

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
FATEMEH BURNES | *CAPRICCIO*

Nov 15 - Dec 16, 2018
Opening Reception Thursday, Nov 15th, 6-8PM

HIGH NOON is proud to present **Fatemeh Burnes'** New York solo debut, ***Capriccio***. Burnes' work across media prods at the seemingly diametrically opposed concepts of "nature" versus "human nature." She references events, tragedies, and cultural chasms both current and historical interwoven with autobiographical elements examining her childhood in Iran, her father's imprisonment (under both Shah and Ayatollah), her early adolescence as a child bride, and her life as an immigrant. Deeply imbued with art historical knowledge and practice, the paintings in the exhibition straddle Abstract Expressionism, Surrealism, Constructivism, and Persian Miniatures.

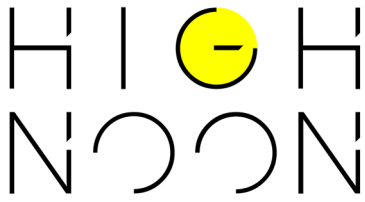
"Capriccio" by definition is a piece of music that is free-form, but also refers to spontaneous movement, and in the case of Burnes' work, spontaneous association. The term has also been applied to fantastical landscape paintings depicting out-of-place architectural elements. Because of her gender and culture, Burnes was deprived of access to the study of both music and architecture.

"These works examine the impact of various kinds of artistic illiteracy upon cultural perception," she states. "As an educator, I sense an irony about teaching in a culture that you immigrated to and in which you've had to recontextualize not only yourself, but your understanding of the world and its systems. I've found myself exploring the idea of literacy and if being limited and, therefore, challenged helps force innovation."

This exploration is echoed in Burnes' painting process, wherein she purposely sets up challenges to push through, particularly with surfaces that are difficult to work on or pose archival concerns of unusual multimedia. Such a situation, in which the paint wants control without being necessarily workable, creates a discord that keeps Burnes constantly engaged and contributes to the metaphorical resonance found in her style of abstraction. Each painting is a non-linear narrative constructed through a dialogue of form, materiality, and complex layering. The surfaces contain numerous worlds within worlds, in great part by virtue of their diversity, often including traces of hand-made paper, asphalt, carving, etc. The forms vacillate between coarse and articulate rendering. Burnes invites us to read into the forms, to consider their interaction with the space. Deciphering the layers is like traveling down a rabbit hole of latent associations as gesture becomes crystalline and geological or patterned colonies, like coral.

Throughout the work, the only definitively recognizable elements are tiny origami-like houses, reminiscent of model units in a planned community or eerily perfect shacks in an abandoned landscape. While they symbolize basic shelter, they don't feel inhabitable, nor are they particular to any culture. The surrounding composition is more dynamic than the houses, spreading and undulating in sharp contrast to the jarring familiarity of the house shape. Other works, while featuring architectural elements, are decidedly less obvious, with the overlapping of dark, hard edges like the workings of a factory. The gestural aspects of the painting also simulate motion within a scene, so that the works are not only formal, but read as a sort of urban landscape.

The largest painting, *Playground*, is approximately 12 ft. in width and comprises four panels, one of which is inlaid horizontally in the middle panel. The painting is a maelstrom of invented gestural and architectural forms with clearly defined space, and an almost animated quality, reminiscent of the techno-organic mutation at the end of the classic 1988 anime, *Akira*. The title, referring to the frivolity of Burnes' gestural mark-making as well as the structural components amidst the chaos, presents a dystopic irony on the subject of safe spaces. A playground isn't always a place for children, and games have different stakes. In the lower right corner of the painting, transitioned almost seamlessly into the scene, is a dilapidated cityscape. It immediately conjures images of bombings and rubble, the ubiquity of which folds into our visual vocabulary to the point of passive recognition. With extreme dexterity and a sensitivity to structural elements, Burnes forces us past our expectation of painting, particularly of abstraction, to find unexpected connections amidst formal and psychological conditions.



Fatemeh Burnes is a visual artist, educator, curator and activist based in Los Angeles. She obtained her formal and informal training in the visual arts, received her BFA and MFA, and did additional graduate studies in art history and exhibition design. Since 1992, she has curated over 100 exhibitions, authored numerous publications, and conducted art-education documentaries. Burnes has been exhibiting nationally and internationally and her work focuses on nature and human nature, looking at modern events and tragedies and how those events manifest in contemporary life. Her most current work has taken an autobiographical turn in context of her experience as an immigrant and a woman. These pieces share the same thread, regardless of their home or location and her purpose as an activist is to learn about her world through hours of studies, connecting to her neighbors, or through whatever method possible within her means.

Please join us for the opening reception Thursday, November 15th from 6-8PM. Refreshments will be served, and a full-color, limited edition catalog of the exhibition will be published and available for purchase. For any additional information about the exhibition or **HIGH NOON's** programming, please contact Jared Linge at jared@highnoongallery.com, or call 760.519.1956.