

## GAZELLI ART HOUSE



Naqsh Collective, Akka Artwork, 2019  
Image credit: Nabil Qutaineh

### *bahith (seeker)*

Amir Khojasteh, Basma Alsharif, Farhad Farzaliyev, Ghasemi Brothers, Naqsh Collective, Orkhan Huseynov

Private View: Thursday 4th July, 6–8pm

Exhibition: 5th July–11th August, 2019

#bahith

Gazelli Art House is proud to present *bahith (seeker in Arabic)*, the first exhibition of a series that will look at the historic identities of countries undergoing significant socio-political and economic change.

The show opens with *Ouroboros*, a film developed by Basma Alsharif around the concept of the 'eternal return' and that life is a cycle of recurrences. Influenced by the artist's experience of what is happening to the Gaza Strip, Alsharif forces what it means to witness atrocities against mankind into conversation with other sites and people. *Ouroboros* will be on display alongside photographic work from her film, *High Series*.

In a perceived departure from notions of war and strife, the exhibition includes works in stone, wood and brass by the Naqsh Collective inspired by embroidery, a quintessential symbol of Palestine. In an effort to preserve their ancestors' bravura in graphic design and precise layouts, these artists have recreated embroidery lines using materials that will last generations. One of the duo's works, *Akka Artwork*, will be exhibited for the first time.

Also on display, are works of Farhad Farzaliyev that consider nostalgia for the Soviet Union. In his *Memory Inversion* series, textiles originating from different periods in the history of Azerbaijan are stretched on frames and then painted. The sleeping blankets, curtains and sheets remind him of his childhood.

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Continuing on the topic of self-identity, Orkhan Huseynov presents tradition in an uncharted context encouraging the viewer to consider what happens when the tendency to place origin as a defining factor is shattered. Similarly, the Ghasemi Brothers exhibit paintings reinforcing their belief that art plays a role in elucidating how the public views the struggle of the displaced as they assimilate abroad.

Finally, with a pinch of satirical flair, Amir Khojasteh exhibits expressionist portraits of well-known figures. It is up to the viewer to interpret the faces, illustrating society's diverse attitudes and perceptions.

"We are very excited to be working with bahith exhibiting artists, many of whom are showing for the first time in London, " says Gazelli Art House CEO & Founding Director, Mila Askarova.

**Amir Khojasteh** plays with the idea of violence and power, dictatorship and sacredness of fear, and represents it through fantasy, dark humor and expressive painterly style simultaneously. He also refers to art history, popular culture and his personal life in his works.

**Basma Alsharif** attempts to break from the confines of one particular perspective or retelling of history. Her efforts to understand a future beyond what is remembered as history, are grounded in a realism which questions the cycle of renewal and destruction intrinsic to the ouroboros – the snake eating its own tail.

**Farhad Farzaliyev** explores traces and influences of the Soviet era in modern day Azerbaijan. With humour and nostalgia, Farzaliyev researches Azerbaijani neo-folklore and the wider regional contexts.

**Ghasemi Brothers** have been working together since 2015 as a collective that includes Morteza, Sina and Mojtaba Ghasemi Sheelsar. The trio works together on a single piece, painting objects reminiscent of their native city, the coastal area of Bandar Anzali.

**Naqsh Collective** was founded in 2009 in Amman, Jordan, by two sisters Nisreen and Nermeen Abudail. Their name means “engraving: the first form of art done by a human to leave his print”. In 2018, the duo was shortlisted for the Jameel Prize 5.

**Orkhan Huseynov** is an artist who is equally prolific in painting, drawing and many other media. From the outset, the focus of his work became his love of his country’s folk tradition and history. Culture, art, everyday life, monuments, and traditional games – all find reflection in his works.

## About

Gazelli Art House supports a wide range of international artists, presenting a broad and dynamic programme to a diverse audience through global public projects and exhibition spaces in London and Baku. Gazelli Art House was founded in 2003 in Baku, Azerbaijan where it held exhibitions with Azeri artists. Having hosted conceptually interlinked off-site exhibitions across London, founder and director of Gazelli Art House, Mila Askarova, opened a permanent space on Dover Street, London in March 2012. In 2017, the redesigned gallery space reopened in Baku, with an ambitious annual program showcasing both local and international artists. Representing artists like Aziz+Cucher, Derek Boshier, Stanley Casselman, Francesco Jodice, Recycle Group, Kalliopi Lemos, Niyaz Najafov and Saad Qureshi amongst others, the gallery has built a consistent and diverse program with artists working in sculpture, photography, painting, video, performance and virtual reality.

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For further press information, images and requests please contact: [press@gazelliarthouse.com](mailto:press@gazelliarthouse.com)