

MEHRNOOSH ESKANDARI ARTIST STATEMENT

Mehrnoosh Eskandari, an artist whose paintings are less fixed destinations than fluid maps of memory, longing, and the suspended state of becoming, gathers together a series of vibrant, layered, and emotionally charged paintings. As these pieces coalesce, we are asked to explore the psychic space of alienation, the in-between terrain that is neither here nor there but undeniably and viscerally real. For Eskandari, this is the space of the immigrant, the queer body, the woman rendered voiceless, her proclamation of the self that refuses to settle.

Rooted in Eskandari's own journey as a gender-fluid Iranian immigrant woman of color, the work reflects her ongoing inquiry into home, identity, and the inner life of survival. Her paintings act as living documents of this liminality, charting what it feels like to exist across cultural, linguistic, and political borders. The works pulse with an intuitive energy, each mark and layer carrying traces of the struggle to find ground in unfamiliar soil. Color becomes a defiant act of memory, gesture becomes a language of authentic expression, and intimacy is reimagined as a radical act of visibility.

Themes of bodily autonomy, emotional rupture, and displacement surface again and again. Figures embrace, float, or turn inward, sometimes faceless, sometimes doubled, emerging from interiors that are vibrant but hollow, familiar yet uninhabitable. These spaces reflect Eskandari's experience of migration, not as a one-time event but as an ongoing psychic condition. The homes she paints are rarely homes at all. They are metaphors for absence, echo chambers for unspoken desires, and sites of confrontation between the life left behind and the life being stitched together in its place.

A pivotal thread is the tension between censorship and expression. Growing up under an authoritarian regime where women's voices were systematically erased, Eskandari developed a need to speak through images. Her paintings challenge cultural taboos surrounding intimacy and gender by bringing the private body into public view, not as spectacle, but as truth. Here, the intimate is not hidden or ashamed; it is articulated in brushstrokes, textures, and unguarded gestures. The incorporation of collage, with its cut forms, torn fragments, and sudden insertions, amplifies the psychic fragmentation of exile and the ongoing attempt to piece the self back together so deeply and personally felt by Eskandari and countless others.

In her works, the figure is never just a figure. Often a stand-in for the artist herself, the characters are self-portraits, people she has encountered, and internalized archetypes. They reflect an emotional complexity that defies binary categories of male or female, local or foreign, whole or broken. She describes an almost dual consciousness, a person within a person, echoing the layered nature of her compositions. Her materials, too, are in dialogue: oil paint, pastel, and collage operate together as shifting registers of voice. Color is used liberally, almost defiantly, drawing from the vibrant aesthetics of her Los Angeles neighborhood and the hidden exuberance of underground Iranian culture. Intuitively driven, her work from subject to process speaks to the resilience found in self-discovery.

Through this practice, Eskandari does not just paint stories; she builds bridges between impossible worlds. Her exhibition invites viewers to sit with that impossibility, to dwell in the silence between languages, in the space between bodies, and in the contradiction of both belonging and not. It is a space filled with longing, but also resistance. A refusal to vanish. A refusal to forget. A refusal to make oneself small. In doing so, Eskandari creates a visual language for the unspeakable, a place where fractured identities and unclaimed emotions are finally, gloriously, seen.