

HAMID YARAGHCHI

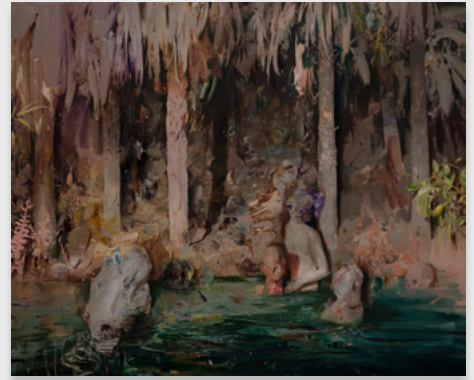
LET THE WOUND LIE OPEN

PREVIEW: SATURDAY 14 JANUARY 2023 (1-4PM)
EXHIBITION: 15 JANUARY – 18 FEBRUARY 2023

*When the heart
Is cut or cracked or broken
Do not clutch it
Let the wound lie open
Let the wind
From the good old sea blow in
To bathe the wound with salt
And let it sting.
Let a stray dog lick it
Let a bird lean in the hole and sing
A simple song like a tiny bell
And let it ring
Let it go.
Let it out.
Let it all unravel.
Let it free and it can be
A path on which to travel.*

A poem by poet Michael Leunig provides the source material for a new body of work by Iranian painter Hamid Yaraghchi. The works included are an investigation into the aesthetics of abject motifs focusing primarily on the human body as a symbol of beauty. The body is very much interlinked with our psychological sense of self, of memory and emotion. This notion recalls the fictionalized biography of painter Rabo Karabekian in Vonnegut's *Bluebeard*, who struggles with his soul and his body: "I do that in my head to people—get rid of all the meat so I can see nothing but their souls. Then I forgive them," he says at the culmination of the novel. And just like Vonnegut with prose, Yaraghchi wields his paintbrush as a sort of communicative weapon, exploring fantastical possibilities that interconnect otherworldly and the natural. Pleasure and beauty.

For this reason, Yaraghchi presents the human form as compromised, incomplete, and at times functionless, challenging and even tainting these beautiful scenarios which, ultimately, lurk somewhere between transcendence and ugliness. According to Yaraghchi, this series of paintings concern the "representation of the human body in tragical transience or incompleteness, in connection with the different spaces, especially nature and its elements," to create visual tension and ambiguity. And certainly, there is a kind of beauty in the circular passage of life, where one is reminded of mortality; just as the Old Masters favoured the *memento mori*, Yaraghchi draws attention to ideas of the grotesque, which – in the day of NFTs, social media 'perfection', and Photoshop – seem like scary concepts. We are a society obsessed with youth, and we seem to ignore or suppress any reality and dream that contains pleasure, joy, hope and at the same time pain, sadness and tragedy... but these are realities of the world in which we live. To return to the poem, above, *when the heart is cracked open, let it sting, let a bird lean in the hole and sing*. It appears that for Yaraghchi, the only way to achieve such beauty, is to eke close to pain.



Demons Pond (2021)
Oil on canvas
160 x 200 cm



Let The Wound Lie Open (2022)
Oil on canvas
200 x 180 cm



Horror Movie (2022)
Oil on canvas
130 x 170 cm



HAMIDREZA YARAGHCHI (B. 1984, Tehran, Iran) lives and works in Berlin, Germany. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts Dresden in 2020. Solo exhibitions include: *Suspicious Reality*, Antonstadt Gallery, Dresden, Germany (2019) and *Banal Memories*, Hübner and Hübner Gallery, Frankfurt, Germany (2016). Group exhibitions include: *Existenz-Chapter II*, Academy of Fine Arts Dresden, Germany (2020); *Prospektive*, Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna, Austria (2019) and *453:32 Visions*, Maryam Fasihi Harandi Gallery, Tehran, Iran (2018).