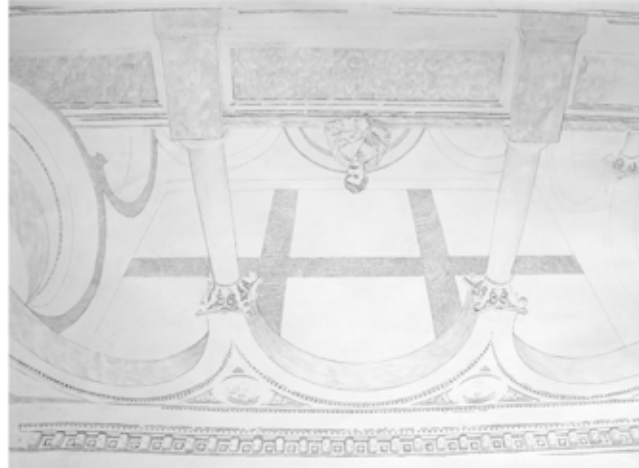


Into the vision of Farshid Larimian

By Nadine Knotzer



The opposite of one, 2012, ink and pencil on canvas, diptych each panel 130x200cm - Courtesy of Carbon 12 gallery.

Farshid Larimian (born 1981) is an Iranian artist who was discovered by a UAE gallery at a presentation project of the University of Fine Art Vienna in 2010. At this time, the artist was already demonstrating a very subtle and intimate approach in his contemporary works. Technically and conceptually Larimian uses paper, collected objects, and found objects to visually draw viewers into his personal world, which is a romantic environment where he expresses his nostalgia. The following is an interview conducted with the artist by Nadine Knotzer, which aims to shed light on the vision, techniques and ideas of his work.

Nadine Knotzer: We know that you originally trained in a different practice than art, please shed some light on how it all started?

Farshid Larimian: Originally, I studied Chemical Engineering (Petroleum Industries Processes design) in Tehran. I was being groomed to work in my family business. However, since my time as a teenager I had developed a seductive, addictive taste for art. I began attending a painting course by Ahmad Nasrollahi in my home town, “Babol”. Later I met a young artist and painter, Amir Ansarian, who actually made me familiar with classical drawing and painting. His interesting character, his encouragement, and his atelier atmosphere motivated me to follow my artistic interests as a daily activity.

In 2007, I came to Austria for my Master in Processes Design Engineering, which I had started, but during this short period my instinct for art made me eager to pursue a career different to that planned by my family. Through a friend I got to know that there was an entrance exam at the art university and that applicants were obligated to give a portfolio to participate in this exam. Honestly I had no idea how an art portfolio should be and what should be inside. I went to work and gave original works in different mediums as portfolio. The jury accepted it, and after three days of a practical exam and the personal interview, I found my name on the list of selected students of fine arts, 2008. Call it destiny; I prefer to believe that we are what makes things happen.

NK: Does your home, IRAN, play a big role in your artwork?

FL: I personally prefer to take a different approach and try to keep my work in an international category and not to brand it “Iranian”. I don’t like the fact that many artists have ridden the wave of calligraphy and the suppression of women, showing them covered head to toe with the “chadour” to represent my culture. My culture is so diverse and my civilization is so old and has encompassed a lot of modification generation after the other. Hence my open approach so that everyone in every country, every religion or every language can understand and connect to it.

It is normal to find some influences from Iran in my work, but it is not planned by me and I believe that putting some Iranian elements or ornaments, letters and so on in an artwork can not necessarily depict the spirit of Iranian art. I try to present new ideas to better present my land and Iranian contemporary artists to the public.

NK: Can you tell us more about your work?

FL: I saw it. Walked up the stairs and opened your door, is a more personal work from the series Carved and Covered. I come from a small town in Iran and I was happy to have received a scholarship in Vienna. When I wanted to change my life direction from technology to art, my father suggested that I study both of them, to earn money and live as an engineer and do the art as a hobby, because he meant earning money with art is not a good idea and there is a lot of risk. My pen drawing on foam board depicts myself walking up the stairs of his university towards a dark or a bright future. The central element, the door at the head of the stairs, has been cut out from the foam board and black fabric was pasted over it to allow light to shine through. Allowing the sunlight to filter through the work as a halo of light, suggesting “the light at the end of the tunnel”.

Mosaddeq marching up the hill from the back, walking toward an uncertain horizon, also from the same series, was also the start of my next series, Uncertain Horizon. I am taking a political approach, representing an iconic political figure of twentieth Century Iran; Dr. Mohammad Mosaddeq was the “democratically” elected Prime Minister of Iran from 1951-53 and is most famous for the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry, which had been under British control since 1913 through the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (later British Petroleum or BP).

In this artwork I draw him walking up a hill. This hill represents Iran and, if you look at it carefully, the map of Iran can be seen in it. He is holding a famous walking stick and with it he’s firmly pointing at the ground. On this specific point oil was discovered for the first time in Iran, an event that changed the history of Iran and the Middle East.

With his stick, he’s also making a firm gesture to the people that the discovered oil is Iran’s national good,

and therefore a national right to the people of Iran.

Since the Islamic revolution in 1979, the country has been facing a lot of turmoil with the climax of the current on-the-ground situations. Thus, the center of the artwork is the sun rising in the drawing. This rise has a symbolic meaning for me, as sun stands for life, energy and growth. Again, technically the sun’s position is again carved and covered at the back with a black fabric. This also allows the sunlight to filter through the work as a halo of light.

In front of the painting you’ll find an installation of an old radio where Mosaddeq’s famous radio speech in the National Assembly and the Majlis (Parliament of Iran) can be heard. This is the original speech from 1951.

NK: What are your current and future projects?

FL: I personally work on many projects at the same time and finished allow them to finish at the right place and right right time. But my most important current and forthcoming projects started from my many findings from various flea markets and my finding of objects. My current project entitled As if they always belonged together, my aim is to give birth to some old artistic works or objects. I put things together that have no relation to one another, but in a way that makes the final piece harmonious and look as if the materials always belonged together. I try to add my personal interpretation to the piece, without interfering with the old “found” pieces, with the least amount of change, even by adding a small piece of paper; so my method is collage. The works are around 50x70 cm. I’ll change my method for my next project from just collage to different techniques like fine drawing, hand prints, installation etc... My Focus is the western classic mode, beauty and advertising ideas in 19th Century. Each piece will be around 300x140 cm. I will also continue to work on the series entitled “Uncertain Horizon” which included some swing installations.

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