IMMIGRATION







J. A. ARDAKANI

CONTEMPORARY PAINTER

Javad Alimohammadi Ardakani

JAVAD ALIMOHAMMADI ARDAKANI
BORN IN 1969 IN ARDAKAN, YAZD, IRAN, JAVAD ALIMOHAMMADI ARDAKANI IS A PAINTER, ART RESEARCHER, AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR WHOSE PRACTICE ENGAGES WITH PAINTING, INSTALLATION, AND THE STUDY OF ART HISTORY.
HE HOLDS A PH.D. IN ART RESEARCH, AN M.A. IN PAINTING, AND A B.A. IN PAINTING. OVER THE COURSE OF HIS ARTISTIC CAREER, HE HAS DEVELOPED EIGHT BODIES OF WORK ENCOMPASSING PAINTING AND INSTALLATION, PRESENTED THROUGH FIVE SOLO EXHIBITIONS AND NUMEROUS GROUP EXHIBITIONS.
HIS WORKS HAVE ALSO BEEN PRESENTED AT FOUR EDITIONS OF THE TEHRAN AUCTION, AS WELL AS AT SEVERAL OTHER PROMINENT ART AUCTIONS.
ALONGSIDE HIS STUDIO PRACTICE, ARDAKANI'S ENGAGEMENT WITH ART RESEARCH AND ART HISTORY FORMS AN INTEGRAL PART OF HIS BROADER ARTISTIC PERSPECTIVE, SITUATING HIS WORK WITHIN AN ONGOING DIALOGUE BETWEEN ARTISTIC PRACTICE, HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS, AND CONTEMPORARY VISUAL CULTURE.THE NARRATIVE OF IMMIGRATION IN ART CAN ENCOMPASS COUNTLESS IMAGES ARISING FROM THIS HUMAN PHENOMENON.
FROM DOCUMENTARY MODES OF REPRESENTATION TO SUBJECTIVE AND REVELATORY FORMS OF EXPRESSION,
IT OPENS A BROAD FIELD OF ARTISTIC POSSIBILITIES, PLACING THE ARTIST IN RELATION TO ONE OF THE OLDEST HISTORICAL CONDITIONS AND CONCEPTS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE.



IMMIGRATION
SERIES STATEMENT-1

AMONG THESE POSSIBLE REPRESENTATIONS, IMMIGRATION REDUCES THE SUBJECT TO A CONTAINED IMAGE OF THE INDIVIDUAL, RESEMBLING THE STANDARDIZED PHOTOGRAPHS FOUND IN PASSPORTS AND ATTACHED TO IMMIGRATION APPLICATIONS. THE FACES, STRIPPED OF THE NARRATIVES THAT SURROUND THEM, ARE RENDERED WITHIN A HISTORICAL VISUAL LANGUAGE REMINISCENT OF THE ICONOGRAPHY OF SAINTS–FIGURES THAT SEEM TO PERSIST WITHIN AN AURA FROM WHICH SANCTITY HAS BEEN REMOVED. HERE, THE AURA NO LONGER SIGNIFIES SPIRITUAL RADIANCE OR DIVINE PRESENCE; INSTEAD, IT BECOMES A MARK OF IMMIGRATION. THE SACRED VERBAL CODE IS REPLACED BY A SINGLE INSCRIPTION: IMMIGRATION.

THE EMPHASIS OF THE SERIES IS NOT ON MIGRATION AS AN EVENT, BUT ON THE PEOPLE WHO, AT FIRST GLANCE, APPEAR TO BE ITS AGENTS. YET CONTEMPORARY FORMS OF FORCED MIGRATION, SHAPED BY WAR AND AUTHORITARIAN CONDITIONS, TRANSFORM THESE APPARENT AGENTS INTO DISPLACED PEOPLE WHO LEAVE THEIR ROOTS AND ANCESTRAL LANDS NOT BY CHOICE, BUT BY NECESSITY.

THIS FOCUS COULD HAVE BEEN APPROACHED THROUGH CLOSE-UP, NATURALISTIC PORTRAITURE, SEEKING ACCESS TO THE INNER LIVES OF THOSE COMPELLED TO LEAVE. INSTEAD, THE WORKS PLACE THESE FIGURES WITHIN A VISUAL LANGUAGE DRAWN FROM THE HISTORY OF SAINTLY REPRESENTATION. THIS STRATEGY SIMULTANEOUSLY GRANTS THEM THE AURA OF SANCTIFIED VICTIMS AND DELIBERATELY OBSCURES THEIR INDIVIDUALITY THROUGH AN ANTIQUATED VISUAL TREATMENT. IN DOING SO, THE SERIES ESTRANGES THE IMAGE OF MIGRANTS–FIGURES WHOSE FACES HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY FAMILIAR, FLATTENED, AND DECONTEXTUALIZED THROUGH THEIR CONSTANT CIRCULATION ACROSS CONTEMPORARY MEDIA. THE EFFECT EXTENDS BEYOND THIS ESTRANGEMENT: THROUGH ITS PALETTE, ATMOSPHERE, AND HISTORICAL VISUAL REFERENCES, THE SERIES CARRIES THE IDEA OF MIGRATION BACKWARDS THROUGH TIME, SUGGESTING THAT DISPLACEMENT IS NOT EXCLUSIVELY A CONDITION OF THE PRESENT.



ACRYLIC ON WOOD PANEL ,45 × 40 CM, 2018

IMMIGRATION
SERIES STATEMENT-2

THESE IMAGES EMERGE FROM A DIALOGUE ACROSS TIME BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT WITHIN THE BROADER CONCEPT OF MIGRATION. THEIR VISUAL VOCABULARY DRAWS ON A FUNDAMENTAL FORM THAT INITIALLY RECALLS THE REPRESENTATION OF SAINTS WITHIN GOTHIC CULTURE. THIS HISTORICAL MODE OF SANCTIFICATION IS, IRONICALLY, ACCOMPANIED BY A MODERN FORM OF SANCTIFICATION: THE FIGURES ARE REMOVED FROM THEIR ORIGINAL CONTEXT AND LOCATION, PLACED WITHIN ELABORATE FRAMES AGAINST RED VELVET, NUMBERED, AND PRESENTED FOR SALE WITHIN THE CONTEMPORARY ECONOMY OF THE ART OBJECT.

ALTHOUGH THESE IMAGES APPEAR WORN BY THE TRACES OF HISTORICAL HANDLING AND DEVOTIONAL ENCOUNTER, THEY NO LONGER REFER TO SACRED NARRATIVES. THERE ARE NO STORIES OF THE VIRGIN AND CHILD, THE APOSTLES, OR CANONICAL SAINTS. INSTEAD, THEY DEPICT ANONYMOUS PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT ETHNICITIES, NATIONALITIES, GENDERS, AND BACKGROUNDS WHO, DESPITE THEIR DIFFERENCES, SHARE A SINGLE DESIGNATION: THEY ARE MIGRANTS.

MIGRATION, REGARDLESS OF ITS CAUSE, CONSTITUTES A TRANSFORMATION IN THE HUMAN CONDITION. AT DIFFERENT MOMENTS IN HISTORY, MIGRATION HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE FORMATION OF NEW WORLDS, BELIEFS, AND CULTURAL ORDERS, OR WITH THE PURSUIT OF ANOTHER LIFE. YET IN PARTS OF THE WORLD MARKED BY WAR, VIOLENCE, AND POLITICAL OPPRESSION, CONTEMPORARY MIGRATION IS INCREASINGLY LESS A SEARCH FOR A DREAM OR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW WORLD THAN A COMPELLED STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL AND ESCAPE FROM DEATH.

THE SERIES ULTIMATELY LEAVES ITS MEANING OPEN TO THE VIEWER: THE FIGURES MAY BE READ WITHIN DIFFERENT HISTORICAL HORIZONS, OR SITUATED WITHIN THE CONDITIONS OF THE PRESENT. THEIR SIGNIFICANCE EMERGES THROUGH THIS MOVEMENT BETWEEN HISTORIES, CONTEXTS, AND FORMS OF LOOKING—INVITING THE VIEWER TO RECONSIDER WHAT IT MEANS TO ENCOUNTER A HUMAN BEING FIRST AND FOREMOST UNDER THE DESIGNATION IMMIGRATION.



ACRYLIC ON WOOD PANEL ,45 × 40 CM, 2018



WORKS

IMMIGRATION
32 FRAMED WORKS





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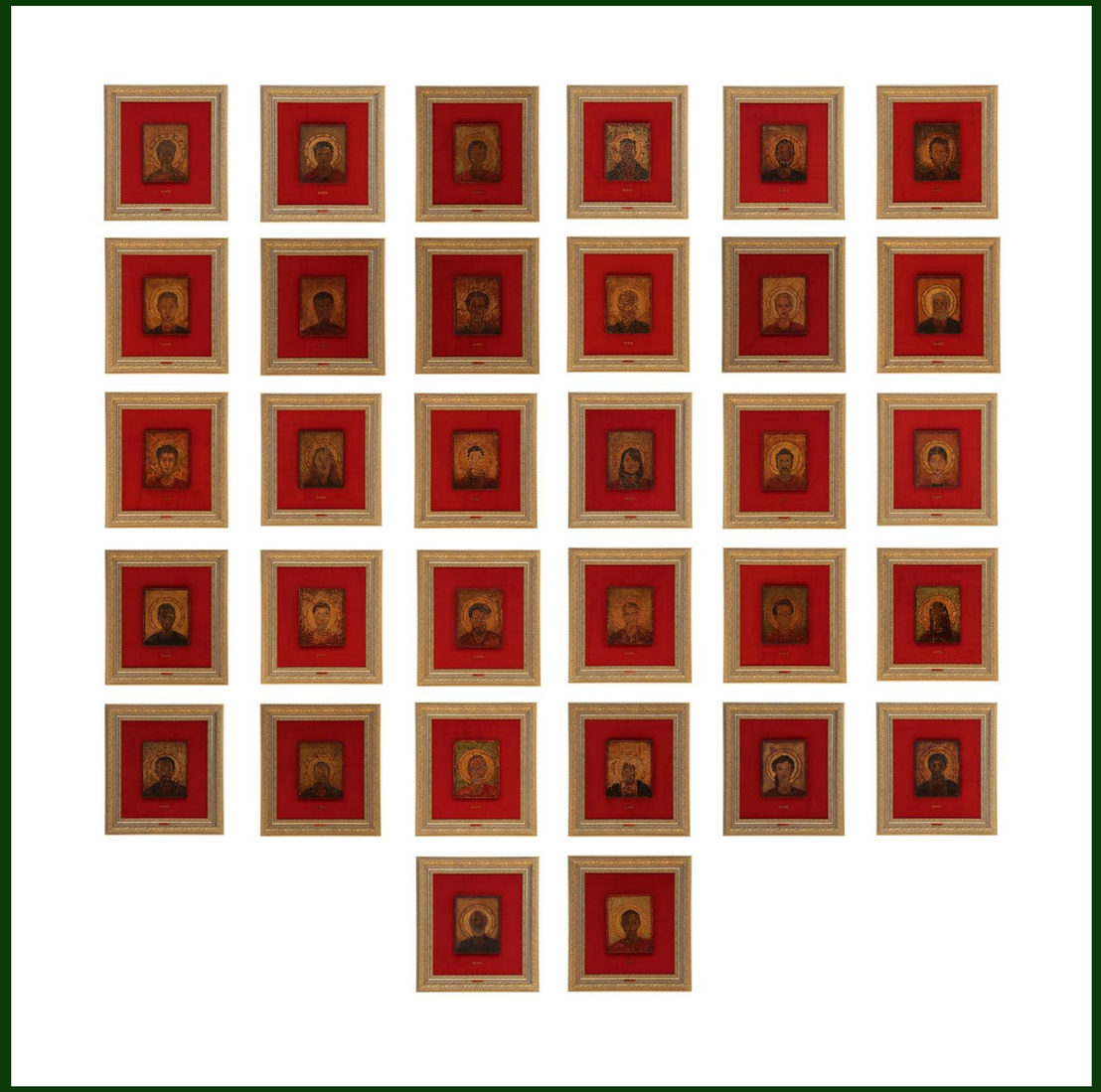
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