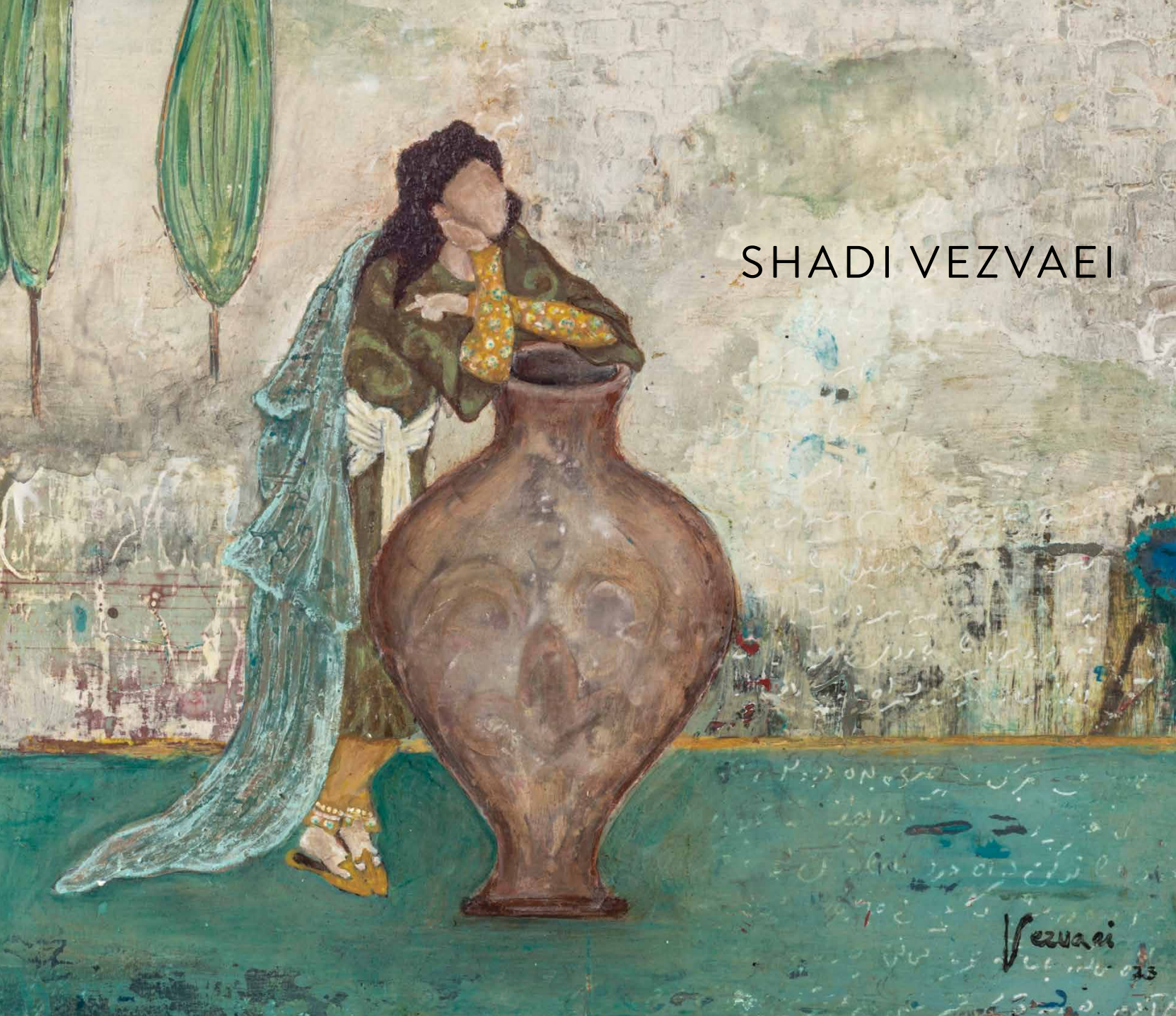


SHADI VEZVAEI





Will I end where I began?
acrylic and mixed media on board 37 x 37 cm

SHADI VEZVAEI *Will I end where I began?*

8 JUNE – 5 JULY


campden
gallery

Will I end where I began?

Shadi Vezvaei's artistic journey seamlessly merges her Persian heritage with our contemporary world. Her work offers a fresh perspective on the rich tapestry of Persian tradition. Rooted in the illustrious tradition of Persian miniature painting, Vezvaei's creations embody a contemporary aesthetic while paying homage to the timeless elegance of her heritage.

Drawing from the poetic narratives of the epic *Shahnameh*, she revitalises overlooked stories and voices of women, infusing her art with a resonance that transcends generations.

The *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings), written by the Persian poet Ferdowsi in the late 10th and early 11th centuries, is a fundamental part of Persian literature and cultural heritage. It tells the story of Persia's mythical and historical past. While focusing on stories of love and heroism with themes of war and bravery, the *Shahnameh* also presents women as important and strong-willed individuals. Characters like Soudabeh, Roudabeh, Frangis, and Tahmineh are depicted as dynamic figures embodying warmth, courage, intelligence, and independence.

Through intricate narrative scenes in her canvases, Vezvaei invites viewers to explore the emotional complexities of her homeland. As a female artist in a historically male-dominated field, her work symbolises feminine empowerment, sparking a much-needed dialogue on the evolving role of women in society.

In her painting *Under the pale blue moon* (page 15), the artist depicts a female figure on horseback atop a hill, confronting two demon-like figures below. With determination, she aims for the gates we see above her at the top of the painting. The gate and demons highlight the narrative of struggle, resilience, and eventual triumph, resonating with broader themes of overcoming adversity and striving for equality and empowerment.

Weaving together stories of love, longing, and resilience with a masterful touch, Vezvaei's art showcases a deep respect for history and a keen interest in the future. Skilfully balancing ancient traditions with modern influences, her visual narratives offer insight into the enduring impact of Persian culture, resonating with today's audience seeking significance and connection.

In *Turquoise path* (page 7), as in many of her paintings, she employs mixed media. Here, she has included soil from Iran and the UK. The use of soil symbolises the act of building restoration. Perhaps here, it refers to restoring ruins to their former glory, reflecting themes of resilience and renewal. This piece beautifully encapsulates constructing a future rooted in history and cultural heritage.

Throughout her practice, Shadi Vezvaei skilfully showcases the beauty of her Persian roots, guiding us on a journey that transcends time and space. By blending echoes of the past with hopes for the future, she takes us on a transformative exploration that goes beyond boundaries.

SHAHZRAD GHORBAN



The Sunlight in the Garden
acrylic and mixed media on board
47 × 47 cm



I will tell you the secret
acrylic and mixed media on board 37 x 37 cm



The lonely forest seek
acrylic and mixed media on board 37 x 37 cm



Turquoise path
acrylic and mixed media on board 37 x 37 cm



Tied to the past with dream
acrylic and mixed media on board 39 x 51 cm



Pink cypress
acrylic and mixed media on board 37 x 37 cm



Enchanted forest
acrylic and mixed media on board 45 x 47 cm



The siren wife
acrylic and mixed media on board 37 x 37 cm

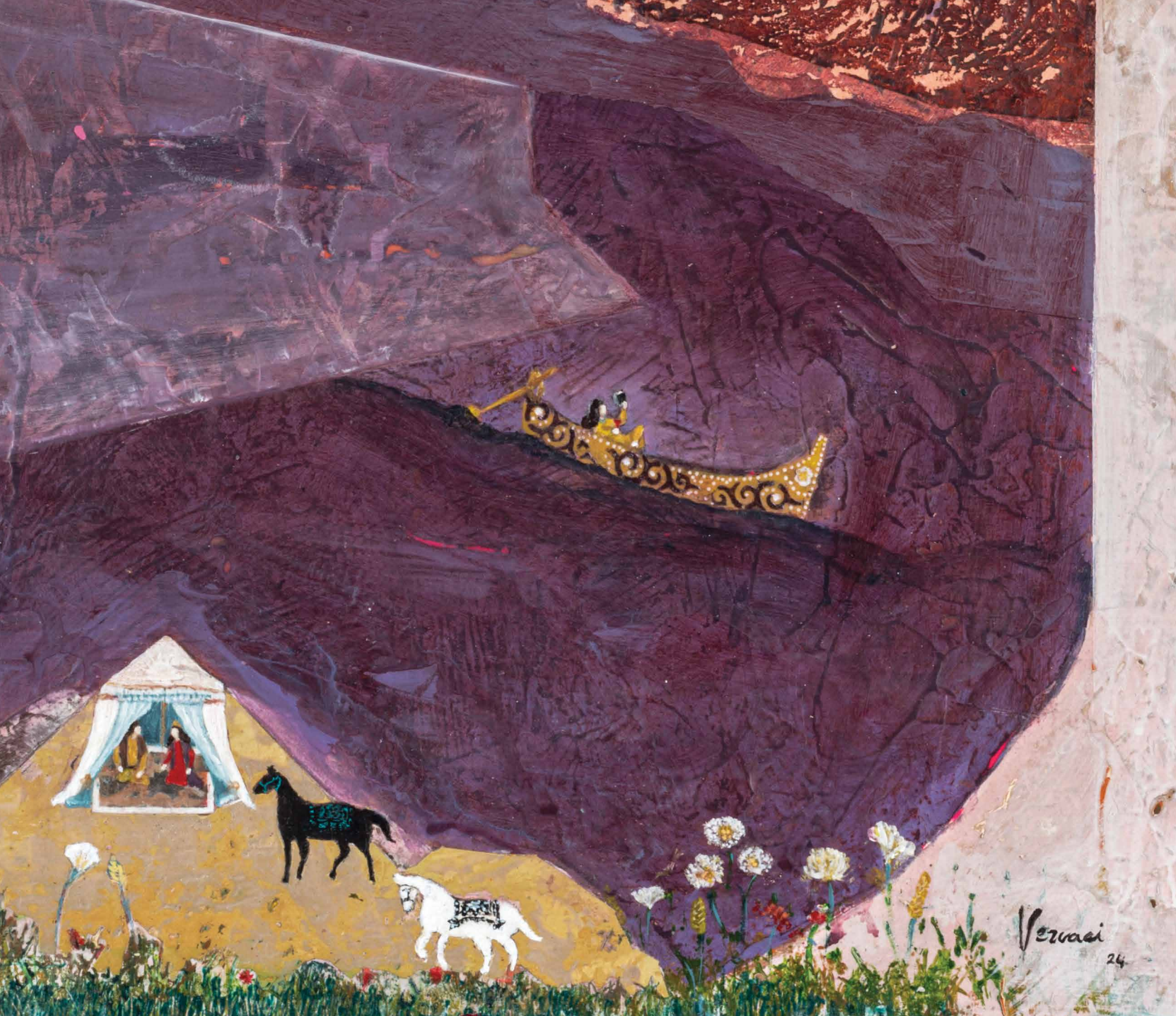


Warming her pearls
acrylic and mixed media on board 70 x 52 cm



Under the pale blue moon
acrylic and mixed media on board 70 x 52 cm





The river
acrylic and mixed media on board 51 x 65 cm





I will never let you use my hair again
acrylic and mixed media on board 45 x 47 cm



Silent harp
acrylic and mixed media on board 37 x 37 cm



Artist Book
etched copper 15 cm high



Lost and found
ceramic 26 cm high

I have witnessed in the studio of Shadi Vezvaei how her peers thrive on the quality of her thinking and personality. Vezvaei has the capacity to edit the ideas and forms in her paintings to their essential elements without losing the excitement of lateral thinking. Her work is a clear manifestation of thorough and varied research and experimentation, undertaken almost always as a synthesis of the practical and the empirical.

I have seen audiences captivated by her work. I am sure this is simply because she is as conscious of the materials and the tools she uses as well as the artistic concepts and concerns for narrative within her pieces. Relate these personal characteristics to the quality of the projects she has developed, the range of materials she uses, from clay to copper, the locations in which she has worked, the pertinent questions she asks, they say much about her intellect and innate capacity to realise ambitious ideas and plans without fuss and bother.

I believe Vezvaei has an exceptional capacity to understand her audience and the territories in which her artworks are going to operate. She is always putting herself 'in' rather than 'out' of touch with contemporary concerns in painting. She achieves innovation without arrogance or any sense of elitism. She operates calmly and with an understated wit. These human qualities are reflected in the nature of her work.

JEREMY GARDINER



Untitled
etched copper 19 cm wide

SHADI VEZVAEI

Growing up in Iran, I initially pursued a degree in psychology before my path led me to the United Kingdom in my twenties. It wasn't until later, after starting a family and raising my two daughters, that I felt the pull to pursue my true passion – art. Immersing myself in my studies, I completed both my BA and then MA in Fine Art.

My Iranian heritage serves as a wellspring of inspiration for me. It infuses my work with a blend of tradition, symbolism, and contemporary perspective. Women hold a significant place in my art, reflecting the complex roles they play in Iranian society and beyond.

The images in my paintings are a response to contemporary life grounded in the tradition of Persian miniatures. Employing techniques comparable to Byzantine and Medieval traditions, my art aims to capture the timeless elegance of Persian femininity but also serves as a visual dialogue, bridging the narratives of the past with the realities faced by women today.

Through my art, I aim to challenge stereotypes and celebrate the strength, resilience, and beauty of women. Each piece reflects my personal journey and a tribute to the diverse cultures that have shaped my identity. From vibrant landscapes to intimate portraits, my work invites the viewer into the cultural tapestry of my homeland and examine the complex issues of dislocation and identity.

In a world where borders blur and cultures intersect, my art is a reminder of the beauty that emerges when we embrace our differences and celebrate the richness of our collective heritage.

BACK COVER

Talk to the wind and let me know what you find
acrylic and mixed media on board 47 x 52 cm



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