

**For Immediate Release**

**February 1, 2023**

## **TODAY'S LIFE & WAR**

*"Today's Life and War" emerged from my experiences during the eight year Iran-Iraq War. This conflict has had a strong symbolic influence on the emotional life of my generation. Although we may be safe within the walls of our homes, the war continues to reach us through newspapers, television and the Internet. This body of work represents war and its legacy, the ways in which it permeates all aspects of contemporary society." - Gohar Dashti*

**Robert Klein Gallery** is pleased to present "Today's Life & War", an exhibition of works by contemporary photographers Gohar Dashti, Shadi Ghadirian, and Tahmineh Monzavi. Presenting a selection of important photographs over the last twenty years of their careers, these images illustrate the legacy and remnants of war as it continues to impact society and culture - regardless of religion, politics, or geography. All born and educated in Iran, the three female photographers work transcends the lens and context of the Middle East. Their works are not merely an investigation of Iran or Islamic culture and identity, but are a reflection on the physical and mental turmoil and destruction that war invariably sears upon its victims. Several of the works on view were first shown in the US in the groundbreaking exhibition "She Who Tells A Story" at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. As a testament to their artistic importance and impact, these works still speak to audiences today beyond borders. As the title of Tahmineh Monzavi's series "Past Continues" implies, the insanity and devastation of war repeats itself, and so does the human tragedy and legacy of destruction. The exhibition opens on Saturday February 11th with an artist's reception from 3-5pm at 38 Newbury Street, Boston.

**Gohar Dashti** (b. 1980) received her M.A. in photography from the Tehran University of Art in 2005. For the past 17 years, she has been making large scale photography with a particular focus on social issues. Her work references history and contemporary culture, as well as the convergence of anthropological and sociological perspectives; employing a unique, quasi-theatrical aesthetic, she brings to bear a diverse intellectual and cultural experience to illuminate and elaborate upon her perception of the world around her. In her most recent works, Dashti has explored, through her highly stylized, densely poetic observations of human and plant-life, the innate kinship between the natural world and

human migrations. Fascinated with human-geographical narratives and their interconnection to her own personal experiences, Gohar Dashti believes that nature is what connects her to the multiple meanings of ‘home’ and ‘displacement’, both as conceptual abstractions, and as concrete realities that delineate and contour our existence. The result is a series of quirky landscapes and portraits, as lush as they are arch, inciting questions about the immense, variegated, border-eschewing reach of nature – immune to cultural and political divisions – and the ways in which immigrants inevitably search out and reconstruct familiar topographies in a new, ostensibly foreign land.

Gohar Dashti’s works have found homes around the globe in the permanent collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Smithsonian Museum, Washington D.C.; the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City; the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.; the Museum of Contemporary Photography (MoCP), Chicago, and Kadist Art Foundation, Paris. She has been awarded numerous art fellowships including a MacDowell, Peterborough, NH (2017 and 2021), DAAD award, Berlin (2009-2011) and Visiting Arts (1Mile2 Project), Bradford/London (2009).

**Shadi Ghadirian** (b. 1974) was born in Tehran, Iran. She gained international recognition with her early series “Qajar” from the 1990’s that explored the relationship between the traditional and contemporary lives of women in Iran. As a modern Muslim woman living in Iran, Shadi Ghadirian takes photographs that exaggerate the customs of her Iranian culture and the archaic stereotypes it places upon contemporary women. After receiving her bachelor’s degree from Azad University in Tehran, Ghadirian was faced with contradictions and preconceptions regarding her role as a woman in society; she began to photograph friends and family in staged portraits that addressed female identity, censorship, gender roles, and geopolitics. With humor and irony, Ghadirian has depicted women reduced to their typecasts, typically housewives draped in veils and with their faces replaced by household items—pots, pans, brooms, and meat cleavers. Ghadirian’s work has been exhibited extensively throughout the world, including The British Museum, Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, Victoria and Albert Museum in London, Smithsonian Museum in Washington, Mumok (Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig) in Vienna, Muséed’Art. She lives and works in Tehran.

**Tahmineh Monzavi** was born in 1988 in Tehran, Iran. She graduated with a BA in photography from the department of art and architecture at Islamic Azad University Tehran. Monzavi has been actively making documentary photographs since 2007 and

documentary films since 2009. Inspired by Bahman Jalali, Peyman Hooshmanzadeh, Nan Goldin, and Sebastiao Salgado, Monzavi seeks out untold stories. “A constant examination of what is not readily apparent in Iran has provided a rich and, oftentimes, surprising basis for my artistic practice,” Monzavi says. In her documentary work, Monzavi has confronted controversial subjects, including drug addicts, the homeless, and a transgender woman.

“I am trying to show the contrasts which exist between social, cultural, and economic classes of Iran. This kind of contradiction can happen in other countries, too, but it can be more violent in Iran, so I want to show some angles of this violence, which has affected women more than men. It is mostly because of their families and their cultural situation in our society. I feel and believe that these women are trying very hard to be strong but, because of the way they have been treated by others and our society, they have become very weak and fragile.”

**For more information please contact Steven Harris: [steven@robertkleingallery.com](mailto:steven@robertkleingallery.com)**

***Online Links and References:***

[Today's Life & War](#) @ Robert Klein Gallery

[She Who Tells A Story](#): Museum of Fine Arts Boston

[Tahmineh Monzavi](#) - Artist's Website

[Gohar Dashti](#) - Artist's Website

[Shadi Ghadirian](#) - Artist's Website

[BBC](#): *She Who Tells a Story: Female lens on Iran and the Arab world*

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ROBERT KLEIN GALLERY



# TODAY'S LIFE & WAR

February 11 - April 22, 2023  
Robert Klein Gallery

*Gohar Dashti  
Shadi Ghadirian  
Tahmineh Monzavi*

For images or media inquiries please contact Steven Harris: [steven@robertkleingallery.com](mailto:steven@robertkleingallery.com)