

To Share a Stomach

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Mimi Amini	Kelly Akashi
Ali Ansari	Renée Petropoulos
BAZAR Art Books	Martian Press
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Introduction

To Share a Stomach is an exhibition shaped by proposals, instructions, and written correspondences sent by artists currently living and working in Iran. It was initiated in March 2026, when the country's population was seized by daily bombardment and the longest blackout in the internet's history. The works in the exhibition have been executed and interpreted by artists performing as proxies on behalf of those constrained by circumstances not of their making. The pairings were made according to shared affinities, an implied understanding of the process, and a willingness to commit one's time and energies to the ideas of another artist. Motivated less by a desire to represent Iran at a moment of crisis, the participating artists living outside the country were tasked with being intermediaries whose relational approaches would inherently have to question the very limits of one's agency and authorship at the expense of another. Through an otherwise strange process of outsourcing artistic labor to other artists, the intention was that the precarity of this historical moment might impress itself more fully onto each contribution.

This manner of working provides an opportunity to think through possibility, to transform information into meaning, and to make experience legible when hope feels tenuous and disconnection and disinformation are the norm. Though the word "collaborative" may not adequately describe the nature of the works on view, it can still be useful as a kind of shorthand. Some projects were remotely executed in close collaboration and over a sustained dialogue, while others required a more technical completion of something more direct and concrete. Other proposals led to responses that are entirely their own, departing from a word, phrase, or sentiment to become something altogether different. The works in the exhibition are united by their immediacy. All were made for the occasion under the productive compression of time, and almost everything on view risked mistranslation or a misalignment of intentions.

The title of the exhibition is itself an approximation. The word for empathy in Farsi is *همدلی* (hamdeli), the literal definition of which would be "shared heart" or "to share a heart." Like many words or phrases in Farsi, there is an overabundance of meaning uncommon in the English language. On its own, the word *دل* (del), contained within the word for empathy, could also mean stomach, gut, or insides, alluding to something more bodily, internal, or instinctual. *To Share a Stomach* is a mistranslation that only a non-native speaker could make, or at least someone who gave up on learning the language after years of effort. The motivations for this project were to better understand the historical and immediate challenge of staying connected to Iran from afar. The works in *To Share a Stomach* express an inarticulate feeling of disconnection. The hope is that this feeling can be felt—if it's not felt already—by those who might not have imagined the possibility of life without the internet, let alone life under siege.

Since the start of the US-Israel war on Iran, Naghmeh Sohrabi, a historian and director for research at the Crown Center for Middle East Studies at Brandeis University, has translated and republished texts authored by Iranians living inside the country. These individual these individual accounts stand in contrast to the mediated perspectives typically communicated by mainstream news outlets. A sentiment that has motivated the organization of this exhibition is borrowed from Rahaa, the alias of an art educator living in Tehran, who was encouraged by her friend Sohrabi to maintain a diary shortly after the war began. In March 2026, the *Boston Review* republished Sohrabi's abridged translation of Rahaa's account, in which Rahaa affirms that "war belongs to innocent people." Speaking not only of her unwilling possession of someone else's aggression or her vulnerability as collateral damage, Rahaa's reflection contains within it the broader repercussions of war for those who have not necessarily experienced its consequences firsthand.

Organizing this exhibition required navigating disruptions in connectivity and traversing what were then newly formed channels of communication. Many of the participating artists in Iran were contacted with the help of other artists, curators, and writers living outside the country with varying abilities to communicate with their family and friends. The task was first to determine who was reachable and who would be willing to take part in this open-ended invitation. Admittedly, a group exhibition built around the contributions of Iranian artists is inherently treacherous, a proposition that risks the typical pitfalls of tokenization or some unifying thematic that might falsely claim equivalences for wildly disparate and divergent practices and interests. For as many positive responses we received, there were just as many letters that went unanswered. Any acknowledgment of the absence of those who chose not to participate is not an attempt to absorb their unwillingness into the exhibition, but rather to point to the practical and ideological circumstances of their nonparticipation. Surely there were those who received the invitation and cringed at the idea, or who were skeptical of the potential imbalance of power the premise contained. There were likely others navigating the disruptions to their daily life with little energy or desire left to question art's veracity during times of crisis. The artworks included in the exhibition are byproducts of what possibility affords; they are articulations of intentions that are both foreign and familiar to their makers, but they are above all opportunities to encounter the potential of what can be made when destruction, unmaking, and undoing are relentlessly ubiquitous.

– Aram Moshayedi

Stream Interrupted: A Note on the Politics of Access

Negar Karimkhani

A couple years ago, I watched a relative from California who was visiting us in Tehran use the internet on her phone. We were trying to figure out how to open a locked door to which we had lost the key. Upon Googling, I assumed she would scroll quickly past the first few results—the way I would when looking for fast and easily accessible information—and land on the dependable refuge of WikiHow. Instead, she immediately tapped the YouTube link that Google had prioritized through size and order. Without hesitation. As if this was the obvious thing to do.

This struck me as peculiar; I assumed my default was universal.

For nearly all my Iranian-Gen-Z life, with most of its formative experiences occurring online, the YouTube tutorials existed as something one could rarely access without a modest technical ceremony. The site had first been filtered in 2006, reportedly on the grounds of morality, by not living up to Islamic values. The immediate provocation, if memory serves, was the appearance of an alleged sex tape involving *Zar Amir Ebrahimi*. Later, after the protests following the disputed 2009 Iranian presidential election, YouTube was blocked again, this time to prevent the videos of police violence from circulating.

The result was that much of my adolescence online was devoted not to watching YouTube but to avoiding a webpage called *Peyvandha*. The word *peyvandha*, which translates to “links,” appeared whenever someone in Iran attempted to visit a filtered website. It was a spectacularly ugly directory of approved alternatives, offered with the optimism of a school counselor thinking they are doing God’s work. You would try visiting one thing only then to be presented with twelve other things you would never once consider visiting.

In the late 2010s, the authorities quietly removed the *Peyvandha* webpage. Instead, you were left with the browser’s austere announcement: “Safari couldn’t open this page,” which has all the warmth of a bureaucrat closing a window.

Under such conditions, choosing WikiHow over YouTube was not a matter of preference but logistics. Watching a video required minimizing the browser, opening a VPN (Virtual Private Network), and waiting for it to connect. With luck, the default server would work, but then access would require exiting *Peyvandha*, returning to the previous page, and finally trying again, while the video buffered at one-tenth the speed of the data transfer rate from a proxy server in some random part of the world.

The psychological forces at play in our internet mannerisms are often discussed. There is probably research on how too many open tabs is a sign of anxiety, and various examples of how we get obsessive and compulsive with these dopamine machines. These are interesting theories. But there is another, far less fashionable force shaping online behavior: politics.

A whole generation of Iranians did not become textual learners by accident. We became textual learners because videos were inconvenient.

The pattern revealed itself most clearly during the internet shutdown that followed the protests over the increase of gasoline prices in 2019. For about a week, from November 16 to 23, the country was largely disconnected. Beyond the catastrophic effect on businesses and commerce, it traumatized all Iranian internet users.

When the connection returned, many immediately downloaded their favorite music playlists, their porns, and comfort shows they assumed they would rewatch. Streaming, it turned out, inspires very little confidence when you suspect the stream might entirely disappear.

This is how a nation reverted to becoming archivists.

Exploring the so-called World Wide Web was even more complicated. It required a certain duplicity. American platforms like Netflix had to be persuaded to believe they were not being reached from the sanctioned Iran, nor was a VPN being used to hide something. All the while it was simultaneously necessary to trick the Iranian surveillance to load the said page via a proxy, as the country consistently discouraged the consumption of what it called the Great Satan’s cultural output. Between these two forms of protection, the web-hungry Iranian users arrived at a third solution: piracy. Not out of rebellion, but rather efficiency.

For this reason, I watched *Orange is the New Black* the way people watched television in 2004: downloaded, labeled, and stored with unnecessary care on hard drives. This persisted well into the 2020s, a decade in which downloading had lost even the dignity of nostalgia. It was not a fashion statement like wearing wired headphones, nor a trendy return to 2016 a decade later. It was an unglamorous and desperate last resort.

Over time the list of filtered platforms expanded like a virus. We migrated from Telegram to WhatsApp and then, somewhat sheepishly, back to Telegram again as each messenger app took turns being blocked. Eventually, the inconvenience reversed itself: instead of turning on a VPN to access certain sites, you occasionally had to turn it off to complete a banking transaction that required an Iranian IP address.

Habits adapt quickly to such absurdities. I eventually noticed a small but telling change in my own behavior: when searching for something on Google, I began clicking directly on the tiny, highlighted segment of a YouTube video, knowing the VPN was on, and that I was browsing the net as a first worlder.

In 2026, during the Iran-Israel-America war, I am writing this text in my phone’s Notes app, which due to the digital blackout doesn’t sync with my laptop. I compensate by airdropping the document to myself after nearly every paragraph. This is entirely out of character. I am the sort of person who transfers toothpaste into a pump dispenser to avoid the inconvenience of screwing and unscrewing a cap. Even offline inconvenience prevails.

My first-worlder access was, however, short-lived. Certain VPNs—namely those that operate at a ping of minutes compared to an average of milliseconds—are dealt more discreetly than drugs, and each gigabyte of data costs more than liters of gasoline. My concerns

became focused on the microscopic detail of my usage. Not megabytes, not even kilobytes. Bytes. One character too many, and the message would fail.

This recalls the era in which iconic abbreviations like “LOL,” “BRB,” and “GTG” were born. During the age of SMS, each message carried a strict character limit; exceeding it meant the cost of another sent message. Bundles were finite, and therefore our choices were strategic. Finglish, though convenient, was inefficient. If one didn't mind losing their cool, Persian script was cheaper. Economy dictated expression.

It was essentially the same logic as rationing VPN data, with an additional war-time pressure: the quiet obligation to reassure loved ones that everything was fine. Messages had to be brief, economical, and calming.

The internet often reminds me of water. It is essential, unevenly distributed, and subject to control. Hydraulic terms are often used to speak of restricted access: closing taps, narrowing streams, constructing dams. The internet flows like a current of water.

Growing up, my mother strictly taught me not to waste water: do not let the tap run while you wait for the right temperature to shower. She would force a toddler to get in ice cold water, because water was too precious to let it run as you waited for warmth. Scarcity hung over this daily activity; it was imminent and anticipated. I now treat the internet with similar restraint. Access is measured, and consumption is deliberate. A gigabyte is not an abstraction; it comes at the price equivalent of weeks of labor.

Under such conditions, connection ceases to resemble a right and begins to behave like a resource: metered, conditional, briefly granted. One adapts accordingly. I revert, again, to text; I trade Twitter for Instagram, then abandon both as the access becomes unstable. I remain curious, resisting the urge to ask unnecessary, peculiar questions of GPT, with my hungers left unfed.

In a time of war, even curiosity learns restraint.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

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پاسنگوی دینی	مهتر	دست پخت	ایران بلووت	تیت دامیه	بلاگ اسکای	کتاب اول
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انقلاب فرهنگی	تابناک	مشاوره	آرشو سیما	مهن میل	پوشن گیگ	تفت نامه
گردشگری	رجا نیوز	ورزشی	میدا و موسیقی ایران	پرداخت الکترونیک	سزمن مجاز	جناگر
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فهرست همادقی محتوای مجرمانه | نظارت بر اینترنت در دیگر کشورها

[این صفحه بعد از 28.3 ثانیه بهرورت انقادی وارد ادامه یکی از موضوعات بالا می شود.]

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درخواست فیلتر

پشتیبانات و اطلاعات

جمعه - 17 دی 1400

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Check if there is a typo in peyvandha.ir.

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Hedieh Amadi Vishal Jugdeo

Subject: دعوتنامه ۲

Date: Saturday, May 9, 2026 at 11:37:56 Pacific Daylight Time

From: hedieh a

To: aram@

CC: sinaghadaksaz1992@

Dear Aram

I hope this email finds you well.

As I mentioned to Sina jan, in addition to the proposal for Bazar Art Books with Ronak, I would also like to share a personal proposal for an artwork by me, which I think could fit well within your exhibition.

Please find the proposal attached below:

Proposal Title: A Memorial for Eternal Flowers

Project Description:

This project originates from an installation developed in 2023 for the exhibition “Probabilistic Space,” followed by a film that documents and extends its conceptual framework.

You can watch the video here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MiGCqPHFePkEY8Wqew9xthDX1BpG3tb/view?usp=drivesdk>

For this exhibition, I propose to present the work as an instruction-based project. Instead of reinstalling the original piece, the work will be reinterpreted and realized by the exhibition team based on provided materials.

Instruction and Approach:

The core directive is to create a memorial using flowers.

The exhibition team (artists, curators, or technicians) is invited to develop a new installation based on:

the conceptual statement

the accompanying film

and its narration or sound

The final form is not fixed. It may reconstruct the original work, draw from elements of the film (image, voice, structure), or take a new direction while remaining grounded in the concept.

The film itself may be shown, partially used, translated into another medium, or not presented at all.

Conceptual Framework:

A memorial is understood as anything that summons memory. Flowers, as both material and symbol, embody cycles of blooming and decay—pointing to the tension between transience and the desire for permanence.

The “eternal” here does not imply permanence, but continuity through repetition and reinterpretation. Memory persists through reconstruction, not preservation.

Yesterday's flowers become today's dreams: the impossible desire to recover what is lost.

Aim of the Project:

The project shifts authorship from a fixed form to a guided reinterpretation. Each realization becomes a new memorial—rooted in the same idea, yet shaped by its context and makers.

Medium:

Instruction-based installation

Film (optional use)

Flowers (preferably natural)

Sound (optional)

Please let me know if you have difficulty to play the movie or any other questions.

Bests,

Hedieh Ahmadi

Hedieh Ahmadi



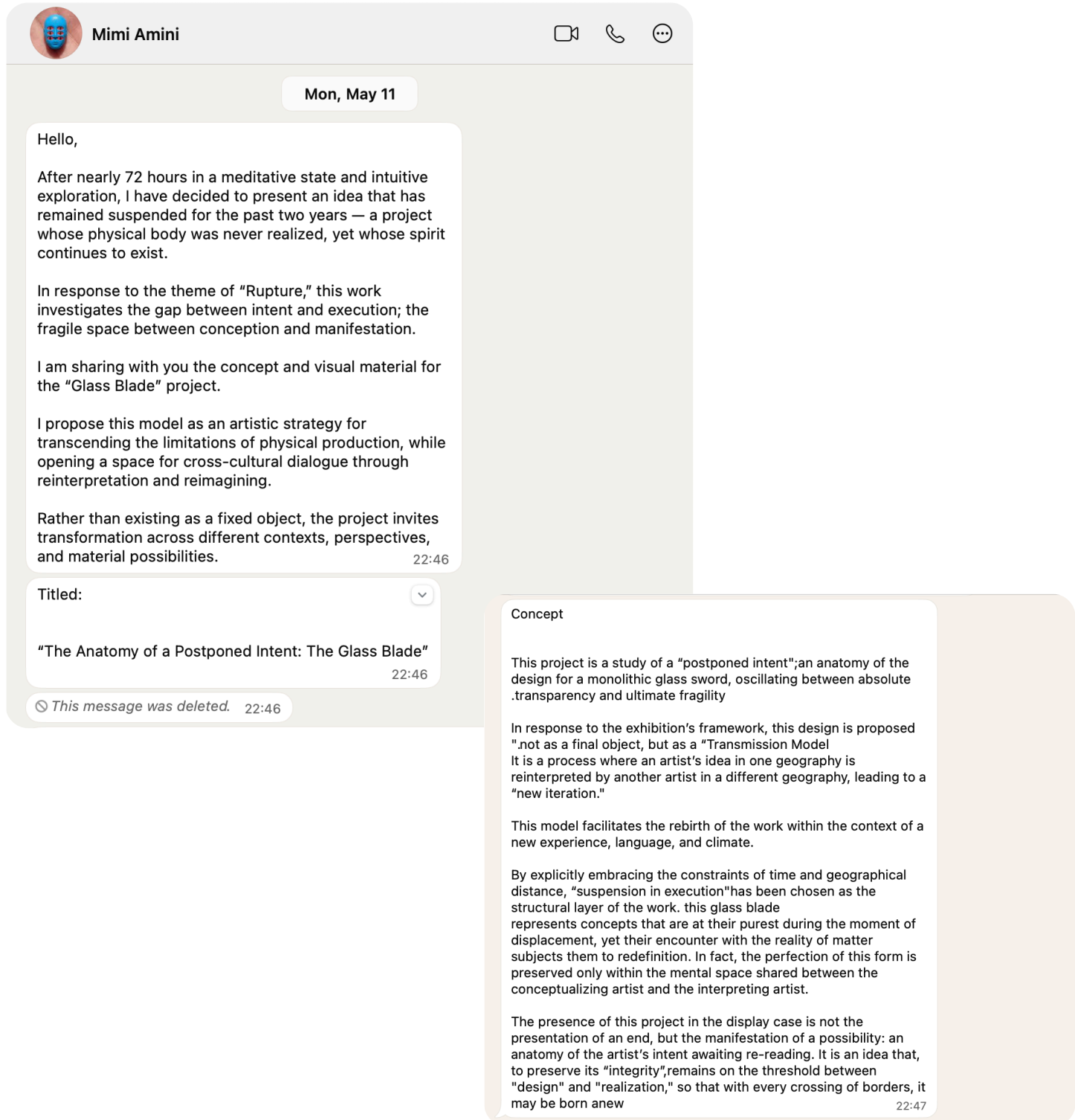
<http://hediehahmadi.com/>

<http://www.bazarartbookfair.com/>



Mimi Amini

Kelly Akashi



Kelly Akashi and Mimi Amini with David Gutierrez,
Matt Rademacher, and Kazuki Takizawa
The Anatomy of a Postponed Intent: The Glass Blade, 2026
Rope, hot-sculpted glass
31 × 9 × 5 in. (78.7 × 22.9 × 12.7 cm)
Courtesy of the artists



Ali Ansari Renée Petropoulos

Between Entries

Some experiences leave records. Others leave traces.

Every institution invents its own way of measuring a life.

There is always a life that refuses to enter the record.

Time is broken into entries. Standing guard. Morning roll call. Cleaning weapons. Sweeping a forest until not a single leaf remains. Calling a girlfriend. Hearing fighter jets overhead. Arguing over an extra bowl of food. Biting your sleeve and crying.

The schedule extends across the floor. Headphones hang above it. Standing within the grid, visitors read while listening.

Between one entry and the next, another life quietly persists.

Ali Ansari and Renée Petropoulos
Between Entries, 2026
Tape, vinyl decals
252 × 276 in. (640 × 701 cm)
Courtesy of the artists

Ali Ansari and Renée Petropoulos with Jasmine Orpilla
Notice a cat passing by without acknowledging your presence, 2026
Audio on headphones
10 min. 12 sec.
Courtesy of the artists

Vocals: Ali Ansari, Amir Moshayedi, and Jasmine Orpilla

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		Wake-up call.				Sunrise. Your guard duty is over.
	Head count.	It is very cold. Group exercise begins. At first you warm up and start sweating. A cold wind hits your face. Now you are cold again and develop a headache.				
					Breakfast.	You have not left the base for a week. Think about women. You are slowly forgetting what it feels like to be close to one.
Sweep the forest behind the barracks with several other soldiers until not a single leaf or trace of dust remains.				Notice a cat passing by without acknowledging your presence.		
Administrative tasks.		You hear fighter jets overhead. You are afraid and wait for a bomb to fall and kill you. Nothing happens. The sound of the aircraft fades into the distance.			You have not left the base for a week. Think about women. You are slowly forgetting what it feels like to be close to one.	
			Lunch.			
	Marching drill.				The commander says something about defending the homeland and sacrificing your life.	
						It is close to sunset. Through the fence of the base, you see a car passing on the street. You miss being part of society.
			Call your girlfriend from a payphone. She cries. Your throat tightens. Swallow it back because other soldiers are waiting in line behind you and you do not want them to see you cry. Hang up the phone. Go to the bathroom. Lock the door. Bite your sleeve and cry for ten minutes.			
Play table tennis with a friend in front of the barracks. Two other soldiers walk by. They offer a few cigarettes in exchange for several rounds with your paddles.				Dinner.		
			Lights out.			Nothing happens.
	Nothing happens. Wait for time to pass in the absolute silence of the night.				The soldier in the bunk next to yours snores loudly all night. You cannot sleep.	

BAZAR Art Books

Martian Press

BAZAR Art Books is an Iran-based platform dedicated to the exhibition and distribution of art books. Founded in 2018 by artists Ronak Moshtaghi and Hedieh Ahmadi, the project approaches self-publishing and art book fairs as dynamic formats for building an organic and inclusive cultural community. BAZAR is an artist-run, independent platform that relies on the voluntary work of its community and collaborations with various host venues. Its activities include organizing an annual three-day fair in Tehran, participating in international art book fairs, creating and maintaining a local archive of artistic publications, and offering related workshops throughout Iran.

Publications

BAZAR Art Books, initiated and compiled by Hedieh Ahmadi and Ronak Moshtaghi, with graphic design by Saam Kashmiri, **Zamin o Zaman (Earth and Time)**, 2025

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12 Days Zines (24-31 July 2025)

1. Kourosh Pashapour, **The Sky of IRAN**, 2025
2. Faranak Dobaradaran, no title, 2025
3. Nikta Sadighi, no title, 2025
4. Nafiseh Khavaran, no title, 2025
5. Mahdi Bermeh, no title, 2025
6. Homayoun Razavi, no title, 2025
7. Kasma Heidarizadeh, no title, 2025
8. Gelareh Moradi, no title, 2025
9. Yasamin Ghalenoei and Azin Dehghan, no title, 2025

Risograph printing during the ceasefire (19-20 April 2026)

1. Hedieh Ahmadi, **PAYAN (The End)**, 2026
2. Mahdi Bermeh & Kourosh Pashapour & Emad Shahidi, **GHAZIYEH (The Matter)**, 2026
3. Sahand Saadatmandi and Golrokh Nafisi, Shisheha va Risheha (Windows and Roots), 2026
4. Arman Shahmohamad, **Shahedbazi**, 2026



Sina Ghadaksaz

John Ziqiang Wu

I. The Tale

At the very first minutes of the war, when the first explosion hit near the Supreme Leader's residence in Tehran, I was in my home studio—just one street away.

I was working on a large-scale landscape painting.

Painting a landscape is always a dilemma for me. It demands time, patience, and a kind of physical endurance. I work with oil glaze—layer over layer—each one waiting to dry before the next begins. It is a slow accumulation, a prolonged negotiation with matter.

At that moment, I had just finished the sky in four layers. I had begun the second layer of the mountains, positioned along the midline of the composition. I was thinking about the surface of reddish rocks—mixing indigo, purple lake, cobalt blue, and a small amount of flesh tint to control the darkness and create depth.

Then the sound came.

A sudden explosion. Then shouts. Then a strange hum filling the space. My laptop was beside me, on the easel I built years ago. An episode of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* was playing. There is a scene where José Arcadio dies—the score always gives me goosebumps. That music continued, now mixed with the sound of panic outside.

I remember saying to myself: “here it begins.” I called my mother. Then my partner. I told them I was safe.

And then—almost absurdly—I continued painting.

It was not a decision. It felt like my body had chosen it before I could think. As if my nervous system was trying to remain calm by repeating something familiar. Each brushstroke became a way to delay reaction. To transform fear into attention.

Painting, for me, has always been a way of thinking. Not thinking before or after—but through the act itself. What Tim Ingold describes as “thinking through making.”

This understanding is deeply tied to my studies in the anthropology of art. For me, the body of the maker—the painter, the artist—is not secondary to the work but central to it. A painting is not simply “created” through thought; it is made through the presence of a body entangled within a web of materials. Paint, surface, brush, light, time—all participate. The body does not stand outside this process; it dissolves into it. It becomes one agent among many in a field of material agency.

This is especially true in my landscapes. Mountains have always been central in my work. I was born and raised in Azerbaijan, in a region shaped by them. I never fully questioned this attraction until recently.

In *The Sailor Who Fell from Grace with the Sea*, the character Ryuji is drawn to the sea out of hatred for the land—its stillness, its permanence. I realized I feel the opposite. I am drawn to mountains precisely because of their apparent stability. Their endurance. Their refusal to change—at least on the surface.

But that is also an illusion.

Mountains do change—constantly, but slowly. Their transformations require attention. A different kind of looking. After the war began, I stayed in Tehran for a few days, then drove back to Tabriz. Among everything I packed, that large painting was one of the first things I chose to take. I continued working on it every day—but “continuing” is not quite the right word. It became something else. A kind of practice. A repetition not of gesture, but of staying. I finished the painting just days before leaving for Europe.

The project I am proposing emerges directly from this experience. It is not a departure from that painting, but its continuation.

II. The Instructions

What follows is not a representation of that event, but a continuation of it—under radically altered conditions.

General Approach

This project introduces a condition that is entirely new for me. Given my understanding of painting as a bodily engagement with material, this work proposes the removal of my body from the act of making.

The painting will be executed by another artist in Los Angeles.

The process becomes comparable to a remote surgery: the intention originates in one place, the execution happens in another, and the body that performs the action is not the body that conceives it.

However, this does not eliminate agency—it multiplies and redistributes it across bodies, materials, and conditions.

The assisting artist is not a neutral executor but an active participant. The painting will emerge from the tension between instruction and interpretation, absence and presence, and my material thinking and another body's material engagement.

Reference material will include images of the original painting, additional drawings, and a visual color palette. These should be understood as guides rather than templates.

The work will measure 300 × 180 cm, horizontal, on unstretched canvas. After gesso, a warm ground will be prepared using Flesh Tint, Yellow Ochre, Burnt Umber, Naples Yellow Light, and Titanium White.

The mountain will be painted primarily with Indigo, Blue Black, Dioxazine Purple, Cobalt Blue, and minimal Titanium White, preferably using Winsor & Newton artist oils, though equivalent materials are acceptable. Material substitutions are not limitations but active variables within the work.

The painting should be built through repetitive, controlled brushstrokes using brushes between sizes 6–10. Avoid smooth gradients or mechanical blending. The surface should feel accumulated, layered, and almost like drawing translated into painting.

Slowness is essential. The work should resist speed and efficiency, carrying the trace of repetition, hesitation, and duration. The landscape should feel constructed rather than natural—a built stage rather than a window onto nature.

The executor is not required to be faithful. Misinterpretation is not an error but part of the work. The assisting artist's bodily gestures, technical habits, available materials, spatial conditions, and moment-to-moment decisions are integral to the final outcome.

The final painting emerges from this distributed field of agency, existing in the gap between instruction and execution, origin and translation, one body and another.

Ismail Ghanbari

Tala Madani

Hi Aram,

Thank you again for your thoughtful message. I've spent the last day carefully reflecting on your feedback, and I felt it would be better to respond directly, in my own words. I hope you don't mind the length of my message. I simply wanted to explain the conceptual foundation of the work as clearly as I could.

Thank you very much for taking the time to watch the videos and for writing such a thoughtful response. I truly appreciate your engagement with my work and with the curatorial framework of the exhibition.

I wanted to respond directly because, due to the language barrier, most of my ideas reached you indirectly through Tala. I am deeply grateful for her help in facilitating communication between us, but I feel that some important aspects of the work may not have been fully conveyed. Since this is our first direct conversation about the project, I would like to explain the conceptual foundation of the work in my own words.

The idea of Proxy (Neyabati) did not begin with your invitation. It has been developing within my practice for several years. The boxing glove is not simply an object I decided to exhibit. It carries the history of years of daily training, physical exhaustion, repeated repair, and persistence. I originally bought it while preparing for my five-hour boxing performance at Iranshahr Gallery in Tehran, and I continued using it long after that performance. Every time it tore, I repaired it instead of replacing it. Gradually, the glove itself became the work. Long before receiving your invitation, I had already named it Proxy (Neyabati), although I had not yet found the right form in which to present it.

When I read your curatorial statement, the word proxy immediately caught my attention. I realized that your exhibition intersected with a question that had already been growing within my own practice. Rather than illustrating your concept, I felt invited into a dialogue with it.

Your curatorial proposal asks what could be created despite geopolitical limitations. My work does not reject that question. Instead, it asks another one: Where does proxy reach its limits?

The videos already demonstrate that many things can travel across borders: documentation, images, memory, and narrative. Tala's role has simply been to help transmit my materials and facilitate communication between us. She is neither recreating nor interpreting the work. What cannot travel is something fundamentally different.

The glove is not merely an object. It embodies years of lived experience that cannot be reproduced by another person. Anyone could wear down another boxing glove, but no one could relive the years that became this glove. For me, this is not only a practical limitation created by war, borders, or financial circumstances. It is also an ethical one. I cannot ask another artist to live my years in order to reconstruct my work.

This is why the pedestal is essential.

The pedestal is not there to represent what failed to arrive. It is there to reveal what cannot be delegated, even when everything else can be transmitted. The glove is absent, but the pedestal is not empty. Instead of an object, it carries a signed statement by Tala Madani acknowledging that she cannot stand in another person's body or fully assume another person's lived experience. Her signature is not a substitute for the glove, nor is it a claim of authorship. It is a performative acknowledgment of the precise point where proxy reaches its limit. The signed statement is therefore not a caption or a replacement for the absent glove. It is one of the work's material components. Just as videos are part of the work, the signed statement on the pedestal is also a part of the work itself. Without it, an essential layer of the installation disappears.

I am not presenting the impossibility of proxy; I am presenting the point at which proxy transforms into testimony. For me, the videos show what can be transmitted, while the pedestal bears witness to what cannot. The current political situation, the recent war, restrictions on movement, and even my own financial inability to ship the glove certainly shaped the form of this installation. However, they are not simply its subject. They made visible a question that had already existed within the work itself: Can lived experience ever be fully delegated?

I do not see this work as opposing your curatorial framework. On the contrary, I see it as a continuation of the conversation your invitation opened. Your proposal did not simply ask me to produce a work; it changed the way I looked at a work that had already been growing in my life for years.

To make sure nothing has been lost through our indirect communication, I am also sending you two texts that are part of the project:

- The exhibition statement, written with Hadi Momeni.
- The statement that Tala Madani will sign and that will be placed on the pedestal.

I hope these give you a fuller picture of what I have been trying to communicate. Thank you again for your generosity, your thoughtful feedback, and for creating a space where this dialogue can happen. Whether or not we ultimately arrive at the same conclusion regarding the installation, I am genuinely grateful that your invitation made this dialogue possible. I genuinely value this conversation and would be very interested to know how you see the work after reading this.

With my warm regards,

Ismail Ghanbari

Ismail Ghanbari
Proxy (Neyabati) 1, 2026
Single-channel digital video, color, sound
3 min.
Courtesy of the artist

Ismail Ghanbari
Proxy (Neyabati) 2, 2026
Single-channel digital video, color, sound
3 min. 5 sec.
Courtesy of the artist

Ismail Ghanbari
Proxy (Neyabati) 3, 2026
Single-channel digital video, color, sound
11 min. 32 sec.
Courtesy of the artist



*I, Tala Madani, acknowledge that I cannot stand in another person's body.
Without agency, this lived experience cannot truly be delegated.
My signature bears witness to that limit.
The gloves remain absent, and the work deliberately remains unfinished.*



Proxy Impossible: The Absence of the Gloves and the Testimony of Inability

Hadi Momeni

Proxy (Neyabati) focuses on the gap that opens between lived experience and the possibility of its representation—a gap that no artistic act, no image, and no substitute body can fully bridge. Presented as a three-channel installation unfolding before the viewer like a triptych, the work tells a story of bodily exhaustion, or relentless persistence inscribed into a pair of worn boxing gloves, and of an object that was meant to enter the exhibition as a physical presence but never arrived.

The gloves, once the bearers of the work and witness to lived experience, were prevented from reaching the exhibition—not because of a lack of intention, but because of war, structural disruptions in systems of communication, and barriers that made their passage impossible. Their absence is not a secondary circumstance; it constitutes the very core of the work's meaning. This absence becomes a direct expression of “impossible proxy”: an experience that cannot be transported, transferred, or repeated in another person's body.

In front of the three-channel video installation stands a pedestal originally intended to hold the gloves. It now remains physically empty, functioning as a site of testimony. Instead of the object, it presents only a signed statement by the artist who was asked to act on behalf of another.

Tala Madani, invited to facilitate the presentation of the work in the artist's absence, acknowledges through this brief statement that she cannot stand in another person's body. This testimony is not simply a personal refusal; it is a statement about the broader condition of proxy itself—a condition in which action becomes separated from the individual, agency is detached from the body, and lived experience can no longer be authentically delegated.

In this work, proxy is not presented as a possibility, but as a structural failure. What remains are the traces of exhaustion carried by gloves that are no longer physically present, and a body that survives only through fragments of resistance preserved in moving images. The three-channel installation does not attempt to replace the absent gloves. Instead, it makes their absence visible, exposing the gap between lived experience and representation.

Proxy (Neyabati) does not seek to reproduce suffering or to offer a substitute for it. Rather, it insists that no lived experience—no matter how ordinary or how deeply marked by endurance—can truly be delegated. In the absence of agency, proxy ultimately gives way to silence. And it is this silence—embodied by the empty pedestal and the signed statement beneath it—that completes the work: and artwork that remains consciously, and necessarily unfinished.

Mohammad Hossein Gholamzadeh

Skylar Haskard

Subject: A proposal by Mohammad Hossien Gholamzadeh

Date: Sunday, May 24, 2026 at 03:36:28 Pacific Daylight Time

From: sina ghadaksaz

To: Aram Moshayedi

CC: moho1365@

Dear Aram,

I wanted to share with you the proposal idea of Mohammad Hossein Gholamzadeh for the project.

Mohammad Hossein is proposing a collaborative and process-based sculptural work centered around reproduction, material failure, and the gradual loss of control within a shared production system. His idea is to send one of his previously made sculptural forms in the form of digital mold files. These molds could then be 3D printed there and used repeatedly during the exhibition process.

The work would not be focused on producing a perfect sculptural replica. On the contrary, the central idea is that different materials would continuously be poured into the molds over time, including unstable or intentionally problematic materials that Mohammad Hossein himself would suggest and select. He is interested in materials that “misbehave,” fail technically, deform, crack, or create unexpected results.

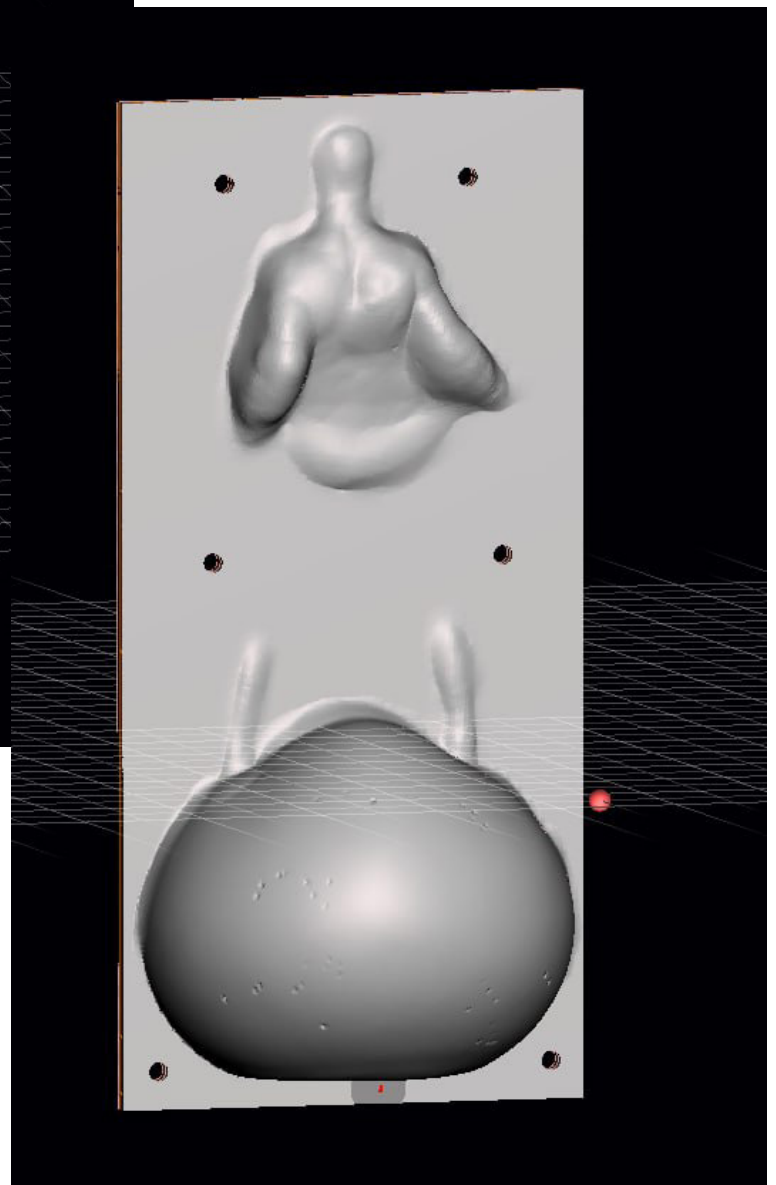
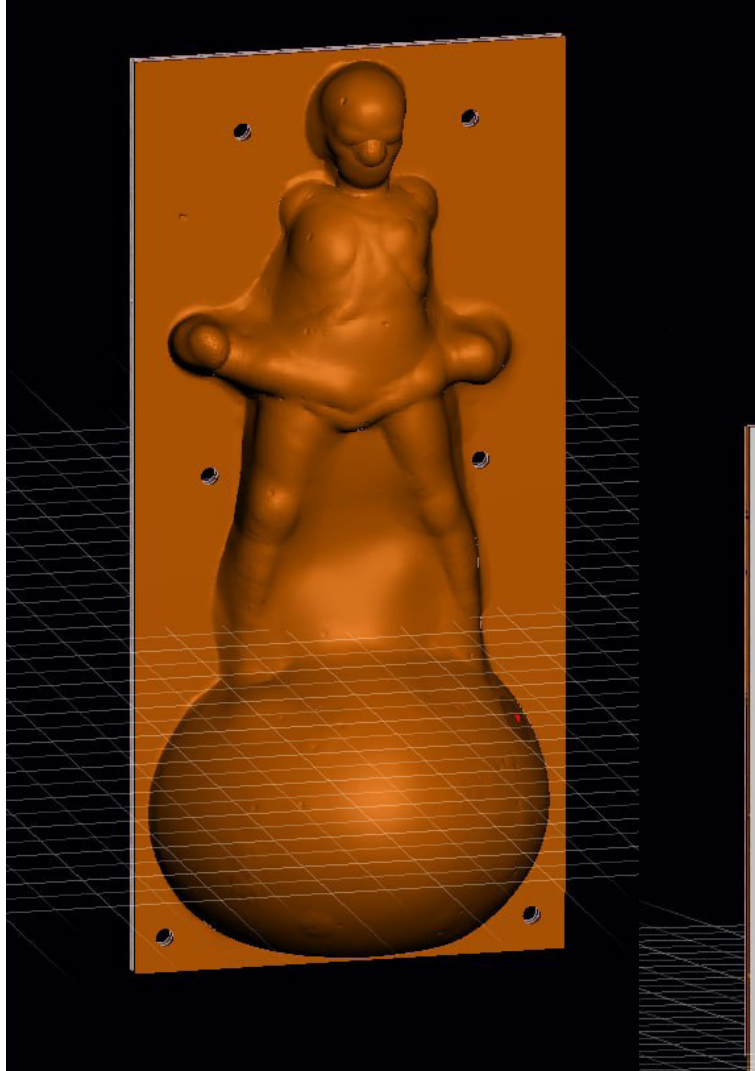
Mohammad Hossein would prepare a detailed visual instruction manual for the process, almost like a construction or operational guide, allowing the production to happen remotely while still maintaining his conceptual framework.

An important aspect of the proposal is that the repeated use of the molds and the pressure of continuous casting would gradually damage and deform the molds themselves. Over time, this would create increasing levels of distortion, imperfection, and chaos within the produced forms. The final sculptural situation would become something partially uncontrolled and unstable; a material accumulation of errors, deterioration, and collapse.

I think what makes the proposal compelling is precisely this shared lack of control. The work transforms production itself into a metaphor for the current condition we are collectively experiencing: repetition, pressure, instability, erosion, and the impossibility of maintaining a fixed or ideal form under continuous stress.

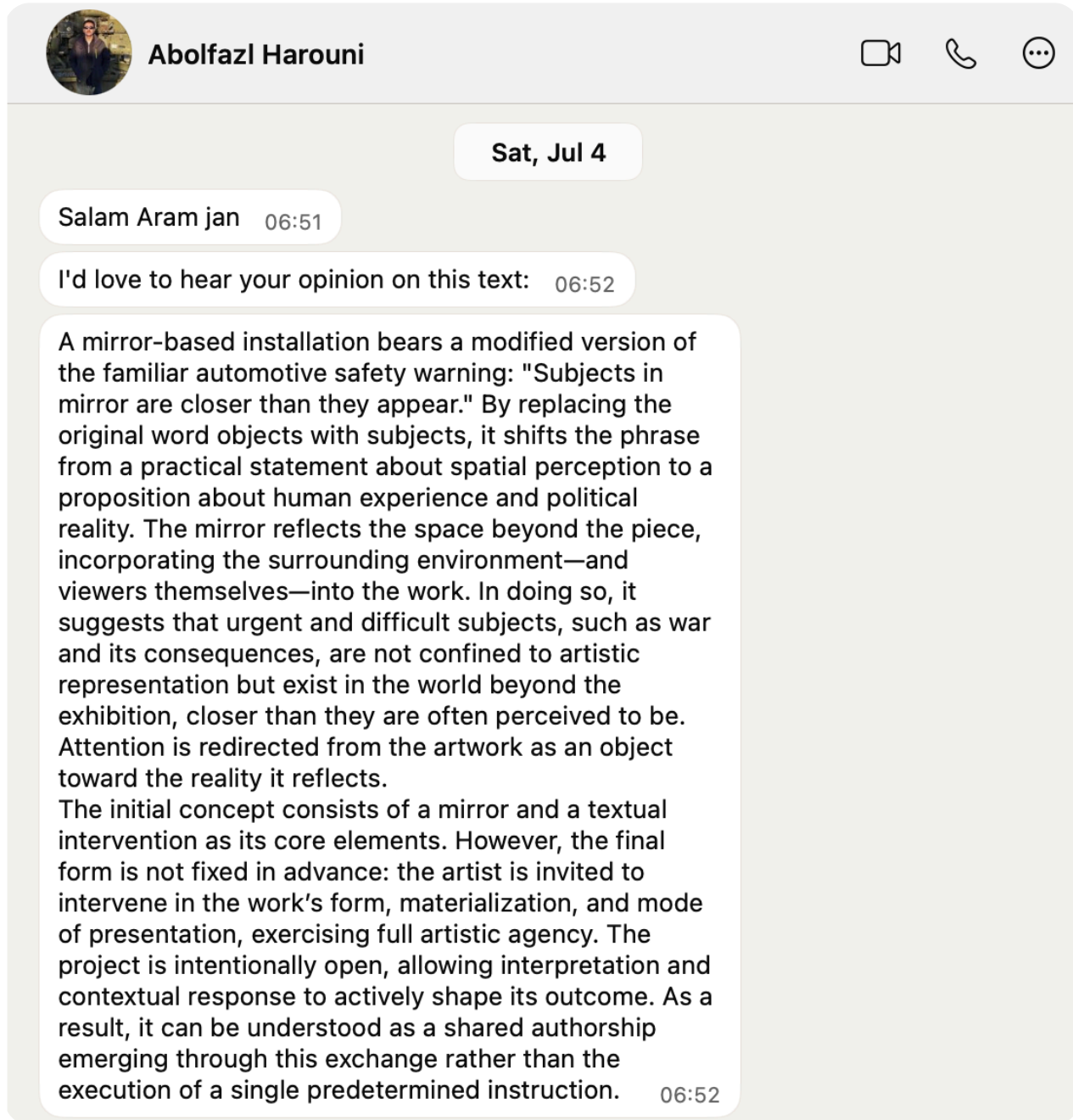
It also creates an interesting balance between presence and absence, since Mohammad Hossein would not necessarily need to be physically present for the work to evolve, yet the process itself would still carry his authorship through the instructions, the selected materials, and the designed conditions of failure.

Mohammad Hossein is going to send us the files and further materials very soon, and I am also going to cc him in the upcoming correspondence so the communication can continue more directly.



Abolfazl Harouni

Zahra Babaei



Mirror

SUBJECTS IN MIRROR ARE CLOSER
THAN THEY APPEAR

Material:
Paint or print on mirror

Dimensions:
Variable

Installation:
Mounted from the back

Mohammadreza Jahanshir

Carmen Argote

Glory-50904020:

My name is Jahan. I held a bachelor degree in Sculpture from the University of Art in Tehran, and I am currently working from Tabriz and Tehran.

In the early days of the recent military tensions, I was forced to leave Tehran and return to Tabriz because of the intensity of the bombardments. On the way, near Karaj, I witnessed several missiles was striking the surrounding mountains. The image of that moment; an immense explosion, both majestic and terrifying, stayed with me for weeks, repeating itself almost obsessively.

In Tabriz, there is a mountain called Eynali. Because of the iron compounds in its soil, it appears red, and under sunlight it takes on a striking, almost unreal glow. From my childhood house, this landscape stretches before the eyes; something I have lived with for as long as I can remember.

On April 3rd, the mountain was attacked. I witnessed the explosion from the foothills of Eynali. At the moment of the strike, a red halo, formed by dust, fire, and light, spread around the center of the blast. Once again, I felt that same tension between awe and fear. The image fixed itself on my mind and became a kind of "key image" in my visual memory.

The color red, the explosion, and the immediate proximity to death created an intense physical experience. Although I do not consider myself religious, this encounter revealed a deep connection between earth, body, and the possibility of death.

all my childhood, I was told that humans are born of dust. Here, red is no longer just a visual quality—it has become part of my language for expressing lived experience.

All elements of this project are conceived with flexibility in mind. The final form can adapt to the conditions of the space and the decisions of the production team; technical details are open and not fixed.

Installation concept: This work consists of two main elements:

Wall panel:

A 60 × 60 cm iron sheet, intentionally oxidized in a controlled way and mounted directly on the wall. At its center, a piece of linen holds an image of Mount Eynali, executed either as a print or a painting.

Video:

A 2–3 minutes video accompanies the work, focusing on Mount Eynali and the geological reasons behind its red color.

Carmen Argote

Aram's sneakers: Mount Eynali, August 6, 8–1030pm, 2026
Shoes (US size 9), oil paint (burnt sienna)
11 ¾ × 9 × 3 ¾ in. (29.8 × 22.9 × 9.5 cm)
Courtesy of the artist

Carmen Argote and Mohammadreza Jahanshir

as if two bodies in different geographies are sharing parts of the same path, 2026
Two walks, two bodies, two cities existing within the same moment
2 hr. 30 min.
Courtesy of the artists

Mohammadreza Jahanshir

Glory / 50904020, 2026
Single-channel digital video, color, sound
3 min. 06 sec.
Courtesy of the artist



Fatemeh Kazemi

Olivia Mole

What does it mean when a nation attempts to rescue itself from collapse through continuous war, while its cultural body and intellectual class retreat into isolation and denial, exhausted by the very demand to understand resistance?

What circulates instead is not the lived reality of resistance, its abstraction. Its image travels easily, becoming legible within radical circles in the United States, yet its material and painful meaning remains distant, almost unintelligible, to a society structured around consumption, accumulation, and the preservation of individual value. In such a context, position becomes everything. The fear of losing that position produces statements instead of commitments, declarations instead of risk.

Within academia, this hesitation appears as a tendency to wait. To wait for the “post-” moment, for the event to settle into history before it becomes readable, analyzable, and therefore safe. But resistance does not belong to the past tense. It demands a form of presence that exceeds institutional comfort. Courage is not abstract virtue; this is practiced under pressure. And there is a lack of such practice in a society trained to protect its privileges, especially those distributed through imperial structures.

Even the act of saying no—to war, to mass death—becomes difficult when neutrality is rewarded and dissent risks exclusion. What is presented as objectivity often masks a deeper alignment with power.

What I have witnessed, however, suggests another form of knowledge. The land itself carries and transforms trauma. It absorbs violence and returns growth. Mountains generate forms of imagination that exceed the epistemologies offered by Western knowledge systems. I encountered this not in theory, but in daily movement across rural landscapes, in agricultural fields, in practices of cultivation

For those of us from this region, resistance has never been a choice. It is not an identity one adopts, but a condition one inherits. It is imposed, lived, and learned through necessity. I have often asked myself what it means to exist outside of Iran, or even to imagine not being Iranian at all, while still carrying the psychological weight of its histories. Our daily agency is shaped by a constant tension, a kind of perpetual displacement, where even our ability to think is measured against proximity to Western systems of validation.

Resistance, then, is not regional. It is necessary everywhere, if there is to be any movement beyond colonial violence. Since October 7, we have heard the phrase: if one person is not free, none of us are free. But this must be extended further. If war has not reached you, it simply has not reached you yet. Its logic is already in circulation, and its consequences will not remain contained.

The images I carry are not distant. They are from the house I lived in until I was twenty-five, in District 12 of Tehran, a dense

neighborhood. To witness the aftermath of multi-stage bombings in the middle of the day, injuring the space of one's childhood, is to understand that the promise of a future is never neutral. Anyone who believes the future will be granted to them must reconsider what liberation means, and what it demands.

Silence is not passive. Every silence sustains the conditions it claims to stand apart from. For the American public, and for the Iranian-American diaspora, this silence will not result in stability, but in eventual failure and disillusionment.

At its core, the tradition of social sciences has always resisted such instrumentalization. It is not meant to serve states or authoritarian agendas under the guise of “social frameworks.” Social sciences should remain a space for uncertainty, for dialogue, and for horizontal understanding. A space that refuses closure.

What I have witnessed, however, suggests another form of knowledge. The land itself carries and transforms trauma. It absorbs violence and returns growth. Mountains generate forms of imagination that exceed the epistemologies offered by Western knowledge systems. I encountered this not in theory, in daily movement across rural landscapes, in agricultural fields, in practices of cultivation.

War disrupts love. It disrupts food, economy, and the basic infrastructures of survival. The restriction of food is itself a weapon. Last year, in my research on bread and specifically on the tandoor in Gaza, I encountered images of scarcity: the absence of bakeries, mold-covered bread, endless lines for food, and death.

Now, in the midst of ongoing war, I find myself thinking constantly about self-sufficiency. About land, its fragmentation, and its sacred relationship to those who cultivate it.

At the moment of the new year, I was walking through open land when I came across a farmer building a small barrier with his shovel, redirecting water across his field toward the wheat. I greeted him for Nowruz. He did not pause. He continued mixing soil, water, and fertilizer, holding his tool with focus. He was marking time differently. Not through calendars, but through the land itself. Through growth, direction, and wind.

There, history, season, and renewal were not symbolic. They were enacted.

گنج و جن

Today we went to the deserts around here where people have recently been claiming that a treasure was found. The locals say that apparently there was a jinn guardian who helped the people who found the treasure dig the well in secret. They say that just a few days ago this well did not exist, and suddenly it appeared. Next to it, there were also many clothes and dolls that had been buried.

The hole was very deep, and we were throwing stones into it to see how deep it was. We dropped a few stones, and suddenly a sparrow flew out from it. We were really scared and ran away.

Fatemeh Kazemi
What the Birds Did Not Tell Upon Their Return, 2026
Three-channel digital video, color, sound
12 min. 47 sec.
Courtesy of the artist

Fatemeh Kazemi and Olivia Mole
The Conference of the Birds, 2026
Digital photo mural
96 × 276 in. (243.8 × 701 cm)
Courtesy of the artists

Editor: Sharzin Hajiloo

**Aidin
Khankeshipour**

**Gina
Osterloh**

Gina Osterloh

*Still Life: Horse skull, turning to marble, flowers (yarrow),
classical lighting (Aidin Khankeshipour gives Gina
Osterloh prompts), 2026*

Pigment print

5 × 6 7/8 in. (12.7 × 16.9 cm)

Courtesy of the artist; Higher Pictures, New York; and
Silverlens, Manila/New York

Gina Osterloh

*Tableau: A compressed yet expanding dark room, horse
skull, the more one moves the more one becomes stuck,
turning to marble (Aidin Khankeshipour gives Gina
Osterloh prompts), 2026*

Pigment print

5 × 6 7/8 in. (12.7 × 16.9 cm)

Courtesy of the artist; Higher Pictures, New York; and
Silverlens, Manila/New York

Dear Aram,

I hope you're doing well.

I'm Aidin Khankeshpour, and I'm very happy and grateful for your invitation as the curator of this project.

I wanted to share my idea with you, and I would be very glad if later we could think together and talk more about the practical conditions and any thoughts or considerations that may come to your mind regarding its realization.

I am a painter, and over the past five years I have been working on a new body of still life paintings. All the works in this series are made with oil paint, which is important for me because I had not worked with oil for many years. But for this project, I decided to return to my oil paint box and paint in the most classical way possible.

These still lifes are entirely mental constructions for me. They are not based on direct observation, but rather emerge from the accumulation of images in my mind. Because of this, when you look at the paintings, you are not necessarily confronted with a clear or conventionally recognizable still life. Yet the aesthetic and the arrangement of elements within the frame still evoke the larger historical narrative of still life painting.

Conceptually, still life has become a metaphor for myself and, in a broader sense, for contemporary human beings. What I have experienced during these past five years, both in physical reality and within virtual spaces, gradually led me toward this understanding. Here, where I live, people constantly try to present themselves as active agents, while in reality this agency rarely takes place. In fact, the more they attempt to assert themselves, the more they seem to fall into a state of passivity, unable to alter the essential conditions of their lives.

For me, still life embodies precisely this condition. No matter how beautiful the light is, no matter how alive or immediate the objects may appear, they ultimately remain in a state of stillness and passivity.

I would love to expand this idea into a performative spatial installation, and I would be very happy to discuss it further with you.

My vision is perhaps to build a small chamber or enclosed structure within the space, containing a composition made of three human figures alongside three still life arrangements. I imagine the space being extremely dark, illuminated only by a classical warm yellow light focused on the elements. I want the scene to feel deeply theatrical and dramatic.

For me, the coexistence of human bodies and still life objects can carry a particular meaning, confronting the viewer with the display of a passive condition.

I would also like all the elements, including the human bodies, to be entirely whitened, resembling classical plaster or marble sculptures.

I wanted to ask whether creating such conditions within the space would be possible. And whether it might also be feasible to have three volunteers willing to remain in this situation for extended durations; for example, occupying the scene motionlessly in four-hour intervals.

I can also make a simple sketch of the installation I have in mind and send it to you. This is the general outline of my idea, and I hope we can speak more about it soon.

Salman Khoshroo

Daid Roy

پروپوزال اینستالیشن آرت
هنرمند: سلمان خوشرو
ارائه شده برای پروژه‌ی آرام مشیدی

شرح اثر و کانسپت:

این اثر شامل یک دیوار بلوکی سیمانی به ابعاد تقریبی ۲۲۰ سانتی‌متر ارتفاع و ۱۵۰ سانتی‌متر عرض است؛ دیواری در ابتدایی‌ترین و آشناترین فرم. سطح بالایی دیوار با خرده‌شیشه پوشیده شده؛ عنصری آشنا در معماری‌های تدافعی و شهری که هم‌زمان نشانه‌ای از محافظت، تهدید و آسیب‌پذیری است. این اینستالیشن با یک آمبیانس صوتی از دوره‌هایی‌های زیرزمینی همراه می‌شود که در خود دیوار تعبیه شده، فضاسازی صوتی به شکلی‌ست که در مواجهه نخست، مخاطب را به نوعی به انتظار آنچه پشت دیوار اتفاق می‌افتد می‌گذارد، اما با عبور به پشت دیوار، دوباره با همان تصویر مواجه می‌شود، هیچ تصویر قطعی‌ای از «پشت دیوار» وجود ندارد.

این اثر اگرچه ارجاعی به فروپاشی، ناامنی یا حتی وضعیت جنگی داشته باشد، اما روایتی‌ست از تجربه زیسته‌ی بخشی از اجتماع معاصر است؛ از ضدیتی که بین بی‌ثباتی محیط بیرونی و تلاش برای نوعی از تاب‌آوری و رهایی در زیرپوست شهر شکل می‌گیرد. دیوار سیمانی در این پروژه صرفاً یک مانع فیزیکی نیست، بلکه نمادینست از مرز بین جبر و اختیار؛ ساختاری که هنوز ایستاده اما نشانه‌های فروپاشی را با خود حمل می‌کند. خرده‌شیشه‌ها نه فقط ابزار دفاع، بلکه نشانه‌ای از آسیب‌پذیری و حافظه‌ی لحظه‌اند.

در سوی دیگر این وضعیت، صدا، موسیقی و حضور جمعی قرار دارد؛ کنشی که می‌تواند هم‌زمان نوعی مقاومت، فرار موقت یا مکانیزمی برای بقا تلقی شود. اثر تلاش می‌کند این هم‌زیستی متناقض میان اضطراب، لذت، بقا و فروپاشی را به تجربه‌ای فضایی تبدیل کند؛ جایی که تجربه‌ی جمعی، برای لحظاتی کوتاه، امکان دوام آوردن را فراهم می‌کند.

مدیوم:

Concrete block wall, embedded broken glass, sound.

تجربه مخاطب:

مخاطب در مواجهه با اثر، وارد وضعیتی از تردید و جست‌وجو می‌شود؛ تلاشی برای دیدن آنچه پشت دیوار پنهان شده است. اما اثر عمداً از ارائه پاسخ یا تصویر قطعی خودداری می‌کند. در نهایت، مخاطب نه با یک «پشت‌صحنه»، بلکه با تداوم همان وضعیت مواجه می‌شود؛ چرخه‌ای از ناامنی، دوام آوردن و زیستن در شرایط شکننده.

Description and Concept:

The work consists of a concrete cinder-block wall measuring approximately 220 cm in height and 150 cm in width; a wall in its most elementary and familiar form. The upper edge of the wall is lined with broken glass, an element deeply familiar in defensive and urban architectures, simultaneously evoking protection, threat, and vulnerability.

Embedded within the wall is a sound ambience composed of recordings from underground gatherings. At first encounter, the audio atmosphere leads the viewer into a state of anticipation, suggesting that something is taking place behind the wall. Yet upon moving to the other side, the audience is confronted with the very same image once again. There is no definitive “other side” to be revealed.

Although the piece may allude to collapse, insecurity, or even conditions of war, it ultimately speaks to the lived experience of a segment of contemporary society; to the tension between the instability of the outside world and the persistent attempt to cultivate forms of resilience and liberation beneath the skin of the city.

In this project, the concrete wall is not merely a physical barrier, but a symbol of the boundary between coercion and agency: a structure that still stands, while already carrying the traces of its own disintegration. The shards of glass function not only as instruments of defense, but also as markers of fragility and as remnants of suspended moments.

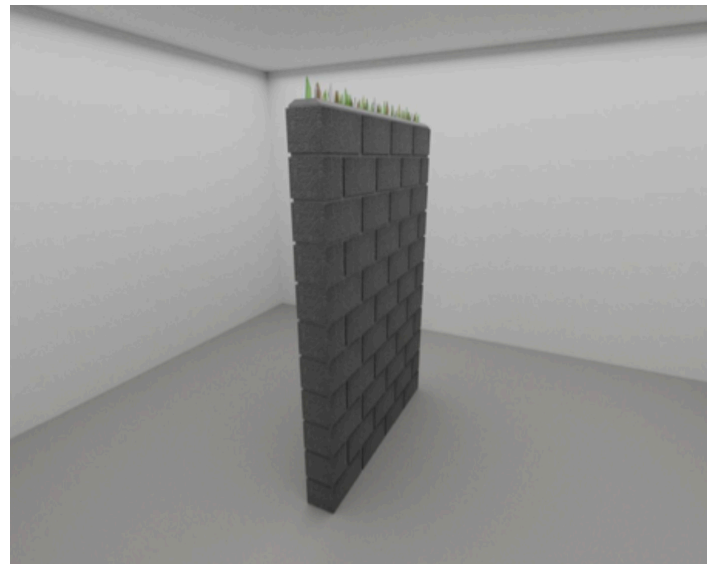
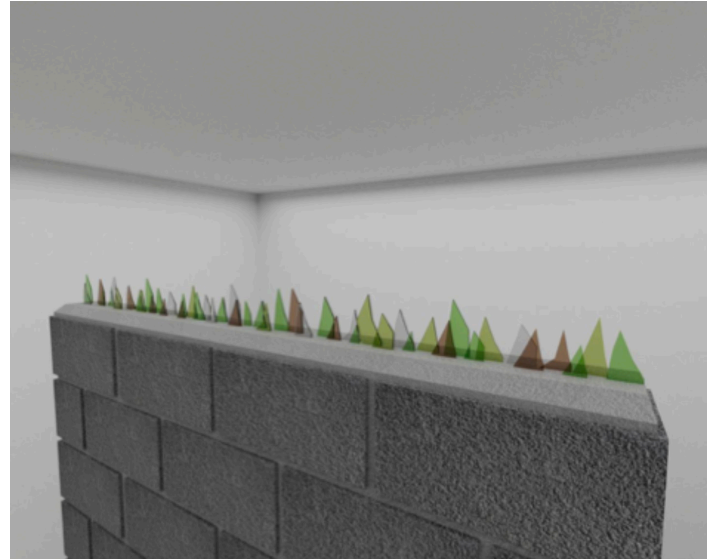
On the other side of this condition lies sound, music, and collective presence; gestures that may simultaneously be understood as resistance, temporary escape, or mechanisms of survival. The work attempts to transform this contradictory coexistence of anxiety, pleasure, survival, and collapse into a spatial experience; a space in which collective experience briefly creates the possibility of enduring.

Medium:

Concrete block wall, embedded broken glass, sound

Audience Experience:

In encountering the work, the audience enters a condition of uncertainty and searching; an attempt to see what has been concealed behind the wall. Yet the installation deliberately refuses to offer a final image or clear resolution. Ultimately, the viewer encounters not a “behind-the-scenes” revelation, but the continuation of the same condition: a cycle of insecurity, endurance, and living within fragile circumstances.



Saman Khosravi

Shirin Mohammad

Saman Khosravi, Shirin Mohammad

-Caption of the installation:

An ordinary afternoon, photography, printed drawings, script, 2026

-Caption of each drawing:

- Instructions for Not Painting the Walls, drawing printed on paper, 50x70
- Instructions for Making Walls Uneven, drawing printed on paper, 50x70
- Instructions for Not Hammering Surfaces, drawing printed on paper, 50x70

Caption of each photo:

- An ordinary afternoon, photography, 50x70
- An ordinary afternoon, photography, 50x70
- An ordinary afternoon, photography, 50x70

-Text

An ordinary afternoon in Imam Hossein Square, Tehran:

It is eleven-thirty in the middle of August. I walk on foot toward Enghelab Square, head down and, as usual, walking fast. Staring down at the street's pavement stones, I watch them crushed beneath my feet one by one. My eyes fall upon some items neatly arranged inside a plastic bag; a used paint roller, work clothes spotted with paint, and a bottle of mineral water are sticking out of it. The plastic bag sits near the gutter, by the street's guardrails, right where it can be clearly seen from the direction of the square. A few steps further, I see a bag containing items similar to the previous one.

I take a few more steps and stop next to an ATM to withdraw some cash. I see a few men standing or sitting in the shade of a tree, smoking cigarettes. One of them is closer to the ATM; he has placed a work like a large hammer upside down on the ground and occasionally exchanges a few words with the men under the tree. I step under the ATM's canopy. The same man who was near the ATM with his hammer on the ground flicks a lighter, lights his cigarette, and pulling his pants up way too high, crosses the sidewalk to join the four or five men standing under the shade of the tree. He takes a puff of his cigarette and says, 'Bro! People are different. Some expect a worker to labor for them like a bulldozer. Sure, if you have a steady employer, you'll work like a bulldozer; but right now, there's work for one day and no work for a hundred days.'

I get the money from the ATM and turn back to catch a taxi. As I step out from under the ATM's canopy, the heat of the asphalt bleeds through the thin soles of my shoes, and I feel a bit dizzy. At the same time, a pickup truck with two other workers sitting in the back pulls up next to the sidewalk. The driver pulls the handbrake, and amid the clattering noise of the engine, sticks his head out the window. The workers lounging in the shade suddenly spring up like coil springs. I catch a glimpse of their eyes; automatically, their bodies give a sudden jump and they run toward the truck. After exchanging a few words, they all hop in, and the truck circles the square and heads toward the next one.



Saman Khosravi and Shirin Mohammad
Instructions for Not Hammering
 Surfaces, 2026
 Serigraph on Coventry Rag paper
 27 ½ × 19 ¾ in. (70 × 50 cm)
 Courtesy of the artists

Saman Khosravi and Shirin Mohammad
Instructions for Not Painting the
 Walls, 2026
 Serigraph on Coventry Rag paper
 27 ½ × 19 ¾ in. (70 × 50 cm)
 Courtesy of the artists

Maryam Lashkari Hodjat Salimi

“Can You S...?”

A Collaborative Installation
by Maryam Lashkari and Hodjat Salimi

We are not interested in making a work about war directly. What interests us instead is what prolonged crisis does to perception, memory, language, and the body itself. Not the event, but the nervous system forced to exist inside unstable transmission.

At the center of the work is a condition of suspension: a prolonged unresolved state. The sensation of waiting for something that never fully arrives. Refreshing messages. Listening to distorted broadcasts. Hearing unfinished conversations. Trying to remember something without knowing precisely what has been forgotten.

We keep returning to the concept of edging; not only sexually, but structurally. A body held indefinitely in anticipation without release. We believe crisis produces a similar psychological condition: a state in which alertness persists beyond its natural duration, until desire, fear, intimacy, anxiety, and exhaustion begin collapsing into one another.

The audience enters a completely dark space. Each participant receives headphones and is asked to lie down in a suggested position that is intentionally, though subtly, uncomfortable; not painful, but impossible to fully settle into. We do not want the audience to become relaxed spectators. Their bodies should remain slightly unresolved throughout the experience.

The work lasts approximately 10–15 minutes. The piece operates primarily through sound. The audience encounters fragmented narration, unfinished conversations, radio interference, static, breaths, buffering noises, and recurring sonic motifs that gradually mutate over time.

One recurring motif, for example, may initially resemble the calm voice of a yoga or meditation instructor:

“Relax your shoulders.”
“Breathe slowly.”
“Focus on your body.”

But slowly, almost imperceptibly, the language begins to drift:

“Relax the part of your body that remembers.”
“If you can still hear my voice, remain still.”
“Someone may already be listening through your breathing.”

The transformation should not feel theatrical or overtly horrific. We are not interested in glitch aesthetics as spectacle. What interests us is the slower instability of language itself, the moment when meaning begins to loosen without immediately collapsing.

Simultaneously, countdown timers remain visible throughout the space. Yet none of them function correctly. Some freeze at

Oscar Tuazon

particular numbers. Some reset moments before completion. Some desynchronize from each other entirely. One may remain permanently suspended at 00:01. Another may unexpectedly begin counting upward instead of downward.

This malfunction is essential to the conceptual structure of the piece. Nothing fully arrives. Nothing fully resolves. Nothing reaches release.

The final section of the work may ultimately function as its conceptual core.

At the end of the installation, the audience encounters a QR code allowing them to download the complete audio piece onto their phones.

However, each download damages the work itself.

The first participant receives an almost clean recording. The tenth receives a subtly corrupted version. By the fiftieth download, words begin disappearing. Sentences overlap. Breaths distort. Silences extend unnaturally. Meaning deteriorates before sound itself vanishes.

Eventually—perhaps around the hundredth download—the file becomes nearly impossible to comprehend. Only fragments remain: static, broken language, residual signal.

What interests us in this gesture is that the audience becomes directly responsible for the erosion of the work through circulation. The piece destroys itself by being transmitted.

In this sense, the installation no longer merely represents unstable communication; it performs it.

The space becomes one in which:

- signals fail,
- narration drifts,
- desire cannot resolve,
- memory cannot fully stabilize,
- language arrives too late,
- and bodies remain suspended somewhere between intimacy and emergency.

Perhaps the entire work ultimately reduces to a single question:

“Can you still feel my presence?”

Further instructions regarding the engineering structure of the installation, audience interaction protocols, and technical implementation will be provided separately.



THE SPACE

A single audience.
Everything happens in front.
No elements behind.
Inclined position (~20°).
Projection spans the front wall
and continues onto the ceiling.
Timers are part of the projection.
10–15 minute sonic experience.

BODY POSITION

The audience lies on an inclined
surface (head elevated ~20°).
The position prevents full relaxation
while remaining physically tolerable.
The body stays in a state of
suspended readiness.



PROJECTION SURFACE

Matte fabric stretched across
an angled frame.
Projection covers the front wall
and continues onto the ceiling.



PROJECTOR PLACEMENT

Ceiling mounted projector.
Positioned at the rear of the room,
centered on the room axis.
Projects onto the angled surface.
Hidden from direct view
of the audience.



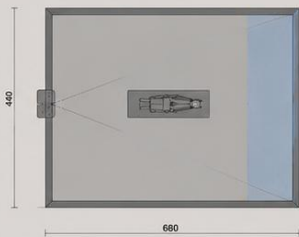
A CHAMBER OF DELAYED ARRIVAL

A 10–15 minute sonic installation exploring protracted crisis
through suspension, unstable transmission, and the erosion of
language. The audience receives headphones, lies down, and
experiences a sound piece that slowly disintegrates.
The timers projected in the space malfunction.
At the end, a QR code allows the audience to download
the full audio—but every download damages the work.

CORE THEMES

SUSPENSION
UNRESOLVED ARRIVAL
FRAGMENTED SIGNALS
ERODING LANGUAGE
BODILY AWARENESS
FAILED SYNCHRONIZATION
THE WORK DESTROYS ITSELF
THROUGH CIRCULATION

PLAN (TOP VIEW)



SECTION (SIDE VIEW)



TECHNICAL INFO

Projection Surface: Matte fabric
Projector: Ceiling mounted, short throw
Sound: Headphones (binaural audio)
Duration: 10–15 minutes
Audience: 1 person



Meghdad Lorpour

Karl Haendel

May 10, 2026

Dear Aram,

I hope this finds you well.

It is a true pleasure to be in touch with you and respond to your invitation. Reading your letter, I decided to share some recent works with you that I think could work within the scope of your project. Thank you for considering my work.

This ongoing series of works, with “Resilience” as their working title, took shape during the recent war in Iran, emerging from a period when I was forced to leave Tehran for a short time to seek refuge with part of my family in Sari. The state of emergency dictated that I carry only the barest essentials. From all the resources of my studio, I took only a single brush, a pencil, an eraser, a bottle of ink, and a few small, about 25x35cm pieces of paper. The first works in this series began in Sari. Following minor damage to our home and studio in Tehran, we were compelled to return, where several more pieces were created. After the ceasefire was announced, we traveled to Shiraz to visit other family members, and the series continued to unfold there.

What is depicted in these works is the silent resistance of the human spirit against the gradual erosion of bonds; a space where even the simplest daily actions become an effort to preserve balance, memory, and the possibility of connection.

In this series, hands serve as the final point of contact between the individual and the surrounding world; an intermediary between fear and survival, between isolation and empathy. They do not ‘save’ anything, yet they continue to hold on: a fragile sign of hope, of continuity, and of the fundamental human impulse to endure.

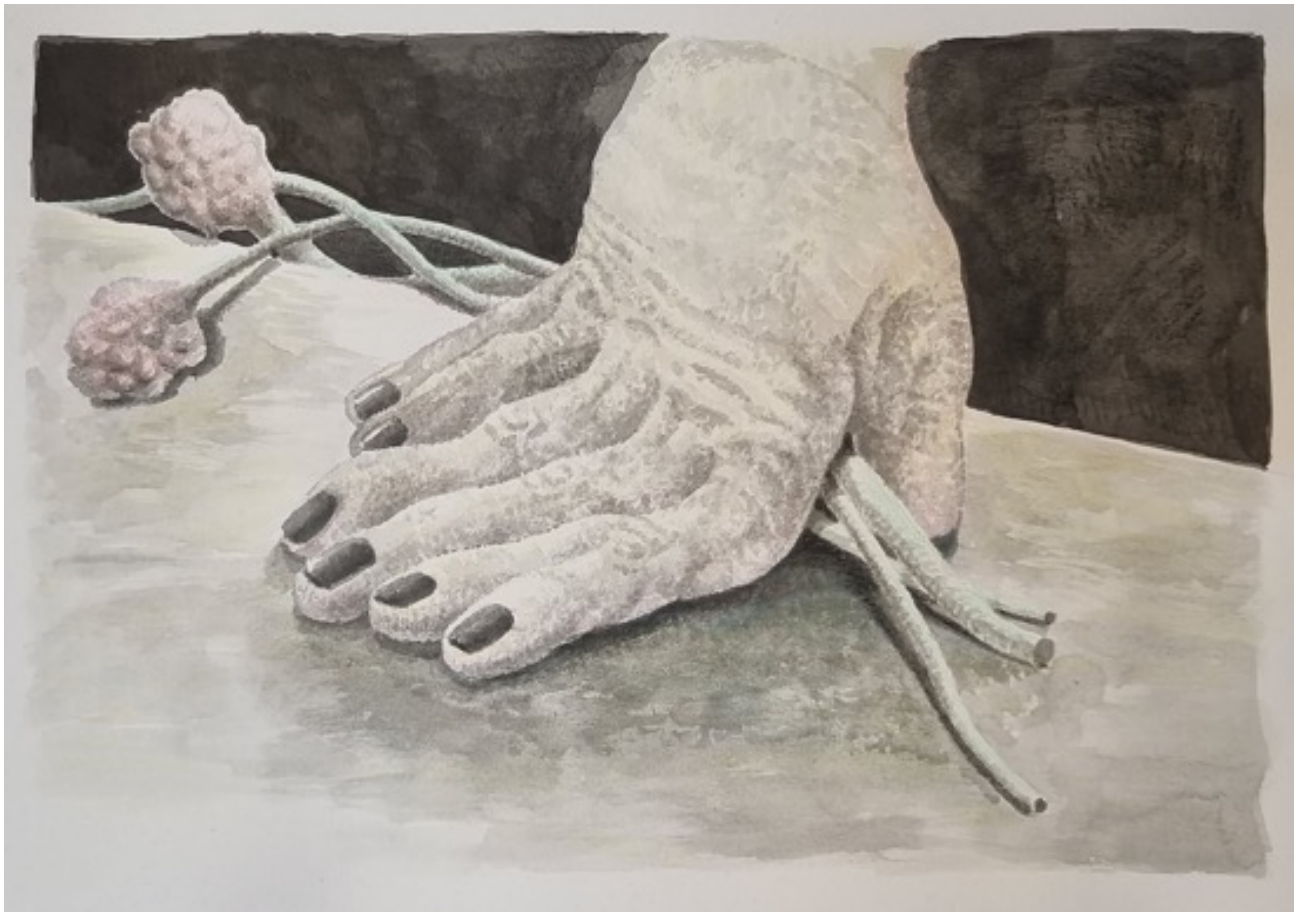
Within these pieces, the hand is not merely a visual element but a form of language. It is a dialect akin to sign language, where meaning is conveyed not through sound, but through movement, pauses, and the posture of the body. In an era where war, communication disruptions, and political and geographical distances have caused human connections to ‘stutter’, hands become the carriers of a primitive yet enduring communication; a desperate attempt to convey meaning even when voice, presence, and the means of transmission have been severed.

In light of your invitation, the series itself is now entangled in this very condition. As the physical transport of the original works and direct contact with exhibition spaces have become fraught with difficulty, printed and reproduced versions of these images have become part of the artwork’s conceptual framework. Like the subjects they depict, these works could perhaps reach the audience through a mediated, unstable, and remote form.

Once again, thank you for your invitation. Please feel free to contact me for more information about the works or for discussing them further.

All of my best,

Meghdad Lorpour



Kimiya Mirzaei

Caye Castagnetto Alina Perkins

A House on Fire

I began this painting in September 2025, roughly six months ago. The canvas had already lived a previous life. I had washed it over with a diluted red, and it lingered in the studio, unresolved. At the time, I was fatigued by another painting I had been struggling with for quite some time, and in a moment of quiet defiance, I turned to this surface instead. Onto the red ground, I began a pastel drawing: a large house, placed almost ceremonially at the center.

For nearly a year now, I have been painting houses. I think this began at a moment when I felt that my life, my sense of home, of stability had been constructed on something fundamentally unstable, as though the ground beneath it were already burning. That underlying anxiety, difficult to articulate directly, found its way into these images, which I rendered in a deliberately naive manner. Perhaps this instinct reaches further back: the house was the first form I learned to draw as a child. It carries a kind of archetypal simplicity, the square and the triangle, assembled into something whole. A structure both elementary and symbolic. These houses are made by the most simple structures, but they represent both inside and outside.

In my studio, there's a note written on the wall at the very beginning of this series of work: what does home mean to children? What does war do to your sense of home? The note was written a month before the first war. The question was shaped by all the images of war and children trapped inside wars that I scrolled through on my phone daily, not because I had any idea it would soon become my own reality.

War is a massive word. It's like pouring a gallon of paint onto a small canvas, the rate at which it gets out of control is faster than human capacity. It's not only that war can destroy your home or your life. It changes your sense of time in an instant; your life separates from what it was a minute before that massive explosion occurred, it changes everything within a second, the past leaves you in an instant and then there's only your struggle to make a connection to a future you can't imagine.

When you're disconnected with your past and fearful of your future in that awful moment you're trapped. It suddenly takes death out of its shadow, more vivid than life. This particular work is the fifth in the series, and the last I touched before leaving my studio, one month prior to the war, when returning no longer felt safe. By late January, the language of war had begun to circulate with increasing intensity. Living in the northern part of Tehran while my studio is located in the city center, I found myself increasingly unable to maintain my usual rhythm. Before this, I had gone to the studio four or five days a week. Some days were spent simply sitting with the paintings, looking. On others, I would devote hours to preparing paints. And on the rare, more lucid days, I would work directly on the surface.

The work represents two different sides, and two different behaviors, it is a constant process of transformation, the

grids give me a sense of control but I try to defeat them with colors. This painting holds the residue of those days: it is built through accumulation and erasure. Some passages are additive, others subtractive; certain layers remain thin, almost fragile, while others are dense, saturated with pigment and time. My process depends on proximity. on the ability to return, to linger, to allow the work to unfold gradually. In another sense, I would say that the time and space in which the work unfolds are central to how the work functions.

That continuity was broken. What I experienced during that period, most acutely, the anticipation and fear of war disrupted my capacity to function, first as an artist, and then more fundamentally, as a person. In the midst of the war, even the act of returning to the studio became charged with fear. I found myself unable to go back, not out of hesitation, but out of a very real concern for my own safety.

I left Iran twenty days ago, on the last days of the war. I left behind my life, my studio, and everything that had anchored me, without knowing when or if I would return. I find myself now inhabiting a different reality, one that feels at once suspended and uncertain. When I imagine going back, what emerges is not only longing but a series of persistent concerns: the prospect of isolation through internet blackouts, of being separated from the world beyond, and the more immediate, intimate question of whether my home will remain intact. These are not abstract anxieties but conditions that weigh heavily on one's ability to live, to think, to work. I imagine these borders as something that, if crossed, would both disconnect me from the world, and yet return me to a place where I can make sense of my identity.

Now the painting is representing another reality to me, it represents the borders that are forced between my body and my studio.

The paintings of houses are not just the projection of my fear of war but are the alarm of another disturbing reality.

I am uncertain whether, if I return, I will be able to function in any coherent way as I already found myself unable to do in the weeks leading up to the war, and throughout its duration. And so, although I hold onto the desire to return to my life in Iran, I am no longer certain that the life I imagine is still there, waiting. as for my relationship with this painting.

I have lost bodily access to my unfinished works and my studio. My practice is now confined within a fixed and restricted border. With this proposal, I want to let my experience of being present in my studio continue through the series of notes of the remembrance of the fifth and last painting I mentioned.

The painting itself exists only as a low-quality image, and due to internet restrictions, I prefer not to expose it.

Caye Castagnetto
Lamp of the Dog, 2026
Custom cast iron rods and hooks, sun-died silk and cotton, lamb's skin, fur, lightbulb, electrical cable
95 × 18 × 18 in. (241.3 × 45.7 × 45.7 cm)
Courtesy of the artist

Caye Castagnetto
Window by the Dog, 2026
Sound composition with musical interludes
60 min.
Courtesy of the artist

Vocals: Hossein Behraves, Kimiya Mirzaei,
and Amir Moshayedi
Trombone: Dave Smoota Smith

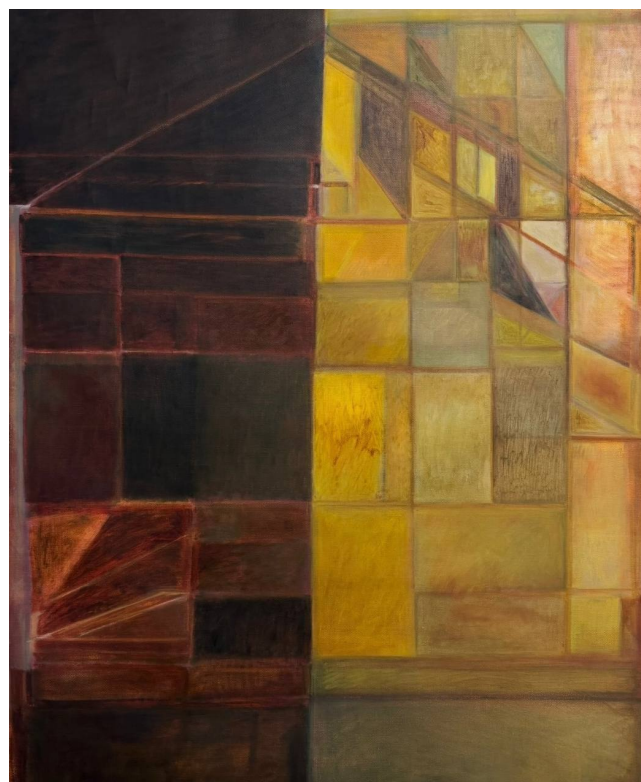
Alina Perkins
Kimiya's Studio, 2026
Acrylic and oil on canvas, wood
72 × 48 in. (182.9 × 121.9 cm)
Courtesy of the artist and Fernberger Gallery,
Los Angeles

The project aims to question the boundaries of body, presence and borders:

I would like to propose that the executor of this work respond not to the meaning of these words, but to their sound in Farsi. The invitation is to read them aloud (in Farsi), to listen closely, and to engage only with their sonic presence. From this encounter with sound, the executor is encouraged to generate movement, guided not by interpretation, but by resonance.

The medium remains open: these movements may take the form of bodily gestures, brushstrokes, or even a composition of sound. The executor may equally approach the work as a musician, allowing the auditory qualities of the language to shape their response.

خانه ها ویران
لاله ها اشک ریزان
کوه، رود، کوچه
خنده‌ی همسایه
تکانی از زمان
از آواز پرندگان
همین‌ها
دوستانم‌اند
سال‌ها پیش‌تر از پایان بهار.



Shahrooz Mohammad

Julianna Halpert

SHAHROOZ MOHAMMAD

Project Proposal

Parallel Narratives: A Travelogue

Concept

This travelogue(s) originates from an archive of images, notes, and visual materials collected during an emergency journey in recent days. A camera and notebook traveled with me—tools that recorded moments: a sketch, memories, calculations, dried flowers, and fragments of daily life during the journey.

Based on my narrative of an incomplete journey, three (or more depending on numbers of artists) travel books will be produced. I will complete one of these travel books myself, and the other artists will complete the rest. The final result is a set of booklets placed side by side, comparable page by page, with similarities and differences shaped by each artist's contribution.

The aim is not to reconstruct a coherent narrative, but to examine how a story transforms as it passes from one person to another—how it distorts, how parallel interpretations emerge from a single narrative and a shared set of materials.

Even with minimal distance—geographic, linguistic, or temporal—the original story diverges from the transmitted one. There is no definitive narrative. This work is about distance, translation, speculation, and the gap between lived experience and remote understanding, and it questions the singularity of narrative.

Form of Execution

The project will result in at least **three or more artist books (visual travel journals)**, depending on the number of participating artists.

Each book will be constructed/completed using:

- **Images and texts provided by me** (the original archive)
- **Additional images, texts, drawings or interventions added by the executing artist** at their discretion

shahroozmohammad.com

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Installation

Several travel booklets will be placed side by side on a table. Alongside the booklets, two, three, or more prints (depending on the number of artists and travelogues) measuring 1×1 meters will be installed above every travel book.

(About the prints: each one full-page and single-color. I will write a description of this color, and each artist will select their color according to their own perspective. These three colors, though close to one another, will not be a single uniform color. These same colors will also be the color of each book's cover.)

Instructions / Score for the Executing Artist

1. You will receive:

- A curated archive of images, texts, and visual fragments from my journey
- An InDesign file with suggested narrative page by page (optional to follow)

2. Your task:

- Use the provided materials to create a visual travel journal based on pages in InDesign
- You may add your own images, texts, drawings, or interpretations
- You may reorder, crop, or recontextualize the materials, but do not alter, remove, or rearrange the pages themselves

3. Technical requirements (This subject may relate technicians of the exhibition, not the artists)

- Familiarity with InDesign or collaboration with a designer
- Familiarity to simple printing and binding methods
- Output should be printed and bound

4. Creative freedom:

- You are encouraged to bring your own artistic voice, personal narrative, or formal approach into the work
- The goal is **not fidelity**, but **interpretation**
- Feel free to guess, imagine, break, and make mistakes

Maryam Mohry

Kate Costello

Sometimes everything falls into suspension and confusion; visions of the future collapse. The horizon ahead fades, and narratives become distorted. Those hidden lines of connection between things are severed, and objects are left adrift in an endless, dreamlike space. What once held disconnected and unrelated things together, what made continuity possible, has itself vanished. Subjects and positions cry out only their own isolated selves, and no shared value remains. Narrative lies fragmented, amid suspended and uncertain things. Like islands whose sea between them has turned to smoke and vanished.



As for the crocodiles, they're deeply fond of humans. They have no intention of harming them; they mostly just enjoy giving people a fright.



The tree is generous. It prefers to cultivate humans instead of fruit—or rather, just the useful part of a human: the head.

Kate Costello
No Other Story to Tell, 2026
 Acrylic on paper mounted on board, 2 parts
 12 × 9 in. (30.5 × 22.9 cm) each
 Courtesy of the artist



The stone cairns stand strong, like homes carved from the mountain. They know how to keep watch. They are not gentle—they are reliable.



The stone cairns cannot withstand the wind. It is a secret that the wind makes them dance, then scatters them into the air.

Asal Peirovi

Gabriel Madan

Targeting Error

The idea for this project emerged after reading an article in The Guardian* about an attack on a school in Minab during the recent war. The report suggested that missile guidance systems — some of which operate through artificial intelligence-based algorithms — may have suffered from computational errors in target identification and selection. If we accept the assumption that the attack resulted from an unintentional targeting error, this incident can be read alongside similar cases of miscalculation, deviation, and misidentification reported during the same period of conflict. What becomes central here is not merely the error itself, but the reliance on algorithms, the dismissal of the possibility of failure, and the question of accountability within systems of machine-based decision-making.

Gradually, this question shifted for me into a visual and artistic problem: how can one think about error, translation, and the incomplete transmission of experience? And how might the difficulties of

communication, internet disruption, and the impossibility of physically transferring artworks under conditions of war become part of the structure of the project itself, rather than merely obstacles to its realization?

In this project, existing paintings are not presented as final images, but are instead translated into written descriptions printed on raw linen fabric. The use of raw linen is directly connected to my practice, as the original paintings are made on the same material. These texts include descriptions of the works' key elements, compositional structures, perspectival logic, and references to art historical traditions. In addition, each work is documented with its title, dimensions, and year of production. These written descriptions are then fed into AI-based image generation systems in order to produce corresponding visual interpretations. The resulting images are exhibited alongside the texts and fabric surfaces.

What becomes crucial in this process is not only technological error, but the inherent inability of language, image, and computational systems to fully transmit lived experience. The paintings move from embodied and mental experience into text,

Gabriel Madan

DIY Fix-It Funny Birthday Card, 2026
Acrylic on felt paper, inkjet on canvas,
glue, sound module, speaker, battery
7 × 5 in. (17.8 × 12.7 cm)
Courtesy of the artist

Gabriel Madan

Let Your Dreams Shine Congratulations Graduate, 2026
Acrylic on felt paper, inkjet on canvas,
glue, sound module, speaker, battery
7 × 5 in. (17.8 × 12.7 cm)
Courtesy of the artist

Gabriel Madan

Peanuts® Snoopy Hugs Sweetest Day Card, 2026
Acrylic on felt paper, inkjet on canvas,
glue, sound module, speaker, battery
7 × 5 in. (17.8 × 12.7 cm)
Courtesy of the artist

Gabriel Madan

Pine Tree Landscape Scene Father's Day Card for Dad, 2026
Acrylic on felt paper, inkjet on canvas,
glue, sound module, speaker, battery
7 × 5 in. (17.8 × 12.7 cm)
Courtesy of the artist

then from text into machine-generated image, and at each stage something is lost, displaced, or misread. Despite its capacity to generate images, artificial intelligence can never fully reconstruct what was originally formed in the mind of the artist. As a result, the generated images consistently misinterpret, omit, or relocate elements of the intended composition. This distance and incompleteness are not treated as flaws to be corrected, but as constitutive parts of the project's structure.

At the same time, the conditions of war and disrupted communication become integral to the work itself. Transmission is never complete or transparent: images may fail to arrive, files may be partially lost, and meaning may shift during the process of transfer. The project seeks not to conceal these interruptions, but to expose and incorporate them as part of its form. In the same way that military algorithms may misidentify targets, language and image are likewise subject to misrecognition, distance, and incompleteness in their attempt to reach one another.

In the following, a sample description of one of the paintings is provided:

Crimson Lull
117 × 100 cm
Acrylic on linen, 2025

A large folding ladder stands at the center of the composition, surrounded by branches and fruit from a fig tree. The dark, twisting form of the tree trunk cuts diagonally across the surface, while a hand saw horizontally interrupts the middle of the image. In the background, a small sun hovers within a crimson sky.

The perspective is flat and influenced by Persian miniature painting, creating a space in which elements accumulate across the surface rather than recede into depth. The composition is structured through a form of asymmetrical symmetry, where familiar objects appear at an exaggerated scale and oscillate between stillness, suspension, and latent violence.

Asal Peirovi

* <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2026/mar/26/ai-got-the-blame-for-the-iran-school-bombing-the-truth-is-far-more-worrying>

Morteza Pourhosseini

Miljohn Ruperto

Dear Aram,

I hope you are well.

I am truly happy to make your acquaintance and grateful for your invitation to participate in this project.

My name is Morteza Pourhosseini, and I have been painting for many years. Reading your invitation brought me back to a series of ideas that I have lived with throughout these years in my paintings and drawings—ideas that, in light of the experiences and events surrounding us in recent years, have now taken on a different meaning for me.

The concept of the “landscape” has always occupied an important place in my work. In the history of painting, landscape carries a long tradition; even in a portrait such as the Mona Lisa, the landscape exists in the background, constructing the world around the subject and, in a way, keeping the figure at the center of the image.

In part of my practice, I have tried to remove the landscape from its role as mere background and turn it into the subject itself. Rather than serving simply as a setting for human presence, the landscape becomes the center of attention in its own right.

What has become important to me within the context of this project, however, is the Persian word for “landscape” itself: *cheshmandaz* — a word composed of “eye” (*cheshm*) and “casting” or “projection” (*andaz*). Like many Persian words, it carries multiple layers of simultaneous and metaphorical meaning within it.

In recent years, especially during the violence carried out against protesters in the streets, one issue deeply occupied my mind: many of those who came to the streets to protest were deliberately targeted in the eyes. At the same time, facing them was a weapon—an instrument designed for aiming and targeting. In a bitter way, that weapon also performs a kind of “landscape” or “sightline”; something that brings the eye down to the ground and destroys the possibility of seeing.

This stands in stark contrast to the way we usually think about “landscape”: as a horizon, a future, light, hope, and the possibility of vision. Yet this second “landscape” stands precisely on the opposite side—in the territory of darkness, violence, rage, and death.

Out of this contradiction and confrontation, an idea has emerged that I would like to share with you and your project.

I am thinking of creating a video work in which countless images of landscapes from throughout art history appear together in the form of a slideshow—from Leonardo to Friedrich and many others, artists who, in one way or another, have looked toward the horizon, the edge, and the landscape.

Facing these images, a second frame would emerge. In this frame, close-ups of healthy eyes would gradually transition into wounded, bandaged, and bloodied eyes. The audience would stand between these two streams of images—between two opposing visual walls projected toward one another.

As the work progresses, the images of eyes would slowly transform into X-rays of damaged skulls, and eventually into X-rays of weapons. The camera would then move across the different components of the weapon, revealing each part in X-ray form, as though the instrument of violence itself had become an exposed and visible anatomy.

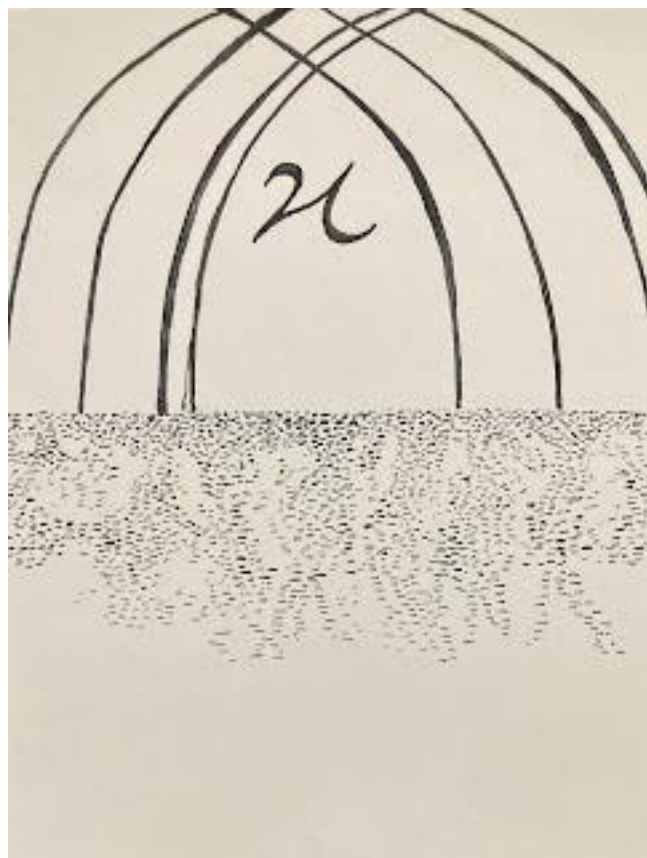
I believe we could further develop the editing, image selection, sound, and final spatial form of the project together through conversation and collaboration.

I hope this idea resonates with you, and I would be very happy if we could move it toward realization together.



**Zeinab
Shahidi Marnani**

**Nevine
Mahmoud**



Zeinab Shahidi Marnani
The Sacred X, 2026
Stainless steel
7 × 8 ½ × 7 in. (17.8 × 21.6 × 17.8 cm)
Courtesy of the artist

“The Mirror Curved
Concave, Then Convex” *

You will need a letter-sized sheet of paper, a pencil, and a knife.

In the center of the paper, draw the letter X, leaving some space around the edges.

The X will serve as the human body.

Add a circle for the head at the top center of the X, touching both arms.

Extend the X upward and downward, leaving some space in the middle to suggest the waist and chest.
To make the figure feel more human, the arms can be narrower than the legs.

The > and < shapes on the sides can also be softened into curves, more like) and (.

Using the knife, carefully cut along the outline of the new body shape.

Leave the small connections at the top of ∨, and bottom of ∧, intact, as the hands and feet are going to be merged with the ground.

Draw a horizontal line across the background at the level of the figure’s core.

Following this line, fold the paper inward on each side of the body while gently pushing the figure outward from behind.

Then fold inward the four horizontal connections where the wrists and shins meet the background.

As a result, the body will be curved outward.
while the surrounding stands at a right angle.

Light can cast both the figure’s shadow onto the piece, and the piece’s shadow onto the space.

*The title is inspired by Parvaneh Etemadi’s narrative of her staying home during the Tehran bombardment of the 1980s; in the documentary film *Mandan (The Staying)* (2001) by Mani Haghighi.

Title

“The sacred X” (الشَّيْءُ)

date

2026

material

Stainless Steel

medium

Sculpture?

dimensions

12” × 9” sheet, cut and folded

Hashem Shakeri

Laura Owens

From: Hashem Shakeri <shakeri.hm@>
Date: Sunday, May 10, 2026 at 22:10
To: Aram Moshayedi <aram@>
Cc: sina ghadaksaz <sinaghadaksaz1992@>
Subject: Re: An exhibition being organized in Los Angeles

Aram jaan,

Thank you very much for your explanation, and really sorry for my late reply. These have been very tense and busy days for me. I hope it's not too late.

Yes, everything is completely clear, and I think, by default, lived experience in Iran as an artist in any medium, especially in these recent years full of tension and events, ultimately means that, no matter what idea you start from, at some point all these ideas connect, even if there is no single overarching theme.

Given the limited time and the fact that we are quite late in the process, I will just put a few ideas forward here, and please let me know what you feel works best. First of all, I think it is important for me that any idea is connected to the period after the "Woman, Life, Freedom" uprising. Over these years, as a photographer and filmmaker, despite all limitations and security pressures, I have tried to document parts of what has been happening, from the recent uprisings to even the war, alongside my longer-term projects.

Let me share a few things I am currently thinking about that might be more feasible:

Recently, a new section of one of my long-term projects was published in Aperture magazine. I will share the online link below in case it is useful for you to look at.

<https://aperture.org/editorial/hashem-shakeris-portrait-of-a-climate-hotspot-in-iran/>

<https://store.aperture.org/products/aperture-no-262>

I am also thinking about the red tree image I have attached here, the kahur tree, which is a symbol of resistance. It survives even in the harshest and most barren soils, finding a way to live with the minimum amount of water. At the same time, for me this image somehow relates to the resistance of the people of Balochistan in Iran and their struggle during the "Woman, Life, Freedom" uprising, which continued for months after the "Bloody Friday" in Zahedan and the killing of many Baloch people, and was made during that same period. For me, the kahur tree is an allegory for the life of the Baloch people, who have always been marginalized and oppressed by the central government, also in relation to their religious minority status. The kahur tree is also a symbol of life and resistance for the Ken and indigenous people of the Balochistan region.

Now I am thinking that perhaps this tree, with all its dignity, exhaustion, and solitude, could be expanded into a broader metaphor for Iran as a whole, an Iran that has gone through these intense years, especially the killings in January and then the recent war.

My question is how we could install this image at a large scale so that the viewer can physically encounter it in real space. Do you think this is technically possible? For example, could it be printed double-sided at a large scale and suspended from the ceiling so that it extends to the floor, with part of it touching and dragging on the ground from both sides? Or alternatively, mounted on a wall with the upper part fixed and the rest extending down to the floor, where part of it might even be walked on and gradually become dirty... and perhaps the lower part of the print, where it meets the floor, could be written on directly by hand, maybe with a description of "Bloody Friday," a quote, or something related to the kahur tree, or something more open-ended and interactive. The scale and format of the image could be adjusted in relation to the installation.

Sorry, I am just sharing my thoughts openly here. I mainly want to get a sense of space and scale in advance so I can better develop the idea.

This work could also stand on its own, which I think makes sense because of its solitude, but it could also be accompanied by two or three other panels, or even combined within a larger collage structure with other printed elements. And the noise of the image feels, for me, appropriate in this context.

At the same time, I am not sure whether video could also be included. I have made films and documentary videos during the recent events in Iran, and perhaps it could be just video works, or a combination of photographs, archival material from the protests and the recent war, forming a more performative installation.

I would love to hear more of your thoughts on this. Also, have you reached any conclusions with the other artists, and is the timeline now fixed?

If there is still time, and if Sina is involved in the process, it might also be good to have a conversation with him.

Sorry again for the delay, and I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

All the best,
Hashem

--

Hashem Shakeri | Photographer | Filmmaker

Web : www.hashemshakeri.me

Mob in : [REDACTED]

Mob at : [REDACTED]

[INSTAGRAM](#) | [FACEBOOK](#) | [TWITTER](#) | [LINKEDIN](#)



Shabahang Tayyari

To Aram

Isabella, our family talisman maker, came to me before you reached me. She already saw it all. She whispered the roar of the aircrafts and the coming blackout and the exhibition at The Brick. I wanted to be there so I begged her for the spell.

She gave me the soil from the other side and told me to mix it with rose water and my own spit and mold it into my future sculptures. So I did it. I put the spell on my aunts' scarves. Shahin, Mahin, and Mercedes.

They were leaving for Los Angeles a week before the malady. They knew nothing. My beloved possessed couriers. They still know nothing. The curse is with them now. I will travel through their dyed blonde hair. Through everything they changed and everything they could not.

When their plane lands at LAX, they will call you and deliver the scarves like sleepwalkers. I have given the scarves a new life. No woman wears it for covering anymore. It has become my sculpture, my vessel, my black transmission.

Along with scarves they will also hand over their perfumes. At the show, Aram, you must spray them onto the scarves again and again, so the air becomes thick with the smell of my aunts, my mom, the smell of every Iranian mother who cannot come for my opening.

I pray for my aunts' forgiveness. I know they won't forgive me, not for the spell, but for what I have taken. I have no regrets. God knows how many dark notes they slipped beneath our rugs, how many curses they buried inside our home.

I will carry the burden myself. Every backlash, every revenge, every affliction is mine to bear. Let it fall on me only. I hope the storm they cause does not break during the opening. I pray for you and The Brick and this contagious Iranian curse.

At the end it was the only way I could arrive when nothing else was allowed to pass.

By soil.

By spit.

By scent.

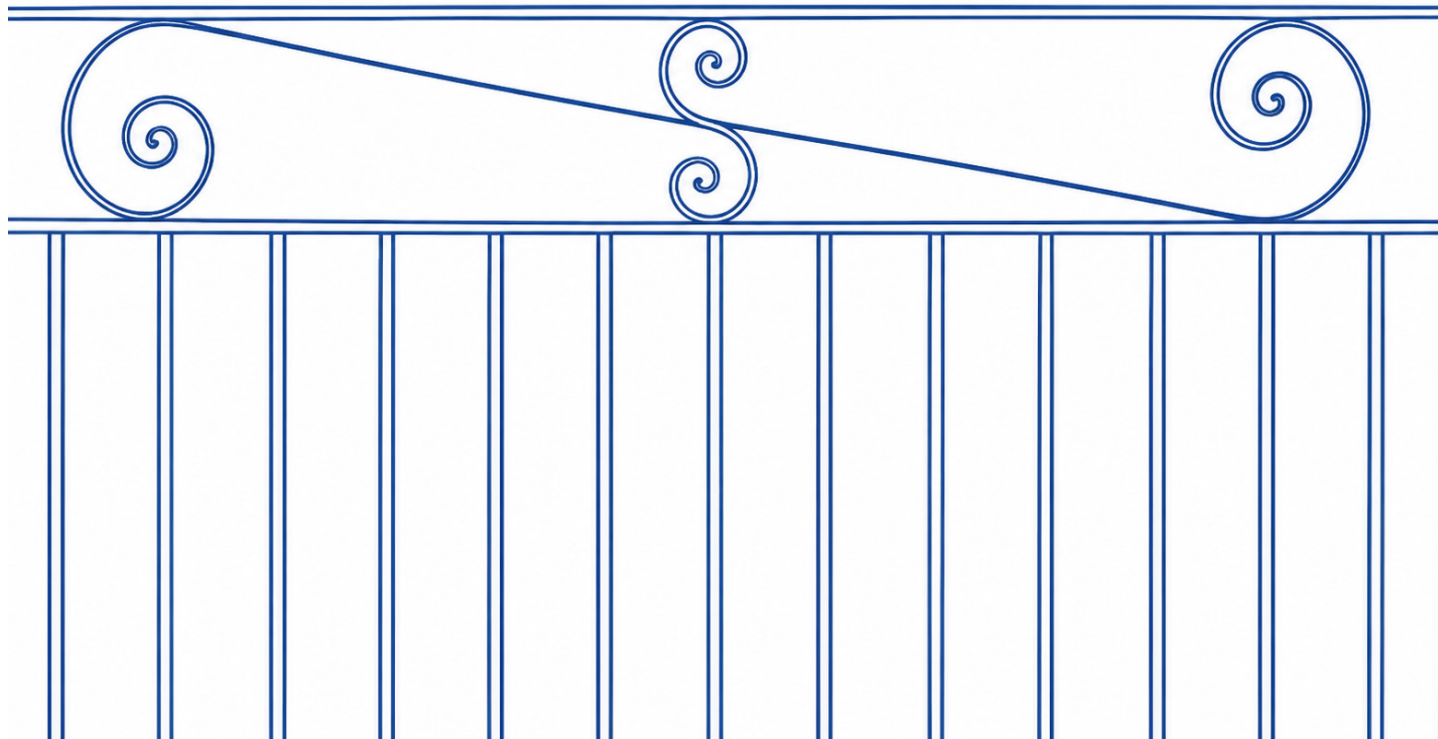
Shabahang Tayyari

Shabahang Tayyari
to, 2026
Perfume, silk scarves, wood dining table,
printed paper, clay, curse
38 × 71 × 33 ½ in. (96.5 × 180.3 × 85.1 cm)
Courtesy of the artist



Mozhan Yaghoubi

Rosha Yaghmai



The idea emerges from ongoing reflections on interruption, delayed arrival, mediated presence, and the experience of witnessing events unfold elsewhere through transmitted images.

I have been considering how an artwork can continue to exist, transform, or be carried by others in the physical absence of the artist. Rather than treating this absence as a limitation, I am interested in allowing it to become part of the work's structure.

The installation is conceived as a constellation of transferable gestures: drawings that can be reproduced by others, transparent images layered and suspended in space, traces carried through movement, and forms that remain simultaneously present and incomplete.

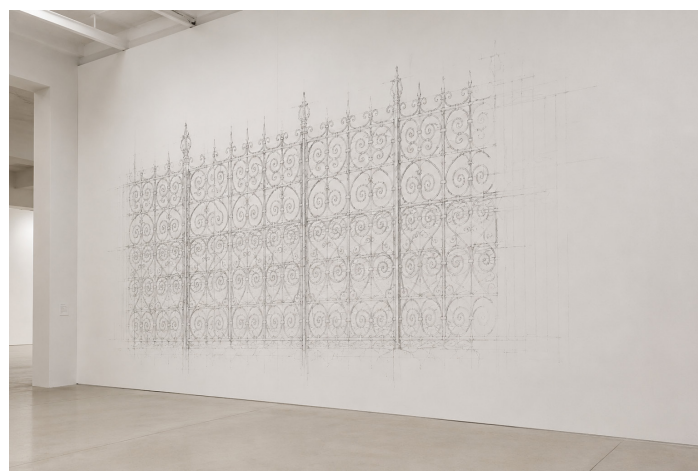
Rather than producing a singular fixed image, the work proposes a condition of translation in which execution, interpretation, distance, and physical separation become embedded within the final form. The installation is intended to remain flexible and responsive to the conditions of the exhibition space.

No. 1 Large-Scale Fence Drawing

A large-scale linear drawing of a fence or barrier would be transferred directly onto the gallery wall. The drawing could be executed through projection, transfer paper, tracing, or other accessible methods by individuals physically present in the exhibition space.

The fence is approached not only as a literal form, but as a structure associated with separation, interruption, distance, and restricted movement. Rendered at an architectural scale, the drawing becomes less illustrative and more spatial, organizing movement and perception within the exhibition.

The dimensions of the drawing would adapt to the available wall space.



Rosha Yaghmai and Mozhan Yaghoubi
Trace, 2026
Ultramarine pigment, cotton
96 × 240 in. (243.8 × 609.6 cm)
Courtesy of the artists

No. 2 Transparent Printed Layers

Selections from existing paintings would be printed onto transparent or semi-transparent material and layered over the fence drawing. These images may be pinned directly to the wall, suspended slightly away from the surface, or produced on plexiglass panels depending on technical feasibility.

The transparent layers would generate shifting compositions that change in response to light, shadow, movement, and the viewer's position.

No. 3 Trace / Ultramarine Pigment

A subtle layer of ultramarine pigment mixed with water could be introduced onto sections of the floor. As visitors move through the space, traces of the pigment would gradually disperse beyond their original location through footsteps and incidental contact.

Rather than functioning symbolically, the pigment is conceived as a form of transfer: something carried unknowingly from one place to another, gradually altering the surrounding environment through circulation and contact.



No. 4 Position of the Absent Observer

A minimal "viewing position" may also be introduced within the exhibition space. This could take the form of subtle footprints, a marked standing position, or a spatial outline corresponding to the scale of my body, suggesting the place of an observer who is simultaneously present and absent.

Rather than representing the body directly, the gesture functions as a quiet indication of displaced presence.

*A material such as wax or a transparent casting gel may be suitable for this element. Dimensions and measurements can be provided if required.***

No. 5 Open-Source Object / Distributed Form

A possible extension of the project could involve producing a downloadable, open-source 3D model derived from the fence structure.

The file could remain accessible within the exhibition, allowing visitors to reproduce or print the object independently elsewhere.

This extension considers the possibility that the work may continue circulating beyond the exhibition through acts of replication, translation, and informal distribution.

Alternatively, if this approach is not feasible, the fence motif could be developed into a series of freestanding or wall-mounted railings fabricated in plexiglass or another suitable material. Another possibility would be to laser-cut forms derived from my paintings, such as flowers, in plexiglass and install them throughout the space, depending on the technical possibilities available.

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