

Gone with the Wind

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This show is a personal narrative; it is an autobiography expressed in visual language that presents a poetic image of fulfillments and frustrations and dreams coming true and gone with the wind in the flow of life. What you see is a resourceful record of a generation's life experience who came over change and morphosis, chose to live in its original habitat, confronted the challenges of its love to remain and live, laid down the groundwork for the road it needed to trod for building its personal and social dreams, and in this specific case, exhibited its imagination through a unique language developed in that very same road.

This exhibition is the recounting of a life determined to protect its hopes and dreams through the strikes of socio-political change, and like wind, which simultaneously breathes fresh air and ravages through everything, created a paradox from the inside out that was symbolically born out of strength, resistance, victory, and conquest, and resulted in a beautiful and unattainable splendor, while remaining tyrannical and coarse.

“Gone with the Wind” includes three parts that together create a unique experience: “Hanging in the Wind”, “Outlived Entity”, and a selection of the artist's drawings and sources of inspiration, showing his thought process and creative path. The combination of these components, both visually and conceptually, hints at something that has disappeared in the space. The beautiful, yet lost, wave of a suspended object that directly makes references to us and our lives (“Hanging in the Wind”), along with the strictly-material being that denotes an inner conflict (“Outlived Entity”), together make an aesthetic allusion to an incomplete, contradictory, and unstable situation experienced by the people living at a particular period in this geography, constantly feeling the entirety of all historical setbacks in their being.

The historical, geographical, and inherent characteristics of a site like Kahrizak Sugar Factory which hosts the exhibition, a site that once accommodated fully-evolved production lines whose life was either abruptly or gradually cut short either by the force of time or deliberate action, have been important sources of inspiration for “Gone with the Wind”, giving meaning to the cohabitation of “Hanging in the Wind” and “Outlived Entity”. Like “Hanging in the Wind”, the majestic site continues to create and foster after surviving through arduous days, and like “Outlived Entity”, it has produced a paradoxical situation in response to a conflict between two groups, forces, or any binary opposition in a civilized society, a situation whose foul effects on the society it touches cannot be dismissed. The factory compliments Aryanpour's thought and expression.

“Gone with the Wind” is a consequence of the mutual effects and convergence of the historical roots and backstory of Kahrizak Sugar Factory and what Aryanpour was developing in his mind. The past life of the factory, as well as its current state, correspond to what Aryanpour was contemplating, and his encounter with the site triggered his imagination to appropriate the pieces to be exhibited there. An organic relationship had developed between the site and the artist, and the architectural features of the factory acted like sparks in his imagination. The torn-apart and half-standing spaces, which while serving no purpose still carried unique and novel characteristics, hinted at a social and historical situation, not unlike the one pertaining to our present lives. It appeared that the abandoned state of the factory was a consequence of a repeated approach prevalent in our lives and culture: going out of order, stalling, becoming useless, and rethinking things that have already been frequently repeated. The site intensified the sense of timelessness.

The first part of “Gone with the Wind” is a large overarching installation comprised of twenty-seven mirror-work sculptures. The pieces are an extension of Aryanpour’s practice of *Ayine-Kari* (mirror-work) sculptures, itself a three-dimensional interpretation of his paintings. Major portions of the mirrors used in the hanging sculptures —hand-crafted and hand-painted one by one in the artist’s studio— have a deep dark hue, inspired by the black flags that hang over our city’s skies during religious mourning periods and other special occasions all year round. The aesthetic characteristics of this installation, shaped like a long piece of fabric that dances in the wind, while taking much inspiration from traditional Iranian architecture and Miniature painting, are the result of Aryanpour’s personal tone and style, and together with its historical references, imply an image of our present collective situation. This situation, during our lives, gave hints and suggestions. When the mind travels to the past, this situation conjures up the values and spaces that were once important and grand, but have been gradually or abruptly lost to us, and at the same time when the mind seeks to picture the future, it is even impossible to imagine any such thing. The beautiful and lost wave of a suspended object who no longer belongs anywhere, as if hinting at our own identity and life’s suspension within time and space. “Hanging in the Wind” is a static moment torn apart from the past, and a pause on the path toward the future.

The second part, “Outlived Entity”, carries a sense of inner conflict, a conflict that appears to have resulted from the workings of a civilized society and whose effect is a fissure and a rift created by the pull of two opposing forces. This large metal sculpture, shaped like warfare and old industrial parts, that sits on the ground like a non-technological creation, manifests an inherent symmetry and appears like a double-sided saw, the result of a social reaction —an entity that creates conflict on either of its sides, a conflict that destroys both the physical body and life itself.

The third part comprises Pooya Aryanpour's drawings and visual and written sources of inspiration. Together, these show his conceptual path, both in a general sense as well as specifically in this project. Aryanpour regularly collects magazine and newspaper clippings, personal notes, handwritten notes from others, and details from drawings and patterns that inspire him, and displays them in his studio to be able to continuously study his different thought processes and routes as well as his flights of imagination. This time his more recent drawings, notes, and photographs are added to his collection of older clippings and notes to accompany "Gone with the Wind".

In "Gone with the Wind", production processes have been a major part of what has been exhibited. In addition to the site-specificity of the exhibition, the process of creating the works bears a special significance, as the artist has not individually produced the work, but rather the pieces and the physical manifestation of the artist's imagination are the results of a more contemporary system of collaboration and production. To Pooya Aryanpour, whose creative process is more intuitive and his imagination is always intrigued by the unforeseeable nature of artistic practice, the creative process is one explored mostly through implicit knowledge. "Gone with the Wind" produced so many technical challenges that could potentially damage the artist's creative process, yet the way he has been able to navigate through such details while keeping his force of imagination as a vital component of the project, has resulted in the unique and even paradoxical states that the work can awaken; not unlike how the combination of mirror and metal have been woven together as two components in the expressive language of "Gone with the Wind".