

Hadi Asgharpour

MFA Creative Practice

<https://hadiasgharpour.com/>

Hadi Asgharpour is an interdisciplinary artist originally from Iran who currently resides in Dallas, Texas. Through his artwork, he explores ecological issues and the intricate relationship between humans and their environment, drawing inspiration from sustainability and the Anthropocene epoch. Through interactive installations, sculptures, and digital media, his art evokes emotional responses to urgent ecological concerns, such as deforestation, water scarcity, pollution, and overfishing. Using a combination of traditional craftsmanship and modern technology, his work incorporates symbolic elements along with interactive features. This encourage audiences to engage in thought-provoking conversations. His commitment to narrative and environmental activism influences all facets of his work, creating immersive experiences that encourage contemplation of humanity's relationship with the natural world.



Whispers in the Bark V3

2024, Mix Media, 72 x 48 in.

Whispers in the Bark is an interactive installation where a responsive “tree” has been created and programmed to track and respond to human presence. Using motion sensors, servo motors, and an artificial intelligence tracking system, the tree tracks and follows only human movements, engaging the viewer in a symbolic dialogue. Symbolizing the fragile relationship between humanity and nature, it invites participants to reflect on environmental stewardship and our shared responsibility to nurture and protect our ecosystems. There is a strong emphasis on mutual care and communication in the installation, which demonstrates the possibility of harmony between humans and the environment.



Video: <https://youtu.be/vqoH8NsOZ4o>
https://youtu.be/2_IVvUsNoxo

Echoes of Dried Water,

2024, Mixed Media, 80 x 50 in.

Echoes of Dried Water explores the haunting memory of the lost water ecosystem and its remains in human consciousness. A fragile acrylic-plexiglass boat hangs vertically, trapped as if it cannot move further. This unconventional orientation highlights the stagnation and vulnerability of vanished waterways.

The installation incorporates an ultrasonic sensor to create interactive experiences. The oars in the boat react dynamically to the viewer's distance: still when over 90 cm away, starting to row between 50 and 90 cm, and more agitated at closer distances. In this way, the growing intensity reflects the gradual transition from absence to desperation and calls once more upon the viewers' reflection on the fragility of water ecosystems. At close range, their reflection appears in the plexiglass, fostering a moment of self-awareness and personal connection to the environmental narrative.



Video: https://youtu.be/D1EH4_nkZ9I

Sturgeon

2023, Mix Media, 60 x 40 in.

As a result of pollution, overfishing, and industrial exploitation, this installation raises a very important question regarding the degradation of life in the marine environment. The installation consists of a life-size sturgeon fish made entirely of welded nuts and bolts, symbolizing the impact of industrial activity on marine ecosystems. Sturgeons serve as a reminder of the Caspian Sea's decline due to overfishing for caviar, also known as "black gold," and rampant habitat destruction.

This artwork was inspired by a childhood memory of fishermen extracting caviar from sturgeons and discarding their still-living bodies into the river, leaving their stomachs exposed. Today, industrial fishing methods and pollution have led to the extinction of sturgeons, which were once abundant.

To emphasize the connection between industry and environmental destruction, the sculpture incorporates an oil pump and hoses that circulate used oil through the sturgeon's fins, a visceral representation of pollution coursing through marine life. The sculpture is mounted on a barrel pedestal filled with used oil, reinforcing the toxic relationship between industry and nature.

This piece invites viewers to reflect on the fragility of marine ecosystems and humanity's complicity in their decline. By using discarded industrial materials—bolts, nuts, and oil—the work evokes both destruction and the potential for transformation, allowing the audience to interpret the narrative through their unique perspectives.



Video: <https://youtu.be/rJOVRXQdB9w>
<https://youtu.be/Y2sxPdJ0CKg>

Memoirs of A Wooden Boat V2

2023, Mixed Media

Memoirs of a Wooden Boat describes the drying lagoons and marshes of northern Iran and the environmental changes there. Several lagoons that once supported vibrant ecosystems have been reduced to less than one meter in depth, down from more than eight meters.

The piece is suspended from the ceiling, floating in mid-air above onlookers standing where there used to be water. This shocking viewpoint emphasizes the destructive consequences of water scarcity and the human impact on the environment. Upon approaching the boat, it starts to float in the air, recalling memories of the lost lagoon and provoking a desire to ponder the importance of protecting the environment.



Video: <https://youtu.be/N9JLXC08yj0>
https://youtu.be/O_BtSdYAMQQ

Redfish Prison

2022, Mixed Media

The purpose of this artwork is to raise awareness of the ethical and environmental issues associated with including goldfish in the Haft Sin Nowruz table in Iran. In about 80 years, they were added to the Iranian celebration of spring, which is unrelated to our culture. Nowadays, goldfish are mass-produced and kept in oxygen-deprived tanks, and many of these fish die before being released into the wild, which is an unsustainable practice.

The installation features a moving hand that moves the goldfish sculpture, symbolizing the buyer's temporary care while also helping with its suffering. This video contrasts beautiful goldfish with a person catching them for sale, highlighting the annual repetition of this cruelty. The purpose of this work is to raise awareness and support for the removal of goldfish from Haft Sin traditions.



Video: <https://youtu.be/gQUXP5JQ1tc>
<https://youtu.be/vxlKTsCfECI>

Indelible Faces

2023, Mixed Media

During the Women, Life, Freedom protests in Iran, a powerful visual trend has emerged on social media: photographs capturing the backs of women's heads. This act serves as both a protest against the mandatory dress code and a method of protecting their identities. By focusing on their hair rather than their faces, these images symbolically shift identity from facial recognition to the back of the head, creating a poignant statement of defiance and resilience.

Collaboration with Zahra Jafarpour



Video: <https://youtu.be/wJlthFiAhHo>

The Significance of Chairs

2023, Found chair, plywood sheet, wood furring strip, wood glue, and scrap wood.
80 x 60 x 60 in.

A chair speaks volumes about its maker or owner—revealing their origins, personality, tastes, social standing, or profession. It serves as a personal space, providing support and individuality. Unlike a shared sofa, a chair offers its occupant a distinct and separate identity. In this artwork, the chair becomes a metaphor for geographical borders, cultures, and languages. Moving to a new place may “break” your familiar chair, but fragments of it can be carried and integrated into a new one. By gluing together parts of various chairs, this piece symbolizes the blending of identities, cultures, and experiences. The resulting chair is unique, a reminder of the fragments that formed it, yet unstable—cautioning against taking it for granted. It reflects the beauty and complexity of adaptation, offering a moment to pause and embrace new cultures while recognizing the delicate balance of belonging.

Collaboration with Zahra Jafarpour



Video: <https://youtu.be/dN28j2RodAw>

Whispers in the Bark V1 2024,
Photography, 36 x 24 in.

I created artwork in honor of the memory of a beloved oak tree that was slated for removal because of new construction on campus. As soon as I saw the tree marked with an "X" in early 2024, I experienced a deep emotional response. In order to convey this, I carved lines from Mark Haddon's poem "Trees" into each branch, repeating them to create a complex and meaningful tribute. During this meditative process, I transformed my grief into a celebration of the beauty of the tree, a symbol of the enduring connection between humanity and nature.



Whispers in the Bark V2

3D Artist book

I had to pay respect to these trees by creating a digital artist's book with diptychs representing "before" and "after" pictures. I have played with distance and perspective while inviting the viewer to delve into the emotional weight that this transformation carries. Incorporating Mark Had-don's poem, "Trees," I wrote, in somewhat lyrical verse, over the branches in one picture and over the sky in another—always double-layered in my narrative. Those visual and literary combinations gave a voice to the tree's story, deepening my relationship with nature; it inspires reverence and remembrance in me.



Link : <https://hadiasgharpour.com/portfolio/whispers-in-the-bark/>

Masquerade of Consequences

Self portrait, 2022

These self-portraits illustrate the disastrous consequences of marine pollution and overfishing. The first image depicts abandoned fishing nets that have ensnared marine organisms for years, while the second image illustrates a mask constructed from plastic debris to highlight the harm caused by the eight million tons of plastic waste dumped into the ocean every year. Through the personification of an aquatic organism, I can illustrate the impact of pollution on marine life and humanity, dismantling the illusion of disconnection from the natural world. These works aim to highlight the hidden repercussions of human activities and promote a more sustainable future for marine ecosystems.



Rooted in Reflection

Commissioned by the Office of Sustainability at UTD for Earth Week

The Office of Sustainability commissioned this welded metal tree sculpture for UTD's Earth Week event. It is a piece of public art that represents the infinite relationship between humans and nature. Based on Piet Mondrian's geometric compositions, it illustrates the fragility of our ecosystems and the need for timely environmental stewardship. The space invites participants to hang objects on the branches of the tree, transforming the activity into a collaborative act of reflection and care for the environment. Each contribution becomes part of the tree's evolving narrative, highlighting the importance of acting together in the face of sustainability challenges. As a centerpiece of Earth Week, this installation seeks to encourage viewers to reflect on their environmental impact and create a dialogue and shared commitment to preserve the planet for future generations.



Video: https://youtu.be/qzBw_LOzn7U

Entangled

In response to AI's tendency toward beautiful images, I urged it to capture something haunting instead. Imagining ourselves in the shoes of marine life—wrapped in plastic and choked by our own seas—I hope this will prompt us to consider more deeply our shared responsibility to protect the fragile ecosystems we all rely on.



Lazaret Cave 2024: Grace

In collaboration with LabSynthE, I created a video piece inspired by Maya C. Popa's poem for the "Lazaret Cave 2024: Grace" project. Initially, I created an image in MidJourney and then animated it in Runway. It depicts a woman entering a red cave, finding that the ice has thawed at last - a moment that resonates with both the themes of the poem and with ancient echoes of renewal within the cave.

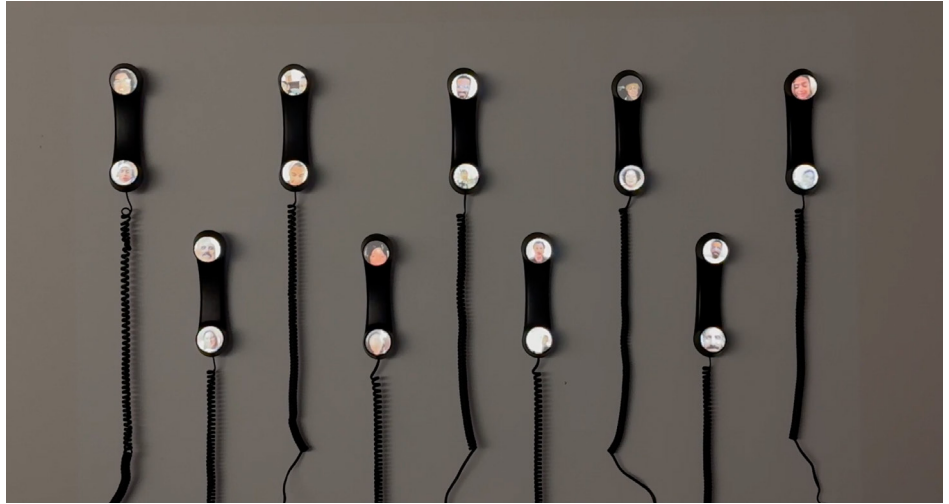


Video: <https://youtu.be/jSE5IOLSgA4>

TimeZone

2023, Mixed Media, 55 x 40 in.

TimeZone is a collaborative project developed by my sister, Maedeh Asgharpour, me, and LabSynthE. This project explores the relationship between immigrant experiences and the role of video calls in bridging geographical distances. The project invites immigrants to record and share video conversations with family members separated by long distances. It features recorded video calls presented through various old telephone installations, enhanced by projection mapping technology. During the video call, one person appears at the top of the telephone, while the other appears at the bottom. This creates a visually engaging storyline that captures the emotional essence of long-distance relationships, providing a glimpse into the complex emotions and dynamics of being away from loved ones.

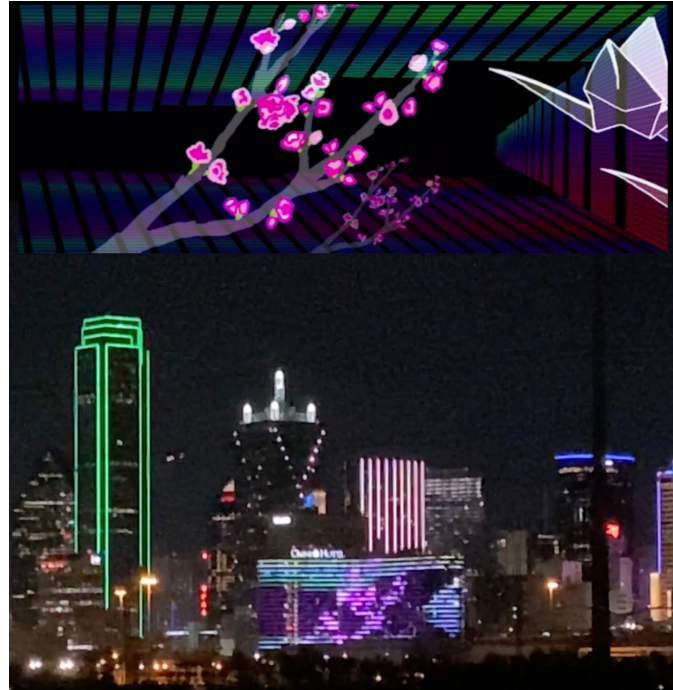


Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qiChydWoy2s>

*Beats, Blossoms & Cranes: A
Springtime Celebration*

2023, Video

In celebration of the spring season—and in honor of Nowruz in Iran—I created a three-part video projection for the Omni Hotel in Dallas. It begins with a dynamic equalizer of my favorite song, which symbolizes the pulse of life and the power of music to bring people together. A blossoming jasmine blossom is featured in the second part, a symbol of renewal and prosperity. In addition, the crane bird takes flight, embodying hope and new beginnings in accordance with the Japanese tradition of granting wishes. Using these images, I hoped to convey a sense of spring's rebirth and a message of hope and unity to all who attended.



Video: <https://youtube.com/shorts/M1C2ZSc99Kk?feature=share>

Fish Bone, 2021

2021, Steel Welding, 15 x 5 in.

This welded fishbone sculpture, made from found metal objects salvaged from industrial debris near the pier, draws attention to overfishing's devastating impact. The skeletal form represents marine life depletion, while the industrial origins of the materials emphasize humanity's role in ecological harm. Through the transformation of discarded objects into art, the work invites reflection on sustainability and the urgent need to protect aquatic ecosystems.



Videos: <https://youtu.be/zCqw89KaeKA>

Memoirs of A Wooden Boat V1

2021, Mixed Media, 42 x 22 in.

This is a boat installation trying to bring awareness to drying and pollution problems in the wetlands and lagoons of northern Iran. In a normal situation, this boat would float on the water. Due to the lack of water, the boat walks on land, supported by a robot that moves randomly along a track, evoking a dried-up riverbed. The installation contains recordings of paddles and frogs that evoke the memory of aquatic life, which is no longer present there. By combining technology and environmental symbols, the boat aims to make the case for the protection of these sensitive ecosystems. The installation shown here is the first version, which aims to deepen the awareness of the environment.



Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGNAILZgs-l&t=7s>

THANK YOU!