

WHAT PERSISTS

MOSLEM KHEZRI





Cover: (Detail) Moslem Khezri, *We Keep Reviewing 90*, 2025, Oil on canvas
Inner Cover: (Detail) Moslem Khezri, *We Keep Reviewing 16*, 2017, Pencil on paper
Back: (Detail) Moslem Khezri, *We Keep Reviewing 90*, 2025, Oil on canvas

What Persists: Moslem Khezri

Aicon Contemporary | 35 Great Jones St, New York, NY, 10012

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On View February 12 – March 21, 2026**Opening Reception** February 12, 7:00 PM

35 Great Jones Street, New York, NY

This exhibition brings together recent works by Moslem Khezri, presented at Aicon Contemporary in collaboration with Sarai Gallery, under conditions shaped by rupture, distance, and uncertainty. The exhibition was profoundly affected by the ongoing crisis in Iran.

Originally, this season was conceived around a different curatorial framework. Yet in light of the unfolding and deeply destabilizing events in Iran—marked by political unrest, state violence, and the intensification of uncertainty—the gallery felt compelled to shift course. *What Persists* emerges from that pivot: in times of upheaval and unrest, we must still keep the art close and follow course.

In this sense, the exhibition exists not outside history, but within it—subject to interruption, constraint, and emotional gravity. In times of upheaval, immediacy dominates. News cycles accelerate, narratives harden, and positions polarize. Yet beneath the surface of public crisis lies another terrain: the slow, interior landscape of lived experience. Khezri's work inhabits this quieter space. Rooted in reflections on memory, repetition, and narration, *What Persists* considers how experience survives—not as fixed documentation, but as something reshaped, revised, and continually negotiated through recall.

Drawing from the environment of Iranian all-boys schools, Khezri's ongoing series *We Keep Re-*

viewing evokes a system of repetition embedded in education: lessons repeated, rules reinforced, histories recited. Yet it also gestures toward a psychological condition. To review is to return, to examine again, to test what remains. In the context of Iran's present realities—where personal freedoms, cultural identities, and generational aspirations are continually scrutinized and contested—this act of reviewing takes on expanded resonance. Memory itself becomes an act of persistence.

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Khezri approaches memory as inherently unstable. Narratives, he suggests, can only emerge through distance. To remember is also to forget; detail dissolves so that meaning may take shape. His figurative compositions hold this tension carefully. Faces are often obscured or generalized. Bodies are defined less by individuality than by posture and relational spacing. Light drifts across surfaces in muted tonalities, as if filtered through time. Atmosphere replaces precision. What cannot be fully recounted is allowed to linger.

In these works, repetition does not imply stagna-

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tion. Instead, it becomes a method of accumulation. Each return to a scene alters it. Each recollection reshapes its emotional contour. The classroom—often perceived as a site of order, discipline, and institutional authority—transforms into a symbolic space where identity is rehearsed and internalized. Hierarchies are learned. Silences are absorbed. Bonds are formed in the margins. Over time, these formative environments exceed their physical boundaries, becoming metaphors for broader social structures.

The decision to mount *What Persists* now acknowledges that safety—political, cultural, even personal—is never guaranteed. As recent events in Iran underscore, structures that promise stability can quickly reveal their fragility. In such moments, what remains is not certainty, but memory. And memory is not static; it is revised continuously in response to the present.

Khezri's paintings do not depict protest or overt conflict. Instead, they explore the quieter architecture beneath public turbulence: the shaping of selfhood in controlled environments, the tension between conformity and individuality, the rituals that define belonging. By returning to the formative spaces of youth, the artist suggests that what persists is not a single narrative, but a layered accumulation of gestures, atmospheres, and shared experiences that endure even when institutions falter.

In revisiting the scenes of his youth, Moslem Khezri does not seek nostalgia. He seeks continuity—an understanding of how identity forms, fractures, and reforms under pressure. In doing so, he reminds us that persistence is not loud. It is cumulative. It resides in return, in quiet endurance, in the spaces

between what is remembered and what is allowed to be said.

What Persists stands as both reflection and insistence: that even amid uncertainty, memory remains a site of agency—and that through the act of reviewing, something essential continues to endure.

(Detail) Moslem Khezri, *We Keep Reviewing* 72, 2024, Watercolor and colored pencil on cardboard



Moslem Khezri. Courtesy of SARAI Gallery.



MOSLEM KHEZRI

Born 1984, Iran

A figurative artist with roots in Southern Iran, Moslem Khezri frequently explores the interplay between the human body and space, employing diverse spectrums of natural light to create delicate atmospheres within his paintings. Khezri aims to encapsulate the inner truth hidden within otherwise mundane moments. His images ultimately transcend time and location to become visual playfields that his figures can interact with. His *We Keep Reviewing* series delves into the Iranian all-boys school environment. Beyond mere representation, these paintings illuminate the underlying complexities and hidden narratives woven into seemingly ordinary school scenes. Similarly, *In Between* is another deeply personal yet culturally resonant series by Khezri. It explores the challenges of immigration in Iran and the experiences of being caught in the choice between leaving or staying -- a dichotomy that has profoundly shaped the lives and identities of much of Khezri's generation.

Moslem Khezri holds an MA in Painting from Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran. Khezri's work has been prominently featured by SARAI Gallery in regional and international art centers such as Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Chicago, Seoul, Busan, Paris, and New York's prestigious The Armory Show in 2021, where the gallery was awarded the Presents Booth Prize. His art is now part of the renowned Dubai and Abu Dhabi Collections.



Moslem Khezri
We Keep Reviewing 88, 2025
Oil on canvas
9.87 x 9.87 in



Moslem Khezri
We Keep Reviewing 72, 2024
Watercolor and colored pencil on cardboard
7.24 x 9 in

(Detail) Moslem Khezri, *We Keep Reviewing* 75, 2024, Watercolor and colored pencil on cardboard

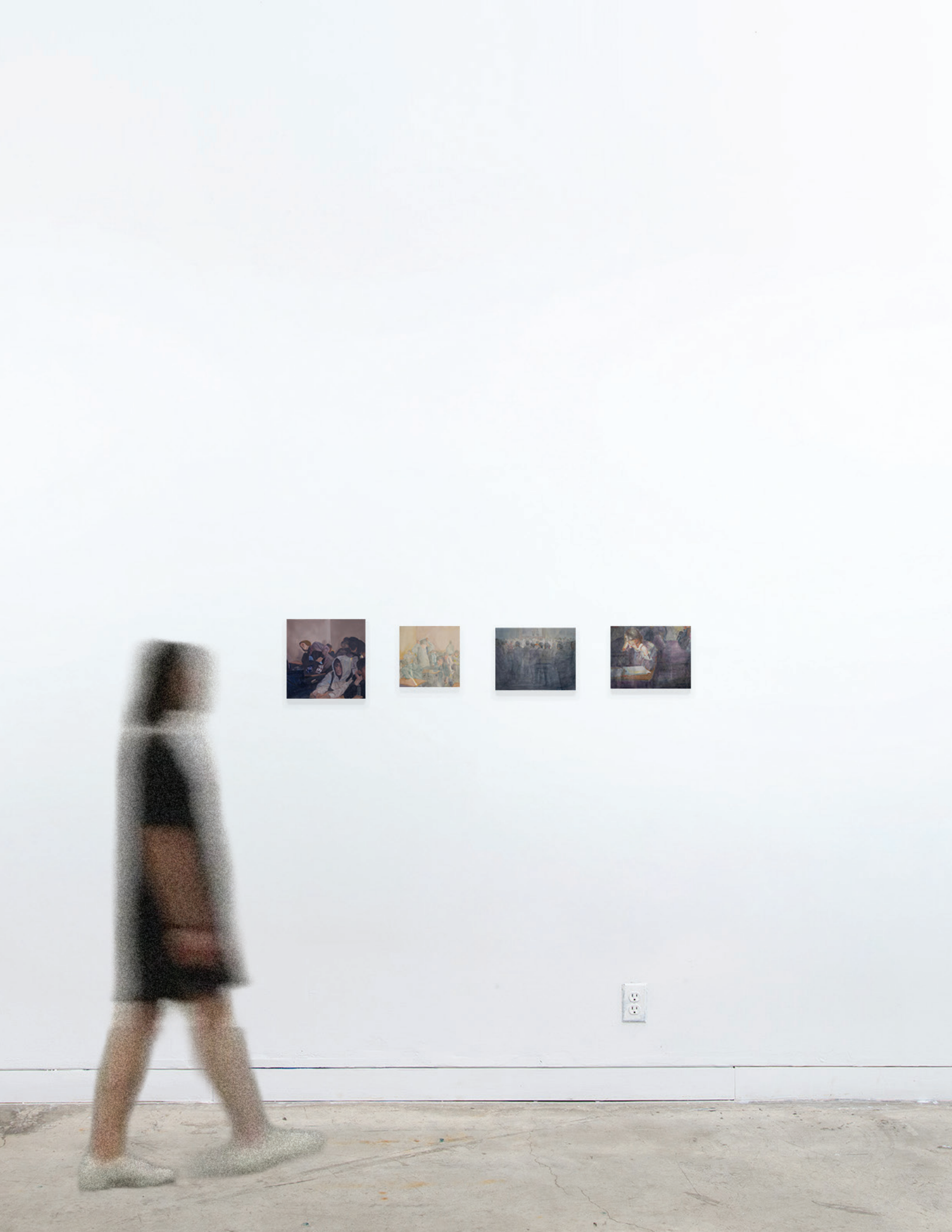




Moslem Khezri
We Keep Reviewing 75, 2024
Watercolor and colored pencil on cardboard
7.12 x 9 in



Moslem Khezri
We Keep Reviewing 74, 2024
Watercolor and colored pencil cardboard
6.87 x 7.12 in





Moslem Khezri
We Keep Reviewing 8, 2015
Pencil on paper
9.37 x 11.75 in



Moslem Khezri
We Keep Reviewing 16, 2017
Pencil on paper
11.12 x 11.25 in



Moslem Khezri
We Keep Reviewing 17, 2018
Pencil on paper
9.87 x 9.87 in





Moslem Khezri
We Keep Reviewing 70, 2024
Watercolor and colored pencil on cardboard
6.87 x 7.12 in



Moslem Khezri
We Keep Reviewing 77, 2024
Watercolor on cardboard
8.87 x 6.75 in

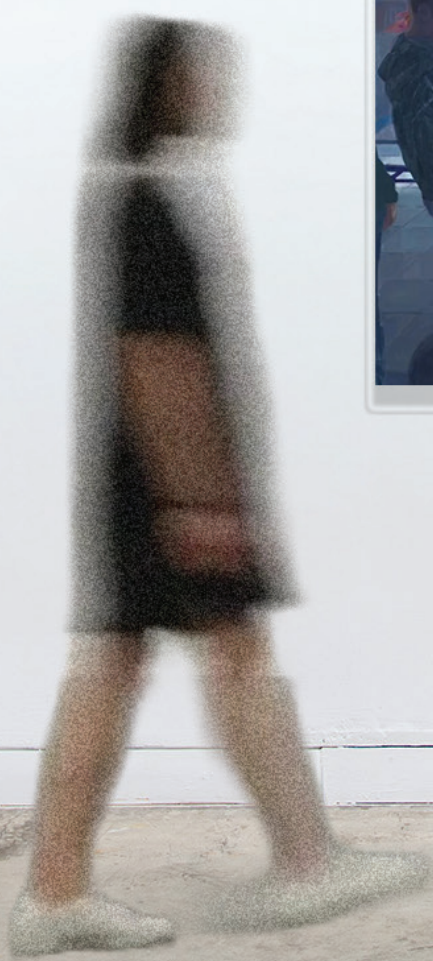


Moslem Khezri
We Keep Reviewing 42, 2020
Oil on cardboard
11.2 x 6.25 in





Moslem Khezri
We Keep Reviewing 90, 2025
Oil on canvas
47.25 x 59 in



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