

Thomas Erben Gallery



“Born in Tehran in 1982, Barbad Golshiri is part of a generation of young Iranian artists who, working primarily at home, are distancing themselves from the easy exoticisms that sell well abroad. At the same time, they’re trying to make art that’s critically responsive to contemporary Iran, and to a political culture that opposes, on ideological grounds, much of what they’re doing.

Mr. Golshiri’s tough, wiry second New York solo is made up of sculptural grave markers, most of them in the horizontal format of Muslim tombstones. At least one piece directly subverts the traditional model. Called “Pentimento,” it’s a flat rectangle of black iron pierced with a cluster of stakelike uprights” ... “Other pieces are dedicated to political martyrs. One tombstone, incised with a labyrinth pattern, commemorates Ahmad Mir-Alaei, a translator of Jorge Luis Borges into Persian, who was killed in 1995 in the so-called chain murders of Iran, reputedly carried out by government agents, that wiped out dozens of dissident writers and intellectuals, many of them friends of the artist’s father, the novelist Houshang Golshiri (1938-2000).

Another memorial, designed for a dissident who had been officially denied a tombstone, consists of a stencil-cut of a funerary inscription that can be temporarily but repeatedly applied to the site of the grave. The show, a collaboration with Aaran Art Gallery in Tehran, includes tributes to Western artists and writers (Jan van Eck [sic], Samuel Beckett) Mr. Golshiri holds dear, as well as a marker for himself, which looks like a work in progress. Surely its existence is premature, but in the context of work about the politics of death, the message is: Be ready; you never know.

Holland Cotter”

Thomas Erben Gallery Inc.
526 West 26th Street, 4th floor
New York, NY 10001
212.645.8701
www.thomaserben.com
info@thomaserben.com