



Art Insider: Amir Fallah’s colorful paintings reflect his personal history from Iran to US

Written by [Lindsay Preston Zappas](#) Sep. 15, 2020



Amir Fallah, “Remember my Child,” at Shulamit Nazarian (installation view. Image courtesy of the artist and Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles

Narrative tapestries represent personal identity, rainbow-colored “beasties” prance across paintings, and proposals for survival in a changing environment.

Amir H. Fallah at Shulamit Nazarian

At [Shulamit Nazarian](#) in Hollywood, Amir H. Fallah’s new paintings cull references from various histories and cultures to create compositions that read like narrative tapestries. Figures pulled from Iranian culture (where the artist was born) sit alongside Greek architecture or scenes of Americana. Out-of-date maps detail geographies that have long been debunked. Beautifully rendered patterns and florals are punctuated by cartoony woodland creatures that the artist appropriates from his son’s children’s books. Fallah commandeers the style of each reference he renders — some images are painted in flat graphic shapes, while others appear hyperrealistic.

Previous work of Fallah’s has often delved into portraiture, painting a subject shrouded and surrounded by their belongings. Here, Fallah has removed the central figure and instead created a map of his own cultural influences; from his childhood in Iran, to his involvement in U.S. skater culture, to American histories that here read like propaganda.

The gallery writes, “Each painting serves as a diary of lessons, warnings, and ideals that the artist wants to pass on to his son and together become a site map, providing coded insight into the formation of an identity while investigating the cultural values passed between generations.”



*“I am not this hair, I am not this skin, I am the soul that lives within,” at Shulamit Nazarian (installation view).
Image courtesy of the artist and Shulamit Nazarian, Los Angeles*

In a project space at the gallery, Fallah has curated a group exhibition that is on view alongside his solo show. Titled [“I am not this hair, I am not this skin, I am the soul that lives within,”](#) the show includes work by four artists who (similarly to Fallah) deal with portraiture in unconventional ways. Todd Gray’s stacked photographs juxtapose African landscapes with tamed European gardens. Daniel Gibson’s thick oil painting depicts fantastical florals enveloping a figure’s striped legs. Francis Upritchard’s uncanny figures have a strange scale, somewhere between doll and child. Amanda Ross-Ho’s “Untitled Smock (Accident)” is an oversized replica of her own painting smock that she accidentally spilled red paint onto (each red stain has been faithfully recreated). Together, these works seem to depict a personage without a realistic representation, much like Fallah’s examination into how influences and cultural references might inform a person’s psyche.

Both shows on view: September 12 – October 31