



ERMES ERMES  
Via dei Banchi Vecchi 16  
00186 Roma info@ermes-ermes.com

BEHRANG KARIMI  
THEORY OF A SMELL  
OPENING JUNE 13, 5-9 PM

*What makes You, You? What is it that brought you here to read these words? How can Curiosity stay alive if we are in the same moment talking about overkill of images, information, conflicts, crisis and so on... how can we continue to stay open and curious, when technology is already replacing thoughts, images, writing, decision making, nearly all cerebral activities are getting replaced. What stays are irreplaceable memories, the smell which you grow up with or place which had memories. This Space of Imagination is a Treasure Bunker.*

*I really can remember the smell of my mother lipstick and the combination of slightly garlic and old rose/opium sense. A heavy flowery note wich explodes in you mind and stay for a long while.*

- Excerpt from a conversation with Behrang Karimi, June 2024

In a calligram from 1914-1915, Apollinaire envisioned a world governed by the law of scents, the “loi des odeurs,” where olfaction would dominate human life and consciousness. He imagined a life experienced through smell, much like animals do, with scents evoking memories of places and moments, repeatedly bringing them to life again. For Behrang Karimi, painting similarly springs from memory, which he explores as a house filled with rooms, corners and drawers. His visual language is a poetic and playful fusion of memories, literature, images, and responses to the complexities of contemporary society — a “Treasure Bunker”. Like music and poetry, his paintings are born from spontaneous associations, flourishing in the sensory realm.

In Karimi’s work, lipsticks, fantastical architectures and scenarios, and male and female figures layer upon one another in memory, never fully disappearing and re-emerging with vibrant energy. His paintings act as reverse mirrors, reflecting an inner world where traces of ourselves can be found. They create passages through time and transitional spaces, narrating dreams and stories from the unconscious. Karimi’s works are memory keepers, activating reminiscences. Through his dense brushstrokes and the evocative scent of old lipsticks, memories and images of a seemingly mythical past suddenly surface, like lucid revelations reminding us of who we were and who we might become.



**Behrang Karimi** (b.1980 in Shiraz, Iran) lives and works in Cologne, DE.

Selected solo and group exhibitions: 2024, *Stories from the Ground*, 9th Biennial of Painting, curated by Martin German at Museum Dhondt Dhaenens, Sint-Martens-Latem, BE (upcoming); *Pocket Call*, curated by Kathrin Bentele at Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf, DE; 2023, *Law of the Tent* at Melas Martinos, Athens, GR; *Suddenly the whole* at Caprii by Sies + Höke, Düsseldorf, DE; Solo presentation with *Ermes Ermes* at Palai, Lecce, IT; *Landschaft* at Galerie Khoshbakht, Cologne, DE; *Dinge Weltweit* at Maureen Paley & Studio M, London, UK; *other view, inner world* at Maureen Paley - *Morena di Luna*, Hove, UK; *Stay Hungry* at *Ermes Ermes*, Rome, IT; 2022, *Bilder sprechen* at Provinz Showroom, Bochum, DE; *Rotpeter: Bild eines zur Dressur gezwungenen* at Moon Grove, Manchester, UK; *bacchus madness walking experiences* at *Ermes Ermes*, Rome, IT; *The Age* at Shahin Zarinbal, Berlin, DE; *Sweet Days of Discipline* at Hannah Hoffman, Los Angeles, CA, US; 2021, *Coming for your job and wifes* at *Tramps*, London, UK; *SPIT* at Braunsfelder, Cologne, DE; *Von der schenkenden Tugend* at Zarinbal Khoshbakht, Cologne, DE; *Fifteen Painters* at Andrew Kreps, New York, US; 2020, *Behrang Karimi* at Zarinbal Khoshbakht, Cologne, DE; *Any Day Now* at Sprüth Magers, London, UK (online); *Akademie Galerie* at Museum Kunstpalast, Düsseldorf, DE; *Space is the Place* at Paul Wiersbinski, Hybrid Installation, Berlin, DE; *Everything is Personal* at *Tramps*, New York, NY, US; 2019, *Alastair Mackinven and Behrang Karimi* at Maureen Paley, London, UK; *d-ream-ing* at Pantaleons Muehlengasse, Cologne, DE; 2018, *Here,Here...*, at Braunsfelder Family Collection, Cologne, DE; *Salon des Amateurs* at *Tramps*, London, UK 2016, *Femdom* at Pantaleonsmuehlengasse/Part1, Cologne, DE; 2014, *Arbeiten aus dem Hinterkopf* at Christopher Crescent, London, UK.