



ARTFA

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The Works of Bahar Behbahani

By Amy Kisch

Amy Kisch currently works for Sotheby's auction house, where she has served in both the Marketing and Proposals Divisions. In addition, Ms. Kisch holds the role of Corporate and Community Liaison for the Williamsburg Gallery Association—after previously acting as its Executive Director—organizing and curating numerous art ventures, including collaborations with The Armory Show, Verge Art Fair, Brooklyn Tourism and Artlog. Ms. Kisch regularly counsels emerging galleries, artists and private and institutional art collectors regarding the intricacies of the fine art market, affording them with her extensive expertise on fine art marketing, arts programming and collection management. Ms. Kisch also serves on the Advisory Board of The Art Fund Association LLC and its charitable arm, Art Funds Give Back.

Born in Tehran, Iran, Bahar Behbahani is a multidisciplinary artist who lives and works in New York and Tehran. Ms. Behbahani received her Bachelor of Arts and Masters of Art in Painting in Tehran. Before graduating high school, she had witnessed a revolution, an eight-year war with Iraq, and her country in the midst of uncertainty, repression, hope and contradiction. These were—and are—the prevalent forces, which inform her perspective on life and creativity.

Ms. Behbahani's paintings hold an uncertain time continuum, with memories stored in the back of the mind, informing and bleeding through to the present. Her work is a place where one both loses and finds oneself.



Mahboob, Mixed media on canvas, 70 X 100 inches

By using multiple layers in her paintings, Ms. Behbahani is able to encapsulate personal and cultural perceptions as well as the objective realities of Iranian identity.



The Chronicle of Her Innocence, Mixed media on canvas, 70 X 100 inches

Bahar Behbahani's imagery is informed by, and seeks to reflect, the cognitive dissonance she experienced as a result of the conflicting messages of comforting familial attitudes and simultaneous cultural brutality. It is the ambiguity and tension between these two states of existence that she offers by balancing images of tenderness and violence with the accompanying invitation to the viewer to decide what is real.



From the "Anonymous Biographies" series, No. 112, Mixed media on canvas, 36 X 57 inches.

Based on the strength of her work, Ms. Behbahani continues to receive recognition and acclaim throughout the art world. She has had group and solo exhibitions of her paintings, photography, video art and installations in numerous locations throughout Europe, Asia and the United States. These venues include United Nations, Geneva; Asian Art Biennial, Bangladesh; Miramar Museum, Zagreb; National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C.; Queens Museum, New York; and Tribeca Film Festival, New York.

In 2007, Bahar Behbahani's video art, "Suspended", was selected 'Best in Show' by Carrie Springer, Senior Curatorial Assistant at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, and was shown as part of the 13th Annual International Exhibition of Women's Art in 2007. One of Ms. Behbahani's recent films, "Saffron Tea", 2008, premiered in the U.S. during Art Basel Miami Beach 2009. Her most recent film, "Ride the Caspian", is a collaborative project with Kazakhstani artist Almagul Menlibayeva and will premiere at the Sharjah Biennial in 2011 as a two-channel video. The film seeks to create a dialogue between the two artists' respective cultures and cultural heritages—both of their countries are located at the crossroads of the Middle East and Central Asia, and each is linked to the other by the Caspian Sea.

In 2009, Ms. Behbahani's paintings were shown alongside artists Judy Chicago and Faith Ringgold at the "Women Forward" exhibition at the Williamsburg Art & Historical Center. In her recent painting series, "My Fantezi (Broken Fantasy)" (2010 – 2011), Bahar Behbahani continues to incorporate Iranian elements more overtly, presenting them in a satiric tone.

For more information and images, please visit www.baharbehbahani.com.



From the "Anonymous Biographies" series, No. 142, Mixed media on canvas, 36 X 57 inches

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