

# Thomas Erben Gallery

**Newsha Tavakolian** (b.1981 in Tehran) began working professionally in the Iranian press at the age of 16. She has since covered regional conflicts in Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Yemen. Her work is published in international magazines and newspapers such as Time Magazine, Newsweek, Stern, Le Figaro, The New York Times, Der Spiegel, Le Monde, NRC Handelsblad and The New York Times Magazine. Her work has been exhibited internationally at such museums as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Boston's Museum of Fine Art, the Victoria & Albert Museum and the British Museum in London. Tavakolian was selected as the fifth laureate of the Carmignac Gestion Photojournalism Award in 2014. In 2015, Tavakolian was named the recipient of the Principal Prince Claus Award, which honors outstanding achievements in the field of culture and development.

In Thomas Erben Gallery's *Discoveries* presentation, Tavakolian will combine a wall-size scenery with a large video screen and several photographs of varying sizes, into an installation drawn from her forthcoming book/exhibition, *Blank Pages of an Iranian Photo Album*.

"The family photo album is the showcase for my generation. The yellowed albums and the pictures of smiling children dressed up in their best clothes are testament to our hopes and dreams, but they end in blank pages, and the moment when our parents stopped taking our pictures [...]"

For me, Iran is the country where I was born. I went to school here, started my career, and never left. As a photographer I have always struggled with how to perceive my society, with all its complexities and misunderstandings. For this project, I have decided to continue the photo albums of my generation. To add the pictures that were never taken of the way that life is for them now, grown-up. I followed nine people who in a sense define this generation. They are interchangeable, thus representing many. This photo album is theirs; it is my vision of life in Iran now, unromantic and confined. Those who feature on the pages are interchangeable, placed randomly in the natural installation of what is and can be their daily lives.

I began by collecting some childhood snapshots from their own family albums. After that I took a series of pictures that show their lives today, like reportage. They are not necessarily present in these images, but the pictures illustrate the way they live in the four corners of the megalopolis that is Tehran.

I have brought them to a mountain overlooking Tehran, Iran's capital [...] In this messiness I have asked them to find their own space, even though it may not be much bigger than their own two feet. Contrary to all the other images, these nine portraits are staged.

Now, what matters to me is that this work communicates the feelings some have here in Iran. These images will not change anything, nor will they help anybody. What I hope is that they visualize a generation marginalized by those speaking in their name."  
- Newsha Tavakolian