

# BODY POLITICS

Curated by  
**Mania Akbari & AmirAli Ghasemi**

Assistant Curator  
Neda Mohamadi

Mehraneh Atashi  
Negar Behbahani  
Bahar Behbahani  
Nebras Hoveizavi  
Mona Kakanj  
Simin Keramati  
Shahrzad Malekian  
Bahar Noorizadeh  
Anahita Razmi  
Bahar Samadi  
Niloofar Taatizadeh  
Maryam Tafakory  
Jinoos Taghizadeh

14 . 09 . 19

**Whitechapel Gallery**

**Body Politics** brings together thirteen contemporary Iranian artist-filmmakers whose work explore notions of womanhood, female gaze, body-memory and body technology, informed by geographical and geopolitical conditions.

Curated by Mania Akbari and AmirAli Ghasemi, this program hopes to provide a counter narrative to the tired image of the Iranian female artist as seen not only in the mainstream media but also in the art world. Featuring work by Mehraneh Atashi, Negar Behbahani, Bahar Behbahani, Nebras Hoveizavi, Mona Kakanj, Simin Keramati, Shahrzad Malekian, Bahar Noorizadeh, Anahita Razmi, Bahar Samadi, Niloofar Taatizadeh, Jinoos Taghizadeh and Maryam Tafakory, this program is defined not by the films' location-specificity but a diversity of conceptual and experiential approaches in tackling the question of body as the site of politics.

A panel discussion with Mania Akbari, Minou Norouzi, Bahar Noorizadeh and Maryam Tafakory will follow the screenings.

**Mania Akbari** (b. Tehran, 1974) is an internationally acclaimed artist and filmmaker. Her provocative, revolutionary and radical films were recently the subject of retrospectives at the BFI, London (2013), the DFI, Denmark (2014), Oldenburg International Film Festival, Germany (2014), Cyprus Film Festival (2014) and Nottingham Contemporary UK (2018). Her films have screened at festivals around the world and have received numerous awards including German Independence Honorary Award, Oldenburg (2014), Best Film, Digital Section, Venice Film Festival (2004), Nantes Special Public Award Best Film (2007) and Best Director and Best film at Kerala Film Festival (2007), Best Film and Best Actress, Barcelona Film Festival (2007). Akbari was exiled from Iran and currently lives and works in London, a theme addressed in 'Life May Be' (2014), co-directed with Mark Cousins. This film was released at Karlovy Vary Film Festival and was nominated for Best Documentary at Edinburgh International Film Festival (2014) and Asia Pacific Film Festival (2014). Akbari's latest film 'A Moon For My Father', made in collaboration with British artist Douglas White, premiered at CPH:DOX where it won the NEW:VISION Award 2019. The film also received a FIPRESCI International Critics Award at the Flying Broom Festival, Ankara. She is currently working on a new project 'Libido' with her son Amin Maher.

**AmirAli Ghasemi** (b.1980, Iran) is a curator, media artist and a graphic designer based between Tehran & Berlin. He graduated in 2004 with a BA in graphic design from Central Tehran Azad University, with an emphasis on research in digital art history. In 1998, Ghasemi founded \*Parkingallery\*, an independent project space in Tehran and in 2002 he set up Parkingallery.com, an online platform for young Iranian artists. Ghasemi has shown his photographs, videos, design works in various festivals and exhibitions internationally. As a curator he has been directing many exhibitions, workshops, and talks for Parkingallery projects, such as \*Deep Depression (2004-06), Sideways (2008). He has co-curated The Urban Jealousy, 1st International Roaming Biennial of Tehran (2008-09) and seven editions of Limited Access Festival for Video and Performance (2007-17), followed by his involvement in a variety of projects for institutions, project spaces and universities in Germany, Netherlands, Serbia, UK, Egypt, Turkey, United States, Brazil, Canada, France, Sweden, and India. He was the guest curator for the CCBRUGGE in 2010 and along with his independently curated programs like "The invisible present"(Brazil,USA) which he guest-programmed a video art section for Rotterdam and Goteborg film festivals in Jan- Feb 2013. And the most recent programs like "Monument in flux" at w139, Amsterdam, "(un)broadcasted event" shown at the new Horizon Film Festival, Wroclaw and finally "detour to Tehran" in Vienna in Nov 2018. He is currently writing on the Tehran art scene and contemporary Iranian art for various magazines and on his own art-log. IRAN&CO is his ongoing curatorial project, an ongoing exhibition, and archive of Iranian art representation beyond its border. In summer 2014, Ghasemi co-funded New Media Society, a network-based research platform and library. He joined the Postgraduate M.A. Course "Art in Context" at the Berlin University of the Arts in 2015, and in 2017 left it unfinished to return to Iran and focus on his curatorial projects at New Media Society and Tamaas Foundation for Media Arts.



## Mehraneh Atashi

Born in 1980, Mehraneh is an Iranian artist living and working in Amsterdam. Since her BFA education in photography in Tehran, and her post-graduate education at the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam, she has developed a body of work consisting of assemblages, sculpture, photography and video. Shifting between conceptualism and materiality, imagery and iconography, her work explore the possibility of becoming within static systems as well as concepts of gaze. Her work has presented in solo and group exhibitions in, Reykjavic, Berlin, London, Paris, Salzburger, Graz, Losangels and Amsterdam.

### Rose Garden

The night was spent at the garden with a friend; such pleasant setting with tree branches meeting above, as if pieces of crystal and the cluster of pleiades were hanging from its vines. In the morning, when the thought of return exceeded the desire to stay, I saw my friend ready to leave for the city with a lapful of flowers, basil, and hyacinth. I said: "as you know, flowers do not last and unfulfilled are the promises of the garden. Men of wisdom advise against attachment to that which is ephemeral." "So, what is to be done?" asked my friend. I replied: "For the pleasure of observers and the delight of those present, I shall compose the gulistan ('The flower garden') whose pages the autumnal wind cannot rend and whose vernal bliss the passage of time cannot turn to the woes of winter."



Behind the Mirrors | 2014 | 18 min | Video

In *Behind the Mirrors*, the protagonist reflects displacement and alienation by contemplating contemporary culture and history stored in the landscape.

As author, subject, and observer of the past and present, Behbahani plays a poignant, yet elusive role in this poetic narrative. Describing the transition from passive to active resistance, *Behind the Mirrors* calls for establishing a sense of spectacle in both content and composition.

**Bahar Behbahani's** research-based practice, approaches landscape as a metaphor for politics and poetics. Born in Iran and based in New York City, her work has been featured in a solo exhibition, *Let the Garden Eram Flourish*, curated by Ugochukwu-Smooth Nzewi, at the Hood Museum of Art at Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire, USA. She has also exhibited in Thomas Erben Gallery in New York and the 11th Shanghai Biennale, China as well as in the 7th Moscow Biennale, Russia and Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center in Athens, Greece, and many others.

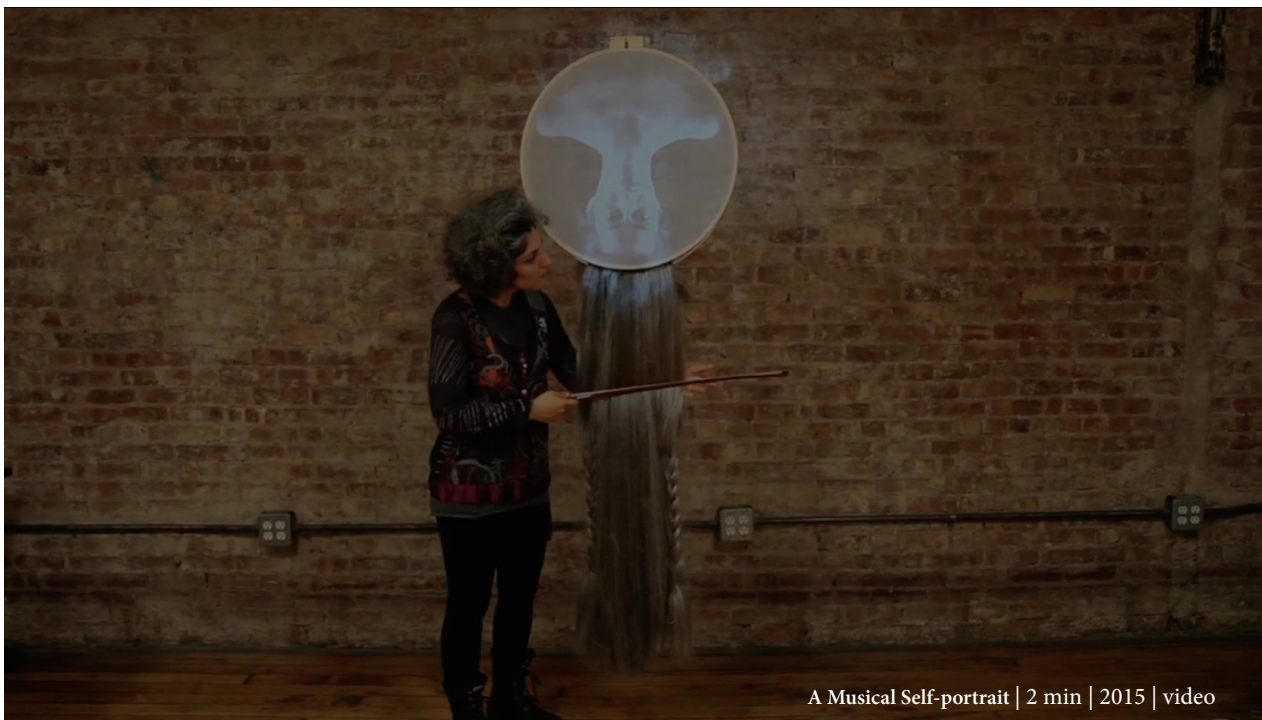
Behbahani has also been awarded a fellowship at the MacDowell Colony, NH; and Open Sessions fellowship at the Drawing Center, NY. She is a 2019 Creative Capital awardee.



*LifeStrand* is documenting my interactive sound installation of the same title.

This is a musical sculpture and self-portrait based on my nature, body, memory and background, told through the universal language of music. The instrument/sculpture's key features are the sound, the screen, and the hair, which mirrors the challenges I endured in life. My instrument connects with the intimate experience of touching my hair and playing a music which embodies my very intimate memories and dreams.

*LifeStrand* is for a general art audience and has been shown in different art spaces in New York.



## Negar Behbahani

Born in 1983 in Tehran, multidisciplinary artist, Negar Behbahani lives in Brooklyn, New York. She received her B.A. in Music in Tehran and MPS from New York University, Tisch School of Arts. Behbahani has exhibited videos and installations in locations including #6 Berlinale Talent Campus, Berlin, Germany; Women's Film and Media Arts Festival, the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C.; Women's Voices from the Muslim World, Los Angeles; DUMBO Arts Festival, New York; Here Arts Center, New York. Featured in Art in America, The Huffington Post, Jadaliyya, and Theater of One World. Behbahani also was part of the Global Groove, highlighting artists from the Far East, Middle East, Africa, and Europe at The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum.

## Sometime in January or Maybe June

Sometime in January, Nakhodka Mammad was singing his songs while smuggling fabrics. It was sometime in June when I was born out of fabrics made by a loom. Time and Place are in snooze mood, and the sleeping zone brought realistic form of talking about smuggling in Iran.

The zone that give Time opportunities to give us reference to our own history and current moments it's not working anymore; and the zone that place known as a border for itself its getting wide enough to lose the boundary and flow. If this video was able to not provide enough information about smuggling in Iran it's definitely reach the stage that was aiming for. It brought the sense of how much this subject it's complicated and vague to be described.

The reality keep getting sweep from the eyes and pass through the hands. The hand that now try to tell you manipulated story of smuggling. The question is how one could talk about smuggling and the economy of the country who had been deal with the sanctions more than decades? In not one way to describe it, but the stage of uncertainty could subjective it for each viewers? It doesn't prove anything, nor taking any side, it narrow it to one piece of moving poetry that was almost impossible without making Time and Place flowing in dream stage.



## Nebras Hoveizavi

Born in Ahavaz, and lived in United States since her 20s, Hoveizavi graduated from California Institute of the Arts with a B.F.A. in Photo-Media in May 2014, and got her M.F.A. from the same University in May 2016. With her background in photography, she started working with moving image as her medium along performance and installation.

Incorporating elements of photography, sculpture, architecture, and installation, her current work is more distances from a traditional photographer. Her art explores, issues of identity, culture, and dislocation among other things.

In 2012, Nebras joined Virtual Verite, a performance troupe established by renowned Los Angeles-based artist, Harry Gamboa Jr. She has been thought in Community Art Partnership in Valencia, California and photography and criticism in Tehran. Her works has been shown internationally and inside her home country, to name a few: Comfort Zone at Villa Kuriosum, Berlin, Limited Access Festival for video, sound and performance and the room parallel program at Fajr International film festival in Tehran. She currently divides her time between Middle East, and Southern California.



Elephant | 4 min | 2014 | 16mm video

*Elephant* reflects on inner and outer perceptual connections. In a low light situation accompanied by vague sound, three different actions in three different settings take place. As the camera pans over, flashes of light reveal the actions. By way of displacing signs *Elephant* frames an unusual viewpoint on the relationship of body, objects and their context. Furthermore, *Elephant* engages light and sound to create an uneasy vibe. Due to its special lighting techniques, *Elephant* originally was shot on 16mm film. This version has been scanned and digitalized for the screening purposes.

The experimental video 'Elephant' present a viewpoint on perception. It is about the things, which are not to be seen but to be perceived. Each scenery starts with a dark-pitched image and as the camera pans, flashes of light reveal the plot. Hence sound is a very distinctive part of the video, yet it can also be deceptive.

'Elephant' engages human body to unfold the story of each plot. Human body is exhibited in unfamiliar situations. By disturbing conventional relations between body, object and context the video aims to study effects of this disturbance on our perception. The physical body hence works with other visual elements to communicate certain emotions. 'Elephant' frames an inexpressible nature of a story, when there is deficit of information.

**Mona Kakanj** is an Iranian media artist based in Cologne. After receiving DAAD scholarship in 2007, she moved from Iran to Germany to continue her studies. She holds a MFA in painting from Alanus Academy, and a MA in media art from Academy Of Media Arts Cologne. In her works, Kakanj explores personal and public perception. By questioning and displacing conventional norms, she desires to evoke emotional reaction from viewers. Her projects largely consist of experimental movies, video installation as well as site specific public installations.

### *The space in between all the physical objects*

This work is about the cause of migration, when people must flee their homes due to war and hunger, and about the experience of being in a transitional, displaced state.

The images are all about the floating people in the middle of nowhere. Here I am trying to portrait the very last seconds of the life of a drowning body and that last breath that instead of the air breathes water. The middle image resembles the drawn corpse that eventually will be thrown to the shore by the waves and the sea. However you will find all these moments as a beautiful poetic dance with the sound of the waves.

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This video art is about the people fleeing war and hunger at their homeland, yet most of them drawn into the sea. Here in this video that is divided into three frames, you can see bodies floating in the middle of nowhere and then this one still body that resembles the corpse that the sea has brought to the shore. To me the floating bodies are showing the last moment of getting drawn into the water, the very last breath that is breathed and the moment that the lungs are fully filled with water instead of the air. This is the trauma that the body is physically engaged with. And the still body shows the after math of this trauma. Yet you see all of them happy, they all are keeping a smile on their lips and you can find their gestures as if they are getting relieved from this body trauma..., they are not afraid of anything anymore.

### **Simin Keramati**

A multidisciplinary Artist, Keramati was born in Tehran, Iran and is currently living and working in Toronto, Canada. She holds a Master's degree in fine arts from Art university of Tehran and was awarded the Grand Prize from Dhaka biennial 2003-4. Her work has been shown in more than 50 group and solo exhibitions internationally.

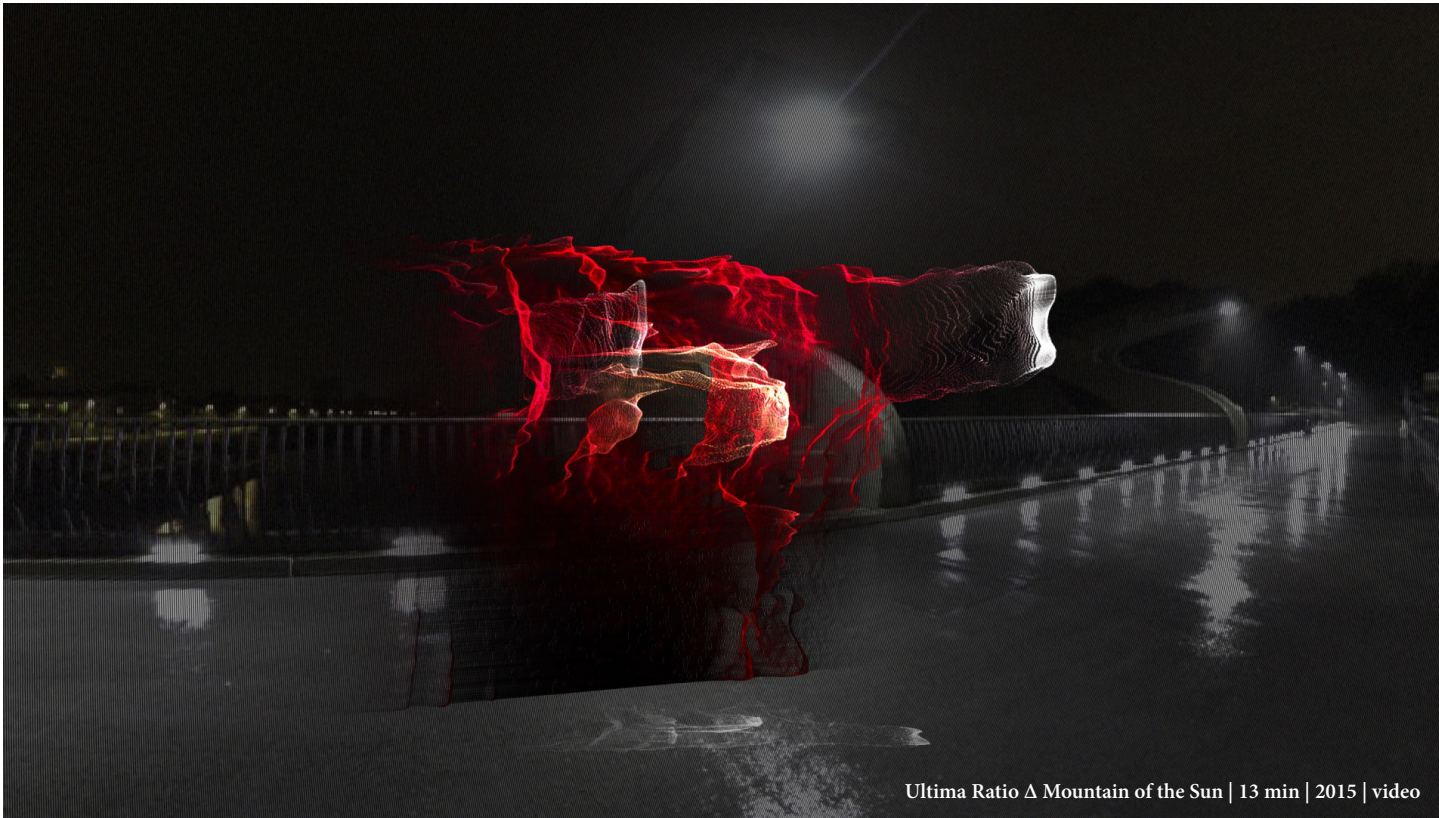




Boundless Game | 12 min | 2015 | video

*Boundless Game* on one hand is an experimental dance and on the other hand can be read as movement study and the interrelation of bodies, objects and space. An object designed to be worn by performers. This wearable piece, which marks the borderline between the private and public is used as a vehicle to create a new dynamic for bodies on the conversation. The two are bound together through this vehicle which in its turn creates a boundless situation. *Boundless Game* is an attempt to portray this potential aspect of relationships in a playful, curious and improvised way.

**Shahrzad Malekian** (1983/ Iran) is an interdisciplinary artist working with video, performance and sculpture. Shahrzad's works often embody contemporary human focusing on relations, power structure, and gender and transitions from private to public domain. Her work has been shown internationally in group exhibitions in Brazil, USA, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Finland and London. Her video piece was selected for International Film Festival Rotterdam and Göteborg International Film Festival in Jan 2013. She was finalist for MOP CAP 2015 prize. She lives and works in Oslo and Tehran.



Ultima Ratio Δ Mountain of the Sun | 13 min | 2015 | video

### *Ultima Ratio*

Cinema devolved into the slow-motion industry: spectacles repeat. *Ultima Ratio* speeds up by slowing down the image-fix. Traversing the crime-enriched Bekaa valley, the camera uncovers the age-old industries of hashish, models for altering what we see. So too, the camera follows futures, a flash-forwarded optic that seeks to perceive what can be seen anew, cut, particled into vivid fields of matter. "In hashish there is no likeness," only zero-sites for vision-production then, now as visual senses submitted to the rule of reason. The new reason, as this cinematic skin sees it, is not dead old technology, power and blood, not accelerated nothingness, hype and retro-fascism, but technology, each and every instance, as a talking with the dead--emotions, optics, hashish, radio transmitters, melo-dramas, fiber optic telecommunications, ideologies--and now, hashish as primitive technology, the Now as a science-fiction beyond the double binds, the bad infinities of u-/dys-topia. Instead, a tension-less state, a lack of anxiety over demarcating sapience from sentience, automation from human, intelligence farms from organic machines. They--these name voyagers of the ultimate reason--have no story, it has already happened, spirit became mainframe. Bodies metamorph into databanks. A cinema mixing 3-D objects and documentary footage views this state ahead of the state Δ the future returning as past--Mountain of the Sun.

## **Bahar Noorizadeh**

Bahar Noorizadeh is an artist, writer and filmmaker. She works on the re-formulation of hegemonic time narratives as they collapse in the face of speculation: philosophical, financial, legal, futural, etc. Her work has appeared in the Tate Modern Artists' Cinema Program; Berlinale Forum Expanded; Biennale of Moving Images, Geneva; Toronto International Film Festival; Barcelona Museum of Contemporary Art; Nanjing International Art Festival, Beirut Art Center, and Mercer Union, Toronto; among others. Noorizadeh is a founding member of BLOCC (Building Leverage over Creative Capitalism), a research and education platform that proposes pedagogy as strategy, to alter the relationship between Contemporary Art and the planetary phenomena of urban renewal and social cleansing. Her current research examines the intersections of finance, Contemporary Art and emerging technology, building on the notion of "Weird Economies" to precipitate a cross-disciplinary approach to economic futurism and post-financialization imaginaries. She is pursuing this work as a PhD candidate in Art Practice+Theory at Goldsmiths, University of London.



## Anahita Razmi

Anahita Razmi is a visual artist based in Berlin and London. She studied Media Arts and Sculpture at Bauhaus-

University Weimar, Pratt Institute New York and State Academy of Art and Design Stuttgart, prior to exhibiting widely internationally in institutions like Museo Jumex, Mexico City, Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Warsaw, Kunstraum Innsbruck, Austria, Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, Germany, Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, Germany, The National Art Center, Tokyo and within the 55th Venice Biennale.

Her videos, installations and performance works are using and mis-using contemporary parameters of import/export and trade and facilitate settings between a “West” and a “Middle East” in which the meanings of existing images, artifacts and thus identities are put into question. The Islamic Republic of Iran, with its current political and social conditions and relations, remains an open, ambivalent point of reference in her work. Razmi was the recipient of the Goethe at Lux Residency, London (2018), the Werkstattpreis of the Erich Hauser Foundation (2015), the MAK-Schindler Artists and Architects-in-Residence Program, Los Angeles (2013) and the The Emdash Award, Frieze Foundation, London (2011). Her work is included in several international collections like the Kunstmuseum Stuttgart, the Museo Novecento, Florence and the Davis Museum at Wellesley College, USA among others. Razmi is an Associate Lecturer in Fine Arts (4D Pathway) at Central Saint Martins, London. Her work is represented by Carbon12 Gallery, Dubai.

<https://www.anahitarazmi.de/>

*The video “How your Veil can help you in the Case of an Earthquake (Lesson 1-8)”* is linked to an event that took place just before the date of origin of the video: the big earthquake in the region of Bam, Iran in December 2003. In the video, the Islamic veil - in this case, a chador - is used as a functional object. Shot in high contrast black and white, the video shows a rigorous instruction in eight steps on how to use your veil as a lifesaver in the case of an earthquake: a dry run, that is reminding of stewardess instructions.



## Bahar Samadi

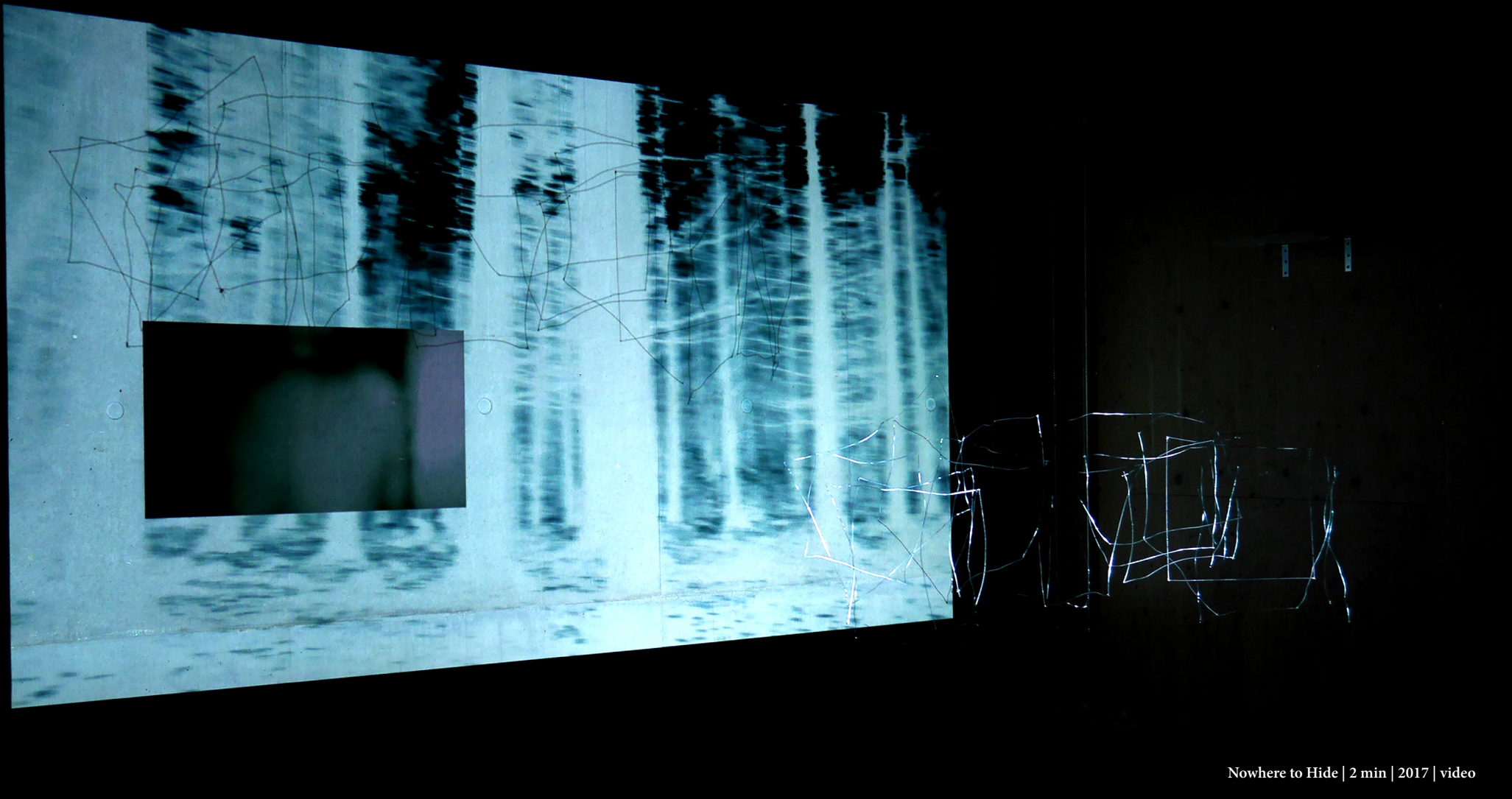
Bahar Samadi (b.1981, Tehran) is a Tehran - Paris based filmmaker and artist. She studied Architecture at the Art Faculty of Azad University - central Tehran, Iran and has graduated in Filmmaking from EICAR School in Paris, France in 2012. In her works, she primarily reaches for found footages and what she has in her archive, using structural techniques like cinematic omission and narrative form diversion to rewrite the pictorial memory. Her attempt to decode the probable life of images, embarks an imaginary journey between the author and the spectator. Since 2014, Navid Salajegheh and Bahar Samadi, have been working together and ran «Studio 51». [www.baharsamadi.com](http://www.baharsamadi.com)

### *Displacement*

A considerable amount of the material in my work is from other people's images and sound archives. Any/thing that can be filmed, re-filmed and filmed over and over, or scanned, re-recorded or downloaded, can become a part of the process. These diverse images are gathered from amateur 8mm films I have found, downloaded videos from cyberspace, or forgotten files on a hard disk. Any camera or imaging device can be incorporated in to my work. There is no limit. It is only through the montage process that the work begins, finds form, and comes to an end. There is no predefined structure or script. The images as they are—or independent from their content which may be nonrepresentational—create the context of their own appearance. Either they impose the necessity of their own repetition, or leave their traces in other arrangements. This repetition transforms an ordinary image to something mysterious. Images are in dialogue with each other and at the same time compete for becoming dominant. One image invites another, passes through it and returns to it, finds its own other, either in resemblance or at variance; introduces it, possesses it, lets go of it, or is replaced by it. A row of windmills.

Images are the main characters here. The image of a tree is not a tree, but an image in which there is a tree.

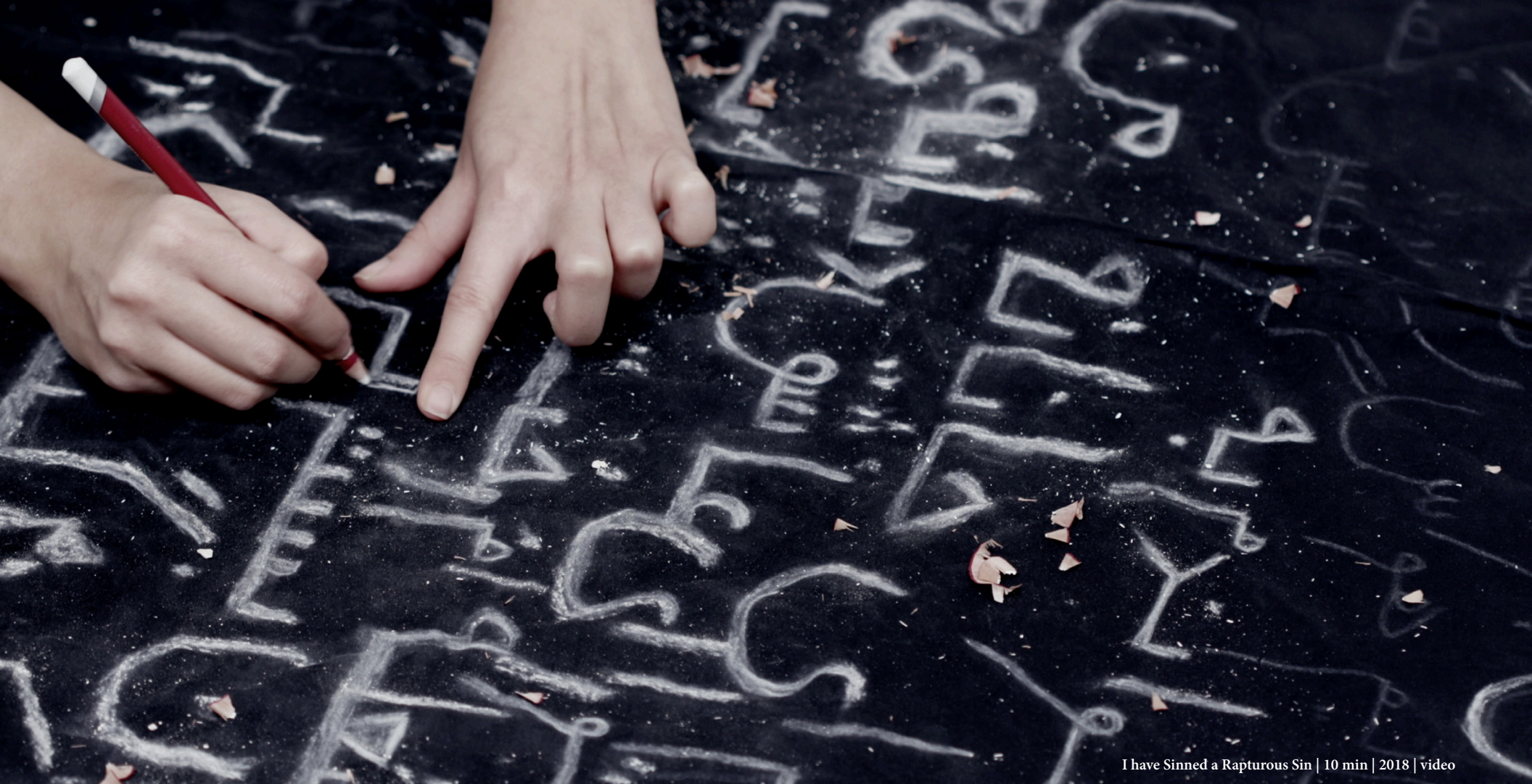
Here is the fiesta of drunken images/.



Nowhere to Hide | 2 min | 2017 | video

*Nowhere to Hide* is a video installation is a composition of three originally independent projects that together explore the interface of mind and body, inner and outer, physical and virtual. These opposing dimensions embodied in human experience are alluded to by the blurry moving image of the artist's head in front of the forest scene. The arbitrary, natural arrangement of the trees is echoed by the imperfect lines of the wire structure to evoke the randomness of the connections we make between these worlds. In the main image the camera does not enter the forest but hovers outside of it, underlining a fear of the unknown. This, together with the negative effect and the slowed down soundtrack create a dreamy quality, a sense of the uncanny, that nudges us into a suspended moment of reflection on the parallel materiality and immateriality of conscious experience.

**Niloofar Taatizadeh** is an Iranian born multidisciplinary artist who explores how the limitless processes of making and creating anew reflect the idea of multiple 'becomings' to reveal what lies beneath the surface of our constructed fixed 'reality'. Her practice combines installation, sculpture, moving image and sound. Based in London, she has recently graduated in Contemporary Photography, Practices and Philosophies from Central Saint Martins School of Art and has participated in exhibitions at Tate exchange, Lethally Gallery, Sluice Biennial and Informal Architects in Switzerland.



I have Sinned a Rapturous Sin | 10 min | 2018 | video

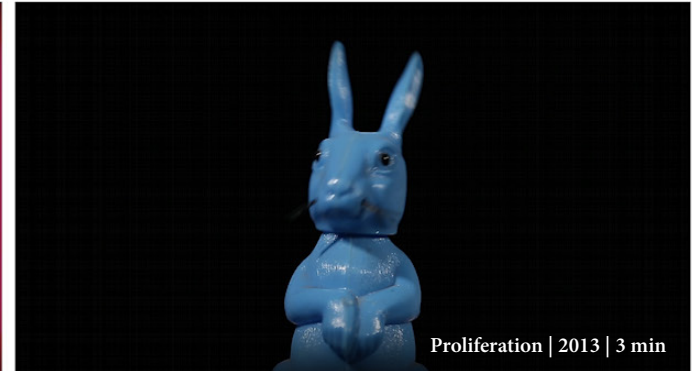
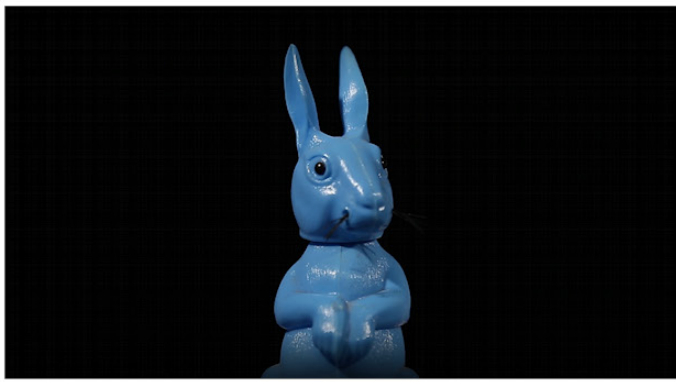
### *I have Sinned a Rapturous Sin*

What cures women of sexual promiscuity?  
Eating lettuce, of course.

Fragments of Forough Farokhzad's poem, Sin, are read out against Islamic clergies advising women on how to control their lust.

**Maryam Tafakory** (b. Shiraz, Iran) is an artist-filmmaker based in London. Her work draws on the notion of *personal as political* in a fractured narrative that involves a subtle negotiation between factual and fiction, exploring allegorical forms of visual narrative, using abstracted, symbolic and textual motifs and their on-screen representation. Part performance, her work draws on womanhood and rites of passage, interweaving poetry, (self)-censorship and religion, combining a formal minimalist syntax and figurative mode of representation.

She studied her MFA at Oxford University and her work have exhibited internationally including, Rotterdam IFFR; Edinburgh EIFF; Zurich Film Festival; Melbourne MIFF; ZINEBI; Hamburg IKFF; ICA London; BFI London; Kurzfilmtage Winterthur; Ji.hlava IDFF; Barbican Centre London; New York UnionDocs; and BBC Three. She has received several awards for her films including Best Short Film at Dokumenta-Madrid.



Proliferation | 2013 | 3 min

*Proliferation* is a silent conversation between a woman and a rabbit; a mass-produced, blue, plastic rabbit and a blue-haired woman. The rabbit says it and the woman confirms it, sometimes begrudgingly and sometimes under compulsion. They multiply rapidly... Without adopting derisive perspectives on the relationship between power and media, the video examines the dynamics between the artist and countless institutions in the modern era, citing Walter Benjamin's essay *Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* on the one hand, and Joseph Beuys's *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare*, on the other.

**Jinoos Taghizadeh** was born in Tehran in 1971. She received her diploma in graphic design, dramatic literature and ceramics 1992, and subsequently received her graduate degree in sculpture from the fine arts faculty of the university of Tehran in 2000 where she also worked in puppetry and illustration. Since 2001, she has served on the board of editors in various art magazines, as well as a critic and essay writer. She has also been delivering speeches and holding artist-talks in universities and museums around the globe. From 2000 onwards, she has had several solo exhibitions and performances in public spaces in Iran and European galleries. She has also participated in more than a hundred group exhibitions, biennales, museums, foundations and prestigious galleries around the world. Jinoos Taghizadeh lives in Tehran as an artist, storyteller and critic.

## Three question by Mania Akbari and Mark Mangion

1. Very evocative spaces, narratives and collaged vignettes suggest strong connections to sociocultural memory and histories. How do these abstract and fluid narratives allude to a sense of place, belonging and does the cinematic language reflect a strong sense of cultural sensitivity in a contemporary context?
2. The body as performance in obscure and repetitive disjointed interactions in a diversity of spaces are presented in a series of structurally and visually reduced positions and interactions. The strained and playful performer, its extremities, costume and props are both very charged and highly mystifying at the same time. How do both humor and profound political and gender sexuality contexts co exist within this language and its cultural intricacies and specificities?
3. What do you think as an artist about how do human actors through interactions with technological and machine artefacts not only mould their daily life but also re shape the technology itself ?

## Negar Behbahani

3. Art and technology have a complex interwoven relationship on different socio, political and cultural levels. While technology can shape how artists express themselves, it's important to consider that artists can shape the future and ethics of technology and human progress. In this complex but potent interaction, art and technology continue to influence each other in many ways. Technology is giving artists more powerful tools, such as virtual reality and in return art expands the boundaries of human mind and imagination; Creates new horizons for science and technology itself. Art also can affect the ethics and socio/political aspects of technology by mapping an ethical and humane way for using and developing it in the future.

## Mona Kakanj

1. As you already mentioned the narratives are abstract and fluid. I never intended to create conventional narratives. However there are connotations, which in a way serve as narrativ layers. The connotations take known socio-cultural memories and displaced them. Displacing it the sense of intervening object-context relation ship. By doing so and by means of using cinematic language (dramatic as well), I aimed to create odd, strange and disruptive scenery. Sense of place and or time is being disturbed by violating object-context relations ship. In the film objects and human interactions with them are being displaced. Hence they don't belong to the context, where they are being presented. So the film points out rather a sense of not belonging, either to its context or to its perceptual symbols.
2. I personally rather not to include gender to this equation, yet I am aware that the performer in the movie has a gender and represent a sexual or political notion. It's inevitable of course. Since I am a woman and whether I like it or not I have a nationality and background. I wished however, the images could go beyond that. I am not quit sure if they do. Humour and political or gender context co-existence merely through their visual symbols. Through their cinematic presentation. As you mentioned, there is a dark humour in a concept of displacing a swing set or attending a box ring In a night gown for instance. Nevertheless if the performer was a man the film and its concept could take a totally different turn. The film and its plots wants to create an uneasy sense of "not belonging". In my opinion it could refers beyond any gender roles and or any politics.
3. Well, as an artist I am not sure if I am able to reshape or mould technology. However as an artist I can employ technology to reflect, to question or to criticise its very own nature.



## Shahrzad Malekian

1. In a narrative, the perspective or point of view refers to how the narrators relate information. Many different variations of perspective are possible, governing the way a story is told. A fragmented narrative that has been made from collaged sub narratives brings different voices to the story. Going back and forth in a non-linear manner, the narrative connects to different layers of the memories, places and events. A fragmented narrative which is marked by a tension between presence and absence; contains numerous gaps and forgotten parts. It creates an evocative space and is a resistance to a dominant monologue. Maybe my narratives are connected to memory and histories, but I do not want to define or give these histories an author. Someone is dreaming, but I might not be the dreamer.

2. Humour is always a weapon used by those without bodies against those whose bodies are solid, gendered, powerful, well defined, applauded. The politician on the stages has a body, one body, a body that is well trained and disciplined, like an army or a dog. And the politician's speech is also a body, a dead body packed in plastic and ready for consumption. The performers do not have the bodies of the politicians, but their bodies are able to "speak" - they have a body language - a language made of movement and limbs. Maybe the fusion of body/acts/space/time will make you want to laugh, and then your laughter will also be the voice of the performer.

3. Technology came before humans. Humans has always been technology - the eye, the leg, the reproductive organs, they are all tools that existed before the craftsman started making and naming them. Only later did the axe and the plough get separated and torn away from the human body. Only then did we start to believe that "technology" is the magical product of men, of science, of factories and the global free market. One aim of my art is to deconstruct this duality. What is the difference between pubic hairs and a mobile phone? Where does the clothes end and the body begins?

## Bahar Noorizadeh

3. One pressing concern for my practice has been to challenge the established organic-machinic divide, as embedded in humanistic frameworks of knowledge. The current turn to machine learning and artificial intelligence has triggered a new-found interest in questions regarding methods of pedagogy and their relationship with intelligence. The recursive model of learning however precedes the contemporary form of AI. In working out their gadgets and designs, craftsmen have always been in a reciprocal learning environment with the tools of their craft. Our bodies today are products of the integration of these technological objects and our bio-organic instruments: surgeries; body modifications (aesthetic or medical); appendant devices like glasses, contact lenses, and hearing aids; pharmaceutical agents and psychoactive substances; and even digital media as extensions of our cognitive faculty, are all as organic today to the "body" as once our organs were. affect the ethics and socio/political aspects of technology by mapping an ethical and humane way for using and developing it in the future.

## Maryam Tafakory

1. Abstracted non-linear narratives allow for touching seemingly untouchable subjects. Functioning both as an invitation to read outside the frame whilst simultaneously rejecting such readings in an attempt to circumnavigate issues around political motivation, offering an intimate reciprocity between the film, artist and spectator. Employing a filmic language and performative use of devotional artefacts and text, I explore how allegorical narrative is channeled through veneration: in terms of structure, visual and textual motif.

*I have Sinned a Rapturous Sin* is a contradictory account of religion and the force with which it is thrust into our existence, with Islamic clergies who can't quite make up their mind whether women are desire-less or promiscuous. The image of Islam that I portray – unlike the violent images depicted by Western media – is all about lettuce, vinegar and dates... and if you commit a sin, simply cry every night and you are forgiven.

## **Simin Keramati**

1. Here in this work, I have left all the spaces white and empty. I believe when you put a person, a body or a character in an empty space, you are creating the most familiar spaces into the mind of the audience; in this case, you help them dig into their own memories and remember the spaces that they are familiar with. When you put a body in an abstract space, the space is no longer the abstract foundation, yet all the shapes and forms start to resemble a thing. The character (e.g. the shape of the body, the outfit (if there is one) the way the body moves) or the body itself is defining the socio-cultural memories. Although I prefer to focus on the more cognitive elements like the movement of a hand and the gaze, rather than the (so called) stereotypical visual elements like the outfit and the language. I believe that culture is not a constant. Although it has a history, it changes through time. Cultures mix and merge with new qualities of modern times and other cultures, it is inevitable. With that being said, yes, I believe a strong sense of cultural sensitivity in a contemporary context is being reflected in this cinematic language.

2. To show off a body and point out the sexuality is by its very nature a political act. A political act can be both profound and humorous.

a. Humour is one of the best ways to convey politics.

b. A political society comprises of all the paradoxes that exist within that society. Humour is mostly a result of paradox.

c. How to make the paradox work in a society defines the flexibility or the rigidity of the political mind of that society.

I believe when you talk about sexuality and body politics, you are touching the most sensitive point of every culture. In order to be able to talk about it, you have to know the cultural intricacies in a society; otherwise you will lose your point. Confronting the matter of body and gender, you need to think of all the paradoxes that exist in a socio-political life.

3. Technology is being developed regarding the needs of the body. And the body is compatible with the tech-evolution. Technology is transforming the body of the human actor: e.g. the shape of the body, the body parts that have been replaced by some other material that works, and etc. In addition to the body, technology is changing different forms of interaction within a culture and a society. But this is not a one way ticket. Technology is always being changed due to the needs of the society. Technology is not a constant factor by itself either, the needs of a society define how and when we have to reshape the new age of technology in each period of time.

## **Niloofar Taatizadeh**

3. What do you think as an artist about how do human actors through interactions with technological and machine artefacts not only mould their daily life but also reshape the technology itself? The human does not end and the machine starts, the relationship perhaps is more fluid. Through technology and machine artefacts we keep reinventing ourselves and we become something else and vice versa. In other words, the relationship between humans and technology is not a question of balance between the two but more how to coexist with one another. I believe the interaction between humans and technology is a series of encounters, they don't have autonomous existence rather they both interlink and depend on each other. It is through these encounters that lies an infinite potential for making and creating anew.

## Bahar Samadi

1. When detached from their original context, or what is assumed to be their original context, fluid and fragmented narratives and images, themselves, form an ephemeral and ever-changing context that inhibits pause, and thus thwarts all attempts on the part of the images and the narratives to present themselves. Who, I think, has the possibility of pause in the midst of all this, is the audience who let the images and the narratives pass through them. The trace left by this passage is a sense of place. Neither a single place, nor multiple ones. Place itself. This place is an abstraction and a translation of all lived and unlived places which belong to the audience.

2. First of all, I should say that I neither believe in, nor trust artworks claiming to be political, especially if they also claim to be politically effective. Political issues are, at best, raw material or pretext, and at worst, they are there to make the artwork a more appealing commodity for the art institutions, festivals and the media. That is why I insisted that 'Displacement' be presented along with its own original text in 'The Body Politic' program:

A considerable amount of the material in my work is from other people's images and sound archives. Any thing that can be filmed, re-filmed and filmed over and over, or scanned, re-recorded or downloaded, can become a part of the process. These diverse images are gathered from amateur 8mm films I have found, downloaded videos from cyberspace, or forgotten files on a hard disk. Any camera or imaging device can be incorporated in to my work. There is no limit. It is only through the montage process that the work begins, finds form, and comes to an end. There is no predefined structure or script. The images as they are—or independent from their content which may be nonrepresentational—create the context of their own appearance. Either they impose the necessity of their own repetition, or leave their traces in other arrangements. This repetition transforms an ordinary image to something mysterious. Images are in dialogue with each other and at the same time compete for becoming dominant. One image invites another, passes through it and returns to it, finds its own other, either in resemblance or at variance; introduces it, possesses it, lets go of it, or is replaced by it. A row of windmills.

Images are the main characters here. The image of a tree is not a tree, but an image in which there is a tree.

Here is the fiesta of drunken images/.

3. I think there are different answers to this question based on the urgency, significance, and particularly, availability of technology to each individual artist. At any rate, it seems to me, that what really counts when it comes to "reshaping technology," on a tangible and effective scale, is practicality and profitability. What I am capable of, as an artist from the periphery, is not to reshape technology, but to reshape its use according to my own needs. For example, I may use the deficiencies, limits, and flaws of an instrument, rather than use it on its own terms, and for its own ends.

## Nebras Hoveizavi

3. I can't tell if one must refrain from technologies or re-direct their path towards it. I still don't have a clear answer. I have many artist friends who still use 8 or 16 mm film cameras. When it came to changing my mobile phone, I wasn't sure if I should get a higher model with the latest technologies every year, but my sister who was studying computer engineering at the time convinced me to do so. So I entered a cycle of consumerism regarding technologies. But now after 10 years of using it as a camera, I can't be unsatisfied that I gave up a film camera as a vintage and nowadays luxury tools to shoot are imposing an enormous amount of cash on an independent artist coming from a lower-middle-class family. The digital cameras on the other hand despite having many features couldn't be used everywhere, and still, there is a difference between the smartphone cameras which is commonly used these days by everyone and regular SLR cameras for example which are bigger and heavier. When you use a smartphone, you are not a cinematographer/artist in the eyes of the public and raise less attention and sensitivities, but a citizen who uses the technology to film for maybe his/her Instagram or communicating with your friends / increasing your followers. The process of normalization which surrounds photography/cinematography interests me a lot culturally. At the same time, I acknowledge the importance of these cameras in documenting sociopolitical conflicts around the world from Arab Spring to Occupy Wall Street changing our perception and the way we look at Mass Media and News corporation giants. So yes, I look at the archives claiming to narrate the history so virtual and so real! How this selection takes place? And what is the role of artists as activists in this cycle?

## **BODY POLITICS**