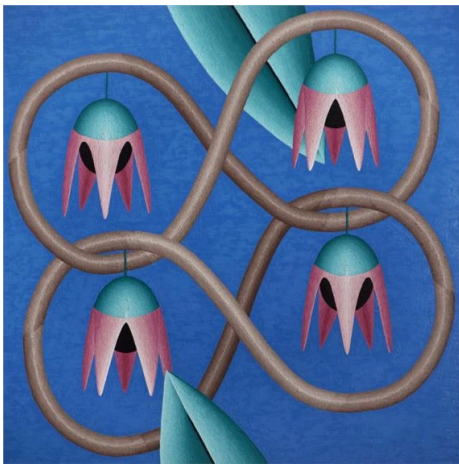


Nadia Ayari: We Saw Stars

Taymour Grahne Projects, Notting Hill

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"Maybe this is a dream version of a world where branches are loops, skies are bright blue, and leaves are untethered," Nadia Ayari deliberates about the paintings in *We Saw Stars*. Here, she allows herself to restructure her rules and process of painting. Materializing a constellation of metaphors that bend in and out of past and future time, a loop, viewed from an observation deck in the depths of a universe blue like lapis lazuli. *We Saw Stars* references that moment of emergence from the underworld, "Where we came forth, and once more saw the stars," Dante's poem evokes a resurfacing, also conjured here in Ayari's process and tribute to Nejma, her grandmother whose name also signifies these incandescent gases from light years away, a supernova that has provided the artist with a renewed anchoring clarity and unfixing gravity.

Traveling in and out of the frame, the elements repeat in sets of three: the branch, the leaf, the flower. The central figure, this time, a spiny pink sprout. Its pointed petals drape like armor, exposing or concealing a piercing pupil at its dark center. The plant's form and characteristics are a synthesis of former protagonists, the eye and flower, which inhabited Ayari's earlier paintings from 2006 to 2010. She describes the eye as a provocation, while the bulbous protrusion surrounded by petals arrange machinations. In *Jetty II* (2020) two branches bend towards one another. Each of them lined with a series of pink flowers that hang upwards and down the branches. The petals hanging above peer at the flowers below, whose dilated pupils gaze right back up, a repeating one-eyed monster staring back at itself in awe. Branches twist in infinity and the flowers blossom within as giant leaves tend to the pods in *Loop III* (2021). The paint as material reveals a highly designed surface and a texture captive by the repetitive interaction of the brush. The effect produces a viscosity and thickness to the painting's surface that is both a crust and an image at once.

Artists on show

Nadia Ayari

Contact details

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