

Gita Hashemi, Biography

Blurring the boundaries of artistic practices through constant experimentation, Toronto-based Gita Hashemi works in installation, performance, social practice, video, internet art and image-text, as well as curating and writing about culture and art. Hashemi's transdisciplinary work is centered on marginalized histories and contemporary politics, often with an eye on women's experience. She frequently uses written text as premise for elaborate and large-scale multi-platform projects. A highly trained calligrapher, Hashemi also uses writing itself as live performance as well as visual material.

Recurrent themes include decolonial acts and cultures of resistance, from 18th century East-West encounters and 1953 coup in Iran to the 1979 Revolution and Indigenous land rights in Palestine and Turtle Island. She is concerned with individual healing and social transformation, and her work often engages the viewers directly through interactive and participatory processes. She originated the revisionary maxim, "the personal is poetic, the poetic is political, the political is personal."

More info:

Hashemi was born in Shiraz, Iran. She entered the School of Fine Arts at Tehran University in 1979 but was expelled at the time of Islamic Cultural Revolution. She continued her education at California State University at Northridge, and later at York University where she graduated with a Masters in Interdisciplinary Studies. She taught time-based art, (new) media and cultural studies at York and Ryerson Universities and University of Toronto, 1998-2009. She lives in Toronto, Canada.

Presently, Hashemi is working on a multi-voice performance based on the writings of early twentieth-century Iranian radical feminist Zandokht Shirazi, that will be premiered in July 2020, as well as a research-based project titled Archive Iran: Encounters with a Century. Her most recent projects include [Dreams \(reload\)](#) (2019), an audio project about post-communist Bulgaria (available as podcast); [Here, Now: Dispatch from Utopia](#), a mail art/social practice work; [BarAyandegan/Emergent](#) (2018-19), a series of audio portraits of Iranian women (available as podcast); [Grounding](#) (2017), a live streamed embodied writing performance and installation based on the memoirs of an Iranian woman, that won the Ontario Association of Art Galleries's best exhibition of the year award.

Earlier projects include [Declarations Diptych \(2016\)](#) focusing on notions and practices of rights in two site-specific performances, [Passages Trilogy \(2014-15\)](#), three site-specific collaborative performances and videos that re-read East-West conceptions through travel writing by travelers from the East to the West, [Headquarters; Pathology of an Ouster \(2013\)](#), a multi-platform work including an installation, performance and webcast focused on the 1953 US-UK coup d'état in

Iran; [Ephemeral Monument \(2008-16\)](#), an embodied writing performance, video and installation based on the literature of resistance in Iran between the coup and the 1979 Revolution; and [The Book of Illuminations \(2012\)](#), a book/installation that draws on self-narrative and idiomatic Farsi to comment on repetitive political and cultural patterns; and [Utopias In-Progress \(2011\)](#), a performance, video and installation about the effects of capitalism on the arts.

She has exhibited, among other venues, at Center for Book Arts/New York, YYYZ Gallery/Toronto, Interaccess Electronic Media Arts Centre/Toronto, Yerba Buena Centre for the Arts/San Francisco, SIGGRAPH/Los Angeles, Casoria Museum of Contemporary Art/Napels, Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Rosario/Argentina, Plug In/Basel, Al Kahf Art Gallery/Bethlehem, Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Yucatan/Merida, Red House Centre/Sofia and Electrochoc/Lyon and in many new media and art festivals in the Americas, Europe and Asia.

Her work has been reviewed in e-Misferica, Mix Magazine, Art Papers, Abitaire, Fuse, Radical History Review, Leonardo, Art Week, Toronto Star, Canadian Dimensions, Eastern Art Report, DigiMag, and TeknoKultura among others. She is a recipient of Baddek International New Media Award for the CD-R Of Shifting Shadows, Toronto Community Foundation Award for the sound installation The War Primer, and American Ad Federation's award for the book Locating Afghanistan, Ontario Association of Art Galleries best exhibition of the year award for Grounding. She has won many art grants from the Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council and Toronto Arts Council.

Hashemi's curatorial projects include Trans/Planting: Contemporary Art by Women from/in Iran (2001), Negotiations: From a Piece of Land to a Land of Peace (2003), Will (2003), Locating Afghanistan (2004-5), RealPlay (2005), In Contact in Iraq (2005) and Acts of Being: Kazemi vs Libman (2005) and Auto-Liberacion (2007). Her writing has been published in several catalogues including 2005 and 2007 InterActiva (Merida, Mexico) and Decima Bienal de Habana's Evento Teorico, and appeared in magazines such as Fuse, Refuge, Resources for Feminist Research, Public, and most recently, Discover Society.

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