

CALIGRAVITY

DIAA LAGAN

19 JUNE - 20 JULY, 2025

The Horse is very pleased to present *Caligravity* - an installation of new work by Dublin based West-Asian artist Daa Lagan. Lagan's work seeks both a loose experimentation with traditional Arabic letterforms, as well as structured allegorical paintings. These epic works solidify his totemic symbolism that is sometimes autobiographical and always speaking to the human condition. Concurrent to this exhibition Lagan has another presentation at the Chester Beatty in Dublin Castle.

Daa's practice is known for metaphorical narratives rooted in mythology and history. Alongside these traditional themes, Lagan also engages with contemporary socio-political issues, making his work relevant and thought-provoking in today's global context. Lagan's research practice is deeply attuned to the present moment, reflecting the ongoing upheaval of post-modernity and the resulting unrest on a global scale.

With *Caligravity*, Lagan presents letterforms moving through several states - the boundaries between painting, sculpture and the gallery are eroded. During our discussions about the show Daa expressed his interest in aural histories, or transferral of knowledge through a floating language. These notions cling to both the passing of Irish history and culture, as well as his own roots in Arabic history, culture and poetry.

Central to the show is a painting titled *Mizan*; the title directly translates from Arabic to Balance Scale. This work functions in classic Lagan style: The composition is driven by form and a separation of the surface into different aspects, vignettes, or fields. This composition is split in the centre by a spirit level. Lagan is fascinated by this particular object. The duality in its semantic meaning as well as its physical nature. A device for exact measurement, placement, a thing able to define balance. Above is a ship, whose form conveys a polyvalent view of what could be multiple ship forms: Does it fly? Does it sail? This is exemplary of Lagan's visual structures, they convey meaning and story that operate on multiple levels: succeeding as efforts to draw a world: portraits and landscapes that evoke our simultaneously defined and abstracted state of existence.

Counter to this spirit level elongated letterforms dance across the walls. Lagan paints directly onto the gallery wall, breaking away from the edge of the canvas. This ephemeral act seems to bring one closer to his experience of application. With a painting, we know it is made elsewhere, so there is a formal separation from action, but marking the wall directly brings you to the front of Lagan's actions. His experimentation with letterforms doesn't stop here - floating across the room are cut outs, abstracted into flying mobile-like shapes whose clustering is quite literally demonstrative of the manner of oral exchange. The word he employs is *Mizan* - a concluding answer to questions both politically and existentially, things will return to balance.

This exhibition is generously supported by the Centre for Creative Practices and The Arts Council.

Founded in 2021 The Horse is an artist run contemporary art gallery in Dublin 1 that seeks to provide a platform for emerging, experimental and underrepresented art practitioners. For sales, viewings and programming in general, please email Matthew Wilkinson – mw@thehosedublin.xyz

*On saturday June 28th
the artist will give a gallery walkthrough at 3-4pm*

