

Pavilion of the Islamic Republic of Iran
At the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia
Of Being and Singing



Venice – Fondanco Marcello, May 11th –November 24th 2019

Pre-Opening May 8th-9th-10th

“**Of Being and Singing**” is the exhibition presented by the Islamic Republic of Iran at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia. “Of Being and Singing” is an exhibition commissioned by Hadi Mozaffari commissioner of the Visual Arts Affair Office and organized by Mehdi Afzali, CEO of Institute of Contemporary Arts Developments, conceived by curator Ali Bakhtiari and exhibiting works by Reza Lavassani, Samira Alikhanzadeh and Ali Meer Azimi. The exhibition opens to the press on May 8, 2019 and to the public on May 11, 2019 at Fondanco Marcello, a known space next to Rialto.

Based on 58th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia, “**May You Live in Interesting Times**”, “**of Being and Singing**” is an homage to life and to precious moments of the past, present and future. The exhibition carries a message of peace from the cultural and artistic scene of Iran, a message seldom relayed to the world by contemporary media. Representing Iran are three artists hailing from various disciplines who magnify the glory of being and time, identity and memory, reality and dreams. Challenging cliché notions of Iranian art as mostly composed of local elements and motifs, these artists represent the universal aspects of Iranian art through their artistic terminology.

Tehran-born and based, Reza Lavassani (1962) practices on various media. He began working on the installation “**Life**” in 2012 and worked on the piece for more than three years. Through a deliberate choice of papier-mâché, the artist underlines the literal and symbolic significance of recycling. The piece is a lyric narrative of life’s splendor and glory and an emblematic visualization of the passage of time. The awe-inspiring presentation, executed in Lavassani’s signature aesthetic language, portrays the artist’s belief in recreation and the eternal cycle of life. “**Life**” focus on theatricality of sculpture and installation.

Samira Alikhanzadeh (1967) deals with memory with an eye on the future. Born and raised in Tehran, she holds a painting diploma from the University of Art but departed from painting after her first exhibition and turned to new media art, which she felt was representative of her own time. Using family photographs as raw material, her praxis is one of image manipulation to explore ideas of identity and memory. Alikhanzadeh cuts out faces and portraits from their original photographic backgrounds and places them on a mesh, guiding viewers from observation of a photograph to construction of a visual narrative.

Ali Meer Azimi (1984) lives and works in Esfahan. Azimi draws inspiration from cinema, philosophy and visual arts and creates deeply narrative pieces, shifting and experimenting with different disciplines in

the process. Working on the idea of “shot,” “reverse shot” and “reversal of depth “and connecting these concepts with language disorders and dreams, his interactive installation is based on a comparative analysis of phonemic language acquisition between children and pre-puberty finches.

Ali Bakhtiari (1985) is a Tehran-based curator. Having worked with different museums and institutions, his practice focuses on relations between art and cultural studies. He works with films, graphics, painting, sculptures, ephemera and all types of material culture to depict a contemporary map of his country’s cultural geography. He aims to expand international awareness of the currents in Iranian art and culture. “Aside from the idea of time and being, I have considered the concept of **Mundus Imaginalis**, a philosophical approach deeply rooted in Iranian art history,” states Ali Bakhtiari regarding this exhibition.

Graphic of the exhibition is designed by Reza Abedini.

Mentions

We would like to thank the Islamic Republic of Iran’s Ministry of Culture and Guidance – Adjutancy of Artistic Affairs, the Visual Arts Affair Office, Institute of Contemporary Arts Development and the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art.

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