

## MAHMOUD BAKHSHI

---

### BAH MAN

PARIS DEBELLEYME

08 Wednesday - 02 Saturday

---



Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac is pleased to announce the first solo exhibition of recent work by Iranian artist Mahmoud Bakhshi.

Bakhshi's installations and sculptural works deal with the aesthetics of post-revolutionary Iran, composed of a distinctive combination of ideological Islam, industrial capitalism and the liberational iconography of the 1979 Revolution. His work represents a struggle between an art that is self-conscious of its independence and the propaganda of the state.

Recently Bakhshi has integrated everyday objects from Iran into his work, objects that have acquired a political character beyond their banal everyday character. Bahman cigarettes, for example, are a low quality commodity that is popular in artistic circles and amongst Iranian non-conformists.

Bahman is also the name of the eleventh month in the solar calendar - the month of the 1979 Revolution - and an iconic movie theatre located around the corner from Revolution Square in Tehran. However, unlike many contemporary political artists, Bakhshi does not simply attack the icons of contemporary Iran. "In most authoritarian societies, artists try to escape the controlling power, with an anti-establishment approach to their work," he says. "I, however, try to emulate artworks that are specifically produced for the government."

Bakhshi's strategy of resistance involves surrounding himself with images of the dominant power, hence the presence of Islamic geometrical motifs in his piece, Wall (2011). The production of Wall - which is constructed from cigarettes - is a very long and laborious process. The same is also true of an earlier work, Solitary show (confinement), 2007, which is influenced by the objects that people in solitary confinement might make with whatever materials they can find to keep themselves busy. The results of this kind of process are often very crude and represent a slow, stubborn insistence upon a seemingly pointless procedure. This insistence represents hope in a hopeless situation. Whether art can instigate real change is an open question, but either way Bakhshi's new works present possibility and futility as two sides of the same coin.

Mahmoud Bakhshi was born in 1977 in Tehran, Iran where he lives and works. In 2001 he graduated with a BA in Sculpture from the Faculty of Fine Arts at University of Tehran. In recent years, he has participated in several group shows including Raad o Bargh, 17 Artists from Iran at Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac in Paris (2009), Iran: New Voices at the Barbican Centre in London (2008), Lion Under the Rainbow in Athens (2008), Iran.com at the Museum of New Art in Freiburg (2006) and Eastern Expressway at the Evangelisch Stadtakademie in Frankfurt (2006). He had an important solo show at the Saatchi Gallery in London in 2010 as the winner of the 2009 Magic of Persia Contemporary Art Prize. For further information on this exhibition, please contact Victoire de Pourtalès, victoire@ropac.net, +33 (0)1 42 72 99 00. For press inquiries, please contact Alessandra Bellavita, alessandra@ropac.net. To obtain visual elements, please contact Zahra Khozeimeh-Alam, zahra@ropac.net.