



Tooraj Khamenehzadeh, *Untitled*, 2020

## Seeing Is Realizing There Is Always More to See

January 24–February 23, 2024

Hours: Tue – Fri 12 – 5 pm

**Lisa Blas**  
**Sari Carel**  
**Clare Churchouse**  
**Billy Gerard Frank**  
**Beth Ganz**

**Amir Hariri**  
**Tooraj Khamenehzadeh**  
**Lise Kjaer**  
**Joyce Yu-Jean Lee**  
**Negin Mahzoun**

Curated by Sharon Kendrick

EFA Studios is pleased to present an exhibition of EFA-affiliated artists whose work reminds us that the act of perceiving can lead to the realization that there is a hidden depth or abundance of things yet to be seen or understood. The artists here perceive and share things that may be hidden in plain sight, suppressed, or living deep in their imagination. From Lise Kjaer's observant romanticism to Amir Hariri's constructivist interiority to Tooraj Khamenehzadeh's exploration of the landscapes of mystical pilgrimage a range of stories remind us that the epic lies just beneath the surface of the everyday.

**A screening of Billy Gerard Frank's film "Second Eulogy: Mind the Gap" will be held on February 22, 2024, from 6–8 pm. A closing reception will follow.**



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**Billy Gerard Frank's** film *Second Eulogy: Mind the Gap* is an autobiographical deconstruction and repositioning of his father's life revealed in an old suitcase of letters and mementos and his own memories of confusion and desire. Fiction and non-fiction interweave to conjure an abstract story of intertwined lives: of Frank's father, and Frank's personal experiences of growing up as a gay teen in Grenada. Front and center are death and mortality, truth vs reality, what the adult said, what was said on the television and radio in 1983, what is remembered, and what one chooses to forget. Memories of confusion and the desires the first time a man laid his hands on my body, my sense of abandonment—the gap of time.

**Amir Hariri** creates constructivist illusions with distorted shapes that challenge the tendency of the brain to take shortcuts and demand the viewer to pay attention. *Cobweb Afternoon* is a snapshot of a contemplative afternoon lost in thought, a mind map of the dialogue happening between him and everything he was absorbing through the noise around him. Forms deconstruct and fold in one another, creating tension and conflict, yet come back together and create beauty. *Study for Shelter* looks back at the optimistic, utopian thinking of the modern era and holds a mirror to where we are today: illuminating ideas that were developed and not developed, how they shaped us, and how they will shape us.

During the lockdown, **Lisa Blas** found herself awake every morning at 5 painting the view outside her kitchen window. Isolated inside and yearning for the outside, she returned to that view each morning, painting the meeting planes of the sky and the Hudson River recording their dramatic shifts in tonality throughout the seasons and weather. She began to notice the arc of light and color was not linear but collinear: forming overlapping, circular movements of color and making the horizon appear to bend. Mirroring the shape of an oculus, a motive she returns to often in her work, a form itself that connects you to something that is missing.

**Tooraj Khamenehzadeh's** work seeks to capture the ineffable—the state of mystical bewilderment Iranian mystics experience as they return from their inner pilgrimages along the path of intuition and truth. He traveled the routes and byways of the mystics through the Dasht-e Kavir, the vast desert in the center of the Iranian plateau. Using film and old-school camera and film manipulation techniques he created images that evoke the dreamlike journey of waking from a vision and returning to the world.

**Sari Carel** dreams of a circular economy where materials can be used forever. Her practice focuses on the overlooked, things like pennies that are the difference between something and nothing. She aims to reset the trivial, things so familiar we don't notice them any longer, and bring them to the center through open-ended play, materials, and process. *Kin* references our relationships with the single-use objects in life: the bottle cap, the pen lid, the bread tie, the ends of things, each of which has its own amazing design decisions. Plastic never really goes away, it just moves somewhere else, the ocean, the air, our bodies. It becomes part of us, it becomes our kin. *Kin* brings our attention to the design of these objects and to the clay under the landfills that protects us from toxic seepage. It brings our complicated relationship with plastics and our mythologies of recycling into the foreground.

**Joyce Yu-Jean Lee's** *Lenses* are inspired by the portals of private yachts Russian oligarchs and other super-wealthy world citizens traverse the oceans in and Joyce's desire to address climate change. Through these portals, Joyce exhibits animations of how the warming climates of the oceans and land might come to look like. The oceans are populated with new creatures and fauna and imagery from traditional Chinese landscape painting is woven in and subverted to reflect the state of our current non-ideal relationship with nature.

One day on the streets of Copenhagen, **Lise Kjaer** saw a stone in the pavement in the shape of a heart. Looking around, she discovered another one and then many more. She was surrounded by heartstones. *Heartstone* is a part of *The Summer of Love*, an ongoing project initiated in the Summer of 2023 during which Kjaer spent three months traveling with artist Ole Lejbach, crisscrossing Denmark and continuing on a road trip to Berlin and Poland. As an artist, Kjaer is interested in how we see the world through filters of senses, memories, and desires, and navigate our perceptions with an often slim line between the illusionary and the real.

**Negin Mahzoun's** beautiful figurative drawings, inspired by *Haft Paykar* | *Seven Portraits* written in 1197 by the Persian poet Nizami Ganjavi (ne. Nizami), are twisted and sewn together and then hidden behind painted glass. Their beauty is obscured and withheld evoking the reality of how familial and cultural traditions reverberate and crash into new generations causing new stories of personal trauma. *Haft Paykar* reflects how women, from ancient tales to contemporary media, continue to face narratives that only address half of humanity, and have to make a great effort to see power and control as possible for them in a male-dominated world. The figures trapped and held hostage by something that can not change on their own, mirror the need for everyone to change to allow true equality to rise.

**Clare Churchouse's** wall-based assemblages teeter on the edge of 2D and 3D and between drawing, painting, and sculpture. Occasionally pieces are related to a particular space with descriptive elements or material from the place, but just as often they do not. Working intuitively and patiently, Clare will add materials and subtract objects working towards the minimal amount to tell the maximum, reflecting her desire to create artworks with as little material resources as possible. Drawings evolve, become abstract, and defy gravity. The space in between lines and elements that are created draws the viewer in to complete the image in their minds.

Rather than treat digital technology as necessarily destructive to human experience, **Beth Ganz** uses it to create new ways of accessing the world's most revered mountains. Traditionally, scaling remote summits entailed great physical effort. Now, one can "visit" these sacred sites while sitting in front of a computer. *Axis Mundi* combines traditional materials such as sumi ink and kozo to record satellite surveillance data. Using screen captures and blowing up imagery to the point of unrecognizable pixelization the work is both indexically truthful and abstractly ritualistic. Many of the mountains depicted are shared by multiple belief systems. Ganz brings them all together illustrating we are more connected than we realize.