

SHADI HAROUNI: I DREAM THE MOUNTAIN IS STILL WHOLE

18 July – 30 September 2018

Prague City Gallery

Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace, 2nd floor

Karlova 2, Prague 1

Open daily except Monday from 10 am to 6 pm

Exhibition curators: Zuzana Štefková, Jitka Hlaváčková

The starting point for Shadi Harouni's work is her personal experience of a post-war and post-revolutionary Iran, as well as a close study of the Islamic regime's relationship towards images, architecture, memory, and the human body. Harouni's work combines the personal and the political with a sense for universal human need for remembrance. As an émigré, she returns to Iran, time and again, in an attempt at finding her place within the struggle for the past and the future of a country that is and is not her home.

In the videos, installations, photographs, and prints presented in the exhibition *I Dream the Mountain Is Still Whole*, Harouni explores the ways in which political power attempts to silence inconvenient voices and hide unpleasant facts. The artist focuses on expressions of inconspicuous resistance to this power: landslides that uncover mass graves (*An Index of Undesirable Elements*, 2017); paved over toilettes of a shanty town visible through the concrete (*Erasure Phase I: Paved Over Toilettes in Abdol Abaad*, 2014); a broken sign that once recalled the name Mohammad Mosadegh, the country's democratically elected prime minister, but now only reads "degh", literally, "death by heartbreak" (*MOSADEGH*, 2017); or a friendly football match played by dissidents in the heart of a pumice quarry (*I Long for a Game of Football*, 2017). Harouni translates these micro-events into the language of art while simultaneously exploring her own relationship to the people, places, and things that embody the potential for resistance.

The title of the exhibition, named after one of Harouni's videos presented here, is related to a quarry in the mountains of Kurdistan. The artist is drawn to these mountains for their beauty, history, and mythology, but also because, for years, she has been seeking the stories of dissidents who have taken refuge in these remote spaces, pushed into the very margins of society and barred from doing any kind of intellectual work. By means of a happy coincidence she finds the protagonist of the film *I Dream the Mountain is Still Whole*, who grew up with her deceased father and uncle and later spent years in political prison with her father.

The artist speaks of the symbolism at the center of this work: "I think of the mountain as a monument to history. But it is also a monument that is being erased, one stone at a time. In this sense, it is the ultimate and perfect monument." When asked about the title, she confesses: "None of the men in the mountain ever speak these words. I don't know if they long for a time when their mountain was intact. But I ask myself if the history of resistance that they dedicated their lives to ever comes to them in a dream, as triumphant and complete. Perhaps I am the only one who Dreams the Mountain is Still Whole."

Shadi Harouni (born 1985, Hamedan, Iran) is an Iranian-American artist based in New York (USA) and Tehran (Iran). She serves as Assistant Professor and Head of the BFA Studio Art Program at New York University, Steinhardt.

Zuzana Štefková

Curators: Zuzana Štefková, Jitka Hlaváčková
Graphic Design: Anymade Studio

Admission: CZK 60 adults / CZK 30 students / CZK 30 seniors

Media partners: A2, Art&Antiques, Art for Good, ArtMap, Český rozhlas, Literární noviny, protisedi.cz, Radio 1

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Accompanying program

Guided tour of the exhibition with curators Zuzana Štefková and Jitka Hlaváčková.

Tue 31 July 2018, 6 pm