



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CALENDAR/ART

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"Haram eh Massoumeen va Shohad ha (Threshold of the Innocents and Martyred)"
By Amitis Motevalli

18th Street Arts Center, Project Room Gallery

September 27 – December 19, 2008

Opening Reception Saturday, September 27, 6-9 pm

Performance 6:30 - 8:30

18th Street Arts Center concludes our 2008 exhibition series, *The Future of Nations*, with **War as a Way of Life**. Curated by 18th Street Artistic Director Clayton Campbell, in conjunction with the exhibit, Artist Fellow, Amitis Motevalli debuts *Haram eh Massoumeen va Shohad ha (Threshold of the Innocents and Martyred)* in our Project Room Gallery.

Motevalli creates an environment in the project room reminiscent of Islamic shrines throughout Iran and juxtaposed over LA street shrines for those who lost their lives in the urban wars. These shrines are erected to revere and pay homage to the lives of people who are victims of war, and/or died as martyrs. In this installation, Amitis Motevalli brings in contemporary issues of war and occupation, while exploring definitions of martyrdom. Motevalli states, "The shrine is dedicated to those who have lost their lives in recent homicides at the hands of Law Enforcement upholding occupation. I celebrate the lives of the contemporary shaheed who have been defiled in the news and media or simply not mentioned." This Installation/Performance will be a discourse on the ultimate need for dominance by people and institutions of power. *Haram eh Massoumeen va Shohad ha (Threshold of the Innocents and Martyred)*, brings together those who have experienced this violence, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Los Angeles, Oakland, New York City, in the crossings of borders, in detention centers or prisons.

Amitis Motevalli was born in Tehran, Iran and moved to the US in 1977. Her work as an artist incorporates a combination of near-eastern aesthetic with a western art education. Motevalli states, "Being an immigrant in the US shows in my work a duality of culture, both natural and learned. In all of my work, I create a dialogue that critiques dominant views of oppressed people and culture in general". Her work in art education is with youth who share a similar duality in vision. Motevalli has been active in creating social change with her students on issues of civil rights within the class through pedagogy or working with students and community to organize around issues that effect their quality of life and access to education. Amitis Motevalli is a recipient of the California Community Foundation Fellowship and the Visions of California Award and a James Irvine Foundation Fellow. She currently lives and works in Los Angeles, exhibiting art nationally and abroad as well as organizing to create an active and resistant cultural discourse through information exchange, either in art, pedagogy or organizing artist and educators.

Amitis Motevalli, is one of four, Artists fellow for our 2008 season that has been made possible by the National Endowment for the Arts.

18th Street Arts Center is one of Southern California's most historic alternative art organizations, seeking to provoke public dialogue through contemporary art making. 18th Street's programs include residencies for Los Angeles artists and arts organizations, residencies for international visiting artists, two galleries for visual arts exhibitions, and free art events for the public.

- END December 20, 2008 -