



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: PANNI MALEKZADEH *LOVE ME TILL IT HURTS* new paintings and KELLY MCCAFFERTY *GOOD LUCK* installation and video @ FREIGHT+VOLUME, JULY 5th- AUGUST 11th, 2012

Panni Malekzadeh makes beautiful, complicated portraits of contemporary Persian women coming of age. What age exactly they are coming into is not entirely clear. The young women she depicts, mostly based on her close friends and family, are clothed in elaborate period costumes, as though they suddenly woke up in a strange land and time, and are seeking clues to clarify their sexual and cultural identity. They appear filled with an abundant mixture of embarrassment, sexual hunger, shame, confusion, delight, and dread.

Panni, a recent grad of the New York Academy of Art's MFA program, is adept at realistic renderings of these women and their costumes, but adds a strong sense of fantasy and illusion to her work. The portraits, simultaneously funny and serious, are fraught with tension, discomfort and idiosyncrasy, from the acute lighting, to the models' odd expressions, to her choice of neon "tags" superimposed on the figures in the manner of thought bubbles. There's also a soft quality to her portrayals, a style slightly out of focus, recalling 70's soft-porn magazines. Indeed, Panni states that when she was 12 or 13 she discovered her father's Playboys in a closet and kept it secret. She describes this as "a childhood memory that most boys have." She became fascinated with Playboy magazines, in particular with how the women were posed and altered to appear how Playboy deemed women should be - at once artificial and perfect and sad. Because of her conservative upbringing (she was the child of an arranged, traditional Persian marriage) things like Playboy were very taboo; she wasn't able to talk about sex and sensuality. Ultimately this resulted in a determination and desire towards uninhibited expression. Panni still collects vintage Playboy magazines and references the same controlled, manufactured, "directed" kind of feeling of the Playboy bunnies when she produces photo shoots on which her paintings are based. The women, while classically clothed, appear free and suggestive, in stark contrast to the repressed women of her past.

In addition to the portraits, Panni presents a series of pink dollhouses in an antique wallpapered, "bedroom" setting in which to view the work. She explores role-playing, the tug of war between girlishness and adulthood in her mis-en-scenes, drawing parallels between ponies and unicorns, dollhouses and whips, lingerie and

bondage, virgins and whores. There is fetishistic quality to her painted worlds, where she leaps quickly and easily between generations, from one culture to another, from fantasy to reality. In a work such as *Love Me Till It Hurts* she flirts with the viewer in a coy, playful manner, with undertones of vulnerability and danger, toying with that fine line between passion and violence, pleasure and pain. These are provocative, dazzling works by a young painter full of imagination and craft.

Panni received her BFA from Otis College, her MFA from NYAA, has been published in the "Grafuck" anthology of erotic art, and shown in numerous solo and group shows in NY and LA. She lives and works in New York City. This is her first exhibition @ Freight+Volume.

In the lobby, project, and video rooms this month we present another debut by a young woman recently graduated from Pratt's MFA program, Kelly McCafferty. Kelly also explores the threshold between childhood and adulthood, but from a very different standpoint: her work at first glance is disarmingly childlike in its subject matter, materials and delivery – at once innocent and magical. Her show at F+V, titled *Good Luck*, is multi-faceted. It consists of an installation of household objects – yarn, soda bottles, candy, applied stickers, milk crates - and drawings in the form of a shrine in the project room; a meditative shelf in the lobby holding six handmade artists books; and a 3-minute stop-animation video titled *Orange You Glad* (based on the classic knock-knock joke) complete with crocheted pillows on the floor as well as a bead curtain hanging at the entrance entitled *Charm Bracelet*. The artist describes her video as "an artist book, which moves." Versatile with a variety of media, Kelly weaves a continuous thread in her work from books to video to installation to drawing and back to books again– taking the viewer on a participatory journey into a children's playground of fun and fantasy.

She writes "The title of the show is Good Luck because I am interested in power embedded in objects. The objects in the show are essentially my ideas of good luck charms. I think about the things that we save when we are children (in our treasure chests)--tiny scraps of paper, the things in your pockets, paper clips, strange drawings, ticket stubs, cracker jack toys...These things are so important as treasures to children and for adults they are the kinds of things that end up thrown away or in junk drawers." Kelly plays the role of alchemist by converting these everyday, "useless" objects into art objects and material for her installations, and the results are joyful and liberating.

Kelly McCafferty (b. 1980) received her MFA from Pratt Institute with a concentration in sculpture in 2012. She received a BA from Hampshire College in 2003 where she studied encaustic painting, women's studies, and ancient religion. She also received a Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in painting from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 2004. She was raised on a thoroughbred horse farm in Kentucky. Her work is greatly influenced by her fascination and contempt for contemporary consumer culture. Time spent working in retail environments

and watching a lot of television have been channeled into her art practice. She spends her free time building up her personal collection of odd objects. Kelly lives and works in Brooklyn, NY.

Please join us for a midsummer reception to celebrate the work of these two women at Freight+Volume, 530 W 24th St in Chelsea, on Thursday, July 5th from 6-9pm. For more information please contact Nick Lawrence by email (nick@freightandvolume.com) or phone (212-691-7700).