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## Amir Khojasteh: The Gloomiest Sunset in the World.

<https://www.annaseaman.com/blog/amir-khojasteh-the-gloomiest-sunset-in-the-world>



Amir Khojasteh's practice is based around the art of painting 'badly'. He has honed an almost child-like use of colour blocks lacking in detail and with deconstructed or distorted features. However, these are not the random markings of a child, Khojasteh has distinct subjects in mind and, he reproduces the images accurately before then composing caricatures of them, which serve as an artistic device to pass what is often satirical comment.

*The Gloomiest Sunset in the World* is a comedic take on classical portraiture. By stretching the shape of his sitter or distorting otherwise recognisable detail, the Iranian artist has produced a series of thickly painted works that undermine the authority of the portrait and remove its absolutism.

In a series titled *The Master (2018)*, Khojasteh has presented three works of some of the most notorious dictators of our time: Adolf Hitler, Chairman Mao, Joseph Stalin. In these elongated paintings, Khojasteh has managed to simultaneously embody the sense of a dictatorial portrait, yet at the same time give them cartoon-like qualities that reveal a skilled and deliberate style infused with a subversive sense of humour.

In the awkwardly titled *Study After The Romanian Blouse by Henri Matisse (2019)*, Khojasteh is also making reference to art history and indeed the stylistic categories that at once defined and pigeon-holed 20th century art. Here, we see pieces somewhere between absurdity and dream-like imagination that, as the press release says "tinker with portraiture as a vehicle to capture subjective interpretations of history, media and the now."

Aside from portraiture however, the exhibition also takes you along a line of personal commentary that the artist is making on today's current globalised situation where truth merges with fiction until neither one is recognisable and where even the notion of a leader is infused with ridicule and controversy.

It is indeed (as the title suggests) a gloomy outlook, which brings to the viewer a kind of tragi-comedy that feels familiar and simultaneously jarring. Either way, the works are captivating and fascinating and deserve a second look.