

Behrang Karimi
Pocket Call
March 16–June 9, 2024

Opening: Friday, March 15, 2024, 6–10 pm

Behrang Karimi's work is grounded within a dimension of intuition. His paintings emanate from an interior and intimate space, suggesting moments of stillness and contemplation. While they are personal works, grounded in specific experiences and memories, they tend toward the metaphor and the parable. This lends them a certain abstract quality, despite their use of figuration—similar to the moments before sleep, when our thoughts drift into the realm of the metaphorical. In an ongoing process of investigation into painting, its possibilities, and its occasional complacency, Karimi (born in Schiraz, Iran, lives and works in Cologne) draws on various tonalities, moods, identities, and gestures within the medium. Image-making, here, becomes a sort of staging of changing roles, less concerned with recognizability and predictability than with the fragile and difficult moment in which a mood, a sentiment, or a memory is materialized and intensified. There are moments when his works play with transparency and making-transparent, radiating an ethereal luminosity. At others, individual objects emerge in frontal views, as if charged with a haunting, almost religious meaning. His figures sometimes appear sunk in deep introspection, their surroundings a blur. There are also unsettling and ambivalent scenes, hinting at experiences between violence, surrender, and intimacy.

For his solo exhibition *Pocket Call*, Karimi brings new works together in a dialog in which continuities and connections emerge between painting, furniture, tapestry, drawings, and prints. These connections occasionally blend into the space of everyday life: in a sound piece, we hear Karimi's children and an out-of-tune piano, interrupted by voices and the clattering of dishes. An idealized vision of childhood casts it as place of utopia, where our thinking and relationship to 'reality' are spontaneous and unpredictable, and where realities exist outside of reality. In a similar way, Karimi's practice is inseparably bound to a space of imagination in which a feeling of worldly gravitas can suddenly feel extremely light, and vice versa. The exhibition serves as a stage that places Karimi's paintings within the wider context of his multifaceted practice. Not without irony, it further touches upon the idea that the process of material

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creation merges into a cosmological dimension, in which energy returns via cyclical paths.

The title of the exhibition, *Pocket Call*, suggests a conversation in which the listener, though uninvited, still hears all that is said. This idea of furtive, secretive, or even clandestine knowledge is characteristic of Karimi's artistic sensibility, which communicates on an intuitive and affective layer while still remaining intangible and fleeting.

Various events will be held during the exhibition, including a walk-through with Behrang Karimi and Kathrin Bentele, Director of the Kunstverein.

Curated by Kathrin Bentele

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