

Assar Art Gallery

Standing Inside, Looking In



Sadegh Tirafkan



Samira Alikhanzadeh



Mehrdad Afsari



Dadbeh Bassir



Mohammad Ghazali



Nima Alizadeh



Saba Alizadeh



Shahriar Tavakoli



Meysam M. Mahfouz



Houra Yaghoubi

Paris Photo 2009

Spotlight on
Arab and Iranian Photography

Carrousel du Louvre
Salle Soufflot, Booth D33
19-22 November



Mahboube Karamli

Standing Inside, Looking In

The world around us can be looked at from both within and without. The East is usually regarded by the West with preconceived mystical and exotic notions and clichés. This point of view has also been used by the West to examine the contemporary art of the Near, Middle and Far East and has in some cases affected the way in which some artists of these regions regard themselves. What, however, do artists of these regions see when they address issues in their societies from within, using their own point of view and art?

Standing Inside, Looking In is a collection of photography by eleven Iranian artists dealing with present-day issues within their society using photography as their art form and incorporating elements from their own past heritage dating from the ancient to the present. These elements, rooted in their indigenous culture, are not being used by these artists to create an orientalist view of their region even if to the occidental eye they exoticize the works created. When being viewed by Iranians within Iran, they are simply visual and symbolic tools to convey the historical, political and cultural issues facing these artists. Yet, despite the Iranian-ness of the work, universally global concerns are addressed.



Samira Alikhanzadeh

- 1967: Born, Tehran, Iran
1998: MA painting, Azad University,
Art and Architecture School,
Tehran, Iran
1996: BA painting, Azad University,
Art and Architecture School,
Tehran, Iran

Solo Exhibitions:

- 2008: Golestan Gallery, Tehran, Iran
2005: Golestan Gallery, Tehran, Iran
2004: Golestan Gallery, Tehran, Iran
2001: Golestan Gallery, Tehran, Iran
1999: Golestan Gallery, Tehran, Iran

Select Group Exhibitions:

- 2009: *Routes II*, Waterhouse and Dodd, London, UK
2009: *Off the Loom: The Persian Carpet in Contemporary Iranian Art*,
Assar Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
2009: *Self Portrait*, Tarahan Azad Gallery, Tehran
2009: *Masques of Shahrazad*, Mall Gallery, London, UK
2008: Mall Gallery, London, UK
2008: *Planting New Roots*, Dar Al-Funoon Galley, Kuwait
2007: *In Memory of Iraj Zand*, Iranian Artists' Forum, Tehran, Iran
2007: *32 Oskou, Students of Aydin Aghdashloo*, Iranian Artists' Forum, Tehran, Iran
2007: *Figurative Art, Broken Promises, Forbidden Dreams*, Iran Heritage Foundation, London, U.K
2007: Assar Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
2007-2008: *Wishes and Dreams, Iran's new Generation Emerges*,
touring exhibition in 9 US cities including Washington DC,
New York and Daytona Beach, USA
2007: *Self Portrait*, Iranian Artists' Forum, Society of Iranian Painters, Tehran, Iran
2004: *Trois Regards Persans*, Salle Polyvalente de la Mediatheque, Issy-les-Moulineaux, France
2004: Society of Iranian Painters, Space Gallery, Vancouver, Canada
2003: Palazzo Alloggia, Palme e Palmizi, Naples, Italy
2003: *25 Years of Separation: Iranian Art after the Revolution*,
Articultural Gallery, Santa Monica, USA
2003: Guest Artist of the Dena Group, Esfahan Museum of Contemporary Art, Esfahan, Iran
2001: *New Experiences*, Iranian Artists' Forum, Society of Iranian Painters, Tehran, Iran
2001: *Contemporary Iranian Art Exhibition*, Ataturk Cultural Center, Istanbul, Turkey
2001: *Contemporary Iranian Art Exhibition*, Modern Art Gallery, Ankara, Turkey
2001: *Contemporary Iranian Drawing Exhibition*, Barg Gallery, Tehran, Iran
2000: The Fifth Painting Biennial, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran, Iran
1999: *Contemporary Iranian Drawing Exhibition*, Barg Gallery, Tehran, Iran
1995: The Third Painting Biennial, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran, Iran

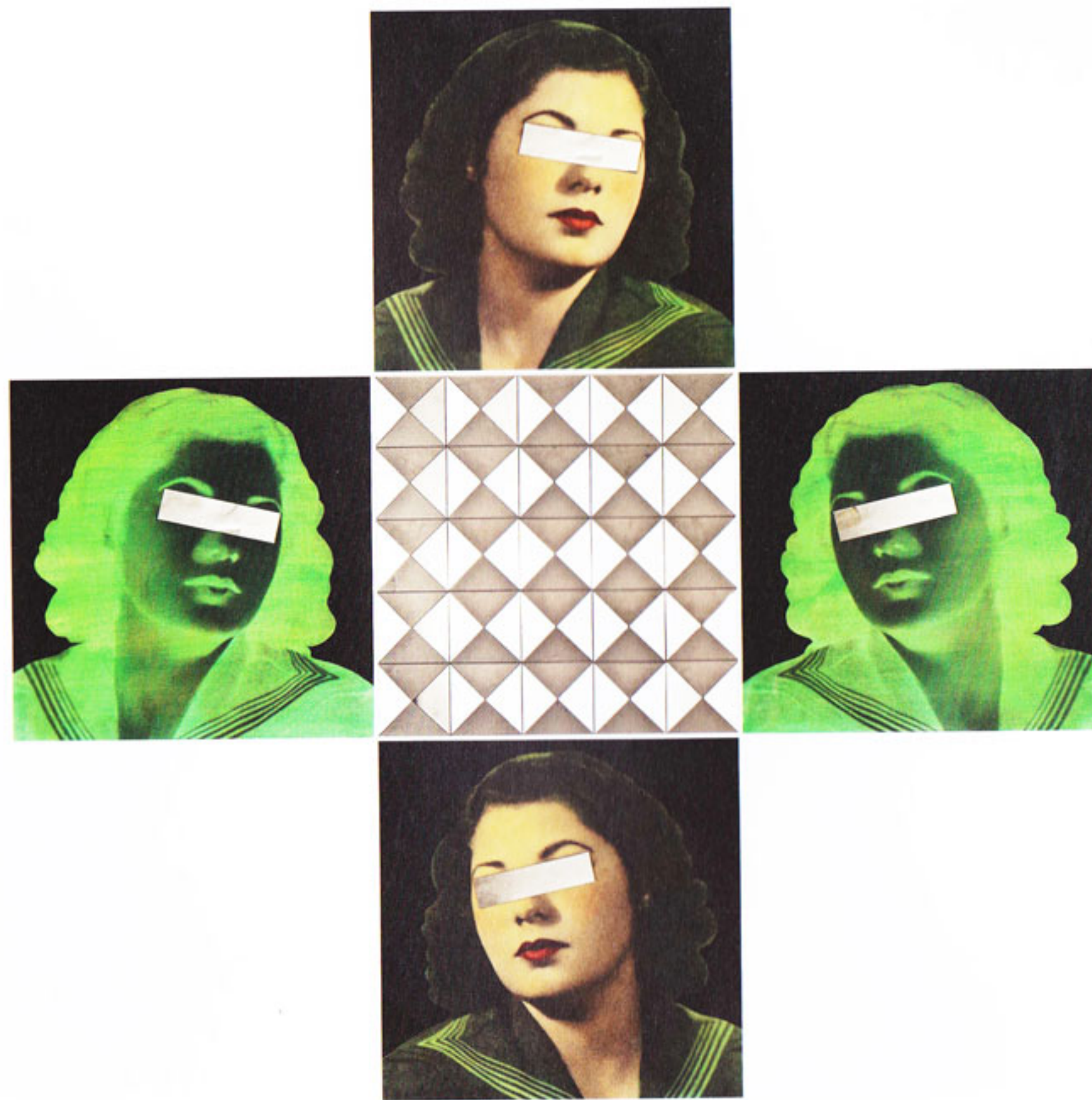
Art Fairs:

- 2008: Art Dubai, Dubai, UAE

What began as an obsession with windows and light sources in interiors became the main element in my initial works and has stayed with me to present. Taking the position of an observer, I created an overlay of window-like openings to the interiors within my composition, and introduced human figures and forms as part of the cold and grey atmosphere within my impression of a society filled with deeply satirical contrasts reflected by my use of blues, purples, and greens. I have since removed the frames and now use the images minimally, printing them directly on the surface and rendering them with my own palette of hues. Human figures and forms, mainly of women and children, and brides and grooms in the form of found photographs render the passage of time as a melancholic truth yet they also express the humor found in most old photographs reflected by hair and dress styles of the day: just as our photographs may be found amusing by their viewers in the not too distant future. The images I use in my work date to the mid 30's, 40's and 50's; a period following the banishment of the veil in Iran. By applying mirrors to the surface, I create a marked though incomplete, presence of the viewers within the framework of my composition. I thus make a direct connection between the subjects in the past and the viewers in the present. They in turn become a part of the composition and possible descendants of the subjects, looking into a past, or perhaps like I, satisfying their voyeuristic urge to enter the lives and memories of generations gone by.



Playful Girl, acrylic and mirror fragments on printed board, 100 x 100 cm, edition 3/3, 2008



Untitled, acrylic and mirror fragments on printed board,
polyptych (5 panels), 50 x 50 cm each panel, edition 1/3, 2008



With the Passage of Time, acrylic and mirror fragments on printed board,
polyptych (4 panels), each panel 90 x 90 cm, 180 x 180 cm overall, edition of 3, 2009



With the Passage of Time, acrylic and mirror fragments on painted board,
polyptych (7 panels), each panel 140 x 40 cm, 140 x 280 cm overall, edition of 3, 2009



www.assarartgallery.com

No. 1, Hamid Dead End, Unit 2,
Lessani Street, Jebbeh Street,
Mahdiah Street, Elahieh,
19159 Tehran, Iran

Tel: +9821 22 63 33 45 - 6

Fax: +9821 22 60 72 84

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