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Abdolreza Aminlari and Benjamin King at Longhouse Projects



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This joint exhibition showcased the recent work of Tehran-born **Abdolreza Aminlari** and North Carolina-born **Benjamin King**. Both artists now live in Brooklyn and create abstract, three-dimensional landscapes on two-dimensional surfaces, marrying geography and imagination.

King mixes ceramic paste, sand, and glitter into acrylic paint, leaving tactile, globular, and gestural marks on his canvases. His small, sketchbook-style experiments in color and application are synthesized into bold, chaotic images. He juxtaposes jarring straight-from-the-tube pigment choices with muted tones that hint at muddled forms—tree bark, a forest floor, water, and undulating hills. The result is a determined building of painted layers that protrude and coalesce to form images of nature that are anything but natural. One of the many untitled works here—in which bright, Technicolor blue-and-white water surges and bleeds into a grassy green background—seemed almost like an homage to Helen Frankenthaler’s *Mountains and Sea* (1952).



Abdolreza Aminlari,
Composition 16, 2012, thread
on paper.
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Aminlari works with thread on paper, and his meticulous, delicate, and powerful embroidered landscapes stole the show. His works used their two-dimensional bases to different effect; a mixture of gold, turquoise, and black lines of thread travel over paper in the manner of an axiomatic architectural rendering. Certain strands, arranged in geometric patterns radiating from a central focal point, evoked variously intricate textile decorations, dandelion heads blown to bits, and golden flecks of hay in sunlight; others were more structured and screenlike. Aminlari revealed multiple dimensions, suggesting the aerial perspective of Persian miniatures on surfaces defined by needle-pierced holes, taut thread, and the spaces created under buckled paper. In one image, tiny turquoise thread breaks loose to disrupt the machine finish, revealing the hand of the artist.

King’s abstractions mimic a childlike, joyful response to their color and form, while Aminlari’s works trigger wonderment over the artist’s process and product. Both are compelling, but Aminlari’s are magical.

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