

Tarlan Rafiee & Yashar Samimi Mofakham

30 Years

11 March 2015

JAMM Art Gallery is pleased to present *30 Years*, a limited edition artist book by Tarlan Rafiee and Yashar Samimi Mofakham, a continuation of their introspective project on post-revolutionary Iran, which was the subject of their first solo exhibition in Dubai in Autumn 2014 at the gallery.

Samimi Mofakham's and Rafiee's works complement each other in their quest for truth behind the violence, propaganda and patriarchy that exist in this part of the world. In her hand-coloured giclée prints, Rafiee depicts Middle Eastern divas, pop singers, actors and actresses in order to remind us that the region has a cultural dimension that is far removed from the cliché of the region as a land of oil and the internal/external strife that arise from that. The Middle East is also home to various ethnic groups with a rich culture and centuries-old traditions. The personalities depicted by Rafiee such as Googoosh, Fairuz, Omar Sharif and Umm Kulthum have acted as ambassadors for Middle Eastern culture in the wider world and have also helped advance their respective societies.

In his silkscreen prints, Samimi Mofakham references a number of iconic works in art history such as the Venus de Milo and Dürer's Saint Sebastian at the Column. The former was utilised by the French as a tool of propaganda to argue its artistic superiority to Medici Venus, after they had returned it to Italy. In Samimi Mofakham's rendition, this classical symbol of feminine beauty is beheaded and her breasts are censored with Iranian stamps celebrating the anniversary of the Revolution, which resonates with the current status of women in Iranian and Arab societies. The martyr Saint Sebastian symbolises all the young men who died in the war and how those deaths were used as a tool for manipulation by the regime's propaganda machine.

Having endured revolution, war and multiple social movements in their young lives, the works of Samimi Mofakham and Rafiee reflect a fragment of their own experiences and serve as mirrors of their external realities.

The portfolio comprises two giclée prints, hand-coloured with gouache, ink and pencil, six silkscreen prints with gold leaf and old Iranian stamps and two collages made with personalised stamps.

30 Years, a limited edition artist book by Tarlan Rafiee and Yashar Samimi Mofakham, will be presented on Wednesday 11 March 2015 from 6-9 pm.

Born in 1979 in Tehran, Yashar Samimi Mofakham is mostly known as a printmaker and runs his own printmaking studio in Tehran with his colleague and partner, Tarlan Rafiee. He has held four solo shows and participated in more than thirty group exhibitions in Iran and abroad. Samimi Mofakham is also known for his writing on contemporary art, as well as his curatorial practice.

Tarlan Rafiee was born in Tehran in 1980. She started printmaking in 2004 and has since worked as a visual artist/printmaker and participated in more than thirty group exhibitions and held five solo shows nationally and internationally.

Rafiee and Samimi Mofakham live and work between Tehran and London.

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