

# Gohar Dashti

(Iranian, b. 1980)

From the series *Iran, Untitled*, 2013

Courtesy of Azita Bina and Robert Klein Gallery, Boston

Gohar Dashti explores fraught social and political issues through the carefully staged photographs of her series *Iran, Untitled*. By tightly clustering groups of people in the middle of a desert landscape, Dashti creates mysterious tableaux that suggest the isolation of specific populations within Iranian society. At the same time, she underscores the insularity of her select groups by providing one element that compositionally binds the people together, such as a couch or orange traffic cones. Dashti describes these images as haikus exploring the relationship between form and content. “It’s like objectifying a feeling; that is how an image reveals itself,” she explains. In this way, her work suggests the universal human need to bond with others, as well as the common urge to seek distance from the unfamiliar.





Gohar Dashti  
Iranian, born 1980

From the series *Iran Untitled*, 2013  
Inkjet print  
Courtesy of Azita Bina and Robert Klein  
Gallery, Boston



Gohar Dashti  
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# Ali & Ramyar

(Iranian, b. 1976, b. 1980)

*We Live in a Paradoxical Society*, 2010

Courtesy of Silk Road Gallery, Tehran

Ali Nadjian and Ramyar Manouchehrzadeh have worked collaboratively in the field of photography for many years. Their practice explores the cultural impact of the Iranian Revolution over nearly four decades and documents the rigid dualities of public and private life imposed on Iranians under the Islamic Republic. Their series, *We Live in a Paradoxical Society*, represents the strict divide between domestic and public spheres, the former marked by individual expression and the latter by necessary self-censorship. As the artists explain: “Home is considered a safe space to live in which we are free to think, dress and behave the way we want. On the contrary, there’s a life outside our homes full of fundamental and basic differences in which we are attacked for deviations, and pretensions are required in order to survive.”



Ali and Ramyar  
Iranian, born 1976/1980

From the series *We Live in a Paradoxical Society*, 2010  
Inkjet print  
Courtesy of Silk Road Gallery, Tehran



Ali and Ramyar  
Iranian, born 1976/1980

From the series, *We Live in a Paradoxical Society*, 2010  
Inkjet print  
Courtesy of Silk Road Gallery, Tehran

# Newsha Tavakolian

(Iranian, b. 1981)

*Look*, 2013

Courtesy of Thomas Erben Gallery, New York

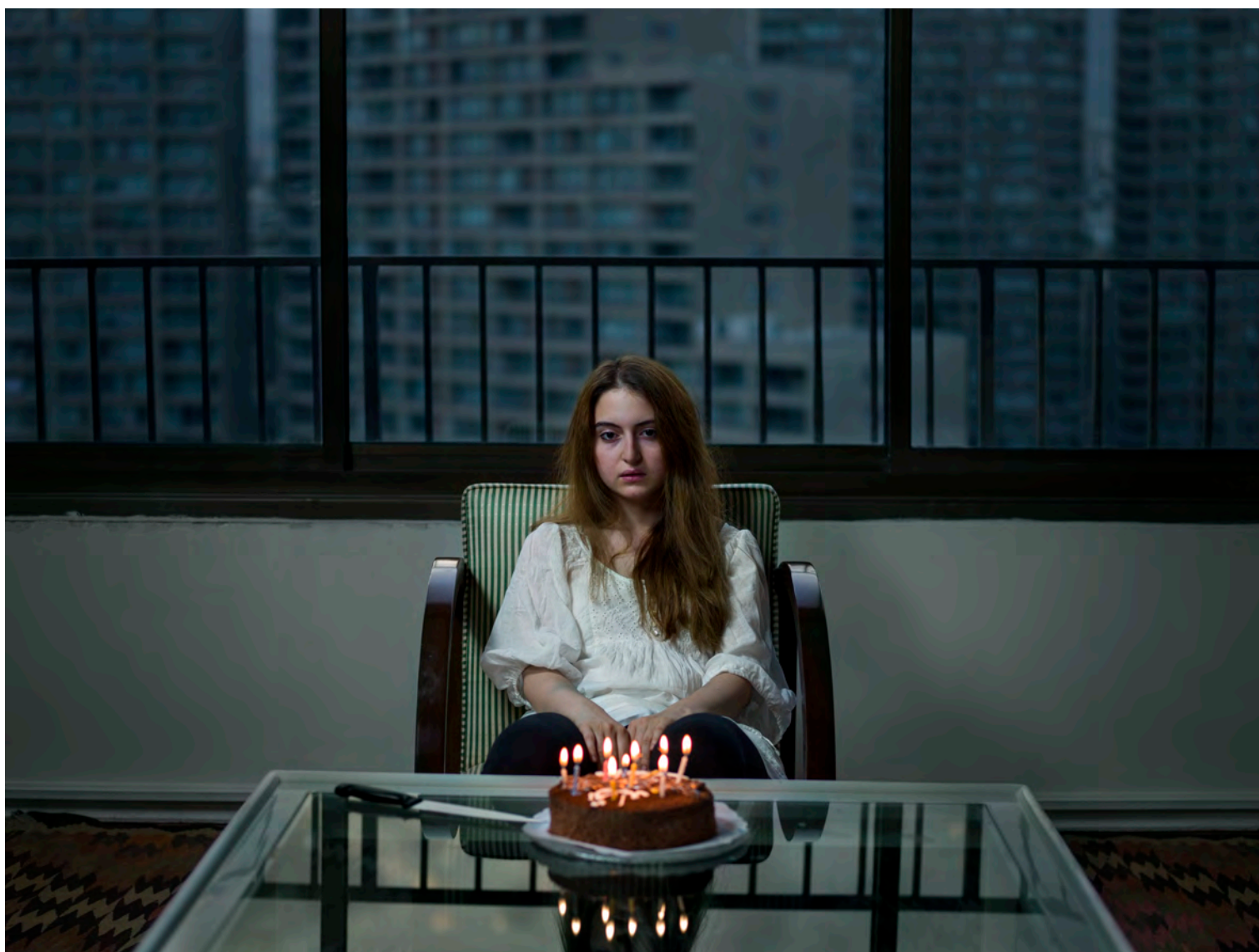
In her series, *Look*, Newsha Tavakolian delves into the unseen, private lives of Iranians. Peering into apartments in her building, she presents tenants who have lived within them for more than 10 years. These photographs tell the story of middle class youths attempting to cope with their isolation from a conformist society and battling with their lack of hope for the future. Over a period of six months, always at 8 p.m., Tavakolian fixed her camera on a tripod in front of a window and tried to capture the moments that best illustrated her subjects' anxieties and concerns. Her neighbors are caught within the frame of that window, their images echoing the cold, nondescript buildings seen in the distance.





Newsha Tavakolian  
Iranian, born 1980

From the series *Look*, 2013  
Inkjet print  
Courtesy of Thomas Erben Gallery, New York



Newsha Tavakolian  
Iranian, born 1980

From the series *Look*, 2013  
Inkjet print  
Courtesy of Thomas Erben Gallery, New York

# Shadi Ghadirian

(Iranian, b. 1974)

*Nil Nil*, 2008 and *White Square*, 2009

Courtesy of Silk Road Gallery, Tehran

Shadi Ghadirian's *Nil Nil* series addresses the symbolic presence of political ideology and war within the home. Transforming the domestic space with the addition of military objects, she reminds us that war has a silent but powerful presence in people's minds and innermost private lives. In *White Square*, Ghadirian has photographed objects of military use—a helmet, canteen, ammunition belt or grenade—that she decorates with a red silk ribbon. Recontextualized, these accessories of war become unfamiliar and appear at once menacing and delicate, their aggressiveness tempered by an element of the feminine.





Shadi Ghadirian  
Iranian, born 1974

*White Square #4*, 2009  
C-Print  
Courtesy of Silk Road Gallery, Tehran



Shadi Ghadirian  
Iranian, born 1974

*Nil, Nil #4*, 2008  
C-Print  
Courtesy of Silk Road Gallery, Tehran



# Babak Kazemi

(Iranian, b. 1983)

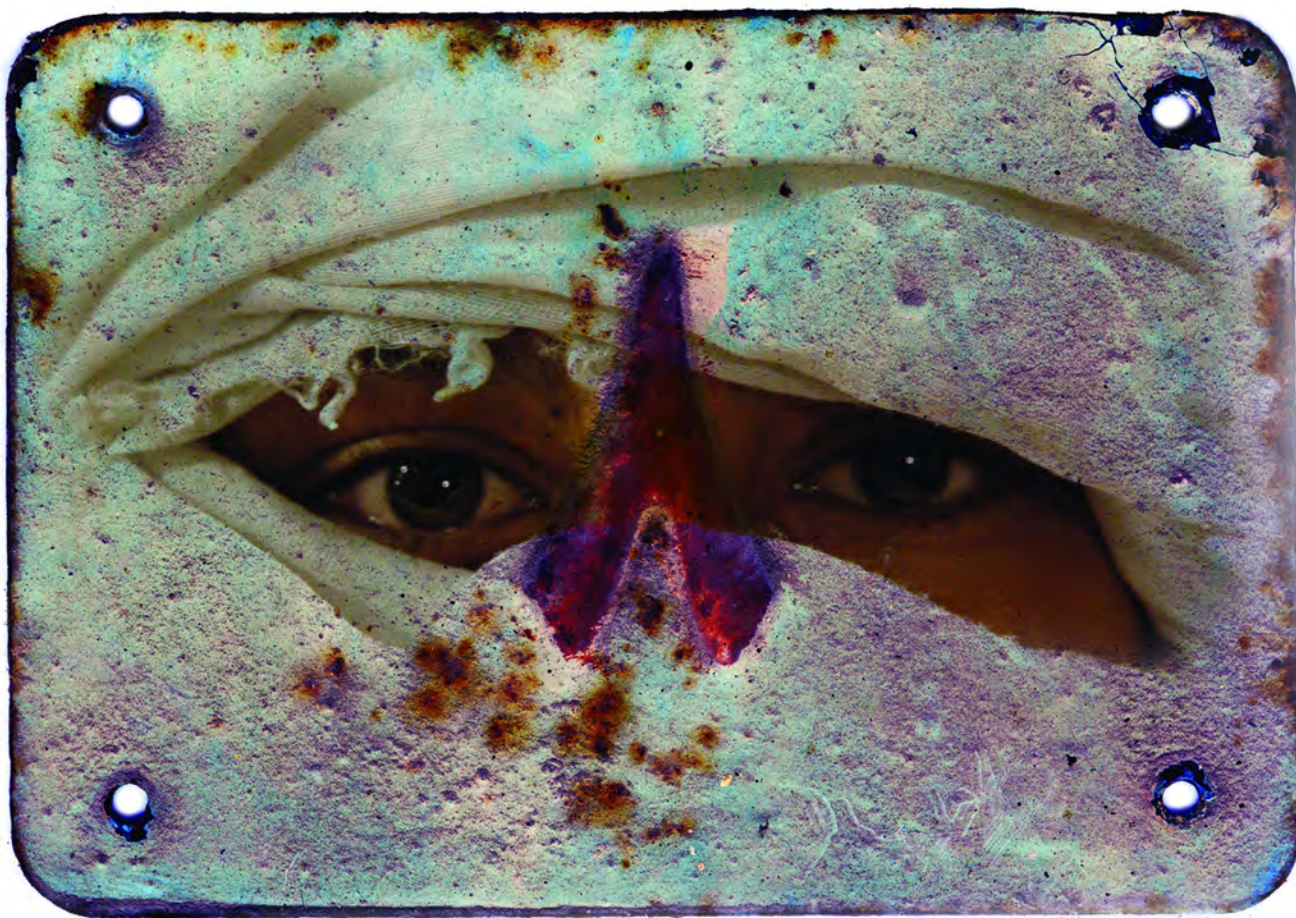
*Khorramshahr Number by Number*, 2006–2010

*Souvenir of a Friend and Neighbor Country*, 2006

Courtesy of Silk Road Gallery, Tehran

Combining markers of conflict and domesticity, Babak Kazemi offers a commentary on the Iran/Iraq War, the longest battle of the 20th century, and the second longest violent conflict after the Vietnam War. In *Khorramshahr Number by Number*, Kazemi superimposes photographs of local people and scenes onto house number plates from destroyed homes in the war-torn city of Khorramshahr, located on Iran's border with Iraq. Openly blaming the nearby oil fields for the political upheaval he witnessed, Kazemi prints his photographs in petroleum products. The works symbolize the 75,000 displaced residents of the city, bringing into view the human and financial costs of war. Kazemi's *Souvenir of a Friend and Neighbor Country* presents bullets from the conflict, which, photographed individually, take on a strange, chilling beauty as a memorial to Khorramshahr.





Babak Kazemi  
Iranian, born 1983

*Khorramshahr Number by Number*, 2006-2010  
Mixed media, collage, inkjet print  
Courtesy of Silk Road Gallery, Tehran



Babak Kazemi  
Iranian, born 1983

*Souvenir of a Friend and Neighbor Country*, 2006  
Mixed media, collage, inkjet print  
Courtesy of Silk Road Gallery, Tehran



# Abbas Kowsari

(Iranian, b. 1970)

*Shade of Earth* and *Light*

Courtesy of the artist

Concerned with the legacy of the Iran/Iraq War, Abbas Kowsari's *Shade of Earth* series documents the pilgrimage that hundreds of thousands of Iranians make to the border between the two countries during the New Year holidays. This journey, known as Rahian-e Noor, commemorates the millions of soldiers who died during eight years of trench warfare from 1980 to 1988. It is paired here with Kowsari's hopeful series *Light*. Inspired by the centrality of light in all major world religions, which serves as a universal metaphor for truth, knowledge and enlightenment, Kowsari photographs the green-hued illuminations of Islamic rituals. His radiant pictures reveal that a respect for religious traditions is very much alive in Iran, particularly in its old neighborhoods, towns and villages. He has taken many photographs over the years on two particular nights of Shiite celebrations, the night of Ashura and the birth of the Twelfth Imam, documenting the decorations, lamps, colored papers and festive installations made by the people in their communities.





Abbas Kowsari  
Iranian, born 1970

From the series *Light*, 2012  
C-print  
Courtesy of the artist



Abbas Kowsari  
Iranian, born 1970

From the series *Light*, 2012  
C-print  
Courtesy of the artist



# Azadeh Akhlaghi

(Iranian, b. 1978)

*By an Eye Witness*, 2012

Courtesy of the artist

In this project, Azadeh Akhlaghi creates images of past events for which photographs do not exist. Her process specifically comments on the many dramatic, tragic deaths that mark Iran's modern history. Pairing images with explanatory texts in both English and Farsi, each work is a thoughtful reconstruction of historical events based on a combination of archived information, news reports and conflicting accounts from witnesses. Assassinations, torture, accidents, suspicious and natural deaths are all represented in the series; each death—whether of a political activist, intellectual or journalist—marks a turning point in Iran's turbulent modern history, crossing political and factional lines, to which all Iranians can relate.





Azadeh Akhlaghi  
Iranian, born 1978

*Hamid Ashraf, 29 June 1976, from  
the series By an Eye Witness, 2012  
Digital print  
Courtesy of the artist*



Azadeh Akhlaghi  
Iranian, born 1978

*Mirzadeh Eshghi, 03 July 1924, from  
the series By an Eye Witness, 2012  
Digital print  
Courtesy of the artist*



# Sadegh Tirafrican

(Iranian, 1965–2013)

*Body Signs*, 2001 and *Body Curves*, 2003

Courtesy of The Tirafrican Foundation

Figurative images are a mainstay of Persian art, but rarely are they presented nude. Sadegh Tirafrican has long been inspired by the human form. In researching his projects, Tirafrican encountered ancient Iranian art depicting the naked bodies of the Secaha tribe and noble pre-Achaemenian kings, who painted their torsos and limbs with abstract and figurative forms. Observing the male role in traditional Iranian society from this historical standpoint, Tirafrican continues this rare practice, embellishing his body with decorative wood blocks using the Mohr technique, which stamps traditional patterns onto prints and fabrics. His two series presented here are an effort to unite the curvatures of the human body with Persian calligraphy and figurative images from ancient Persian art, which more freely depicts the nude.





Sadegh Tirafkan  
Iraqi, 1965-2013

From the series *Body Curves*, 2003  
Calligraphy on black and white print  
Courtesy of the Tirafkan Foundation



Sadegh Tirafkan  
Iraqi, 1965-2013

From the series *Body Curves*, 2003  
Calligraphy on black and white print  
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