

Natessa Amin: *Hyphen*

Curated by Ali Banisadr

September 12 - October 16, 2019

Opening reception:

Thursday, September 12, 6-8PM

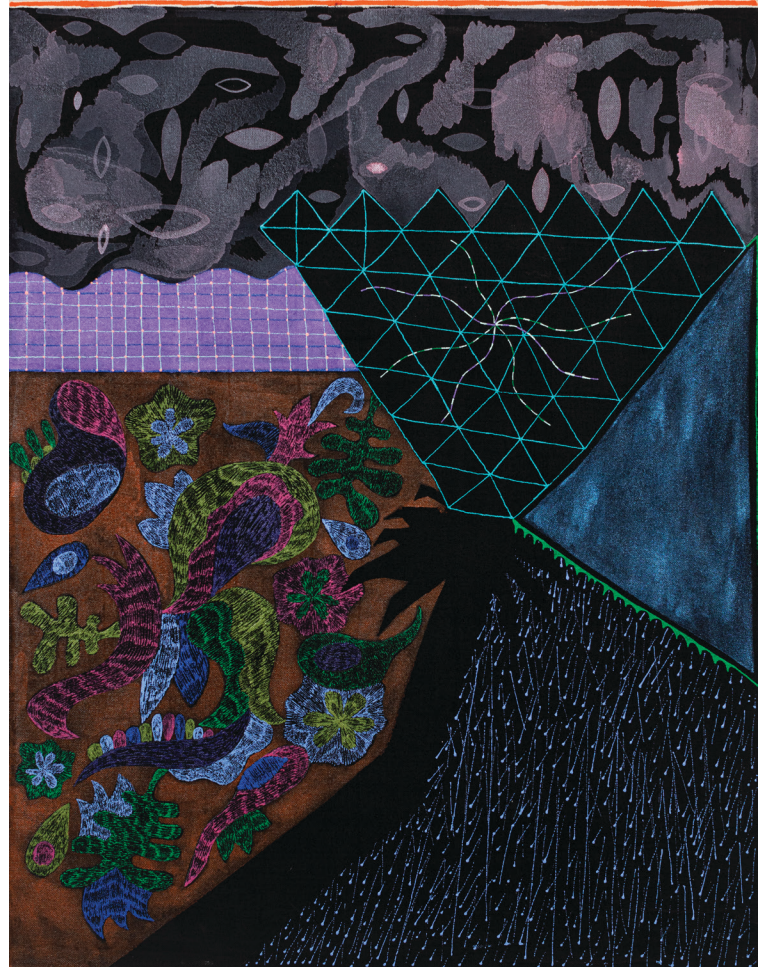
Exhibition walk-through with Natessa Amin and

Ali Banisadr: Saturday, October 5, 5-6PM

CUE Art Foundation is pleased to present *Hyphen*, a solo exhibition by Natessa Amin, curated by Ali Banisadr. Amin creates a site-specific mixed-media installation that brings together painting, sculpture, and drawing to explore the artist's experience of embodying a hybrid identity. Binding all of these materials together is a long undulating trail of hand-dyed newsprint that curves around the gallery's walls, forming a textural structure within which individual objects become intertwined as part of a larger sculptural body.

Born and raised in Pennsylvania in an Indian-American family, Amin grew up navigating the complex relationships that were formed as a result of combined and contrasting cultures and religions. Her observations are recorded in colorful abstracted shapes and patterns that take inspiration from Indian and African textiles, Indian palaces and garden design, and Pennsylvania Dutch craft. She employs techniques that emphasize the tactility of the material and her process of making, such as layering paint, pigments, dyes, silver leaf, glass particles, and textural gels. However, rather than blurring or disguising the boundaries between these materials, the artist proposes relationships between them, drawing them into conversation with one another while preserving their differences.

Amin's manipulation of material is further reinforced by recurring motifs such as the serpent, a symbol of transformation for its ability to shed its skin as it grows. Not only does the imagery of the serpent reappear throughout her work, but the dyed newsprint installation itself takes on a skin-like quality as it snakes across the walls of the gallery. Alongside this motif are repeated images of eyes, which act as protective charms and conjure associations of *mati*, the evil eye, which is used across multiple cultures to prevent malign spirits. These eyes are also watchful—they serve to reflect back the viewer's gaze and invite us to look more closely. This visual invitation to be more attentive to our environment is mirrored in Amin's artistic process of hyphenation. As Roksana Filipowska writes in her exhibition catalogue essay, "Hyphenation is an act of drawing words together while retaining their difference: each word has a legible identity, yet hyphenation also leads them to signify something new...Amin's installation posits hyphenation as a mode of bringing various media and artistic processes together to take dynamic—and hybrid—form."



Natessa Amin, *Smoke that Thunders*, 2019. Acrylic on canvas, 20 x 26 inches.



Natessa Amin, *I plunge my hands into the sun*, 2019. Acrylic on canvas, 20 x 26 inches.

Natessa Amin (b. 1987, Easton, PA) is a visual artist based in Philadelphia. Amin earned her BFA in Painting from Boston University (2010) and MFA from the University of Pennsylvania (2015). She is the co-director of FJORD Gallery in Philadelphia and a full-time faculty member at Moravian College, Bethlehem, PA. Amin's solo and two-person exhibitions include *Dancing on the Water Tank* at the Philip & Muriel Berman Museum of Art (2017); *Past is a Place* at the HUB Gallery at Moravian College (2016); *We Can't Say What We've Seen* at Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Los Angeles (2018); and a scheduled exhibition (October 2019) at Ortega y Gasset Projects, Brooklyn. She has shown work in group exhibitions at Hangar H18 Gallery, Brussels; Trestle Gallery, Brooklyn; Distillery Gallery, Boston; Benaco Arte, Sirmione, Italy; and at the Fabric Workshop and Museum, Woodmere Art Museum, Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Art, Tiger Strikes Asteroid, Pilot Projects, and CFEVA in Philadelphia. Amin has been awarded residencies at the Fabric Workshop and Museum (2016), Wassaic Project (2017), Lacawac Sanctuary & Biological Field Station (2018), and the Sam & Adele Golden Foundation for the Arts (2019).

Ali Banisadr's (b. 1976, Tehran, Iran) work demonstrates a careful balancing act between chaos and composure, and abstract and figurative painting and drawing. His complex, expansive paintings are rich with figurative allusions rooted in autobiographical narratives, sonic recollection, invented stories, world history, collective memory and mythology.

He obtained his BFA from the School of Visual Arts and MFA from New York Academy of Art. He lives and works in Brooklyn, New York. Banisadr's work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including solo shows at Het Noordbrabants Museum in the Netherlands, Gemäldegalerie at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, and MOCA Jacksonville in Florida, along with group exhibitions at institutions such as the Prague Biennale, the Venice Biennale, the Centre Pompidou in Paris, the Frist Art Museum in Nashville, the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston, the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst in Gent.

The exhibition is accompanied by a 32-page color catalogue, with texts by Natessa Amin, Ali Banisadr, and Roksana Filipowska. The catalogue is available online and free of charge to gallery visitors. For more information please contact Programs Manager Lilly Hern-Fondation at lilly@cueartfoundation.org.

CUE Art Foundation is a visual arts center dedicated to creating essential career and educational opportunities for artists of all ages. Through exhibitions, arts education, and public programs, CUE provides artists, writers, and audiences with sustaining, meaningful experiences and resources.

Major programmatic support for CUE Art Foundation is provided by Anholt Services (USA) Inc.; Aon PLC; Chubb; Compass Group Management LLC; The Milton and Sally Avery Arts Foundation, Inc.; Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP; The Shelley and Donald Rubin Foundation; Vedder Price P.C.; and New York State Council on the Arts with the support of Governor Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature. This program is supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City Council, and an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

