

Snowy Year

Soheil Mokhtar

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Snow falls don't lead us into thinking deeply down, but rather thoughts are falling down on us. Ideas are pouring down on us, too fleeting to catch, melted before being understood. There's such an abundance that it's as if we're drowning. Even mid-conversation, our eyes follow the lightness of a snowflake that floats like a feather and melts in the affair. Or it joins the rest of its family; other snowflakes that have escaped their demise and have covered the surface.

The snowflake you had been chasing like a free butterfly will now join its family, which is not all that different from melting. The beautiful crystal-shaped image of a snowflake is an invention of a disarmed artist's non-naked eye. Soheil Mokhtar's paintings fit both inside and outside this complex story. Mokhtar has followed more flakes and has recorded them midway and before reaching the surface. He did not accompany them all the way and has painted the snowflakes in each painting. The image is so abundant of the flakes and overflowing as if life outside the frame is also like that. There's no movement. Heads and bodies in paintings are not coming from or going anywhere. Much like a two-second excerpt from a Japanese anime that depicts rain's pouring. It goes on forever. The lamps and candles are signs of discovery. In fact, he is depicting the snow falls at night surrounded by the lights around. Imagine a streetlamp, the area it illuminates and the dancing snowflakes. The artist has brought in flashlights, sparks and candles in the pieces repeatedly. All three are symbols of discovery. The famous "eureka!"

In one piece, a man is staring at the ground with a few cucumbers on his shoulders, and on them, paintings of a spark. That spark is "eureka". That sparkle in the eye. Somewhat similar to a scientist's moments of solitude. In another painting, someone else is staring at the snowfalls on the ground and two shapes like a gateway are in front of him, as well as some candles behind him. If the shape was wooden, like an upside-down 'Y', it could've been like one of those branches used to find water in the desert. A method called 'dowsing', which is not backed by any logic. All the faces are metamorphosed into discovery.

A light's gone off on top of their heads. They have discovered something from snowfall and the moment of its fall that we are unaware of. Just like our individual experience with snow. In a larger painting we see a headless body on something similar to a boat, with three sparks among the everglade. A precise moment of the painter's life. A discovery made in Mokhtar's solitude that paves ways across new borders. A way that started abruptly, but won't end abruptly.

Shabahang Tayyari Summer 2021