

Kayla Mohammadi
Artist Statement

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Like most Americans whose parents immigrated to this country, I grew up with influences beyond the typical suburban landscape. My way of seeing the world has been shaped by three different cultures. My mother is from the southern tip of Finland, a small town called Hanko; and my father is from Tehran, Iran. In 1964 they met in San Francisco, where I was born. As a child I was exposed to the bright bold shapes in Scandinavian design, the poetic blues and rhythms of Islamic tile, and the intricate patterns in Persian rugs.

Being a first-generation American gave me the opportunity to live in a world where these everyday Persian and Finnish objects seemed different—even special—and combined they became something completely new. From my parents I inherited my love of travel and going somewhere new, and this is what my favorite paintings do: they take me somewhere beyond what I already know and suggest questions I might never have thought to ask.

While the imagery found in my current work comes from an interior space, landscape or still life setup in my studio; the intention is not a literal portrayal, but rather a visual translation. A translation based on color, value, and space; formal elements that push and pull in different directions. I want to know, Can I walk into this space? Do I want to? Am I standing on solid ground, being pushed away, or finally stepping through to a new place?