

Praz-Delavallade is proud to welcome Golnaz Payani for her first solo show with the gallery in Paris. Born in Teheran and now living in Paris, the artist embodies this generation of artists who delve into their own life story to find the elements of a new contemporaneity. The delicacy of her works and the emotions they give rise to / are grounded in an attempt to exemplify a dual representation, one of paradise and lost happiness. She expresses the ambiguity of possibilities, where nostalgia meets memory and disappearance meets appearance. The very elegance of her art undeniably betrays her origins, this tropism that means she is drawn towards an idealised Persian garden. However, beauty is not alone in being invited into her art. Golnaz Payani strives to find the tiniest of details which will provide her with the feeling that she is returning to her roots, like a quixotic quest for a magical oasis, one that provides shade and succour and which is the stuff of which Persian tales are made. And yet, behind the poetry and the sheer delight of seeing, reality raises its head, a harsh, cruel and violent reality that does not necessarily reveal all at first glance.

Just as these Indo-Persian tales have been passed down by word of mouth over the years, Golnaz Payani perpetuates stories as witnessed in her works. In her art, she remains faithful to the way this paradise is always represented, reinforcing her representation by borrowing traditional Persian motifs such as the "*Gol-O-Morgh*", the flower and the bird. But make no mistake: behind her urbane appearance the artist is double-dealing, combining amiability and violence. Perhaps the latter is only present in her gestures, in the treatment she inflicts on the fabrics she uses, tearing, cutting and brutalising the material in a way that is a far cry from a perfect picture of idyllic happiness. In fact, this need she feels deep inside is apparent throughout her body of work in her constant toing-and-froing between presence and oblivion and with always the same insistence on traces: "*Violence is also within the object I produce. The final work is a brutalised image, covered by other images superposed on top or hidden behind wool. The image is falsified, altered and transformed, which is in itself a violent act*", Golnaz Payani explains. Depending on its quality, its richness and the way she uses it, the fabric also embodies the notion that it actually reveals as much as it conceals, which is an underlying preoccupation in any quest for beauty and ornamentation. As she says herself: "*Providing something that is beautiful to see, which in fact hides something else*". The same goes for her works on paper. Whether it is her stitches, her incisions of red and blue debris, her harmonious shades of orange or her doubly-transparent works, all are inspired by the tiles that decorate palaces, or which appear in the interlacing motifs of precious Persian carpets. "*These motifs that I have embroidered represent a compendium of all of this ornamentation. I have simply replaced the diamond shape by a point.*" Golnaz Payani bases the main part of her message on a narrative, on the telling of stories and their interpretation, building on the past in order to re-enchant the present. *L'Ombre des Oasis* hovers all around us and we are won over by a feeling of calm!