

Roffino, Sara. *Art Seen: Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh, Hesam Rahmanian, I won't wait for grey hairs and worldly cares to soften my views*, Brooklyn Rail. May 6, 2015. Web and Print.

BROOKLYN RAIL

CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES ON ARTS, POLITICS, AND CULTURE

ArtSeen

May 6th, 2015

RAMIN HAERIZADEH, ROKNI HAERIZADEH, and HESAM RAHMANIAN *I won't wait for grey hairs and worldly cares to soften my views*

by Sara Roffino

CALLICOON FINE ARTS | APRIL 12 – MAY 31, 2015

Iranian, Dubai-based artists Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh, and Hesam Rahmanian's first show in New York, *I won't wait for grey hairs and worldly cares to soften my views* is a vociferous installation spanning a multitude of genres, places, times, and languages. Several visits are not enough to digest all that is present in this exhibition, which includes works made by the three men individually, as well as collaborative pieces, and works by other artists—Etel Adnan, Martha Wilson, and A.K. Burns, for example. It's not possible in this short review to cover even a fraction of what is happening here. In fact, that inability to process it all is itself a significant element of the work. Nonetheless, spending time in this exhibition is revelatory. It is an opportunity to enter the world of the Haerizadeh brothers and their childhood friend Rahmanian—a world that is sharply and critically observant of cultural, political, and personal states of being without succumbing to the darker realities of each.

Sculptures, videos, collages, paintings, and assemblages are installed atop a floor painted with a winding black-and-white triangular pattern, pink amaryllis flowers, and erratic splotches of yellow. On three screens immediately to the left of the entrance, the video "O, You People!" (2014) runs on a loop. Filmed in 2013 while the artists were at the Rauschenberg Foundation's residency on Captiva Island, "O, You People!" presents footage of the Haerizadehs and Rahmanian exploring and interacting with an oceanfront house on stilts. Against low contrast grey-blue light, the artists dressed in costumes, draped themselves in sheets, and wore animal masks to film each other from 4 a.m. until sunrise for two weeks. Installed just above the floor, the videos require viewers to kneel down to view the screens properly. The audio is a Farsi to English and then back to Farsi translation of the poem "O, You People" by Nima Yushij, the father of modern Persian poetry. Despite its unassuming placement within the gallery, and the nearly inaudible audio, "O, You People" is integral—perhaps even the anchor of the show.

Through placing themselves within the installation as such, the Haerizadehs and Rahmanian insist on their presence within the work. Their individual biographies—the personal experiences of culture, modernity, art, oppression, and freedom within Iran (and beyond)—serve as material in much the same way as do dollar-store underwear, plastic carrots, family photos, Pussy Riot, Cindy Sherman, Renaissance putti, and the British Royal family (to name just a few of the dozens of references in the show).

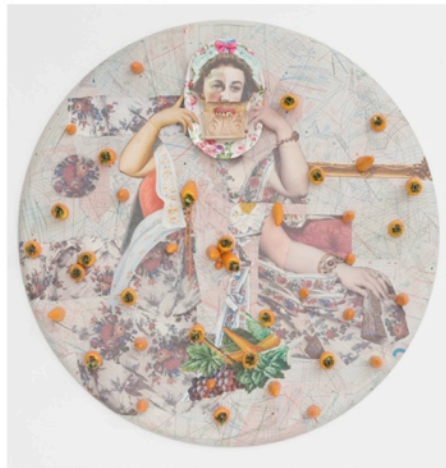


Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh, and Hesam Rahmanian, *I won't wait for grey hairs and worldly cares to soften my views* (2015), Callicoon Fine Arts. Installation shot. Courtesy of Callicoon Fine Arts.

The Haerizadehs have lived in Dubai since 2009, after the Iranian government raided the home of one of their collectors. At the time the brothers were in Paris, and fearing imprisonment, they have never returned to Iran—not even for the funeral of their father earlier this year. Rahmanian joined the Haerizadehs in Dubai a few months after they settled there and since then the three have lived and worked together in a home/studio on the outskirts of the city. Working and living together is a part of their practice, which is clearly diligent and rigorous, but also alive and spontaneous. Chairs in the back of the gallery were turned into blue tape sculptures during installation, and a metallic bunny rabbit in the corner of the space was another impulsive addition to the show. In Ramin Haerizadeh's circular collage "Carrot Cake, Carrot Cake, Do You Have Any Nuts?" (2014) a German sewing pattern serves as the background to an image of Cindy Sherman whose teeth are plastic and tethered down with yellow yarn. Pieces of painted canvas are loosely attached to the surface of the work, out of which nubs of bright orange plastic carrots protrude. The carrots are hilarious. One can't help but imagine the moment Haerizadeh saw the possibility of including them and the joy he must have felt.

Collages made individually by each of the artists are installed together in one corner of the space and are a highlight of the exhibition. The works are all in dialogue formally, though their content varies widely. Rahmanian's pieces (all "Untitled," 2014) are installed as a cluster. The bright colors and hard lines sourced from art publications convey a casual irreverence, unlike his paintings of the backs of politicians' heads, which are visually subtler and consequently more unsettling. Ramin Haerizadeh's collages (both "First Rain's Always a Surprise," 2014) layer symbols of military and industry atop black-and-white family photographs of his mother as a child and young woman. Perhaps it is a projection to find a sense of loss in these works—to see a son reflecting on the freedom his mother does not have and the reasons she does not have it. Rokni Haerizadeh's collages in this grouping are a series of nine works ("The Reflection of the Moon is Dry in a Bowl of Water," 2014), all of which began with an image of a royal wedding, a particular fascination of the artist whose two videos in the back room juxtapose footage from the 2011 wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton with footage from the 2009 Femen protests.

Forget about Post-Internet Art, this show is about Post-Internet Life. Everything is seemingly at one's fingertips, there are no clear rules or roles, and as a friend said at the opening, "If someone who walked in here didn't really know about contemporary art, they would think it's really fun."



Ramin Haerizadeh, "Carrot Cake, Carrot Cake, Do You Have Any Nuts?" (2014). Collage of various plastic ready-mades, paper, cardboard, and carved wood on canvas, 44.88Ë diameter. Courtesy of Callicoon Fine Arts.