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Number of painters:

152

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[< back](#)

[Paintings](#)
[Painters](#)
[Galleries](#)



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The Advantage of Not Being an Avant-garde Artist

By Shahrouz Nazari

Winter, 2007

What makes Tajik's works attractive to me at the outset is his deliberate valor and aloofness in representation; the clear explanation why he is different from many others who intend to deal with photography in a representational mode.

Most probably those who do not know Tajik might think his works are ostentatious while one of his distinctive characteristics as a painter is his indifference in saying or not saying something in a sloganized tone. In order to fully realize this fact, I believe, one should go through his recent years' works.

Tajik's performative manners, however, which in my opinion is some sort of deliberate boldness, has been influenced by two notable tutors in his life: first 'photography' as his primary instructor from which he benefits slyly in representation and makes the best out of and second, his expertise in 'painting'. By learning all rules and techniques, he becomes a truthful heir to his second tutor and this is clearly seen when it comes to his proficiency in painting a burning paper or a broken tile for instance. Tajik, however, does not apply his unquestionable skill at all times. It is wonderful that he does not pretend to be very authoritative in realm of representation for it has been proven to me that the thicker the bullies' horns seem to be, the more fragile they are.

There are several aspects to that purposefulness in Tajik's works that I insist on: first he does not want his paintings to be forcibly avant-garde, which means he is scared of being dragged into an erratic modernity and intellectual disorder. Standing back at the sidelines is a result of the worry, fear and concern that doesn't seem to matter to some contemporary painters at all. Second, with his paintings, Tajik is connected to the past and linked to Ali Mohammad Heydarian, Yassemi and later on to Aghdashlou, Khakdan and others at one end, and at the other, he pleases the desire of us, the Iranians, in being representational in our art, something we never were. Such a proficient audacity is his privilege over others for he respects the borders of photography in his paintings as well and does not make a painting look exactly like a photograph.

And last but not least is the fact that in his recent series of boxes that are definitely somehow linked to showcases, Tajik has achieved a dramatic approach towards painting: spot lights, theatrical scenes, frames that look like puppet show boxes. All of the abovementioned features make his paintings look like some sort of theater-painting, a kind of theater that is directed through the act of objects as if all strings, paper airplanes and soda cans are going to inform the viewer of an incident: a self expressive story maybe, a confessional narrative that is down-to-earth and without any twists and turns like Tajik himself. In his last series, one can say the apprentice outruns the master in performing techniques of representation.

Mojtaba Tajik

Painter, Photographer

Member of the Iranian Society of Painters

Mojtaba Tajik was born in 1966 in Tehran. He started painting under supervision of Master Aydin Aghdashlou and has been professionally painting ever since.

Solo Exhibitions:

2009 Nader Gallery, New York, USA
2008 Assar Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
2006 Assar Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
2005 Bissan Gallery, Doha, Qatar
2003 Nader Gallery, New York, USA
2001 Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran, Iran
1998 Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran, Iran
1996 Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran, Iran
1995 Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran, Iran

Selected Group Exhibitions:

2007 Artists' Forum, Tehran, Iran
2007 Silk Road, Tehran, Iran
2007 Golestan Gallery, Tehran, Iran
2006 XVA Gallery, Dubai, UAE
2006 Assar Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
2006 Farmani Gallery, L.A., USA
2004 Kavir Gallery, Rafsanjan, Iran
2003 Al Bidda Gallery, Doha, Qatar
2003 6th Tehran Painting Biennial
2002 Golestan Gallery, Tehran, Iran
2001 Assar Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
2000 Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran, Iran
2000 5th Tehran Painting Biennial
1999 Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran, Iran
1997 4th Tehran Painting Biennial
1997 Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran, Iran
1995 3rd Tehran Painting Biennial