

# TAYMOUR GRAHNE GALLERY

## Nicky Nodjourni: Chasing the Butterfly and Other Recent Paintings

7 September – 12 October 2013  
Opening: Saturday, 7 September 2013, 6 – 8 PM

*New York, New York (July 11, 2013)* – This September, Taymour Grahne Gallery opens its doors with an inaugural exhibition by acclaimed Iranian painter **Nicky Nodjourni**. Featuring large-scale oil paintings in the main gallery and works on paper in the lower gallery, **Chasing the Butterfly and Other Recent Paintings** explores Nodjourni's surreal hybridization of historic and contemporary imagery intercut with sharp political commentary.

Born 1942, in Kermanshah, Iran and based in New York since 1981, Nodjourni uses his practice to explore the intersection of his personal history with the politics of alienation and dislocation. Combining historic references, social realist critique and surrealist abstraction, his compositions feature multi-layered human figures engaged with bizarrely counter-poised animals, theatrically staged against indeterminate backdrops and barren landscapes.

Not unlike the work of the German Social Realist Neo Rauch, Nodjourni's paintings suggest the intention of a narrative reading, but are instead cryptic and open-ended. In *Inspector's Scrutiny*, 2012, warriors from traditional Persian miniatures join with anonymous suited men in the struggle to tether and subjugate a supine horse, creating a scene that is both politically charged and ambiguously unresolved. Nodjourni's figures are continually spliced and rejoined on fractured registers with mismatched proportions, a spatial discrepancy that heightens the work's disjointed layering of history and identity.

This uneasy perspective is balanced by the artist's humorous, yet bitter satire. In *Time to Pray*, 2012, a family of apes grouped in a pose redolent of ritual worship are in fact engaged in coital activity, overseen by a supplicating mullah, who seems to vindicate the absurdity of adherence to religious stricture.

In Nodjourni's works on paper, politicians and businessmen cut from the day's paper are extricated from their public personae and recontextualized in undefined circumstances, often framed within the confines of a rigidly structured grid, echoing unnamed systems of authoritarian order. Complicating the work's play between fantasy and reality by providing a hint of material textuality, the artist's sketches and clippings are also on display.

As artist, writer and curator Phong Bui considers in the exhibition's accompanying catalog essay, "Nodjourni's newest paintings evidence a negotiation between political convictions—ones that belong squarely neither to his native home nor his adopted one—and the intricate yet obdurate language of painting he has created for himself out of necessity."



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## About Nicky Nodjoui

Born in Kermanshah, Iran in 1942, Nicky Nodjoui experienced the Islamic Revolution of 1979 from the perspective of a young artist, astutely aware of the political and social upheavals of this tumultuous period in Iran's history. After earning a Bachelor's degree in art from Tehran University of Fine Arts, Nodjoui moved to the United States in the late 1960s and received his Master's degree in Fine Arts from The City College of New York in 1974. He later returned to Tehran as a member of the faculty at his alma mater, joining his politically galvanized students in their criticism of the Shah's regime and designing political posters inspired by the revolutionary spirit sweeping the country, only to be exiled once more in the aftermath of the revolution.

Nodjoui has exhibited internationally and is in several prominent collections worldwide, including the British Museum in London, the Salsali Private Museum in Dubai, and the National Museum of Cuba. His work will be featured in the exhibition Iran Modern, opening at the Asia Society in New York in September 2013, in conjunction with his solo exhibition at Taymour Grahne Gallery. The artist lives and works in Brooklyn.

## About Taymour Grahne Gallery

Taymour Grahne Gallery seeks to foster a diverse, international program of groundbreaking contemporary art, with a special foundation in contemporary the art of the Middle East region. Working collaboratively with curators and critics, the gallery is committed to cultivating emerging talent and supporting established artists from around the world.

Taymour Grahne Gallery is situated in the heart of Tribeca in a landmarked 4,000 square foot space designed to accommodate a dynamic public events program organized in conjunction with the gallery's exhibitions and related publications. Widely recognized for creating the most comprehensive and widely read blog dedicated to contemporary art from the Middle East, gallery founder Taymour Grahne brings a special foundation and specialization in Middle Eastern and North African art. Exhibiting artists include: Tarek Al-Ghoussein, Noor Ali Chagani, Reza Derakshani, Daniele Genadry, Nermine Hammam, Hassan Hajjaj, Mohammed Kazem, Sanaz Mazinani, Ciarán Murphy, Nicky Nodjoui, Farah Ossouli, Albert Yonathan Setyawan, Walid Siti, and Camille Zakharia.

Gallery hours are Tuesday through Saturday from 10am to 6pm.

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For more information, please contact:

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Join the conversation on social media by linking to @TaymourGrahne and using the hashtag #NickyNodjoui