

Akram Ahmadi Tavana

Books

It Transpired

(A conversation Between Akram Ahmadi Tavana and Mojtaba Amini)

2019



<
The Archeology of Revolution
Found photo, found lamp & brass covered with graphite
30×39×23 cm
2007-2012

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Book Cover:
Yad (lit. hand, power)
Turquoise stone & copper rings
Various sizes
2018

It Transpired

About

Mojtaba Amini

To **Parvin**

009821

“Art Remains Eccentric”

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Mojtaba Amini

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A Conversation Between

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Black Stone
Black stone, cast iron, charcoal, sheep skin & fat
110×50×70 cm
2014



It Transpired

A Conversation Between
Akram Ahmadi-Tavana & Mojtaba Amini

This conversation with Mojtaba Amini took place over several sessions in 2018.

Dakhma
Steel mirror, aluminum, print on canvas
190×101×101 cm
2013

Mojtaba Amini is an artist who depicts the realities of our times, albeit in a veiled, indirect manner. By flipping through these pages, and reviewing his work from the past decade, one can survey a selective, particular interpretation of certain instances in the political history of regions in conflict. His obscure presentation is intended to attract the viewer's attention to a certain location, but in this presentation the main subject matter is excised, and what remains is a hardly decipherable, vague trace of an event or person. As such viewers don't observe Amini's work, rather they experience a process of discovery leading to an uncertain degree of understanding.

Mojtaba Amini's main subject matter is the fundamental mystery faced by humankind: the subject of death. He has escaped death in silence and bitterness, but has never been set free from it. The artist's dark, course pieces present the viewer with a world of pain and anxiety, while at the same time providing solace to their creator. His escape from death has seeped its way into the work's concept and material, influencing its shape and form, and continuing into the viewer's world. Amini conceptualizes death by using decomposable material and challenging the permanence of his work. For him death does not happen in an instance but is a gradual process. In Amini's pieces death is neither an end nor a release, it is not a moment of grief or happiness, it isn't bitter or sweet; it is merely an unknown, unavoidable fact. Amini uses hues in the Arabic titles of his works about death ("almawt al'ahmar" or Red Death), but the work itself is often done in dark tones. He is interested in types of death that reinterpret or recreate certain concepts and definitions for the living.

In order to understand Mojtaba Amini's work, one needs to be familiar with the artist and his portfolio. Sometimes his thought process and the concepts that arise from it, result in a single piece, but each piece ends up being part of a whole. And it is in this relationship to the whole that the work finds meaning. The artist directs the viewer to the inspiration behind each piece, as well as the various

symbolism contained within them.

This conversation is intended to help the viewer discover hidden layers within Amini's work, and to see them for a few moments from the artist's perspective.

Language is a complex and mysterious source of amusement for Amini, one that he uses both as inspiration, and as a means of expression, albeit an ambiguous, meandering expression that for the viewer is often a hindrance rather than clarification. He chooses the Arabic language — something his is familiar with and has been exposed to — in order to widen the range of his questions. Layers of complexity get added on, to the point that the initial concept becomes obscure. The artist intentionally makes the viewer struggle. Amini uses language in a variety of ways: as his main subject matter, as text used within the work, and also as titles for his pieces. He includes complicated references, defamiliarizes words (by using archaic and unfamiliar definitions of familiar words), and homogenizes the form and content of text.

Mojtaba Amini finds his subject matter in unspecific geographies. The repetition and depth of events in these regions is insanely accelerated, making the recording, and even the experience and understanding of these events, very difficult. He chooses an event and empathizes with it, and then he gives it form within the overall body of his work, before finally sharing it with his viewers. In fact from among a multitude of events/subjects, the artist directs a distraught public to a place beyond the event itself, forcing them to think. From Syrian refugees to Iranian workers, these are things that have an impact on Amini and lead him to express their lives and deaths, presenting the viewer with an historical awareness.

Experimenting with different media is an intellectual/healing process for the artist, and leads to a certain level of physicality between the artist and his creations. Amini has the essential ability to select a unique medium and form of expression in order to convey his concept in the most complete manner. His choice of material and the way he works with it, leads to a particular quality that may not provide answers to his questions, but is inline with their meaning. There is a similar lack of certainty in the content, material, and ultimate form of the work. For Amini material contains both history and meaning; this is why he uses remnants from animals such as wool, fat, and animal glue, to create (and sometimes destroy).

Mojtaba Amini takes the viewer out of the world of art and into concepts rooted in violence, such as social protest, revolution, child execution, self-immolation, rape, and the immigration and death of refugees. In order to answer questions, he ends up posing broader topics. He candidly shares his past, memories, fears, and personal and social concerns with the viewer, and the work that is created in the process is a piece of art that belongs to its time, carrying the stench of ugliness and pain.