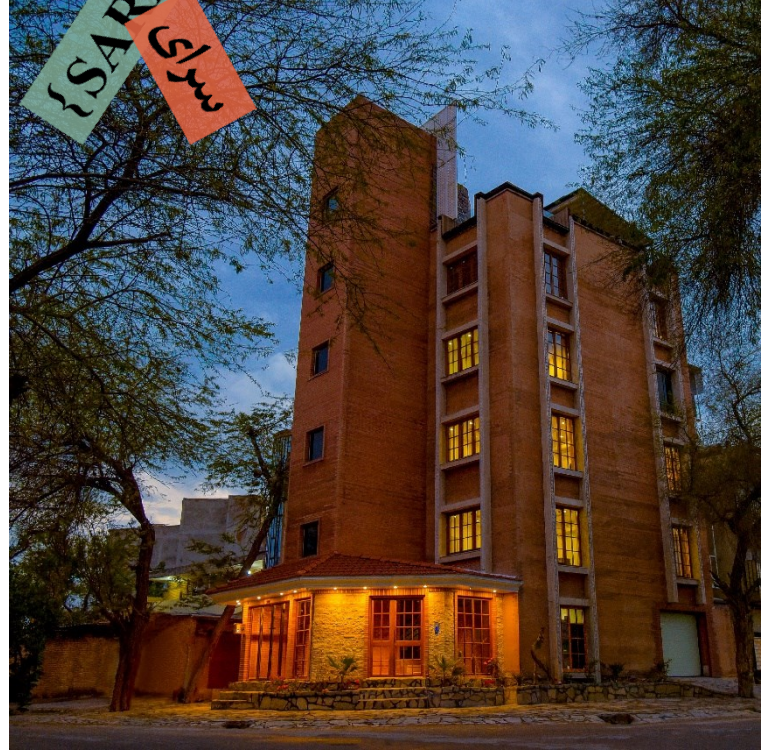
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SARAI Gallery is a contemporary gallery specializing in Middle Eastern art. Founded in 2018, SARAI Gallery represents bright emerging and young regional talents including Iranian and Pakistani artists internationally, helping them achieve their potential both in recognition and value by organizing exhibitions and joint events, and publishing works by artists. Moreover, since 2020, SARAI has introduced Khor Art Initiative, an annual art prize for local artists, reviewed by a high-profile international jury. SARAI Gallery has been participating in top art fairs around the world including Art Dubai 2020-21 and 2023, The Armory Show 2021-2023 (winning the Presents Booth Prize in 2021), KIAF 2021-22, Abu Dhabi Art 2021-2022 and 2023, Untitled Art Miami Beach 2022 and 2023 (announced), Expo Chicago 2023, Art Brussels 2023, Taipei Dangdai 2023, and Art SG 2024 (announced) among others, making it one of the youngest galleries to appear on such competitive platforms. SARAI Gallery's main exhibition space is located in Mahshahr, Iran, where we host shows throughout the year, while under Karavan Projects, SARAI organizes collaborative shows with selected galleries and institutions at home, particularly in Tehran, as well as in major art capitals across the globe including Cromwell Place, London. Our LA-based office handles US and international affairs.



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Mehdi Chitsazha (b. 1973, Iran) received his BA in painting from Shahed University Faculty of Art and his MA in art research from Tehran University of Art. As an adolescent, his interest in literature and cinema initially led him to join the Young Cinema Society during high school. It was only later that an encounter with an art teacher with a special approach to teaching aroused his curiosity and interest in painting. His painterly explorations would later prove instrumental in making an animation called “The Trout”. Publishing several articles and making documentary films, the urban environment, modernism, and artistic identity have more or less defined Mehdi Chitsazha’s main intellectual and artistic trajectory for the past twenty years, particularly the social and urban realms as seen and lived from the childhood point of view. His paintings of children and stray dogs wandering around in the chaotic, winding alleys and roads rendered in oils seem to represent the innocent gaze and state of mind in these environments.



Mehdi Chitsazha

Chitsazha has exhibited extensively both in Iran and abroad including the National Museum of Fine Art in Kyrgyzstan (2003), and the Modern Art Museum in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia (2022). His work is due to appear at Art SG 2024, Singapore, as a part of a group presentation by SARAI Gallery.