

Here There Nowhere, Flaccid Means Without End

Ali Ahadi

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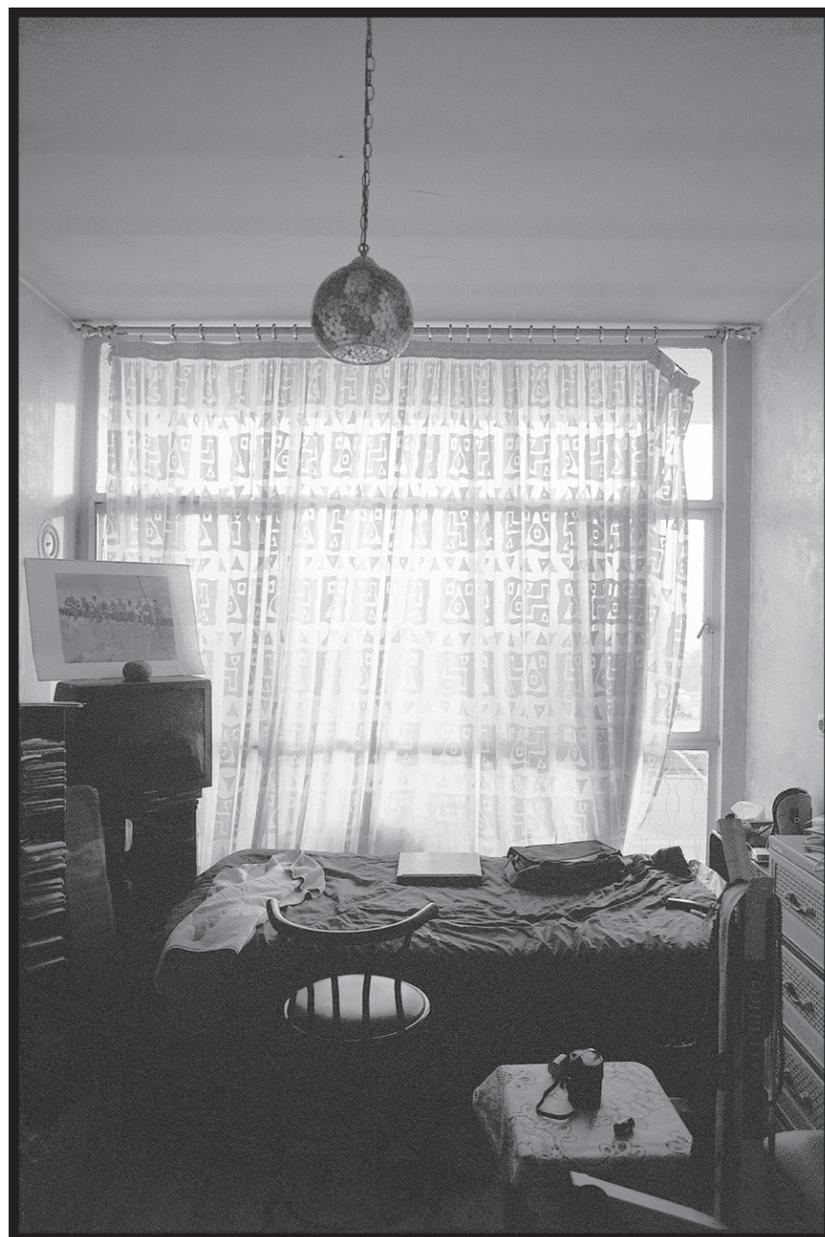
Exhibition Essay

Looking at Ali Ahadi's work, I can't help but getting mad; this work bugs me. It reminds me of the long and devastating Persian history. It makes me want to run into a busy intersection and rant and be completely misunderstood.

On this busy intersection no one is able to comprehend all of my historical and cultural grievances, and why should they? As I raise my voice and arms and keep on shouting, I realize that I'm not speaking in English and I feel even more frustrated, knowing that there will never be an easy connection to the inhabitants of this busy intersection. So I close my eyes and become the teenager in Ahadi's *Wire & Wire-less*. I try to feel normal and act as if all is well, then I disconnect myself from the outside world. This brings me a sense of calm, but it doesn't last long; nothing this peaceful can remain real.

I would have been around the same age as the said teenager during Iran 1979 revolution and all that followed after the revolution, which brought my generation who got bitten and killed nothing but bitterness and betrayal. This is the same kind of bitterness that my father's generation would have felt during Iran oil nationalization movement and the American and British orchestrated coup that followed in 1953 (operation ajax), a repetition of the same bitterness and betrayal my grandfather's generation felt during the 1903 constitutional revolution.

This has become a genetic bitterness as deep and disappointing as having been born with some form of disability or addiction—addiction to disappointment. Sadly, I see Ahadi's generation inflicted with the same intellectual sickness as we witness in the dialogues and monologues of the “voices” in *The Encyclopedia of Shabdolazimica*, while the images of the disabled children become a metaphor reflecting Iranian contemporary society as a whole: encountering intellectual sickness, oppressed and institutionalized by forces “outside” and “inside” the culture that have forced this society to develop a kind of very unfortunate split personality within the individual as well as a collective schizophrenia.



All the Time Existant

Mendacity has become the only tool of survival as we observe in Ahadi's *Off the Record* dialogue of self-conscious and ultimately revealing struggle in trying to overcome an oppressive “sexiocultural” duality, a pretense of knowledge as a substitute for so-called desirable anatomy.

There is a sense of gloom and doom all the way through the series, but there is a sense of beauty as well, a kind of beauty like a lemon tree growing on the hip of compost. This cultural compost is constantly interrupted in its struggle to arrive at modernity, but has lost itself in backward, ideological, reactionary behavior.

Iranian people have withstood thousands of years of invasions, conquest, rape and murder, but nothing has challenged them as harshly as modernity (though much can be said about the similar issues facing the rest of humanity).

We blindly entered a race toward some utopian idea that what is new will bring us happiness regardless of all the side effects, and consequently we have contaminated our mental well-being as well as all other things we have come in contact with.

What little I see and what little I know, both historically and culturally, forces me to think that very good art is a mediocre, human act. A good act, on the other hand, is a revolution. But the ultimate act is an explosion resulting in complete annihilation.

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