



HISTORICAL PRESENCE IN VISUAL CULTURE

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Artist Statement

rial and tERROR

Gelare Khoshgozaran

Abstract

Artist statement to for the work *rial and tERROR* (2011), 16':27" video, sound, color, included in *Contemporaneity* vol. 3, no. 1.

About the Author

Gelare Khoshgozaran is an artist, a translator and writer living in Los Angeles, CA. She has contributed to multiple Persian and English publications, including Parkett, The Enemy Reader, Ajam Media Collective, Wild Gender and ZanNegaar Journal of Women Studies. She is the translator of Oxford University Press's Critical Theory: A Very Short Introduction to Persian. In 2013 Gelare exhibited her work in Encyclonospace Iranica at Access Gallery, Vancouver and A Bomb, with Ribbon Around It at Queens Museum, New York. Gelare received her undergraduate degree in Photography from the University of Arts, Tehran and her MFA from the University of Southern California. She was the winner of the 2011 Neely Macomber Travel Award and ArtGenève's Meta Young Art Critic Award 2012.

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My practice examines the ways of knowledge production in relation to the fluidity and mutability of images and sounds in our digitized, globalized condition. Through production, (re)distribution, translation and interpretation, how do images get presented, perceived, marketed and consumed by the individual and societies at large? How is culture “formed” or imagined through our individual intake and collective experience of images, sounds, spaces and practices? And how can artistic practice alongside scholarly research be an entry point to

approach the hybridity of culture and the complexity of our contemporary existence, are amongst some of the main questions that I investigate in my videos, performances and writings as an artist and an independent scholar.

Throughout the two years of my Master of Fine Arts program, I was exploring the idea of a cultural “lag” in my practice of art making and research as I was experiencing a lag in my thinking, speaking, learning and art making as a cultural producer having just emigrated to the U.S. As a result, *rial and tERROR* was a short film that, through the usage of found archival material—pre-revolutionary Iranian TV commercials of U.S. products, Iranian 1960s Psychedelic rock music, pirated tapes of the 1980s American music videos illegally distributed in post-revolutionary Iran, home video footage, etc.—created an anachronistic video collage.

By way of spoonerism in the title, *rial and tERROR*,¹ and the anachronism in the structure of this piece, I was inclined to create a shifted narrative of a generation born and raised in the contemporary Iran, post-1979 Islamic Revolution, during the Iran-Iraq War and currently living in diaspora, with regards to the notion of “fun” as it was presented to us through American popular culture in a country with a complicated history of former alliance and tight economic ties and current conflict with the U.S Imperialism. America was the “fun factory” of the world, the same story told to us in different ways: once through the blurry pictures in the nostalgic memories of our parents who had spent their youth during the highly westernized pre-revolutionary Iran under Shah’s regime, another time through the pirated mixed video tapes that were smuggled into and distributed in the Islamic Iran as contraband and finally “discovered” through a living experience in the U.S. and culling the (non)archives of the internet.

¹ Rial (code IRR) is the currency of Iran and as of 2013 remains the world’s least valued currency unit.

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