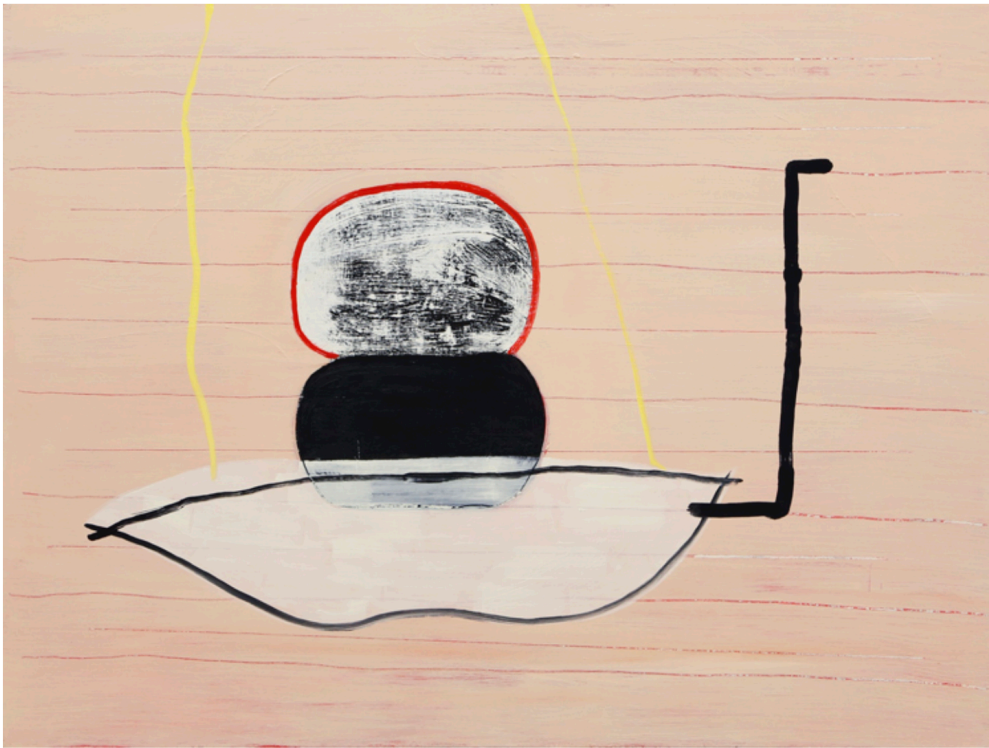


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AUTHOR

Like Ghosts: New Works by Rema Ghuloum and HK Zamani at JAUS



HK Zamani, Untitled #13, Like Ghosts, JAUS; photo courtesy of the gallery

through April 8

JAUS, Los Angeles

By Lorraine Heitzman

There is currently a show at JAUS that highlights two equally vibrant but divergent voices in contemporary abstraction. The work by Rema Ghuloum and HK Zamani surprisingly complement one another and the juxtaposition of the paintings by these two Los Angeles artists heightens their differences as well as their strengths. Each artist shows work that is representative of their focus over the past few years; in the case of Ghuloum, it is her investigation of subtle color relationships and complex surfaces and for Zamani it is his bold, minimal forms that despite their simplicity and perhaps even their intent, suggest narratives. Both their work explores memory and paint, though each through their own particular lens.

Zamani's curious paintings are as uncomplicated as they are oblique. The larger paintings are surprisingly simple for their size with a single, central and almost cartoonish shape set against a stark background. *Untitled # 13* has such an image; it appears to be a ship, either nautical or celestial, and the painting itself looks like it was torn from a coloring book belonging to someone who couldn't stay within the lines. *Untitled #1* is also a ship of sorts; the skeletal structure rests on water with black above and below and is topped by a green shroud. These are contradictory paintings because the images are undecipherable but at the same time rendered in a straightforward manner. Like hieroglyphics Zamani's paintings suggest stories even without the viewer understanding their meaning. The paintings convey mysteries, effectively communicating through a language that is entirely of Zamani's imagination.

"Many of my dome and tent paintings of the past years were less about paint than image," Zamani says of his work. "Their recent transmutations are about paint. These paintings are portraits. Perhaps even self-portraits, fragile portrayals. Some are ruins, some are vessels, and transport. The new images in these paintings continue to grow out of, or away from their predecessors. They are sometimes devils, then angels. Some are on land, in sky or sea, occasional remnants, reformed or transformed. They are a return as well as departure, departure from the dome image and back to the way I used to paint."

Both Rema Ghuloum and H.K. Zamani are well known figures around Los Angeles. Zamani has been the force behind PØST Gallery that has given opportunities to hundreds of local artists since 1995. Ghuloum is part of the curatorial collective, Manual History Machines. It is satisfying to see their work together in this inspired and unexpected pairing. The vivid contrast between their styles plays to their individual strengths and to the surprising success of *Like Ghosts* as a whole.

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