

ART GALLERY NEWS RELEASE

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(press & tour inquiries)

Tufts University Art Gallery

at the Aidekman Arts Center

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EMPIRE AND ITS DISCONTENTS

September 11, 2008–November 23, 2008

Curated by Rhonda Saad and Amy Ingrid Schlegel

Participating Artists: *Kamrooz Aram, Andisheb Avini, Lara Baladi, Zoulikha Bouabdellah, Kenneth Tin-King Hung, Farhad Moshiri and Shirin Aliabadi, Marjane Satrapi, Seher Shah, Mark Shetabi, and Saira Wasim*

MEDFORD, MA – The Tufts University Art Gallery proudly presents *Empire and Its Discontents* from September 11 to November 23, 2008 in its Tisch Gallery. *Empire and Its Discontents* exhibits the work of an international roster of contemporary artists with ties to previously colonized regions in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. The exhibition explores various notions of “Empire”—Empire as a conceptual lens through which previously distinct cultural iconographies are merged or juxtaposed, often in provocative, conceptual, or humorous ways that toy with viewers’ expectations; Empire as a historical term evoking traditional art-making practices; Empire embodied in grandiose nationalistic events re-presented to indicate collapse; Empire in the media today, approached critically through the appropriation and recombination of pop cultural and political icons. The exhibition is accompanied by a 72-page full-color publication with contributions from the co-curators.

Conceived as a tribute to the influential post-colonial theorist, comparative literature scholar, and Palestinian-rights activist Edward Said (1935-2003) on the 30th anniversary of the publication of his watershed book *Orientalism*, *Empire and Its Discontents* extends Said’s analyses into the 21st century and into the realm of contemporary art, neither of which was his chosen discursive arena. This exhibition explores Said’s legacy in the work of ten contemporary artists (see list above and “About the Artists” page) who have familial and other ties to the “imaginative geographies” Said identified as “the Orient.”

PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

Thursday, September 18, 5:30-8:30pm: Public Opening Reception

5:30-6:30pm: Panel Discussion with *Empire* artists Kamrooz Aram, Mark Shetabi, and Kenneth Tin-King Hung, and exhibit co-curator Rhonda Saad; moderated by Tufts University Art Gallery director and exhibit co-curator Amy Schlegel

6:45-7:30pm: *Voice Your Vision!* Tour

Saturday, September 27, 2-3pm: Curator’s Walkthrough with Amy Schlegel

Wednesday, October 15, 7:30pm: Screening of *Persepolis*, by Marjane Satrapi & Vincent Paronnaud

Friday, October 17, 12:30-1:15pm: Parents’ Weekend Gallery Tour

Saturday, October 18, 1:30-2:30pm & 3-4pm: *Voice Your Vision!* Tours

Thursday, October 30, 6-8pm: *Orientalism, Then and Now*, panel moderated by Eva Hoffman,

Associate Professor of Art History & Director of the Middle East Studies Program at Tufts

Wednesday, November 5, 5pm: Lecture with Mohammed Alwan, Lecturer in Arabic at Tufts

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The **Tufts University Art Gallery** animates the intellectual life of the greater university community through exhibitions and programs exploring new, global perspectives on art and on art discourse. The Gallery is located in the **Aidekman Arts Center** on Tufts University’s **Medford** campus. The Gallery is fully accessible and admission is free. Gallery hours are Tuesday through Sunday, 11:00am to 5:00p.m; Thursdays until 8:00pm. **Free** daytime visitor parking is available in the two parking lots off Lower Campus Road. Parking passes must be obtained at the front desk of the Tisch Gallery and displayed on your dashboard. Free event parking is available without a pass in the lot behind the Aidekman Arts Center, off Lower Campus Road. Call **617-627-3518** for more information or visit www.ase.tufts.edu/gallery.