

and repressive conditions.

"The only relationship between many of my colleagues and the government is censorship," Golshiri comments in a correspondence from 2012. In this dynamic, the human body becomes the battlefield, a contested area constantly renegotiated and compromised, which the artist, in his previous performance work, expressed through the immediacy of physical acts—ingesting, cutting, masturbating.

Considering the urgent presence of the body, with all its most primal and visceral functions, death has played an important, if understated, part throughout Golshiri's art. In *Curriculum Mortis*, it becomes the main theme through which all other aspects are filtered, as physical bodies are replaced with tombstones, turning the gallery into a graveyard. How do we deal with the loss of those close to us, when they are killed under unclear circumstances, in a society where no authority can be trusted? Golshiri approaches each death individually, creating grave markers so closely attuned as to become physical manifestations of the people they commemorate.

*Tombstone for Borges' Assassinated Translator*, for example, incorporates engravings referring to the stories translated by Ahmad Mir-Alaei, a well-known writer who disappeared and was later found dead, allegedly from cardiac arrest. By making these tomb-



Barbad Golshiri, *Tombstone of Beckett*, 2004–2013, iron, ashes. Image: Courtesy of the Artist and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

stones, Golshiri gives voice to those whose words have been forcibly taken from us, and gives them a renewed physical presence in the world, refusing to forget.

Not all graves commemorate victims of oppression; as is true for Golshiri's production as a whole, this series of tombs reverberate with subtext, and the artist's own personal history is as deeply entwined in the work as the histories of the dead. There is the grave of Samuel Beckett, whom Golshiri has translated into Persian; a stone with the epitaph "[There is] no God"; a Tombstone of Jan van Eyck; and finally Golshiri's own tombstone. Walking through this makeshift graveyard, we are moving through a mind-

scape of the artist; each grave presents a portal into worlds beyond the present one, where transformation is possible and all can—finally—be different.

Barbad Golshiri (b.1982, Tehran, Iran) studied painting at The School of Art and Architecture, Azad University, Tehran. He has worked both as media artist and critic. His art has been shown widely in international art institutions. The artist lives and works in Tehran. The exhibition is a collaboration with Aaran Gallery, Tehran.

Thomas Erben Gallery is at 526 West 26th Street, floor 4, New York, NY 10001. Tel: (1-212) 645 8701. Website: [www.thomaserben.com](http://www.thomaserben.com).

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Barbad Golshiri, *Death Sentence*, 2011–2013, engraving on marble (triptych). Image: Courtesy of the Artist and Thomas Erben Gallery, New York.

## THE UNITED STATES

### Portals To Other Worlds

Thomas Erben will present *Curriculum Mortis*, a sculptural installation of a cemetery, by Iranian multimedia artist Barbad Golshiri, September 7 through October 26, 2013.

It will be his second solo exhibition with the gallery after *Nothing Is Left to Tell* in 2010. One of the most prominent figures on the Iranian contemporary scene, over the past ten years Golshiri has produced aesthetically and conceptually provocative art, in an impressive balancing act between political urgency