

I'm not here;
this isn't happening.

Elnaz Talaei

**I'm not here; this isn't
happening.**

Elnaz Talaei

Thesis Report

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Spring 2020



تبدیل اهل جهان

در دست سید کیست

بستان اهل اجل در

دارد سوختن

بستم جهان را

بدره اهل

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در دست سید کیست

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ای ساربان آهسته رو کارا ام جانم من رود
و آن طل که با خود داشت با دلستانم من رود

گفتم به نینس و منسون بنهان لنم ریسن درون
بنهان نهن مانده نه خون به آستانم من رود

او من رود دامن گان من زهر سفایه چان
دیده میرسد از من گان کند دل نشانم من رود

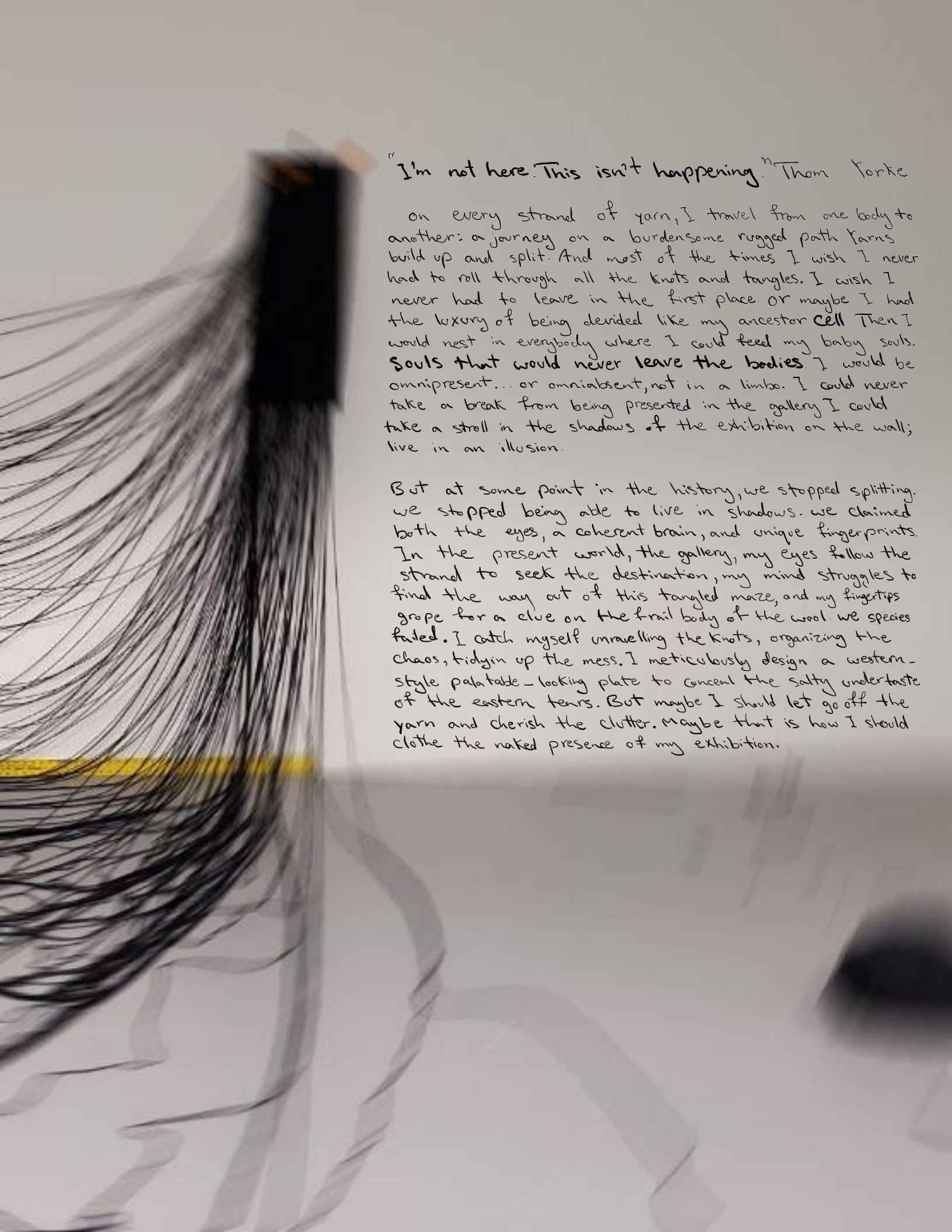
با آن همه بیداد او ریش عهده به بنیاد او
در سینه دارم یاد او یا به زبانم من رود

صبر از وصال یار من بدگشتن از دلدار من
گدوم نبات کارین صم کار از آستانم من رود

در رفتن جان از بین گویند هر نوعی سخن
من خود به چشم غزین دیم که جانم من رود

سعدی، غزلیات






"I'm not here. This isn't happening." Thom Yorke

on every strand of yarn, I travel from one body to another: a journey on a burdensome rugged path. Yarns build up and split. And most of the times I wish I never had to roll through all the knots and tangles. I wish I never had to leave in the first place. Or maybe I had the luxury of being divided like my ancestor **cell**. Then I would nest in everybody where I could feed my baby souls. **Souls that would never leave the bodies.** I would be omnipresent... or omniabsent, not in a limbo. I could never take a break from being presented in the gallery. I could take a stroll in the shadows of the exhibition on the wall; live in an illusion.


But at some point in the history, we stopped splitting. We stopped being able to live in shadows. We claimed both the eyes, a coherent brain, and unique fingerprints. In the present world, the gallery, my eyes follow the strand to seek the destination, my mind struggles to find the way out of this tangled maze, and my fingertips grope for a clue on the frail body of the wool. We species failed. I catch myself unravelling the knots, organizing the chaos, tidying up the mess. I meticulously design a western-style palatable-looking plate to conceal the salty undertaste of the eastern tears. But maybe I should let go off the yarn and cherish the clutter. Maybe that is how I should clothe the naked presence of my exhibition.

"poetry and calligraphy are innate in Iranian culture. I like poetry because it has the potential to be metaphorical and for us Iranians, metaphorical language is essential. It has been used for many years and today it is used by artists and visual artists, because it provides the opportunity to "say what is forbidden to say" without being censored, and it allows you to make statements between lines in a country where we are forbidden from speaking out, especially women. That's why it is logical that the halo of poetry is found in my work because it's part of me, my personality and my culture. It's part of my art and comes through easily when I'm creating. I like to count on Iranian poetry, because I know that it's understood by my people. In terms of Farrokhzad's poems, they are very necessary for my work for explaining my feelings and the character of my people. She was an amazing poet who wrote about forbidden things for a woman, like love or desire."

Shirin Neshat



years ago I lost my glasses
diving into the pool...



Last night, I found them
at the bottom of the ocean
And it seemed they hadn't
been washed for years.

As I walk through the buildings and in the streets, as I look at the walls and tables, I see faces. To me, objects have character. Apart from aesthetic aspects of objects, I tend to emotionally connect to them, often the way I connect to people. Things become non-tradable parts of my life as I use them and live with them for a while. Perhaps this bonding is mutual; perhaps my childhood doll I left back home misses me; and perhaps the walls of my house look at me through their cracks.

We leave our marks on our surroundings either intentionally or unintentionally, the same way our presence affects the people around us. In the Middle Eastern cultures, it is believed that the coffee residue at the bottom of one's cup reflects one's fortune. I see reflections of people's personalities, moods, histories, and intentions in the ashtrays they use, couches they rest on, and sweat stains on their dresses. To me, the imperfections in the objects have gradually become representative of the neighboring people. I recognize faces in the cracks of the walls, peeled off tables, and broken windows. I feel, as if I am an empath, I can travel into the vacuums of people's lives through these anthropomorphic voids and cracks surrounding me.

Signifying anthropomorphic imperfections in objects, I try to recreate a narrative through **Pareidolia**: A narrative I do not know by heart, but have been exposed to; maybe as I watched my grandmothers weave rugs or my mother make clothes. In this recreation, I bring to the forefront the voids and imperfections, which my predecessors tried to elaborately conceal.

Pareidolia is inspired by such works as the **Insomnia** (1994) piece by Jeff Walls, the **Red Room** photo (2001) by Sara Dobai, and the footprints on the steps in the **In Deeper** piece (1999) by Rut Bleese Luxemburg (Charlotte 2009). It is the last work in a series of experiments that started with taking photographs of the face-shaped patterns I recognized in my environment, and then transformed into drawings and markings using paint, spray, glue, and stencils. These experiments eventually evolved into a weaving.







The most familiar unrecognizable faces


were you desperate carrying the desk,
I don't recall!

were you angry pounding your fist on the wall,
I don't recall!

I don't remember your name.
I don't even remember your face.

you are long gone.

only leaving these faces, which are the most familiar
to me.





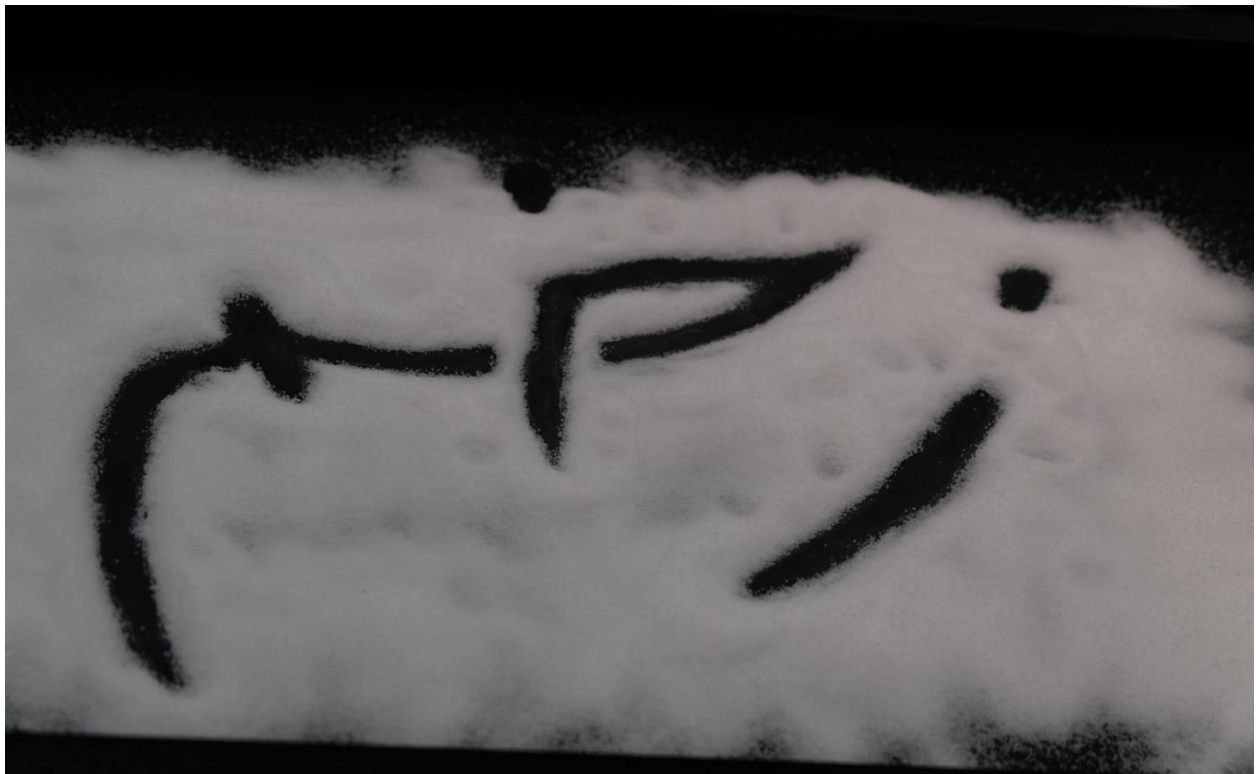
Dagger in the sore

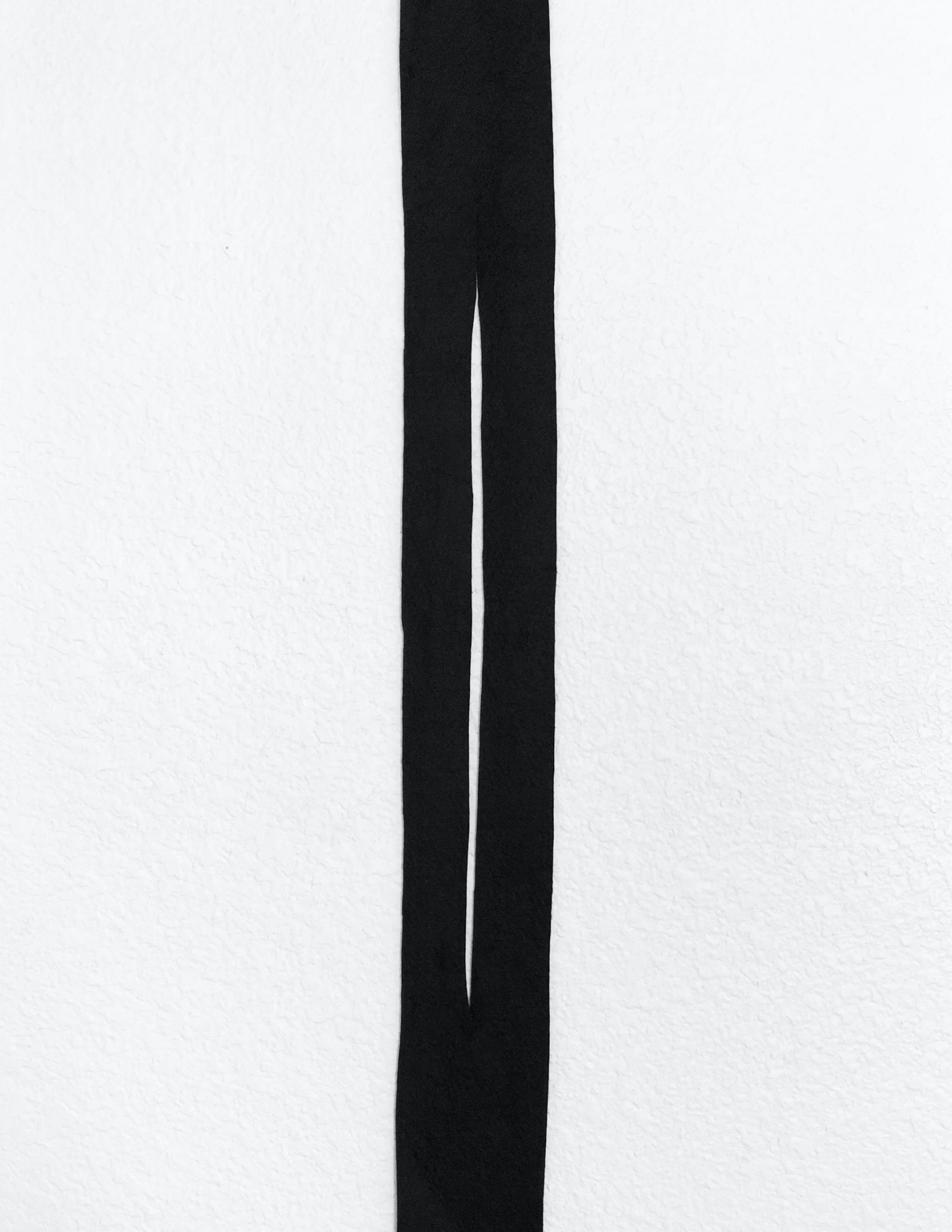
see

snow-covered wounds

no blood comes out

It's just a sore
Softly blow the salt
Alone, the grains move together
I got bruises from the cold
words pouring out, stuck right there





our heart is surrounded by the coronary plexus,
the most vital of threads...

Handling fiber we handle mystery.

A dry leaf has a network reminiscent of a
mummy...

when the biology of our body breaks down, the
skin has to be cut so as to give access to
the inside.

Later it has to be sewn on like fabric. Fabric
is our covering and our attire. Made with our
hands, it has a record of our thoughts.

Magdalena Abakanowicz
(Rose 1993, 20-22)

unwinding the thread,
lines come loose
pulling with one hand
chaining with the next
Loop up and around
Slip through
Loop up and over
Continue

One loop of a hope
over a loop of a woe
Slip through
one loop of a joy
around the ache of a sore

Row after row after row after row

what's left at the end...
Thousands of wishes
Turned into a long
teethed-edged sheet





I inter
of m
Other
chain
roche
A cell
to de

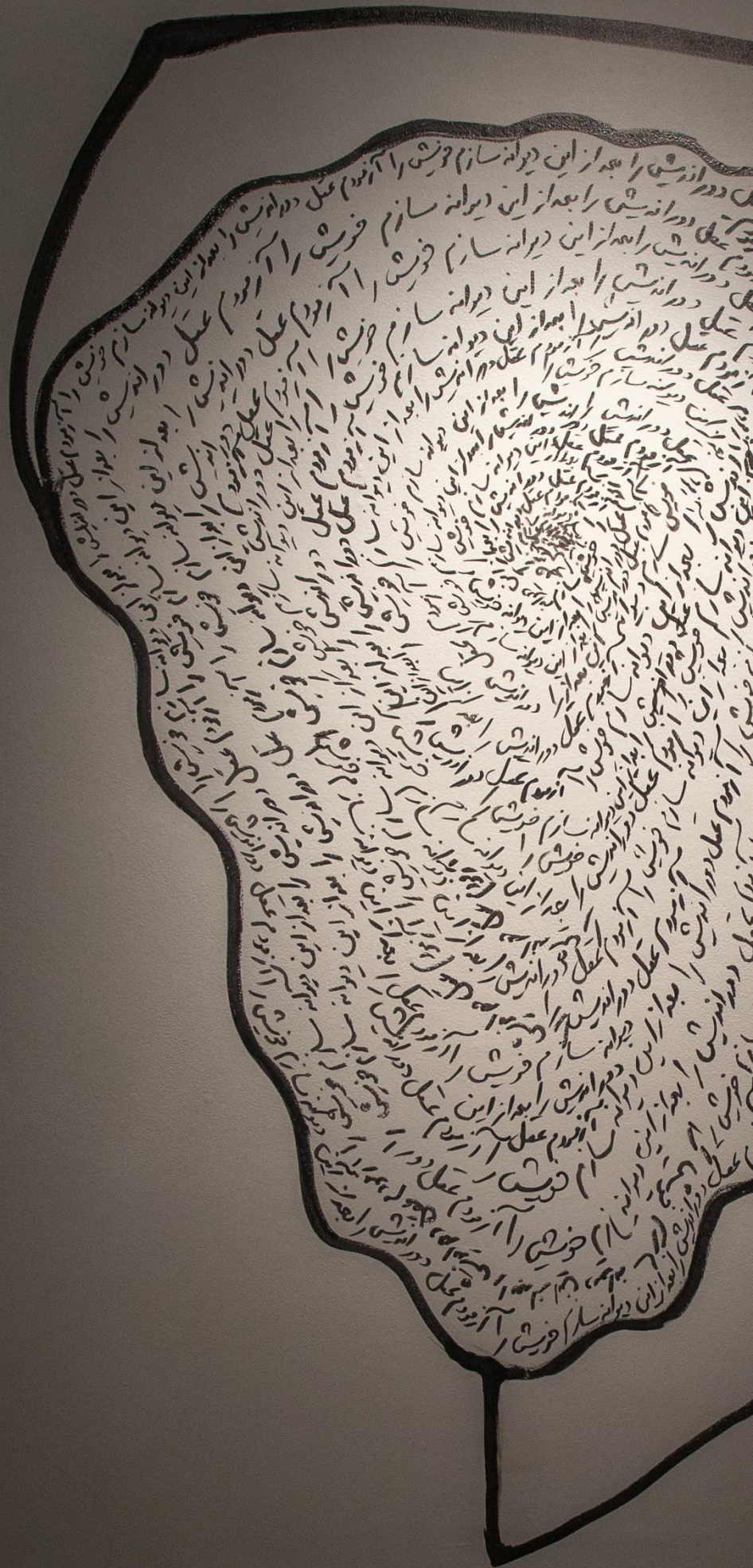
I work with fibers, words, lines and marks. My practice may be social or personal—but I often wonder if I could easily distinguish between the two. I'm interested in abstract art, but reflecting on my own product, I can't help finding social references or narratives traced back to my relationship with my mom. My childhood memories are saturated with sound and color—and these memories seem as absent from me today as sound and color from my artwork. My mom was often too busy making dresses for her customers, so not many words would normally be exchanged between us. Instead, while listening to the music of her sewing machine, I occupied myself with colorful buttons, strings, and fabrics.

Observing my mom endlessly cutting and sewing has shaped my work process in similar ways. However, as confined as she kept this routine to her private prison cell (making only the "product" accessible), "process" is the foreground of my practice. By dramatizing the routine, I seek to study the transformational aspect of repetition and open a window to commonly ignored layers of life, particularly in the Eastern traditional societies—like the one I was raised in. As Shirin Neshat explains in reference to such societies, the public appearance of women should deemphasize their individual differences.

"[In these societies,] space and spatial boundaries are politicized and are designed to lift personal and individual desire from the public domain and contain it within private spaces. Ultimately, men dominate public spaces, and women exist for the most part in private spaces."
(Bertucci 1997)



memories. friends. مذكرتي. high school. hiding from my mom.
smoke. Cigarettes after sex. Cigarettes instead of sex. Jazz music.
rain. haircut. love. break up. Summer. Alcohol. ordinary. memories,
I don't remember. blue jeans. vague memories. my only friend.
where do we go from here. success. I should quit it sometime.
present. hope. god. sorrow. emptiness. death. memories. friends.
مذكرتي. high school. god. summer. hiding from my mom. smoke. rain.
Cigarettes after sex. jazz music. break up. Alcohol. ordinary. smoke.
haircut. where do we go from here. love. summer. I should quit it
sometime. Cigarettes instead of sex. memories, I don't remember.
blue jeans. vague memories. my only friend. success. sorrow. hope.
jazz music. مذكرتي. summer. Alcohol. present. memories. emptiness.
Cigarettes after sex. death. break up. Alcohol. Smoke. hiding from
my mom. haircut. love. blue jeans. Alcohol. مذكرتي. Jazz music.
I should quit it sometime. summer. cigarettes after sex. love.
present. مذكرتي. haircut. where do we go from here. memories, I don't
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memories, I don't remember. مذكرتي. hiding from my mom. rain.
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sex. memories. haircut. break up. jazz music. friends. death. sorrow.
god. hope. ordinary. cigarettes instead of sex. success. my only friend.
vague memories. hiding from my mom. I should quit it sometime. rain.
sorrow. god. jazz music. love. where do we go from here. Alcohol. I
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memories. hiding from my mom. friends. Alcohol. break up. jazz music.
rain. cigarettes after sex. مذكرتي. love. blue jeans. hope. sorrow. god.





I'm putting together a list of my passions:

The gravity of aim that sucks me down
The tightness of relation that hurts to cut
Separation of bodies to resurrect the love
And loosen the ties to let free

Zippering the words together
Knitting the lines to shape the flesh
Pulling the threads to close the thoughts

There I see a presence
A collection of molds
Hanging around each other

Some sank in compassion
Recouping the missed parts
Some in deep vengeance
Frowning upon rivals

