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A Second Coming

Tagreed Darghouth



Born in 1979, Saida, Lebanon, Tagreed Darghouth studied fine arts at the Lebanese University in Beirut as well as earned a diploma in art education. She then went on to study space art at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris. Tagreed's social and political themes draw attention to hidden forms of violence and the misconception of the other. For example, in her "Canticle of Death" exhibition, 2011, her paintings drew attention to the irony of the contrast between the colorful innuendos given to weapons of mass destruction and their lethal purposes. Tagreed has exhibited in solo and group shows that have taken her all over the globe from Singapore, Buenos Aires, Paris, Istanbul, Dubai, London, Munich, Miami, New York and Brussels. She attended Ayloul's summer academy for young Arab artists at Darat al Funun, directed by artist Marwan Kassab Bashi, in Amman, Jordan in 2001.

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The exhibition *A Second Coming* highlights paintings from Tagreed Darghouth's 2013 series 'Nuclear Craters', where she explores the nuclear testing terrain in the vast Nevada desert. Exhibited again at a time when Elon Musk's SpaceX sent its first rocket, *Falcon Heavy*, to outer space, which begs the question: why are humans planning the colonization of other planets? The nuclear tests featured in Darghouth's work were driven by the arms race during the cold war, which was further propelled by the space race. Inspired by these events, Darghouth's works advertently show the devastating impact of nuclear weapons on the land. In her paintings, the artist depicts plots of land radically fractured and sometimes removed from their context in compositions that push beyond the traditional mediums of representation. Employing multiple perspectives that adhere to recognizable compositions, the subject matter of these works seems to cohere solely on an individual basis rather than a collective one. Through various repetitions and representations of the same crater from a range of angles, the surfaces of the works appear as a plane that moves fluidly between dimensions. The relationship between craters and the landscape alter the ground upon which our visual senses rely, creating a destabilized, surreal yet familiar tension.

There is a reason, beyond the mere fantasy of it, that Elon Musk's SpaceX is undertaking measures to colonize Mars, linking back to the inevitable fear of a nuclear apocalypse. The title of the exhibition *A Second Coming* alludes to this cryptic foreshadowing of a possible nuclear war. The notion of collapse acquires darker connotations when understood throughout the subject of the paintings – evoking themes of preparing, covering up and ultimately exposing a premeditated destruction.

