

HAMZIANPOUR & KIA

Ali Phi

Enfe'al

July 15 - August 05, 2023

Opening reception: Saturday, July 15, 4:00 - 8:00 pm

Hamzianpour and Kia takes great pride in unveiling a fresh chapter in its pursuit of diverse artistic medium and genre. We are delighted to present the works of media artist and digital poet Ali Phi as he embarks on a remarkable journey of exploring the essence of Middle Eastern aesthetics. Through constant construction and deconstruction of forms and ideas, Ali Phi presents a groundbreaking perspective through the mesmerizing collection, *Enfe'al*, making its debut in the vibrant city of Los Angeles.

The *Enfe'al* collection derives from the recent audiovisual set by Ali Phi entitled *Maqruh*. In Islamic terminology, the term *makruh* refers to a detestable act, although it is neither forbidden nor entirely allowed. It exists within a space of liminal ambivalence – disapproved of but not punishable. The audiovisual set is inspired by this concept, as well as the contrasts between the dark ambiance and tranquillity of techno-electronic music paired with Middle-Eastern and West-Asian musical and visual motifs merged with Western digital media processing technologies.

The visual elements of the collection are created using 3D point clouds of ancient architecture, 2D videos processed through visual programming and creative coding, as well as digital 3D illustrations of reconstructed structures. Digital technologies allow the artist to examine ancient Persian architecture, their sacred geometries, histories, and their relationship to Islamic concepts like *makruh* from a contemporary vantage point.

The visual materials are modified by the soundscape and processed in real time. The sound design includes field recordings of Iranian regional and ritual music. The beats are based on local patterns. Digital synthesizers produce the audio element.

The main project is composed of seven elements. Together they depict the cyclical formation of an entity and include the following phases: passivity, avoidance, constriction, conformity, elevation, expiry, and revival. *Seven* is significant in West Asian culture, acting as a metaphor for infinity or completion. It is invoked frequently in prophetic narrations and sacred texts to illustrate the cosmic scale.

These seven stages are based on the verb forms Enfeāl, used to assign the meaning of affectability to a verb and Efteāl, which is used to assign the meaning of obedience to a verb and the subject's influence. These words are generally used in both Arabic and Farsi in the fields of science, mathematics, physics, and chemistry (alchemy).

Enfeāl [passivity]: Affectability; the effect created by the subject in the passive

Emtenā [Avoidance]: To stop, to avoid accepting or doing something

Enqebāz [Constriction]: To constrict, to draw together, to become narrower and tighter without making a change in physical characteristics

Entebāq [Conformity]: To conform, to accord, to be equalized, to adjust to new circumstances

Ertefā [Height]: Prominence, elevation, the vertical distance from head to foot or from base to top of something, an Arabic poetic device

Enqezā [Expiry]: To pass, to end, termination

Ehyā [Revival]: To regain life

The *Enfe'al* exhibition explores select aspects of the Maqruh project, delving into the profound connections and reciprocal process of affecting and being affected. Ali Phi explores the inherent uncertainty in decision-making during the creative process by employing technology-driven materials and navigating the interplay between ancient concepts, aesthetics, and modern digital presentation tools.

Enfe'al illustrates the fusion of traditional art and architectural aesthetics from the greater Iranian plateau with the latest advancements in real-time digital processing, offering a captivating exploration at the intersection between past and present, tradition and innovation, and endless possibilities, probabilities, and contingencies.

Ali Phi (b 1987) is a new media artist and creative technologist currently based in Toronto. His works are at the intersection of art, science, and technology; through installations, autonomous machines, and performances, he explores the underlying mechanisms of new media, technology, interactions and data. In his practice, architecture and space play a vital role both metaphorically and physically.

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