

Immediate Release: Friday, November 9, 2018



NEW EXHIBITION AT MACKENZIE ART GALLERY EXPLORES ARTISTS' RELATIONSHIP TO STRUCTURES OF POWER

Regina, SK - The MacKenzie Art Gallery is delighted to announce the opening of a new exhibition, *Punk Orientalism*. The exhibition explores the nonconformist contemporary art and artists of Central Asia, Caucasus, Iran and the Middle East. *Punk Orientalism* is curated by Sara Raza, an independent curator and writer based in New York City, and most recently the Guggenheim UBS MAP Curator, Middle East and North Africa.

Sara Raza will be in Regina to curate the exhibition and will attend our Fall Premiere and Reception, taking place November 9 at 7 PM at the MacKenzie Art Gallery.

Raza will be joined by two artists with work in *Punk Orientalism*, Babi Badalov and Shahpour Pouyan. Badalov, born in Azerbaijan and currently residing in Paris, will be creating a visual text mural on-site before the opening on November 9, entitled *OrnaMental Punk* (2018). Pouyan's work, a sculpture entitled *Projectile 6* (2012), is made from iron and brass. Raza, Badalov, and Pouyan will take part in a curator and artist walkthrough of *Punk Orientalism* on November 10 at 2 PM. The event will be accompanied by a gallery facilitator who will provide Russian translation. All three will be available for interviews on November 9 as well as prior to and after the walkthrough on the afternoon of November 10.

"The *Punk Orientalism* exhibition embraces an essential part of our mission as an art museum, providing a place to examine and discuss challenging social issues through art," said Anthony Kiendl, the museum's Executive Director and CEO. "The many artists in *Punk Orientalism* bring to bear a set of experiences that are both foreign and yet also instantly relatable, drawing on the experiences of Indigenous people and both physical and conceptual colonization across the globe; giving us the opportunity to connect experiences abroad with Canada's own ongoing efforts toward reconciliation. We are grateful to guest curator Sara Raza for her collaboration with us on *Punk Orientalism*."

This is the debut of the exhibition and many works receive their Canadian debut. The exhibition runs until February 17, 2019, and includes an off-site billboard installation at Albert St and 12th Avenue by Mustafa Hulusi entitled *Pomegranates* (2014), which extends the conversation between the museum and the public realm. "*Punk Orientalism* presents artists whose work addresses issues of Soviet imperialism, and 'friendship,' revealing new pathways into history and geopolitics that are both at once timely and relevant to understanding our current social and political climate," said Sara Raza, the exhibition's curator. "Bringing together an array of critical voices that slice through oversimplified narratives of history and place, these artists also speak to the wider influence of the former Soviet Union, beyond Central Asia and the Caucasus to include Iran and parts of the Arab world, to shape a different understanding of how one East perceives another East."

The MacKenzie Art Gallery is committed to fostering and developing space for people to engage in meaningful discourse surrounding contemporary and complex issues affecting Canada and the world at large.

About MacKenzie Art Gallery:

The MacKenzie Art Gallery is Saskatchewan's original public art gallery: an immersive centre for engaging people through transformative experiences of the world through art, with an ongoing focus on Indigenous culture and diversity. The MacKenzie is located in Regina's Wascana Park, Canada's largest urban park and home to the Provincial Capital Commission. It is located within Treaty Four territory, the traditional territory of the Cree, Saulteaux, Assiniboine and Metis, and a home to the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota people. The permanent collection, which includes the University of Regina's extensive collection, contains over 5000 works of art spanning 5000 years of art history.

The MacKenzie is grateful for the support of the South Saskatchewan Community Foundation; Canada Council for the Arts; Saskatchewan Arts Board; SaskCulture; the City of Regina; University of Regina.

About Sara Raza:

Sara Raza is an independent curator and writer specializing in global art and was the winner of the ArtTable New Leadership Award for Women in the Arts (2016). Sara was the Guggenheim UBS MAP curator for the Middle East and North Africa and curated *But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise* at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, (2016), which travelled to the Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Milan (2018). Sara has curated exhibitions and projects for several international biennials and festivals, including the Tashkent Biennial, Uzbekistan *Rhizoma: Saudi Pavilion*, Venice Biennale (2013); and Baku Public Art Festival Azerbaijan (2015). She has organized a number of exhibitions for Maraya Art Centre, Sharjah. Sara is the West and Central Asia editor for ArtAsiaPacific.

About Babi Badalov:

Babi Badalov's work often is dedicated to linguistic explorations researching the limits of language and the borders it imposes upon its users and based on his personal experience of linguistic inconveniences while travelling. In foreign countries, we often come across words written in the same alphabet as ours, but with different meaning, sound or pronunciation. His visual poetry often takes the form of a diary, created every day through a combination of his own linguistic research of manipulated pictorial material, mainly with political content. His visual poetry often takes the form of a diary, created every day through a combination of his own linguistic research of manipulated pictorial material, mainly with political content.

About Shahpour Pouyan

Shahpour Pouyan's work is a commentary about power, domination and possession through the force of culture. His interest lies in singling out particular objects whose images captivate him, and by painting them he releases the feeling of anguish they create. Pouyan brings the same spirit to his projectiles, demonstrating his wry sense of humour through references to high Persian culture. Working with traditional armourers and metal-smiths, and taking intricately decorated costume armour and military helmets, he has morphed them into the shape of modern rockets or 'projectiles'. These suspended sculptures have an unsettling human-like experience closely resembling actors in the *Taziyeh* (passion play) performed during the month of Muharram.

The MacKenzie | engaging people in transformative experiences of the world through art

For more information on the exhibitions and artists contact:

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