

*What We Know that We Don't Know*, organized by KADIST San Francisco and curated by Arash Fayezi, presents works by eight contemporary artists: Nazgol Ansarinia, A.K. Burns, Nicolás Consuegra, Trisha Donnelly, Claire Fontaine, Ha Tae-Bum, Walid Raad, and Miljohn Ruperto. The exhibition explores the poetic space of paradox, where works intentionally provide multiple angles of interpretation and opposing meanings collide.

Many artists and practitioners navigate in paradoxical forms and representations: the fact and the fiction; the public and the private; the outer and the inner; the *muḥkamāt* (clear) and the *mutashābihāt* (ambiguous); and the *bāṭin* (esoteric) and the *ẓāhir* (exoteric) [see Jalal Toufic's *The Withdrawal of Tradition Past a Surpassing Disaster*, page 18-19]. Moreover, the various meanings interpreted through these equivocal states exist conjunctively. The paradox, and so the ambivalence, are created when meanings and interpretations are connected with “and” (and not “or”); when we switch between fact and fiction; when we move between public and private; and when we don't know and we do know.

*What We Know that We Don't Know* draws inspiration from poetic tendencies in Persian literature, where metaphor, irony, and paradox are understood as devices that allow artists to encode their opinions in complex cultural and political circumstances. In a cultural context, this is best illustrated through the concept of *ta'arof*, which designates a set of social behaviors defining how people should live in society and treat each other. A host is obliged, for example, to offer anything a guest might desire, while the visitor, in equal measure, is obliged to refuse it.

This exhibition is part of a KADIST initiative dedicated to commissioning exhibitions, artworks, and events that deepen the organization's engagement in the Middle East and augment its proximity to artists from Iran.

The title of the exhibition is inspired by an essay by Barbad Golshiri *For They Know What They Do Know* on e-flux.

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