

Study for MYDHA and Study for SYAH **, by Tobi Kahn**

art selection and comment by [Aaron Rosen](#) in the [March 25, 2020](#) issue



Tobi Kahn is fascinated by the edges of abstraction. The surfaces of his paintings swell with forms that can appear both macrocosmic and microcosmic, as if depicting the contours of a distant nebula or a cell dividing under a microscope. In 2019, Kahn set himself yet another challenge, taking up the human figure as subject for his paintings and works on paper for the first time in more than 30 years. His paintings continue to tread the border between abstraction and figuration, but in these works he finds strangeness and unfamiliarity in the most intimate subjects, standing right before him. His figures stretch their limbs with the elegance of dancers, but beyond that it is impossible to establish any identifying characteristics. Like Amedeo Modigliani, Kahn has a gift for creating images of people which are simultaneously someone and everyone. The artist says he seeks to capture a “liminal moment, before the apprehension of gender and sexuality, an uncertain moment filled with

possibility.” It is in this untrammeled potential that Kahn opens a door to the divine.