

Taymour Grahne Wants to Be the First to Introduce You to New Artists

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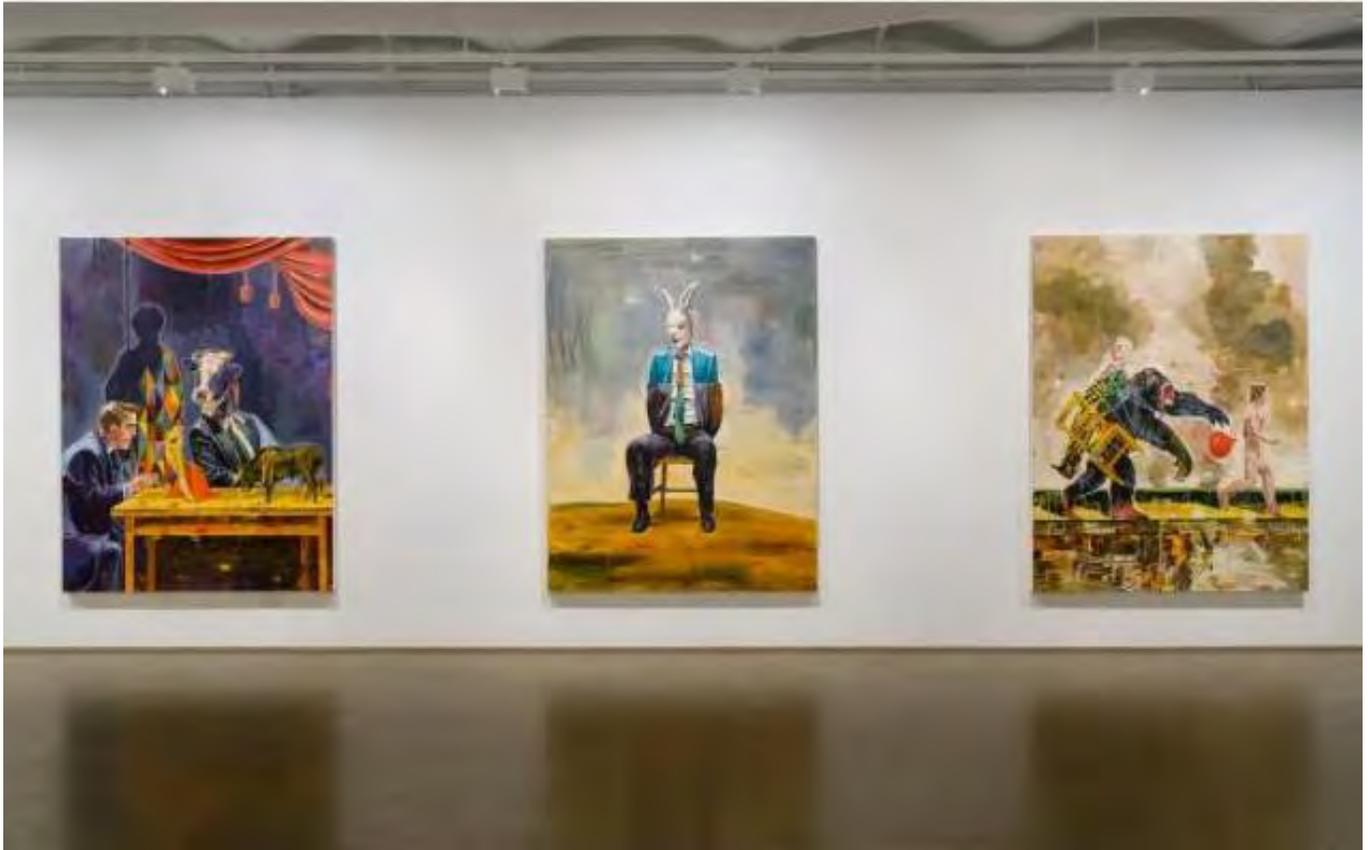
Gallery Interviews



Installation view, Impossible Garden: Cara Nahaul, Taymour Grahne Projects, London, September 17–October 22, 2020

In 2013, Taymour Grahne founded Taymour Grahne Gallery in New York, where he built a reputation for exhibiting some of today's most important emerging and mid-career contemporary artists—including Maia Cruz Palileo, Hassan Hajjaj, and Nicky Nodjoumi.

In 2017, he closed the gallery to launch a nomadic exhibition program in London, hosting a series of pop-up solo shows featuring emerging artists such as Dominique Fung, Maia Cruz Palileo, Matthew F Fisher, Nadia Ayari, and GaHee Park (whose work is currently hanging in his living room). Last year, Taymour broke ground on a permanent gallery once again, launching Taymour Grahne Projects as a space for viewers to learn about both emerging and historically overlooked artists from around the world. Here, he shares his passion for discovery and why he thinks the market is shifting toward emerging art.



Installation view, *You and Me*: Nicky Nodjoui, Taymour Grahne Gallery, New York, January 26–March 5, 2016

How did you end up in the art world?

I ended up in the art world through a blog I started in college. I was at university in Boston and my parents were living in Beirut. I would go back and visit them, and at the time the art scene there was flourishing. I decided to start a blog on Middle Eastern art called *Art of the Mid East*, at a time when there was not a lot of online content on the Middle Eastern art scene. It garnered huge traction—I was studying International Relations at university and this blog took up the second half of my time. When I graduated, I pursued a Masters at Sotheby's Institute in New York. Once there, I realized there were so many artists and friends I'd met through the blog that were not even showing in New York. I knew that I needed to open a gallery to show the artists that weren't being shown. There was a sense of urgency.

What was your first personal art purchase and why that piece?

My first art purchase ever was a work by Lebanese artist Hassan Jouni. I was eighteen. He painted iconic scenes from Lebanon, imagery that I grew up with and was very familiar to me. I still have the piece—it's in Beirut with my parents.



GaHee Park, *Every Day Was Yesterday*, oil on canvas, 70 x 55 inches (177.8 x 139.7 cm)

What is currently hanging in your living room?

I have a wonderful painting by GaHee Park that I acquired from my own show of her work in 2018. The title of the painting was the title of the exhibition: *Every Day Was Yesterday*. This work, which is really representative of that show as a whole, explores the absurdities and perversities of intimacy, and the tensions between our public and private selves. The work is so layered and open to interpretation, I constantly discover new aspects to it.

What would you like your new gallery, Taymour Grahne Projects, to be known for?

Discovery. Introducing artists to a new audience. I spend hours a week researching new artists—being one of the first people to show an artist is what excites me and what I've become known for.

What is the best and the hardest part of running your gallery?

The best part is when you place works into really great homes, into good collections and museums. When you get press for your artists and find really good homes for their work, you know you're giving them a platform to really shine. I love that the gallery, in whatever small way, is contributing to the culture of our generation, and the gallery will hopefully be making a mark by supporting a new generation of artists. The toughest thing is foot traffic. No matter where you are, generating constant and steady foot traffic is an issue.



Nadia Ayari, *Fold 7*, 2018, oil on linen, 60 x 60 inches (152.4 x 152.4 cm)

Are there any recent additions to your program? How did you discover these artists?

Painter Cara Nahaul was the opening show for my new gallery in London. I was introduced to her work through an artist friend of mine (Kamrooz Aram) in New York, who said I had to meet her when I moved to London. Introductions through other artists are often the best way to discover new artists. I went to Cara's studio and instantly fell in love with the work. The way she is able to make these vibrant paintings, exploring the character and architecture of spaces, is truly remarkable. The work is drawn from visual cues Cara has picked up both during her research as well as her personal travel. I love the way her paintings are able to suggest the ways interiors and landscapes can become vessels for intimate memories and charged introspection.

Can you tell us about one of the pieces or artists currently featured in your Parlor collection?

In his new body of work, painter Matthew F Fisher continues to play with the idea of what is real, questioning the intricate relationship between constructed images and their corresponding physical objects and memory. At first glance, majestic rocks, peaceful oceans, and sea creatures surface from his canvases, but at closer inspection these instantly recognizable images unfurl into idealized shapes and colors. It is only through your mind that those images elicit memories of lived experiences, creating a reality suspended between the personal and the universal.



Matthew F Fisher, *The Father of History*, 2017, acrylic on canvas, 20 x 16 inches (50.8 x 40.6 cm)

How do you think collecting art will change in the next decade?

I've already seen a difference since opening my first gallery in New York. I think the majority of people are now comfortable buying art through a PDF or online. Back in 2013 or 2014, people still needed to see the work in person. This is going to make it easier to operate in the art world, especially outside of the typical art hubs. Of course, nothing replaces seeing a work in person, but from an operational standpoint, collectors are based around the world, so it's great that they can continue to support my program through acquiring work even if they are not able to see it in person.

I think the art market is going to continue to grow with so many young collectors coming in through Instagram, fairs, and online platforms, and with that, the market is going to tilt towards emerging art. The new collectors want to collect artists of their own generation, which will herald a massive shift in interest from blue chip to emerging. The challenges are that big galleries are now signing on emerging artists at an unprecedented scale, so there is more competition between large and small galleries over many sought-after emerging artists.

Note: This interview has been edited for length and clarity.