



Ramin Haerizadeh | Rokni Haerizadeh | Hesam Rahmanian

I PUT IT THERE YOU NAME IT

Texts by Vali Mahlouji

By Vali Mahlouji

Artists Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh and Hesam Rahmanian, co-habitants and co-exhibitors, appropriate the gallery space into their personal domestic environment and create a replica of home. Interconnected rooms are stage sets. Coveted art works, collected over the years, by artists including Louise Bourgeois, David Hockney, Bahman Mohassess, Jake and Dinos Chapman, mingle with their own artworks, found objects and possessions in exact replication of home.

These artworks, relics and objects, accumulated, amassed and organised through time, are placed and displayed in apparent arbitrariness. The parts are intertwined, shortening and lengthening experience. There are no clear delineations, categorizations. Deliberately, there are no boundaries, nor hierarchies. Dramatic meetings are being pushed. Individual distinctions are overshadowed. Fragments must be considered in their function predominantly in relation to the spatial totality. A consciousness of the spatial totality considers the object as an integral part of it.





THEATRE OF OUR WORLD

By Vali Mahlouji



Right in the heart of his sixteenth century Florentine Palazzo Vecchio, Francesco I de' Medici designed a private windowless setting in marble and painted wood around the theme of the four seasons as a lavish decorative scheme to accommodate, organize and modulate the dialogue between his paintings and sculptures and precious collectables. This was the secluded chamber of his *studiolo* and it was accessed through a hidden doorway.¹ It was a sophisticated man's sanctuary – a retreat amassed with objects qualified, *a priori*, by their rarity. Its central aim was to reflect a condensed microcosm of the universe - creation in all its diversity and variety. Throughout the Renaissance *studioli* and curiosity rooms and cabinets were designed in private spaces across Italy and the rest of Europe and these became places of reflection and admiration for the wonders of the world and things precious - *Wunderkammern* (or *Kunstammern*) as they were known in German. “The first impression upon entering a cabinet of curiosities was one of a world in miniature, an accumulation of objects in such profusion that it was difficult to find one's way round it; there was no beginning and no end.”² A document from 1587 lists the *Kunstammer's* indispensable items as: sculptures and paintings; “curious items from home or abroad”; and “antlers, horns, claws, feathers and other things belonging to strange and curious animals”.³ The dual aim was not only to discover, accumulate and define but also to inscribe meaning, encourage analogies, and to draw a network of dynamic parallels and apportion magical affinities across the collectables.

One such famous *Kunstammer* was created at the Scholss Ambras by the brother of Charles V, Ferdinand of Tyrol, in the 1570s. In it all manner of arts, natural wonders, freaks of nature, and extraordinary creations were amassed. In one corner were displayed life-size representations of a giant and dwarf, a document of two residents of Vienna. In front, sat a tree trunk with antelope horns nailed onto it. Above, two sharks hung from the ceiling.

These highly prized and guarded theatrical settings showed off the extraordinary wide range of interests of the collectors. They defied any system of classification - a profusive shower of objects, art works, natural marvels, scientific instruments, minerals, manuscripts, ethnographic curiosities. In 1521, along with his artworks, Albrecht Durer sent back from the Netherlands to Nuremberg items of *naturalia* such as animal horns, fish fins, coral and a wooden weapon retrieved from the East Indies.⁴ The seventeenth century Imperial Library of Vienna mixed an extensive array of relics and fragments slotted and fitted in-between books and manuscripts. These were, in the customary way, arranged in serried ranks and apparent arbitrary symmetries, heavy with meaning. At certain times and for select persons *studioli* and cabinets were exhibited. So attached were men to their prized found objects that a certain Manfredo Settala (deceased 1680) ordered his most curious relics to accompany his coffin at the funeral procession.

Seventeenth century courts across Europe commissioned and invested in preciousl

produced luxury art shrines (*Kunstschrank*) that presented a portable ordered universe in miniature. A famous one destroyed in 1945 was the exquisite Hainhofer cabinet taken to the court of Phillip II, Duke of Pomerania, in 1612.⁵ It is documented as being made of walnut, ebony and ivory, surmounted by silvered depictions of Mount Parnassus, the Nine Muses and the Seven Liberal Arts. Its lower parts carried personifications of the continents, the zodiac, and the attributes of man. A total ‘universe of Mind, Nature and Art’.⁶ A desire to bring all knowledge into one space. A cosmic whole.

Jan ‘Velvet’ Brueghel and Peter Paul Rubens immortalized the theatre of the world in their famous collaborative allegorical painting, *The Sense of Sight* (part of *The Allegory of the Senses*), dated 1617.⁷ The personification of sight sits amongst works of art, antiquities, *naturalia* and *scientifica* in this pictorial equivalent of the *Wunderkammer*.

Back in the time of the antique, treasure houses of temples and sacred places of pilgrimage equally housed collections and materials endowed with special auras or magical powers. These could be seen equally as linked to a culture of curiosity. The surrealists reveled in imbuing found objects with similar powers.

FOOTNOTES

1. An example of a studiolo, known as the Gubbio studiolo, originally from the Palazzo Ducale of Gubbio, Italy - has been reassembled and is on display at the Metropolitan Museum, New York. Refer also to The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Europe, ed. Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor, 2001
2. Patrick Mauriès, Cabinets of Curiosities, Thames & Hudson, London, 2002, p. 68
3. B. Gutfleish and J. Menzhausen, “How a Kunstammer should be formed”, Journal of the History of Collections, 1989 Vol I: p. 11.
4. A. Hyatt Mayor, Prints and People, Metropolitan Museum of Art/Princeton, 1971, nos 48
5. For a painting showing Phillip Hainhofer of Augsburg presenting this cabinet see Patrick Mauriès, idem, p. 56
6. ibid, p. 56
7. Jan ‘Velvet’ Brueghel and Peter Paul Rubens, The Sense of Sight (part of The Allegory of the Senses), Museo del Prado, Madrid.

That morning eleven days ago, someone cried out. Not a word has been heard since.

No crying has been heard.

The prince says that the world will be saved by beauty! And I maintain that the reason he has such playful ideas is that he is in love.

Pass by us, and forgive us our happiness.

I prefer Munch the painter because he has the real idea of theatre.

Munch may have believed one can and one must start from one's own body, both the actor and the spectator (on stage and in life, respectively).

And this can and must be carried out as an alternative behaviour. So the actor and the observer can be reciting and living. In this way the body and the behaviour are no longer disunited, they do not go their separate ways.

Is it still possible to produce something as sublime as *The Ecstasy of Santa Teresa di Avila*? I am skeptical of those who reduce its purity to an orgasm.

What about love?

Sometimes in the evening, especially at dusk, there is the feeling that something will come out from the forest and devour you.

This is the culture of love
An unrequited affair of love
Full of heartfelt sentiments
Full of smells.

I like Orhan Pamuk's *Museum of Innocence*. A love novel in the most popular sense. A character tells his love story. For this or that reason our character collects the things he and his beloved share.

Novels have also archival qualities

And the chemistry of daily life.

In love's pain there is also the anger, the fury that the beloved does not understand us.
This is how life is.

This is the culture of love.
An unrequited affair of love.

Choosing an imaginary world in which you (want to) live.

Living in that world.

A city one has lived in long enough shapes itself into one's own image, acquires the traits of one's personality, the features of one's soul.

Like a map of humiliations and failures, a *huzun* of longing.

In those days, one could order ham or pork sausages for breakfast in most restaurants or drink lemon flavored vodka at Rejans, a Russian restaurant run by two emigrant white Russian ladies. In those days the city was visibly singing.

I live with Maeterlinck's fear of the day when we see Hamlet die in the theatre, that something of him dies for us. He is dethroned by the spectre of an actor, and we shall never be able to keep the usurper out of our dreams.

A boy told his torturer, "I take my desires for reality because I believe in the reality of my desires."

Yevgeny splendidly expressed it the other day.

I am a keeper. A guardian. The reality that is not visible is apocryphal and the guardian knows its meaning. So the guardian must prevent people from approaching the mystical secrets in his custody.

The origin of composition is custody, and as composition it is conserved within the order and unites present and past.

And the modern man, as in any other era, is an ancient man.

Humans love categorizing. We don't always agree on the boundaries but neither do we like arbitrariness.

Still,

I prefer the hell of chaos to the hell of order.

I prefer many things that I haven't mentioned here

To many things I've also left unsaid.
I prefer the time of insects to the time of stars.
I always knock on wood.

I prefer not to ask how much longer and when.
I prefer keeping in mind even the possibility
that existence has its own reason for being.

I prefer Ophelia to Gertrude.

Sometimes, I like Van Gogh's pencil drawings much more than his paintings.

Comments are free on the blog and encouraged, but register first. Hopefully this will encourage community and keep us from having to come in and clean Viagra spam.

Maybe there were never any cherries in the orchard.
Waiting for the telephone to ring.

I admire Chekhov's search:

Believe me, for many there the fatherland has become as strange as it has for us: an 'inner emigration' of millions.

There, awaiting the end just as we are.
This is the culture of love
An unrequited love affair
Full of heartfelt sentiments
Full of smells

A cabinet of curiosities.

Pass by us, and forgive us our happiness.

An assemblage of Dostoyevsky, Kounelis, Maeterlinck, Pamuk, Symborska and myself, Vali Mahlouji.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Isabelle van den Eynde

Ramin, Rokni and Hesam forced me to accept that their art could not be separated from their environment. With their Art Berlin Contemporary 2011 show, Rokni and Ramin decided to transport their studio to the fair booth; they glued fallen scraps of material to the studio floor, and while art handlers were asked to throw nothing away, to keep the studio exactly as it was, I was asked to throw all the normality and formality I relied on away. We, as a gallery, since ABC, have relinquished familiarity by turning away from the structures that have supported us until now to meet Ramin, Rokni and Hesam's requests. They asked us to take risks, abandoning price lists, openings and inventories, and replacing them with an ambiance in which artworks of their own, of all three of them, of others they admire, Astroturf, floor painting and laundry mingle with the smell of cigarette smoke and fresh fruit. We are grateful to them for their sincerity, and for the ways in which they have revived us.





RAMIN HAERIZADEH

Born in 1975, Tehran, Iran. Works and lives in Dubai, UAE.

Dubai-based Iranian artist Ramin Haerizadeh fought his way from the paths he was expected to follow to acquire a diverse education in the arts. Exploring photography, drawing, painting, film, animation and collage, he creates multifaceted works that lyrically reclaim and transform found images into arrestingly witty, but tragically troubling, scenes of humanity.

Among multiple reproductions of Haerizadeh's self, a lone, bearded, veiled, cross-dressed creature crops up incessantly. This creature reveals a culture of concealment, serving as both a metaphor for oppression and a container of safety. As winners re-write history, Haerizadeh, disillusioned, re-writes, camouflages and twists given images and apparent truths. He mimics the hypocritical and grotesque manipulations that shape our disturbing world and forcibly alienate personal and collective memories. The inevitable repetition of abusive behaviour, on any scale, resonates throughout Haerizadeh's carefully constructed montages of beasts, texts, icons, magazine clippings and media images.

Vali Mahlouji wrote that in Ramin Haerizadeh's collages 'he depicts himself as a "simulacrum – a chaos of appearances" (as Jorge Luis Borges said of Citizen Kane) to emphasise a fractured self. Multiple cross-gendered self-portraits appear to celebrate a kind of triumphant bestiality. The artist uses a safety of humourous juxtapositions and candy-soft background colours to contain and camouflage the grotesque absurdity of the exposed internal conflicts, highlighting the schism between the individual's internal and external realities'.

Ramin Haerizadeh presents a collaborative exhibition with Rokni Haerizadeh and Hesam Rahmanian at Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde in March 2012 entitled 'I Put It There, You Name It'. Receiving wide international acclaim,

his works featured in Charles Saatchi's 'Unveiled: New Art From the Middle East' London, 2009, Thaddaeus Ropac's 'Be Crowned with Laurel in Oblivion', 2010, and 'Raad-o-Bargh', 2009, Paris, 'The Right to Protest' at The Museum of the Seam, Jerusalem, and three solo shows at Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde. At the invitation only Art Berlin Contemporary in 2011 he presented on the theme 'About Painting' with his brother Rokni Haerizadeh. Beyond this, Haerizadeh has participated in group shows in Berlin, New York, Istanbul and Tehran, and has works in various collections such as The British Museum, London, the Devi Art Foundation, Deli, the Rubell Collection, Florida, and the Rosenblum Collection, Paris.

ROKNI HAERIZADEH

Born in 1978, Tehran, Iran. Works and lives in Dubai, UAE.

The works of Rokni Haerizadeh, ranging from painting to collage, sculpture and animation, form a narrative that explores the extremities of human behaviour. Haerizadeh finds humour in the arts from the late Safavid to Qajar eras, in their exaggerated depictions of existence where intended dignity disappoints to reveal farcical imperfections. By rejecting romantic nostalgia, he captures the humour we depend upon to negotiate our flawed world.

Ephemeral oral cultures, from Coffee House painting narration to contemporary news broadcasts, distort, ravage and regenerate narratives as Rokni Haerizadeh does. He depicts a decadent world, exaggerated by a fantastical sense of the absurd, and amplified by his compelling and intrinsic manipulations of reality. In his series 'Fictionville', found media photographs capturing violence, torture and suffering are transformed into satirical tales that echo our grotesque reality; harrowing scenes of riots, demonstrations and natural disasters are corrupted to become perverse scenes of sensual delights and animalistic instincts.

He creates a controversial and disturbing narrative, a commedia dell'arte animated by the vocabulary of contemporary film, art, literature and music. Each character in Haerizadeh's narratives is the expression of a mood; frustration, desire, naivety, perversion, decency, violence and shame reveal themselves through his painterly approaches. When he rips images apart, destruction and nihilism subvert meanings spontaneously. When he thrashes paint on the canvas, protest and torture mingle, and the violent process makes a mockery of religious bigotry.

Rokni Haerizadeh's works - whether direct responses to society, the histories of art, literature and oral culture, or organic expressions of moods and sensations - are fragments in a never-ending and elaborate creative process.

Instinctive desires and struggles are unleashed and challenged by Haerizadeh to emerge like castrated howls; words are abandoned, and narratives materialize as disturbingly vivid collages of sensations and scenarios that repeat, evolve, regress, and re-emerge.

He has had several solo shows in Dubai with Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde, most recently 'Oh Victory, You Forgot Your Underwear' in 2009, and has participated in group shows such as Charles Saatchi's 'Unveiled: New Art from the Middle East', 2009, and 'Raad-o-Bargh' at Thaddaeus Ropac Gallery in Paris, 2009. At the invitation only Art Berlin Contemporary in 2011 on the theme 'About Painting', he and his brother Ramin Haerizadeh transformed the booth into a dynamic installation replicating their studio space. In his show 'I Put It There, You Name It' in March 2012 at Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde, he extends this project further. He participated in Iran Gardens at the Tehran Museum for Contemporary Art in 2004 as well as Iran.com at the Museum Fur Neue Kunst in Freiburg, Germany. In June 2010, he had an exhibition at Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac entitled 'Be Crowned with Laurel in Oblivion'. In the Sharjah Biennale 2011, Rokni Haerizadeh presented Fictionville, a project featuring an animation. In Art Basel Art Statements 2012, the artist presents a solo show. His works are included in public and private collections, among which the Tate Modern, the British Museum, the Devi Art Foundation, the JP Morgan Chase Collection, the Rubell Family Collection, the Rosenblum Collection.



HESAM RAHMANIAN

Born in 1980, U.S.A. Lives and works in Dubai, UAE.

Dubai-based artist Hesam Rahmanian grew up in his native Tehran, before moving to India, the USA and subsequently the UAE. Rahmanian studied fine art and calligraphy in Tehran, followed by applied art and design in California, where he received wide recognition for his outstanding graphic design work. Since moving to Dubai, he has immersed himself fully in visual art, focusing predominantly on painting, though occasionally incorporating neon, or challenging himself to projects such as ‘Solitaire’, a pack of playing cards illustrated with figures of the Iranian regime, or a portrait of Ahmadinejad made entirely of playing dice. Rahmanian’s works encourage social discourse through their astute social observations and arresting wit. He has developed a practice that inherently integrates his personal memories, obsessions and inspirations with wider questions of social and political issues from his native Iran and beyond.

At the core of Rahmanian’s creative explorations is the desire to maintain equality between the subjects and the painterly techniques appropriated. His approaches fluctuate so that in certain works, events, allegories and metaphors flood out through fluid gestural painting that echoes the spontaneous energy of the discontent and the momentum of overbearing powers. In other works, wrought layers of heavy paint build up on the canvas as Rahmanian’s ideas evolve; animals emerge from tanks, car wrecks emerge from abstraction, and the surfaces are scratched at obsessively. The laborious evolution of these paintings captures another aspect of unabated human struggle and frustration. Whichever approach, process or medium Rahmanian engages, the final works emerge as reductive scenes in which birds, animals, figures or inanimate objects stand alone, stranded. Solitary metaphors create an augmented sense of ultimate desolation while channelling an intense spectrum of influences, inspirations and poignant social observations.

VALI MAHLOUJI

Works and lives in London, UK.

Vali Mahlouji is an independent curator, critic and writer who has collaborated with The British Museum, The Barbican Centre, National Museum of Contemporary Art Athens, Sharjah Biennial, Delfina Foundation, Yale University, *Theatre Journal*, City University New York, Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac (Paris), The Saatchi Gallery, Niccolo Sprovieri Gallery (London), Kalfayan Galleries (Athens), Isabelle van den Eynde Gallery (Dubai), Krinzinger Gallery (Vienna), Khak Gallery (Tehran), The London Middle-East Institute, The Italian Cultural Institute (London), Institut Francais (London), Bregenzer Festspiele, London Film School, British Film Institute, Royal Court Theatre, The Guardian, BBC.

INDEX



08–09 **ROKNI HAERIZADEH**
The Crying Butcher Was in Love with the Canary | 2009
oil on canvas
200x300 cm



10–11 **ROKNI HAERIZADEH**
Screaming Pumpkin | 2010
glazed ceramic
38 cm x diam. 60 cm



12 **HESAM RAHMANIAN**
Ya Hussain | 2011
acrylic and neon on canvas
120x100 cm

Right at the front
RAMIN HAERIZADEH
Mrs. Tanakora | 2011
assemblage of found objects
128x42x43 cm

13 Center
RAMIN HAERIZADEH
We Choose to Go to the Moon | 2009
mixed media and collage on canvas
200x150 cm

Bottom right
RAMIN HAERIZADEH
For Ghazel | 2004
video | 4.30 min | ed. of 3 + 2 AP



15 **RAMIN HAERIZADEH**
Still Life, King, Queen and Tomato | 2011
collage and acrylic on canvas | 170x140 cm



16 **RAMIN HAERIZADEH**
Cabinet of Self-Curiosities | 2012
wood, glass, clay, photos, frames,
soft toys, fiberglass, stones and ink
177x80x43 cm
detail in the center



18–19 **ROKNI HAERIZADEH**
Untitled | 2012
Painted Floors: acrylic and varnish on MDF boards
variable sizes

Installation views
Work by Ardeshir Mohassess (top right)
Work by David Hockney (bottom right)



24 Collaborative work by
RAMIN HAERIZADEH, ROKNI HAERIZADEH AND HESAM RAHMANIAN
The Flute Player of Hamelin | 2012
Assemblage of found items with
epoxy foam, wallpaper collage, plaster and acrylic
240x48x35 cm

Wall installation views
Left to right top to bottom
Works by Ahmad Aminnazar, Mona Hatoum,
Olafur Eliasson,
Mona Hatoum, Billy Childish, Georg Baselitz,
Nam Jun Peik,
Louise Bourgeois, Alice Nikitina, Alice Nikitina,
Bahman Mohassess, Alice Nikitina,
Tala Madani, Damien Hirst,
Bahman Mohassess,

25 *Bronze sculpture by Bahman Mohassess*



26 Installation view
Bronze sculptures by Bahman Mohassess
Mirror work by
Monir Shahroudi Farmanfarmaian

27 **ROKNI HAERIZADEH**
You Have Chosen the Skull for One of the Seven Essays | 2010
oil on canvas | 250x153 cm

Work by Abel Auer (top right)
Sculpture by Shirin Fakhim (bottom right)



28–29 Wall installation views
top to bottom, left to right
Works by Bahman Mohassess,
Bita Fayyazi, Shahpour Pouyan, Abel
Auer, Shirin Fakhim, Houshang Pezeshknia,

Y.Z. Kami,
ROKNI HAERIZADEH
Ghognous for Bahman Mohasses | 2012
Ripped magazine pages, gesso and watercolor
on paper | 36x27 cm

Two works by Nader Ahrihan,
ROKNI HAERIZADEH
Khosrow and Shirin | 2011
gesso, acrylic and watercolor on paper
65x100 cm

HESAM RAHMANIAN
Web | 2011
acrylic on canvas
triptych 50x70, 70x50, 70x60 cm

RAMIN HAERIZADEH
Mangy Lion Series | 2012
mixed media on paper
35.5x25.5 cm

works by Ardeshir Mohassess,
Avish Khebrehzadeh,
Bita Fayyazi (sculpture on the table),
Two works by Daniel Johnston,
Nazgol Ansarinia,

RAMIN HAERIZADEH
Melody of a Fallen Tree | 2011
mixed media and collage on canvas
170x140 cm



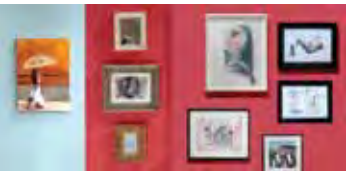
33 Left to right
RAMIN HAERIZADEH
Hail to the King | 2011
mixed media and collage on canvas
300x200 cm

HESAM RAHMANIAN
Eqsh (love) | 2012
acrylic and neon on canvas
127x107 cm



36 **ROKNI HAERIZADEH**
Still Life, Three Carrots, One Tangerine on an Old Tray | 2009
oil on canvas | 150x200 cm

ROKNI HAERIZADEH
Untitled | 2012
Painted Floors: acrylic and varnish
on MDF boards
variable sizes



38–39 Wall installation views
Top to bottom, left to right

HESAM RAHMANIAN
The Savior | 2012
acrylic on canvas | 70x50 cm

HESAM RAHMANIAN
Untitled | 2012
acrylic on cardboard | 23x18 cm

ROKNI HAERIZADEH
Mollah Nasreddin | 2008–2011
Ink, watercolor and gesso on paper
21x29 cm

Work by Bita Fayyazi

ROKNI HAERIZADEH
Dagger Dancer | 2008
watercolor on paper | 65x50 cm

Work by Nargess Hashemi

ROKNI HAERIZADEH
Mollah Nasreddin | 2003
pen and marker on paper | 21x28 cm

ROKNI HAERIZADEH
Our Story | 2002
pen and marker on paper | 21x29 cm

Work by Hani Rashed

COLLABORATIVE WORKS BY RAMIN
HAERIZADEH, ROKNI HAERIZADEH
AND HESAM RAHMANIAN



40

RAMIN HAERIZADEH
Sweet Shirin | 2004
marker on photo paper | 30x21cm

RAMIN HAERIZADEH
Theater Group | 2008
c-print | 100x70 cm | ed. 3/10

HESAM RAHMANIAN
Only One Can Cross the Road | 2012
acrylic on canvas | 50x70cm

RAMIN HAERIZADEH
Today's Woman | 2009
collage on paper | 75x55cm

ROKNI HAERIZADEH
Dead End | 2002
pen on paper | 21x28 cm

*Works by Ardeshir Mohassess,
Youssef Nabil,*

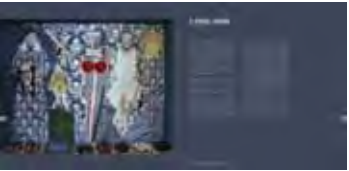
HESAM RAHMANIAN
Old But Eager | 2012
acrylic on canvas | 70x50 cm

Work by Joze Larma,

HESAM RAHMANIAN
Captured Swan | 2011
acrylic on paper | 57x75 cm

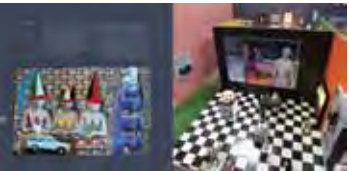
Work by Farshid Maleki,

ROKNI HAERIZADEH
Untitled | 2012
Painted Floors and Cabinet:
acrylic and varnish on wood



02

GARDEN OF GRANDMOTHERS (01) | 2012
*Plastic sheet, wallpaper, printed paper, acrylic
and found items in a wooden crate*
185x240x40 cm



04

GARDEN OF GRANDMOTHERS (02) | 2012
*Plastic sheet, wallpaper, printed paper, acrylic
and found items* | 156x244x20 cm



44

GARDEN OF GRANDMOTHERS (03) | 2012
*Plastic sheet, wallpaper, printed paper, acrylic
and found items* | 185x240 cm



46–47

GARDEN OF GRANDMOTHERS (04) | 2012
*Plastic sheet, wallpaper, printed paper, acrylic
and found items* | 300x540x83 cm



48

GARDEN OF GRANDMOTHERS (05) | 2012
*Plastic sheet, wallpaper, printed paper, acrylic
and found items* | 182x240 cm expanding on the wall

49

GARDEN OF GRANDMOTHERS (06) | 2012
*Plastic sheet, wallpaper, printed paper, acrylic
and found items* | 186x240 cm expanding on the wall



50–51

GARDEN OF GRANDMOTHERS (07) | 2012
*Plastic sheet, wallpaper, printed paper, acrylic
and found items* | variable sizes

GARDEN OF GRANDMOTHERS (08) | 2012
*Plastic sheet, wallpaper, printed paper, acrylic
and found items* | 185x240cm expanding on the wall



54–55

LADY WITH THE SHELL | 2012
*Assemblage of found items with
epoxy foam, wallpaper collage, plaster and acrylic*
240x109x50 cm



56

GARDEN OF GRANDMOTHERS (09) | 2012
*Plastic sheet, wallpaper, printed paper, acrylic
and feathers* | 185x240 cm



58–59

GARDEN OF GRANDMOTHERS (10) | 2012
*Plastic sheet, wallpaper, printed paper, acrylic
and found items* | variable sizes



60

GARDEN OF GRANDMOTHERS (11) | 2012
*Plastic sheet, wallpaper, printed paper, acrylic
and found items* | 185x240 cm

61

MAD GOAT | 2012
*Assemblage of found items with
epoxy foam, plaster and acrylic*
218x45x45 cm

GARDEN OF GRANDMOTHERS (12) | 2012
Plastic sheet, wallpaper, printed paper and acrylic
185x135 cm



62

BALZAC | 2012
*Assemblage of found items with
epoxy foam, plaster and acrylic*
243x55x80 cm

63

GARDEN OF GRANDMOTHERS (13) | 2012
*Plastic sheet, wallpaper, printed paper, acrylic
and found items* | variable sizes



64

GARDEN OF GRANDMOTHERS (14) | 2012
*Plastic sheet, wallpaper, printed paper, acrylic,
spray paint and fake fur* | 185x240 cm



67

GANESH | 2012
Assemblage of found items, wood and acrylic
241x105x105 cm



68–69

ROKNI HAERIZADEH
Study Model (I) (II) (III) | 2003
watercolor and ink on paper
From top to bottom
30x35 cm, 28x28 cm, 30x30 cm



71

GUARD OF THE GARDEN | 2012
*Assemblage of found items with
epoxy foam and acrylic* | 260x47x59 cm

Published on the occasion of the exhibition *I Put It There You Name It*, a collaborative exhibition by *Ramin Haerizadeh, Rokni Haerizadeh and Hesam Rahmadian*, presented at Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde, Dubai, from March 18 to May 17, 2012.

Design by Hesam Rahmadian
Texts by Vali Mahlouji
Photography by Xavier Hansart
Cover photography by Ramin Haerizadeh

Published and distributed by
Gallery Isabelle van den Eynde
Street 8
Alserkal ave
#17
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Dubai
UAE
Phone: + 971 (0) 4 323 5052
Fax: + 971 (0) 4 323 6761
www.ivde.net

Our special thanks goes to the following people, whose work and commitment were essential to the exhibition and catalogue: Nesa Azadikhah, Tessa de Caters, Olivier and Nathalie Delfosse, Bita Fayyazi and Minnie McIntyre.

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ISBN: 978-9948-16-657-3