

Kambiz Sabri - Nostalgia in Media Era

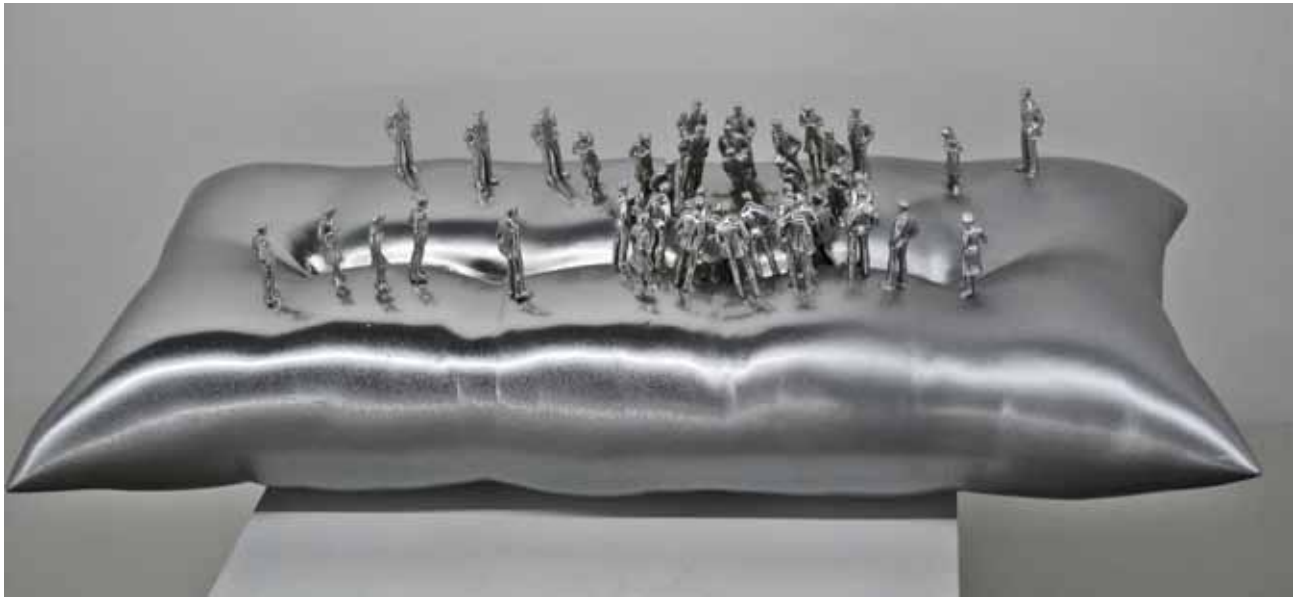
By Ziai Mob - Critic and Honar va Resaneh editor



To The Best of My Mind, 2012, Fiberglass & acrylic sheets, Edition of 3 + 1 AP, 80x55x35cm - Courtesy of Khak Gallery.

Sabri's works of mattresses that have reached an unusual synthesis with architecture. With a tendency toward a new concept inspired by the Iranian architecture, the artist tries to reconstruct the memory of the symbolic buildings of Iran's different historical periods. He seeks narratives that on one hand are deeply rooted in the ancient history and traditions of his country, and on the other, reflect on the Iranian's nostalgia, a nation forced to leave its cultural generative ground after withstanding the pressures and constraints of social, cultural and economic restrictions of the liberal society in the past decades. They moved on to postmodernism without

ever deeply experiencing modernism or preserving their ecological and urban relations. Ironically in such circumstances, they are maintaining what is written as a universal scenario. Sabri is looking for certain things that have been lost for decades; the commotion of life, men, women, children, births and deaths. He pursues the turning point in ancient art and Iranian traditional architecture to convert it into a dual past-present axis. Upon assessing this axis he will be able to find a worthy synthesis for his time, the contemporary art. Kambiz is an artist, in an attempt to find the formal elements of traditional art and architecture and their decorative or



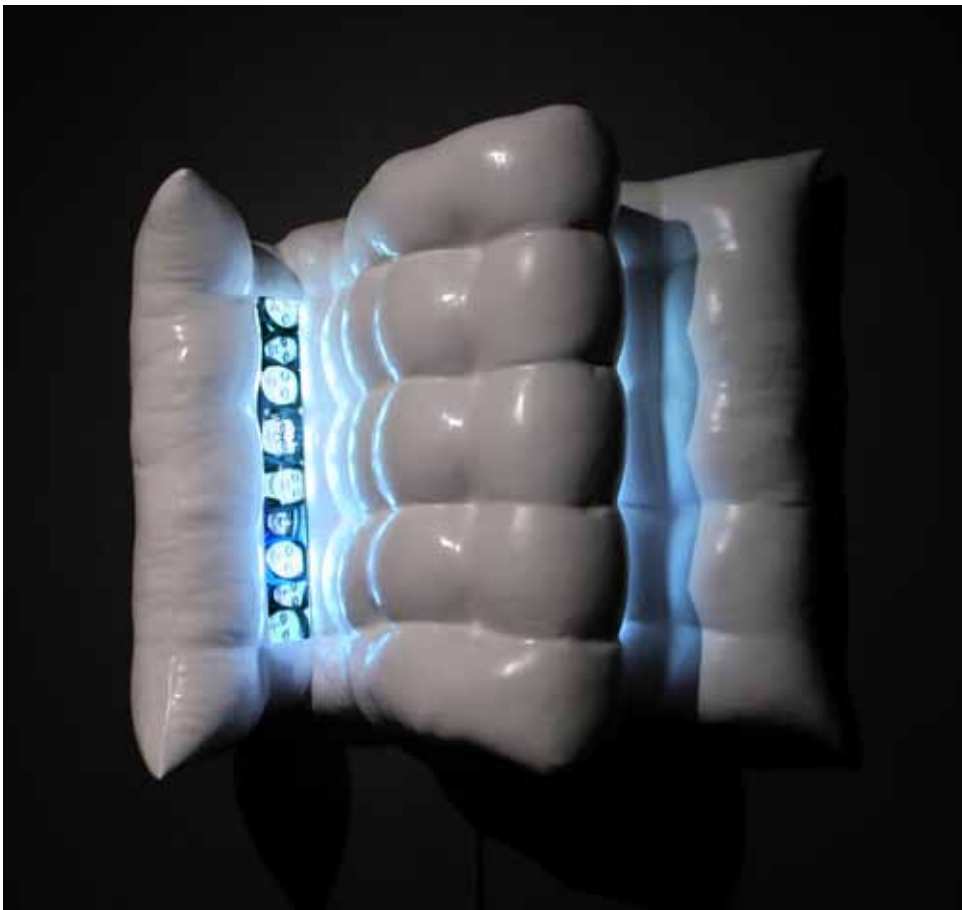
The world is a mirror, 2010, Fiberglass, edition of 3 + 1 AP, 25x40x80cm. - Courtesy of Khak Gallery.

practical aspects and combining them with contemporary elements such as TV, Video, photography, etc. and at the end, he creates a new structure containing all the existing elements. In “To the Best of My Memory”, the artist looks for things that have been lost after all the recent changes and transformations in his native country. His attempt is to bring back the memory of a Qajar’s royal symbolic mansion, Shams-ol Emareh. The mattress with its hollow spaces and the manikins form a swollen symbolic world stressing upon uncertainty and suspension between two heterogeneous atmospheres. The passing of the concrete hard building through the soft textured mattress resembling white impregnated clouds, suggests the idea of an emotional penetration, in which the vertical masculinity of the building crosses through the horizontal femininity, reaching spiritual ecstasy. This work is a replica of Shams El Emare sunk in an enormous cloud-like mattress encircling the sumptuous edifice. Sabri is looking for certain things that have been lost for decades. The sculpture is similar to a pendulum experiencing time with each swing and resembles the mid-tower clock that has been broken for years and no one is capable of restoring it.

On the lower part, one can see a few more manikins, mesmerized and frozen in the mirrored hall, as if they are witnessing life’s new players through the passage

of time. In “Stretched memory” the element of the architecture of the Arg – e Karimxan of Shiraz has been combined with the formal identity of current mattresses. In the center there is a lattice ventilator that still acts as a device to exchange air between inside and outside and to control the temperature.

Combining these two elements the artist is pursuing the turning point in ancient art and Iranian traditional architecture to convert it into a dual past-present axis. Upon assessing this axis he will be able to find a worthy synthesis for his time, the contemporary art. In “Hidden Layers” Sabri returns to the current time, combining the contemporary electronic elements such as video, light box and TV monitors with the mattress. “Hidden Layers” has moved away from its indigenous identity by encircling TV monitors in the cracks of its sunken layers. The monitors are similar to closed circuit TV cameras that both store and display classified data about the passersby, similar to the ones installed in public places such as stores, subways, crowded streets, airports, stations to monitor the citizens’ social political actions, a routine act which controls our lives under the defined rules of political powers. The mirrors used in “A Window to Light” are similar to the wonderful stuccos and stalactite works of the Safavid dynasty architecture. In this work Sabri uses this element to multiply light



Hidden Layers, 80x85x45cm, Fiberglass & light boxes, 2012

and space. There are numerous reflections reflecting off of the mirrored surfaces and a bilateral window connects the sculpture to its surroundings. The stair-like mirrors help the viewer to follow the route between the two openings just as the artist has intended.

The inner space of the sculpture shows human's bewilderment and movement in his lifespan, a life that he instinctively tries to illuminate and by adding spirituality and subjectivity to the work, he seeks his own path. Successively the mirrors reflect the human's image thus display his infinite presence in the middle valve. Creating a mysterious and spiritual space in the inner part, and the repetition of the human images, is an attempt to express the mutual and mirror-like relations of humans with one another and with the universe. Moreover, it means humans are constantly watching the reflections of their own actions and thoughts.

About the artist

Kambiz Sabri was born in 1967 in Iran. He has a BA in sculpture and an MA in graphic design. He is teaching at a number of art faculties in Tehran, namely at Tehran University. Kambiz has held various solo exhibitions and participated in many group exhibitions in contemporary art museums and galleries. He has won prizes from the 3rd Sculpture Biennial and the 2nd Sculpture Symposium of Iran. He is also a winner of the Emirates Airlines Skywards Future Artists competition. International activities include being the coordinator for the Iran pavilion in the 51st Venice Biennial and participation in Art Dubai and Art Paris 2011.

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