

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
LOS ANGELES

Shulamit Gallery is pleased to present a solo exhibition by regional artist **Doni Silver Simons** and new media work in our Project Space by Iranian artist **Pouya Afshar**. Both examine our core understanding of the human experience through the investigation of the passage of time. Silver Simons and Afshar unite in exploring the narrative traditions of folklore in Western and Eastern cultures. They delve into the metaphor of the artist cloistered in the studio -- the familiar trope of the solitary figure, offering the viewer a unique window into the artist's subconscious. Climactically, each comments on the moment of inspiration.

Doni Silver Simons

dé•noue•ment (n.)

the outcome of a sequence of events

Origin: Old French, meaning untying

March 19 - May 18, 2013

Opening Event: Thursday, March 21, 6-9 PM

This event is open to the public.

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Doni Silver Simons earned her Bachelor of Studio Arts degree from the University of Pittsburgh in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and holds a Master of Fine Arts from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. Across multiple mediums, Silver Simons explores the marking of time, identity, and memory. Silver Simons' work has been shown in museums and galleries in the United States, Europe and Israel, and her pieces are included in many private and public collections. She has recently shown in the Museum of Art, Ein Harod, Israel; the Wolfson Museum, Jerusalem, Israel; the Pacific Standard Time exhibition, *Breaking in Two* (curated by Bruria Finkel), and her documentary film *Omer 5769* premiered at the 22nd-annual Washington D.C. Jewish Film Festival in 2011.



Featured in *dé•noue•ment (n.)* are two seminal bodies of work. The title references both the metaphoric and literal aspects of Silver Simons' work. Featured in the main gallery are three totemic works originating from the classic fairytale, *Rumpelstiltskin*. They take on the

lyrical facets of storytelling as residuum of her durational performances. As part of her discourse, Silver Simons literally deconstructs her primary medium: the canvas.

In a dramatic gesture, she unravels her artwork much like the miller's daughter in the classic tale tasked with the impossible -- to spin straw into gold. She displays the fallen strands in various vessels and has created a video project looping the twine, drifting gingerly downward. It is these elements that are suggestive of the exhibition's title, *dénouement*, originating from old French, meaning to untie or undo. The cloistered nature of the miller's daughter resonated deeply with the artist, seeing her quest as a parable to the *modernist ideal of the artist tucked away in the atelier -- seeking revelation and creation.*

*Doni Silver Simons
Homage to a Fairytale
(Detail), 2012*

The second body of work on display is from Silver Simons' recent *Caesura* series from 2012. These two undertakings are linked by the artist's ongoing interest in literature. By definition, the term caesura is the breath of air inhaled before reading a line of poetry. Here, the artist alludes to the primordial narrative of creation: breath, life, and water. The paintings in the *Caesura* series reference the coastline, the ocean, and the tides. *Tidal* and *Tied* employ layers of paint, washes of pigment, and drawn allusions to the tide schedule. An abstracted lunar calendar reflects the magnetic pull of the moon and the sun on the tides. The effects are enigmatic. The subtle use of color creates a delicate juxtaposition to the monochromatic works in the fairytale series.

For Silver Simons, both series are about transition and transformation - how we transition from breath to speech/introspection to action, how we transform the mundane into meaningful experiences, and how we attempt to retain the essence of each experience despite the inexorable "deconstruction" of time as it passes.

Pouya Afshar

*The Mystery of Süveyda:
Within the Artists Mind*

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Pouya Afshar moved from Iran to the U.S. in 2000 to study film, animation and illustration. His videos, new media installations, and

figurative paintings have been exhibited widely in Iran and Los Angeles, including locally at the J. Paul Getty Center. He has received numerous awards and recognition from the Marc Davis Foundation and Walt Disney. Currently, he teaches New Media at the Art Institute of California.

Afshar delves deep into the psyche of the artist and the immigrant in his latest new media installation, entitled *The Mystery of Süveyda: Within the Artists Mind*. In this work, Afshar blurs the lines between our conscious and subconscious. Creating a solitary room, he emulates the sensation of an artist struggling with the limitations of his/her own imagination. In a theatrical way, Afshar opens up a fourth wall, allowing the viewer to step into a three-walled enclosure. Here, the audience is confronted by three images: a window looking out onto a faraway landscape, a fetus growing within a mechanized womb, and a running horse whose gauntly gate is heightened by the animals exposed tendons. These images projected on an imagined stone edifice are meant to be mysterious, overwhelming and provocative. Reminiscent of a prison cell, the space invigorates metaphors of time elapsing.

Once the viewer turns away from this walled room, the final element is revealed. Tucked away in the corner is a touchstone amid reality; we see a glimpse of the artist's studio: complete with desk, chair and monitor. The participant is invited to sit and view several illustrative short films. Afshar, as artist and creator, highlights deeply buried fears, questions and concerns. In the Sufi mystical tradition, this process takes place in the form of a small black dot upon the heart: the *Süveyda*. For Afshar, *Süveyda* is an atelier that seldom allows him to explore the depths of his being.

Shulamit Gallery, founded by owner and director Shulamit Nazarian, began as a roaming gallery in the spring of 2006. Shulamit is pleased to be expanding to her first flagship space in Venice, California at 17 North Venice Boulevard, adjacent to the ocean. The gallery supports work that is aesthetically innovative, socially engaged, and that fosters dialogue and views the artist as a cultural ambassador. Devoted to building bridges between our regional and global community, Shulamit Gallery focuses on the Middle East with a special interest in Israeli, Iranian and Jewish artists.

Shulamit Gallery is deeply rooted in the Persian value of mehman navaz, meaning hospitality. In Hebrew, this is expressed as hakhnasat orchim. The gallery is a place where people from diverse communities are welcomed. Our programming explores the role of art and culture in assimilation, acculturation, the shifting of geographical boundaries, personal identity and in how racism and religious persecution negatively impact our society. Shulamit Gallery strives to use art as a platform to create a more inclusive and hospitable future.

To learn more about Shulamit Gallery, our exhibition schedule and programming, please visit our website: www.shulamitgallery.com

Khosh amadid. We look forward to welcoming you!