

PRESS

raha raissnia

Shorthand of Sensation

Exhibition from March 28th-May 2, 2009
Opening Saturday, March 28th mars at 3 pm

Performance by Charles Curtis & Raha Raissnia on Tuesday, March 31th at 6 pm.

Galerie Xippas is pleased to present Raha Raissnia's new paintings, drawings, and photographs for her second solo exhibition at the gallery.

Raha Raissnia describes her work as belonging to the field of "Expanded Cinema" in which simultaneous practices of painting, live projection and installation create the corpus of a work that declines itself materially in painting, drawing, filmmaking, and now photography.

The multidisciplinary interconnectedness of Raha Raissnia's work creates a complex mise-en-abime between and among her works: architectonic elements and biomorphic geometry echo one another in the drawings and paintings, shifting the viewer's perspective between an internal anatomy of living organisms and advanced electronic circuitry, while passing through an array of influences and references very carefully selected from high-art and popular culture alike, such as architectural drawings, the labyrinthic twists and turns of 20th Century "Wild Style" graffiti, and Classical Islamic calligraphy. The tension between paradoxes like futuristic and ancient, moving and still, density and emptiness, qualifies her dreamlike vision of our emerging bio-synthetic future. "The subject matter that gets revealed in many of my images is about the vulnerability of human existence in the violence of technology that is both evolutionary and destructive," writes Raissnia.

Like most aspects of Raissnia's work, the visual richness achieved through collage, superimposition and erasure generates a double effect, on the one hand of dynamic elegance and intricacy akin to and resembling the ineffable, sensory experience of music, and on the other hand of a chaotic anxiety or a frenetic uncertainty about how to read the works and what to read in them. The frames within the frames, the borders of the filmstrips and the limits of the deliriously vertical structures that create such intense internal density, by extension leads our attention outward, beyond the work, into an exploration of limits, of the dynamics of reality and imagination, pushing the viewer to the threshold of objectivity where a delimitation of time, in Raissnia's drawings and paintings, collapses into an extension of time through her filmic works. Thus the embedded historicity confronts the ambiguous futurism, creating a synaesthetic present.

There is an element of suspension of disbelief that is intrinsically correlated to the cinematic experience, and yet Raissnia's work is so much more complex than that because the structural/materialist elements, expressed through her concern with the tacticality of filmmaking in its connection to chemistry and mechanics, results in the demystification of the film process rather than its representation. With influences ranging from Harry Smith, Bruce Connor, and Jim Davis to avant-garde composer Iannis Xenakis, without forgetting

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Francis Bacon, perhaps we can make sense of these myriad points of departure by considering Bacon's phrase about painting that Raha Raissnia has internalized in her oeuvre: painting is not "an illustration of reality, but a concentration of reality and a shorthand of sensation."

Raha Raissnia emigrated from Iran to the United States in 1983. She received her BFA from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago in 1992 and her MFA from Pratt institute in 2002. From 1992 to 1995, between her two degrees, Raissnia worked as an intern and a full time employee at Anthology Film Archives in New York, a time that she describes as being "directly formative years" for her exposure and knowledge of avant-garde cinema as well as for the paintings she made during this period.