

HALEH ANVARI



Chadornama – On the Road, 90 x 135 cm, C-print, Ed. 10, 2005



Chador-dadar – Paris/Elle, 40 x 60 cm, C-print, Ed. 15, 2006

Haleh Anvari feels that the black chador has become an icon for Iran. It has been used very effectively by two very opposing camps, both the Islamist government of Iran and the Western media. She feels that the government uses it both for religious considerations but also because the image of a black clad woman became the trade mark or logo of the Islamic Republic. It became the most visual way of telling the world after the revolution, that something had changed in Iran while the Western media uses it as a proof of the repression of the Islamic state on its citizens. Yet for Anvari, both sources exploit the chador for their own purposes and neither show the true picture of the life of Iranian women.

In Anvari's series *Chadornama*, she begins by combining the Chador with the word *nama*. *Nama* is not only a reflection, but also the refraction that occurs, for instance, when water reflects on a house. *Chadornama* is a series about Iranian women emerging within the Iranian landscape. Though this series began as a form of protest for Anvari – she wanted to show that black chadors do not speak for the women of Iran – and instead created colorful chadors and luscious environments. Yet the color and beauty of the women in the landscapes instead depict a loving portrait by the artist for her country and her people.

Dadar is a playful Persian word often used for children when they are sent to play outside with *Da* meaning door. At the same time, there is a derogative slang for women; a *Dada* is a woman of dubious moral standing, someone who goes out too much. In the *Chador-dadar* series, Anvari takes her colorful chadors to play outside in locations around the world. She juxtaposes the chador, what she sees as the icon for Iran, with the icons of other nations. In these spaces, the intervention of these chadors with the people and location of the places she visits reveals as much about our ideas about what the chador represents as it does to challenge the viewer to imagine the women of Iran with lives as colorful and playful as the situations in which they find themselves. Each place offers different opportunities and reactions as Anvari travels to London, Paris, Dubai, Istanbul and to Agra India and the Taj-Mahal.

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HALEH ANVARI

Born in Tehran, Iran in 1962
Lives and works in Tehran, Iran

EDUCATION

B.A. Joint Honours Politics and Philosophy, University of Keele, Staffordshire, UK

SELECTED SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2008 *15 Minutes*, Etemad Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2006 *Peace Chador*, Etemad Gallery, Tehran, Iran
Chadornama, Al Riwaq Gallery, Bahrain
- 2005 *Chadornama*, Etemad Gallery, Tehran, Iran

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2011 *Staging Identity. Performance and Irony in Contemporary Middle Eastern Photography*, Galerie Kashya Hildebrand, Zurich, Switzerland
- 2008 *Thirty Years of Solitude*, Asia House, London, UK
- 2007 *Transform-Nation*, Elipse Gallery, Washington DC, USA
Thirty Years of Solitude, University of Cambridge, UK
- 2005 *Duomo Assicurazioni*, Caserta, Italy

PERFORMANCE LECTURE: *Power of a Cliché*

- 2011 University of Warwick, Warwick, UK
- 2009 Kulturfestival Frauensperspektiven, Karlsruhe, Germany
- 2008 Barbican Centre, London, UK
- 2007 Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Boston, USA
Pacific Asia Museum, Pasadena, USA
Bowery Poetry Club, New York City, USA
Busboys and Poets, Washington DC, USA
- 2005 AlRiwaq Gallery, Bahrain

DIGITAL INSTALLATION: AKSbazi.com

- 2010 School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, UK
- 2010 British Museum, London, UK

Concept for a digital space where Iranians can create their own image through the nuances of their own culture and psyche through the use of photographs.

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