

LEILA HELLER GALLERY.

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Iran Special Edition : Reza Aramesh Aramesh at Sazmanab

[Iran](#), written by [Laurence Cornet](#)



Action 114. Baqouba, Iraq, Friday July 30, 2004. © Reza Aramesh

The Sazmanab Platform for Contemporary Arts occupies a special place in Tehran. Housed in Tehran's former water department, the non-commercial art center is a narrow, three-story building with a flexible exhibition space and a library. In addition to its insightful exhibitions of international dimension, Sohrab Kashani, its founder, organizes debates and conferences that enhance the dialogue about artistic practice and hosts an annual residency program open to international curators and artists. Though he had previously worked with Amirali Ghasemi to curate the alternative art space Parkingallery, Kashani leaves behind the underground and set up a model.

The latest exhibition was Reza Aramesh's « At 11:08 March 14th, 2006 » . Represented in New York by the Leila Heller gallery, this multidisciplinary artist made a splash at the 2014 Frieze Art Fair in London with the sculpture of a man, trousers low on the ankles and tee-shirt hiding his face, challenging our idea about statues: instead of portraying a glorious personality, it depicted a submissive individual. The piece was called Action, as most of Aramesh's works, numbered 137, and followed with a precise time (6:45pm, 3 May 2012, Ramla), but didn't portrayed a glorious individual.

Long interested in the impact of images of conflict and their circulation outside of the immediate context of the event itself, Aramesh deconstructs the iconography of war by using the codes that shaped it throughout history. His exhibition at Sazmanab includes three original works, among which one video of archival images and a photographic reconstruction of a war crime. The photograph, completing a larger series, creates a time-lag with the reality of the event, going so far as to remove all spontaneity from the expressions of her models to make the scene strangely and merely picturesque. The gap between the action itself and its depiction disturbs.

« Cruelty, Aramesh asserts, must be confronted but there is an impérative to regard it in a way different from the standard models set by entertainment and news media », writes David Thorp in the book's exhibition. In the video, Not what was meant, Aramesh goes further in challenging our assumption about war photography. Made of 470 archive photographs of conflicts spanning over different periods and locations, the piece is structured around the poses of the soldiers - the haunting movement of their arms and the intoxicating expression of their eyes -, repeated as inevitably as violence.