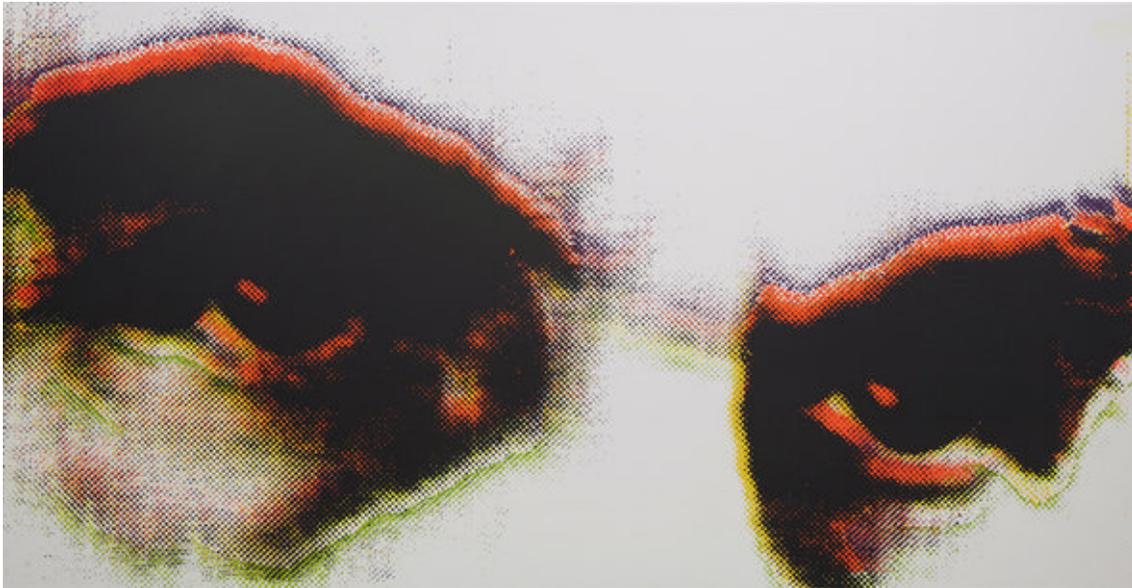


On View | In a Gagosian Gallerist's Personal Work, Cultures Collide



*Jason Wyche. Courtesy of the artist and Marianne Boesky Gallery, N.Y.
Andisheh Avini's "Untitled," 2013.*

Every so often, boxes bedecked with Iranian postage and customs stamps arrive at Andisheh Avini's doorstep. He can instantly recognize the packages as containing handcrafted marquetry panels from a traditional woodworker in Iran, but, though he ordered them himself, couldn't tell you what they look like. That's because when he commissions the works a month before they arrive, his only instructions are their dimensions. The rest — the size and pattern of the decorative inlay on the lacquered wood boards, which are typically used for interior decor — is left to the maker, whom Avini has never met in person. This inscrutability is an essential part of the artist's process.

The geometric panels serve as the foundations for some of Avini's

work, which explores the notion of memory through the filter of the Iranian-American artist's cultural histories. Beginning Thursday, the pieces will make up a large part of his eponymous exhibition at Marianne Boesky Gallery. With silkscreen ink in shades of muted indigo, acid yellow, black and white, Avini overlays the wood panels with swirls and splatters (and, in one painting, a luxurious fringe of peacock feathers) that seem to emanate from their surfaces.



Jason Wyche. Courtesy of the artist and Marianne Boesky Gallery, N.Y.
Untitled works by Avini.

Persian carpets provide another kind of canvas for Avini, who layers the fibers with his abstract strokes. “As a child, I sat upon these rugs, which are filled with imagery and color,” Avini, who daylights as a Gagosian gallerist, recalls. “I have a three-year-old son, so lately I’m down on the ground with him a lot. It triggered my memory.” Avini’s carpets, however, are only vaguely reminiscent of their ornate predecessors — faint peacock feathers are overlaid with saturated, amoebic forms akin to Rorschach inkblots.

Perhaps the most striking piece in the exhibition is a vibrant screen-printed image of the revolutionary Iranian leader

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Avini reduced the politician down to his intense gaze in hopes that viewers will look beyond the initial political connotations. Instead, he wants you to consider the process by which we associate certain images with poignant memories. His colorful abstractions of the image echo with references to the work of his Pop Art predecessors, calling to mind Andy Warhol's portraits of Mao Zedong.

"I was born and raised here," Avini says in reference to the United States, "but closely held on to my heritage. When these two worlds collide, that's when the art happens. It gets strange and interesting, and it can be beautiful and chaotic."

Andisheh Avini's exhibition is on view from Jan. 16 through Feb. 15 at Marianne Boesky Gallery, 509 West 24th Street, N.Y.; marianneboeskygallery.com.