

FOLIA

« Three Iranian stories »

With the works of

Babak Kazemi, Morvarid K and Mohsen Rastani

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Opening on Thursday September 13th from 6.30 p.m.



© Morvarid K, *The Thin Line*, 2016. Courtesy of the artist.

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"Three Iranian Stories" questions today's Iran through a series of dialogues and confrontations between the works of three contemporary photographers. Three views tell, through three different approaches, the history of a country with multiple and complex faces.

Today's Iran is the fruit of a thousand-years-old civilization, of ancestral traditions, but also of recent history: the Islamic revolution, the war with Iraq, the "Iranian green movement". Between periods of openness and censorship, the Iranian artists find thanks to the photographic medium a space of freedom and expression that passes essentially through metaphor and allegory. Photography becomes, like poetry, a way of subverting repression.

With "The Exit of Shirin and Farhad", Babak Kazemi offers a modern writing of one of the greatest classical texts of Persian culture, "Shirin and Farhad" by the poet Nezami Ganjavi (1175). Revisiting this patrimonial love story through photography is a roundabout way for the artist to evoke the current struggles of those who have to go into exile to find love and freedom.



© Babak Kazemi, *Exit of Shirin & Farhad*, 2012. Courtesy de la galerie Silk Road et de l'artiste.



© Morvarid K, *The Thin Line*, 2016. Courtesy of the artist.

Morvarid K's "The Thin Line" explores the boundaries that separate two worlds, two cultures, two imaginaries. The overlay of two photographs, one taken in Iran, the other somewhere else, brings about a third reality, that of men and women who, like the artist herself, are inhabited by different cultures. These images of a great poetry bring out the invisible, the absence, this missing part that goes through all identity quest.

For « Iranian families », Mohsen Rastani has been traveling the country since 1990 to collect these portraits of Iranian families. The white backdrop used by the photographer to pose his subjects is an essential element of his approach. These anonymous characters are erected in icons, the monumental composition of the work gives them a heroic, mythical grandeur.

Whether they touch the intimate or the collective, the works collected on the occasion of this exhibition are all imbued with a visual vision and a strong poetic charge. The Iranian culture has been anchored for millennia in poetry, which is expressed today in Iran through all the visual arts.



Mohsen Rastani

© Mohsen Rastani, *Iranian families*, 2012 . Courtesy Silk Road gallery and of the artist.

Biographies

Babek Kazemi is a self-taught photographer born in Ahvaz, Iran, in 1983. He lives and works in Tehran. In 2012, he received the "Magic of Persian" Contemporary Art Award from the Delfina Foundation in London.

Kazemi is particularly interested in the history of the province of Khuzestan where he grew up and in particular the impact of oil activity in the region.

His work has been featured in the collections of the Maraya Art Center, the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, the Tehran War Museum and Sharjah Sheikh's Private Collection in the United Arab Emirates.

Babak Kazemi is represented by the Silk Road Gallery in Tehran, directed by Anahita Ghabaian.

Morvarid K was born in 1982 in Tehran. For the past ten years, she has been developing a work that combines photography, visual arts and performance. She lives and works in several countries at once.

Shaped by her identity and her Iranian roots, Morvarid K anchors her artistic work in what she calls the "invisible borders", whether intended or imposed, intimate or collective, real or imaginary. Sensitive to human complexity, Morvarid K creates dialogues between opposing forces, a source of beauty and poetry. Each of his projects is a bridge that connects identities and cultures to each other.

His photographic works are enhanced by collages, overlays and sometimes inks and drawings. These are often unique pieces. Recently, Morvarid K has broadened his artistic horizons by exploring his favorite themes through performance and interdisciplinary collaboration with artists such as choreographers Sherwood Chen and Yuko Kaseki.

Mohsen Rastani was born in 1958 in Iran. He is a photojournalist, documentary filmmaker, professor and lecturer at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran.

Graduated in photography from the University of Tehran, Faculty of Fine Arts in 1987.

First prize of Tehran's 10th biennial photography for black and white, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art in 2005.

Several exhibitions in Iran and abroad, including the Iranian Cultural Center of Iran, "Iranian Cultural Week", 2011 New Year Visual Arts Festival, Quai Branly Museum, Paris, "165 Years of Iranian Photography", 2009 at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, "Silver Windows Exhibition", 2005 at Espace Electra, Paris, "Regards Persans", 2000

Mohsen Rastani is represented by the Silk Road Gallery in Tehran, directed by Anahita Ghabaian.

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Babak Kazemi

© Babak Kazemi, *Exit of Shirin & Farhad*, 2012. Courtesy Silk Road gallery and of the artist.



Morvarid K

© Morvarid K, *The Thin Line*, 2016. Courtesy of the artist.



Mohsen Rastani

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