

ARTFORUM

Paris

Golnaz Payani

Praz-Delavallade | Paris

5 rue des Haudriettes

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In her first solo show at this gallery, Golnaz Payani deftly—in some cases, defiantly—uses embroidery techniques and tools to alternately conceal, reveal, and subvert traditional Persian motifs. Working on paper, canvas, linen, or soft mesh, the Iranian-French artist adds or subtracts threads to evoke floral and geometric patterns. For *L’Ombre en lin* (*The Linen Shade*) (all works 2019), Payani painstakingly removed vertical strands from linen canvas to create a frayed Gol-O-Morgh (flowers and birds) design at the center of the composition. Whereas this paradisaical Persian motif is typically rendered in luscious colors, here it exists as a ragged and ghostly negative image. Conceptually more complex, *Pâlis sur couleur* (*Fade on Color*) can be read as a mashup of Eastern and Western florals. By embroidering a Gol-O-Morgh outline in white thread over a prismatic flower-printed fabric, Payani erases and reframes occidental blooms. In addition to highlighting similarities and differences between two culturally distinct styles of ornamentation, the superimposition also enraptures as pure, fizzy abstraction.

In the middle of the gallery, *Quand les poussières tombent* (*When the Dusts Fall*)—a laser-cut wooden map of Tehran propped up on low supports—suggests a magic carpet hovering several inches above the floor. Far from enchanted, however, Payani’s depiction of her native city shows an emptied and crumbling metropolis. The buildings and monuments have all been excised, leaving an expanse marked by pristine gaping holes connected by a delicate web of streets. A layer of fine concrete dust coats the sculpture’s latticed surface as well as the floor beneath; an ephemeral affirmation of the cyclical nature of creation and destruction.

— Mara Hoberman