

Marjan Moghaddam in #ModernUtopias at the Main Line Art Center

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Main Line Art Center, Haverford Pa.
Panorama 2015 Festival of Imaging in
21st Century. Curated by Amie Potsic
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September 12 - November 4th
Opening & Artist talk Fri Sept 18th
5.30-8.30pm
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Modern Utopias, the featured exhibition of **Panorama 2015**, presents compelling visions of modern existence, human potential, and virtual realities through works by **Marjan Moghaddam** (New York, NY), **Noah Addis** (Columbus, OH), and **Nicole Patrice Dul** (Philadelphia, PA). The artists cleverly investigate modern culture, international politics, and existential dilemmas through the camera lens, printed imagery, and digital technology. Reaching for the sublime, these artists invite viewers to interact with and respond to notions of utopia while defining personal visions of the future. Curated by Executive Director of the main Lien Art Center, Amie Potsic.

For Modern Utopia, pioneering digital artist Marjan Moghaddam takes on some of the grand narratives and disruptions of our era from income inequality, destruction of the environment, technology, and artificial intelligence, to global revolutions from the Arab Spring to the Occupy movement in the US. With eleven spectacular CG pieces, Marjan describes the modern Utopia as an Apocalyptopia, a mashup of the apocalypse and utopia. “Almost every utopian longing for physical comfort from earlier civilizations has been realized in the Anthropocene Age. Our utopia has come at the expense of the destruction of much of the planet, and much of humanity”, she explains, adding, “This is the complex nature of our modern utopia”.

Ms. Moghaddam is actively engaged in redefining form for painting in the Post Digital Art era, “for me painting is a pictorial composition that can be still, animated, interactive, or even navigable as virtual reality”. In Modern Utopia she is exhibiting eight prints (some up to 9 feet), two animations, and a print with an embedded touchscreen videogame, all of which she defines as digital paintings.

Working with cutting edge 3d CG techniques from Hollywood action movies and video games, Marjan creates monumental virtual reality worlds in her signature style, using contemporary digital aesthetics alongside Abstract Expressionism, street art, and classical art historical references. Her pieces also use text and miniature worlds as additional narratology, blending poetry and stories, with social media style commentaries. In some of the pieces she recounts her experiences of living through the 1979 Islamic revolution in her country of origin Iran, and her life since as a political refugee in the US. “Much of the turmoil in the Middle East and global terrorism was foreshadowed by this revolution”, she elaborates, blending her personal stories with global narratives.

Ms. Moghaddam describes her figures as “digital bodies” and “artistic avatars” that are not bound by traditional physically-based forms, but rather technological possibilities. Her characters can be made of energy, fire, or made from machined or cubic parts indicating the transference of our identities and lives to digital substrata, or as spheres, depicting our physical and organic nature. She works with motion capture of improvised performance and other contemporary movements such as martial arts and stunts, which she applies to her CG figures in order to imbue them with what she calls “life, agency, and being”. Her environments employ explosions and special effects alongside simulated paint, symbols, and texts in a nod to our visually complex mediascape.

Ms. Moghaddam has innovated much technology in support of her work in the last 3 decades, and with this particular collection since her landmark animation “Scab” in 2008 (Siggraph Digital Library), which originated some of the concepts, styles, and technologies for this collection. “For me it wasn’t possible to take on these grand narratives without pioneering equally important new aesthetic and technological forms, it couldn’t really be our moment any other way”, she adds. Her approach is to find the Meta-narratives of our rapidly changing world and the cataclysmic nature of our times, “I look for and work with the sublime aspects of everything that is unfolding in frightening yet equally exhilarating ways in this new century. I don’t claim to have the answers, but I try to reframe these radical changes and disruptions by creating layers of depth, substance, and meaning in my modern utopia or #mytopia”, she explains. “And I do it with art that employs cutting edge, 21st century Imaging tools”, she concludes.

#Modernutopia #Panorama2015 #MarjanMoghaddam #Mytopia

Still Digital Paintings:

“**David & Goliath**”, 78” x 39” (CGI to Archival Digital C). “**Shot in Iran**”, 84” X 30”, 2012 (CGI to Archival Aluminum). “**Embrace With Interference**”, 50” X 20”, 2012 (CGI to Archival Aluminum). “**Floodplain**”, 50” X 20”, 2012 (CGI to Archival Digital C). “**Knocked Out**”, 2012 50” X 20” (CGI to Archival Digital C). “**The Stand**”, 11” X 14” 2009-2015 (CGI to Archival Aluminum with oil paint). “**Atlas Beta**”, 20” X 30”, 2014 (CGI Archival Aluminum). “**Gestural Step in Splash**”, 11” X 14”, 2014 (Archival Pigment print on watercolor paper).

Interactive:

“**9 Stages of Consciousness**”, 24” X 30”, Archival Aluminum print with embedded 3.5” Touchscreen LCD and videogame program. 2015

Animated:

“**David & Goliath Still Can’t Fight**”, 14 minute, Loop, 1080 HD CGI animation with Music, 50” X 30” HD display with Gilt frame, 2014. “**Sometimes Up, Sometimes Down**”, 3 Minute, Loop, 1080 HD CGI Animation with Music, 2014. 29” X 19” HD Display.

For Images see Ms Moghaddam’s Web Main gallery:

<http://marjan.com/html/Gallery.html>

<https://twitter.com/themarjan>

<http://www.oninstagram.com/profile/marjanmarjan>