

Sanam Khatibi  
*The murders of the green river*

The Armory Show  
 Booth S2  
 September 9 - 12, 2021



P·P·O·W is pleased to exhibit in the solo sector with a monumental new tapestry and a series of ten intimate oil on oak panel paintings by Sanam Khatibi. Set in fantastical, utopian landscapes, Khatibi's atemporal and allegorical works showcase primal impulses and unrestrained animality, wherein humans and beasts have little emotional or physical distinction. Channeling magical naturalism through paintings, tapestries, and sculptures, Khatibi both exalts and cautions against the fine line between triumph and failure, peace and brutality, and ultimately, civilization and destruction.

For this presentation, Khatibi continues to explore human impulses embedded in everyday circumstances with her series, *The murders of the green river*. Inspired by the most prolific serial killer in American history, the Green River Killer, this series is charged with tension between the lush, unspoiled environment and the all-too-human characters who inhabit it. An avid follower of the true crime genre, Khatibi's painterly worlds, while swathed in bygone nature and bathed in radiant dawn light, depict the basest of human violence, refusing any social contract. Describing her interest in true crime, Khatibi notes,

"It is a theme that fascinates me and that was also discussed earlier in my work: the loss of control, domination and submission, the way we deal with our fears and let our primitive feelings run wild. It is also about delineating territories so that people kill each other and start wars. It is something that has always been part of life. There is a lot of under-skin violence in my work. But now I wanted to bring that aspect even more to the foreground. Through the story of that serial killer, you go in search of the murder in every painting and your imagination is triggered."

Informed by a broad range of influences from Northern Renaissance still life painting, to Pre-Columbian art, and Flemish and Bayeux tapestries, Khatibi imbues this series with her unique visual vocabulary. Drawing upon this global tangle of natural and aesthetic signifiers, the flora and fauna she imports are ecologically implausible, including tropical ferns, desert palms, and Mediterranean oaks. As such, the world she conjures questions our collective potential for growth and evolution in beautiful yet horrifying parables for the chaos that has unfolded daily before our eyes.

Sanam Khatibi (b. 1979) lives and works in Brussels, Belgium. She is self-taught and has been featured in exhibitions around the world, including group exhibitions in Paris, Florence, Los Angeles, Mexico City, New York, Marseille, Vienna, and Warsaw, among others. Khatibi's work has been included in *The Seventh Continent*, the 16th edition of the Istanbul Biennial curated by Nicolas Bourriaud (Turkey); *De ta salive qui mord*, BPS22 (Belgium); *Mademoiselle* at the Regional Centre of Contemporary Art of Occitan (France); *Quel Amour!?* at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Marseille (France); and *The Biennial of Painting* at the Museum of Deinze (Belgium). Khatibi an ongoing solo exhibition, *Lemon Drizzle*, at the Groeninge Museum in Bruges, Belgium through October 3, 2021 and included in the Kortrijk Triennial, Kortrijk, Belgium through October 24, 2021.