

**Summary Description**

An inter/multi/trans-disciplinary solo exhibition, *Time Lapsed* intrinsically connects the political and the personal: It opens a vista to a tumultuous geopolitical history that is urgently present in the contemporary political dynamics but very little understood by Western audiences. At the same time, this *body of/at work* presents a personal passage through history, tracing the effects of external and internal events and transitions on the individual and social body and psyche.

**Curatorial Proposal**

The exhibit includes 5 pieces, spanning over a decade of work: *Of Shifting Shadows* (not much shown in Canada), *Ephemeral Monument* and *Post-Coitus* (never shown in Canada), *Padding* and *Headquarters* (new works).

*Of Shifting Shadows* (interactive CD-R), *Ephemeral Monument* (single channel video projection) and *Headquarter: Pathology of An Ouster* (performance/installation/webcast) glance back at the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. Revisiting the 1979 Iranian Revolution, one of the most dramatic popular uprisings of the twentieth century, a major political event in the “Middle East” and a landmark in my own life, *Of Shifting Shadows* presents four character’s journey in the non-linear terrains of memory and history through a hypermedia narrative based on personal and historical archives. The piece speaks to the fragmentary effects of traumatic social events on individual subjectivities and the agency of individuals in recreating their lives. Focusing on key texts from the Iranian underground literature, *Ephemeral Monument* responds to the history of thought and activism that led to the Revolution. Here the material and embodied processes of writing, erasing and re-writing are used to construct a ritual for re-inhabiting, reflecting upon and memorializing the past. *Headquarters* uses embodied writing in similar ways, working with selections from now-declassified CIA documents. The text chronicles CIA’s masterminding and staging of the 1953 coup d’etat, internationally the first operation of its kind, that brought down the popular nationalist government of the time and re-established the monarchy in Iran, thus aborting the Iranian’s anti-colonial movement and sowing the seeds of the 1979 Revolution and present-day relations between the two countries.

*Post-Coitus* (t-shirts) uses original and appropriated media, including images from the war in Iraq, scans of my body, internet porn, political propaganda, and phrases from Nostradamus’ predictions that resurged in popular imagination after September 2001. Playing on notions and terminology of the “war on terror,” the piece explores psycho-sexual and historical dynamics in the U.S. and draws parallels between (neo)colonial operations and the American mainstream male erotic imaginary. A deeply intimate piece, *Padding* (photo installation) documents my menstruation cycles through images of used pads since 2008, when I first noticed signs of perimenopause. Inspired by the conception within many cultures of the transition to menopause as a time for women to reflect on our life trajectories, work on our spiritual and psychological deepening, and prepare for higher power and responsibilities in our communities, *Padding* opens up a reflective space where the blood stains trace the passage of time and a body in motion alluding to a history as individual and common as menopause itself.

Still images and videos are inadequate representation given the time-based and performative nature of most of these works so I am providing descriptions along with the technical requirements and images. *Headquarters* has not yet been performed therefore I am providing images from a methodologically similar work, *Utopias In-Progress*.

Thank you for your time and attention.

## Artist's Statement

As an artist and curator, I am concerned with the ways in which the political, the ethical and the personal fuse in art. I am guided by my reformulation of the feminist principle: The personal is poetic, the poetic is political, the political is personal.

For nearly two decades, I have been producing interactive digital media (image, sound, text) and time-based art, networked art, interventionist art, community and participatory art. Deep engagement with contemporary issues, transdisciplinary approach to art production, politicization of aesthetic encounter and creative practice, transcending the limitations of institutional art, and genuine search for more direct relations with the art public often characterize my work. I work with concepts, language, social relations and a variety of techniques and technologies, but most of all I work with purpose, intentions and meaning in art.

I often utilize network and digital media technologies and/or performance/intervention techniques even though my early training and practice were in traditional art media (drawing, painting, illustration, printmaking, photography, graphic design and calligraphy). My early work (pre-1995) inform my current practice through attention to process and surface and the insistence on art as a vehicle of communication and imagination, and safe-guard me from techno-centrism and media/disciplinary fixation. In turn, network technologies, alternative spaces (virtual and physical) and practices that are not object oriented make it possible for me to reach and engage audiences who are not the usual art consumers.

I expanded my creative work into curatorial practice, including self-curation, well over a decade ago. In this, choice and necessity were deeply intertwined: Working in a then fringe discipline (netart and new media), making work that explicitly addressed difficult geo-political issues, insisting on the socio-political dimensions and roles of art, carrying a "Middle Eastern" identity, and resisting the customary exoticization and sensationalism surrounding that location and identity in the West were artistic choices that created the necessity to enter and intervene in the curatorial field. Two of the more significant of these interventions addressed Iran and Palestine (*Trans/Planting* and *Will*, 2001 and 2003 respectively, both staged at A Space) and generated much needed cultural and political discourse. Although the curatorial discourse about the "Middle East" has changed, deepened and expanded in recent years, self-curation remains a choice for me as it allows for unmitigated conceptual development from creation to presentation/circulation of work, and facilitates a more radical politico-aesthetic autonomy. (*Utopias In-Progress*, written in 2010 and staged in 2011, centres on these issues.)

For me art and life form a feedback system, in perpetuity. As an active participant in the 1979 Iranian Revolution, a witness to Iran-Iraq war, a survivor of political repression in the Islamic Republic, and twice a refugee, I am intimately aware of the fragmentary effects of traumatic social events on individual subjectivities and deeply moved by the agency of individuals in recreating their lives. I am fascinated by the history of the present and the social, psychological and spiritual continuity of distant events on the collectivity of our lives. For me making art is fundamentally about transforming my own relations to external events and, through that, creating a space for collective reflection and re-interpretation.