



SANTA BARBARA
CONTEMPORARY ARTS FORUM

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum presents the first US exhibition of Berlin artist Setareh Shahbazi. We are also featuring Bloom Projects artist Mickalene Thomas!

Exhibition Dates: March 1, 2008 - May 11, 2008

Opening Reception: Saturday, March 1, 2008, 6-8 PM



Setareh Shahbazi
"Secret Affinities", 2008
Inkjet-Print, 100 x 75 cm

SANTA BARBARA, CA– East Meets West. Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum (CAF) is pleased to present the first US solo exhibition of Iranian-born, Berlin-based Setareh Shahbazi, organized by Regine Basha. Shahbazi's exhibition *Why Not Bazar* examines intersections and collisions between different cultural locations and their traditions. The artist culls from images found in her daily life and surroundings. Pictures from different sources like magazines, newspapers, postcards, billboards, and advertisements as well as pictures that she takes on location, create the basis for her two-and three-dimensional collages. Using a highly colored palette as a lens, the images in this exhibition act as filters for what could be charged psychological states, a collective memory, mediated news items, or just a fleeting banal scene. Shahbazi employs these images as actors on a stage, various media including flat ink-jet prints, installations placards, platforms, and theatrical tableaux.

Shahbazi (b. 1978, Tehran, Iran) moved to Germany in 1985, where she later studied Scenography and Media Arts at the Karlsruhe University of Arts and Design. With a Scholarship from the DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service), she spent one year in Beirut, Lebanon working on the project, *Oh, no, no...The Crystal Series* and participated in the group exhibition *Rainbow* at Galerie Sfeir-Semler. Her most recent exhibitions have been held at the Badischer Kunstverein, Frankfurter Kunstverein, Cartier Foundation, Paris and the Rooseum Center for Contemporary Art, Malmö.

Renowned curator, Regine Basha, has organized this exhibition for CAF. Basha has served as an independent curator of contemporary art for over ten years. Currently working between Austin and New York City, Basha is an active panelist and visiting critic for residencies and exhibitions



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worldwide, including: Unitednationsplaza, Berlin; Art Omi, and ISCP in New York; Townhouse, Cairo; Platform Garanti, Istanbul; and InCubo, Santiago. Her writing can be found in *Art Papers*, *Cabinet*, *Modern Painters*, *Art Lies*, and *Performance Art Journal*.



A Little Taste Outside of Love, 2007
Rhinestones, Acrylic, Enamel, on Wood Panel
108 x 144 inches

Also on view

Bloom Projects: Mickalene Thomas, *What's Love Got To Do With It?*

At CAF, artist Mickalene Thomas will occupy the Bloom Projects and Glass Box gallery spaces with her works that depict African American women in intimate household settings using acrylic paint, enamel, and rhinestone. Her current exhibition *What's Love Got To Do With It?* investigates themes of self-image, eroticism, black female celebrity, and the marketing of black urban identity in an effort to celebrate and critique the black narrative. Predominately inspired by the artist's cultural identity and her memories of growing up in the 1970s, the many decorative patterns found in the clothing, blankets, wall coverings and upholstery surrounding the lounging women are reminiscent of that era. Other sources of inspiration for Thomas' work are women—including her mother—70s icons, and models depicted in print advertisements, album covers and art history.

Thomas (b. 1971, Camden, New Jersey; lives/works New York, NY) earned a B.F.A. from the Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, NY in 2000, and an M.F.A. from Yale University School of Art in 2002. She was an Artist-in-Residence at the Studio Museum in Harlem in 2002 and was later featured there in the exhibition *Hands On, Hands Down*. Her work has been included in many prominent group exhibitions including *Hands on Hands Down* and *Frequency* at the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, NY; *Greater New York 2005* at P.S. 1, New York, NY; *Wild Girls* at Exit Art, New York, NY; and *Do You Think I'm Disco* at the Longwood Art Gallery, Bronx, NY.

Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum is non-profit, non-collecting alternative art space dedicated to the exhibition, education, and cultivation of the arts of our time. CAF is the premier venue for contemporary art between on the Central, presenting 15-18 exhibitions annually. Images available upon request. **For more information contact Lauren Mermel, at 805.966.5373 ext 104 or go online to www.sbcaf.org.**