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THE CRITICS' TABLE ART IN BRIEF

Flashbacks to 1975, Glimpses of a Banned Instagram, and a Proto-Punk Penpal: 3 New York Critics Share Their Late-July Faves

Johanna Fateman admires the pre-drip geometry of the great Pat Steir at Hauser & Wirth, Will Harrison visits Khajistan's archive of ephemera and excess at SculptureCenter, and John Vincler sees H.C. Westermann with fresh eyes at Theodore.



"Spasial Program by Khajistan" (Installation View), SculptureCenter, 2025. Photography by Charles Benton. Image courtesy of Khajistan and the SculptureCenter.

"Spasial Program by Khajistan"

SculptureCenter | 44-19 Purves Street, Long Island City

Through July 28, 2025

A flyer for Lahore's preeminent pigeon-racing championship, replete with owner names and blood lines; devotional Shia tapestries sourced from Tehran's Grand Bazaar; a Pakistani Urdu poster for an imaginary film featuring bubble-letter catchphrases like "Love will never die!" and the face of TV star Veena Malik somewhat crudely pasted onto the body of a foreign model; framed prints of horny memes pulled from Grindr and WhatsApp ("I love old man bottom uncle 50+")—these are just a few of the items

on display at Khajistan's "Spasial Program," an exhibition teeming with rare, illicit, suppressed, or otherwise neglected digital and physical media artifacts that span the entire Islamicate world.

The brainchild of Lahore-born filmmaker Saad Khan, and a product of years of assiduous compilation, Khajistan is an archive, a state of mind, a repeatedly banned Instagram account, and a tangible, sometimes-cheeky counter to our present moment of historical amnesia. Stored inside SculptureCenter's twisting basement gallery, "Spasial Program" emerges as a contemporary "Toshakhana" (or dazzling "treasure house"), which also happens to be the name of Khajistan's always-growing physical archive. As I made my way along the exhibition's narrow, rug-adorned halls, moving past scores of Lollywood posters, war propaganda leaflets, satirical cartoons, and bulbous video monitors playing porn ripped from VCDs, the uniquely anarchic splendor of the archive began to take hold. With every piece of ephemera placed on the same plane, no matter its context—whatever time period, political sensibility, religious perspective, or technological era it represents—"Spasial Program" feels like a story told in medias res, already in motion, waiting for you, the viewer, to make your own way through its riches. —Will Harrison