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**ASIA SOCIETY PRESENTS FIRST U.S. SHOWING OF VIDEO WORKS BY  
RAHRAW OMARZAD (AFGHANISTAN) AND SEIFOLLAH SAMADIAN (IRAN)**

***SIGHT UNSEEN: VIDEO FROM AFGHANISTAN AND IRAN***

June 9, 2009 through September 13, 2009



Rahraw Omarzad, *Opening*, 2005.

*Sight Unseen: Video from Afghanistan and Iran* showcases two video works by Afghan artist **Rahraw Omarzad** and Iranian artist **Seifollah Samadian**. The exhibition will represent the first time either work has been presented in a U.S. museum. Both artists are ardent supporters of artistic independence in their home countries. Although the two works are stylistically different, *Sight Unseen* reveals each of the artists' intense exploration of the human condition.

Rahraw Omarzad (b. 1964, Kabul) is one of Afghanistan's first avant-garde video artists. A teacher and mentor to a younger generation of Afghan artists, he played an important role in establishing the Center for Contemporary Art Afghanistan (CCAA), the only not-for-profit arts organization in the country. His work *The Third One* (formerly titled *Opening*, single channel video, color, and sound, 11 minutes, 31 seconds) is the result of a collaboration between Omarzad and his students and members of CCAA. This compelling video depicts an unidentified individual cutting a hole in a woman's head-covering or *chadri* (also referred to as *chador* in Iran or *burqa* by Muslims in other regions) with a pair of scissors. Rather than passively accepting this apparent "liberation," the woman under the *chadri* begins to stitch colorful embroidery around the hole.



Seifollah Samadian, *The White Station*, 1999.

Seifollah Samadian (b. 1954, Tehran) is highly regarded internationally as an art director, and has worked with for celebrated directors such as Abbas Kiarostami and Martin Scorsese. His simple filmic works often document mundane everyday scenes, extracting drama and leading to an awareness of wider social issues. He emerged on the forefront of the Iranian art scene for his photographic work following the end of the Iran-Iraq war in 1988. *The White Station* (1999, 35mm film transferred to single channel video, color, and sound, 9 minutes) depicts a woman wearing a black *chador* as she waits for a bus during a harsh blizzard in Tehran in 1999. The mesmerizing film

was shot in one take from the artist's apartment window. Samadian's work has been exhibited extensively in Europe and at major international exhibitions, including *Documenta*

in Kassel and the *Istanbul Biennial*. He is the publisher and editor of the influential Iranian cultural magazine *Tassvir*.

The exhibition is curated by Miwako Tezuka, Associate Curator, Asia Society.

### **Credits**

The exhibition is part of the Society's Creative Voices of Islam in Asia project, a three-year initiative funded in part by the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art. It is also part of Muslim Voices: Arts and Ideas, an unprecedented NYC-wide festival and conference—organized by Asia Society, BAM and New York University Center for Dialogues—taking place June 5–14 celebrating the extraordinary range of artistic expression in the Muslim world.

### **Asia Society Museum**

Asia Society Museum presents groundbreaking exhibitions and artworks, many previously unseen in North America. Through exhibitions and related public programs, Asia Society provides a forum for the issues and viewpoints reflected in both traditional and contemporary Asian art. For more information, visit [www.AsiaSociety.org](http://www.AsiaSociety.org).

Asia Society Museum is located at 725 Park Avenue (at 70th Street), New York City. The Museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Closed on Mondays and major holidays. General admission is \$10, seniors \$7, students \$5 and free for members and persons under 16. Free admission Friday evenings, 6:00 to 9:00 p.m.

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