

VISUAL ARTS

CHARLES DESMARAIS *Art*2 critical views
of migration

By Charles Desmarais

Guerrero Gallery shares two takes on the idea of migration in exhibitions of the art of Adam Feibelman and Taravat Talepasand, running only through Saturday, May 6. Both artists approach the subject with a combination of thoughtful criticism and biting wit.

Feibelman's are the more immediately accessible works. A huge pile of plastic water bottles would be immediately recognizable to fugitive border-crossers as the evidence of flights across the desert from Mexico to the U.S. White bottles, too easily recognizable by reconnaissance aircraft, were sometimes painted black or brown; now black plastic water bottles are manufactured specifically for the purpose of cross-border trips.

Feibelman has cut up some of the white and black bottles and stitched them into soccer balls — perhaps a reference to the deadly, unending game of cat-and-mouse pursued daily on the frontier. An image of an Arctic tern — the bird that makes the longest annual migration trip of all — is carved deep into a white block by hand-cutting sheet after sheet of white paper. The laborious process of making, like the vast distance of the tern's flight, brings to mind the exhausting effort of migration.

Talepasand calls her show “Made in Iran, Born in America.” Unlike Feibelman, who is described in gallery materials as an outsider attempting to understand his multilayered topic, Talepasand revels in scrambled aspects of her own cultural identity. It is quite the mash-up.

One wall is covered with banknotes that bear the image of the Iranian Supreme Leader. The logic, if we can call it that, of the work's title —

“Adam Feibelman and Taravat Talepasand”: 12 p.m.-6 p.m. Wednesday-Saturday. Through May 6. Free. Guerrero Gallery, 1465 Custer Ave., S.F. (415) 400-5168. <http://guerrero-gallery.com>

“Margo Wolowiec: Evergreen, Searchlight, Rosebud”: 11 a.m.-6 p.m. Tuesdays-Saturdays. Through May 27. Free. Jessica Silverman Gallery, 488 Ellis St., S.F. (415) 255-9508. <http://jessicasilvermangallery.com>

“Unauthorized SFMOMA Show”: 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Fridays-Tuesdays; 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Thursdays. Through July 2. The exhibition is staged in free zones of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 151 Third St., S.F. Visit <https://sfmoma.show> upon arriving at the museum.

“Microdosing Iran” — is revealed by the object label that describes the media as “LSD on Iranian currency (rial).”

A denim jacket looks like any such youthful attire on American streets, festooned with message buttons and embroidered patches. One pictures Mickey Mouse holding an American flag as he raises his middle finger; “Hey Iran!” brays the text. The back of the jacket loudly repeats, “IRAN IRAN IRAN IRAN.” A small patch depicts a pink candy heart with the legend, like a call for help scratched in the sand, “Send Nudes.”

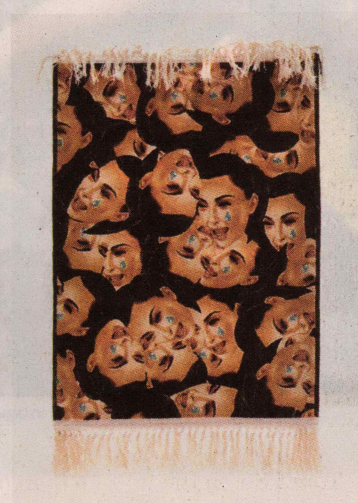
Both artists are showing “Persian” carpets of a sort. Feibelman's is a marvel of stencil-cut paper, a hand-worked tribute to traditional weavers of the 17th century. Talepasand's prayer-rug-size piece is an all-over pattern of images of the face of Kim Kardashian — once accused by the Revolutionary Guard of compromising Iranian social and religious traditions — crying a big blue tear.

More weaving. There is a



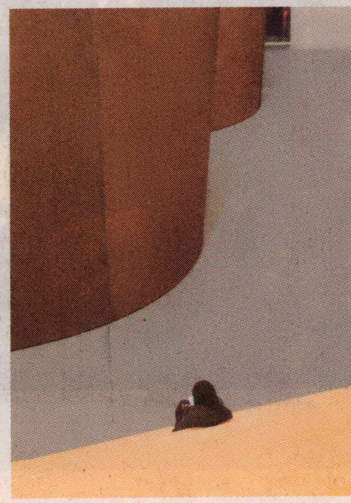
Guerrero Gallery

Adam Feibelman uses black and white water bottles like those discarded by border-crossers.



Guerrero Gallery

Taravat Talepasand's “Selfish for Muslims” features Kim Kardashian's face.



SFMOMA

The “Unauthorized SFMOMA Show” is on view (maybe) through July 2.

very useful text produced by Jessica Silverman Gallery to accompany its exhibition “Margo Wolowiec: Evergreen, Searchlight, Rosebud.” Do read it, but only after viewing Wolowiec's alluring woven objects — tapestries made up of digital photographs that are paintings, and sometimes room screens.

Imagery of roses in subtle tones and colors comes across as seductive in an old-fashioned, gauzy way. Or is it that we are trying to see, through the haze of poor reception, pictures captured by some tool of surveillance? Words that float among the roses can only occasionally and barely

be deciphered, but it does become clear that it is not a language of poetry we are seeing, but of authority.

The artist's process, a full description of which would fill this page, is tedious but rewarding in the way intelligence analysis must be: restoring tiny bits of data to a new coherence.

An assignment for you, dear reader. I am someone with a great deal of patience when it comes to art, but not always a lot of time. I would not recommend an exhibition I have not seen but, as I will be away through much of May, I won't be able to visit

“Unauthorized SFMOMA Show” any time soon. Would you mind going and sharing your thoughts?

The exhibition is said to be on view in the public spaces of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art through July 2. That's probably so, but it's hard to know for sure without physically heading to the museum.

The home page of the exhibition website (<https://sfmoma.show>) presents two options. “I want to have an unauthorized SFMOMA show” leads to a brief form asking for some basic data (name, title of work, etc.) and providing a place to upload a digital file. There are also some basic rules and disclaimers (“The submitter understands that special handling and installation instructions won't be take(n) into consideration.”) That's it.

Selecting the second option, “I want to visit the current unauthorized SFMOMA show,” gets you only so far. You must prove you are actually in the museum at that moment, by allowing location access on a smartphone. You would then be guided to the art, presumably.

I did ask for a press photo, which is reproduced here.

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