

## Artist Statement

Bahar Behbahani

*"It started out very simply...*

*In the spring of 1973, in the city of Tehran, I was born.*

*My early childhood consisted of rolling around amongst my father's writings, seeing myself through my mother's pictures and splashing around my uncle's studio.*

*Love, light and color were the main course at my family's house.*

*I was 6 when I noticed the people; they filled the streets shouting with their fists clenched in the air.*

*When I was 7, the people's revolution was achieved.*

*Under nightly bombings, in the basement of our lovely home, I was learning the meaning of life.*

*I was 10; amongst the rubble of my neighbors' house, the death of my best friend's brother and the constant fear of losing the roof over our head. My little sister was born, and with her came happiness.*

*So at an early age, I learned the contradiction of being.*

*Fighting, hiding, bravery, timidness and covering my femininity were what I learned in school. At the same time, my mother and father worked hard to teach me to question what I learned from the outside world.*

*I hear my father humming a melody, my mother's laughter, my sister stroking the piano and it is in this environment that I became an artist."*

Born in Tehran, Iran, Bahar Behbahani is an Iranian artist who lives and works in New York and Tehran. She received her diploma from the School of Plastic Arts in 1991, her B.A. in Painting in 1995 and her M.A. in Painting in 1998. Before graduating high school, she had witnessed a revolution, an eight-year war, and her country in the midst of uncertainty, repression, hope and contradiction. These were—and are—the prevalent forces surrounding her. As an artist, she continues these struggles, reexamining love, femininity, identity, freedom, morality and humanity.

Ms. Behbahani has had group and solo exhibitions of her paintings, video art and installations in numerous locations throughout Europe and Asia including Christie's, London; United Nations, Geneva; and the Asian Art Biennial, Bangladesh. Her work has been shown throughout the United States in cities such as New York, Los Angeles, Boston, Philadelphia and Washington D.C.

In 2007, her video art, "SUSPENDED", was selected 'Best in Show' by Carrie Springer, Senior Curatorial Assistant at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and shown by the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington D.C. In 2008, "SUSPENDED" was an official selection of the Tribeca Film Festival in New York. She completed her latest film "SAFFRON TEA" in Tehran.

Ms. Behbahani's recent works were shown alongside outstanding artists such as Judy Chicago, Faith Ringgold and Toshiko Takeazu in the 'Women Forward' exhibition at the Williamsburg Art & Historical Center.

Behbahani's photographs were recently selected to appear in the 2010 Silverstein Photography Annual (SPA) at the Bruce Silverstein Gallery; this exhibit will feature works by ten emerging artists, each of whom will have been nominated by an individual curator.