

New Exhibition at the Austrian Cultural Forum New York

THE SEEN AND THE HIDDEN: (DIS)COVERING THE VEIL

MAY 22 – AUG 29, 2009



Shadi Ghadirian, Domestic Life #61, 2002

ARTISTS

Negar Ahkami (USA), Ayad Alkadhi (Iraq/USA), Zoulikha Bouabdellah (Algeria/France), Adriana Czernin (Bulgaria/Austria), Katrina Daschner (Germany/Austria), Shadi Ghadirian (Iran), Nilbar Güres (Turkey/Austria), Marlene Haring (Austria), Farheen HAQ (Canada), Princess Hijab (France), Hanna Menne (Austria), Sara Rahbar (Iran), Marjane Satrapi (France), Asma Ahmed Shikoh (Pakistan/USA), Esin Turan (Turkey/Austria)

The Muslim woman's veil is one of the most symbolically charged pieces of clothing in contemporary dress. By addressing conflicting ideas of faith, sexuality and public life, it is something that both provokes and conveys ideas, language, and actions. The veil raises a host of questions and tensions between religion and identity, and has become one of the most visible icons of contemporary Islam. It represents an important cultural tradition yet remains a very personal practice for Muslim women as well as a symbol communicated to others within the public sphere.

The wearing of the veil has caused heated discussion worldwide - both in Europe and the United States, but also in countries where Islam is the prevalent religion. Often rejected as a symbol of backwardness and oppression, veiling has simultaneously become a symbol of Islamic culture's ability to assert autonomy and stress the significance of protection, privacy, morality and piety.

By examining the positions of contemporary artists from the Greater Middle East (Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Pakistan), Europe (Austria, France, Germany) and North America (New York City, Canada), this exhibition intends to be a trans-cultural exploration of the numerous approaches to the ideas that surround both the literal and, as importantly, metaphorical meaning of the veil, and includes works in a variety of media such as video, installation, photography, and painting.

Produced by Andreas Stadler. **Curated** by David Harper and Martha Kirszenbaum (New York) and Karin Meisel (Vienna), **Exhibition Coordination** Elisabeth Haider, **Exhibition Assistance** Natascha Boojar, Anne Marie Butler, Hanna Menne, Kerstin Schuetz-Mueller, Maria Simma

A catalogue will be available at the Austrian Cultural Forum.

Exhibition dates: May 22, 2009 – August 29, 2009

Hours: Monday – Saturday, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm

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The Seen and the Hidden: (Dis)covering the Veil at the Austrian Cultural Forum is presented in conjunction with **Muslim Voices: Arts and Ideas**, an unprecedented ten-day festival in New York City celebrating Islamic culture. It features more than 100 artists and speakers for performances, films, exhibitions, talks, and other events, ranging from the traditional to the contemporary. www.MuslimVoicesFestival.org

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Admission to exhibitions, concerts, and other events at the Austrian Cultural Forum is free.

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