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Sheida Soleimani: Hotbed
November 6 - December 23, 2020

This is the artist's first exhibition with the gallery and her first gallery exhibition in New York City. An opening talk with the artist and Jasmine Wahli, the Holly Block Social Justice Curator at the Bronx Museum, took place online the evening of November 6th. A catalog will accompany the exhibition with an essay by Jane Ursula Harris.

Hotbed advances Sheida Soleimani's inquiry into the crises that define Iran and the United States' relations. Superimposing source imagery onto sculptural backdrops to illustrate the complex relationships between these hostile nations, Soleimani's photographs are virtual palimpsests. Paradoxically, this paper-thin practice of layering foregrounds weighty ethical questions about how power operates, justice is served, and damage is done. These photographs reflect and critique and chop and screw hot button issues: demands for reparations, sanctions on trade and resources, and the "crude" history of the petroleum industry. Collectively, they induce atmospheres and moods that are agonizingly of the moment. Yet even as crises proliferate while media algorithms are increasingly geared to restrict our attention, Soleimani's work produces the possibility of an otherwise and an elsewhere, modeling how we can create broader horizons of attention to include a multiplicity of crises.

Drawn from her newest series, *Levers of Power*, *Hotbed* (2020, archival inkjet print) most immediately treats Iran's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the manner of a still life, the image freezes the arm of the deputy health minister of Iran in the act of wiping his brow, on the one hand isolating the gesture of a corrupt official, and on the other revealing the links between this public gesture and the country at large. Iraj Harirchi would be diagnosed with COVID-19 shortly after a press conference, even as his physical discomfort was then read as a sign of his unease with concealing the actual extent of the pandemic. Objects in the image invite viewers to build new readings: flypapered in the background are satellite images of mass graves dug for the pandemic dead, while lime, used to dissolve flesh, dusts grass and soil; a chain references sanctions on Iran, which had already thrown the country into economic depression. Other images in the room, including the Iran-U.S. finger-pointing diptych, *1/8/2020* and *PS752*, illustrate how technologies of power like "blame shifting" have become integral to the new global authoritarianism.

In the back room, Soleimani's works excavate a prehistory of present-day crises, extending her examination of how relationships between Middle Eastern and Western leaders, institutions, and governments produce and are informed by exploitation, domination, corruption, profit, and abuse. Campy, sarcastic, and dark, each image targets a specific event within this history, satirizing the underbelly of trade wars and foreign policy circumventions. The images in the exhibition trace critical moments in the history of Iran and the US's international relations, beginning with the 1953 Iranian coup. During the US-backed overthrow of Iran's democratic government, for example, 'YANKEE GO HOME' became a rallying cry and symbol of the Iranian people's discontent with Western intervention. In our present moment, this mantra sounds all the more urgent. The images comprising *Hotbed* enjoin us as spectators to evaluate moralities embedded in our viewing practices, not simply to avoid being complicit with larger structures of power, but also to learn how to speak truth to them.

Sheida Soleimani received her MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art and her BFA from the University of Cincinnati, College of Art. Soleimani's most recent solo exhibitions were at Harlan Levey Projects in Brussels, Andrew Rafacz Gallery in Chicago and the evolving exhibition *Medium of Exchange* that examined how oil is interchangeable with currency and the corruption at the center of the petroleum industry. *Medium of Exchange* traveled to six different locations from Edel Assanti in London to the Atlanta Contemporary, in Atlanta, GA. Soleimani is represented by Edel Assanti in London, as well as Harlan Levey Projects in Brussels. Soleimani has been written about in *The New York Times*, *Artforum*, *Hyperallergic*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, among many others including *BEAUTIFUL/DECAY* founded by artist, Amir H. Fallah. She currently is an Assistant Professor of Studio Art at Brandeis University in Waltham, MA.

The exhibition will be open Tuesday to Saturday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. If you would like to make an appointment, guaranteeing you will be alone in the space, please visit our website. Masks are required. For sales and press inquiries, contact Elizabeth Denny (+1-917-215-3723, elizabeth@dennydimingallery.com) or Robert Dimin (+1-917-445-7956 or robert@dennydimingallery.com).

Sheida Soleimani
1/8/2020, 2020
40 x 30 in/102 x 76 cm
Archival pigment print, Edition of 3 + 1 AP



Sheida Soleimani
PS752, 2020
40 x 30 in/102 x 76 cm
Archival pigment print, Edition of 3 + 1 AP



Sheida Soleimani
Hotbed, 2020
40 x 30 in/102 x 76 cm (exhibited as 120 x 90 in Phototex)
Archival pigment print, Edition of 3 + 1 AP



Sheida Soleimani
HR2118, 2020
40 x 30 in/102 x 76 cm (exhibited as 120 x 90 in Phototex)
Archival pigment print, Edition of 3 + 1 AP



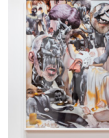
Sheida Soleimani
Unplugged, 2019
40 x 30 in/102 x 76 cm
Archival pigment print, Edition of 3 + 1 AP



Sheida Soleimani
Westoxification, 2018
54 x 42 in/137 x 107 cm
Archival pigment print, Edition of 2 + 1 AP



Sheida Soleimani
B-Team (Iran Deal), 2015
46 x 30 in/117 x 76 cm
Archival pigment print, Edition of 2 + 1 AP



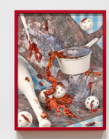
Sheida Soleimani
West Texas Sour, 2019
24 x 18 in/61 x 46 cm
Archival pigment print, Edition of 5 + 2 APs



Sheida Soleimani
Iran Heavy, 2018
24 x 18 in/61 x 46 cm
Archival pigment print, Edition of 5 + 2 APs



Sheida Soleimani
Bayou Choctaw Sweet, 2019
24 x 18 in/61 x 46 cm
Archival pigment print, Edition of 5 + 2 APs



Sheida Soleimani
Basra Light, 2018
24 x 18 in/61 x 46 cm
Archival pigment print, Edition of 5 + 2 APs

