



## Art Notes

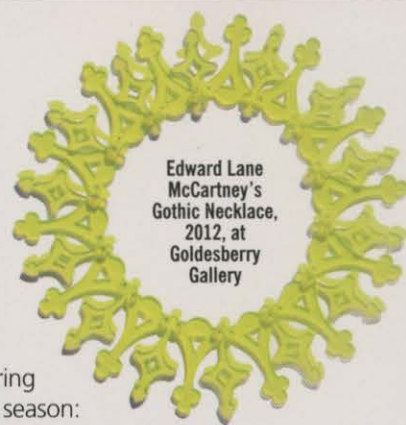
**Good Gifting:** As we wrap the year, we're giving thanks for **Houston Arts Alliance**, whose innovative Web site **power2gift.org** makes donating to your fave arts nonprofit a breeze ... Speaking of HAA, we'll be following more stories in 2013, including the continuing impact of **The Creative Economy Study**, commissioned by **HAA** and the **University of Houston** in tandem with the **Greater Houston Partnership**. The numbers reveal there are more jobs (146,000 plus) in our creative economy than at the Medical Center, while our creative sector fuels a staggering \$21.93 billion annually in sales ... Jewelers shine in dual shows this season:

**Raphael**'s dramatic bijoux creations, many from found objets, at **Darke Gallery** (through December 22). Then visit **Goldesberry Gallery**'s final show: an over-the-top jewelry showcase including works by **Edward Lane McCartney** (through December 24) ... **Return of the Prodigal Son:**

**Angelbert Metoyer** touches down at **Deborah Colton Gallery** to unveil a new series of drawings, continuing his cosmic babies and interest in time travel. Alongside Metoyer, it's an enticing array, including emerging video talent **Brent Bruni Comiskey**, PC Acquire headliner **Deborah Treviño Porter**, as well as **Soody Sharifi**'s updates on Persian miniatures (through January 19) ... **Super Eight/Dirty Dozen:**

Our hometown talents are celebrated here and on the road. At the **Station Museum of Contemporary Art**, the "HX8" [Houston Time Eight] presents our best and brightest including respected senior masters **Forrest Prince**, **Lynn Randolph**, and **Floyd Newsum** as well as Whitney Biennial-shown **Robert Pruitt** (through February 17) ... Hit the highway and head to the rebranded **Blue Star** in San Antonio for "The Dirty Dozen," which pairs Houston and San Antonio artists side-by-side; representing our burg are **Susan Plum**, **Liza Littlefield**, **Nancy Douthey** (with a new performance), **Jonathan Leach** and **Ann Wood**. Yours truly curates (December 6

– February 16) ... **Alternative Wows:** Some of the strongest exhibitions are mounted by **Lawndale Art Center**, **Art League Houston** and at the new midtown digs of **DiverseWorks** (more coming in our January issue). Check out, respectively, a show all about boredom at Lawndale (through January 12), Art League's really major "Stacks" curated by **Robert Pruitt** that examines the black experience (through January 4), and DW's talk of the town, a wild installation by **Franklin Evans** (through January 5) ... **Moving On Up:** PG Contemporary moves to 4411 Montrose, come January. Meanwhile, at PG's Milam digs, Japanese action painter and performer **Ushio Shinohara** headlines concurrently with his show at MoMA (through December 5, reopening at 4411 January 12) ... See late Houston color-field great **Dorothy Hood** at **Thom Andriola/New Gallery** (through December) ... We also love the sublime and simple splendor of **Joe Havel's** cast book stacks and minimalist shirt-label wall pieces at **Hiram Butler Gallery** (through January 26) ... "The Realist Impulse" at **Rudolph Blume/ArtScan** presents a disquieting take on realism (through January 12); and **Barbara Davis'** round up includes **Jay Shinn** who trips the light fantastic and **Paul Fleming** of the fabulous futuristic resin (through January 5) ... Noteworthy doubleheader: **Laura Rathe's** dual solos for **Erik Gonzales** and **Tamara Robertson** (December 1 – January 5). See you in 2013. *Catherine D. Ansporn*



Edward Lane  
McCartney's  
Gothic Necklace,  
2012, at  
Goldesberry  
Gallery



Dorothy Hood's *Copper Canyon*, circa 1980s, at Thom Andriola/New Gallery

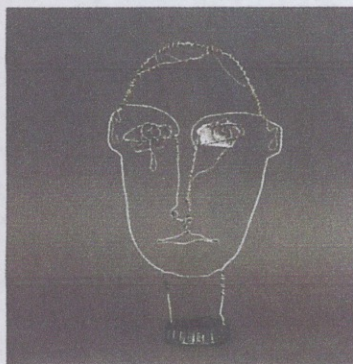


**NOV 10 - FEB 10, 2013**

**WHAT:** "Behold, America!" a collaboration between three San Diego museums explores the legacy of art in the United States with each museum focusing on a different theme, figures, frontiers and forms, with works representing the art from colonial times to the present.

**WHERE:** San Diego Museum of Art; Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego; Timken Museum of Art

**INFO:** [www.sdmart.org](http://www.sdmart.org); [www.mcasd.org](http://www.mcasd.org); [www.timkenmuseum.org](http://www.timkenmuseum.org)



**NOV 1 - DEC 21**

**WHAT:** Terry Turrell: "Hindsight" a solo exhibition of sculptural objects consisting of modestly scaled figures, both human and animals, constructed from wood, tin and mixed media, as well as densely layered narrative paintings by the Seattle-based artist.

**WHERE:** Grover/Thurston Gallery, Seattle

**INFO:** [www.groverthurston.com](http://www.groverthurston.com)



**NOV 3 - DEC 22**

**WHAT:** New York artist Julie Heffernan's allegorical paintings are filled with abundant symbols of the natural world, creating portraits and landscapes with Surrealist undertones which acts as parables depicting man's often troubling interaction with nature.

**WHERE:** Mark Moore Gallery, Los Angeles

**INFO:** [www.markmooregallery.com](http://www.markmooregallery.com)



**NOV 17 - JAN 19, 2013**

**WHAT:** Through visual juxtaposition of cityscapes and desert landscape the series "The Desert Beyond the City Belongs to Me" by Iranian-American artist Soody Sharifi tells the story of the contradictions and paradoxes with the cultural and political life in Iran.

**WHERE:** Deborah Colton Gallery, Houston

**INFO:** [www.deborahcoltongallery.com](http://www.deborahcoltongallery.com)

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## soody sharifi

by elliot zooey martin

Jan 2013



*The Sea That Does Not See*

2012

Archival inkjet print of digital collage

35" x 42 1/2" Edition of 1/3

Photo: courtesy Deborah Colton Gallery

In her latest exhibition, "The Desert Beyond the City Belongs to Me," Houston-based artist Soody Sharifi re-imagines the landscapes of her native Iran. Beginning with photographs from her travels across Iran, Sharifi interjects historical imagery culled from Persian miniatures to create tableaux laden with humor and ambiguity. The disjunctive photographs bring together historical and contemporary figures in a layered narrative that speaks to her dual-citizen status.

Sharifi states: "I have lived here in the United States for 37 years. I feel like I have an insider as well as an outsider view when I go back to Iran. There are things I pay attention to which might be insignificant to an Iranian who lives his day-to-day life in Iran. So when I see the desert landscape, it reminds me of all the issues about the Middle East which I have observed while living in America, as well as my experiences as a teenager growing up in Iran. Most of the time, I feel like I see things which maybe are hidden from the average Iranian observer."

Spurred by the 2009 Iranian election, the Arab Spring, and the concomitant media maelstrom, Sharifi was inspired "to start a series which shows the paradoxes and contradictions in the social and political life in the Middle East." Looking at newspaper images and television reports, Sharifi began to wonder: "What would it look like if those events were depicted in the style of classical Persian miniatures? How would these people look in a contemporary landscape, interacting with each other? Would they be able to represent what is transpiring in the Middle East?"

Sharifi turned to her library of old books she had brought from Iran, scanning images of Persian miniatures, extracting figures from different manuscripts and inserting them in her own photographs to "tell my stories through them." For instance in *The Siege*, Sharifi remakes a contemporary battle scene with historical protagonists culled from the Safavid and Timurid periods of Persia as well as Indian miniatures. "I'm not using just one period," she explains. "I'm bringing images from all over. Because what's happening right now, the different factions are fighting each other in the Middle East. This could be a day in Syria where it depicts different Islamic religious sects hostile to each other."

Her attention to contradiction and paradox also led to one of the more seemingly lighthearted images in the series, *The Sea that does not See*. The inspiration came from a recent trip to the south of Iran where Sharifi and a friend visited a private, women's only beach. While outside the beach's compound walls the Iranian women wore the habitual hijab, in the water the women swam in bathing suits, bikinis, and even topless. Stunned by the separation between public and private, male and female, decorum and abandon, Sharifi says, "I thought there was so much contradiction here between outside and inside world. So I wanted to depict that through my own fictional story."

However, Persian miniatures depicting nude figures are very rare. "That was very difficult," Sharifi admits. "I tried very hard to find them. It wasn't easy to find uncovered women in the Persian miniatures. It took a long time. But I found a lot of the imagery in the Indian miniatures of the Mughal period." Describing the bathing scene Sharifi likens it to a harem: "All these women in the nude, they are so comfortable with their bodies and are just playing around." The humor arises from the happenings outside the beach's protective wall. Sharifi has peppered the wall with a selection of Peeping Toms. With female skin out of sight in contemporary Iran, the nudity takes on an extra charge. "I wanted to just play with the idea of the veil and the woman's body," Sharifi divulges, "and so that's how this image came about."

In the same way that *The Sea that does not See* confounds the dictates of public and private realms, Sharifi's medium of choice also disrupts expectations. Sharifi uses the innovations in digital imaging including Photoshop and Illustrator to cannibalize older forms of image making--disrupting both the craft conventions of historical miniatures and the supposed veracity of documentary photography. As a result, her digitally collaged photographs reveal an uncertain world where time has collapsed and received narratives are open to question.

"Soody Sharifi: *The Desert Beyond the City Belongs to Me*," remains on view through January 26, 2013. [www.deborahcoltongallery.com](http://www.deborahcoltongallery.com)

## CURRENT ISSUE



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## LATEST NEWS

V&A Jameel Prize, Stanford University



### V&A Jameel Prize Opens Stateside At Stanford University

DATE: 12 DEC 2012

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**The Jameel Prize, an international award bestowed by the Victoria and Albert Museum in London and sponsored by Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives, has opened a touring exhibition in the United States. The art prize is Inspired by Islamic Tradition" is on show at Stanford University's Cantor Arts Center. This special exhibition presents the work of 10 artists selected as finalists for the prestigious Jameel Prize, The Jameel Prize, awarded for contemporary art and design inspired by Islamic tradition, encourages the exploration of long-established practices of Islamic art, craft and design within a contemporary framework.**

The resulting exhibition demonstrates that artists can and do use these traditions in ways that are vividly relevant to the contemporary world. The prize also fosters a wider debate about Islamic culture and its role today. The Jameel Prize is truly international. Awarded every two years, it is open to all entrants and not restricted to Muslims or those from the Islamic world. Entry for the Jameel Prize is by nomination. For the 2011 Jameel Prize, the names of almost 200 artists and designers were put forward from countries as diverse as the United States, Spain, Nigeria, Egypt and Pakistan. From this list, 10 finalists were selected, with one chosen as a winner for a prize of 25,000 British pounds, or approximately 35,800 U.S. dollars. This exhibition presents art by all 10 finalists, more than 20 works that draw on the artists' and designers' own local and regional traditions, celebrating particular materials and iconography with strong references to traditional Islamic art.

The artworks on view range from felt costumes to sculptural installations made from handmade terracotta bricks, from mirror mosaic to digital collages inspired by classical Persian miniature paintings. In many of the pieces, there is an underlying reference to the artists' own "hybrid" cultural identity, in addition to the contrast between old and new, minimalism and ornament, home and exile. The finalists are culturally diverse, representing many countries. The youngest artist, Noor Ali Chagani, was born in Pakistan, and he lives in Lahore. Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, who has works in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, was born in Iran but spent many years in the United States; she currently lives in Tehran. Bitā Ghezelayagh, born in Italy, now lives in London and Tehran. Babak Golkar, born in the United States, now lives in Canada. Hayv Kahraman, born in Iraq, now lives in the San Francisco Bay Area. Rachid Koraichi, born in Algeria, now lives in Tunisia and France. Hazem EI Mestikawy, born in Egypt, lives in Egypt and Austria. Hadieh Shafie, born in Iran, lives in the United States. Soody Sharifi, born in Iran, lives in the United States. (See artists' bios below.) Rachid Koraichi won the Jameel Prize 2011 for his series of embroidered cloth banners entitled "Les Maitres invisibles" ("The Invisible Masters"), made in 2008. Koraichi uses Arabic calligraphy and symbols and ciphers from a range of other languages and cultures to explore the lives and legacies of the 14 great mystics of Islam. These "masters" include great Muslim thinkers and poets such as Rumi and EI Arabi, whose teachings have spread even to the West. The exhibition continues to March 10, on view in three spaces at the Cantor Arts Center. Koraichi's banners hang prominently from the Geballe Family Balcony, over the Cantor's main lobby. The other works are presented upstairs in the Ruth Levison Halperin Gallery and the Lynn Krywick Gibbons Gallery.

**Photo: Hadieh Shafie, 22500 Pages, 2011. Ink on paper with printed and hand written Farsi text. V&A Director's Circle.**

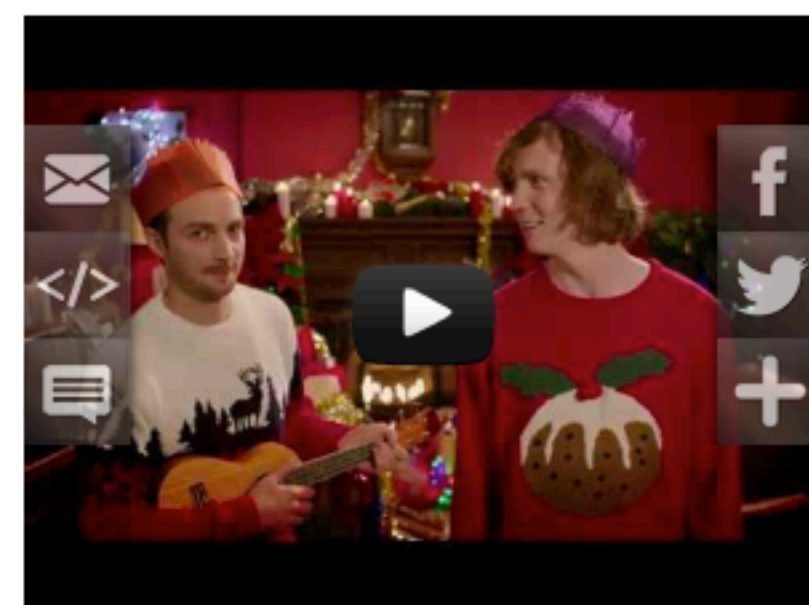
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