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SARAI Gallery / The Pardeh-Khān

A Group Exhibition Curated By Nirvana Parvizimotlagh In Collaboration With Aabee Bleue Project

June 6 – July 11, 2026 / Los Angeles

SARAI Gallery is pleased to announce [The Pardeh-Khān](#), a group exhibition bringing together four contemporary Iranian artists whose practices explore the ways images construct, transmit, and transform meaning. Curated by Nirvana Parvizimotlagh in collaboration with [Aabee Bleue Project](#), the exhibition takes its title from the historical figure of the *Pardeh-khān*—the narrator who stood before a painted canvas and guided audiences through stories, directing attention, shaping interpretation, and connecting disparate scenes through the act of narration.

Drawing on this tradition, *The Pardeh-Khān* considers curating itself as a form of storytelling. Rather than presenting fixed conclusions, the exhibition foregrounds the relationships that emerge between artworks and the shifting meanings generated through their proximity. In an era defined by the rapid circulation of images and the fragmentation of narratives across digital platforms, the exhibition asks how stories are constructed, transmitted, and received—and what ethical responsibilities accompany acts of interpretation.

The exhibition unfolds across two distinct spaces, conceived as two contemporary “pardehs.” Each room develops its own visual and conceptual language through the dialogue between the artists’ works.

The first chapter, *The Face and the Flesh*, brings together paintings by [Orkideh Torabi](#) and [Ali Zakeri](#). While both artists examine representations of masculinity, they approach the subject from markedly different perspectives. Torabi employs humor, exaggeration, and references to Persian visual traditions to reveal the performative dimensions of male identity. Zakeri’s figures, often drawn from the world of boxing, evoke endurance, vulnerability, and the emotional weight concealed beneath physical strength. Installed in conversation, their works offer complementary and contrasting reflections on performance, authority, and fragility.

The second chapter, *The Structure and the Flow*, presents works by [Parham Peyvandi](#) and [Shima Faridani](#). Peyvandi’s compositions draw on memories of northern Iranian landscapes partially obscured by architecture and urban planning, creating spaces marked by distance, containment, and controlled visibility. In contrast, Faridani’s paintings dissolve distinctions between body and landscape, interior and exterior, permanence and transformation. Together, their practices examine the tension between stability and change, structure and becoming.

Throughout the exhibition, meaning emerges not from individual works alone but from the spaces between them. Like the traditional *Pardeh-khāni*, the exhibition does not seek to resolve interpretation. Instead, it invites viewers to navigate a series of relationships—between image and narrative, performance and vulnerability, structure and fluidity—and to construct their own pathways through the stories that unfold.

The Pardeh-Khān is organized by SARAI Gallery in collaboration with Aabee Bleue Project and will be presented at the Aabee Bleue Project space in Los Angeles from June 6 through July 11, 2026 (1700 S Santa Fe Ave, Unit 1626, Los Angeles, CA 90021, United States).

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Instagram handles:

[@saradipour.art](#)

[@parhampeyvandi](#)

[@aabeebleueproject](#)

[@alizakerii](#)

[@shimafaridani](#)

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Curatorial Statement

Nirvana Parvizimotlagh

Before books, there was the voice. Before the voice, there was the image held up in firelight, and someone standing before it, deciding where to look.

The Naqqāl, the Iranian oral storyteller, did not preserve stories by fixing them. Stories stayed alive because they changed, reshaped by each telling, each room, each particular silence in the audience. From this came the Pardeh-khān: a figure who stood before a painted canvas and moved the viewer's attention like water, deciding what to linger on, what to let go, how one wound connected to another. The image was never complete without that body standing beside it, narrating.

This is how I understand the act of curating. Not as the arrangement of finished meanings, but as a form of standing-beside. The works came to me first as images, encountered through the galleries representing the artists, through the slow accumulation of looking, and only later through research and language. The path did not pass through direct conversation with their makers. I came to them sideways, through the silence that exists between a work and its representation. Roland Barthes wrote that the death of the author is the birth of the reader, but perhaps what he meant is softer than it sounds. It is not that the artist disappears. It is that the work, once released into the world, becomes capable of meaning more than any single intention can hold.

We live now in a moment when images move faster than understanding. Stories are lifted from their sources, repeated through different mouths, transformed by the platforms that carry them. In this condition, choosing how to tell a story, choosing what to place next to what, is not a neutral act. The question of narration has become a question of ethics.

The exhibition unfolds across two rooms. Two pardehs. Each space is its own painted canvas. Each constructs its own world through the relationship between the works inside it, not through statement, but through proximity, friction, resonance.

PARDEH I: The Face and the Flesh

Orkideh Torabi and Ali Zakeri both look at men. They do not see the same thing. Torabi approaches from the side, through humor, through the exaggeration of Persian caricature and visual tradition. Her men perform. They are theatrical and emotionally fragile beneath their posturing, caught mid-gesture in the theater of their own authority. Zakeri's figures look powerful at first. But spend time with them and something else comes through: exhaustion, a heaviness that has nothing to do with muscle. His boxing scenes are not about sport. They are about what it takes to keep standing.

Placed together, these two bodies of work expose masculinity from opposite directions at once, one through the comedy of performance, one through the weight of endurance. The meaning of each shifts in the presence of the other.



PARDEH II: The Structure and the Flow

Parham Peyvandi builds walls. Not from hostility, but from memory, the memory of northern landscapes of Iran glimpsed behind architecture, of nature held at a distance by the lines of urban design. His spaces feel controlled, almost held in. Something outside is visible, but cannot be entered.

Shima Faridani dissolves them. Her paintings refuse the boundary between body and landscape, between interior and exterior, between what a form is and what it is becoming. Nothing in her work stays fixed long enough to be named. It is always in the process of turning into something else.

To stand between these two artworks, between Peyvandi's contained distance and Faridani's continuous becoming, is to feel the tension between wanting to hold the world still and knowing that it will not stay.

Like the Pardeh-khān standing before the painted canvas, this exhibition does not deliver conclusions. It stands beside the works and points. The meaning lives in the space between them, in the conversation between performance and vulnerability, structure and flow, the face we show and the flesh underneath. What the viewer carries out is their own.