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**THE MAK URBAN FUTURE INITIATIVE (UFI)
PUBLIC FORUM SERIES PRESENTS**
Satellite Geography: as long as it is aiming at the sky
A conversation with UFI Fellows Nasrin Tabatabai and Babak Afrassiabi



From *Satellite Geography: as long as it is aiming at the sky*, PAGES, 2009

Tuesday, June 30, 2009

Reception at 7 p.m.

Presentation begins at 8 p.m.

Event free with admission to the Schindler House

(West Hollywood, June 17, 2009) Nasrin Tabatabai and Babak Afrassiabi will give a public presentation about their current video project-in-development entitled *Satellite Geography: as long as it is aiming at the sky*. A survey about Los Angeles-based Iranian satellite television stations, this project addresses aspects of the tele-visual mediation and production of geographical and communal identity and politics.

Today, there are more than 20 satellite TV stations broadcasting internationally in the Farsi language from Los Angeles, with the majority of their audience living inside Iran. What is



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retained through these TV programs is their twofold geographical, political and cultural identity: an ambivalence of here/there, now/then, and now and the eventual future, identified and elaborated by both the audiences living in and outside of Iran. These programs have come to produce a surplus geography with a political and cultural identity that is indecisive and liminal in nature, while fostering a community of hosts and audiences. This has given these television programs the character of an enclosed tele-visual micro universe that constantly refers to and comments on its own production and reception structures.

During the evening's discussion, Tabatabai and Afrassiabi will present video footage gathered during two month of research in Los Angeles.

Also at the MAK Center for Art & Architecture:

The Isle

Pages (Nasrin Tabatabai & Babak Afrassiabi)

May 28 – August 23, 2009

The Isle is about the architectural and political incongruities of an Iranian island in the Persian Gulf called Kish. This presentation is the third and final part of a project by the artists, begun in 2005 with the installation *Sunset Cinema* and continued in 2007 with *Undecided Utopia*.

Throughout its modern period, the island of Kish did not fulfill all that was desired for it to be. Subjected to the politics of mainland Iran, the island finds itself lingering between opposing ideologies, caught in a geopolitical indecisiveness that prevent it from retaining a sense of "place". Kish fails to situate itself historically and in relation to the geography that surrounds it. In many respects the island of Kish has become the "other" of its surrounding developments in the Persian Gulf.

Through videos, models, and re-appropriation of found documents, *The Isle* re-articulates the unresolved instances of Kish's modernization into representations of (unfulfilled) desires as symptoms of a modernity manifested in un-destined and ambivalent forms of architecture.

The MAK Center for Art and Architecture extends special thanks to the Federal Ministry of Education, Art and Culture of the Republic of Austria; the Consulate General of the Netherlands, New York; and the Mondriaan Foundation of the Netherlands for their support of *The Isle*.

Nasrin Tabatabai and Babak Afrassiabi live in Rotterdam and pursue an art practice both in Iran and the Netherlands. They began Pages in 2004, which consists of art projects, and a bilingual Farsi/English magazine. With Pages they try to create possibilities for reflecting on politically and socially contingent conditions of cultural practice in order to generate space of criticality. Their work has been featured in solo and group exhibitions in Latin America, the United States, the Middle East, and throughout Europe. For more information about Pages, please go to www.pagesproject.net.

Nasrin Tabatabai and Babak Afrassiabi are the sixth Fellows sponsored through the MAK Center's Urban Future Initiative. The mission of the Urban Future Initiative (UFI) Fellowship is to promote meaningful exchanges between cultural thinkers from diverse nations in order to

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cultivate visionary conceptions of the urban future. For more information about the UFI, please go to www.makcenterufi.org.

The MAK Center for Art & Architecture is located at the Schindler House, 835 N. Kings Road in West Hollywood. Public hours are Wednesday through Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Regular admission is \$7/\$17 with the guide book, *Schindler By MAK*; students and seniors, \$6/\$16 with book; free for Friends of the Schindler House and on Fridays, 4 to 6 p.m. Parking is available at the public structure at the northeast corner of Kings Road and Santa Monica Boulevard. For further information, the public may contact www.MAKcenter.org or call (323) 651-1510.