

ASIAN ART MUSEUM  
Chong-Moon Lee Center  
for Asian Art & Culture  
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**Asian**

**News**



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**SANAZ MAZINANI:  
THRESHOLD**

**San Francisco artist raises complex questions about entertainment, perceptions and the violence of war in video installation abstracting clips of explosions from mainstream movies**

SAN FRANCISCO, March 23, 2015—San Francisco artist Sanaz Mazinani presents a new and ambitious work that transforms cinematic action sequences, prompting a fresh perspective on the meanings and experience of media. Curated by Marc Mayer, educator for public programs, [Sanaz Mazinani: Threshold](#) is on view March 27 through May 3 in the Asian Art Museum's Vinson Gallery.

Mazinani's work explores the conceptual and formal frames of photography as they relate to perception and representation, especially in digital culture. *Threshold* features a video set within a constructed architectural space. The video mirrors, couples and multiplies explosive sequences from 11 Hollywood action movies, creating dazzling kaleidoscopic patterns. It is shown in an elaborately fabricated installation that draws on geometries of Islamic architectural ornamentation, corresponding to the shapes and contours presented on-screen. The walls are lined with mirrored laser-cut panels inspired by architectural details observed during the artist's visits to her birthplace of Iran. Visitors will hear a music composition created by Toronto-based multi-disciplinary artist, Mani Mazinani, produced in response to the video work.

For Sanaz Mazinani, "Architecture and site are important in understanding one's position from which the world is viewed. The mirrored surface provides a reflective space, a place for speculation on the nature of perception, and the complexities of representation and the self." It is the interplay between the architectural installation and the moving image that results in a shift in perception, while raising complex questions about entertainment, mass media, and the violence of war.

"*Threshold* possesses a dynamism that captures your attention. You are immediately seduced and drawn into the video," said Mayer. "There are moments in which the artist

Still from *Threshold*, 2015, by Sanaz Mazinani (Iranian-Canadian, b. 1978). Digital video. *Courtesy of the artist and Stephen Bulger Gallery. © Sanaz Mazinani.*

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reveals a glimpse of something like a fighter plane, and you come to realize these scenes are from movies we consume every day. It makes me consider my relationship to representations of explosions. How does that relationship change for survivors of the pipeline explosion in San Bruno in 2010 or the collapse of the World Trade Center? There is a tension there, between the lived chaos of an explosion and the stylistic excess of cinema, which is a little unnerving.”

Mazinani’s heritage has been a source of inspiration in her work. She was born in Tehran in 1978 and immigrated to Canada at age 11. In 2009 the Iranian-born artist relocated to the Bay Area to attend Stanford’s masters of fine arts program. She works primarily in photography, video and large-scale installations, and her practice often focuses on the observer and the photographic image. The artist believes photography can transport the viewer temporally and spatially. At the same time, photographs shift and shade our perception of reality. This central theme is explored in her recent works, including *Conference of Birds*, *Frames of the Visible* and *U.S.A.I.R.A.N.* Her works have been shown across the U.S. from Volta NY to San Francisco’s Southern Exposure, and the artist has received several awards and honors from the Canada Council for the Arts, D.C. Commission for the Arts and Humanities, Kala Art Institute, Magic of Persia Contemporary Art Prize, Stanford University and San Francisco Arts Commission.

In conjunction with *Threshold*, Mazinani invited contemporary dancer Bobbi Jene Smith to perform a dance that engages *Threshold* both thematically and physically. Smith has danced with the Batsheva Dance Company based in Tel Aviv, Israel, since 2006. The performance, *Crossing Threshold*, will take place on Thursday, April 16 at the museum.

The event is part of the [Artists Drawing Club](#) program series, which invites artists to use the museum as a platform to draw connections between ideas, times, cultures and the broader world. The 2015 series will also feature Bay Area artists Eliza Gregory (June 25), Ahree Lee (July 23), Ma Li (May 28) and Hadi Tabatabai (Aug. 27).

### ***Crossing Threshold* with Sanaz Mazinani and Bobbi Jene Smith**

Thursday, April 16, 6:30–9 PM

North Court, free with museum admission (\$5 after 5 PM)

### **EXHIBITION ORGANIZATION**

*Sanaz Mazinani: Threshold* was organized by the Asian Art Museum.

### **ABOUT THE ASIAN ART MUSEUM**

The Asian Art Museum—Chong-Moon Lee Center for Asian Art and Culture is one of San Francisco’s premier arts institutions and home to a world-renowned collection of more than 18,000 Asian art treasures spanning 6,000 years of history. Through rich art experiences, centered on historic and contemporary artworks, the Asian Art Museum unlocks the past for visitors, bringing it to life while serving as a catalyst for new art, new creativity and new thinking.

Information: 415.581.3500 or [www.asianart.org](http://www.asianart.org)

Location: 200 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102

Hours: The museum is open Tuesdays through Sundays from 10 AM to 5 PM. From Feb. 26 through Oct. 8, 2015, hours are extended on Thursdays until 9 PM. Closed Mondays, as well as New Year's Day, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day.

General Admission: FREE for museum members, \$15 for adults, \$10 for seniors (65+), college students with ID, and youths (13–17). FREE for children under 12 and SFUSD students with ID. General admission on Thursdays after 5 PM is \$5 for all visitors (except those under 12, SFUSD students, and museum members, who are always admitted FREE). General admission is FREE to all on Target First Free Sundays (the first Sunday of every month). A surcharge may apply for admission to special exhibitions.

Access: The Asian Art Museum is wheelchair accessible. For more information regarding access: 415.581.3598; TDD: 415.861.2035.

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