

SARA ABBASIAN
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**BONES, FLESH
AND HUMAN
COMMUNICATION**

Human Communications Series

For almost ten years now, dealing with the subject "human beings" can be regarded as one of the core concept of the young Iranian artist Sara Abbasian. Recurrently, she produces paintings, drawings, collages, videos and installations with images and objects of naked bones, fetuses, human flesh or quite unaesthetic and deformed faces. In an offensive way her artwork does not try to please, it rather challenges the spectator and asks to raise questions.

One year after Sara Abbasian finished her work on the series "1388" (2009), she focused on a new project which she titled "Human Communication Series". The title had been taken over from a special textbook: This book focused on the use of the 1970's television as a communication system in business and industry, and its technical background back then. Looking at the copy of the edition nowadays, the book itself became an artwork ("Human Communication", 2010): Numerous prints of bold and rather mechanically looking heads inside old-fashioned televisions have been glued into the volume. Additionally, most of them hold a registration number (123456789 or 0012345678900), which furthermore occurs as stamped version on various pages, too. As in her previous works, the artist discusses the concept of the "human beings", here in connection with technology and the advanced way of communication. "It is a magical box that shows all happenings according to what they will, with a believable effect on human society. This series tries to show communication" indicates Sara. In a series of black and white drawings "Human Communications Series", 2010 the artist introduces the image of the mechanically looking head again. But not only does she copy the image of the head itself. Bit by bit she erases elements from it such as ears, eyes, and finally even the whole face by using a huge, monitor-like, white square. Though already rather mechanized, i. e. reduced to a material thing, the human head seems to loose its individuality steadily. Destruction on another level can be analyzed too: not only does the head loose visual bits and pieces, at some point only bones are left in the drawings.

Looking at these heavily reduced art pieces individually, the establishment of a direct connection to the initial prints in the book is difficult. Only the title and the given registration number remain obvious references to the textbook as, for instance, in a drawing of a single bone. Consequently, the artist's works stimulate the spectator to question the message of the "Human Communication Series", which becomes apparent while looking at her artworks as a whole.

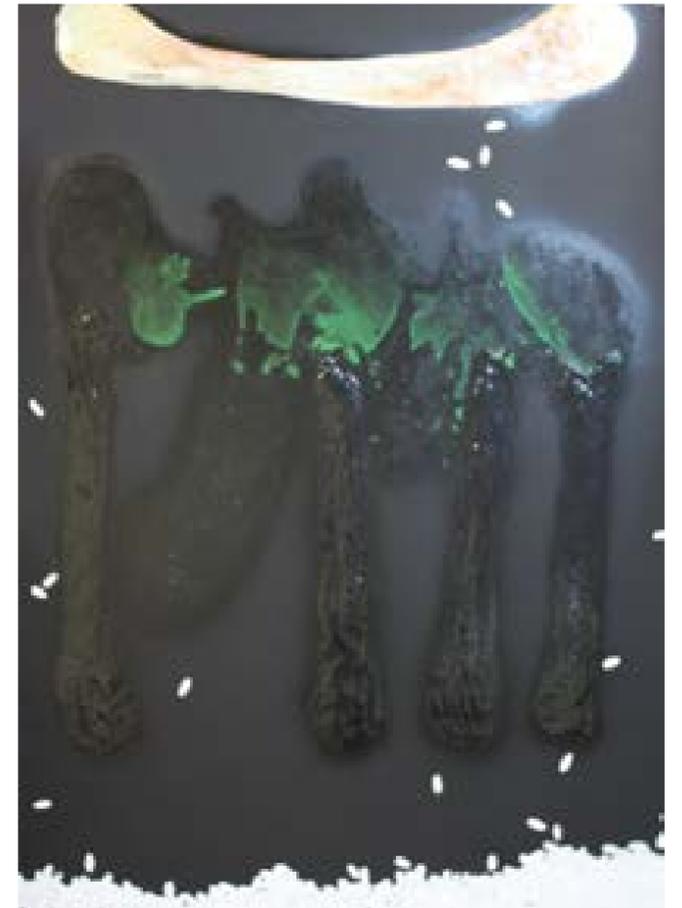
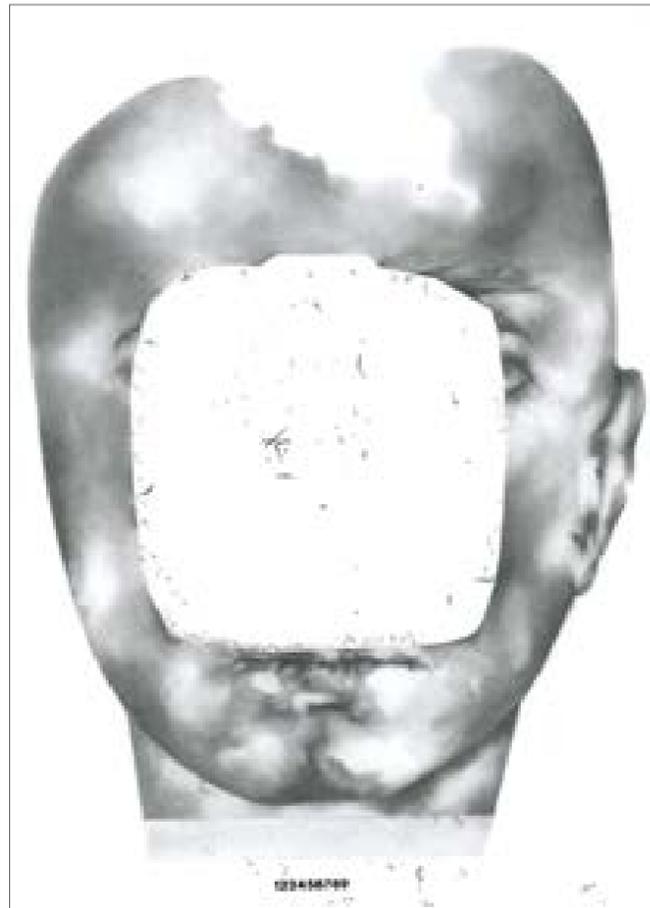
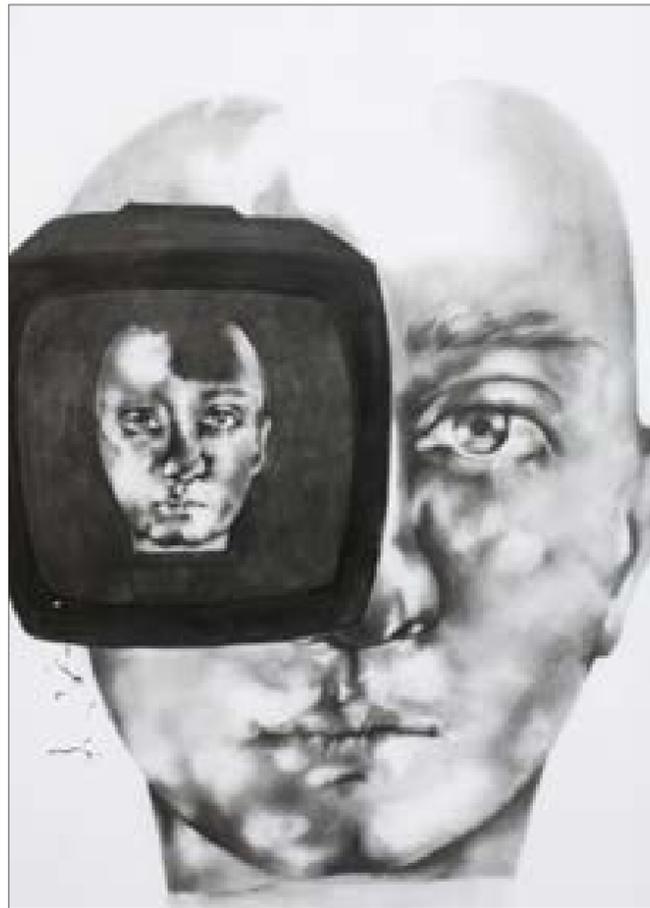
Another hint to the fact that her artworks has to be regarded as a cohesive overall concept are reoccurring motifs in each of her single pieces. Although the artist creates a totally new concept she is able to connect her art pieces to her previous creations: The bones that result

from a gradual reduction in this series can be found in her project "The War Series" (2006-08), as well. Also the television ("TV", 2006) and the registration numbers are reoccurring motifs.

Having a look at a number of paintings the artist created during the same year, the bone and the registration number can be found again, though in an entirely different manner. With the help of a mixed media technique on canvas she succeeds in developing a fascinating surface: On a black background an almost realistic looking image of a single bone emerges in a hectic manner. Additionally, a special type of varnish creates the illusion as if the bone has just been taken away from its former body; at this stage right now it still seems a bit moist and covered with flesh. A very reduced application of green color accentuates the whole painting, which is almost black apart from a number of white, rice-like dots. Once more, the imprinted registration number inside the bones gives a clear reference to the deconstruction of the human being. Again, these paintings fit in smoothly in the previously described overall concept of the Iranian artist's artwork. Returning elements such as bones, raw flesh, registration numbers, mechanically looking heads, the concept of reduction and even the usage of only a few colors are essential parts of the artist's work. This does not mean that her work is an accumulation of repetitions. She seems to focus on deeper and personalized features within the displayed head. Contrary to previously reduced and eliminated individual features, her new portraits (and this is an accurate definition) have been given back their individuality. Nevertheless, the core idea of "destruction" remains within the art pieces drawing comparison to Jenny Saville, Francis Bacon and maybe Lucian Freud as she is not afraid of showing an unmasked, and sometimes even ugly reality of human beings.

Sara Abbasian (1982, Tehran, Iran) started studying painting in the year 2000. Since her previous years at school had been difficult/ painful for she had to face frequent corporal punishments, she found herself struggling again. Unable to cope with the academic atmosphere, she quit shortly after. Finally she overcame these difficulties when she joined Pooqah Aryanpoor's classes in 2003. According to the artist herself, it was the "continuous and hard working that increased my curiosity in the field of art". In 2006 she when she had her first solo exhibition in Tehran. Since then, she is exhibiting both nationally and internationally on a regular basis.

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Human Communication Series, 2010. Pencil on cardboard, 41x30cm, courtesy of AB Gallery & artist.

Untitled, 2010. Mixed media on canvas, 150x100cm, courtesy of AB Gallery & artist.