

PORTRAITS: REFLECTIONS BY EMERGING IRANIAN ARTISTS



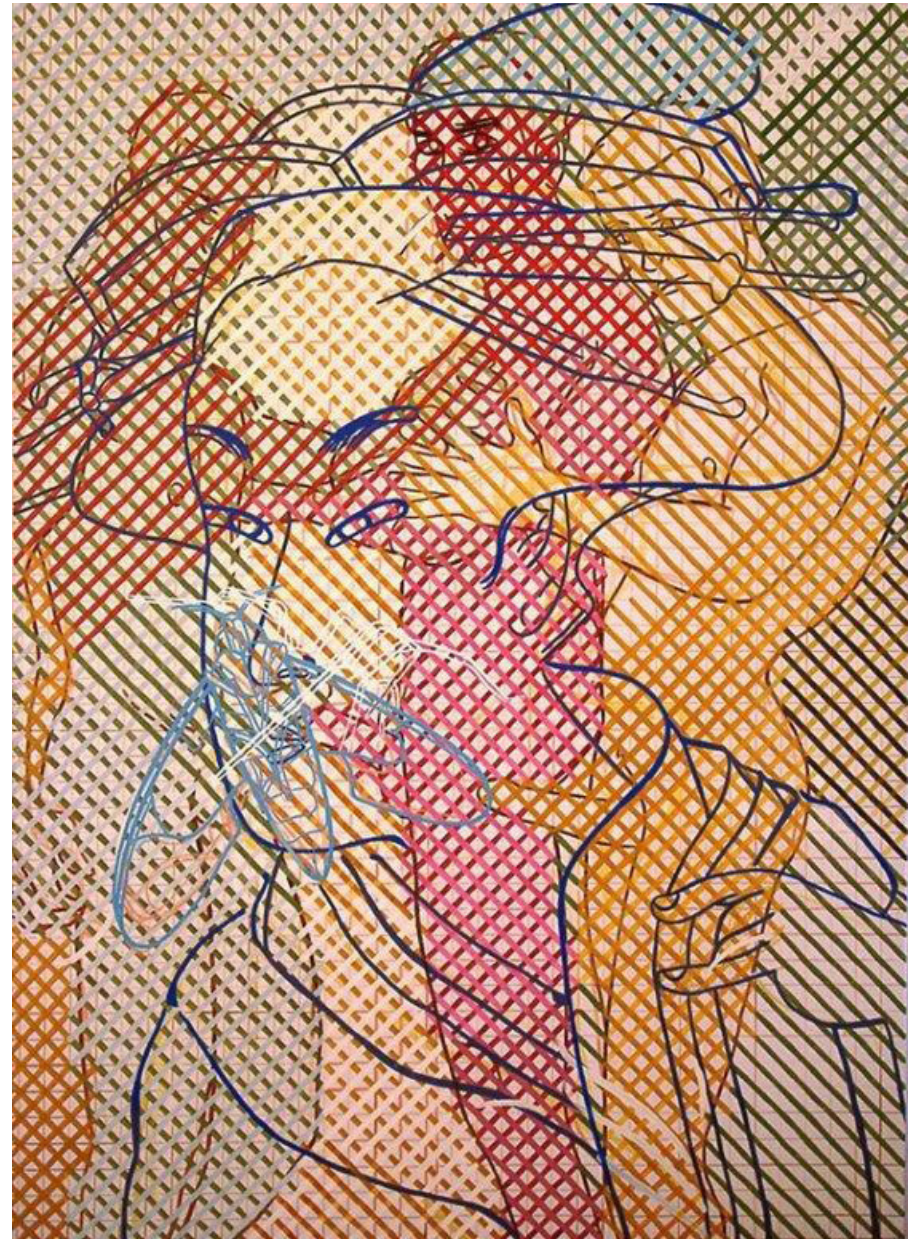
Curated by
Roya Khadjavi Heidari
and Massoud Nader
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“These young artists
despite all the limitations,
boldly challenge the
status quo and insist
on their independence
and capabilities
as any contemporary
human beings!”

—Nazila Nobashari,
owner of Aaran Gallery,
Tehran/Iran



Farsad Labbauf, *Trinity III*, 2002, Acrylic and ink on canvas, 60 x 40 in. / 152.4 x 101.6 cm.

PORTRAITS: REFLECTIONS BY EMERGING IRANIAN ARTISTS

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Portraits: Reflections by Emerging Iranian Artists

To mark the five year anniversary of the opening of *Iran Inside Out* at the Chelsea Museum and the first anniversary of *Iran Modern* at Asia Society, this group show seeks to promote Iranian contemporary art by showcasing work by young Iranian artists who were born, raised, and educated in Iran. Portraits mirror the soul. Through them, we hope you will get closer to the world in which they live.

Despite the societal and political challenges of the past 30 years, which led the country into isolation, Iran has experienced an artistic revival that has defied all expectation. Perhaps as a reflection of this isolation, the work of most of the artists featured in this exhibition is still unknown in the United States. It is for this reason that we began this project with the hope of raising awareness within our US communities and to familiarize them with these bodies of work.

The multidisciplinary nature of the show, with its emphasis on various artistic styles and techniques, demonstrates the remarkable breadth of the Iranian artistic community. "These young artists despite all the limitation, boldly challenge the status quo and insist on their independence and capabilities as any contemporary human beings," Nazila Noebashari (Aaran Gallery Owner, Tehran/Iran) states. The current generation of Iranian artists is not afraid of experimentation; they often test the limits of acceptability in their own land. The works in the show diligently create a dialogue between contemporary art on one hand and the rich cultural influence of Iran's past on the other.

Indicative of the tactful intelligence of this young generation, this exchange provides a departure from strictly western artistic styles. The emphasis on emerging Iranian Art does not aim to ghettoize the artists geographically or philosophically. Rather, by holding such a show in New York City—at the epicenter of the global contemporary art market—we hope to highlight the talent of these under-recognized artists and to celebrate their courage, stamina, and love of their craft.

We hope that this rich body of work will engage you, spark your curiosity, and invite you to navigate a new creative world.

—Roya Khadjavi Heidari and Massoud Nader

“By dispensing with constraints of “Islamic” artistic convention, all have produced work which is fresh, conceptually challenging and totally contemporary in idiom, thereby talking effortlessly to an international audience.”

—Janet Rady,
Director of Janet Rady Fine Art,
London/Dubai



Mehdi Mirbagheri, *Nassereddin Shah*, 2009, Mixed media on canvas, 49.2 x 49.2 in. / 125 x 125 cm.; Reza Shah, 2009, Mixed media on canvas, 49.2 x 49.2 in. / 125 x 125 cm

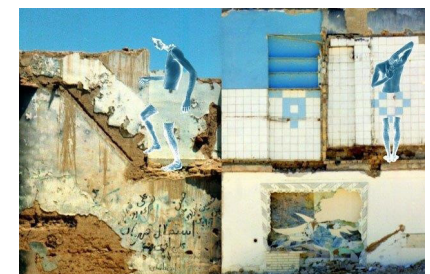
Portraits: Insertion and Recognition Strategies by Emerging Iranian Artists

By Sohrab Mahdavi

All the works that you see in these pages are addressing contemporary Iranian society. They are politicized, in the sense that in them politics serves as a vehicle for the artists to reflect upon their in-the-world experience.

Artists represented in this exhibit are preoccupied with their society, in their daily engagements, but also in their estrangement from it. Sadeq TIRAFKAN wrestles with the notion of sacrifice in his *Untitled* work (*Sacrifice* series, 2010) and all that it culturally entails -- bodily mutilation, deformation, and defamation. Morteza POURHOSSEINI's forehead bears the stamp of Quranic invocations; his back is ready for the sword and shield of tradition (*Circus* series, 2011). The boy with the bandana in the painting of Babak BIDARIAN (*Boy in Passion Play*, 2013) is looking directly at the painter, who can only be an observer in the reenactment of a liturgical drama, whose meaning the artist is not privy to. The girl in another painting of Mr. BIDARIAN (*Coming of Age*, 2013) is looking at the painter threateningly. The procession of mourners behind her is half-covered by daubs of paint. Amirhossein RADAIE's bronze sculptures of women in full Islamic dress (2012) shine to impose their in-your-face-ness, but since there are no faces to behold, the experience of looking at them becomes one of an outsider's.

The sense of estrangement from society, or the incapacity to come to terms with the conflict between the self and other, often more powerful, social forces, suffuses these works. In her *Rock, Paper, Scissors* series (2006), a more seasoned Jinoos TAGHIZADEH (b. 1971) is trying to trace back the political roots of this estrangement by studying the pages of newspapers in the wake of the Iranian Revolution of 1979. The indeterminate nature of the political landscape following the revolutionary moment is depicted through substitution of the original front-page photographs of newspapers of the time by lenticular images that suggest other possible historical outcomes. Somewhere in the middle of these newspaper pages we come upon a picture of the artist at the age of seven, beneath which appears an announcement of her having been lost since the revolution's victory.



Top: Amir Mousavi, *Lost in Wonderland*, (detail) 2011, Photograph on metallic paper, 47.2 x 31.5 in. / 120 x 80 cm., Ed. 2 of 5 Bottom: Naghmeh Ghassemlou, *Navab* series, 2011, C-print on silk paper/chemical process, 29.5 x 45.3 in. / 75 x 115 cm., Ed. 1 of 2

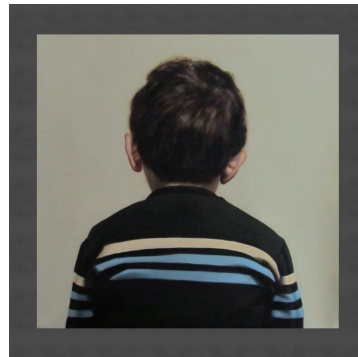
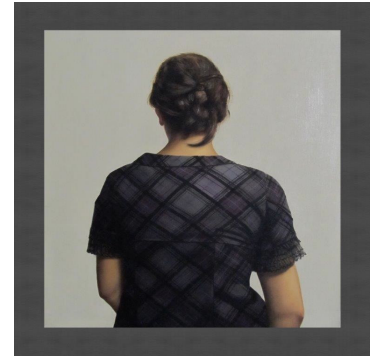
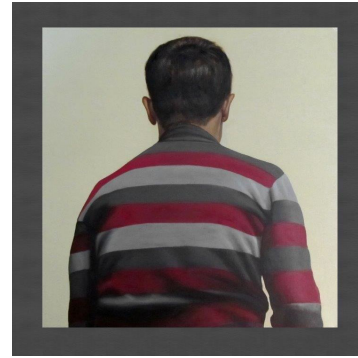
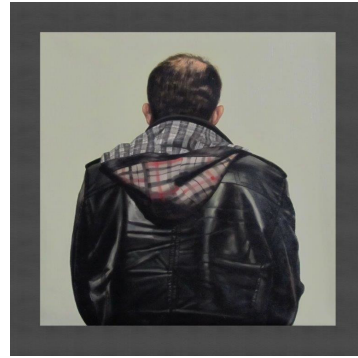
The modern middle class, whom the artists in this exhibit by and large belong to, has had a tumultuous relationship with the state and with society at large. It helped to set in motion the Revolution of 1979, but was soon kept at bay by an emerging ruling class who took the political center stage through contentious means. Every decade since then has offered the middle class reasons to insert themselves into or dissociate from politics; to turn their backs on or to try to understand the nature of the society they live in. The 2009 presidential election (almost all of these works were completed afterwards) marks the re-entry of the middle class into politics. The desire for the middle class to represent itself, trapped (Alishia MORASSAIE, *My 9 cm Friends 5*) as it may be in the bottle; occupying (Nasser BAKHSHI, *When We Were Together*, 2010) the same self-reflexive space; spinning (Bahar BEHBAHANI, *Proceeding*, 2011) in a dizzying, upside-down awareness of its surroundings; summoning (Samira Alikhanzadeh, *The Wedding*, 2010) ghosts from the past; prancing (Dariush GHARAHZAD, *Girl with Red Scarf*, 2006) in an attire not of its choosing; crumpled and contorted (Mohammad HAMZEH, *The Accountant*, 2009) in its portrayal; at once hiding and revealing (Hossein EDALATKHAH, *My Life, My Body, My Bio* series, 2009) its sexuality; outlining (Farshad Labbauf, *Mossadegh, Trinity III*, 2013) body politic; or simply standing (Arash SEDAGHAKISH, *Untitled*, from *University Students* series, 2011), are some of the prerogatives of the middle class as it appears in the works of these artists.

They may appear apolitical to the viewer at first, but whether through self-representation, recognition, or assertion, these works challenge the status quo. Some offer a critical view of the dominant issues of the day. The rich symbolism of *The Lion and the Sun* (2010) by Mohsen AHMADVAND creates a mutant creature that nevertheless stands at the apex of middle class national utopianism. People in the Naghmeh GHASSEMLOO photographs (from *Navab* series, 2011) seem to be ghosts inhabiting a sphere that is in the process of dissolution. The donkeys in Majid BIGLARI's *Kharkhouneh* (2011) speaks to the ignorance that the artist sees pervading Iranian society today, from the masses below to the rulers above, and possibly including his own middle class. The *Children's Program* installation of Mojtaba AMINI is a scathing criticism of the punitive juridical approach of the state as it relates to delinquent children. Could the dorsal portraits of Nasser BAKHSHI be a way for the artist to remain within, but with his back turned on society?

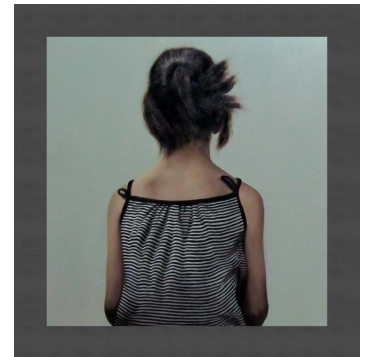
These works recognize the multifaceted nature of the society they were conceived in. Perhaps because of this recognition, they exhibit an estrangement from a ruling order that delegitimizes their ways of being-in-the-world. As such, this particular middle class is not out to universalize its mode of existence but is interested in expression and self-representation as a strategy for social legitimation and insertion.



Top: Jinoos Taghizadeh, *Rock, Paper, Scissors* series, 2006, Mixed media on lenticular paper, 26.8 x 20.9 in. / 68 x 53 cm. Bottom: Leyli Rashidi, *Woman on Edge*, 2014, Oil on canvas, 13 in. diameter / 33 cm. diameter



"Iran is currently experiencing a remarkable artistic revival in the middle of the most challenging of circumstances."



Nasser Bakhshi, *Portraits of Generations*, 2010, Oil on canvas, 23.6 x 23.6 in. / 60 x 60 cm. each

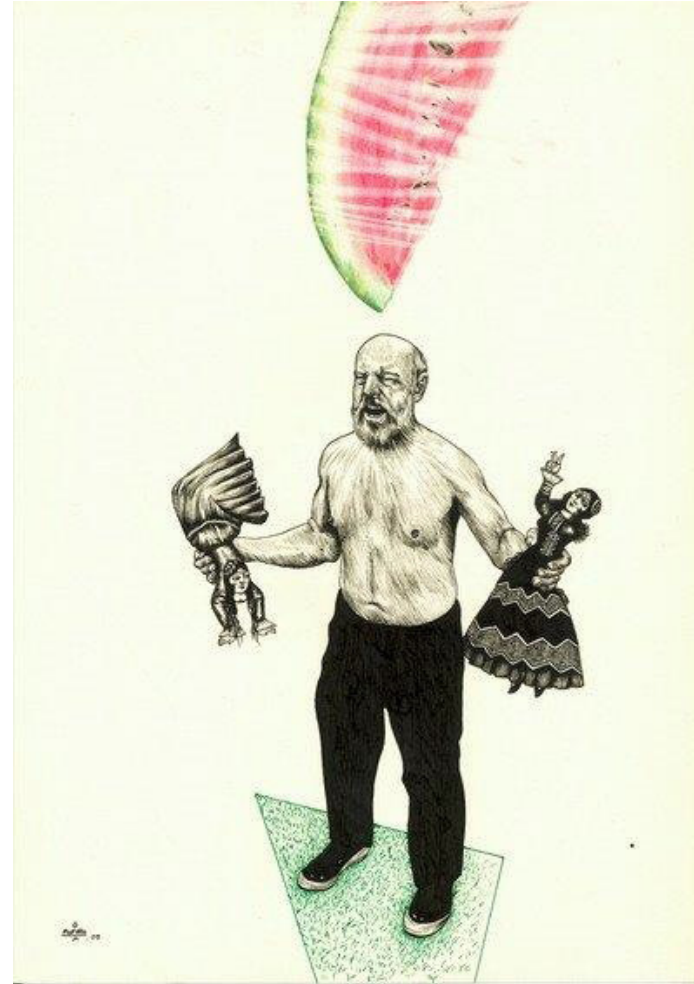
—Hossein Amirsadeghi,
author of *Different Sames:
New Perspectives in
Contemporary Iranian Art*

ARDESHIR MOHASSESS TRUST

A percentage of the profits from the exhibit will be donated to the Ardeshir Mohassess Trust.

Founded in New York City, The Ardeshir Mohassess Trust is an educational, cultural, and charitable foundation established to honor Mohassess, to sustain, expand, and protect the artist's legacy, to safeguard and promote his lifelong contributions to art, to preserve the late artist's collection, and to offer financial aid to ailing and disabled artists.

MOHSEN AHMADVAND



LEFT:
Ghajar series
Ink on paper
2010
26.4 x 22.4 inches
67 x 57 centimeters

RIGHT:
Ghajar series
Ink on paper
2010
26.4 x 22.4 inches
67 x 57 centimeters

MOHSEN AHMADVAND

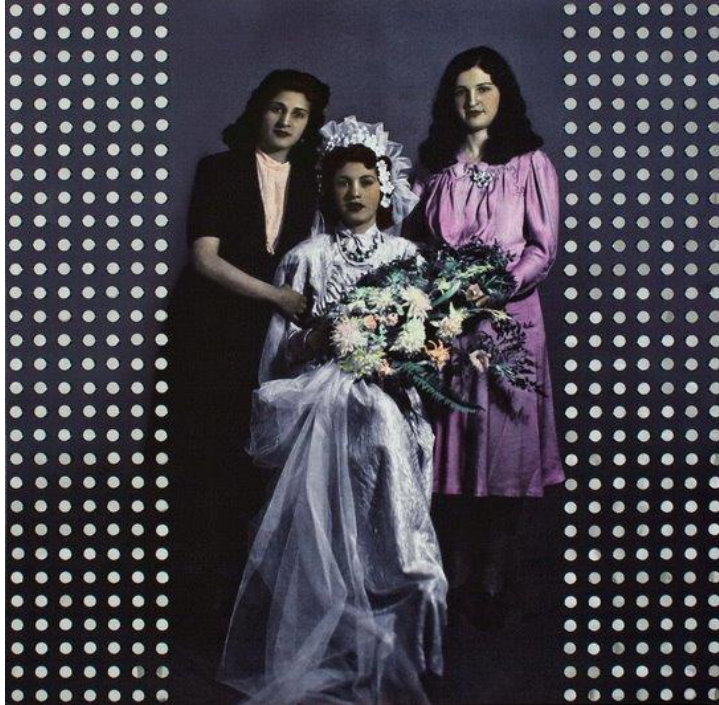
Mohsen Ahmadvand doesn't explain what he sees because the political and social content today in Iran is way past explaining. He simply decorates what has already been explained.

Though the images might invoke criticism rising from the cliché loving mind that intensifies them with nostalgia, his work turns memory worshipping to chocking with tears, but this time the sound of a far cry time making fun of all traditional tunes. A tune in which the notes are history, society, and it's euphoric song forgetfulness.

—Vahid Sharifian



SAMIRA ALIKHANZADEH



The Wedding

Acrylic and mirror fragments on printed board

2010

47.2 x 47.2 inches

120 x 120 centimeters

Edition 2 of 3



Woman with Red Shoes

Acrylic and mirror fragments on printed board

2008

31.5 x 47.2 inches

80 x 120 centimeters

Edition 3 of 3

SAMIRA ALIKHANZADEH

Born in Iran in 1967, Samira Alikhanzadeh studied first at the Alzahra University, and then took a Master of Fine Arts at Azad University, Tehran, which she completed in 1998. Today she exhibits regularly in Tehran, and has taken part in group exhibitions internationally.

Alikhanzadeh's earlier paintings depicted windows and frames, reflecting an obsession with light effects; however, one day, stumbling on a box of old photographs, she began to incorporate these new elements. Today her works are populated by children and women from the past, nameless faces dressed in long-gone fashions. Another common tactic in her works is the use of shards of mirror, which are employed to partially incorporate the viewer into the piece, encouraging them to think about their own identity or heritage. The overall impression is one of melancholy, of time passing.

—Hossein Amirsadeghi,
*Different Sames: New Perspectives in
Contemporary Iranian Art*



MOJTABA AMINI



Children's Program

2011

Mixed media, acrylic paint, wall paper, plexi-glass, mirror on cardboard

Dimensions variable

MOJTABA AMINI

Mojtaba Amini, born in 1979, is a radical neo-conceptual artist. Fully engaged with the society, political and social issues are never far from his mind. *Children's Program* is about children less than 18 years old who have committed murder. As per the laws of the Islamic Republic, once given an execution verdict, they remain in jail until they come of age and the sentence is then carried out. In Iran, there is a tradition of putting up richly adorned canopies that are meant to resemble the "Bridal Chamber" for the young deceased. A metaphor for an unfulfilled life. In 1997, Iran joined the International Convention for Protection of Children, which does not allow passing of the execution verdict or life imprisonment for children less than 18 years of age. Right now in Iran more than 200 children are waiting for their execution and many have already been executed.



REZA AZIMIAN



Portrait of A Man
2007
Oil on canvas
31.5 x 31.5 inches
80 x 80 centimeters



Portrait of A Man
2007
Oil on canvas
31.5 x 31.5 inches
80 x 80 centimeters

REZA AZIMIAN

Reza Azimian was born in Hamedan in 1977, where he still lives and works. He studied Sociology, but as a self-taught painter, he soon realized that his main interest and focus would be painting.

Strongly influenced by the effects of modern communication tools on social behavior and the environment, his work depicts various characters and locations, while focusing on his personal interest in the negative psychological effects of modern interactions. Reza's paintings explore our changing culture and the parallel effects these changes have on our identities and social conduct.



NASSER BAKHSHI



LEFT:

The Waiting

2010

Wood and glass box, mixed media with glass,
string, fabric, paint

27.5 x 20 x 3.9 inches

70 x 50 x 10 centimeters



TOP RIGHT:

Return

2010

Wood and glass box, mixed media with pins,
string, fabric, paint

15.7 x 15.7 x 3.9 inches

40 x 40 x 10 centimeters



BOTTOM RIGHT:

When We Were Together

2010

Wood and glass box, mixed media with strings,
glass, pin, fabric, paint

19.7 x 23.6 x 3.9 inches

50 x 60 x 10 centimeters

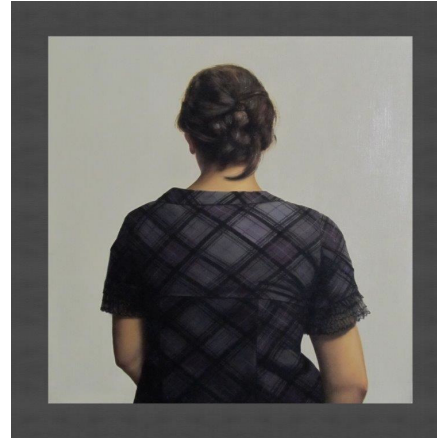
NASSER BAKHSHI



Portraits of Generations
2010
Oil on canvas
23.6 x 23.6 inches
60 x 60 centimeters



Portraits of Generations
2010
Oil on canvas
23.6 x 23.6 inches
60 x 60 centimeters

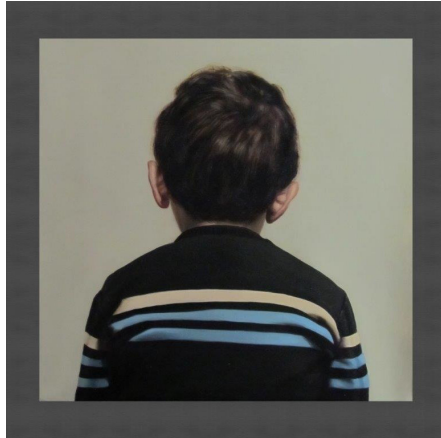


Portraits of Generations
2010
Oil on canvas
23.6 x 23.6 inches
60 x 60 centimeters

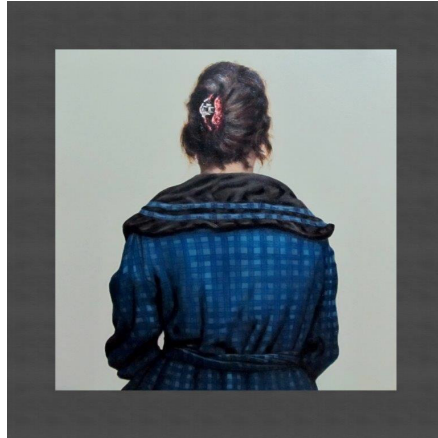


Portraits of Generations
2010
Oil on canvas
23.6 x 23.6 inches
60 x 60 centimeters

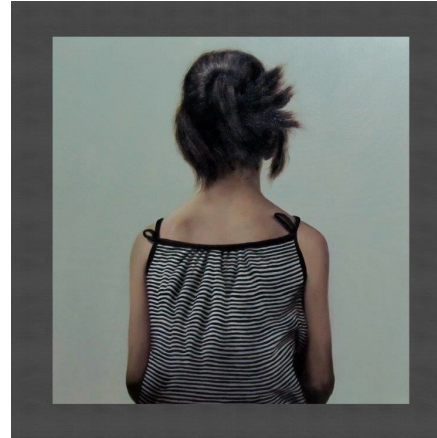
NASSER BAKHSHI



Portraits of Generations
2010
Oil on canvas
23.6 x 23.6 inches
60 x 60 centimeters



Portraits of Generations
2010
Oil on canvas
23.6 x 23.6 inches
60 x 60 centimeters



Portraits of Generations
2010
Oil on canvas
23.6 x 23.6 inches
60 x 60 centimeters



Portraits of Generations
2010
Oil on canvas
23.6 x 23.6 inches
60 x 60 centimeters

NASSER BAKHSHI



Portraits of Generations
2010
Oil on canvas
23.6 x 23.6 inches
60 x 60 centimeters



Dawn
2010
Oil on canvas
39.5 x 39.5 inches
100 x 100 centimeters

NASSER BAKHSHI

Nasser Bakhshi, a self taught painter born in Tabriz in 1982, paints people who have turned their back to the audience. This series of work was done during some of the darkest years of the Islamic Republic, the years of Ahmadijnejad's presidency. At first glance the series might not reveal its political nature but once seen as a group the concept of "protest" becomes clear. These works are excellent examples of hyperrealistic paintings, and show both the extraordinary skill of the artist as well as his probing mind. He joins scores of other young artists who are registering the truth, their presence is denial of the darkness.



DADBEH BASSIR



Untitled
2005-2006
C-print
23.6 x 15.7 inches
60 x 40 centimeters
Edition 1 of 7



Untitled
2005-2006
X-ray and digital photograph on light box
29.5 x 37.4 inches
75 x 95 centimeters
Edition 1 of 7

DADBEH BASSIR



Untitled
2005-2006
C-print
19.7 x 19.7 inches
50 x 50 centimeters
Edition 1 of 7

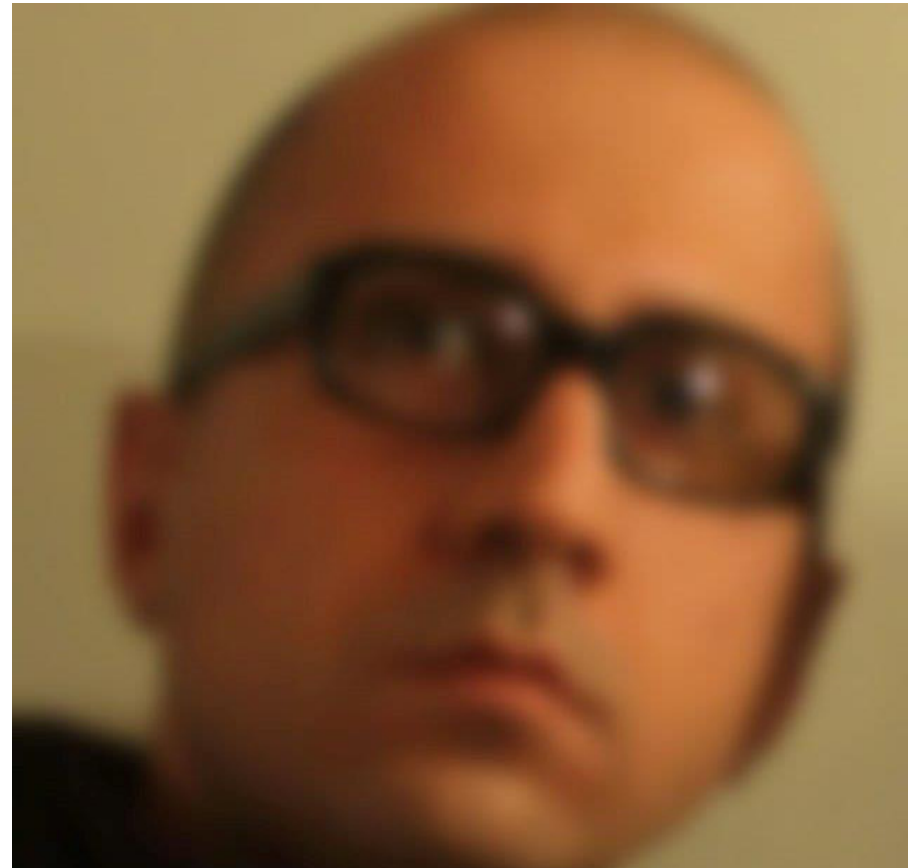


Untitled
2005-2006
C-print
15.7 x 23.6 inches
40 x 60 centimeters
Edition 1 of 7

DADBEH BASSIR

Dadbeh Bassir was born in Tehran in 1978, just six months before the Islamic Revolution. He studied for a degree in Photography in Tehran, from which he graduated in 2004, and he continues to live and work in Iran. Many of his photographs are autobiographical—'I always see myself as the closest subject,' says Bassir—dealing in particular with a serious illness that he suffered in 2003. Works such as the haunting *After Six Months* (2003) catalogue Bassir's own physical deterioration, and he would later revisit this subject as a sort of exorcism. The result, produced from 2005 to 2006, was the 'Untitled' self-portrait series that incorporates x-rays alongside his own photography.

—Hossein Amirsadeghi,
*Different Sames: New Perspectives in
Contemporary Iranian Art*



BAHAR BEHBAHANI



Proceeding

2007

C-print mounted on aluminum

26 x 40 inches each

64 x 98 centimeters each

Edition 1 of 6

BAHAR BEHBAHANI

Multidisciplinary artist, Bahar Behbahani's work addresses her long-term conceptual dialogue with memory and loss, representing her chronic displacement and longing. Through her lyrical videos Behbahani stages a contemporary cultural critique by layering and juxtaposing allusions to past and present sociopolitical circumstances with a language that she draws from her experience as a painter.

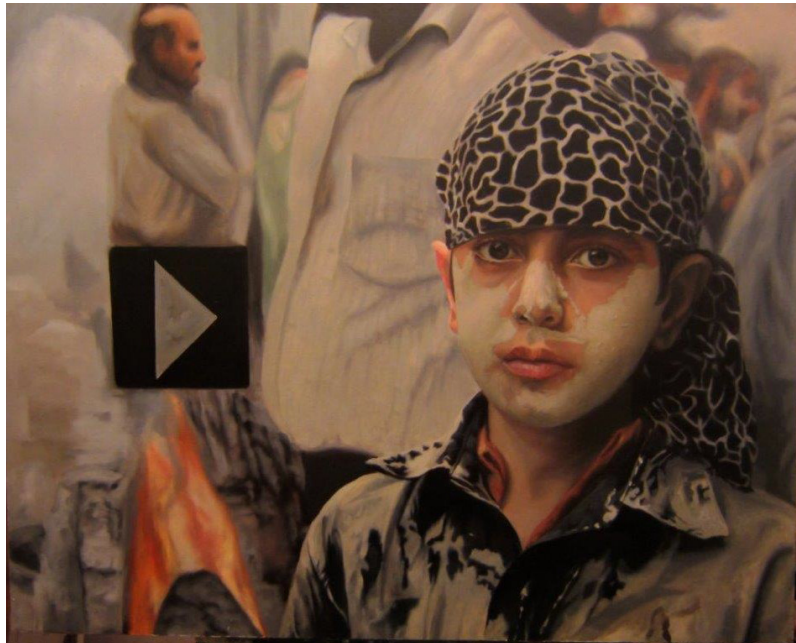
Her work has been featured in the 18th Biennale of Sydney, Australia; Sharjah Biennial 10, UAE; Queens Museum, New York; The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum, Michigan; MACRO, Museum of Contemporary Art, Italy; Mimara Museum, Croatia; The Tribeca Film Festival, New York; as well as the Asia Art Biennial, Bangladesh, among others.

Behbahani was awarded an Art Omi International Artists Residency by The Pollock Krasner Foundation Grant in 2013 and the Art and Culture Network Program Grant from the Open Society Institute, Budapest in 2011. Guggenheim Museum Curator Suzanne Cotter selected her video for the 10th Sharjah Biennial, UAE. In 2007, her video *Suspended* was selected 'Best in Show' by Carrie Springer, Senior Curatorial Assistant, Whitney Museum of American Art.

Her work is included in the permanent collections of the Queensland Museum, Australia; Sharjah Art Foundation, UAE; and Columbia Hospital, New York; as well as numerous private collections. She received her BA and MA in painting in Tehran, Iran and lives in Brooklyn, New York.



BABAK BIDARIAN



Boy in Passion Play
2013
Oil on canvas
31.5 x 39.3 inches
80 x 100 centimeters



Coming of Age
2013
Oil on canvas
31.5 x 48 inches
80 x 122 centimeters

BABAK BIDARIAN

Babak Bidarian was born in Hamedan, Iran in 1979, the year of the Iranian Revolution. He studied art at the University of Hamedan and graduated with a BA in 2001. He started his career teaching and only began to paint as an artist in 2007.

He first exhibited in his hometown where he was discovered by Shirin Jelveh—an art consultant who brought his art to the attention of galleries and collectors in Tehran. Bidarian has had several solo and group exhibitions in Iran, and his painting recently sold at Bonhams London.

Portraits of ordinary people are his primary subject matter. Throughout these portraits, he exquisitely captures their expressions and moods with the use of light.



MAJID BIGLARI



Kharkhouneh

2011

Fiberglass and painted wood

20 x 47.2 x 7.9 inches

51 x 120 x 20 centimeters

MAJID BIGLARI

Majid Biglari, born in 1986, is among the first graduates of Sculpting from Tehran University of Art. Sculpting had been eradicated from Iranian University curriculums from 1980 to 1999 and was once again included, but the prevailing teaching methods focused on form and the syllabus concentrated on Modernism. One of Biglari's first attempts to escape from the established Modernist program of the university was to use the discarded materials found in the campus.

The application of assembly line rules are once again noticeable in the artist's *Donkey* series. While the artist uses this method to his advantage, at the same time he resists conformity and ridicules uniformity. His choice of a singular character and the use of monotone grey are an escape from usual preconceptions. While the "unit" sculpture is beautiful, there is no variation on color or character. The "unit" is chosen to represent "us." By deforming society and taking away individualism, the artist attempts to reveal the true "us." He advocates the acceptance of the "other," in its lowest form of all: the donkey, as one of us.

Biglari defines his characters in this series by installing them as a group—representing a society that is supposedly mesmerized by the orator. This particular choice of presentation emphasizes the concept and at the same time shows the artist's contempt of tyranny. The shadow of the orator that he has had to live with all of his life.



HOSSEIN EDALATKHAH



LEFT:
My Life, My Body, My Bio series
2009
Mixed media on canvas
70.9 x 31.5 inches
180 x 80 centimeters

RIGHT:
My Life, My Body, My Bio series
2009
Mixed media on canvas
70.9 x 31.5 inches
180 x 80 centimeters

HOSSEIN EDALATKHAH

An artist's creative mind can be a prison for inspiration. For Hossein Edalatkhah, its freedom comes from expressing unique thoughts with fierce passion, overflowing from a wild, yet lonely heart.

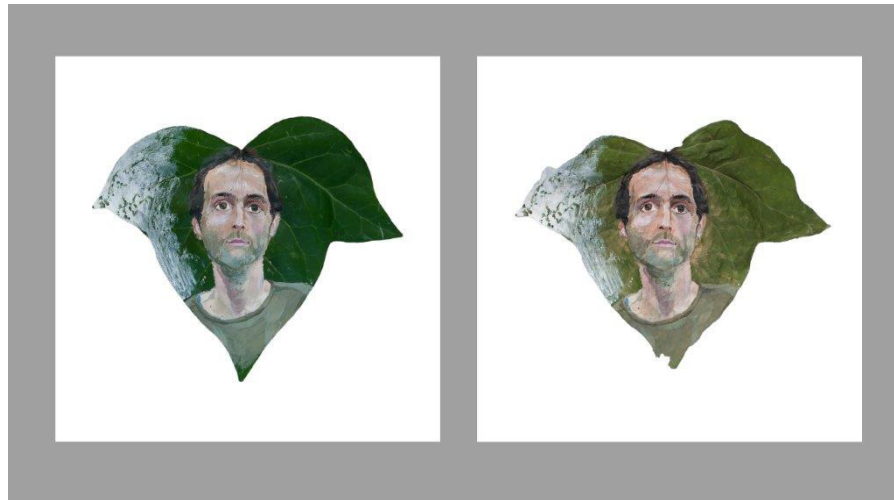
Edalatkhah, as an artist, is impulsive. He actualizes his ideas with great fire and urgency. Yet, the immediacy in his work is not devoid of cultural symbolic icons from Iran's past. Iconic elements such as Safavid floral designs, Persian carpets, lions (as a symbol of Iran's imperial past), as well as images of Mullahs. He also uses tile designs from centuries past. All are incorporated in his works to project a cultural identity.

His personal identity, however, as an openly gay man, is at odds with the current social and cultural identity of today's Iran. A society in which he has to live, and work, with all of its ramifications.

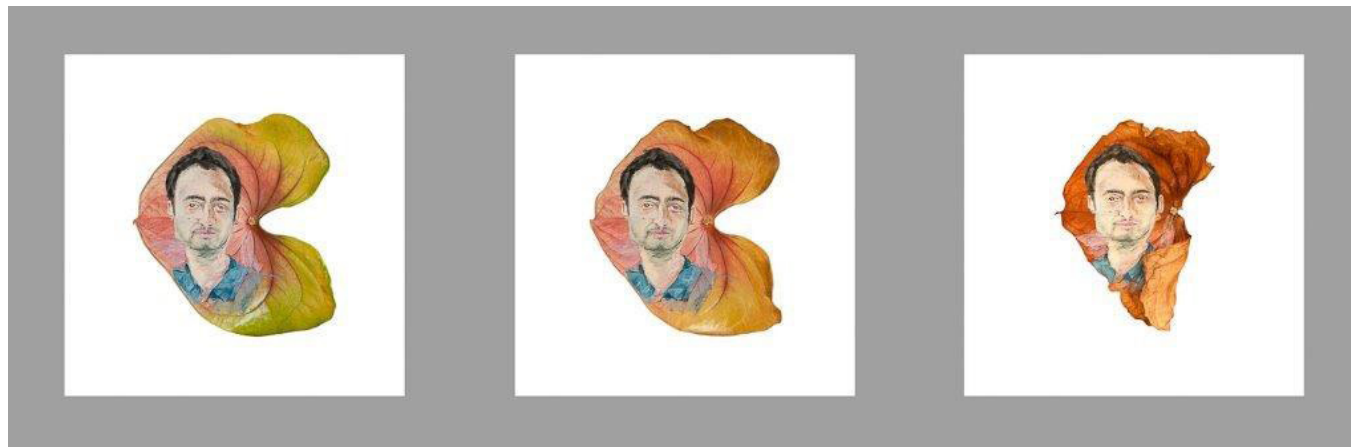
In the society that has demonized his desires and is trying to eradicate his existence, he uses the male penis to fight back, to say he exists. This is very clear in his series *My Body, My Life, My Bio*, previously exhibited privately in New York, he rails against this anti-homosexual dogma by saying "I am, I exist and I want to be free."



SARA GHANBARI



The Vain series
2012
Mixed media
13 x 14.6 inches
33 x 37 centimeters



The Vain series
2012
Mixed media
13.8 x 27.5 inches
35 x 70 centimeters

SARA GHANBARI

Sara Ghanbari, born in Tehran in 1980, plays with notions of time and its effect on people. By using real leaves and painting over them she tests time and nature. Each leaf is scanned in various stages of decay and the final selection is presented as a series portraying one person. The delicacy in her paintings and overt attention to detail is exemplary among the young artists of Iran. By painting portraits of friends and relatives, Ghanbari engraves their image as a way to deny decay and death.



DARIUSH GHARAHZAD



Girl with Red Scarf
2006
Oil on canvas
57.1 x 57.1 inches
145 x 145 centimeters

DARIUSH GHARAHZAD

Dariush Gharahzad was born in Tehran in 1976. Trained in painting and drawing, Gharahzad now concentrates on extremely realistic paintings that are often mistaken for photographs. His work has been shown in several exhibitions in Iran, London, and New York, and has been included in Sotheby's & Christies' auctions for several years. He now primarily works with middle east women as his subject. Gharahzad's work concentrates first and foremost on the social and urban life of modern-day Tehran and modern urban environments. Color and atmosphere are everything in his compositions—women walk by wearing headscarves, set against colored walls, and graffiti, a new form of expression among the Tehran youth, is reinvented as something beautiful. Gharahzad is especially interested in the booming youth culture, and the ways in which it quietly contravenes the rules of Islamic society. 'I think the message [of my art] is the people have changed—especially the young people,' he says. 'They need something more interesting than whatever is inside their culture—the traditional culture. And this new series is about women identification.'



SEPANTA GHASSEMKHANI



Lateral Inversion

2011

Single-channel video, 09:30 minutes

Dimensions variable

Edition 5 of 7

SEPANTA GHASSEMKHANI

Sepanta Ghassemkhani was born in Tehran in 1987. In her widely appreciated piece, *Lateral Inversion*, she addresses the issue of self, the female body, narcissism, and in general, identity. Particularly that of a young female in Iran. She protests to wearing hejab, but in true Persian style embraces the hejab and tries to look her best wearing one. She criticizes the deception and pretensions in society, as well as the ineffective efforts of regime in Uniform-zing the society.



NAGHMEH GHASSEMLOU



Navab series

2011

C-print on silk paper/chemical process

29.5 x 45.3 inches

75 x 115 centimeters

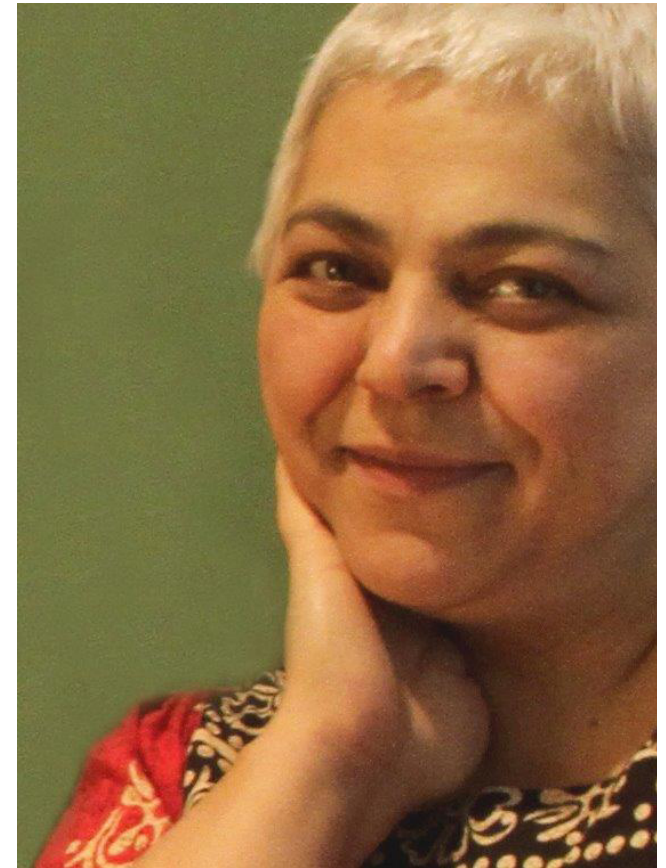
Edition 1 of 2

NAGHMEH GHASSEMLOU

Time and reflection are the two main themes of Naghmeh Ghassemloo photographic images. In her *Navab* series, Ghassemloo visualizes life and hears voices in old buildings now demolished in the Navab neighborhood of Tehran. The ghostlike men on staircases remind her of life that once was.

Disillusioned in what is real and what is her imagination, the *Navab* series is about the destruction of the past and current despair. The artist's work reflects on a society to which she needs to adjust to, where everything old is to be discarded, without any consideration for its value and what it meant to some.

Ghassemloo's photographs are part of numerous private collections in Iran and abroad, as well as part of the permanent collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.



MOHAMMAD HAMZEH



The Accountant
2010

Acrylic on canvas
33.1 x 25.2 inches
84 x 64 centimeters

MOHAMMAD HAMZEH

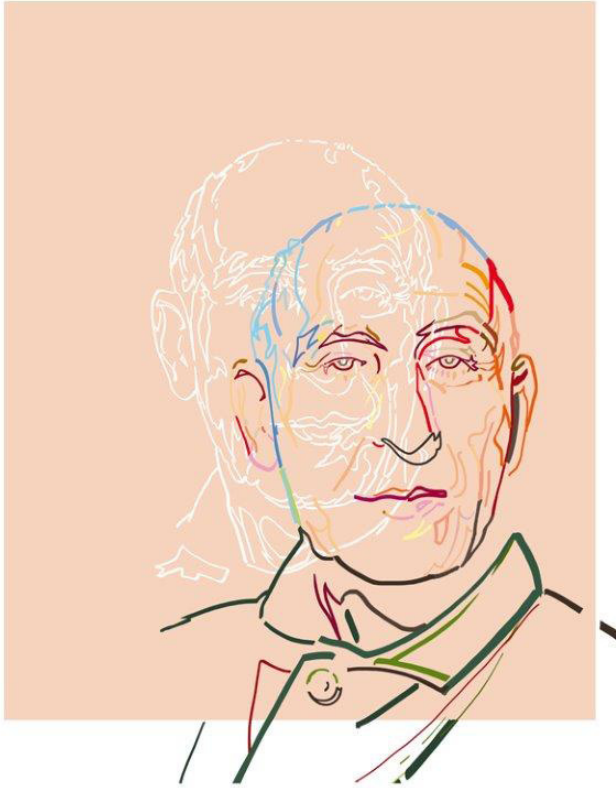
Born in Tehran in 1963, Mohammad Hamzeh studied art in the same city and has been exhibiting in Iran since the early 1990s. His paintings—mostly portraits of people who surround him in everyday life—are made in a naturalistic manner, to scale and in proportion; however, Hamzeh then deliberately crumples and distorts the works, an act by which he hopes to ‘capture the subject’s inner soul.’ This fragmented effect, though interesting from a formal point of view, can also suggest unease and dislocation.

More recently, Hamzeh has begun to experiment with the opposite process: producing the ‘correct’ painting, and then stretching it out of shape. The effect is a little like looking into a convex mirror. Hamzeh has also branched out into a form of painted sculpture—or perhaps that should be three-dimensional painting—that takes his ideas to the next level.

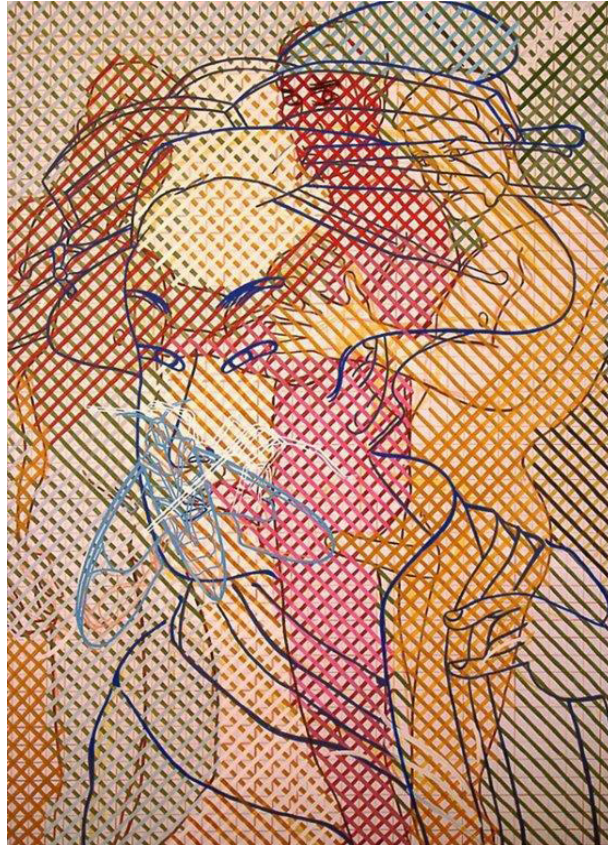
—Hossein Amirsadeghi,
*Different Sames: New Perspectives in
Contemporary Iranian Art*



FARSAD LABBAUF



Mossadegh
2013
Archival paper giclee print
39.4 x 29.5 inches
100 x 75 centimeters
Edition 4 + 5 of 7



Trinity III
2002
Acrylic and ink on canvas
60 x 40 inches
152.4 x 101.6 centimeters

FARSAD LABBAUF

Farsad Labbauf is an Iranian artist living and working in the New York area. Best known for his linear figurative paintings, he immigrated to US at thirteen. After enrolling in Rhode Island School of Design in 1982, Labbauf received his Bachelor of Fine Arts, followed by a second degree in Industrial Design. His linear figurative paintings are inspired in part by Persian Calligraphy, tile works, and studies in Quantum physics, revealing his reverence for such ideas as Unity and Monism. The origins of Labbauf's work lie in Figurative Expressionism, a style he practiced for more than two decades, leading to the creation of his linear figurative painting style. His paintings have been featured in more than sixty group shows across the globe, including Saatchi Gallery in London and Ex Aurum Museum in Pescara, Italy, in addition to solo exhibitions in New York, Boston, Amsterdam, Tehran, and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Esfahan. Labbauf's work can be found in numerous public and private collections including The Salsali Museum, Dubai, Saatchi Gallery in London, Carsten de Boer Art Collection, Amsterdam, and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Esfahan.



MEHDI MIRBAGHERI



Nasseredin Shah
2009
Mixed media on canvas
49.2 x 49.2 inches
125 x 125 centimeters



Reza Shah
2009
Mixed media on canvas
49.2 x 49.2 inches
125 x 125 centimeters

MEHDI MIRBAGHERI

Mehdi Mirbagheri was born in Tehran in 1980. He studied Graphic Design at Azad University in Tehran where he obtained his BA and MA.

Along with Hossein Edalatkhah, he is part of a group of Iranian Pop artists. Known as the Andy Warhol of Iran, Mirbagheri uses portraits of Persian Kings, iconic political figures, and images of the court ladies of the Qajar's Dynasty as subjects. He produces catchy and colorful images.

Mirbagheri has had many solo and group exhibitions. In his latest series, *Daddy Long Legs*, he uses calligraphic symbols as metaphors of male sexuality, decorating female forms which are long legged and in black stockings. The series depicts a showing of the battle of the sexes.



ALISHIA MORASSAIE



LEFT:

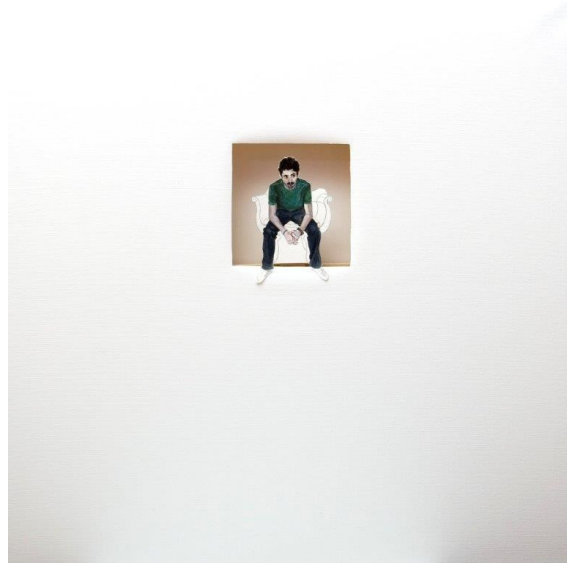
My 9 cm Friends 1

2011

Water color on paper, mixed media

23.6 x 15 inches

60 x 38 centimeters



TOP RIGHT:

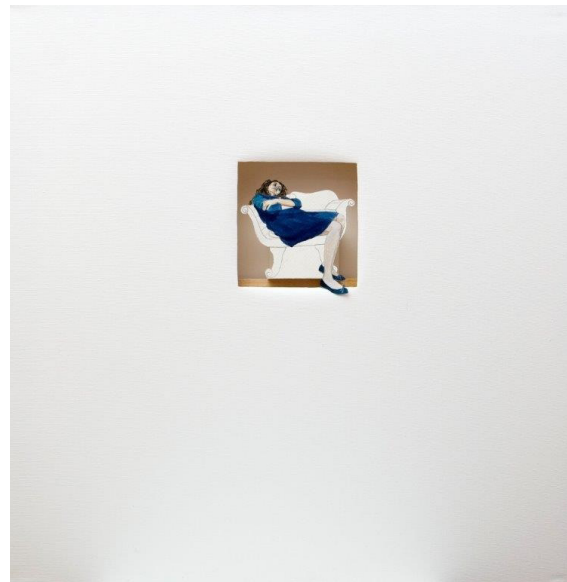
My 9 cm Friends 2

2011

Water color on paper, mixed media

27.5 x 27.5 inches

70 x 70 centimeters



BOTTOM RIGHT:

My 9 cm Friends 3

2011

Water color on paper, mixed media

27.5 x 27.5 inches

70 x 70 centimeters

ALISHIA MORASSAIE



My 9 cm Friends 4
2011
Water color on paper, mixed media
11.8 inches tall
30 centimeters tall



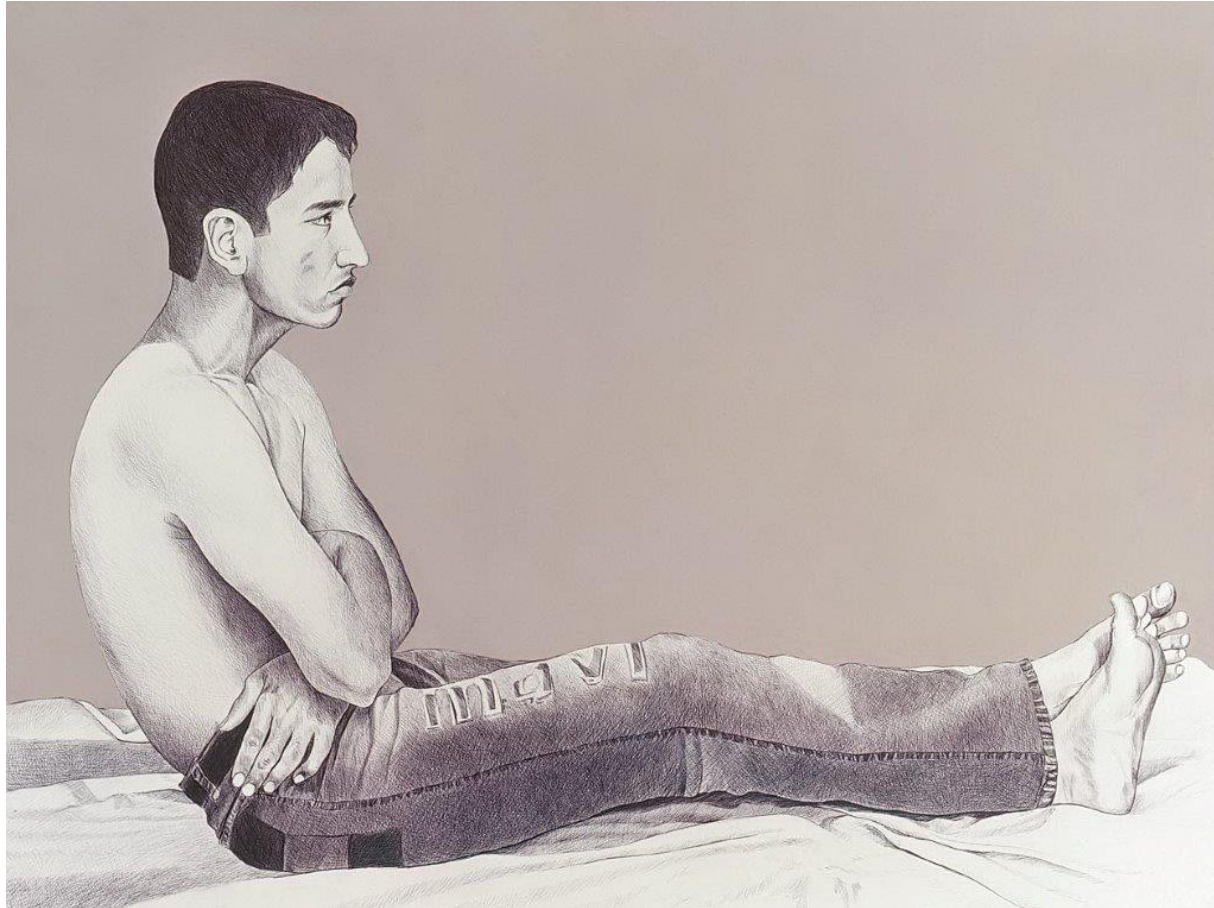
My 9 cm Friends 5
2011
Water color on paper, mixed media
11.8 inches tall
30 centimeters tall

ALISHIA MORASSAIE

Alishia Morassaie, born in 1980 in Tehran, has participated in numerous group exhibitions. The artist made a name for herself with a solo show in 2013, titled *Tehran No 12*, where she portrayed the ambiance of fear and stress in a party when the Moral police shows up and she and her friends are hastily covering up and trying to escape. The audience could find the hidden figures behind purpose built structures using a flash light. Her earlier works also show the environment of stress and insecurity that the young generations of Iranians have learned to live with.



AHMAD MORSHEDLOO



Defiance
2007
Ballpoint pen on cardboard
35.4 x 47.2 inches
90 x 120 centimeters

AHMAD MORSHEDLOO

Born in 1973 in Mashhad, Iran, Ahmad Morshedloo is one of Iran's most original painters. He studied first at the Azad University in Tehran, and then in 2001 completed a Master of Arts in Painting. Since then he has exhibited widely, including several solo shows in Tehran and group shows in Europe and the United Arab Emirates. He also teaches at a number of universities in Iran.

Morshedloo's main subject is the human figure, and many of them are depicted naked. In his own words, 'Their nakedness represents their detachment from this world. Sometimes we see some naked children on the street, for instance, to whom nakedness is not an issue for they don't live in this world really.' Some critics have commented that his figures appear to be burdened and yet tranquil at the same time—ambiguity pervades the works.

The style of these images has been described as 'neo-realist,' though there is also a touch of caricature, of exaggeration. What is certain is that Morshedloo is able to handle a large range of media, from charcoal to oil, watercolour to pen, and that his works show considerable technical prowess. However, instead of creating images that are strictly true to life, he attempts to conjure up works that have some humanity, or even humility. There is also a sense of death or morbidity hanging around some of the works: for example, in the sheep's heads that crop up in certain paintings. Even some of the 'live' sitters appear to be only half-alive.

—Hossein Amirsadeghi,
*Different Sames: New Perspectives in
Contemporary Iranian Art*



AMIR MOUSAVI



Lost in Wonderland
2011

Photograph on metallic paper
47.2 x 31.5 inches
120 x 80 centimeters
Edition 2 of 5

AMIR MOUSAVI

Amir Mousavi started with paintings and arrived at photography. From the beginning he loved surfaces, and the flattest of surfaces were walls, which for him have a life of their own. As he says it 'walls are characters of a city.' Painting on walls that might not exist in coming years reflect the reality of the strange land he lives in.

—Vahid Sharifian



JASON NOUSHIN



Sepheri

2008

Ink on printed paper laid on cardboard

12 x 8.75 inches

30.5 x 22.2 centimeters



Hedayat I

2008

Ink on printed paper laid on cardboard

32 x 23.25 inches

81 x 59 centimeters



Hedayat IV

2008

Ink on printed paper laid on cardboard

21.5 x 15.75 inches

54.6 x 40 centimeters

JASON NOUSHIN

I'm interested in individual motivation, the moment of anticipation that leads to social consequence and the meaning of personal responsibility. Human beings with all their complexities—frailties and strengths, benevolence and greed continue to inform my work. I focus on geo-political and social conflict which functions as expression, document, and artifact.

—Jason Noushin



MORTEZA POURHOSSEINI



The Circus 2 (Self Portrait)
2013
Oil and acrylic on canvas
60 x 60 inches
150 x 150 centimeters



The Shield
2011
Oil on canvas
60.2 x 60.2 inches
153 x 153 centimeters

MORTEZA POURHOSSEINI

Pourhosseini is a fast-rising young contemporary artist who has not only sold successfully in Sothebys' 2011 London sale of Middle Eastern art but has also recently been acquired by the Met. Pourhosseini's latest works brings many layers of meaning to its audience in a series of arresting portraits. A circus it definitely is: sword-swallowers, zurkhaneh-type wrestlers, dagger-players—all appear before us in dazzling hyper-realism. Seemingly modern figures bear the stamp of tradition, sometimes with exquisite calligraphy casting a shadow or showing up as a tattoo. One or two works push the boundaries, while others make disturbing statements, at once weaving the two incompatible ideas of religion and magic together. There is a vulnerable balance between beauty and terror, the message clearly relying on the sheer power of the unexpected. There is nothing quite like the combination of enigma and anomaly to startle and captivate.

—Roxane Zand, Sothebys Deputy
Chairman, Middle East Department



AMIRHOSSEIN RADAIE



Ghajar Woman series
2012
Bronze
13.8 x 9.4 x 9.4 inches
35 x 24 x 24 centimeters
Edition 2 of 2



Ghajar Woman series
2012
Bronze
13.8 x 9.4 x 9.4 inches
35 x 24 x 24 centimeters
Edition 1 of 5



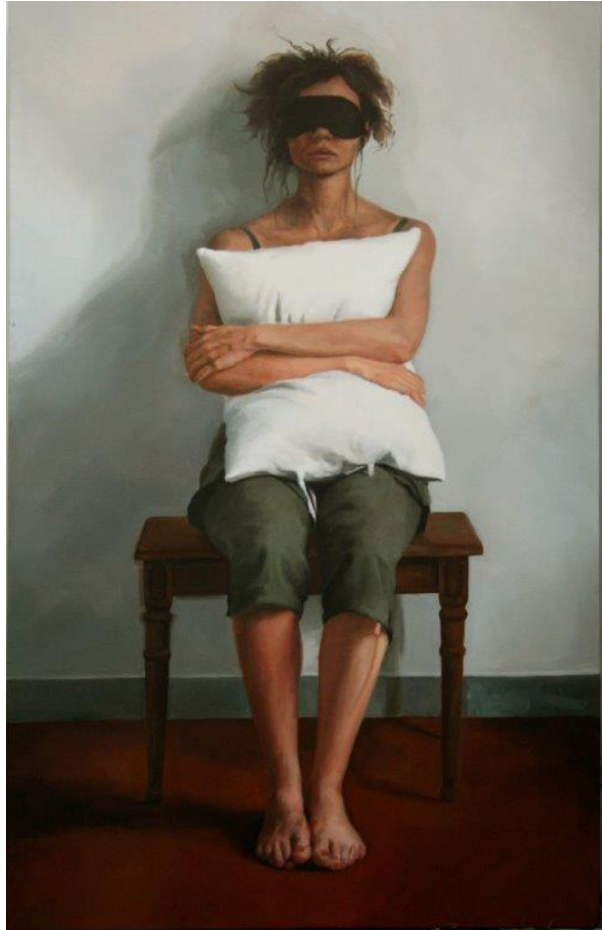
Ghajar Woman series
2012
Bronze
13.8 x 9.4 x 9.4 inches
35 x 24 x 24 centimeters
Edition 1 of 5

AMIRHOSSEIN RADAIE

Amirhossein Radaie was born in Hamadan, Iran in 1986. Using certain forms and shapes of the human body, along with various objects, Radaie strives to portray the inner feelings of not only his subjects, but his audiences as well. Even though the outfits which adorn his sculptures belong to the Qajar era, they are ever-relevant, representing the inability of people to determine their destinies, and their lack of rights. These people, according to the artist, can only fulfill their aspirations in the confines of their imagination.



LEYLI RASHIDI



Self Portrait with Pillow
2010
Oil on canvas
70.9 x 45.3 inches
180 x 115 centimeters



Woman on The Edge
2014
Oil on canvas
13 inches diameter
33 centimeters diameter

LEYLI RASHIDI

Leyli Rashidi was born in Tehran in 1986. She received her BA in Visual Arts from the Shahed Art University in Tehran in 2010. She is the recipient of many awards including the London's Young Artists competition in 2009. She has participated in many group exhibits in Tehran from 2009 to 2014, as well as the Abu Dhabi Art Fair in 2010. Rashidi is a painter. Her subjects are usually women, preferably self portraits or people in her life. She usually paints on large canvases but in her *Women on The Edge* series, she ventures into small circular paintings as seen in this exhibition. Rashidi is married to the artist Morteza Pourhosseini.



ARASH SEDAGHATKISH



LEFT:

Untitled (Art Student)
2011-12

Water color on paper
78.7 x 29.9 inches
200 x 76 centimeters

RIGHT:

Untitled (Art Student)
2011-12

Water color on paper
78.7 x 29.9 inches
200 x 76 centimeters

ARASH SEDAGHATKISH

Born in 1972 in Tehran, Arash Sedaghatkish studied painting at Tehran University, and is currently completing a Master of Fine Arts in the same institution. His work, strikingly realistic and direct, has already attracted plenty of attention, and has been exhibited in the United Kingdom, as well as extensively in Tehran.

According to the artist, the main subjects of his work are 'urban environments and their occupants.' As he explains, 'Through my work I explore and comment on a variety of social exchanges and tensions which underline contemporary Iranian society, particularly among its youth.' Of his unusual, tall format he says: 'My work is created and viewed in series and in many ways resembles sequences of a movie.'

Primarily Sedaghatkish uses drawing and painting, though from time to time he also turns to photography; in fact he is currently working on a series of photographs of youths who have tattoos of famous paintings.

—Hossein Amirsadeghi,
*Different Sames: New Perspectives in
Contemporary Iranian Art*



JINOOS TAGHIZADEH



Rock, Paper, Scissors series
2006
Mixed media on lenticular paper
26.8 x 20.9 inches
68 x 53 centimeters



Rock, Paper, Scissors series
2006
Mixed media on lenticular paper
26.8 x 20.9 inches
68 x 53 centimeters



Rock, Paper, Scissors series
2006
Mixed media on lenticular paper
26.8 x 20.9 inches
68 x 53 centimeters

JINOOS TAGHIZADEH

Taghizadeh's techniques work on different levels: they suggest an ironic counter-narrative to official discourse; private responses to public events; the chasm between what is promised and what actually happens; and the true meaning behind the politically correct euphemisms in which Khomeini's revolution, like others before it, excelled.

Her use of the hologram, nodding and winking from beneath the surface of the prints, means that the images change depending on where the viewer is standing, the quality of the light, and so on – suggesting subtly different ways of seeing.

Rock, Paper, Scissors provides a tantalising glimpse of life beyond slogans. "Iran is not a black and white society," said Aaran's owner, Nazila Noebashari. "This country is not just an Islamic republic. Despite the official line there is another life, there is a vibrant art scene, people still manage to convey a message despite self-censorship and state censorship. Probably, if we were totally free to say everything we wanted to say, this wouldn't have to be such a complex work."

—Ian Black in Tehran, theguardian.com



SADEGH TIRAFKAN



Sacrifice series
2010
Photography
33.5 x 43.3 inches
85 x 110 centimeters
Edition 1 of 5

SADEGH TIRAFKAN

Sadegh Tirafkan is one of the pioneers of “conceptual art” in post-revolutionary Iran in that in his works’ technique is in the service of concept. His name is often associated with photography and he studied photography at the university, but he was more the director of his works than their executioner—in fact, the person behind the camera in most of his works was photographer Abbas Kowsari.

Tirafkan was also among the first post-revolutionary artists who didn’t limit himself to a medium. In *Persepolis* (1995-98), for example, the artist produces the first specimen of video art in Iran. He exhibited his works mostly in diverse installation formats. Tirafkan can indeed be likened to a film director whose concern with form is tied to the conceptual questions that the work asks: What is male? What is an Iranian? What is the nature of knowledge? Where is the fount of tradition? What does history tell us? How does beauty show itself?

—Sohrab Mahdavi



“It is probably a new phenomenon in our country, that art has now become a tool by which artists can raise their quest for a better society.”

—Alireza Sami Azar,
previous Director
of Tehran Museum of
Contemporary Art



Bahar Behbahani, *Proceeding*, 2007, C-print mounted on aluminum, 26 x 40 in. each / 64 x 98 cm. each, Edition 1 of 6

PROGRAMMING

PRESS + VIP RECEPTION

Wednesday, September 17
5-6pm

OPENING RECEPTION

Wednesday, September 17
6-9pm

ARTEEAST PATRON'S CIRCLE EVENT

Saturday, September 20
1-3pm

IAWF MEMBER TOUR

Sunday, September 21
1-2 pm

PAAIA MEMBER TOUR

Sunday, September 21
2:30-3:30pm

PANEL DISCUSSION

Anne Barlow, Executive Director, Art in General
Bahar Behbahani, Artist
Layla S. Diba, Independent Curator and Art Advisor
Mahnaz Fancy, Executive Director, ArteEast
Sunday, September 21
4-6pm

ARTTABLE MEMBER EVENT

with Roya Khadjavi Heidari
Bahar Behbahani, Artist
Monday, September 22
12:30-2:30pm

ARTIST TALK

Farsad Labbauf, Artist
Sunday, September 28
1-3pm

PROGRAMMING IN FORMATION

SPONSORS + PARTNERS

AKArt Advisory

AKArt.com



The Committee

thecommitteenyc.com

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Anahita Rahimzadeh + Amir Khajehnouri

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iawfoundation.org



ArteEast

www.arteeast.org



Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans

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ARTTABLE

Rogue Space Chelsea

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art-and-framing-nyc.blogspot.com



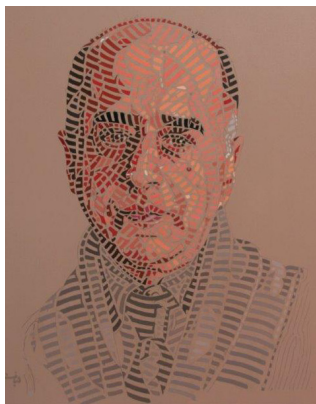
SPONSOR + PARTNER LIST IN FORMATION

ORGANIZER INFORMATION



Roya Khadjavi Heidari: Co-Curator

A highly respected executive with a history of spearheading successful strategic planning, business development, and marketing initiatives for leading fashion, art, education, and non-profit institutions, Heidari's love of art has led her into collaborations with artists, art consultants, and galleries on various projects. She currently supports young Iranian artists, promoting them in exhibitions and events in NYC. She also collaborates with Gallery R'Pure on contemporary design, promoting young French and American designers and is a marketing consultant for Kreëmart. Previously, she served on the board of the Lycée Français de New York school. She has been honored with the Women's Global Leadership Award by the Institute of International Education, and the Chevalier dans L'ordres des Palmes Academiques, by the French Minister of Education for her pioneering efforts to advance, support, and promote international education. Before that, Heidari was VP of Sales & Marketing for luxury fashion house Yves Saint Laurent, and VP and Divisional Merchandise Manager for Lord & Taylor. In addition to her professional accolades, Heidari is a proud member of Asia Society's Art Acquisition Committee and a member of the steering committee of their recent blockbuster exhibition *Iran Modern*. She was Co-Founder of the Institute of International Education's Iran Opportunities Fund, and currently serves on the Board of Art in General, the Advisory Board of Mission Restore, and is a Member of the Guggenheim Middle Eastern Circle. She holds a BA in Political Science and French Literature from Wellesley College and is fluent in French, Farsi, and English.



Massoud Nader
portrait by artist
Farsad Labbauf

Massoud Nader, Founder, Nader & Nader: Co-Curator

Massoud Nader is an Art Dealer residing in New York. He began his career in the mid 80's selling the Art of the Islamic World and by the late 90's—with the emergence and public interest in Middle Eastern Contemporary Art—he started representing a few young Iranian artists. His first foray was in 2002, when he exhibited Sadegh Tirafkan's photographs in New York. With the success of the show, he explored working with other artists, and today Nader & Nader represents a group of 30 artists, whose work includes photography, sculptures, paintings, and mixed media. He has exhibited works by Mojtaba Tajik in New York and Doha in 2005, and photographs by Sadegh Tirafkan at Lehmann Maupin Gallery. He also organized several group shows in Los Angeles and Dubai with Courtyard Gallery, and in November 2013—in collaboration with art patrons Maryam Panahy Ansary and Nader Ansary—he unveiled Morteza Pourhosseini's first international solo exhibit at the Bohemian National Hall in NYC, entitled *The Circus*. Pourhosseini's works were recently acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and successfully auctioned at Sotheby's Middle Eastern Contemporary Art sale in London in 2011. Nader works closely with museums in the U.S., Europe, and the Middle East and has placed many of his artists' works—including that of Siamak Filizadeh, Amir Moussavian, Naghmeh Ghassemloo, Ahmad Morshedloo, Arash Hanaie, and Sadegh Tirafkan—in the permanent collections of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, LACMA, and Brooklyn Museum of Art. Many works by these artists have been successfully auctioned at Christie's Dubai, Sotheby's London, Bonham's London and Bonham's New York. Nader holds a BSC degree from Leeds University, UK and an MBA from Columbia University.



Sohrab Mahdavi, Co-Founder + Editor, TehranAvenue.com: Catalogue Contributor

Sohrab Mahdavi is a translator and writer who has worked with Iranian art publishers and artists for the past dozen years. Co-founder & editor in chief of TehranAvenue.com (2000-2010)—a bilingual magazine that focused on the city as the site of creative expression—he saw the arts as a way of coming to terms with the ever-changing nature of life and a precious tool for healing wounds resulting from seeming contradictions of human existence, which sometimes manifests itself in celebrating life beyond what appears to be a string of paradoxes.



Amy Kisch, Founder + CEO, AKArt Advisory: Producer

Amy Kisch is an independent art consultant, curator, and strategic specialist. Her expertise includes fine arts marketing, programming, development, publishing, and collection management. Kisch is the Founder + CEO of AKArt, an art advisory agency as well as an independent curatorial platform, working with art fairs, art galleries, artists, auction houses, collectors, corporations, curators, institutions, luxury brands, museums, organizations, and publishing houses on developing major art initiatives from the ground up—offering private and corporate curation, collection management, and creative consulting on strategy, programming, exhibitions, strategic partnerships, brand development, marketing, public relations, events, and sales. Kisch previously ran Sotheby's worldwide VIP program for the auction house's top clients—curating, producing and marketing VIP programming, including the Sotheby's Preferred Museum Programme, Art Fair Programme and The Economist Lecture series. Prior to that, she worked within Sotheby's Proposals division—creating highly-customized business-winning proposals for the company's major private, institutional, corporate, and museum clients. While at Sotheby's, Kisch concurrently held the role of Executive Director of the Williamsburg Gallery Association. Kisch made her start in the art world at *Parkett*, Thread Waxing Space exhibition space, and at Umbra Editions. She has been integral in the production and curation of numerous successful art ventures, including collaborations and partnerships with ARTLOG, Artnet, ARTnews, Art Basel Miami Beach, Art Chicago, ARTLOG, Artnet, ARTnews, Art Basel Miami Beach, Art Chicago, Assouline, AT&T, Brooklyn Tourism, The Carlyle, Eli Wilner and Company, iCollect, Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group, Northside Music and Arts Festival, NYFA, Petrossian, Sotheby's Diamonds, Sotheby's Institute, Sotheby's International Realty, The Armory Show, and Williamsburg Every 2:ND Friday, and ZOOM Elite, among others. A member of ArtTable, Kisch serves on numerous committees and boards including City at Peace, CITYarts, NURTUREart, FolioCue, sparks & honey, and Time In Children's Art Initiative. Kisch holds a BA in Art History and Fine Arts from Columbia University and a Masters in Social Work.



Lizzie Jones, Associate, AKArt Advisory: Producer

Lizzie Jones has worked with AKArt since its inception, helping to produce art events and promote artists of all disciplines. She has been an integral part of numerous exhibitions, performances, and events. Jones curates the rotating exhibitions featured at The Gallery@BCL at the Brooklyn Creative League and recently helped to produce AKArt and Causey Contemporary Gallery's critically acclaimed exhibition *Liminal Reclamations* at the 2014 SPRING/BREAK Art Show. Prior to her time with AKArt, Jones worked at art galleries, art organizations, and non-profits in New York, Chicago, and Minneapolis. Since moving to New York in 2010, she has worked with numerous artists to further promote their work and careers. While in Chicago, Jones interned at Woman Made Gallery, working to support the every day functions of the gallery, as well as producing their annual gala. Interning for Intermedia Arts in Minneapolis, she helped to produce and support the organization's involvement in The UnConvention—a series of non-partisan programs in art, education, and journalism around themes of participatory democracy using participatory media timed during the 2008 Republican National Convention. Jones became interested in art and the creative process at an early age, and is most focused on socially engaged and community based art initiatives. She has a BA in The History of Art and Architecture, specializing in Contemporary Art and Art and Design, from DePaul University in Chicago, where she helped to spearhead the revival of The Arts Club.



thecommittee

Ricky Lee, Founding Member, The Committee: Publicity + Event Production

Ricky Lee, Founding Member of the Committee, is an experienced marketing and communications strategist specializing in the arts and design. For the last 10 years he has worked as an independent media relations and event production consultant for various artists, galleries, museums, and cultural institutions. He has directed public relation campaigns for Abrams, Phaidon, The Vendome Press, and Hermes of Paris. From 2001 to 2004, he was Associate Publisher and Gallery Director of Scalo (Zurich). He was the founding fashion editor of Vibe magazine and has worked as a writer and editor for *The New York Times*, *Vanity Fair*, *Interview*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Allure*, and *The Los Angeles Times*. Founded in 2012, The Committee focuses on producing unique experiences for the arts community. Exploring the constantly blurring line between art, fashion, design, and music, The Committee is dedicated to bringing contrasting individuals or groups together on one platform in order to expand the boundaries within each field. Through events such as artist studio visits or gallery talks, and off-site exhibitions, The Committee's goal is to make the arts more accessible to New York City's young professionals and arts enthusiasts.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the artists for lending their immense talents and vision to this exhibition, as well as Sohrab Mahdavi, for his insight and eloquence in contextualizing these complex works.

Our gratitude for the generosity of our Sponsors: ArteEast, ArtTable, City Gallery & Framing, Iranian-American Women's Foundation, Public Affairs Alliance of Iranian Americans (PAAIA), patrons and collectors Anahita Rahimzadeh + Amir Khajehnouri, Rogue Space Chelsea, The Committee, and AKArt Advisory.

Special thanks to Anne Barlow, Executive Director, Art in General; Roxane Zand, Sotheby's Deputy Chairman, Middle East Department; Kevin O'Hanlon, Founder, Rogue Space Chelsea; Amy Kisch, Founder + CEO, AKArt Advisory; Lizzie Jones, Associate, AKArt Advisory; Ricky Lee, Co-Founder, The Committee; Alexandra Sacha Wagle, Co-Founder, The Committee; Mahnaz Fancy, Executive Director, ArteEast; Saghi Mojtabai, Executive Director of Public Affairs, Alliance of Iranian Americans; Mariam Khosrovani, Founder, Iranian-American Women Foundation; Layla S. Diba, Independent Curator and Art Advisor; and Nazila Nobashari, Owner and Executive Director, Aaran Gallery.

Additional thanks to our Host Committee: Azita Aghravi, Maryam Ayromlou, Sanam Akhlagh, Negin Baradari, Iman Bacodari, Jeyran Ghara, Marjan Ghara, Tamilla Ghodsi, Laya Khadjavi, Nazgol Saati, and Nassrin Iromloo Zahedi, who have worked so hard and helped us spread the news about this exhibit.

Finally, this exhibition couldn't have happened without the support of our families and friends.

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