

Kour Pour: New Homes, New Places

Gallery 1957, London

March 24 – April 30, 2022



Kour Pour, Stories Told in a Language I Don't Understand, 2022, Acrylic on canvas over panel, 29 3/4 x 24 3/8
courtesy of the artist and Gallery 1957

Gallery 1957, London is proud to announce a solo exhibition of works by Kour Pour (b. 1987, UK), running from March 24th to April 30th, 2022. The exhibition marks his first in the country of his birth.

Based in Los Angeles, artist Kour Pour's creative processes, source material, and painting techniques stem from a wide range of cultures and histories. His experience as an immigrant and biography are the foundation of his work, reflecting his transitory heritage; Pour is of British and Iranian descent and grew up in a mixed-race household – but the artist is also newly American, having been granted citizenship during the

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pandemic. As a child, Pour spent considerable time in his father's carpet shop, memories of which have become a central component of his practice. These cultural threads inform his work and add to a wide range of visual languages; the interplay of form and content becomes a way for Pour to convey meaning in his art. He draws inspiration from visual traditions that include Persian carpets, medieval Islamic manuscripts, Chinese paintings, and ukiyo-e prints, among others.



Kour Pour, *Prowling Surrealist Landscapes*, 2022, Block printing ink, acrylic and oil on canvas, 43 x 26 / *Tiger in Pop Land*, 2022, Block printing ink, acrylic and oil on canvas, 94 x 65, courtesy of the artist and Gallery 1957

Pour's creative point of view disrupts simplistic notions of cultural hybridity, appropriation, and originality. New works on view at Gallery 1957 see the artist creating silkscreen prints based on imagery from illustrated texts of the Persian epic *Shahnameh* [*The Book of Kings*] by the poet Ferdowsi (977-1010 CE). Presenting the works with the text boxes redacted – a comment on the artist's inability to speak his mother tongue and the universal limitations of language – the shape of the canvases eschew the art-historical square. Called 'extractions', the series expands on the artist's ongoing interest in mixing visual culture across boundaries and borders, with the 'redacted' pieces reminiscent of the shaped canvases of American Minimalists such as Frank Stella and Ellsworth Kelly. In other works, Pour explores the cultural exchange of tiger imagery across China, Korea, and Japan, creating and recreating works inspired by different contexts across bright canvases reminiscent of Western Pop art.

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As an immigrant who has lived between worlds, the notion of home is both compelling and chimeric for Pour, the artist explains, *“When someone asks me where home is, the answer is multi-layered. And this experience of holding multiple identities and truths becomes a part of my art. I’m working to show how intertwined histories and the movement of cultures are directly linked to all of our personal biographies. This exhibition is sort of a homecoming – I left the UK at age 17, and I’m returning 17 years later.”*

Looking beyond the African continent towards global diasporas, the show marks an expansion of Gallery 1957’s program. Founder Marwan Zakhem comments: *“Kour’s works continue the artist’s multifaceted interrogations into concepts of belonging, cultural exchange and art and social history; these issues have always been central concerns to Gallery 1957 and the artists we represent. As we grow globally, we wish to build these dialogues with an increasingly international network of collaborators and are excited to have Pour - an artist who himself straddles countries and continents - at the forefront.”*

Kour Pour: New Homes, New Places is accompanied by a critical text by Dr. Shiva Balaghi, cultural historian at the University of California-Santa Barbara.

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About Kour Pour

Kour Pour (b. 1987, UK) has quickly developed a reputation for meticulously composed and delicately rendered artworks that intersect diverse material and aesthetic traditions, allowing for a remapping of the standard understanding of “Eastern/Western” cultural exchange. Fostering forms and techniques from numerous cultures and time periods, Pour’s truly global vision weaves together representational imagery, abstract patterning, and ornamental elements to create new hybrid artworks.

Pour’s synthesis of image and process often connects different art histories in an attempt to highlight the cultural exchanges that lead to artistic innovation and disrupt the notion of singular originality.

Recent exhibitions include *Wild Garden*, a dual-venue presentation at SHRINE and Sargent’s Daughters, NYC, and *Familiar Spirits* at Kavi Gupta, Chicago; *Returnee* at The Club, Tokyo, 2019; *Manzareh/Keshiki/Landscape* at Ever Gold [Projects], San Francisco, 2019; *Abrash* at Shane Campbell Gallery, Chicago, 2018; *Polypainting* at Pearl Lam Galleries, Hong Kong, 2018, and GNYP Gallery, Berlin, 2018. Select group exhibitions include *A Boundless Drop to a Boundless Ocean* at the Orlando Museum of Art; *Decoration Never Dies, Anyway* at Tokyo Metropolitan Teien Museum, Tokyo, 2017; and *Labyrinth(s)* at Pearl Lam Galleries, Hong Kong, 2016.

About Gallery 1957

Based in Accra, with a London outpost opened in 2020, Gallery 1957 has a curatorial focus on Africa and its diaspora. Presenting a programme of exhibitions, installations, and performances by the continent’s most significant artists, the gallery serves as a vital platform

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for promoting Africa's presence within the art scene by hosting ambitious exhibitions, providing resources for residencies, and participating in international art fairs. Founded by Marwan Zakhem in 2016 with an initial focus on supporting the West African arts scene, Gallery 1957 has since expanded to collaborate with leading artists globally, now hosts three spaces in Accra – one in the Kempinski Hotel and two in Galleria Mall – and a London outpost in Hyde Park Gate.

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Dates: March 24 – April 30, 2022

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