

# Farima Fooladi

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## *Displacement* Proposal

Dislocation and migration are piercing themes indeed. It is easy for me to stay focused working with the Displacement concept, because I am talking about what I experienced and I am experiencing everyday. It is my own story, it can become challenging though, when you start to recall and review all the collective historical events in excess of the personal ones. I was discovering more and more about myself and my past by working on this project. When you migrate you feel an urge to find where you belong from the first few days. What I discovered is that it is an unnecessary challenge, I created a third world in between the where I am from and where I migrated to. It is challenging but this is how I like life to be, I will live in between for now. I wouldn't say I am living in two worlds at once, rather I am experiencing these two worlds. I don't want to make things more dramatic than what they really are. I just want to tell the story as it is and if it is powerful it will do its job. I moved to the US to get my MFA three years ago, a willed dislocation, but the truth is that it is not as simple when you are from a country that is in conflict with the whole world. It's more complex when your destination country is known for being the source of conflict. I guess I like to complicate things!

Iran doesn't have a pervasive historical painting tradition. I believe that I create self-portraits of my country through its architectural elements. Architecture is my entry point to social and historical events, I am working with the concept of being in between spaces, defining a third environment as an Iranian living in the US and I create its map. I am producing maps rather than following their reproduction. Also my personal experience with the landscape and climate of Iran lead me to focus on landscape. Mountains have been a safe place for Middle Eastern people, even for me being from Tehran climbing mountain on weekends was a means to relieve things

down in the city such as pollution and restrictive laws for women. Since early childhood I have been traveling from the Caspian Sea in the north to the Persian Gulf in the south and the mountains in Kurdistan. I have been exposed to various cultures existing in Iran and how land influences their lives. After meeting my husband I came into contact with cultures in central southern Iran where drought is a perennial issue exacerbated by recent global climate change. Water is a precious asset there. All these personal experiences make me focus on landscape and topography as a cause of trauma or social changes. We have always been a country struggling with nature as its uninvited guests.

Künstlerhaus Büchsencausen fellowship program will give me the opportunity to be able to focus on my ongoing project called *Displacement* more deeply by providing me with the diverse work environment along with technical and financial support offering. I will be able to go further deep in theoretical concepts of my project and also using other mediums such as performance and short movie formats in my studio practice.

Below I am copying the curatorial writing, written on my recent Solo Painting Show with the same title *Displacement*, in collaboration with a well known Iranian Poet, Sara Mohammadi Ardehali and Also my recent Portfolio.

I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the unique requirements of this fellowship and thank you for reviewing this letter and the accompanying material.

Sincerely,  
Farima Fooladi

## Curatorial Writing

*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 conservatism firsthand as one of twenty million children born in the wake of revolution, part of a state initiated 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.

# Farima Safaitakhtehfooladi Paintings Portfolio

[www.farimafooladi.com](http://www.farimafooladi.com)



*Displacement*  
*2016*

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*Aaron Ziolkowski*



*Take the departure*  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
35.5" x 57"  
2016





*Iman and JFK airport*  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
18" x 18"  
2016



*Ferdows Garden*  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
17.5" x 15"  
2016





*National Garden, Tehran*  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
17.5" x 15"  
2016



*Laleh Zar St,*  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
8.5"x 11.5"  
2016



*Laleh Zar St, Stone St*  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
18" x 18"  
2016





*Brides of Mokhbero doleh*  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
18" x 18"  
2016



*Bridal Windows*  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
18" x 18"  
2016





*Tehran*  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
16" x 18"  
2016



*Liaison #1*  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
49".72"  
2104



*Liaison #2*  
Mixed Media on Canvas  
17.5" x 15.5"  
2016

## *Glorious Invasion 2014-2016*

Repetition, both hidden and clear, is always present in our world, repeated threads hanging, patterns growing continually, windows framing the glory of repetition in our domestic space and chains of mountains framing nature around us. It doesn't stop there: our history is a recurrent version of ourselves. This prompts me to ask 'when do our habits and traditions lose their meaning?' I want my paintings to serve as subtle whispers, whose repetition - like the formulaic and relentless repetition of patterns in Iranian tapestries- will make a quiet but lasting mark on Iranian cultural imagery.

*Farima Fooladi*



mixed media on paper  
14"x17"  
2014





Mixed Media on Canvas  
72"x63"  
2015



Mixed Media on Canvas  
72"x60"  
2015

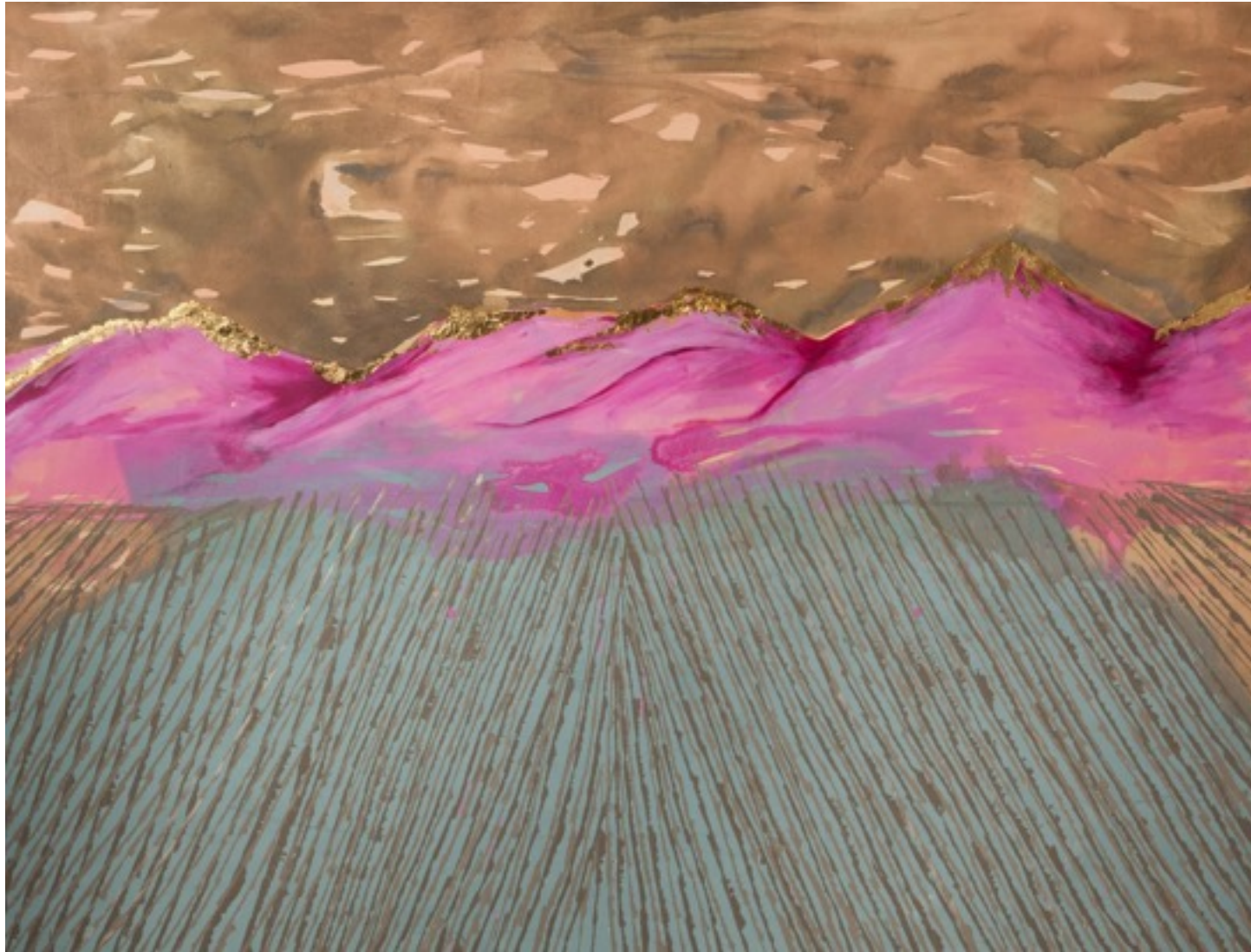


Mixed Media on Canvas  
78"x59"  
2014





Mixed Media on Canvas  
51"x67"  
2015



Mixed Media on Canvas  
51"x67"  
2015





Mixed Media on Canvas  
31"x28"  
2014

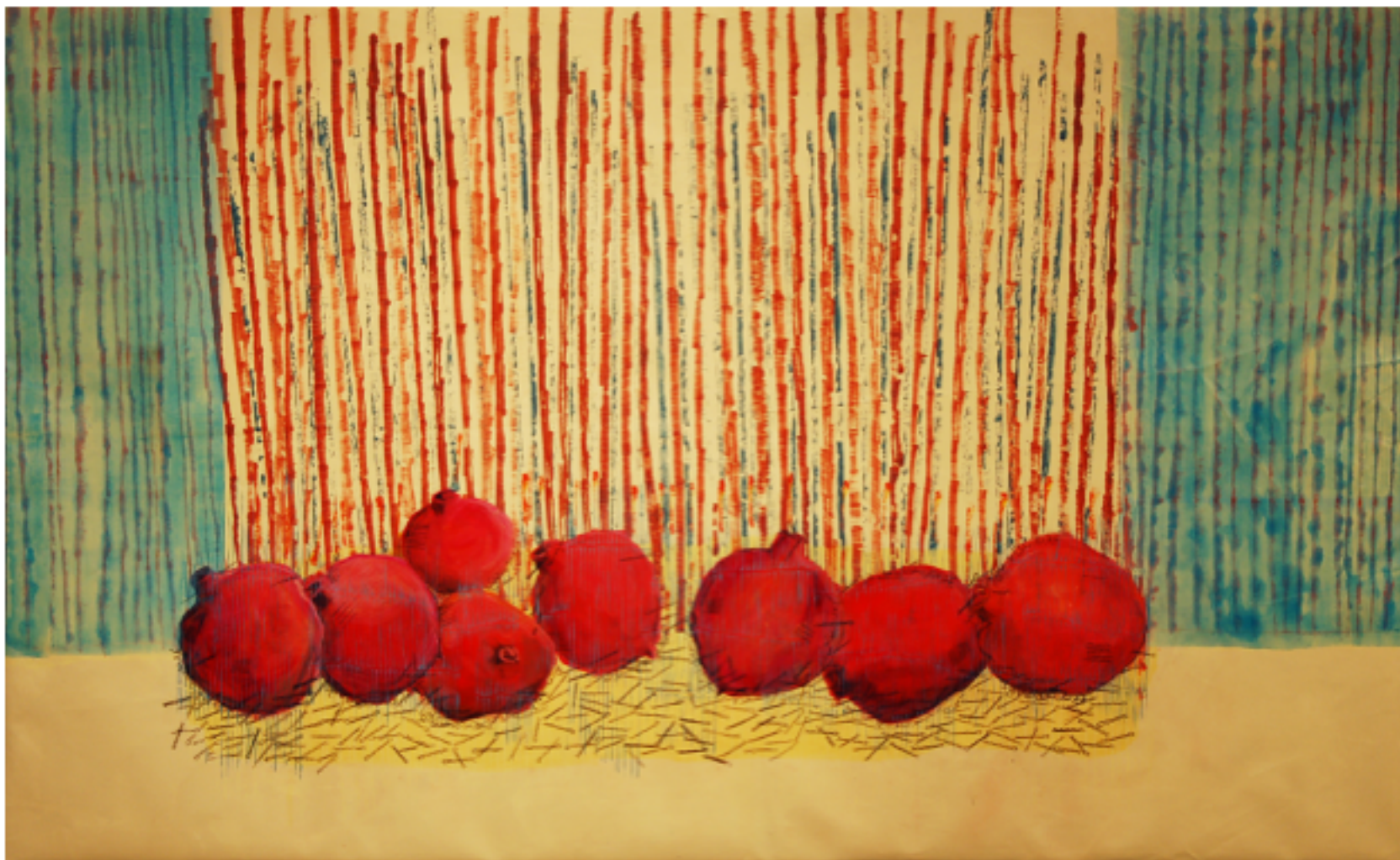
## Pomegranate Series

a laughing pomegranate bring the whole garden to joy

"The pomegranate, a mythical fruit that becomes a daily fixture in our house during its season.

A still-life that was once the life of the epic, in the hands of a woman is, aril by aril, broken  
apart."

Farima Fooladi Fall 2014



Mixed Media on Canvas, 2014  
39".59" \_ 124x 150 CM



39"x59"  
Mixed media on Canvas





39"x59"  
Mixed media on Canvas





31x 47 inches  
Acrylic on Canvas



Khosrow and Shirin, Mixed media on canvas  
2014  
59". 78" \_ 150x 198 CM



detail







Dethroned, Mixed media on canvas, 2013  
39". 59" \_ 100x 150 CM