

## **Parents without Past**

**Parents without Past** (Collective **Tahereh Fallahzadeh** b.1967 & **Mostafa Nader** b.1963)

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## **Good Parents**

Seven years ago, Hadi and I traveled to the hillsides of the Alborz Mountain to visit a very special village known for its unique beliefs. It was surrounded on all sides by large stone walls and almost all views of the center of the village were blocked by tall cypress trees. No one other than the village residents were allowed inside, and so, unable to enter, we waited and watched from afar. We saw only one man cutting firewood during the six hours of our observation. A primitive village without electricity, gas, or city water whose residents were rarely seen and almost never in contact with anyone outside the village. On our way back, as Hadi was telling me stories about the villagers' beliefs, he complained about the unruly sounds the car engine was making. He told me that he would take it to the auto- repair the next day.

The day after, I was busy painting in a corner of our studio. I heard the door opened. Hadi entered with a cardboard box and a light in his eyes that meant I needed to see what was inside. He opened the box and I saw the scariest egg I have ever seen. An egg with vertical charcoal lines drawn all around it. The car technician had pulled the egg out of the engine ventilator. I don't know what my face looked like then, and I couldn't imagine the technician's. But Hadi's eyes were the entire truth: we were now faced with a real curse.

We put the cursed egg on the table next to the sofa. We stared at it for three whole days. It was harder to look at when Hadi wasn't there. I found out that his family had discovered two similar curses prior to this egg. One was found under a tree by his sister while she was playing, and the other I can no longer remember.

His parents had managed to nullify the other two curses and asked us to deliver them the cursed egg without delay. Every hour we waited was an hour too long. Too much time had already passed. His parents took the curse and we felt better. Now we could believe everything, even the most impossible of all impossibilities.

Hadi's parents are the two artists behind Parents Without Past.

Shabahang Tayyari January 2021

## **Fish on Land**

And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech.

And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there.

And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar.

And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach

unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men built.

And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do.

Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city.

Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.

Book of Genesis, Chapter 11, King James Bible

Perhaps you remember the fate of José Arcadio Buendía from “100 Years of Solitude”; dreams, dreams, dreams, journeys and voyages, discoveries, dreams, early dementia, sinking in another world, speaking in another language (one that no one understands) and ultimately, tied to a tree in the garden to die.

His last moments were spent tied to a tree during a hailstorm without a companion; a true stranger to this world.

Now, Mostafa Nader and Tahereh Fallahzadeh have voluntarily lost their memories and taken “Parents Without Past” as their collective name. Much like the fish that began crawling instead of dying on land during evolution, they have escaped their daily existence and have stepped into a reality where any familiarity is strange, and naturally, any strangeness is familiar. Over the past 25 years, Tahereh Fallahzadeh has been creating photographs in her black and white darkroom using her film negatives in unconventional ways by processing and altering chemicals, light and photo paper.

Fallahzadeh presents a selection of photographs from the past twenty years that poetically reflect and criticize the medium of photography as well as the society around her. Fallahzadeh's photos paint the portrait of an artist freely crafting a personal and photographic language in the darkroom, while living in a restricted society.

Mostafa Nader's self-proclaimed 'frame-sculptures' are mesmerizing combinations of folklore art, surrealism and expressionism that have been poetically brought together to the point where the result can't be called anything but contemporary art. Mostafa arrives at these playful, humorous and complex pieces by taking uncharted waters that only the boat of his imagination and the paddles of his talent are able to discover. Each of Nader's sculptures are made in response to Fallahzadeh's photographs. Each frame-sculpture includes creatures that circle around Fallahzadeh's photos like an audience that has one eye looking at the stage of her photos, and the other eye on us.

Why not let us today, after reading these lines and the news about “Parents Without Past” dream and imagine Mostafa and Tahereh both under one roof, speaking in a language that’s neither hard nor easy to comprehend, but rather strange and unknown.

Hadi Fallahpishe January 2021