

ERMES ERMES

BEHRANG KARIMI
THEORY OF A SMELL

13 JUNE - 30 AUGUST 2024

Via dei Banchi Vecchi 16
00186, Roma



Behrang Karimi, Theory of a smell, 2024, exhibition view, Ermes Ermes, Rome, IT



Theory of a smell
Behrang Karimi
Ermes Ermes

13 June - 30 August 2024.
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Behrang Karimi - Theory of a smell

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Behrang Karimi
Mutter/Selbst, 2012
Oil on linen
50x40 cm (19,6x15,7")



Behrang Karimi, Theory of a smell, 2024, exhibition view, Ermenegildo Zegna, Rome, IT



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Behrang Karimi
Masse liebt Dichte, 2024
Oil on canvas
40x30 cm (15,7x11,8")



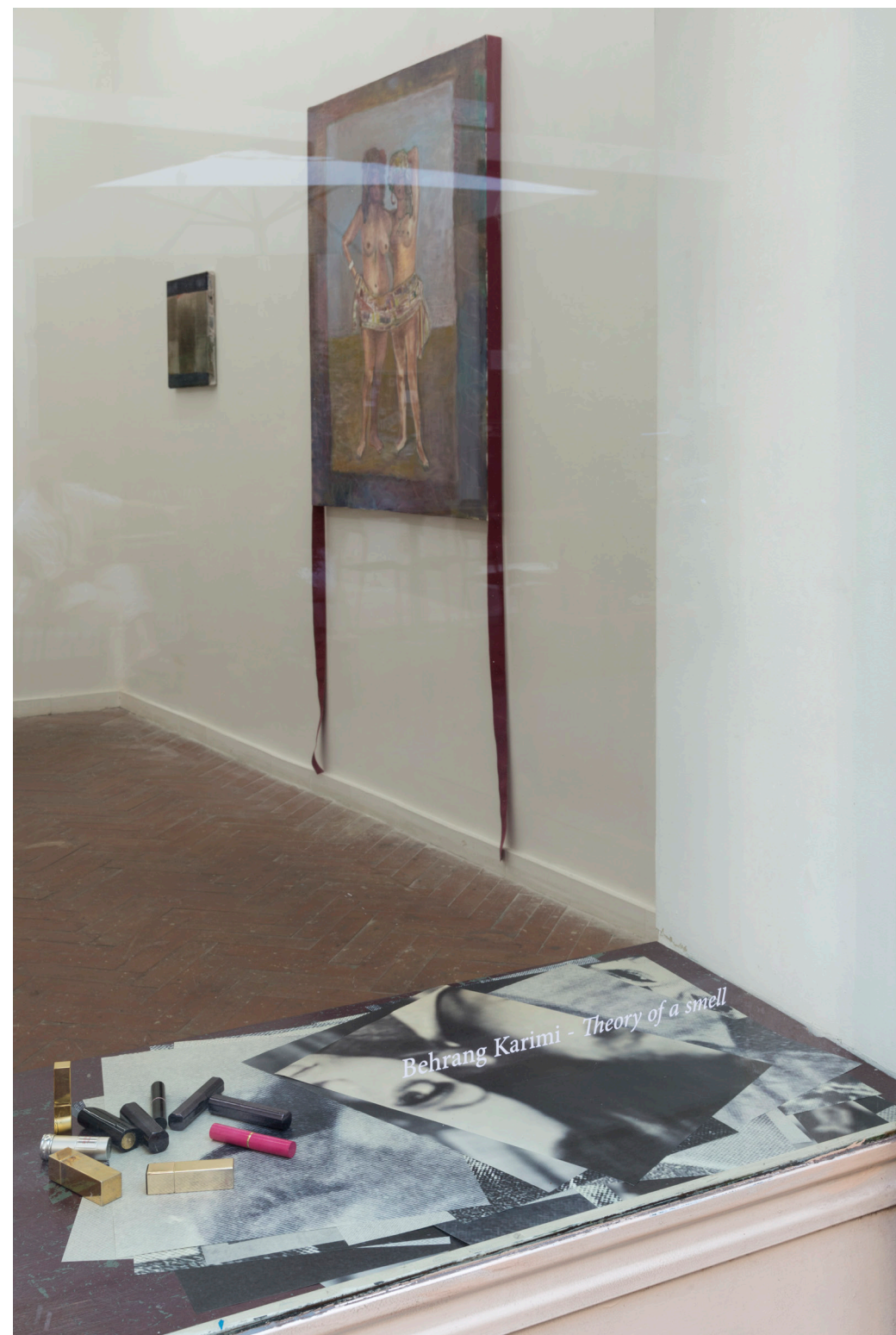
Behrang Karimi
Nocturne wall, 2012
Oil on canvas
40x40 cm (15,7x15,7")

Behrang Karimi
Nocturne wall, 2012 (detail)
Oil on canvas
40x40 cm (15,7x15,7")





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Behrang Karimi
Body of Revolution, 2024
Oil on canvas
120x120 cm (47,2x47,2")



Behrang Karimi
Body of Revolution, 2024 (detail)
Oil on canvas
120x120 cm (47,2x47,2")





Behrang Karimi
Body of Revolution, 2024 (detail)
Oil on canvas
120x120 cm (47,2x47,2")



Behrang Karimi, Theory of a smell, 2024, exhibition view, Ermenegildo Zegna, Rome, IT



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What makes You, You? What is it that brought you here to read these words? How can Curiosity stay alive if we are in the same moment talking about overkill of images, information, conflicts, crisis and so on... how can we continue to stay open and curious, when technology is already replacing thoughts, images, writing, decision making, nearly all cerebral activities are getting replaced. What stays are irreplaceable memories, the smell which you grow up with or place which had memories. This Space of Imagination is a Treasure Bunker.

I really can remember the smell of my mother lipstick and the combination of slightly garlic and old rose/opium sense. A heavy flowery note wich explodes in you mind and stay for a long while.

- Excerpt from a conversation with Behrang Karimi, June 2024

In a calligram from 1914-1915, Apollinaire envisioned a world governed by the law of scents, the “loi des odeurs,” where olfaction would dominate human life and consciousness. He imagined a life experienced through smell, much like animals do, with scents evoking memories of places and moments, repeatedly bringing them to life again. For Behrang Karimi, painting similarly springs from memory, which he explores as a house filled with rooms, corners and drawers. His visual language is a poetic and playful fusion of memories, literature, images, and responses to the complexities of contemporary society — a “Treasure Bunker”. Like music and poetry, his paintings are born from spontaneous associations, flourishing in the sensory realm.

In Karimi’s work, lipsticks, fantastical architectures and scenarios, and male and female figures layer upon one another in memory, never fully disappearing and re-emerging with vibrant energy. His paintings act as reverse mirrors, reflecting an inner world where traces of ourselves can be found. They create passages through time and transitional spaces, narrating dreams and stories from the unconscious. Karimi’s works are memory keepers, activating reminiscences. Through his dense brushstrokes and the evocative scent of old lipsticks, memories and images of a seemingly mythical past suddenly surface, like lucid revelations reminding us of who we were and who we might become.



Behrang Karimi (b.1980 in Shiraz, Iran) lives and works in Cologne, DE.

Selected solo and group exhibitions: 2024, Stories from the Ground, 9th Biennial of Painting, curated by Martin German at Museum Dhondt Dhaenens, Sint-Martens-Latem, BE (upcoming); Pocket Call, curated by Kathrin Bentele at Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, DE; 2023, Law of the Tent at Melas Martinos, Athens, GR; Suddenly the whole at Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf, DE; Solo presentation with Ermes Ermes at Palai, Lecce, IT; Landschaft at Galerie Khoshbakht, Cologne, DE; Dinge Weltweit at Maureen Paley & Studio M, London, UK; other view, inner world at Maureen Paley - Morena di Luna, Hove, UK; Stay Hungry at Ermes Ermes, Rome, IT; 2022, Bilder sprechen at Provinz Showroom, Bochum, DE; Rotpeter: Bild eines zur Dressur gezwungenen at Moon Grove, Manchester, UK; bacchus madness walking experiences at Ermes Ermes, Rome, IT; The Age at Shahin Zarinbal, Berlin, DE; Sweet Days of Discipline at Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles, CA, US; 2021, Coming for your job and wives at Tramps, London, UK; SPIT at Braunsfelder, Cologne, DE; Von der schenkenden Tugend at Zarinbal Khoshbakht, Cologne, DE; Fifteen Painters at Andrew Kreps, New York, US; 2020, Behrang Karimi at Zarinbal Khoshbakht, Cologne, DE; Any Day Now at Sprüth Magers, London, UK (online); Akademie Galerie at Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, DE; Space is the Place at Paul Wiersbinski, Hybrid Installation, Berlin, DE; Everything is Personal at Tramps, New York, NY, US; 2019, Alastair Mackinven and Behrang Karimi at Maureen Paley, London, UK; d-ream-ing at Pantaleons Muehlengasse, Cologne, DE; 2018, Here,Here., at Braunsfelder Family Collection, Cologne, DE; Salon des Amateurs at Tramps, London, UK 2016, Femdom at Pantaleonsmuehlengasse/Part1, Cologne, DE; 2014, Arbeiten aus dem Hinterkopf at Christopher Crescent, London, UK.