

Private View: 6-8pm, 19 January 2017
Exhibition Dates: 20 January - 18 February 2017
Open Tuesday to Saturday 11 - 6pm or by appointment

Sheida Soleimani *To Oblivion*



Edel Assanti is pleased to present *To Oblivion*, Sheida Soleimani's first UK solo exhibition.

Soleimani's practice expounds on the photographic traces of women unlawfully imprisoned and executed by the state in Iran. Low-resolution images, drawn either from the victims' lives or from government archives, are printed on three-dimensional effigies, collaged and assembled within elaborately constructed sets. The surreal, colourful spaces are populated by the victim's repeated faces, evoking a fragmented digital landscape in which images that should have disappeared permeate and replicate, blurring the distinction between physical object and reproduction. The figures are accompanied by disparate objects and imagery relating to the circumstances and detention of each individual.

Soleimani undertakes extensive research in order to unearth each victim's narrative, communicating with journalists within Iran or via the dark web, finding photographic material ranging from passport photos to images of torture. The stories and

images are often buried by the Iranian government in attempts to elude human rights organisations and international media. The pixilation of the images printed upon the dolls reasserts their web origins, lending permanence to a lost portrait.

The bulbous fabric figures appear both in the images and independently, as free-standing hand-sewn sculptures on whose surface the photographic portraits have been printed, reaching the height of a kneeling adult. They reference Albert Badura's 1961 "Bobo Doll" experiment; Badura established the ease with which children apprehended violence by recording their aggressive behaviour towards inanimate dolls after they were shown a video of an adult punching one. Women condemned to death in Iran are frequently executed publicly, in forums in which children are encouraged to bear witness and participate; Soleimani employs the Bobo Doll to elucidate upon the learnt apathy toward these disappeared victims and their suffering, as well as state-endorsed, systematised violence towards women.

Sheida Soleimani received her MFA from Cranbrook Academy of Art in 2015. She currently resides in Providence, RI where she teaches at the Rhode Island School of Design.

EDEL ASSANTI

74a Newman Street, London W1T 3DB
art@edelassanti.com +4420 7637 8537