

New Exhibition at the Austrian Cultural Forum New York

THE SEEN AND THE HIDDEN: (DIS)COVERING THE VEIL

MAY 22 – AUG 29, 2009



Shadi Ghadirian, Domestic Life #61, 2002

ARTISTS

Negar Ahkami (USA), Ayad Alkadhi (Iraq/USA), Zoulikha Bouabdellah (Algeria/France), Adriana Czernin (Bulgaria/Austria), Katrina Daschner (Germany/Austria), Shadi Ghadirian (Iran), Nilbar Güres (Turkey/Austria), Marlene Haring (Austria), Farheen HAQ (Canada), Princess Hijab (France), Hannah Menne (Austria), Sara Rahbar (Iran), Marjane Satrapi (France), Asma Ahmed Shikoh (Pakistan/USA), Esin Turan (Turkey/Austria)

The woman's veil is one of the most symbolically charged pieces of clothing in contemporary dress; it is provocative even when it is not revealing. With roots in the three Abrahamic religions, it has become one of the most visible icons of contemporary Islam. The donning of the veil conveys conflicting ideas of faith, sexuality and public life and thus raises a host of questions and tensions between religion and identity. It represents an important cultural tradition yet remains a very personal practice for women as well as a symbol communicated to others within the public sphere.

The wearing of the veil has caused heated discussions worldwide - both in Europe and the United States, but also in countries where Islam is the prevalent religion. Often rejected as a symbol of backwardness and oppression, veiling has simultaneously become a symbol that stresses the significance of protection, privacy, morality and piety.

By examining the positions of contemporary artists from the Greater Middle East (Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Pakistan), Europe (Austria, France, Germany) and North America (New York, Canada), this exhibition intends to be a trans-cultural exploration of the numerous approaches to the ideas that surround both the literal and metaphorical meaning of the veil. It includes works in a variety of media such as video, installation, photography, and painting.

Concept and produced by Andreas Stadler

Curators David Harper and Martha Kirszenbaum (New York) and Karin Meisel (Vienna)

Exhibition Coordination Elisabeth Haider

Exhibition Assistance Natascha Boojar, Anne Marie Butler, Kerstin Schuetz-Mueller, Maria Simma

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The Seen and the Hidden: (Dis)covering the Veil at the Austrian Cultural Forum is presented in conjunction with **Muslim Voices: Arts and Ideas**, an unprecedented ten-day festival in New York City celebrating Islamic culture. www.MuslimVoicesFestival.org

OPENING EVENTS: THURSDAY MAY 21, 2009 12 PM – 8 PM

12 PM GUIDED TOUR with curators and artists

5 PM PANEL DISCUSSION – Please rsvp@acfny.org

Introduction by Andreas Stadler, Director Austrian Cultural Forum

with Martha Kirszenbaum, David Harper, Negar Ahkami, Ayad Alkadhi, Zoulikha Bouabdellah and Esin Turan

Moderated by Karin Meisel

7 PM OPENING REMARKS

Andreas Stadler, Director Austrian Cultural Forum

Martha Kirszenbaum, Curator

Karen Hopkins, President Brooklyn Academy of Music

Claudia Schmied, Austrian Minister of Culture

Followed by a PERFORMANCE by Princess Hijab

A catalog will be available at the Austrian Cultural Forum.

Exhibition dates: May 22, 2009 – August 29, 2009

Hours: Monday – Saturday, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm

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Admission to exhibitions, concerts, and other events at the Austrian Cultural Forum is free.

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Additional information: 212 319 5300 or www.acfny.org.