

HAMZIANPOUR & KIA

Milad Aramnia

DeevGooneGi

March 11 – April 1, 2023

Opening reception Saturday, March 11, 4 – 8pm

Exhibition preview Friday, March 10, 11am – 7pm

“Deevs are in love with the moon
they are slaves to the moon, in love and willing to be melted into it.”

Milad Aramnia

Hamzianpour & Kia is pleased to announce *DeevGooneGi*, an exhibition of new paintings by Milad Aramnia. *DeevGooneGi* marks the artist's debut Los Angeles solo exhibition and announces his representation by Hamzianpour & Kia.

The show title is a portmanteau of the Persian words deev (beast) and deevonegi (insanity), a term made up by the artist roughly translating to beastlies – that is, beasts insanely in love rather than cruel or coarse. The term deev is drawn directly from Persian mythology as beastly creatures existing alongside jinn (genies), peri (fairies), and shayatin (devils). The deev is unique as a beast in that they are shy, innocent creatures whose trust was often broken by heroes and protagonists, causing the deev to become violent. They are melancholic creatures deeply tied to humans, portrayed as villains, but are more accurately anti-heroes.

In his new paintings Milad Aramnia attempts to portray the complexity of these beasts through a traditional handling of acrylic paint and sensitive use of color and light. The paintings' intense color combinations and varying surfaces cause their subjects to shimmer and come alive as the viewer moves in front of a painting, opening a portal and establishing a connection. The paintings become portraits of the beasts, portraits of the artist himself, and portraits of the viewer. Grotesque and horrible on their surface, the beasts in Aramnia's paintings are delicate, coy, vulnerable creatures who are generally misunderstood. By overturning the deevs' evil associations, Aramnia puts them on display in a new light – one that praises their liberty, intelligence, and ferocious benevolence. His deep interest in the beasts and all creatures monsterly allows for a compassionate understanding of these ethereal beings.

The beasts' eyes in the paintings look directly into the viewers'. Their bodies contort, their arms holding fruit, hiding their face, or caressing another beast. The beasts are compressed in the frames of the paintings as they wrestle with themselves and each other. Their horns are one of the few indicators that the viewer is looking at something otherworldly, otherwise they feel very familiar. Fierce and powerful, gentle and kind, the deevs are both what we want to be and what we fear becoming.

Aramnia's paint handling pull the deevs from the ether into the visible human realm. As an artist who is constantly sketching, drawing, and painting, Aramnia channels the images of deevs compulsively, chasing their visage to better know them. His adept handling of painting and drawing links the beasts' Persian lineage to image making reminiscent of post-impressionism and early modernism. The expertly rendered figures are loosely painted over with a palette knife distancing the beasts from the viewer and casting them in a liminal, nostalgic digital-mythical realm. Primary colors collide vividly with secondary colors while gold and metallics illuminate the painting surface. The use of surface reflection gives a feeling of early Eastern Orthodox icon paintings and Iranian miniature paintings on paper. Their movement is a vibration, an energy source emitted by each deev in a different tone or frequency. The sense of time in the paintings is a brief flashing moment of eye contact with the beasts while everything around that connection slows down. The background melts away, the bond is intense, and all else blurs except the exchange of looking. We see ourselves in the paintings and we see others – how things are, how they might be – and are offered a chance to live this life again.

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Milad Aramnia (b. 1983, Tehran, Iran) is a painter and visual artist based in Los Angeles. He holds a BFA in painting from Tehran Art University, a postgraduate degree in Digital Illustration in New Media from the New York Fashion Institute of Technology, and an MFA in Intensive Studio Painting from the New York Academy of Art. He uses various materials – from oil on canvas, acrylic, and watercolor, as well as digital media and tools including virtual reality, augmented reality, and artificial intelligence – to create his visions into images. In 2019 he won the inaugural Virtual Reality Sculpting Championship in New York City and Tokyo.

For more information please contact info@hamzianpourandkia.com or call the gallery at +1 (917) 751 8893.