



Studio away from Studio : Artists in COVID19 Quarantine

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- Where are you? Do you have Quarantine? Since when?

I am with my family at home, in -thank god- a spacious and well lit apartment. We are socially distancing now for over three weeks now.

- How many times do you leave your house? Are you with family and/or pets?

We usually left only once a day for a walk and scooting with my toddler to the park. Once we got there, I would wipe one swing with alcohol and have my daughter swing in it. No social contact during this walk to the park and during our time there. However, once they locked the playground, she has refused to go to the park or leave the apartment, so now we are inside for four days straight!

- How are you feeling?

I'm feeling very good. A little cooped up, but ok. This is all because I divide the day with my partner- to care for our child- and have some creative outlet and make my art and have some time to myself.

- Are you making work? If so, is there a difference since the quarantine, such as inspiration, motivation, productivity, etc?

yes yes yes- thank god I am making work, and much more than what I would have under normal circumstances. This is only because our wonderful neighbor whom had left for upstate called and told us that we could use their apartment. They did this because they knew we can't work with a toddler in our 1-bedroom and because they are awesome! Even if I locked myself inside the bathroom Assia would not let me work. So my productivity is higher than normal, and the nature of my work is maybe affected. I mean how could it not be? Not in a direct way but perhaps in a nuanced manner. I'm working with the Persian alphabet, making the grid of the alphabet inspired by my father's writings- sampling his long letter as the context for this alphabet. I am also working with Hafez's poem,

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making the verbs in it physical and sculptural. Both these projects are continuations of work I had started before, but the way I am continuing them is a kind of response to Covid 19. The alphabet is a nod to visiting the fundamentals, like washing your hands... the poem is an invitation to Sufi mysticism, something we need so badly in our lives right now, to connect to a higher force, to see the things that really matter in life and to sit for a minute and rest and meditate.

- Are you making something new or working on something you started before the quarantine?
- Are you making any work related to Covid19?
- Has it changed any future art projects you had in mind or planned?

I can't think that far and long, but I don't see how this situation will not affect my long-term perspective. It's too early to say how exactly.

- Has it changed any exhibition plans?

I've had a couple of group shows that have been pushed to the Fall for now.

- Has the medium changed due to limited resources or due to staying at home instead of studio?

I am always dealing with this, so nothing new

- Is art helping you stay sane?

YES

- Do you have another job that has been affected?

I am a freelancer and so all of my income except for one teaching gig has stopped!

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- Are you reaching out to other artists?

Yes, I am in constant contact with other artists.

- Do you feel the art world has come to a stop?

yes, thank god in some ways ;)

- If you are staying at home, do you see your home differently?

I love it, and cherish it. I've always had a home studio and I love being home and working from here. But now that I actually have time to do so I spent the first couple of days organizing my studio and it made me decide to use a lot of the material that were accumulating which was the impedes for getting started on my poetry work. It's really all so connected to this situation.

- What do you miss the most as an artist during this quarantine?

nothing as an artist, as a human, walking outside and feeling the train rumble.