

Fariba Boroufar *In our Bones*

Preview: Thursday, 31 October, 6 - 9 PM
31 October - 07 December, 2024

Gallery Isabelle is delighted to present *In our Bones*, Fariba Boroufar's first solo exhibition in the UAE, from October 31st until December 7th, 2024.

As a child, the artist Fariba Boroufar took advantage of the drawing classes offered by Kanoon e Parvaresh e Fekri, an arts institute for children in her native Iran. She'd submit drawings according to a prompt—say 'draw a horse'—and receive feedback from Kanoon's band of inspired teachers. She took this feedback very seriously; it was, if you will, an early encounter with art criticism.

Still, she didn't exactly set out to be a visual artist. Her family deemed it too impractical. Why shouldn't she become a doctor, like her sisters? She opted to study graphic design at university instead—a sensible choice—and spent ensuing years both working for newspapers and designing children's books. It was only after a move from Mashhad, where she had been living for a decade, back to her native Tehran, that she switched gears and took up weaving, apprenticing herself to a friend who had mastered the art. For Iranians, weaving, and rug-making, were in her own words, "in our bones."

Boroufar's weaves are uncanny. They remind us of elements of the built environment via a correspondence that is subtle, ambiguous, pleasing. Gaze at two tall and skinny structures she has woven long enough and you may see a pair of wind towers, known as *bad-gir*, a form of vernacular architecture for cooling structures in the desert. Elsewhere, a clump of hexagons—also woven—begins to evoke the delicate tile work one might find in the great mosques of Esfahan. Another work takes inspiration from *gaalipoush*, the ancient practice of covering roofs with leaves in the northern Caspian Sea region—an architectural gesture but also a psychic one: nature in the service of healing, protecting.

Boroufar's interest in architecture blossomed in the early days of her marriage, when she and her husband would travel to far-flung corners of the country to view the rarest of marvels in Yazd, Naeen, Esfahan, Shush, Birjand, and Ghazvin. In these places they might track down a rare *qanat*, an ancient irrigation channel indigenous to Iran, or happen upon an idiosyncratic mosque in the middle of nowhere. From these adventures came an appreciation for Iran's formidable architectural history—its iconicity, heart-stopping beauty, and attention to context. But with that also came an unshakable melancholy over the wages of modernization.



Turquoise, 2024, various threads, 150 x 220 cm

Today, Tehran, once a charming and sleepy capital, is hobbled by overdevelopment, pockmarked by garish towers that extend to the heavens. Architecture, in Boroufar's words, was once a source of sensuality and pleasure. Today it has been reduced to bland functionality, pragmatism, or even disorienting bling. Which is to say, it has changed irrevocably. Not, as it happens, unlike the centuries-old practice of weaving itself, which is increasingly mechanized, divorced from the movement of the body, divorced from touch, divorced from community.

In this way, Boroufar's embrace of weaving—atavistic as it may appear—alongside her representation of architectural forms and traditions on the verge of extinction, feels especially poignant. It offer a poetical portrait of our broken present, a protest against forgetting, and a paean to another way of moving through the world.

Negar Azimi

Artist's Biography

Fariba Boroufar (b. 1975, Tehran) began her artistic journey studying Sculpture at the Tehran School of Fine Arts, where she graduated in 1993. She later pursued a Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design and earned a Master's degree in Illustration from the University of Art in Tehran in 2004. She spent ensuing years both working for newspapers and designing children's books. It was only after a move from Mashhad, where she had been living for a decade, back to her native Tehran, that she switched gears and took up weaving, apprenticing herself to a friend who had mastered the art.

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Fariba Boroufar participated in the National Sculpture Biennale in Tehran (2020) as well as the 7th and 10th annual site-specific Persbook exhibition held in Isfahan (2017) and Kashan (2020) where she brought her attention to ancient buildings in an attempt to bring protection in conversation with the area's crafts and ecology. Recently, she's been part of various group exhibitions in Tehran, including Dastan Gallery (2022) and Etemad Gallery (2023) as well as Afikaris Gallery (2024) in Paris.



Untitled, 2024, various threads and metallic mesh, 140 x 100 x 35 cm

For any additional information or press-related inquiries, kindly reach out to Jad Karam jad@ivde.net

Courtesy of the artist and Gallery Isabelle, Dubai
Photos: Altamash Urooj