

FRIEZE

Tirdad Hashemi Honours Kinship

At Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Paris, the artist depicts queer and trans figures giving birth to symbolic versions of themselves



Tirdad Hashemi, *The collapse of years of hiding* (detail), 2025, mixed media on canvas, 1.8 x 2.4 m. Courtesy: © Tirdad Hashemi and Galerie Christophe Gaillard

Iranian artist Tirdad Hashemi's paintings are soaked in flesh, fluid and the trauma of becoming. Titled 'Butchered Bodies', the artist's first solo exhibition at Galerie Christophe Gaillard in Paris confronts viewers with disquieting corporeality. Canvases are mounted in varying states of tension: some are stretched taut on their frames; others are nailed directly to the wall, roughly cut from the roll and frayed at the edges. These unstretched canvases sag a little, like loose skin. It is a variability echoed in the bodies these paintings depict: the distorted, engorged figures populating the tableaux are pregnant cis women, non-binary people and trans men displaying freshly sutured mastectomy wounds. Their bellies are swollen, yet they are conspicuously sexless. Umbilical cords unfurl directly from the birthing figures' abdomens, rather than from their omitted genitalia.



Tirdad Hashemi, *A normal kid*, 2025, acrylic on canvas, 1.2 x 1.5 m.
Courtesy: © Tirdad Hashemi and Galerie Christophe Gaillard; photograph: Rebecca Fanuele

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In works like *The collapse of years of hiding* (2025), these dangling crimson cords snake along the floor or up into the air; cut with scissors, they soak the fleshy mass of bodies in blood and other liquids. On the adjacent wall, *A normal kid* (2025) depicts an ethereal infant severing these bonds itself, tearing apart the umbilical cord with its bare hands. The cutting of these cords traveling from navel to navel suggests a sense of the self-made figure: queer and trans people spawning renewed, symbolic, formerly symbiotic versions of themselves. Instead of serving as projections toward reproductive or biological legacy in normative terms, Hashemi's birthing and birthed figures symbolize chosen kinships and new heredities, untethered from bloodlines and biology. The imagery of severed connections slips between the umbilical and the visceral; the visual trope of spilling one's guts is common to Hashemi's work, rooted in the anxiety-linked intestinal issues the artist has struggled with since childhood. This slippage is evident in *My severed ears in Pride, where even the deaths of trans people* (2025): bringing the inside out, Hashemi lays bare the bloody realities of bodies in metamorphosis. The paintings stage a psychological and physiological grotesquerie that recalls the monstrous transformation of Gregor Samsa in Franz Kafka's *The Metamorphosis* (1915): a sudden, alienating rupture from familial intimacy and a descent into bodily dissolution.



Tirdad Hashemi, 'Butchered Bodies', 2025, exhibition view. Courtesy: © Tirdad Hashemi and Galerie Christophe Gaillard

Throughout the exhibition, a suite of drawings made over the last four years offers a sharp accent to the new painted works. Each piece in this series commemorates a murdered trans person: the title lists their name along with the dates and details of their murder, sourced from the memorial site Trans Lives Matter. Rather than depicting the violence of their deaths, however, Hashemi's works on paper – including *Brianna Ghey A 16-year-old student from England. Brianna fatally stabbed on February 11, 2023* (2023) – show scenes of domestic alienation. The drawings present crying figures hooked up to hospital machines; arms cut at the wrist in empty bedrooms; bodies deteriorating. With these works, Hashemi offers a visual elegy, commemorating the emotional struggle of transition – a journey to self-realization that, for the people depicted here, has been cut short.



Tirdad Hashemi, *Malte C. In Germany. Malte was attacked during the Münster CSD (Christopher Street Day) and later died from his injuries in the hospital...* 2025, mixed media on paper, 24 x 35 cm. Courtesy: © Tirdad Hashemi and Galerie Christophe Gaillard

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'Butchered Bodies' is a meditation on queer kinship and survival that balances horror with compassion, suggesting that new bonds can emerge from past ruptures. The exhibition imagines queer connection as a form of family-making, forged through shared experience rather than through DNA. With figures disembowelled not as an act of hara-kiri, but as a radical means of opening up, 'Butchered Bodies' evokes the possibility of alternative futures for queer people – albeit steeped in a violent past and bloodied present.

Tirdad Hashemi's 'Butchered Bodies' is on view at Galerie Christophe Gaillard, Paris, until 21 June

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