

# PASSPORT PORTRAIT INSTALLATION

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## Passport Portrait Installation

These portrait installations offer an alternative way of thinking about a passport photograph in the context of the history of art. Historically and universally there has been a restricted criteria universally set by governments for the composition, size and even pose of the holder's photograph and that is what makes it pertinent as a portrait. Often on close inspection, a country's power and wealth can be seen in the design of their passports and the watermark of the passport page. As we live in a time of ID security and increased boarder control along with being judged on our nationality a portrait within the context of a nationality adds an interesting layer to our perception of how we read portraits.

The ink stamp with each work portrait has been created to mimic the stamp that was originally issued in the passport however the text within the stamp has is replaced with what Soheila sees as reflecting the politics of the nationality of each passport. By adding the text, which the viewer has to discover, an extra layer of narrative is created and open to the viewer's own interpretation.

## Soheila Sokhanvari

Soheila Sokhanvari is UK based Iranian-born artist whose multidisciplinary work weaves layers of political histories with bizarre, humorous and mysterious narratives that are then left to viewer's own sensitivity to complete. Soheila is drawn to traumas that linger in the collective consciousness or cause mass amnesia, and yet resist conventional representation. Playing with the relationship between the artwork and its title, Soheila severs the signifier from the referent so that the resulting artwork functions as an aesthetic skin to a complex, buried issue. A graduate of Chelsea College of Art and Design and Goldsmiths College, Soheila has gone on to show her work in Europe and the Middle East. In 2012 she was shortlisted of the Caitlin Art prize and is a resident artist at the Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge.

"I am interested in Félix González-Torres's 'Specific Objects without Specific Form' in which things are always what they are but also point to something outside of themselves," she explains. "The art object then becomes a metaphor for an event, emphasising the mutability of meaning and form through viewer participation."

"The act of experience is not the same as its representation," she continues. "One has to invent layers to go with the representations, creating a communicative function for each unit of experience."

Soheila is also interested in the use of metaphor to speak about the inexpressible events, particularly with reference to Iran. Magic realism and use of metaphor in autocratic countries has historically permitted writers and artists to allow the meaning to lie between the lines and hence escape the limitations of being pinned down. It is both a gesture of protection and arena for exploration.

For more unique artwork by Soheila Sokhanvari please visit – [www.soheila-sokhanvari.com](http://www.soheila-sokhanvari.com)

## Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery

The Kristin Hjellegjerde Gallery is based in London and showcases cutting-edge contemporary art from emerging and established international artists, with the central concern being to create an intimate space in which artists can present a coherent body of work within a focused environment. Drawing on her international background, Kristin Hjellegjerde seeks to discover and help develop new talents by creating a platform through which they can be introduced to local and international audiences and by allowing for artistic exchange. Kristin also acts as an art advisor for both emerging, private and corporate collectors.

Sohelia's work can also be found at the Kristin Hjellegjerde gallery – [www.kristinhjellegjerde.com](http://www.kristinhjellegjerde.com)