

April in Paris

Ceremonial Weight

October 6, 2024 - January 6, 2025

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With Y. Malik Jalal, Behrang Karimi, and Ruoru Mou
curated by Jennifer Teets

Ceremonial Weight is a three person exhibition joining new and existing works by Y. Malik Jalal, Behrang Karimi, and Ruoru Mou. The title is borrowed from the poem 'Ceremonial Weight' by Michael D. Snediker, a Houston, Texas based writer who is known for their writing on landscape and compressed lavishness.

Ceremonial Weight takes place in a home for art that emphasizes community, family, and friendship in its unique domestic context. This exhibition marks April in Paris' second collaboration with the American, Paris-based curator after *Conduit House*, an international group show held in the fall of 2023.

In 'Ceremonial Weight' Snediker describes a landscape, a kind of intimacy of conversation that for better and worse "acquires densities—debts and dents—of its own." Reading it we can sense a correspondence between scales, both in terms violence on the world's stage and between individuals. This "brutalizing aesthetics of war-chest plunder" as the author describes it, becomes the fertile ground for this eponymous exhibition encircling material discourses. Specifically how themes such as domesticity, inheritance, and personhood can be powerful markers of the associations between inner worlding, idiosyncratic myth, and meaning-making.

While being deeply personal, the poem reflects on "the world's present, including the overlapping and ever-developing sorrows that we are currently enduring." One might imagine it in conversation with **Y. Malik Jalal's** *SPANNO. 3* & *SPANNO. 4* (both 2024) that use the motif of the span that borrows from early mapping technologies, including map projections and sonography to achieve their signature shapes. These "framed" works, fashioned from welded steel include candid to posed family photographs, purchased by the artist on eBay, and stand at the center of each frame. Within, the artist crafts a landscape defined by personal memory, and the historical reevaluation of Black life in the southern United States. In *SPANNO. 4*, Jalal introduces a blown up image of a cut finger, a wound that reminds of an ever enduring past. Other collage elements range from civil war paraphernalia and graphic elements that touch on the comical, secular and religious. In *Untitled* (2024) the artist reflects on the art of communion, while consciously excluding the serving dish that it normally holds. Collectively, these works point to a space for microhistories to subsist.

In *Buleh* (2011) by **Behrang Karimi**, a wound is also visible. At first glance what one would think of as a turban, in fact is gauze located on the frontal lobe of an Indonesian man. Karimi is a masterful painter whose works offer glimpses of inner life —of trees, flowers, humans, plants, beings, entities, couples. The artist often works in a variety of formats, including small scale canvas, which a handful are included in *Ceremonial Weight* including *Bridge* (2020) and *Clouds* (2020) and *Trees* (2020). In *Trees*, Karimi reveals the fact that trees and humans share similar physical characteristics: upright, each with a crown on top and mobile limbs stemming from a central trunk; each shows its sentience, with no generic actions. In *Spring* (2020) Karimi works in a door size format, playing with scale to depict a scene of a young boy, sowing. The scribbled crayon lines in the bottom of the painting are childlike, but also the trees themselves have lines that appear vibrational, exuding a sense of aliveness. There is no temporality in Karimi's work, rather the sensation is one of time compounded. It is no surprise then that the artist often includes decades of work in one exhibition stitched together by material memory, revealing echoes of Persian culture, the Orient, a history of fairytale and the language of the 20th



Century European tradition. These fantastical and lyrical subjects detail how every painting becomes its own stage; where composition is the central question. Karimi's interest in literature and history manifests in *Epilog* (2020) a large-scale painting depicting a couple alone in a red crimson landscape, in a cryptic etherlike haze. Here, Karimi's method is not narrative, but driven by free association, cognitive stimulation, and a spirit of inquiry that creates a threshold between abstraction and figuration. It is here where enigmatic elements emerge in poignant ways.

Ruoru Mou's *Uouou Voyou* (2024) is a construct for a hypothetical product that forecasts the life of an existing handbag model that has been bootlegged. Using discarded leather and zamak hardware (clasps, springs and fixtures) from custom-fitted high-end fashion factories historically made by Chinese luxury bag workers, the not exactly right (for production) becomes the mainstay in Mou's work. In *Uouou Voyou* the artist puts two objects into conversation and ultimately 'dresses' a very low brow object, a restaurant grease trap, that serves as the work's vital organ. Considered as a prototype for models to come, *Uouou Voyou* exposes a labor chain, a network of diasporic families working in leather factories in and around Florence, and the enduring conditions of their labor.

Uouou Voyou

Borrowing from the French word for "bad boy," Uouou Medium shoulder bag is a bold complement to the season's look. Made from slightly reflective stainless steel and greasy gelatin lining, the robust style is beautifully set off by polished palladium finish hardware. A pleasure to carry.

Internal details: greased gelatin lining, two compartments

Closure: open top

Designer color name: Silver

Made in Italy

Material: stainless steel, leather bag mould, plexiglass, gelatin, glycerin, restaurant grease, food coloring, leather, hardwares, machine sewing needles

Dimensions:

Detachable shoulder strap

Item number: RO01



Bios artists

Y. Malik Jalal (b. 1994, Savannah, Georgia, USA) utilizes traditional craft and collage techniques to explore themes of Black history, power and humanity. By merging materials like steel and iron with an index of found photos depicting Black American family life in unexpected and intimate moments, he addresses the transformation of industries and inequalities, referencing both the legacy of metal artisans in the South and pop culture. Jalal received his MFA in Sculpture from Yale University in 2024. Recent group exhibitions include *The Apple Stretching*, Helena Anrather, NYC, NY (2024); *The sea swept the sandcastles away*, MARCH Gallery, NYC, NY (2024); *Go Tell it on the Mountain*, Swivel Gallery, NYC, NY (2024); *I've Gone to Look for America*, Murmurs, Los Angeles, CA (2023); and solo exhibitions *Bent*, MARCH Gallery, NYC, NY (2022). He was a recent resident at Fonderie Darling in Montreal, Canada and has a forthcoming solo exhibition with MARCH Gallery, NYC, NY, to open in late October 2024.

Behrang Karimi (b. 1980, Shiraz, Iran) lives and works in Cologne, Germany. Karimi's paintings, drawings, objects, and multiples, are extremely varied in style and differ formally from abstraction to figuration, combining multiple influences, including Eastern and Western myth, history, symbolism and spirituality. Tending to the metaphor and parable, his work "is 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." Recent group exhibitions include *Stories from the Ground*, 9th Biennial of Painting, curated by Martin German at Museum Dhondt Dhaenens, Sint-Martens-Latem, BE (2024); *Vagabondi*, TRAMPS, La Pulce, Rome, IT (2024); *Ghosts Shimmer in Sunlight*, Thirsk Hall Sculpture Garden, Thirsk, UK (2024); solo exhibitions *Theory of a smell*, Ermes Ermes, Rome, Italy (2024); *Pocket Call*, Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, DE (2024), amongst others.

Ruoru Mou (b. 1997, Florence, Italy) lives and works between Amsterdam and Florence. She graduated from Central Saint Martins in 2020 and is currently a participant at De Ateliers. Her recent enquiry concerns the complex relationship between labour and international trade marked by her own experiences with migration. She works predominantly through personal encounters, looking at the social structures under which Chinese workers have toiled in restaurant businesses and leather factories in and around Florence, Italy. Recent solo and group exhibitions include *On Feeling*, The Approach, London, UK (2024); *Leftover Linings*, San Mei Gallery, London, UK (2024); *Cozzie Livs*, Des Bains, London, UK (2023).

Bio curator

Jennifer Teets is a Houston, Texas-born curator and writer based in Paris since 2009 working at the intersection of poetics of science and technology, material culture, literature, and performance. She has curated numerous exhibitions and talks since the early 2000s with artists and thinkers worldwide. She was recently the 2024 curator of Offspring: *Underbelly* at De Ateliers, Amsterdam where she also was a guest tutor. Her forthcoming book *Intimate confession is a project* is a complement to the exhibition of the same name held at the Blaffer Art Museum, University of Houston in 2023/2024 and co-published by Inventory Press. She has written extensively for *Artforum*, *e-flux (art-agenda, Art + Education)*, *frieze*, *Mousse*, *Topical Cream*, *SPIKE*, and *Terremoto*, amongst others.



CEREMONIAL WEIGHT

We too the sinking shore,
bewildered in
its haste.

The time of geometry is over.
Yet here our bodies
are.

Sugar meat salt.
Lying tenderized in both.

& the little Mars art in
the war of its chest.

Child of the jewel & of syllable tong.
Tearing out the grass like a noise
in the cloud &

I'm back in trout lily rain.
Wishing only to indicate
that it rings.

Splayed against this privacy collage
like a hole in the plank.

Over the lawn or abandoned to
the track with a little
Emersonian wet in his eyes.

& finding jade
in the river where
the moonlight reflects
it back.

- Michael D. Snediker

