

Born in Tehran, Iran, in 1975, Shiva Ahmadi's representational watercolors are influenced by Persian and Indian miniature painting, yet occupy a charged contemporary psycho-visual space. According to the artist, her loosely spattered and highly layered paintings on aqua-board, "Create an allegorical realm where faceless tyrants and religious authorities sit on ornate gilded thrones while subservient minions bow to them." These recent works from the artist's mythical *Throne* series are meticulous and loose, playful and somber, and are also very much rooted in the artist's reality.

Ahmadi's earlier paintings were a belated manifestation of the double trauma of the invasion of Iran by Iraq in 1980 followed by the US invasion in 2003. Her more recent work reflects a broader sense of instability about the region and the mounting uncertainty of a tense standoff between aggressive regimes. However, rather than tackle the emotional charge felt by the civilians of these regimes directly, Ahmadi takes an