

Tanya Leighton

The Dallas Morning News

At Site 131, Sara Issakharian's epic 'Storied Cloud' painting astounds

The gallery's 'Abstract Now' exhibition runs through March 26.

By Lauren Smart
3:14 PM on Mar 23, 2022 CDT



Sara Issakharian's "Storied Cloud" (detail shown) is on view at Site 131 through March 26 as part of the "Abstract Now" exhibition. (Nan Coulter / Special Contributor)

From across the room, the painting *Storied Cloud* looks like an abstraction, all wild colors and huge gestural paint strokes. When visitors approach the canvas, which is nearly 15 feet long and 6½ feet tall, the work teems with figures, mythical and violent. Its vivid pinks, reds and purples act like a magnet, pulling viewers toward it, and up close, its narrative quality demands that you stay and look. The painting's content is vicious and sinister, but the viewing experience is pure pleasure.

This stunning work by Sara Issakharian is on view at Site 131 through March 26 as part of the "Abstract Now" exhibition. Gallerist Joan Davidow continues her interest in matching artists from "here, there and beyond," but this time through the lens of Los Angeles. She found all three artists shown here at an art fair in the sunny City of Angels. The "here" artist is b chehayeb, an oil painter from Dallas. "There" is Channing Hansen, an LA artist who uses the art of knitting to create abstract fiber works. And "beyond" is Issakharian, who was born in Iran.

The Dallas Morning News, March 2022

Kurfürstenstraße 156, 10785 Berlin
+49 (0)30 21 972 220, info@tanyaleighton.com, www.tanyaleighton.com

Tanya Leighton

Indeed, this work goes beyond the expectations one might have of a typical gallery show. It's a huge painting, for one thing, a feat rarely allowed to an artist whose first solo exhibition took place in the last six months. It's also a tantalizing work of art. In *Storied Cloud*, which could easily be read as an apocalyptic allegory, she creates her own visual language — something you can see her developing in earlier work, including the three paintings on paper elsewhere in the gallery. Humans morph into animals, or perhaps it's the other way around? This painting obscures as much as it illuminates, allowing for endless new discoveries.

Issakharian's work dances in the shadows of canonical artists like Hieronymus Bosch and Michelangelo and plays with delightful shades of hot pinks, taking this once girlish and now liberated color to violent ends.

Details

The "Abstract Now" exhibition runs through March 26 at Site 131, 131 Payne St., Dallas. Open Fridays from noon to 5 p.m. and by appointment. For more information, email hello@site131.com, call 214-871-2971 or visit site131.com.