

First solo show in New York City of photography by Mitra Tabrizian opens at Leila Heller Gallery



Mitra Tabrizian, *City, London 2008, 2008*. C-type photographic print, 48 x 98.5 in / 122 x 250 cm. Edition of 5, 2 Aps. Photo: Courtesy Leila Heller Gallery.



NEW YORK, NY.- The first solo show in New York City of photography by Mitra Tabrizian will be on view at Leila Heller Gallery in Chelsea at 568 West 25th Street from June 7 – July 7, 2012. The exhibition will feature seven monumental photographs taken in Iran and England. The artist had a solo show at Tate Britain in 2008, and has been commissioned to do a portrait for the London Olympics this year. A fully illustrated brochure with an essay by Vali Mahlouji, a London-based independent curator and writer, will accompany the exhibition.

Tabrizian creates fabricated mise-en-scenes. Bankers in an office building, women walking through Tehran's surrounding mountains, a man standing on the sidewalk—nothing seems out of the ordinary—yet Tabrizian stages these evocative scenes as if we are walking in on the subjects mid-scene, immediately before or after the climax of the narrative. Often the images appear cold or even disturbing in large part due to the utter disconnect between the characters. For instance, in *City, London 2009*, we see several men in black and grey business suits inside the lobby of an office building. Indeed nothing out of the ordinary; however, there is no interaction between the characters. They each stand and stare in different directions, completely disconnected from each other and the backdrop that surrounds them.

In the brochure essay, Mahlouji writes, "When figures appear in groups, Tabrizian's meticulous compositional juxtapositions and directorial interventions ensure an even more acute sense of dissociation and dislocation. Where expectation is congruency and relatedness, actors remain hermitically solitary. Despite co-habiting a particular and shared fragment of space, the protagonists remain resolutely detached, disunited and scattered."

Beyond Tabrizian's emphasis on the placement of her subjects, the landscape often plays the secondary character in her photographs. Whether it's a kitchen, an office building, or the desert of Tehran, the backdrop always lends to further characterize her subjects and to enhance the work's narrative.

In her newest series, "Leicestershire 2012," Tabrizian documents the deteriorating factories of the city of Leicester. In this series, the landscape of the city, rather than the subject, takes center stage. A man makes an appearance in a few of the images—but his solo presence seems only to emphasize the eerie desertion of the city. In *Leicestershire 2012*, the man stands in a suit by a canal in front of a boarded up, now defunct building. His eyes are closed as if mourning for or perhaps remembering a town which once was.

Mitra Tabrizian, born in Tehran, Iran, lives and works in London. She has exhibited widely in major international museums and galleries, including her solo exhibition at the Tate Britain in 2008. One of her portraits will be on view during the London Olympics as part of the exhibition *The World in London*, a public art program celebrating the 204 participating nations, with 204 portraits by London and international artists on view across the city. Her most recent book, *Another Country*, published by Hatje Cantz in 2012, includes texts by Homi Bhabha, David Green, and Hamid Naficy. Her photographic and film works are represented in major public collections, including: Victoria and Albert Museum, London; Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art, Australia; Moderna Museet, Stockholm; Musée d'Art Moderne, Luxembourg; amongst others. She has received several photography and film awards, including the British Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRC) Innovation Award for the film *The Predator* (28 min., 35 mm print, 2004).