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TAHA HEYDARI

Corrupted

July 7 – September 3, 2016

Opening Reception: Thursday, July 7, 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Haines Gallery is pleased to present *Corrupted*, an exhibition of recent paintings by Taha Heydari (b. 1986, Tehran, Iran; lives and works in Baltimore, MD). The exhibition marks the first time this promising artist's work has been exhibited on the West Coast.

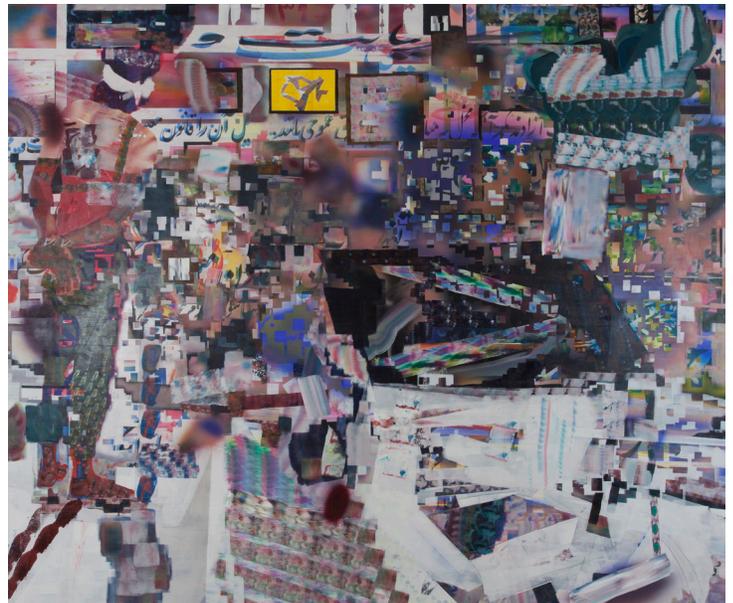
Taha Heydari's striking, large-scale canvases reflect the artist's ongoing interest in the power of images and the role of the spectator in the stagecraft of both politics and terror. Throughout the work, there is an emphasis on historic moments and current events that highlight the complex relationships between observer and image, viewer and viewed.

Heydari begins each new painting by culling from his growing archive of source material, gleaned from research in libraries and on the Internet, but these images are fragmented and combined until they evoke a mood, rather than a narrative. The beauty of Heydari's paintings invites closer inspection, which yields an array of ominous associations. *Dark Chamber* (2015), utilizes a well-known photograph of German POWs being forced by American troops to watch film footage of the concentration camps. The Holocaust returns in Heydari's *Minister of Public Enlightenment* (2016), which is based on a famous image of Joseph Goebbels called *The Eyes of Hate*—so named for the facial expression offered by the Nazi propagandist upon discovering that the photographer before him, Alfred Eisenstaedt, was Jewish. A glowing cruciform seen in the painting comes from an image of a Klu Klux Klan rally, as the artist fuses two iconic moments of malevolence.

While these works may resemble digitalized images, they are achieved through Heydari's skilled usage of painterly techniques, rather than computer manipulation. Alternating between variously sized rollers and an airbrush,



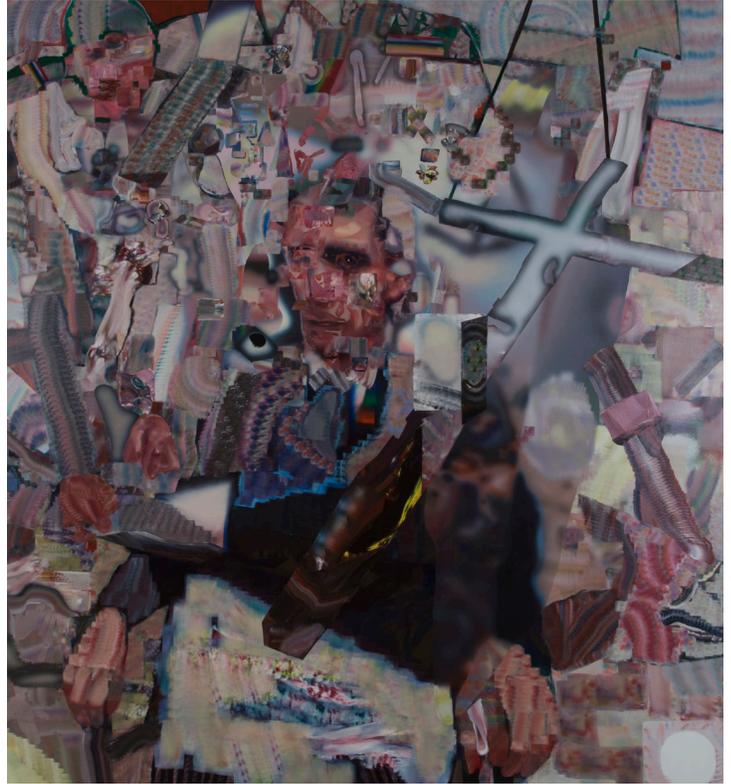
Taha Heydari, *Dark Chamber*, 2015, acrylic on canvas, 76 x 83 inches



Taha Heydari, *Page 39*, 2016, acrylic on canvas, 93 x 78 inches

Heydari compiles layer upon layer of contrasting paint applications to carefully produce visual effects that approximate pixelization, glitch-like repetitions, and flashes of gradient color, “questioning the relationship between an actual event and its representation online, or through a screen,” the artist explains. The exhibition’s title comes from this dual nature of Heydari’s practice: through a set of formal devices, the artist produces works that suggest corrupted image files, while the underlying photographic sources of his paintings reverberate with corruption of other kinds: political and ethical corrosion, but also the cruel and corrupting impact of certain images themselves.

Taha Heydari’s work has been presented in solo exhibitions at Ethan Cohen Fine Arts, New York, NY (2015) and the Azad Art Gallery, Tehran, IR (2011 and 2010), and has been featured in group exhibitions at venues that include the Touch Gallery, Cambridge, MA (2014); Castrum Peregrini, Amsterdam, NL (2013); the Mah Mehr Art Gallery, Tehran, IR (2012); the De Winkelhaak Gallery, Antwerp, BE (2012); the 1x1 Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2012); Frameless Gallery, London, UK (2011); the Freies Museum, Berlin, DE (2011); and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran (2009). Heydari received his BFA from the Art University of Tehran and an MFA from the LeRoy E. Hoffberger School of Painting at the Maryland Institute College of Art.



Taha Heydari, *Minister of Public Enlightenment*, 2016, acrylic on canvas, 77 x 84 inches