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- All prices exclude VAT -

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Until The Lions Have Their Own Historians, The History Of The Hunt Will Always Glorify The Hunter

SMITH is excited to present the solo exhibition of Iranian-born artist Sepideh Mehraban with *Until The Lions Have Their Own Historians, The History Of The Hunt Will Always Glorify The Hunter*.

Mehraban's collection, her first solo show in Cape Town, will feature eight works of mixed media on found carpets and draws its name from a famous line in Chinua Achebe's seminal work *Things Fall Apart*.

In this series, as with her academic work as a PhD candidate at Stellenbosch University, Mehraban focuses on recent Iranian history, exploring it through text, figurative works and abstraction, often drawing on the grid format of newspaper as a source of inspiration.

Mehraban delves specifically into a heady and turbulent time in her birth country's past - the 1979 revolution, a populist and nationalist movement consisting of Marxists, Islamic socialists, secularists and Shi'a Islamists. These diverse groups united to overthrow the monarchy but instead of a democracy ushered in an Islamic fundamentalist-led theocracy under Ruhollah Khomeini.

For *Until The Lions* carpets provided the ideal surfaces to work with as a means by which begin her chosen tactic of the overlaying and veiling of paint as a means of expressing layers of existence and experience.

"These are objects that embody and convey personal stories, they are symbols of the private and intimate that carry the stains of use. The damage and destruction of history - and our ability to prevail - are contained and represented by these beautiful artefacts," says Mehraban.

These carpets are deeply personal yet Mehraban brings them to the public space for inspection as evidence of the ordinary lives of those involved and affected by political change and unrest. By using these rugs as canvases she further references her own roots while asking whether a canvas can ever be totally blank. For Mehraban we are both separate and inseparable from our past.

"I'm interested in the personal experiences of people who have been caught up in political turmoil...how these personal histories are not necessarily told in textbooks or taught in schools or via official histories. In a way, I'm using art to bring back these memories."

Included in the show is a video piece made in collaboration with studio mate Kathy Robins and delves into issues of environmental, land and socio-political significance in post-apartheid South

Africa and post-revolutionary Iran.

Robins is a vastly experienced artist with postgraduate qualifications from both Michaelis School of Art and Parsons School of Design in New York. The artists drew from Persian paintings, hunting scenes from ancient manuscripts and from their own personal histories to narrate the contemporary issues of both Iran and South Africa and stage an animated parody on propaganda and censorship.

The collection is an elaboration of the themes Mehraban interrogated in 2018 with her curatorial debut, *Cape to Tehran*. Inviting 19 artists from Iran and South Africa to respond to their experience of political change, Mehraban tasked the collective to study personal impact as well as the shared experience of intergenerational trauma and inherited change.

Now, by retracing her steps and digging up the stories she grew up believing, Mehraban questions our tendency to prefer official accounts to our own, more ephemeral yet arguably more keenly felt personal experiences.

Here she pits personal histories against public histories and hones in on the discrepancies between what is happening and what governments say is happening, where propaganda is used as a tool of oppression and ignorance.

This deliberate obfuscation speaks to the show's title and reiterates Mehraban's point that history and the past are not one and the same. History is a story we are told, usually by those who manage to speak loudest.

Mehraban's materials act as veils, abstracting and obscuring her statements so that they become questions instead. Her use of glue poured freely over the rugs both covers and works as a new surface on which the artist screen prints newspaper articles.

These fragmented, mostly illegible reports are doubly oblique. Scraps of reports that were made up largely of tampered information are obscured by Mehraban's mark making, replicating the acts of censorship. What can be made out is not trustworthy. We can't know what is true and dependable information, leaving us to rely on instinct and our own private and emotional responses.

"I'm asking the viewer to look through these layers and make their own story. My goal is to challenge the idea that someone or some entity can tell you what happened to you. It's really critical to have these conversations, especially in places where the conversation is so highly politicised."

Like a historian relying on fragments of unreliable testimony trying to piece together a story that makes sense, Mehraban's works are like puzzles. But there's no end to this one.

"Like the big carpet full of holes, we might try to fix the holes but, in truth, they are there forever. They are part of us."

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Sepideh Mehraban

Sepideh Mehraban is an Iranian-born artist, working and living in Cape Town. Her work explores memory and landscape, looking at the overlaying and veiling of paint as a means of expressing layers of existence and experience. She was born in Tehran and obtained her BA (2009) and MA (2011) from Alzahra University (Tehran - Iran).

In 2012, Mehraban worked on and was awarded a postgraduate diploma in Fine Art at Michaelis School of Fine Art (Cape Town, South Africa) and has since also completed a second masters degree with distinction there. She has worked as a set designer and collaborated on puppeteering projects. Mehraban has also worked as an assistant lecturer in the Department of Painting at Michaelis School of Fine Art. She is a PhD candidate currently lecturing at the University of Stellenbosch.

In her academic work, as well as in her personal projects there is sensitivity toward recent history in Iran, which she incorporates and explores through text, figurative works and abstraction, often drawing on the grid format of newspaper as a source of inspiration.

Solo exhibitions

2019 *Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter*, SMITH, Cape Town

2015 *Retracing Memories*, Golestan gallery, Tehran

Selected group exhibition

2018 *Close Encounters*, SMITH, Cape Town

2017 *SS17*, Gallery MOMO, Cape Town

2017 *Distill Motion*, SMITH, Cape Town

2017 *A Painting Today*, Stevenson gallery, Cape Town

2017 *Art Meets Camera: Closer than ever*, gallery MOMO, Cape Town

2016 *Charting*, Eclectica Contemporary, Cape Town

2015 *Imago Mundi*, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice

Private and public collections including

Alzahra University (Tehran)

University of Cape Town, Spier Art's Trust (Cape Town)

Thulamela Chambers (Johannesburg).



Sepideh Mehraban

Collapse, 2019

Mixed media on carpet

Triptych: 72 x 62 cm

20,000.00 ZAR



Sepideh Mehraban

Prime minister (IV), 2019

Mixed media on carpet

87 x 96 cm

30,000.00 ZAR



Sepideh Mehraban

Tehran 1979, 2019

Mixed media on carpet

78 x 93 cm

30,000.00 ZAR



Sepideh Mehraban

Prime minister (III), 2019

Mixed media on carpet

78 x 94 cm

30,000.00 ZAR



Sepideh Mehraban

40 years, 2019

Mixed media on canvas

145 x 110 cm

40,000.00 ZAR



Sepideh Mehraban

Refuge, 2019

Mixed media on carpet

Diptych: 64 x 89 cm

20,000.00 ZAR



Sepideh Mehraban and Kathy Robins

Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter, 2019

Video work

3 min

Edition 3 + 2 AP

25,000.00 ZAR



Sepideh Mehraban

36 hours, 2019

Mixed media on carpet

Diptych: 70 x 75 cm

20,000.00 ZAR



Mehraban, Sepideh

Thread of stories, 2019

Mixed media on carpet

425 x 322 cm

120,000.00 ZAR

All prices exclude VAT



Sepideh Mehraban

Arrival, 2019

Mixed media on carpet

78 x 93 cm

30,000.00 ZAR



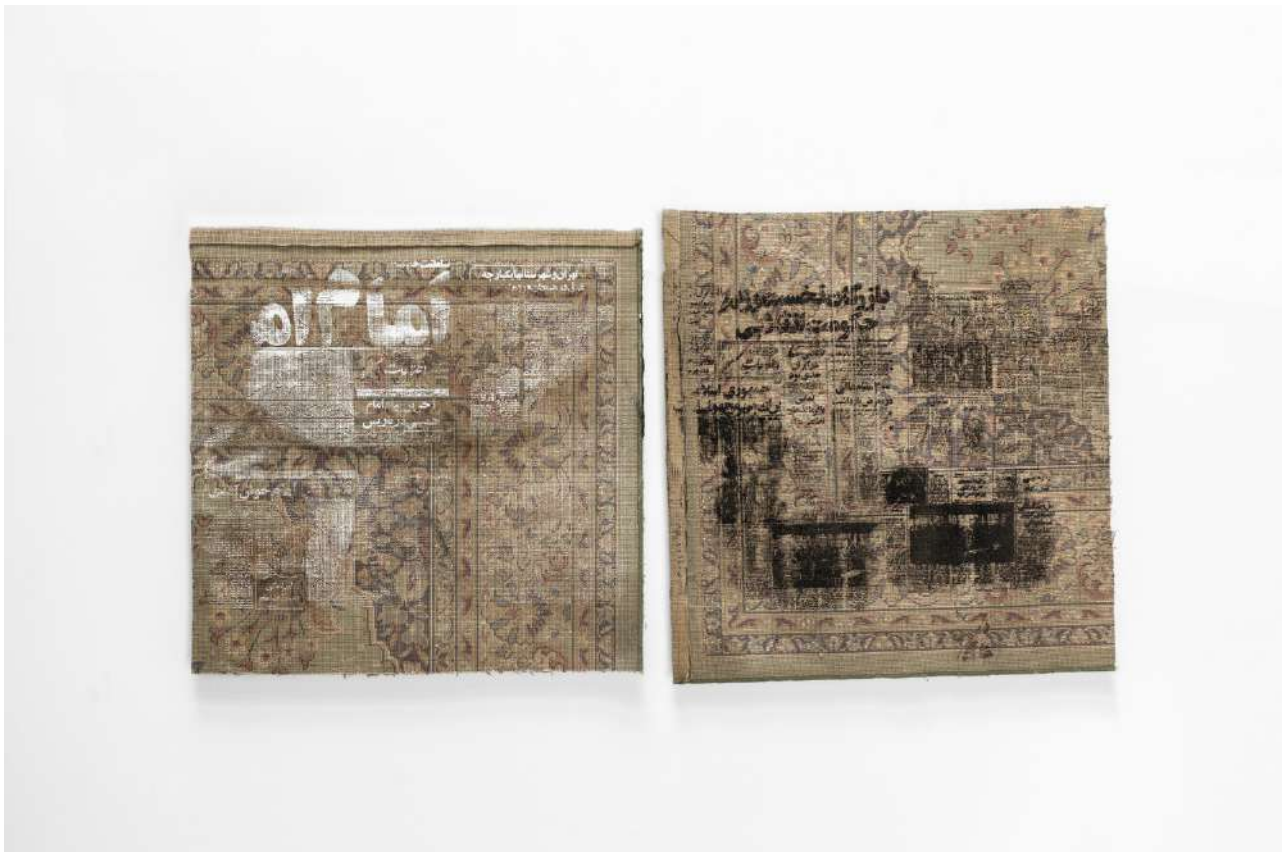
Sepideh Mehraban

Prime minister (II), 2019

Mixed media on carpet

Triptych: 76 x 186 cm

40,000.00 ZAR



Sepideh Mehraban

Under the carpet, 2019

Mixed media on carpet

Diptych: 77 x 150 cm

40,000.00 ZAR



Sepideh Mehraban

Prime minister (I), 2019

Mixed media on carpet

73 x 86 cm

30,000.00 ZAR

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