

AZADEH ELMIZADEH

Sister Seeds

September 17 - October 15, 2022

Franz Kaka is proud to announce the opening of *Sister Seeds*, Azadeh Elmizadeh's second solo exhibition at the gallery. Working from a tradition of Persian mythologies, Elmizadeh's translucent surfaces foreground the mutability of narrative and its resistance to fixity and rigid meaning making through language. The exhibition further extends Elmizadeh's investigation in to the ways in which contingency, uncertainty, and translation can be used as strategies to undermine prescribed cultural boundaries.

Of particular interest within *Sister Seeds* are the figures Arenavak and Sanghavak, two female characters who appear across myriad creation myths and folk stories. Often portrayed as sisters, the two are closely associated with ideas of fertility and wisdom, with one representing water and the other soil. In Persian mythology, there is a close connection between water, wisdom, trees and the capacity for speech, and it has been speculated that these figures reappear as narrators within later fictions.¹ Although specific narrative references are largely absent within Elmizadeh's paintings, the devices and apparatus of storytelling offer a structure onto which complex layers of meaning are built. Whereas her previous exhibition *Subtle bodies* saw figures transformed by and into other objects, beings and landscapes, *Sister Seeds* speaks to the dissolution of figure within narrative itself, allowing bodies and beings to instead occupy multiple times, spaces and identities simultaneously.

Azadeh Elmizadeh (b. 1987) is a visual artist based in Toronto who works between painting and collage. She holds an MFA from the University of Guelph and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from OCAD and Tehran University. Elmizadeh has presented solo and two-person exhibitions at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery (Lethbridge, AB) and Franz Kaka (Toronto, ON). Her work has been exhibited internationally at Public Gallery (London, UK) curated by Rose Nestler; The Blackwood (Mississauga, ON) curated by Noor Bhangu; Kamloops Art Gallery curated by Charo Neville; Birch Contemporary (Toronto, ON); Boarding House Gallery (Guelph, ON). Elmizadeh was the recipient of the 2020 Joseph Plaskett Award in painting. *Sister Seeds* is her second solo exhibition at Franz Kaka, Toronto.

The artist wishes to acknowledge the support of the Toronto Arts Council.

¹ It has been proposed by Iranian filmmaker Bahram Beyzaie in his books *Roots of the Old Tree* and *Where is Hezar Afsan*, that the storyteller Shahrzad and her sister Dinazad in *One Thousand and One Nights* are based on Arenavak and Sanghavak.