



# Press Release: Kaveh Golestan & *Recreating the Citadel* at Tate Modern

by Archaeology of the Final Decade

**Archaeology of the Final Decade** (AOTFD) is delighted to announce the opening of a room dedicated to ***Recreating the Citadel: Prostitute (1975-77)*** at **Tate Modern**, featuring **Kaveh Golestan's** photographic work alongside **research materials uncovered by AOTFD**. The display marks the first time in Tate Modern's history that a room of its permanent collection has been dedicated to an Iranian artist. The museum will display twenty vintage prints from Kaveh Golestan's *Prostitute* series as well as AOTFD's *Recreating the Citadel* research for the next twelve months.

Tate's recent acquisition of twenty vintage prints from Golestan's *Prostitute* series comes on the back of recent travelling exhibitions of *Recreating the Citadel*, curated by AOTFD, at Foam Fotografiemuseum Amsterdam, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, MAXXI Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo (Rome), and Photo London (Somerset House). Tate's acquisition follows similar purchases of Golestan's work by Musée d'art Moderne de la Ville de Paris and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA).

## Notes for Editors

### ***Archaeology of the Final Decade***

Founded in 2010 by curator and writer Vali Mahlouji, **Archaeology of the Final Decade** is a non-profit curatorial and educational platform with the core aim of bringing international attention to artists whose work has been neglected due to historical circumstances. As part of this mission, AOTFD assists cultural institutions in identifying and investigating significant cultural and artistic materials that have remained obscure, under-exposed, endangered, or in some instances destroyed. AOTFD's mission is the reintegration of these materials into cultural memory, counteracting the damages of censorship and historical erasure.

## **Biography - Kaveh Golestan (1950-2003)**

Kaveh Golestan was an important and prolific Iranian pioneer of documentary photography. His photographic practice has hugely informed the work of future generations of Iranian artists, but until now remained seriously over-looked by institutions inside and outside of his home country.

Besides numerous socially motivated projects such as the *Prostitute* series, Kaveh Golestan documented many major historical events, including the conflict in Northern Ireland, the Iranian revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, and the Gulf Wars. In 1979 he was awarded the Robert Capa Gold Medal for "superlative photography requiring exceptional courage and enterprise abroad". He wasn't able to pick up the award until thirteen years later, at a time when the work was no longer considered a threat to the Iranian government.

Golestan's life and work was cut short when he stepped on a fatal landmine on 2 April 2003, while on a BBC assignment in Iraq. He died in Kifri in Northern Iraq.

## **About *Prostitute* (1975-77)**

Golestan's photographs from the Citadel of Shahr-e No are the result of a very personal mission. He entered the Citadel without an official permit, seeking to publicly expose its interior in three consecutive photo-essays in the Iranian daily newspaper *Ayandegan* in 1977. The sixty-one portraits which went on to form the final project were edited down from a substantially larger pool of negatives.

The creation of the series involved several years (1975-77) of study and research, long visits to the site of the Citadel, and a cultivation of friendships with the residents which played into the carefully composed portraits. Golestan's meticulous observation and empathetic sensitivity to the individual subjectivities of the women produced one of the strongest photographic studies of femaleness composed in Iran.

Revisiting the work of Kaveh Golestan not only highlights the uncomfortable relationship between the Iranian state and the Citadel of Shahr-e No, but also sheds light on the nature of the totalising post-revolutionary narrative. Golestan's original aim was to rupture metropolitan complacency and to confront his audience with the darker face of their society.

Much of his artistic ethos was directed towards shifting public opinion and motivating democratic civic action. In the face of political restrictions, Golestan and an active intellectual milieu in the 1960s and 1970s, especially on the Left, were driven by a social conscientiousness that strove to expose and incorporate the marginal into the mainstream as an act of political motivation. His transgressive lens became a conduit for the marginalised to interact with the mainstream, to overcome public denial about the truth of their experiences. The photographer consciously identified with the excluded. His aim was to summon us to action, to move, to radicalise and politicise his audience.



## **Kaveh Golestan – Selected Exhibitions:**

### **Curated by Archaeology of the Final Decade:**

*Kaveh Golestan - Prostitute*, Tate Modern (permanent collection), August 2017–.

*Prostitute (1975-77)*, Photo London, Somerset House, London, 21–24 May 2015.

*Az Div o Dad: the Fantastical Polaroids of Kaveh Golestan*, Art Dubai Modern, 18–21 March 2015.

*Unedited History (Iran 1960-2014) – Recreating Shahr-e No: The Intimate Politics of the Marginal*, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 16 May – 24 August 2014; travelled to MAXXI Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome, 10 December 2014 – 15 March 2015.

*Kaveh Golestan: The Citadel*, FOAM, Amsterdam, 21 March – 4 May 2014

### **Other:**

*Kaveh Golestan: Recording the Truth in Iran 1950-2003*, The Kunsthal Rotterdam, 2008

*Rouspi, Kargar, Majoun*, Tehran University, 1978

*Az Div o Dad*, Seyhoun Gallery, 1976

*Kaveh Golestan*, Seyhoun Gallery, 1975

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