***Displacement*** *presents a current and on-going body of mixed media paintings by Farima Fooladi (MFA, 2015) with poetry by Sara Mohammadi Ardehali, curated by Aaron Ziolkowski. Zoller Gallery, Penn State University, 8.15 – 9.02.*

Farima Fooladi was born in Tehran, three years after the Iranian Revolution in the midst of an eight year armed conflict with Iraq. Her childhood years witnessed the transition from monarchy to rule by an Islamic republic. She experienced the regime’s enforced social conservativism firsthand as one of twenty million children born in the wake of revolution, part of a state mandated procreation campaign. Such drastic transformations of the government and the makeup of the population were writ large on the built environment as bulldozers razed old structures and replaced them with sheer, monumental faces of reinforced concrete. As a young adult, Farima lived abroad in Brazil and Britain for several years before returning to her family and friends in Tehran.

In 2011 Farima spent a period of three months in near isolation alongside her close friend Sara Mohammadi Ardehali at the latter’s vacation home an hour’s drive outside the capital city. Their mornings and afternoons were spent sharing a sun-soaked room that hummed with quiet productivity: one painting, the other writing poetry. The locale offered a time for reflection and observation at a physical and emotional remove from the ever-watchful eyes of family and state. They have maintained a strong friendship despite their geographical distance. Farima was one of many in her social network who subsequently left Iran to settle across the globe. Sara has remained, becoming a successful poet who takes the ever-changing city and its social ramifications as her primary subject matter. Each artist, in their own way, is concerned with the notion of displacement in its many forms. A connection to place remains essential despite its ability to elude description.

The built environment, in its resolute tangibility, its pronounced thingness and its tectonic solidity seems to willingly offer itself to focus our personal, emotive idiosyncratic projection. All the more so for its silence. Despite an obsolescence imposed upon it by ever-shifting aesthetic tastes and bureaucratic consensus, architecture has the potential to endure a suprahuman lifespan. As such, it is often asked to bear a collective psychic weight of those who have walked amidst its cast shadows. This burden born becomes inextricably entangled with the visual manifestation of the accrued physical stresses imposed upon it by gravity and meteorological fluctuations. Ever more so when the locus of nostalgic longing is separated by many thousand miles. It is the simultaneous presentness and elusiveness of a homeland’s architecture, which makes it seem fit to anchor the diffuse inarticulable feelings attendant to such dislocation.