

Artists' biographies

Hassan Sharif (born 1951, Dubai) lives and works in Dubai. He has made a vital contribution to conceptual art and experimental practice in the Middle East through 40 years of performances, installations, drawing, painting, and assemblage. In his early artistic maturation, Sharif rejected calligraphic abstraction, which was becoming the predominant art discourse in the region in the 1970s. Instead, he pursued a pointedly contemporary art vocabulary, drawing on the non-elitism and intermedia of Fluxus and the potential in British Constructionism's systemic processes of making. In 1984, Sharif graduated from The Byam Shaw School of Art, London, and returned to the UAE shortly after. He set about staging interventions and the first exhibitions of contemporary art in Sharjah, as well as translating art historical texts and manifestos in Arabic, in order to provoke a local audience to engaging with the contemporary art discourse. In addition to his own practice, Sharif has encouraged and supported several generations of artists in the Emirates. He is a founding member of the Emirates Fine Arts Society (founded 1980) and the Art Atelier in the Youth Theater and Arts in Dubai. In 2007, he was one of four artists to establish The Flying House, a Dubai institution for promoting contemporary Emirati artists, which is now solely dedicated to his works. His works are held in the collections of the Centre Pompidou, Paris, Guggenheim New York and Abu Dhabi, Fondation Louis Vuitton, Paris, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha, Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah, Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art, Beijing, and M+ Museum, Hong Kong, among others.

Haleh Redjaian (born 1971, Frankfurt) lives and works in Berlin. Her works on paper, textiles and site-specific wall installations are grounded in geometry, but she uses its rules to reshape and retrace the apparent order of angles and lines. Her compositions subtly belie their own errors and form what she calls a 'natural abstract language'. Redjaian believes that these works, nimble yet systematic, refer in part to the manner in which people create, adapt to and deviate from order in their lives. She will often base her drawings on a precise background, such as grid paper, and weave graphite into its rigid structures with rough shadings and free-radical lines. Conversely, Redjaian may overlay two pieces of grid paper, drawing directly onto their discordant lines, creating a paradoxical order in the result. A similar approach can be seen in the artist's textiles, for which she appropriates carpets made in Kerman and lightly stitches patterns onto them. The irregularities in these hand-knotted carpets contrast with the long, smooth lines of thread she stitches over the top. A conversation of abstraction takes place within the threads of the fabric, between these two hand-made yet very different systems.

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ART BRUSSELS

Prime
Booth B50
Hassan Sharif and Haleh Redjaian

Tour & Taxis, Brussels
22 - 24 April



Hassan Sharif
Cutting and Tying No. 4, 2016
 Cotton rope and threads of wool
 235 x 185 x 38 cm



Haleh Redjaian
Under The Moon, Stars Shoot, 2014
 Collage, graphite and colour pencil on grid paper
 50 x 70 cm

The booth highlights Emirati artist **Hassan Sharif** and German-Iranian artist **Haleh Redjaian's** critical approach of using the grid as a measurement tool and foundation for their composition, allowing for chance and repetition.

Having studied art in London in the early 1980s, **Sharif** was particularly drawn to British Constructivism, and theorist Kenneth Martin's analysis of the movement's 'systematised constructive process governed by chance and order', which since then served more as a catalyst than a path encompassing Sharif's *Objects* constructed via impulse decisions and improvisation, as well as his *Semi-Systems* which are strictly ordered. His *Objects* are sculptural assemblages constructed from mass-produced materials, and created via random and arbitrary rules that generate continually evolving and failing systems. In seeming diametric opposition

to *Objects*, his *Semi-Systems* explorations are governed by specific pre-determined rules that are extended to their logical limit taking the shape of works on paper and sometimes bound in the form of a book or a box.

Redjaian's works often feature series as processes that reveal apparently strict patterns to be in actuality variable systems, revealing a discrepancy between a supposedly objective order and subjectivity. In her work, we usually encounter elementary shapes: corners, squares, and above all lines. But a line is not something that necessarily connects two points, instead, a line creates space, and it not even have been drawn. By allowing irregularities and deviations within a strict order of geometry, the artist subtly breaks out of the rigid rational systems that try to contain them. Redjaian often works in-situ creating sculptural installations with thread structures to reveal architectural considerations.

Artist's biography

Rokni Haerizadeh (born 1978, Tehran) lives and works in Dubai. He attracted international attention during the mid-2000s for his paintings that brought together his observations about social or public gatherings in Iran – particularly weddings, religious festivals, funerals and banquets – and reveal the hedonistic, ritualised or violent side of human nature that are buried in such spectacles. Since 2009, Haerizadeh has sought new definitions of painterly practice that could lift the medium off the white canvas. In his ongoing series of works on paper, *Fictionville* (2009–) Haerizadeh paints directly onto news photographs or stills taken from news footage, while his moving paintings are rotoscope video works composed of thousands of individually-painted stills. Both projects are a discourse about the ideology and voyeuristic violence embedded in a media-powered spectacle. He has participated in numerous exhibitions such as *But a Storm is Blowing from Paradise* at Guggenheim, New York (2016), Carnegie International (2013), *Here and Elsewhere* at the New Museum, New York (2014) and the Sharjah Biennial (2011). His works are held in public and private collections, including the Guggenheim, New York, Carnegie Museum of Art, British Museum, Tate Modern, Devi Art Foundation, JP Morgan Chase Art Collection and Rubell Family Collection, among others. Haerizadeh maintains a collaborative practice with his brother Ramin Haerizadeh and childhood friend Hesam Rahmanian, and in 2015 they staged collaborative shows at the Kunsthalle Zurich, Den Frie in Copenhagen, Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane and Intitute of Contemporary Art (ICA), Boston. In July, they will participate in the 9th Liverpool Biennial. A monograph of his works, entitled *Fictionville*, was published by Koenig Books in 2014.

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ART BRUSSELS

Solo
Booth B50-S
Rokni Haerizadeh

Tour & Taxis, Brussels
22 - 24 April



Rokni Haerizadeh
Subversive Salami in a Ragged Briefcase, 2013–14
 Gesso, watercolour and ink on printed paper
 30 x 40 cm

Rokni Haerizadeh rotoscoped video animation *Letter!* (2014) uses footage from the Femen protest and shows how that protest is turned into its own hysterical, violent and performative spectacle once the gaze of the media is present. Haerizadeh refers to his videos as 'moving paintings' to emphasise the pulse of the video. He purposely doesn't refer to them as animations as he is not tracing a movement between frames, instead, each movement is enacted in these individual, hand-painted frames to create an erratic pulse, and also merges thousands of individual paintings into one durational piece. Also presented alongside the video is a selection of works on paper, which were made concurrently with the animation, and respond to the breaking news events that occurred during the creation of *Letter!*.

For Haerizadeh, life is rendered as a series of elaborate rituals, alternately richly comic, absurd, tragic, farcical, and finally, devastatingly familiar. The 37-year-old Dubai-based artist is perhaps best known for painterly tableaux whose subject matter draws from weddings, galas, murders, parades, funerals, riots, and revolutions. His human forms—often very large and wildly expressionist—turn a crooked lens onto the madness of contemporary society.

"The images are, true to 'Fictionville's' name, vividly unreal; they depict a fantastic bestiary of battling characters and pulsating, anthropomorphised scenery. But the scenes they depict are, nonetheless, familiar. The bodies rehearse the classical language of contemporary news media spectacles: the tropes of trenchant nationalism, military triumphalism, defiant rebellion, cowering victimhood, not to mention natural and man-made disasters. Violence—specifically human violence—is their common link. If the images are uncanny, it's because we recognise familiar prejudices in strange bodies: Performed by fleshy and corpulent demons and beasts, human actions take on a startling expressiveness," says writer Media Farzin about Haerizadeh's ongoing series *Fictionville*, in his monograph of the same name.