

# MEHDI FARHADIAN

# PARADE SQUARE

NOV 15 - DEC 21, 2018

OPENING NOV 15, 6-9PM



*Inflated Lion*, 2018, Acrylic on canvas, 78½ X 122 in. (200 x 310 cm.)  
Courtesy of the artist and RICHARD TAITTINGER GALLERY

Following the success of our 2016 show *Sanctums of Decision*, **RICHARD TAITTINGER GALLERY** is thrilled to present, *Parade Square*, our second solo exhibition of **Mehdi Farhadian**. Unable to attend *Sanctums of Decision* because he was not granted a VISA, Farhadian's work was required to speak for itself, which it did proficiently. His achievements are also reflected in the 2018 acquisition of his work *Cannons and Ballerinas* by the British Museum.

Having lived his whole life in Tehran, Farhadian has a deep connection to the city. *Parade Square* reflects Farhadian's connection and its extraordinary history. The Lion is a long-standing symbol of Iran and Farhadian's work *Inflated Lion*, plays with this symbolism. It presents an idyllic dream like image of an imagined future. Farhadian was born one year after the Iranian Revolution in 1979, which overthrew the Shah of Iran and established a conservative Islamic theocracy. While he has a sense of what life was like in the decades before his birth, he has no direct experience of it. Access to books and images from archives of earlier periods of Iran's history sparked Farhadian's imagination and allowed him to conceive of a Tehran that could have been. *Inflated Lion* conveys celebratory spectacle, with the immense lion shaped balloon, the fireworks, and the jubilant people in the frame. Simultaneously, an ominous tone permeates the piece as the deep colors contrast and fill the canvas, and the lion's open mouth bares sharp teeth. *Peace Girls*, conversely has a more calming effect with its repetitive image of young women holding white floral hoops. This work is youthful and hopeful, and highlights the significance of women in social and political realms.

Each of these works connects directly to the space it represents, and to the significance or context of the space historically and culturally.

*Parade Square* reflects on the physical space of the Parade Square (Meydān-e Mashq) in Tehran as well as its broader relationship to culture and history. These pieces capture the possibilities of the place. The actual site of the parade square located in the heart of Tehran has been used as both a military shooting range and a venue for gatherings and festivities. Today, it is a historic location and is home to a governmental compound. The space itself has born witness to the unpredicted progression of events in Iran.

Farhadian notes the way this space serves as an embodiment of the nation's psyche, "to me the Parade Square, especially as it now houses the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is a symbol of the never-ending endeavor of a perpetually anxious nation... the site and its story symbolizes an eternal effort to stay equipped and prepared, always expecting something vague in the faraway horizons." Each of the works included in this show references the square in its own way.

Farhadian is an intellectual, a poet, and an artist. He has been teaching art in Tehran for the past ten years. His work is saturated with the city and captures a world unfamiliar to many Western viewers. Since representing Iran at the Venice Biennale in 2015, Farhadian has been recognized as one of the important leaders of the contemporary art scene in Iran.

*Parade Square* is on view from 15 November - 21 December, 2018 at RICHARD TAITTINGER GALLERY, 154 Ludlow Street.

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

**Mehdi Farhadian** lives in an old, historically charged neighborhood in Tehran where he was born in 1980. He received his MA in painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran. Since 2010, he has taught painting and drawing at Elm o Farhang University, (Science and Culture), Tehran. Select exhibitions include ART CAPITAL (Comparison), Grand Palais, 2016, Paris (France); The Great Game, Iran Pavilion, La Biennale di Venezia 2015, Venice (Italy); Magic of Persia, Royal College of Arts, 2011, London (UK); and Iran Inside Out, Chelsea Museum, 2009, New York. In 2017 Farhadian had a residency with the Delfina Foundation in London. His work is in the permanent collection of the British Museum, among other institutions.

## FOR PRESS INQUIRIES

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