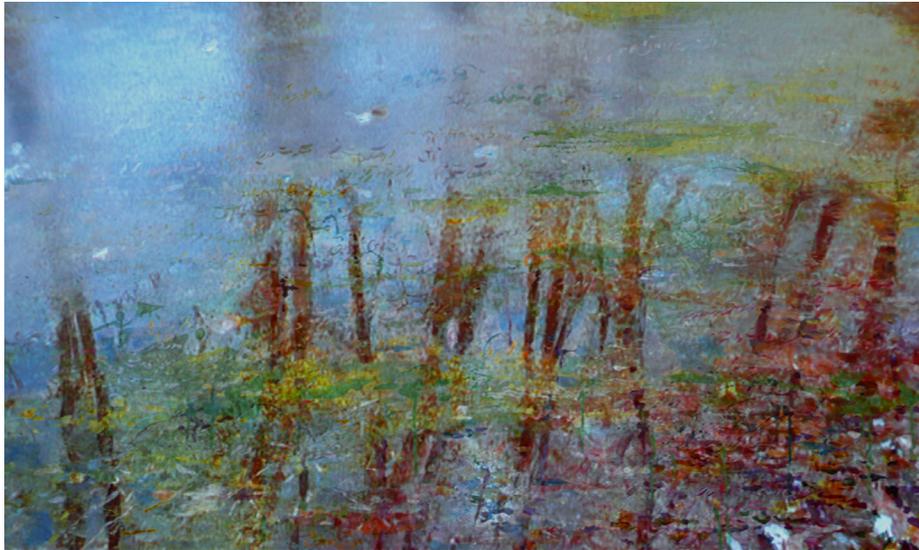


**SHOJA AZARI AND SHAHRAM KARIMI: MAGIC OF LIGHT, OPENS SEPTEMBER 29, 2013 AT MANA CONTEMPORARY**



Shoja Azari and Shahram Karimi, *Spring*, 2007-2008. Video projection on painted canvas, 50 x 89 in.  
Edition 2 of 3. Image courtesy of the artists and Leila Heller Gallery.

JERSEY CITY, NJ, Sep. 10, 2013—Mana Contemporary, in collaboration with Leila Heller Gallery, is featuring works by artist and filmmaker Shoja Azari with painter Shahram Karimi in the exhibition *Magic of Light*, opening to the public on September 29, 2013. The exhibition emphasizes the subtle ways in which motion, texture, and light are used in all the works to further convey inherent emotions of loss, fear and nostalgia. *Magic of Light* includes three collaborative video-painting series by Azari and Karimi, as well as a video installation by Azari.

Azari and Karimi's groundbreaking four piece series, *Silence*, consists of carefully filmed abstract images of natural landscapes projected onto canvases that have been painted in a precise, hyper-realistic manner, each depicting one season of the year. Imbued with an ethereal elegance, these works encompass the nostalgic emotions of the passing of time through the lenses of Autumn, Winter, Spring and Summer. The perfectly aligned installation connects the two mediums of painting and video to produce subtle movements and bring to life the flat surface, thereby suggesting an element of real time onto an otherwise frozen moment.

*Magic of Light* will feature the latest collaboration between Azari and Karimi. Each piece from this 4-panel video-painting series, entitled *Forsaken*, depicts metanarratives based on a story of a family in the midst of deterioration. The perspectives of a father who has abandoned his home, a heartbroken wife attempting to decipher her state of being, and a neglected child fleeing the sight of his broken family, all develop throughout the series. A sense of irrevocable damage lies heavily across the body of work, as the final panel depicts the child solemnly walking down a road towards his uncertain destiny.

On view is also Azari's *There Are No Non Believers in Hell*, a video installation informed by the timelessness of Renaissance art seen through the lens of contemporary existential anxiety. The video work, projected on two sides of cross hanging from the ceiling, creates a powerful yet disturbing experience: famous old Master paintings including Caravaggio's *The Incredulity of Saint Thomas* and Rembrandt's *Abraham's Sacrifice of Isaac* burn in front of the viewers eyes. As the paintings melt away into darkness, the voices of evangelical radicals preaching about hell as a reality on earth are heard throughout the room instilling a troubling sense of religious fervor.

*Magic of Light* is on view through December 28, 2013.

**SHOJA AZARI** is an artist and filmmaker who has been living in New York since 1983. His works have been exhibited globally, with solo shows throughout Europe and North America. Azari has participated in international exhibitions at Museums such as the Haus der Kulturen in Germany and the MUSAC in Spain, and at world renowned exhibitions such as the 55th Venice Biennale. His works are in the permanent collections of various Museums and foundations, such as the Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA) in Los Angeles and the Farjam Collection in Dubai. Since 2006, Azari has also been collaborating with painter Shahram Karimi on video paintings, a medium which explores the juncture between film and fine arts.

Born in Shiraz, Iran, **SHAHRAM KARIMI** has been living and working between Germany and New York since 1988. Primarily a painter, he produces powerful and intriguing works often containing subtle political messages. Karimi is also an accomplished production designer and has collaborated with artist Shirin Neshat on the award-winning film, *Women Without Men*, and the piece *Overruled* for the 2011 Performa 11 Biennial in New York. Since 2006, Karimi has also been collaborating with filmmaker Shoja Azari on video paintings, a medium which explores the juncture between film and fine arts.

#### **ABOUT MANA CONTEMPORARY**

Mana Contemporary is a groundbreaking cultural institution with locations in Jersey City and Chicago. Based on an integrated philosophy, its facilities provide services, spaces, and programming for artists, collectors, curators, performers, students, and the greater community within single locations. For more information about Mana Contemporary, please visit [www.manacontemporary.com](http://www.manacontemporary.com).