

Open studios – Artists in residence

sepideh zamani



Sepideh Zamani
photo credit :
Autonomotormenthek

**villa
arson**

November 29, 2023

Temporary gallery (access from the hall)

nice

Artist in residence between September 28 and December 15, 2023 in the framework of a partnership with the Embassy of France in Iran.

Born in 1986 in Tehran (Iran), Sepideh Zamani worked as a graphic designer in advertising agencies before obtaining a Bachelor of Fine Art in sculpture at Tehran University of the Arts.

Between 2008 and 2014, she was a founding member of Tehran Carnival, an all-women artists' collective known for its interventions and performances in public spaces in Tehran.

In 2020, she was a laureate of the year-long residency program at Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht (Netherlands).

The use of papier mâché in her sculptures and installations reflects both her desire to produce quickly and her intention to make artworks on a limited budget.

Gil Lekh: Can you introduce yourself and tell us about your background?

Sepideh Zamani: I started my practice as a graphic designer in advertising companies. After pursuing my BA in Sculpture at Tehran University of the Arts, I continued my career as an artist. Speed of creation defines the formal decisions and the material in my work. Papier mâché is my primary material not only because it matches with my desire in quick production but also my intention for low-budget fabrication since I have a certain financial situation, in which I use the money I earn by working at advertising agencies to produce my art. My works have an exuberant approach that imply candidness, humor, movement, repetition and narrative in the form of sculptural installation.

G. L.: And what about your work?

S. Z.: Storytelling is a consistent thread woven into the fabric of my artistic practices. I find joy in articulating the essence of my work in various languages, exploring diverse ways to describe its narrative. Occasionally, I opt for visual communication, substituting statements with images within the gallery space. At other times, my creations stand alone as eloquent speakers like self-describing robots encapsulated within the form of sculptures.

G. L.: What kind of research are you developing at Villa Arson?

S. Z.: My current project traces an image capturing the delicate sway of wheat in a field, stirred by the gentle caress of the wind. Fascinated by it, it occurred to me that this gentle movement of the wind can easily turn into a devastating thing such as a storm that can collapse the things around instead of caressing them smoothly. Inspired by this juxtaposition, I tried to depict the contrast between a day before and after the havoc wreaked by a formidable storm. My focus centered on a dwelling ravaged by the impact of a fallen tree. I added details to capture the nuances of both the pre-collision and post-collision

scenarios, aiming to multiply the representations and convey the profound transformation brought about by this natural force.

During my residency, I learned about Alex, a storm that happened in the area of Nice three years ago and created a very big destruction. I found it very interesting to work on the theme of the storm in a place that was so affected by it. As an artist, there are some features that recur in my work like showing the process. I like to leave some traces of the project's procedure in the final work, like in this recent work there are indications on the wood such as: "this part should be broken" or "this one must be sideways" that were some notes I made during the construction period. In this way, the public can observe the process in my work.

In my opinion, the process itself holds significant importance in enhancing the viewer's understanding of the artwork.

G. L.: What is the starting point in your work? How does it unfold?

S. Z.: I typically start my creative process with a single image, approaching it from a deeply personal standpoint and infusing it with a narrative. However, as the creative journey unfolds, the work undergoes a transformative process, acquiring multiple layers of interpretation.

The utilization of diverse media holds significant importance in my artistic practice. My portfolio encompasses moving images, paintings, structures, and sculptures. My process involves taking an initial image and expanding it into a series. I collaborate with a company in Iran to create a 3D model, which I then further refine through digital painting. The culmination involves producing a large print, integrating sound created by a friend, and frequently collaborating with others. I believe these collaborative elements contribute to a richer understanding of the artistic narrative and the context it encapsulates.

G. L.: Let's talk about the materials you use, like papier mâché, which you use a lot.

S.Z.: Yes, I choose to work with papier mâché not solely for its cost-effectiveness, although that is a notable advantage. The primary reason is its versatility. I appreciate the speed with which I can work, the hands-on nature of the process, and the freedom it provides for my creative expression. While I often undertake commissioned projects, I have a personal inclination to engage in hands-on work independently, without the assistance of others. The choice of materials for my projects depends on the specific requirements, and I frequently incorporate print to enhance the audience's understanding of the image. Generally, I opt for materials that are not only economical but also lend themselves to swift application. Given my limited availability, with only four days a week dedicated to my artistic pursuits, I prioritize efficiency to expedite the creative process.

G. L.: You've said that it's important for you to work with other people.

S. Z.: I find immense joy in collaborative endeavors. For seven years, I was an active member of a public art group named Tehran Carnival. We crafted sculptures in public

spaces to observe their interaction with the environment. Currently, I'm engaged with a new collective named Foj, which I look forward to contributing to upon my return home. Collaborative efforts, in my experience, offer diverse perspectives, allowing us to comprehend a work from multiple angles and gain a deeper understanding. I typically collaborate with individuals I've known for an extended period, fostering a seamless and effective working dynamic. Additionally, I had the opportunity to participate in a collective called "KAF" within an institutional framework. This collective provided us with shared studios, facilitating collaborative work, joint projects, and collective exploration of films and books, creating a rich environment for creative exchange.

G. L.: You use short stories, poems in your work. Can you tell me more about them?

S. Z.: I prefer to convey my message through images, poems, or short stories, as my pieces already carry a wealth of detail and layers. For me, it's more about accessibility. I want my friends, even those who aren't artists, to attend my shows and easily grasp the narrative. Therefore, adding texts that might be obscure or challenging for the audience to comprehend is not a priority for me. On the contrary, I strive to create an experience that resonates with a broader audience.

G. L. : Would you say it's a way of keeping one foot in reality?

S. Z. : Yes, it is.

Residence organized in partnership with the Embassy of France in Iran.

Wednesday November 29, 2023

6pm – 8pm
Open studio Sepideh Zamani
Temporary gallery

Villa Arson is a public institution of the ministry of Culture and a legal entity of Université Côte d'Azur. It is supported by the City of Nice, the Département des Alpes-Maritimes, the Région Sud Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur. Villa Arson is a member of the networks L'Ecole(s) du Sud, BOTOX[S], Plein Sud, d.c.a., ANdEA and ELIA Art Schools.



MINISTÈRE
DE LA CULTURE
*Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité*



UNIVERSITÉ
CÔTE D'AZUR



RÉGION
SUD
PROVENCE
ALPES
CÔTE D'AZUR



DÉPARTEMENT
DES ALPES-MARITIMES



VILLE DE NICE

20 avenue Stephen Liégeard
F-06105 Nice cedex 2
tél. +33 (0)4 92 07 73 73
servicedespublics@villa-arson.fr
www.villa-arson.fr