

# JAMM

How I learned  
to stop fearing  
and love  
exotic art



*"It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances. The mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible."*

- Oscar Wilde



Exoticism is the charm of the unfamiliar. It is a relative characteristic, a way of perceiving the world. Anything can be viewed as exotic, depending on what is being perceived, by whom, where and when.

There exists a lingual communication between an artwork and the observer as the observer has her own interpretation of the concept that she confronts. There is no absolute interpretation of an artwork. In changing the viewpoint in any which way, be it sociological, political,

aesthetically or otherwise, it brings a new meaning to the artwork.

French philosopher Paul Ricoeur in conversation with Jean-Marie Brohm, a French sociologist, stated that the connection of art with the masses changes with time. The exact meaning of an artwork depends on how it is received by the audience, which may lead to a different interpretation in time. Ricoeur calls this the 'time orientation of reception.' Therefore, exoticism and the unfamiliarity of an art piece is the result of the audience in a specific time rather than the work itself.

Jean Cocteau's 'Le sang d'un poète,' chansons of 'Abdul Halim Hafiz,' Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations, Lorca's poems, Warhol's cinema, Merce Cunningham's choreography, Fellini's 'La Dolce Vita' and a verse by 'Khayyam' are often categorized as exotic. On the other hand, Tahitian paintings by Paul Gauguin, Alain Robbe Grillet's 'L'immortelle,' Greta Garbo as 'Anna Karenina,' Abbas Kiarostami's 'Copie Confirme' are seen as utilizing an exotic approach.

Due to sociopolitical and economic changes in recent decades, there has been a new focus on Asian and Middle Eastern art and particularly, the stereotypical elements of the art from these regions, which differentiates it from the art that is being produced in other parts of the world. This new focus on these so-called exotic elements has raised a wave of pseudo intellectual criticism questioning the concept of exoticism as a whole.

Artists are naturally resistant to having their works viewed as exotic, especially when an artist is consuming his life experiences, internalizing it and transfiguring it into art. The question to ask perhaps is 'What can I be?'

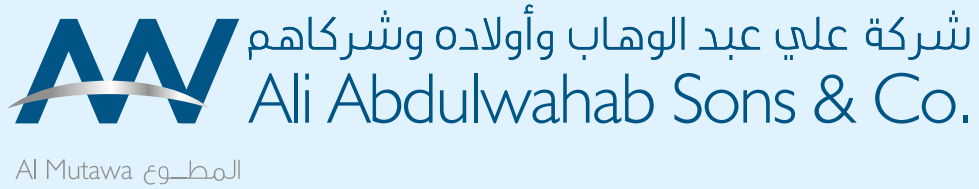
Post literate society reads images, sounds and touches and creates a multimedia language from an engine devised for types. Types surround everyday life of literate and post literate societies. Transferring types to art is hardly original since to have the notion of type, it has to be conformed to a tradition of readable alphabets.

Recent decades of Middle Eastern art have seen different trends in regards to types in art. The Iranian artists in the Saqqakhaneh Movement purified the alphabet of its meaning, focusing entirely on the aesthetic side of the letters itself. More recent trends use writing in the same vein as it was used in the Dada activities of the 1920s and beyond. Sometimes the script acts as an audio mise-en-scène for the art piece. Regardless, text makes the art appear exotic because its ambiguity.



- Ali Bakhtiari, Curator

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The use of writing is a common theme in contemporary Arab and Iranian art. Nevertheless, the use of the Arabic language renders the art from this region as 'exotic' to outsiders. In highlighting these so-called 'exotic' elements, we hope that viewers will question the nature of exoticism and appreciate the works, which are among the best examples from each of the artists selected. As a research-based exhibition, the selection was dependent on the works' relevance to the theme of the show rather than the time that the works were produced. We hope that you enjoy the exhibition.

Lulu M. Al-Sabah  
Partner, JAMM

## About JAMM

JAMM, an independent art advisory, was founded in 2009 by Sheikha Lulu Al-Sabah and Lydia Limerick who bring a combined expertise of over 16 years in the contemporary and international art market.

JAMM offers a comprehensive art-management and consultancy service to private, corporate and public clients and deals predominantly with new and existing art collection management, commissioning of artworks, exhibitions and contemporary art auctions.

Projects range from large-scale auctions and exhibitions to smaller-scale events focused on the development of the contemporary art market in the Middle East and beyond. Such activities include book launches, lectures, panel discussions and educational programs.

JAMM works with corporate clients to engage in cultural projects, our goal being to advance Arab & Iranian artists in the West, and Western artists in the East, and thus encourage further collaboration between the two.

Our primary goal is creative collaboration without cultural divide.

## Shahrazad Changalvae

"I started to think about these three words [in farsi]: ا (من), Body (تن), Motherland (وطن) / ا (man), Body (Tan) and Motherland (Vatan). These three have letters in common and it makes the idea poetical.

I started to think about the concept of these words and the relation between them, how they define one's situation, how they describe each other and how we live in these three.

Through 'I', 'Body' and 'Motherland', I have been searching for close-ups and wide-angles. 'I' is the geography of the mind, 'Body', the geography of flesh and 'Motherland' the geography of where we live:

'I' is important. It is beautiful. It is 'being-there'. It is created and recognized. 'I' watches and represents. 'I' is never what it represents and it does not see without itself what it watches. 'Body' is composed. It combines with other bodies. It takes shape; it moves and arranges the scene. 'My Body' sometimes does not follow 'I'; it goes its own way. It remembers the earth. 'Motherland' is a landscape afar. A trampled square. An earthy bed. Where 'I' wants to be. Where it takes the form of the 'body' of 'I's. It has the form of we.

We, in our current condition, live in a critical situation with these three. It is as if we regard none of these as ours. Neither 'I' is ours, nor 'body' is at our disposal, nor 'Motherland' belongs to us.

Today, these three concepts are disturbed. Our horizon is upset.

Many young people are leaving Iran these years, moving your body, choosing another land and finding yourself another I, it's a challenge we Iranians, mostly the middle class, are involved in. Therefore, I made these words big and shiny. I wanted them like a clear, obvious object. Bringing them to the street, I asked people to hold one of them and look into the camera. At sunset, when the edges of landscape blur, the form of objects is disturbed and environment finds another meaning. At such a moment, it is time to encounter things anew."

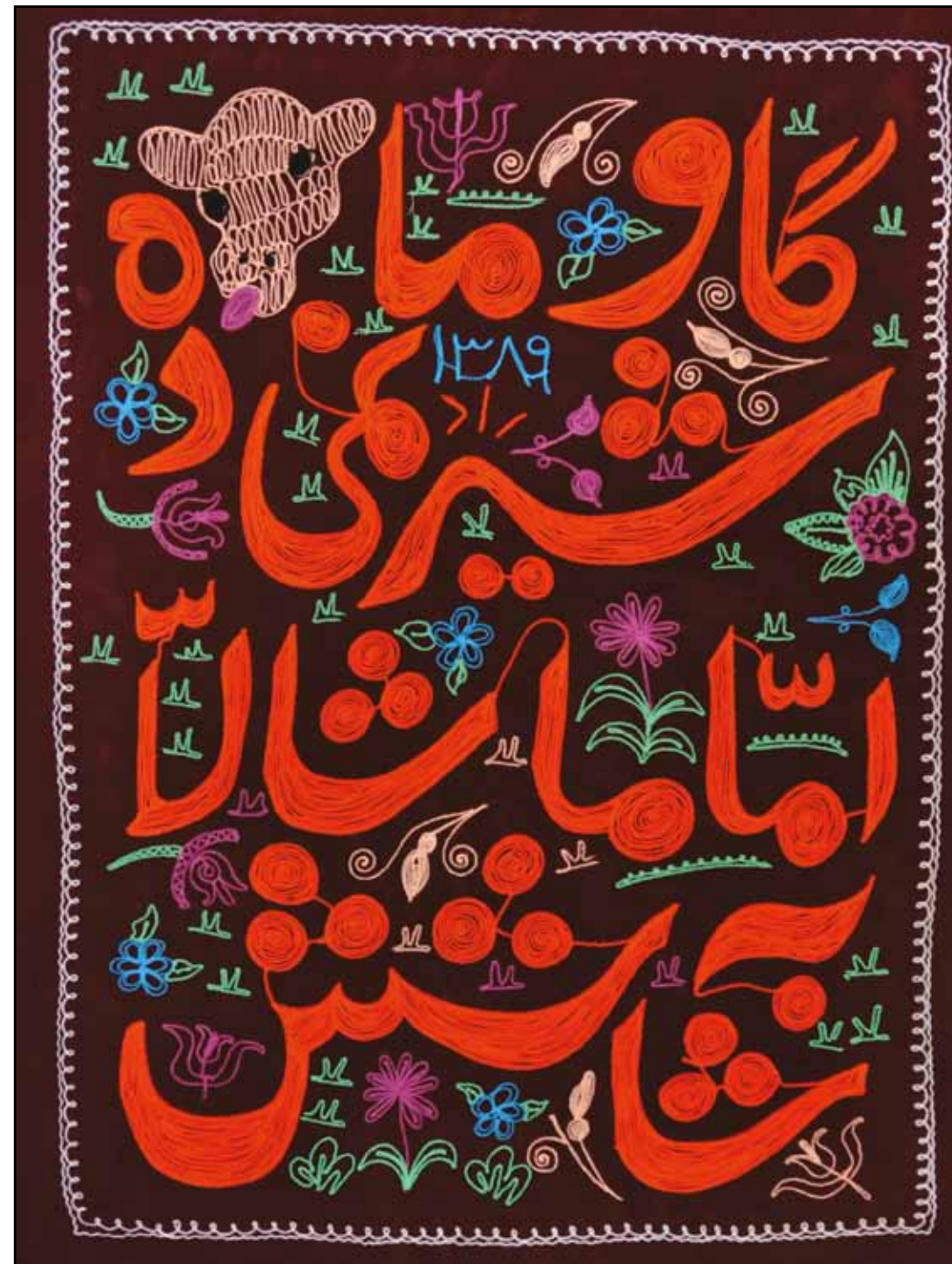


Body #1 from "Body Composition Remaining Within Limited Domain" Series, 2010  
C-print, 60 x 90 cm  
Edition 4 of 5  
Courtesy of the artist

## Iman Raad

Iman Raad believes in paramount artistic capacities in folklore, considering revisiting the past as an artistic creation. His works are inspired by Iranian folklore and Persian and Islamic traditional crafts such as calligraphy, pottery, embroidery, architecture and talismans.

The main text in this work is an Iranian proverb that states: "Our cow doesn't milk but pisses plenty." It describes a person who tends to make a mess of things, rather than make them right.



Our cow doesn't milk but pisses plenty, 2010  
Embroidery on velvet (dark crimson),  
120 x 162 cm  
Courtesy of the Gallery Isabelle Van Den Eynde

*Amira Behbehani*



“In this work, entitled *The Journey*, I am presenting my life and my feelings throughout my painting years in different colors, layers, mediums and motifs. I have taken the line in my life to another level of transformation and evolution, no more fear and tightness inside a box of rules that, if adhered to, can become suffocating. These lines have created an innocent universe of lively elements attached to me, its all me and its all what I want to be, full of life and attached rather than detached to all the vibrant motifs, bringing them to life and giving them a soul and a character.”

Detail of work  
*The Journey*, 2011  
Mixed media on board, 367 x 243 cm  
Courtesy of the artist

## *Parviz Tanavoli*

Tanavoli transforms all the poetic legacy of his culture into a very private expression. He uses all the motifs of ancient Iranian culture, Islamic art, tribal handicraft and the product is a gestalt of these all. For him, words are neither words nor an abstract form. Words are some existing figures to which Tanavoli gives a character.

The artist has long been inspired by the word heech, meaning 'nothing,' which he has used in numerous and ever more ambitious ways. It has been said that the word symbolizes his ambivalence towards the past and sense of dissatisfaction with an inadequate present. The letterforms are in a traditional Persian script called nastaliq.

Standing Heetch, 2007  
Fiberglass, 100 x 21 x 21 cm  
Edition 10 of 25  
Courtesy of the artist



# Nargess Hashemi



Untitled from «Aceton Qajar» series, 2007  
Mixed media on paper, 100 x 70 cm  
Courtesy of the artist

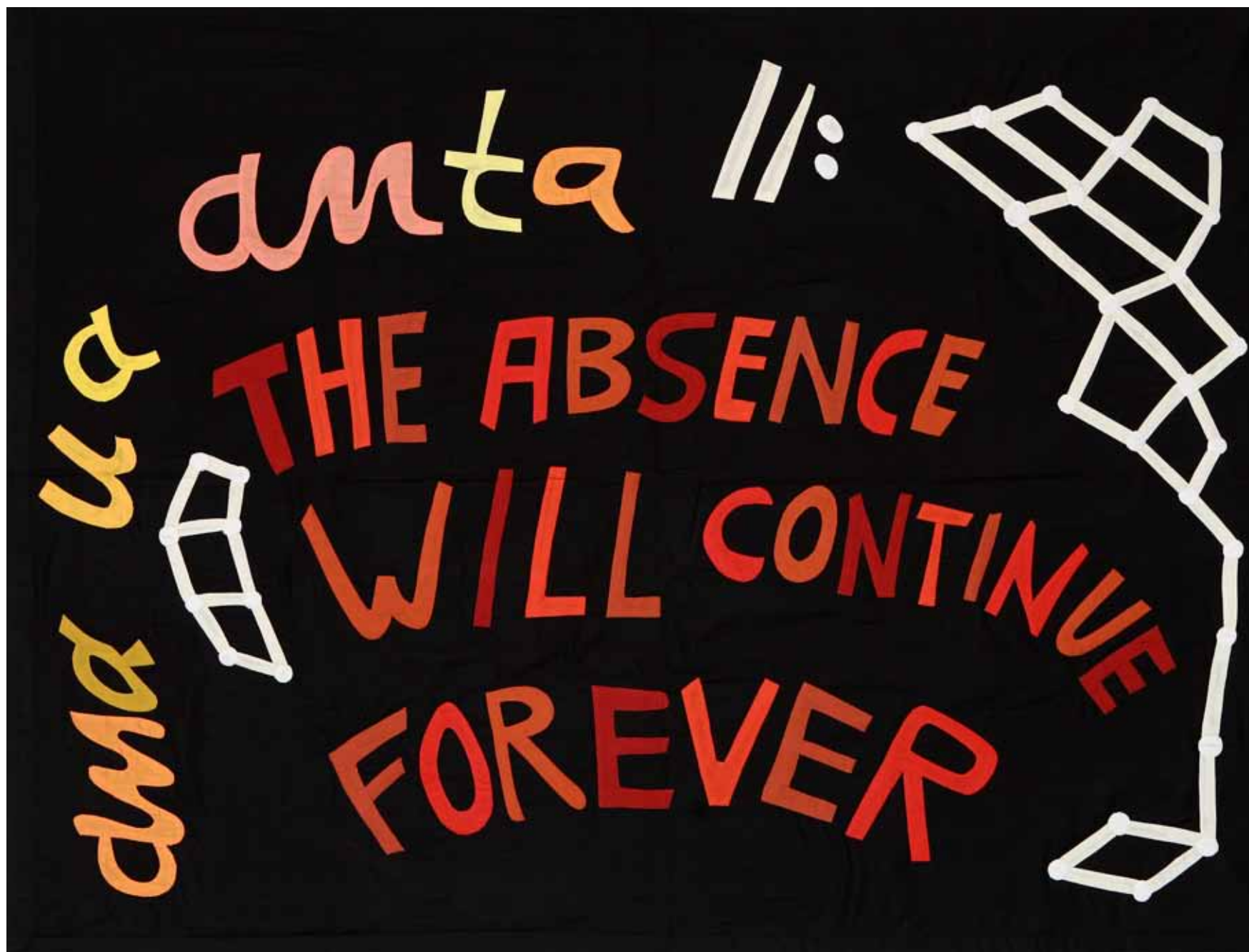


Persian miniature painting dates back to the late Safavid period when Iran's relations with Europe began to expand considerably. It was during this period that a mixture of Persian and European styles of painting created a unique art form. During the first period of Qajar reign, painting was almost exclusively prevalent in the space of the royal court and, therefore, highly influenced by other courtly arts, specifically poetry and calligraphy. The themes, motifs and style

appealed to royal taste and world-view rather than of popular origin. In the second period of Qajar reign, when Iran's contact with Europe entered a new phase and Western painting further influenced Qajar painting, the script component of Persian miniatures was eliminated. Iranian artist Nargess Hashemi recomposes the Qajar miniatures and brings back what was once eliminated: the typography. She uses script that is intentionally ambiguous and opaque,

telling stories of harems and diplomatic relations, which are shrouded in secrecy.

Susan Hefuna



As an artist of dual heritage, German and Egyptian, Hefuna's work reflects her experience in between two cultures, dealing with cross-cultural codes; she constantly plays at what images mean and how they work, creating a dream-like space where viewers can attach a wide array of significances to indicators of time and location.

The Absence Will Continue For Ever (Ana Wa Inta Baseed), 2007  
Textile, Egyptian cotton, 100 x 150 cm  
Courtesy of the Artist and The Third Line

## Farideh Lashai

Lashai's present installation is part of a body of work entitled *I don't Want to be a Tree, I Want to be its Meaning*, taken from Orphan Pamuk's novel, *My name is Red*, which recounts the classic Persian tale of tragic lovers, Leyli and Majnun.

Pamuk's novel tells the story of a tree destined to enter the pages of a great manuscript in the late 16th Century, which is consequently lost and left as a solitary image. Lashai is fascinated by the multiplicity of potential meanings the tree could have been given had it arrived at its destination instead of being purloined en route. Following Pamuk's text, through three simultaneous video projections on three sets of paintings, the viewer becomes aware of various hypothetical scenarios in which the tree could have featured and its role therein. The video is made of animated photographic images that move and morph into one another. The technique is meant to preserve painting as the dominating form, and for the photography and animation to merge into Lashai's paintings.

This video projection depicts the future 'Majnun' when he first sees his Lady Beloved Leyli is projected on a painting of the "Tree of Life" from illuminated pages, while in the other panel his Lady's countenance offers a pomegranate that bursts in her hand, its seeds falling on the ground connecting the two lovers symbolically. When night falls they fall asleep together enwrapped in Leyli's veil and in their dream an image of femininity borrowed from Manet's 'le déjeuner sur l'herbe' appears in Majnun's embrace. The dog in colossal dimensions passes through their dream, recounting the story of their divine love.

Recalling the conceptual format of ancient illuminated manuscripts, Lashai places her trees amidst a scrolling textual background. The projected images in combination with the text and the paintings refer to imagery and narratives in Pamuk's novel... Ultimately, Lashai goes beyond the realm of mere depiction, and instead provides us with a tangible sensual experience that guides the viewer through a reflective yet playful journey exploring the essence of the artistic spirit and one whose humor and buoyancy provides a satirical edge to an otherwise profound subject matter.



Leyli Va Majnun, 2008 - 2011  
Mixed media and video projection on canvas,  
180 x 160 cm  
Courtesy of the artist

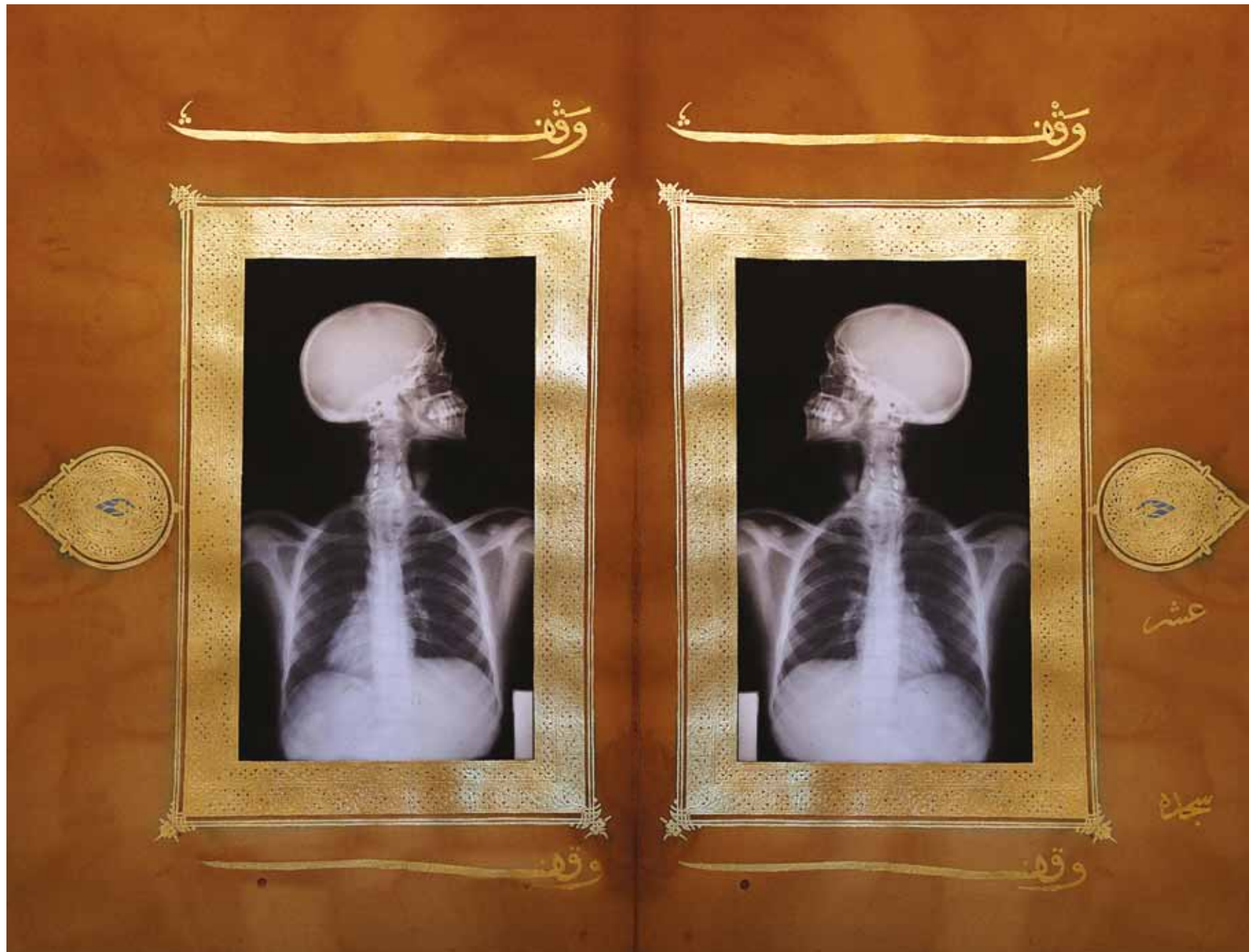
## Yashar Samimi Mofakham



In the late 1800s, two master calligraphers, Mirza Gholamreza and Mir Hussein, explored the visual qualities of Nastaliq- a cursive style developed in the late 14th century in Iran- by creating pieces known as Siah Mashgh. It was originally just a practice for the calligrapher to warm up his hand and to refine the shape of letters by repeating them over and over, hence the name Siah Mashgh, which literally means 'Black Practice.' Words and letters are repeated regardless of meaning, all for the sake of composition and style. These practices can be found in the very early works of calligraphic paintings as artists had an abstract approach to the structure of the words.

Yashar Samimi Mofakham uses this style to create his serigraphy entitled, 'Existence.' His siah mashghs appear to be completely black with patches of white. However, at closer inspection, you see a repeating of the words over and over.

Existence # 1 from «Existence» series, 2008  
Serigraphy, 70 x 72.5 cm  
Edition 5 of 5  
Courtesy of the artist

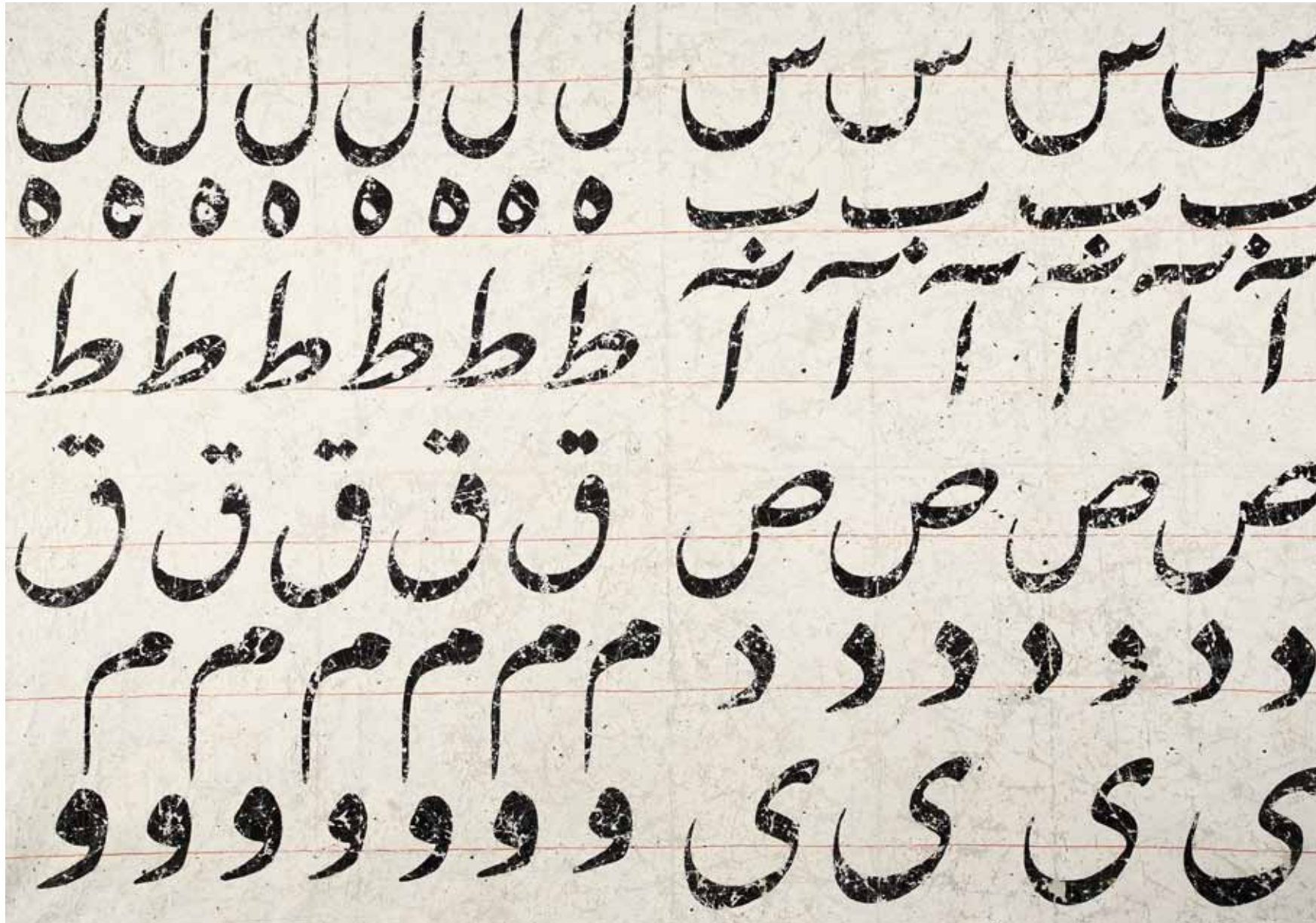


"In Saudi, the old and traditional beliefs collapsed. I denied my existing values. I went through an inner turmoil but I still learned from what had been imposed on me and from old traditional teachings, whether [they were] religious, cultural, social or political... I assimilated all these ideas and then I tried to destroy them. From this turmoil I experienced a big dilemma that gave birth to many experiments in my art, my rejection, my obedience, my religion...everything that surrounds me. All this influenced what I call 'the change.'

I am searching, like so many of my generation in Saudi, for ideas, for music, for poetry – for a glimpse of a different kind of life... This story says a lot about my life and my art. I catch art from the story of my life... I don't know any other way.

The Illumination series has been one of my most recognisable to date. They demonstrate how I have juxtaposed my life in the objective world of modern medicine with my subjective world of faith and spirituality. Often using DNA codes embedded into traditional Quranic manuscripts I want my works to illuminate and give light."

*Farhad Moshiri*



Recognized as one of the leading contemporary artists of his generation, Moshiri shot to fame with his jar series, followed by a series of highly textured works incorporating both calligraphy and numerical abjad; an ancient Arabic clerical code, correlating letters and numerals. Moshiri's early works rarely appear on the open market, which makes this work very special.

Untitled, 2001  
Mixed media on canvas, 180 x 260 cm

*Katya Traboulsi*

“Today’s world is made of leaders and followers... everything navigates around this behavior, a sort of satire for Mankind. It is a game of manipulation, of war, power and ego from one end while the masses follow with hope, devotion and blind belief. And we keep on falling into this repetitive history that goes back to our creation.”



Babel, 2010  
Acrylic on Canvas, 170 x 170 cm  
Courtesy of the artist

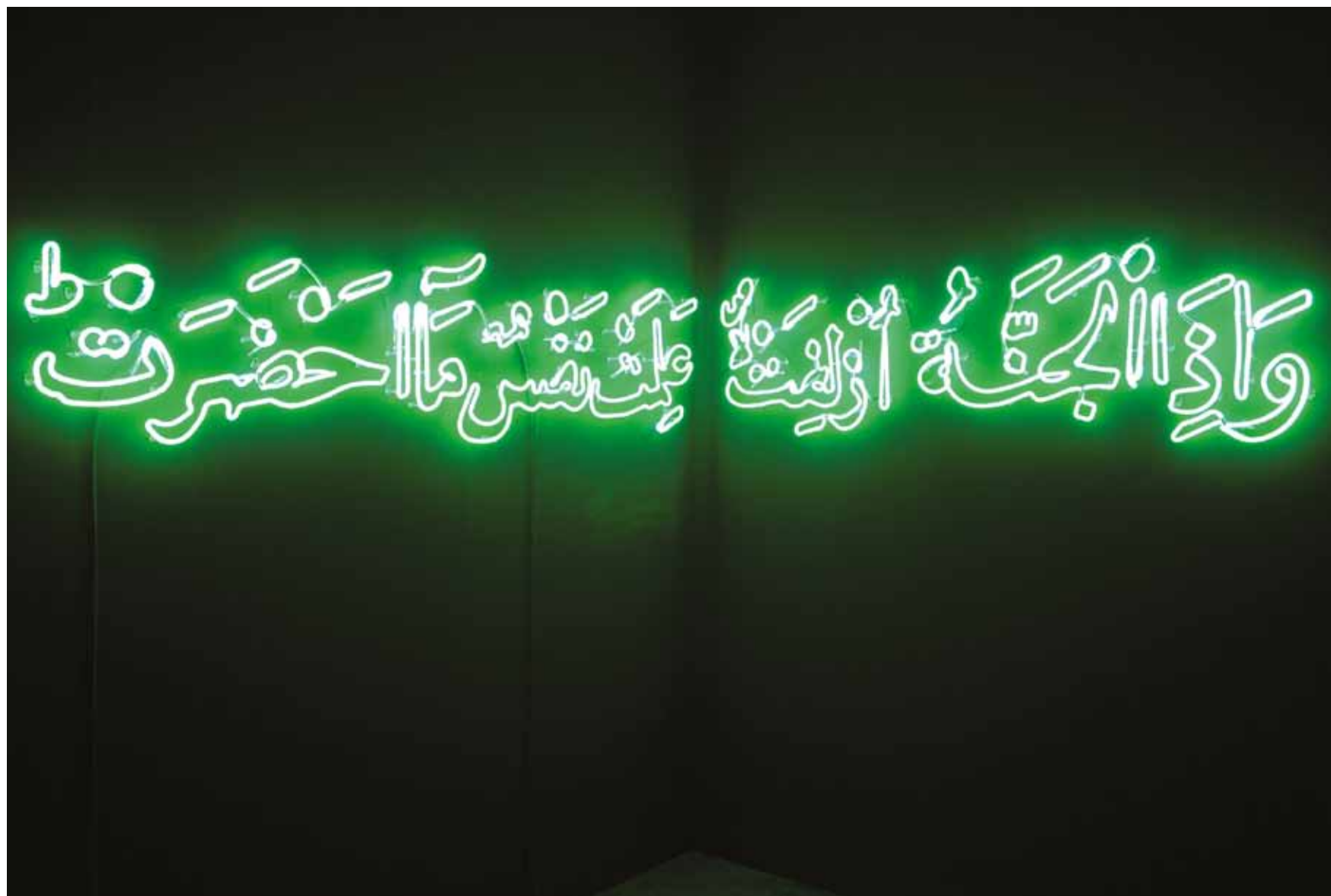
## Shezad Dawood

The Garden is another major wall-based neon work by Shezad Dawood, which follows on from *Until The End of the World* (2008), a major neon work that is part of the permanent collection in Doha's Mathaf Museum. The Garden comprises of a quotation from the Qu'ran, articulated in green neon, that reads, in English, "And when the Garden is brought near, every self shall know what it has brought with it."

In Arabic the word Jannah means both 'garden' and 'paradise,' a dual meaning key to the phrase and the interpretation of *The Garden*.

As Shezad explains, "My understanding of the phrase is that when the kingdom of God is nigh, we will see what state of grace or understanding of the divine plan we have attained. The phrase then turns on this beautiful idea of the garden, not as a physical manifestation, but as a point in conscious awareness that represents the fulfillment of the promise of heaven. As such it was my idea to represent it on black, using green to point to an idea of the garden emerging from the darkness of the unformed. As with the installation of *'Until The End of the World,'* where I separated sequential lines of the Qu'ran by having them in different colors, here I use the device of the corner to emphasize the linguistic potential of the phrasing, and to point to the deep truth contained in the phrase."

Simultaneously, as with all of Dawood's work, the work points in many directions, consciously drawing on the tradition of text based conceptual employed by the likes of Lawrence Weiner and Bruce Nauman.



The Garden, 2010  
Green neon, dimensions variable  
Courtesy of the Artist and Paradise Row

## Fereydoun Ave



Fereydoun's aesthetic is a fusion of the ancient and modern, of East and West, of comic strip and myth. His figures are tangled to each other with an effort to survive and prove, accompanied by an erotic isolation.

He creates his Persian miniatures by using contemporary Iranian wrestlers in the round, reminiscent of the pre-Islamic wrestling hero Rostam, a character drawn from the Persian poet Ferdosi's epic 'Shahmaneh- Book of Kings,' and the worn out murals, made poetic by the shadowy lights, watercolor and motion. Fereydoun alters every scene into an archetypal image.

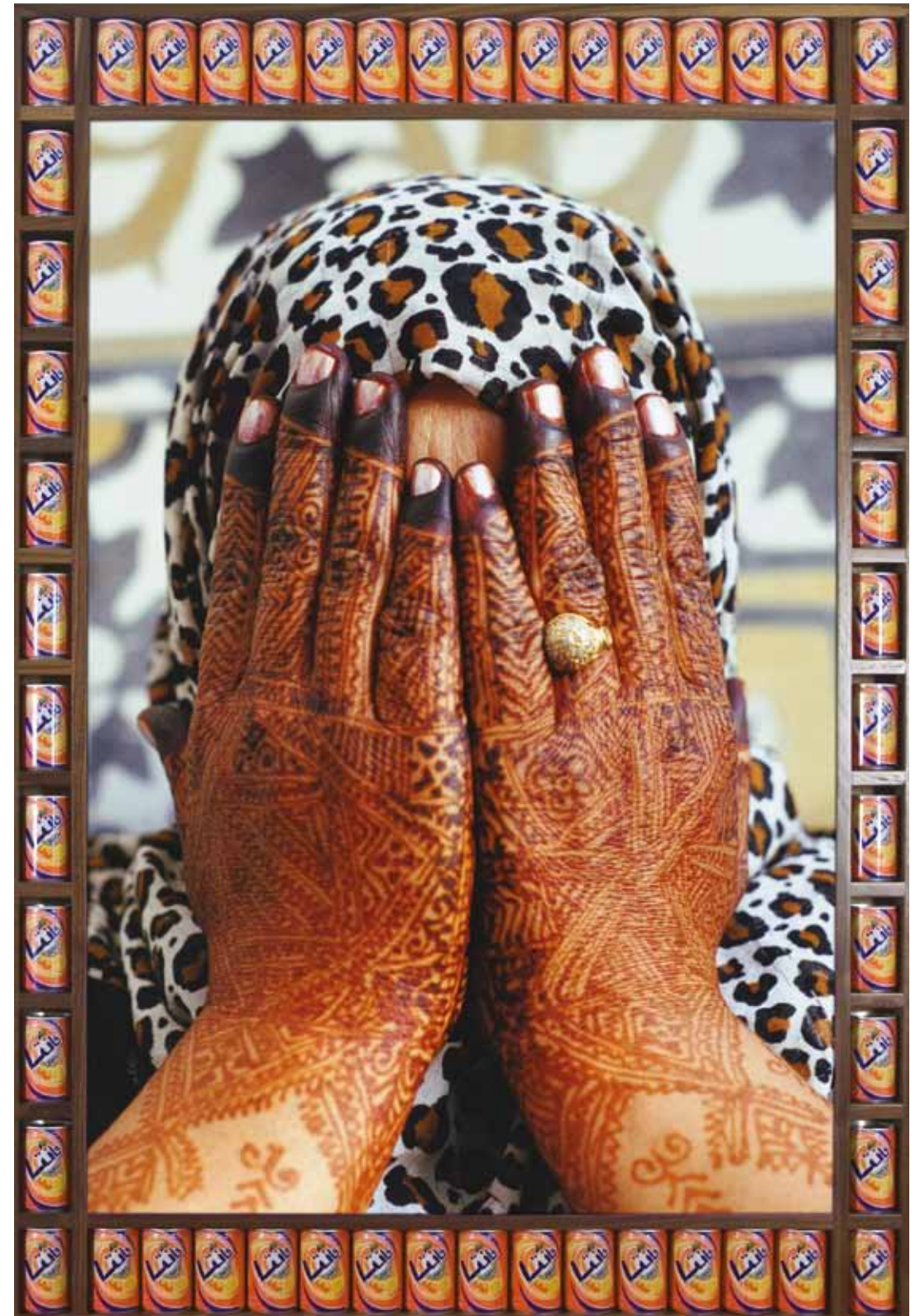
In the artist's words: "With Rostam, known as the 'champion of champions' in Iran, I am trying to locate the position of masculinity in the Iranian cultural context... I am doing research on the macho-mystic, exploring the mystical side to chivalry in Iranian culture. From my perspective, machismo has negative connotations; however, the mystic is much more positive. I am interested in examining the trials and tribulations of Rostam to uncover a certain code of conduct."

Rostam and Sohrab, 2000  
Mixed media, 43.5 x 51 cm  
Courtesy of the artist

## Hassan Hajjaj

From the Fez to the camel, Hassan Hajjaj takes on the European stereotypes of the North African world and turns them into a visual celebration... the concepts he employs are seductively witty and playful while having a serious edge. Clearly a child of the pop art generation - his working methods encompass so many techniques and fields - he engages personally and intensively in the time consuming process of designing and producing furniture (tables, lamps, stools, poufs), clothes (from customised patrol attendant overalls to babouches, from funky-ed djellabahs to hats), photography (the youth of the medina a never ending source of inspiration, as well as photo-reportages commissioned by several magazines), interior design incidentally dubbed «Marrakithch» by the French press (Mourad Mazouz - of the Sketch fame - Parisian bar aptly named «Andy Wahloo») and, last but not least, painting and printed canvas (always in a limited numbered edition). The concept remains the same, only the medium changes. All is expertly crafted and dishes out plenty of colorful humor.

Les mains, 2000  
C-Print, Walnut wood frame, and found objects,  
136 x 93.5 cm  
Courtesy of the Artist and The Third Line



## Shirin Fakhim



Shirin Fakhim's *Tehran Prostitutes* uses absurd and sympathetic humor to address issues surrounding the Persian working-girl circuit. In 2002 it was estimated that there were 100,000 prostitutes working in Tehran, despite Iran's international reputation as a moralistic country with especially high standards placed on women. Many of these women are driven to prostitution because of abusive domestic situations and the poverty incurred from the massive loss of men during the war; in response to Iran's strict religious laws, some even consider the profession as an act of civil protest.

Fakhim's sculptures play on the duplicitous perceptions of streetwalkers, highlighting the hypocrisy surrounding the sex industry. Made from found materials, her assemblages are grotesque configurations, exaggerating rough-trade stereotypes of wig-wearing, melon-chested slappers contortedly stuffed into ill-fitting lingerie (in reality Tehran vice-girls wear hijabs and are identifiable through more covert and subtle signals). Fakhim farcically combines westernized hooker fashion with the codes of Islamic demur, torsos and heads made from cooking implements, adorned with makeshift veils and chastity belts... Approaching sculpture as an intrinsically tactile activity, Fakhim chooses her materials with a playful sensitivity. Crafted from the female stuff of fabric, clothing, and kitchen apparatus, her sculptures temper benign domesticity with a bawdy coarseness, creating a vaudevillian humor from over-stretched stockings, sickly green terrine masks, and exaggeratedly padded brassieres. Hardy practical tools such as stoves and pots create a physical contrast to the fussy adornments of lace and garters, creating an image of sexual prowess that's conspicuously ill fitting, painful, and tragic.

*Prostitute in Love*, 2011  
Mixed media assemblage, 100 x 40 x 50 cm  
Courtesy of the artist

*Fareed Abdal*

Fareed Abdal's compositions are a form of meditation, expressed in brushstrokes and articulated in ink, encompassing calligraphy, poetry and martial arts. Inscribed 'peace, a saying from a compassionate lord,' this work is rare in that it is a departure from the artist's more identifiable style.

Salam, 2010  
Ink on paper, 59 x 41 cm  
Courtesy of the artist



**Shahzad Changelvae** was born in 1983 in Tehran, where she lives and works. In 2006, she received her BA in graphic design from Tehran University where she was a student of famed professor of typography, Reza Abedini. Since 2007 she has participated in various group exhibitions in Iran, Europe, Canada, the United States and Russia. She was also featured in JAMM's contemporary art auction in Kuwait in 2011. Changelvae was nominated for the Magic of Persia Contemporary Art Prize (MoP CAP) in 2009 and became the 1st place winner of MoP CAP in 2011 for her series, 'Body Composition Remaining Within Limited Domain,' which is featured in this exhibition. Her works are featured in a number of private collections, including the Barjeel collection (Sheikh Sultan Al Qassemi).

Born in 1979 in Mashad, Iran, **Iman Raad** moved to Tehran in 2004 and established his own studio. Since 1995, he has worked as an art director and graphic designer for various magazines. In university, he collaborated with different student journals and won a number of prizes in various student competitions and festivals. Thereafter, he has participated in various exhibitions, won awards and published his works in various journals, catalogs and books in Iran and abroad. He is a member of Iranian Graphic Designers Society. In 2005, he participated in the Iran Pavilion at the 51st Venice Biennale. Raad is now carrying out in depth studies in Persian traditional art and culture. His work is featured in the collections of Farbod Dowlatshahi, Rami Farook and Ramin Salsali.

**Amira Behbehani** was born in Kuwait in 1964. Her works, inspired by Krishnamurthy, Eastern philosophy, Omar Khayyam and Rumi, speak in a vocabulary of intimate emotions, exploring why we cling to our dreams, ideas, memories and thoughts. Her paintings have been exhibited in Paris, Istanbul and across the Gulf. Notable solo shows include the courtyard gallery, Bahrain, Al Waqif, Qatar, and the Sultan Gallery, Kuwait. Her paintings were also featured in JAMM's contemporary art auction in Kuwait in both 2010 and 2011. She lives and works in Kuwait.

**Parviz Tanavoli**, born in 1937 in Tehran, is the pioneer of modern sculpture in Iran. His art career began in the early 1950's and continues to the present. In 1956 he graduated from the Tehran School of Arts. Crucial to understanding Tanavoli's achievements is the realization that he has explored, analyzed and absorbed the rich visual, literary and crafts traditions of Iran. It is virtually impossible to separate his work as an artist from his passionate engagement as a researcher, teacher, collector and author. His work is featured in the collections of The British Museum (London), Museum of Modern Art (New York), the Nelson Rockefeller Collection (New York), Olympic Park, Seoul (South Korea), the Royal Museum of Jordan, the Museum of Modern Art in Vienna (Austria), the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis (USA) and Shiraz University (Iran). Other editions of the silkscreen that is featured in this exhibition is also featured in the Tate Modern Collection in London (UK) and the collection of New York University (USA).

**Nargess Hashemi** was born in 1979 in Tehran. She holds a B.A in Fine Arts from the University of Tehran. Since 2001 she has participated in various group exhibitions in Iran, Europe and the United States. Her most recent solo shows include, Wrap Me Up In You, at the La. B.A.N.K gallery in Paris, France (2010) and Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde (former B21 gallery) in Dubai (2010). Reflections on her traditional family life, her upbringing and instances from her childhood are themes often found in her work. She lives and works in Tehran

**Susan Hefuna** was born in 1962 in Germany and now divides her time between Egypt and Germany. She takes up everyday aspects of life in her work, exploring the indeterminacy of location, identity and negotiation of her own identity through photography, video, drawing, sculpture, and digital media. She won the International Award at the 1998 Cairo Biennial. Hefuna has exhibited her work internationally in numerous solo and group exhibitions including the Sharjah Biennial, 2007, Contrepoint, The Louvre, Paris; DisORIENTATION, Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; and Navigation Xcultural, The National Gallery, Cape Town, South Africa. Her works are featured in a number of private and public collections, including the British Museum, London (UK), Burger Collection, Zurich (Switzerland), HH Sheikhha Salama, Abu Dhabi (UAE) and at the DIFC, Dubai (UAE).

Born in 1944 in Rasht, Iran, **Farideh Lashai** has been painting since the 1960s. She holds a BA in German Literature from the University of Frankfurt, Germany and a BA in Glass Design from the Academy of Decorative Arts in Vienna, Austria. She has exhibited her painting and installation works internationally with notable solo shows in Tehran, Dubai and London. Her paintings were also featured in JAMM's contemporary art auction in Kuwait in both 2010 and 2011. Her work can be found in major private and public collections such as the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Iran; Demenga Public Collection, Basel, Switzerland; Deutsche Bank and Commerz Bank in Germany; Christie's collection in New York and National Museum of Fine Arts, La Valetta.

Born in Tehran, Iran, in 1979, **Yashar Samimi Mofakham's** works have been exhibited in the UK, Denmark, Australia, Armenia, Italy and the United States. Notable solo exhibitions include the Haft Samar Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran (2007), Naregatsi Art Institute, Yerevan, Armenia (2009) and 66 Gallery, Tehran, Iran (2010). His works are featured in a number of collections, including the Museum of Contemporary Art, Isfahan, Iran, the Naestved Municipal County's collection, Denmark and the Engraving Museum of Acqui Terme, Italy. Mofakham lives and works in Iran.

Born into a traditional Aseeri family in 1979, **Ahmed Mater** grew up far from the urban centres of Saudi Arabia. At the age of 18, he became a founding member of the influential Al-Miftaha Arts Village in Abha, while simultaneously studying medicine. Mater is the co-founder of Edge of Arabia and one of the Arab world's leading young artists. Mater's work has been exhibited internationally and is featured in the collections of the British Museum and Los Angeles County Museum of Art. He is informed by his education and life as a medical doctor, as well as by his traditional upbringing in Saudi Arabia. He was also featured in JAMM's contemporary art auction in Kuwait in 2011. His works, which encompass photography, calligraphy, painting, installation, performance and video, explores the narratives and aesthetics of Islamic culture in an era of globalization, consumerism and transformation.

Born in 1963 in Shiraz, Iran, **Farhad Moshiri** currently lives and works in Tehran. He graduated from the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) in Valencia, Spain, where he studied art and filmmaking. Since 1989, he had participated in over 30 group exhibitions around the world and in the last decade, he has had 18 solo shows. His most recent solo exhibitions include Silly you, Silly me, Galerie Emmanuel Perrotin, Paris (2009); Galerie Thaddæus Ropac, Salzburg, Austria (2010); and The Third Line Gallery, Dubai, UAE (2011). Moshiri first rose to international acclaim with his jar series, followed by a series of highly textured works incorporating both calligraphy and numerical abjad; an ancient Arabic clerical code, correlating letters and numerals. Moshiri has since been constantly pushing his materials, using cake icing dispensers, Swarovski crystals, and knives to make paintings that incorporate increasingly textured and sculptural approaches. But it is not Moshiri's technique that has earned him the attention that he currently benefits from; rather, it is his mastery of Iranian visual vernacular, as well as his acute awareness of popular culture and art history.

**Katya Troubsi** was born in Beirut, Lebanon in 1960. She studied Interior Design at the Michelangelo Art Institute and had her first exhibition in Beirut in 1986. Since 1990, she lives and works in Dubai, UAE, where has exhibited her figurative and abstract artworks: the Majliss Gallery (1991,1993), at the Epreuve d'Artist Gallery (1993, 1995), at Green Art Gallery (1996, 1999 and 2004) and at the Basement Gallery (2009). Other Solo exhibitions include Vivendy Gallery in Paris and MH Gallery in NYC. Troubsi's work was also exhibited at various notable shows around the world including in ARTUEL in Beirut in 1998, at Art in Dubai in Mina al Salam (2003), at the "Art & Development" exhibition at La Rochefoucault, France in 2004, during the "Art & Design" exhibition in NYC in 2005, during "Espomigos" at Puebla Museum in Mexico in 2007, L'Art au Feminin" at the Algiers Modern Art Museum, and most recently at Art Dubai (2010) and at KATZEN art center, AU Museum, Washington.

Born in 1974, **Shezad Dawood** was raised in London where he currently lives and works. His multi-media works are inspired by his mixed cultural heritage- his mother is from Pakistan, his father from India and his stepmother from Ireland. He is interested in the variety within different forms of art and the systems which society uses to judge their value. Dawood received his BA in Critical Fine Art Practice from Central St. Martin's College of Art & Design, an MA from the Royal College of Art in 2000 and an MPhil from the same institution in Fine Art Photography. Dawood's solo exhibitions include The End of Civilization, Axel Lapp Projects, Berlin, 2007; If I Should Fall From Grace With God, Paradise Row, London, 2007; Until the End of the World, Third Line, Dubai, 2008; Journey to the End of the Night, Riccardo Crespi gallery, Milan, 2008; MONTANA, Gabriel Rolt Gallery, Amsterdam (2008); I Knew I Should Have Taken That Turn in Albuquerque, Washington Garcia, Glasgow, 2009; and Intensive Surfaces, Aarhus Kunstbygning, Denmark, 2010. Dawood's work was also featured in JAMM's exhibition in London, Neither Here nor There: Reflections on Cultural Hybridity and the Third Space, 2010.

**Fereydoun Ave** is one of the major players in the Iranian art scene in Tehran. Besides being an avid collector and artist he owns one of the most important underground art galleries that has been responsible for launching the careers of many artists. Born in 1945 in Tehran, Fereydoun graduated from the film school at NYU in 1970. From 1970-1980, he was the Artistic Director at the Zand Gallery in Tehran and the Hayden-Zand Gallery in Washington DC. For over 30 years, from 1984-2004, he was the Artistic Director of the 13 Vanak Street Gallery in Tehran. As an artist, Fereydoun's career spans 40 years. Between 1970-1990, he had multiple solo shows in Iran, France and Greece and participated in numerous group exhibitions across the world. In recent years, notable solo shows include Hervé Van der Straeten Gallery, Paris, France; Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran, Iran; XVA Gallery and the progressive B21 gallery (now IVDE gallery) in Dubai, UAE. Fereydoun's works are in a number of prestigious collections, including the Cy Twombly Foundation (USA), Centre Georges Pompidou (France) and Lloyd Bank (Switzerland). The artist lives and works in Tehran and Paris.

Born in 1961 in Larache, in northern Morocco, **Hassan Hajjaj** now divides his time between London and Marrakech. Spotted by art critic Rose Issa in 2006, he has taken part in numerous exhibitions in Morocco, England, Mali and the Middle East. In 2009 he was a finalist in the Victoria & Albert Museum's Jameel Prize for Islamic art. He grew up in Morocco and went on to discover London and its dazzling art scene. He worked there as a music promoter and music video producer, designed a line of fashion accessories and opened RAP, a ready-to-wear boutique that became a fashion hub in the 1980s. In the 2000s he drew on all this experience to create installations and decors full of his fascination with the flamboyant, organised chaos of Arab souks, as well as consumer goods, popular imagery and American Pop Art... during the same period he came up with photographic series that betray an admiration for Samuel Fosso, Malik Sidibé and David La Chapelle... kitschy and highly coloured, subversive and outlandish, Hajjaj's images address issues about the way East and West see each other, and about the cultural exchanges between them.

Born in 1979 in Tehran, Iran, **Shirin Fakhim** is a rising star in contemporary Iranian art scene. In 2009, her works were featured in the Women International Biennale in Rome, Italy; a group exhibition entitled Iran Inside Out at the Chelsea Art Museum in New York; and Saatchi's breakthrough exhibition, Unveiled: New Art from the Middle East at the Saatchi gallery in London. Her works have subsequently been shown at the IVDE gallery in Dubai, The Silk Road in Lille, France and at Art Dubai, 2010. In 2011, Fakhim had a solo show at the LTMH gallery in New York. Her works are featured in the collection of Charles Saatchi (UK), Thadeus Ropac (France) and the Devi Art Foundation (India). She lives and works in Iran.

**Fareed Abdal** was born in Kuwait in 1957; he is a calligraphic artist whose distinctive, experimental work seeks to reconstruct the way the Arabic letter is perceived, cultivating a previously unseen compositional method involving the use of bold brush with a vertical format. He has long been a part of the Architecture Department Faculty at Kuwait University. In 2000, Abdal moved to calligraphy as an art form. His first solo calligraphy exhibition was held in 2001 in San Juan, Puerto Rico in an exhibition entitled Sacred Hearts. In 2003 the same exhibition was held in Kuwait. Abdal then exhibited his calligraphy work twice in Kuwait and at the Arabesque Festival in Washington D.C. in February 2009. His works were also featured in JAMM's contemporary art auction in Kuwait in both 2010 and 2011.

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