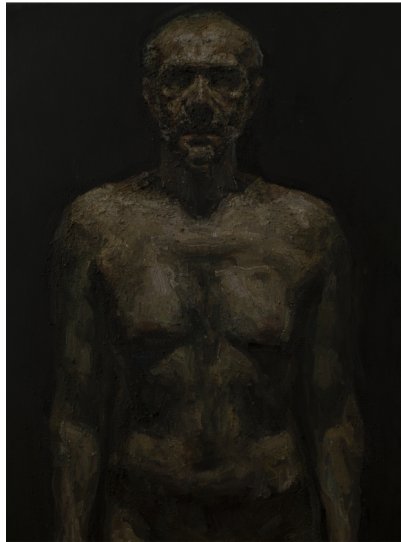
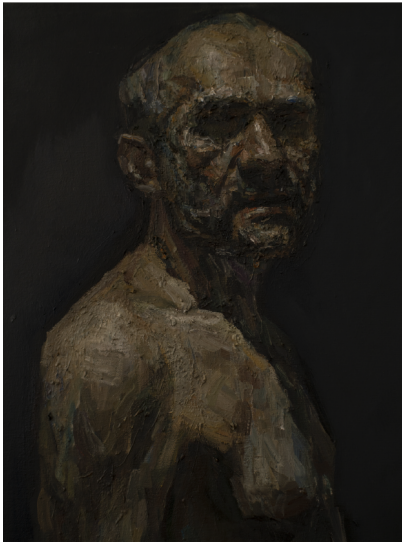


***In The Shadows* by Fereidoun Ghaffari**

Mentor: Phong Bui

Exhibition Dates: June 9th – July 9th, 2022

Opening Reception: Thursday, June 9th, 6–8 pm



Details from *Self-Portrait* series, Fereidoun Ghaffari. 2006–ongoing, oil on canvas.

New York, NY – *In the Shadows* is a solo exhibition at CUE Art Foundation by Fereidoun Ghaffari, with curatorial mentorship from Phong Bui. The exhibition opens on Thursday, June 9th with a public reception from 6–8 pm. *In the Shadows* will remain on view at CUE’s gallery space from Tuesdays through Saturdays until July 9th, 2022. CUE is located at 137 West 25th Street, New York. Attendance is free and open to the public; no reservation is needed.

About the Exhibition

In the Shadows presents a series of self-portraits by Fereidoun Ghaffari rendered in thickly layered and textured oil paint, from close ups of his face to full body paintings at scale. The works on view as part of the show represent only a small portion of Ghaffari’s ongoing series of self-portraits, which he began in 2006. In these paintings, stripped bare of any markers that might suggest a particular culture or time, Ghaffari – who was raised in Iran and is currently based in Brooklyn – resists the politicization of his art. For the artist, painting is “a process of digging into the inner self,” and a quest for intimacy and meaning that is universally human.

Through his repetitive and continuous process, Ghaffari uses painting to consider the basic elements of humanity. Years in the making, *In the Shadows* at CUE Art Foundation is the debut exhibition of Ghaffari’s self-portraiture series and marks the artist’s first solo exhibition in New York – and the first time he invites a public audience to witness the outcomes of his private and solitary practice.

Having followed Ghaffari's work in the past four years, mentor Phong Bui locates it within a Western art historical understanding of self-portraiture, from Jan van Eyck's *Portrait of a Man* to Rembrandt's lifetime practice of using himself as a subject; from Picasso's cubist and surrealist representations of self to Frida Kahlo's *Self-Portrait with Thorn Necklace and Hummingbird*. Like these earlier works, Ghaffari's self-portraits convey an evolution of the self over time, and are "predicated upon a necessity to engage in a mediation upon life's experiences in totality, or to confront the deeper aspects of [oneself] from within."

Unlike these historical examples, however, few of Ghaffari's self-portraits presented as part of *In the Shadows* are considered by the artist to be finished. Observes catalogue essayist Sinclair Spratley: "Ghaffari's paintings reveal that the project of self-making is ever developing and changing; what seems like a stable self-image one day can look like a distorted, incorrect projection the next. In this way, Ghaffari refuses to be lockstep with other painting practices that permit easy access to the work's content or internal logic, rather challenging the viewer to sit uncomfortably with confrontation. An encounter with such rawness and vulnerability brings the self-making project of the work into fuller view; while one may not 'see' themselves in the work, they might begin to understand that they, too, are an iterative conglomeration of dozens of views, perspectives, and poses that might, one day, add up to a singular project."

About the Artist

Fereidoun Ghaffari was born in Tehran, Iran. He studied painting at the University of Art in Tehran, earning a BFA in 1998 and an MFA in 2002. In 2003, he was accepted as a guest student for a special studies program at Konstfack, University College of Arts, Crafts and Design in Stockholm, Sweden. He returned to Tehran in 2004 and taught in universities there until 2006, when he moved to New York and enrolled in the New York Academy of Art, attaining his second MFA in painting in 2008.

In 2013, Ghaffari had a solo show of self-portraits at the Tarahan-Azad Gallery in Tehran. Group exhibitions include *EDGE* (Emkan Gallery, Tehran – 2018); *In Between, Contemporary Iranian Art*, curated by Shahram Karimi (MANA Contemporary, Jersey City – 2017); *VISAGE: Image of Self*, curated by Fereydoun Ave (O Gallery, Tehran – 2016); and *SELF: Portraits of Artists in Their Absence*, curated by Filippo Fossati (National Museum Academy of Fine Arts, New York – 2015). Awards include a Leslie T. Posey and Frances U. Posey Foundation Grant (Sarasota, Florida – 2008); The Elizabeth Greenshields Foundation Grant (Montreal, Canada – 2003); and First Prize at the Fifth Biennial of Contemporary Iranian Painting (Tehran – 2000). Ghaffari currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

About the Mentor

Phong H. Bui is an artist, writer, independent curator, and Co-Founder and Publisher/Artistic Director of the *Brooklyn Rail*, Rail Editions, River Rail, and Rail Curatorial Projects. Bui has organized more than sixty exhibitions since 2000, including an ongoing curatorial project called *Artists Need to Create on the Same Scale that Society Has the Capacity to Destroy*, which was exhibited as an official collateral event of the 2019 Venice Biennale *Mare Nostrum*; at Colby

Museum in Waterville, Maine in the exhibition *Occupy Coby*; and in *Singing in Unison*, presented in ten galleries and art spaces across New York City in 2022. In 2014, Bui was named one of the “100 Most Influential People in Brooklyn Culture” by *Brooklyn Magazine*, and in 2015, the *New York Observer* dubbed him a “ringmaster” of the Kings County art world. From 2007 to 2010, he served as Curatorial Advisor at MoMA PS1. He has been a senior critic in the MFA programs at Yale, Columbia University, and University of Pennsylvania, and has taught graduate seminars in the MFA programs in Writing and Criticism and Photography, Video, and Related Media at the School of Visual Arts.

Bui has received numerous awards, including the Jetté Award for Leadership in the Arts, Colby College Museum of Art (2019); The Lunder Fellowship, The Lunder Institute for American Art (2019); The Dorothea and Leo Rabkin Foundation Prize in Fine Art Journalism (2017); an honorary doctorate from University of the Arts (2020); and the American Academy of Arts and Letters’ Award for Distinguished Service to the Arts (2021). He has served as a board member of many organizations, including the International Association of Art Critics (2007-2019), Anthology Film Archives, Artfare, Denniston Hill, Fountain House, Louis Comfort Tiffany Foundation, Mildred’s Lane, Monira Foundation, Second Shift Studio Space St. Paul, Sharpe-Walentas Studio Program, Studio in a School, the *Miami Rail* (2012-2018), and the *Third Rail*. Bui lives in Greenpoint, Brooklyn.

About CUE Art Foundation

CUE Art Foundation is a nonprofit organization that works with and for emerging and underrecognized artists and art workers to create new opportunities and present varied perspectives in the arts. Through our gallery space and public programs, we foster the development of thought-provoking exhibitions and events, create avenues for mentorship, cultivate relationships amongst peers and the public, and facilitate the exchange of ideas. For more information about CUE, visit www.cueartfoundation.org.

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