

# TEMPLON



NAZANIN POUYANDEH

*FRIEZE*, April 2025

## Sous l'étoffe du monde Templon

23 April 2025 to 7 June 2025



Galerie Templon is proud to present the first exhibition in Belgium of talented Iranian painter Nazanin Pouyandeh. The show, an ambitious foray into her creative universe, centres on fifteen canvases in varying formats primarily created between 2024 and 2025. All works engage with the central theme of her practice: painting as a means of expressing pleasure and emancipation.

"Beneath the Fabric of the World" positions painting as an act of fulfilment, liberation and, consequently, resistance. "Painting is the supreme act, an act of total and joyful freedom, an act that will outlive humanity, a means of combating the power of living beings by transcending them," explains Nazanin Pouyandeh. The new series features a range of female figures, active participants in scenes that are as complex as they are ambiguous. Her characters emerge within carefully arranged settings, from ruined cities to painters' studios and hushed living rooms. The compositions are marked by a profusion of vibrant colours, with visually captivating motifs - floral, geometric or tribal. Unexpected symbols are juxtaposed as religious icons rub shoulders with African masks, the gleaming blades of daggers, human skulls and art books, their pages left carelessly open. Draped materials and rugs reveal a world full of meaning.

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Nazanin Pouyandeh's practice is deeply rooted in her personal history – she was forced to flee Iran at the age of 18 after the politically motivated murder of her father – and inspired by the experience of living in exile as well as centuries of global art history. Influences that flourish in the form of the sort of remarkable *mis en abyme* reminiscent of the Flemish School and European surrealism. There are references to Shungas, the famous Japanese erotic prints, as well as the works of Matisse and Bonnard. The realistic scenes devised by the artist gradually move away from all tangible veracity. She takes the viewer on a dreamlike, sensory journey that functions as an exploration of the mechanisms of survival and resistance in these uncertain times.

Born in Teheran in 1981, Nazanin Pouyandeh was admitted to the École des Beaux-Arts of Paris in 2000 where she joined painter Pat Andrea's studio. Her technical virtuosity takes the veristic dimension of her painting to new heights, without, however, inviting in hyperrealism. Nazanin Pouyandeh draws on all available sources of imagery at a time when the boundaries between the arts and different eras and cultures have become permeable. These convergences, such as the way she plays with disproportionate figures, create a sense of formal strangeness that is strongly redolent of dreams. Nazanin Pouyandeh interrogates collective representations of women, as well as themes of eroticism and violence.

Her work has been shown in a variety of solo and group exhibitions, including at the Musée Paul Valéry, Sète (2025), Centre d'Art La Malmaison, Cannes (2025), Fondation GGL, Montpellier (2024), Belgrade City Museum, Serbia (2024), MO.CO Montpellier Contemporain (2023), Fondation d'Entreprise Francès, Senlis (2023), Galerie Municipale Julio Gonzalez, Arcueil (2022), Musée du Quai Branly – Jacques Chirac, Paris (2021), Fondation Salomon, Annecy (2020), Le Suquet des Artistes, Cannes (2019), Centre d'Art Contemporain, Meymac (2018), *acentmetresducentredumonde* contemporary art centre, Perpignan (2017) and Centre Art & Culture, Cotonou, Benin (2017). She has won numerous awards, such as the Fabbrica Culturale Casell'arte, Venaco, Corsica (2020), Prix Spécial Erro as part of the Antoine Marin prize (2008) and Prix Spécial Erro as part of the Antoine Marin prize (2003). Her work recently entered the collections of the Musée National d'Art Moderne Centre Pompidou Paris and MOCO Montpellier Contemporain.