

3-26-2021

## Delightful Scars

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## DELIGHTFUL SCARS

SHAHRBANOO HAMZEH

20 Pages

At the door of the house who will come knocking? / An open door, we enter / A closed door, a den / The world pulse beats beyond my door (Bachelard, 25).

Border is a dichotomous concept. Within a border exists both the potential for protection and alienation. By exploring the closure in borders around people in both a family and a country setting I am exploring communication on both an interpersonal and intrapersonal level; how our understanding of ourselves and others can affect us; how we can be close to each other and help each other. I suggest that our bodies, domestic spaces, and home countries function as three parallel homes on different levels. Seeing the parallels between the issues in these three levels makes the suffering of displacement tangible.

I started this chain of thought by thinking about doors, what they are, and what they do. The surfaces of doors, like many other borders and boundaries, can affect our definitions of outside versus inside, intimate versus public, us versus others, and displayed versus hidden. I got interested in the imagery of a type of large metal door, which was common in Iran when I was a child. I used them as a means of exploring family issues. I believe focusing on the house, its structure, and its elements allows us to think and talk about the residents, the family. Our identities and characters intertwine with our home. According to the spatial theorist Gaston Bachelard, there is a lot that one can show about the other. He writes “our home is our corner of the world that we take root, day after day. As has often been said, it is our first universe, a real cosmos in every sense of the

word” (25). The concept of home is intimately related to the feeling of safety. I am questioning what doors, borders, and boundaries are and what they can do. I am thinking of people’s safety and its relation to the border. Are people safer inside their home-country or outside of it?

The purpose of calling attention to the surfaces of the metal doors and borders and boundaries is threefold. I am trying through comparison and pointing to some similarities between three different levels of issues, First, to explore what is going on behind the “closed doors” of domestic spaces. Second, to evoke the severe and ongoing brutality towards women within the borders of my country. Finally, to depict the traumas that a single body is going to suffer and its internal mental landscape. I am proposing that better processing, understanding, or challenging of issues in any of these levels, inside a human body, inside a domestic space, and inside a country reveal that they can be about relationships and processes that exist in other levels as well.

**KEYWORDS:** Diaspora; Othering; Borders; Boundaries; Duality; Contradiction; Home; Home country; Skin; Trauma

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A Thesis Supportive Statement Submitted in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of

MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Wonsook Kim School of Art

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY

2021

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DELIGHTFUL SCARS

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To Andreas Fischer who was a wonderful chair and advisor, to Dr. Friedman who I found just in time and whose encouragement was invaluable, and Jin Lee with her special point of view which helped me further coalesce my ideas. Special thanks to Jacob Pritchard and Thomas Jacobs for their support, and to every member of my family that supports me all along and I have learnt from them all my life.

SH. H.

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## CHAPTER I: HOME

### **Home Country-Home**

I am thinking of familial spaces; how relationships are different inside a house and outside of it; how people have complicated relationships with their family based on the physical and emotional distance they have from them; the gain and the loss from that distance, separation, division, closeness and being apart. It is possible to think of multiple perspectives to approach distance from the family. There are varied reasons why someone may experience distance from their family and the consequences can be both positive and negative.

I think all these concepts apply not just to the family home, but also to the home country and the new country in which one settles. People leave their home country for a variety of reasons. Some can visit from time to time, others may never see their home again. Some leave to find a chance for a better life, while for others it is their only chance at survival, with nothing remaining in their homeland but ruins. Many achieve a better life and others die on the way. All sacrifice many familiar and precious things, for instance, their milieus and many friendships. Regardless of the situation, a price is always paid. When we arrive at the decision to leave, we detach from the network of people that has been created around us over the course of our lives. Even if we have a few people from our country of origin with us in the diaspora, we will still live in a different social setting. Living in the diaspora comes with a lot of sacrifices and displacements; it is often the result of being unsafe and unable to express oneself back home.

Thinking about borders and comparing the concept of home as a domestic space with the concept of home as a home country is so helpful to empathize with people over the borders. The concept of people being trapped in a domestically abusive situation and requiring outside allies to escape is more conceptually tangible than an issue related to a country. Seeing the parallel between

these two levels of issues considering the concept of home, the country-size issues become more relatable. It can help us to understand them with more empathy. Personally, living in diaspora helped me to understand the “state of exception”, the term Agamben uses, that I was living in before I left my homeland. In other words, the actual displacement from my homeland made clear for me the amount of displacement that I was suffering while at home as a female artist and non-Muslim individual. Living under the dictatorship of the Ayatollahs has meant most Iranians are already strangers in our own homeland: a primary displacement from our own government.

### **Body-Home**

To bring the issue of displacement and suffering even closer and make it more tangible we can see the parallels between the issues of countries and domestic places with what a single body could have been through. I think it is an effective comparison because not being able to talk about what we have been through and suffering in silence is an almost common experience. Knowing that our bodies have their own language to communicate can be helpful. According to Shouse (3): “The transmission of affect means that we are not self-contained in terms of our energies. There is no secure distinction between the ‘individual’ and the ‘environment’. Because affect is unformed and unstructured (unlike feelings and emotions) it can be transmitted between bodies.” In a way our skin is analogous to other boundaries, connecting and separating two different realms. Skin is the boundary that separates the body from the environment and others. Knowing that we are not emotionally self-contained, and the possible pain can find a way out, can be perceived as overcoming the skin as a boundary. It is then essential that the signs of pain should be taken seriously by other people and true effort in communication is needed to alleviate the pain. The

same situation applies to other borders and boundaries as I mentioned. We can be together and lift each other's pain beyond all boundaries if we put the effort into it.

We understand a lot about what is going behind the skin emotionally and physically by looking at the surface of the skin, blush, sweat, scars, bruises, and aging. According to the insights of affect theory, our skin is a very important organ and conducts a special kind of communication. "Intensity is embodied in purely autonomic reactions most directly manifested in the skin, at the surface of the body, at its interface with things" (Massumi, 85). Intensity here is the same as affect, which is something beyond language and prior to and/or outside of consciousness. "Affect is the body's way of preparing itself for action in a given circumstance by adding a quantitative dimension of intensity to the quality of an experience. The body has a grammar of its own that cannot be fully captured in language because it "doesn't just absorb pulses or discrete stimulations; it infolds contexts (Shouse, 1-2). Bodies can show what they have been through, also they can resonate with each other's experiences and communicate in a very unconscious way.

Doors can function as the household's skin, unwittingly conveying information about the household; speaking of what is going on in the family and their relationships. Through their damage and oxidation, they can depict possible scars, traumas, and lacerations suffered by family members within. If the door is the skin of the family, the whole family constitutes a body. The texture and wrinkles speak volumes while remaining silent. The intensity within the body of the household is going to leak outside from the skin. The surfaces of doors reveal what they might conceal. Home can be its residents, a single body, possibly oppressed and injured by the painful touch of life, a site of trauma. A body that is potentially able to bring the audience to a point to resonate with its affects.

## CHAPTER II: US VERSUS OTHER

Doors help people maintain boundaries and privacy and offer safety and protection. Doors represent transitional spaces in the home and the family; they function as barriers between two different realms, both dividing and connecting. Here a moment of duality comes up. Doors can connect, but also can divide those inside the home (us) from those outside (others). It is also true about other borders and other boundaries. The problem is the division and separation between “us” and “them” can be a form of “othering”; designating some people as less important and perhaps less human. It is easy to define “us” and “others” in ways that dehumanize people who are not us, who are not inside our self-definition, and towards whom, assumably, we have no ethical obligation. This ambivalence, as I mentioned, also exists in the nature of different boundaries. Borders and boundaries are paradoxical, creating both safety as well as a potential barrier to aid. Furthermore, people exploit boundaries and hurt others and use the boundaries as an excuse not to help when needed. It is important to think about what happens to people due to the lines that we draw around them, around us, and around others from time to time; what is the impact of being inside or outside of these lines.

Our understanding of others can be very limited. We exclude them with a little bit of knowledge that we have through the firm definition of Us. This can produce heavy, impenetrable barriers between people, due to unfounded stereotypes and beliefs which allow the acceptance of confirmation biases and willful ignorance. We need to know about others, in order to re-humanize them instead of allowing them to remain the generic other. Ignoring, avoiding, and othering intertwine and reinforce each other and put irreconcilable distance between people. In other words, any difference between people has the potential to create some otherness and divide people into

different groups that alienate each other unless they try to know each other through conversations and focus on connections. This concept is referred to as Intergroup bias or In Group-Out Group bias in Social Psychology (Tajfel, 96). If we let them, many borders exist to divide us, and our mind has the potential to create more. Our mind also has the potential to overcome the borders and make connection. As Ebrahimi (5) argues:

The condition of fluttering simultaneously between the self and the Other, of being oneself and beside oneself with pleasure or pain, of transcending the self, of perception of the Other as a self—but without the greed of domination—is in sharp contrast with a solitary aesthetics that commences and terminates in the self. True aesthetics can't remain isolated, self-absorbed, completely out of tune with the cycles of politics.

In my understanding, it is impossible to care about humanity and communication and avoid politics. In order to fight back against what politicians may do to people outside of one special border through Othering and underestimating the pain that they will experience; we need to stay aware. I am hopeful that the arts and the humanities have a special role in protecting humans and human rights by bringing attention and awareness. Even more importantly, by offering a better understanding of borders and boundaries.

## CHAPTER III: MY EXPERIENCE OF DISPLACEMENT

I left my homeland, Iran, three years ago to study an MFA in painting at Illinois State University. This experience of displacement and of residing in a foreign land for the first time has shaped the path I want to take in my research and my studio practice, though it was not my first experience of displacement as a female artist from Iran. The regime in Iran ruins the opportunity of a normal life for Iranian citizens. Therefore, being a part of the Iranian diaspora in the US was not my first experience of displacement, especially as a woman.

### **Being an Iranian Citizen**

I grew up in a country with a regime in power that tries to emphasize the borders and disconnect all the potential relationships people can have with the outside world. The regime tries to create an imaginary enemy and keep people in fear of it; even creates wars based on manufactured enemies, they create paranoia among the populace. On the other hand, on the other side of the borders, there is not much knowledge about us and, unfortunately, we are often defined by stories mixed with fear and brutality. Our people are often blamed for the crimes that the regime does to us. Those brutalities hit us twice; first as we are suffering inside the border at the hands of the regime and second when we are demonized because of the very same crimes outside of the border.

It is hard to accept but I have experienced that in the view of the rest of the world people's lives are less valuable in my country, also that my people's lives are less important outside of the borders of the country. For instance, the regime in my country killed 1500 people who were

protesting the tripling of the price of gas in November 2019. The incident was not reported in the global news media and we as a nation mourned alone. The same Iranian regime shot down an airplane, Ukraine International Airlines Flight 752, and killed 179 people on Jan 8th, 2020, two months after the protests. It was reported worldwide. One might ask what the difference is. I would say the difference is that the second group consisted of Iranians who had Canadian passports. Being Iranian was not important enough outside our borders for any reactions. It was the Canadian passport that carried the weight. Inside the borders, the value of Iranian citizens is also negligible as they are executed for the smallest reason such as being upset about the unreasonable price of gas. Regardless of where the death occurs, being Iranian is not sufficient to garner the world's sympathy.

When the government does not work properly, citizens are like orphans Nobody accepts the responsibility to defend their rights, whether they are living inside the country or outside of it. They do not have any laws to resort to for their rights. Laws inside the country are fundamentally designed against them, and international laws do not extend far enough. Borders prevent outside laws to be effective due to jurisdictional issues. Here again, we see the duality in boundaries. They are mostly created for providing safety, although they can work against it. In the global arena, Iran's autonomy is respected, preventing outside intervention. Within the country, the ruling regime can misuse the concepts of borders to enforce whatever they want as laws and go as far as killing citizens. We, as Iranians, live in a perpetual *state of exception*, we do not have any rights and the only relationship we have with the law or government is that they have power over our life or death, the term Downey used in his paper on Agamben ideas.

The regime in Iran is actively and blatantly fighting our traditions and culture to replace it with their own 'purified' version. To be left alone, my people need to pretend to believe in their dogma. There is no separation of religion and state, and many laws are against the people. As shocking as it may seem, something as normal as dancing has been declared illegal and can actually be punished by execution. Women have the worst of it. In addition to everything I mentioned, women in my country also need to deal with rampant systematic misogyny. We are oppressed in many ways. We live within many borders. Each of these is supposed to keep us safe at different levels, according to the regime's narrative. In reality, these are layers of chains: country, city, neighborhood, family, and home. Are we safe in any of these borders? Who is our friend, who is the enemy? During 2019, several young women got killed by their fathers in Iran. The law supports the fathers although they have committed homicide. The justice system believes these murders are something inside the family that no one can interfere with; just the same way other countries believe they should not interfere with our government's decisions. They can adopt a laissez-faire foreign policy towards our country; however, the government is literally killing us, the citizens.

Iranian women are internally displaced within their homeland. They do not have a say in their marital status, they need to fight in the court in order to get a divorce, but divorce is only granted for men. It is a process that I am familiar with myself. I feel for those young girls who are suffering behind those tall metal doors, concrete walls, and inside the borders of the country, the country that a cruel authoritarian regime is governing now. The issue here is about life and death in its most extreme sense, the way women in Iran experience life, bare life, life exposed to death. As Anthony Downey (109) uses these terms and explains them:



Lives lived on the margins of social, political, cultural, economic, and geographical borders are lives half lived. Denied access to legal, economic, and political redress, these lives exist in a limbo-like state that is largely preoccupied with acquiring and sustaining the essentials of life. The refugee, the political prisoner, the disappeared, the victim of torture, the dispossessed – all have been excluded, to different degrees, from the fraternity of the social sphere, appeal to the safety net of the nation-state and recourse to international law. They have been outlawed, so to speak, placed beyond recourse to law and yet still in a precarious relationship to law itself.

Living in Iran is like this for almost everyone. People must devote all of their resources, fighting tooth and claw, simply to survive. Laws can be easily bent and most of the time situations are handled based on the authorities' taste or mood. In my country being a citizen is not enough, there is a very precise definition of "being" that is excepted. Not many people meet that definition that includes everything from one's thoughts and beliefs to their clothing and marriage unless the person is related to the regime, then everything is allowed for them, even rape or stealing. Daily life for almost everyone is 'bare life'. On the other hand, the people related to the regime are not normal citizens either in front of the law, they are something beyond the law, they can decide what the law is in different situations.

### **Living in the Diaspora**

By focusing on the door as representative of the home, my work addresses issues of family, loss, and relationships through the lens of my diasporic experience. It is useful to bring an explanation of diaspora here:

Diaspora is by no means a new term - originally used in the third-century BCE to reference the dispersal of the Jewish diaspora. It was only in the latter part of the twentieth century that diaspora was expanded as a theoretical frame to describe not only communities dispersed through violence, as with the Jewish and African diasporas, but also communities, cultures, individuals, and even art objects spread globally under the conditions of late capitalism. . . . Diaspora theories do often follow a set of shared assumptions about the usefulness of studying the impact of migration. For, while the causes of the dispersal of diasporic communities and individuals might be different, the term is appropriate in describing the struggles undertaken to uphold cultural affinities with a homeland (real or imagined) and to maintain narratives of dislocation from that homeland. Wofford (74-75)

To explain further, diaspora, later on, has come to apply both to those who are denied the rights of citizenship and those who voluntary choose to leave their home due to oppression, poverty, persecution, war, etc, and it was not the case at the beginning. Tobias Wofford in "*Whose Diaspora?*" believes that regardless of the reasons for displacement, the term Diaspora is about the challenge people in Diaspora face and their efforts to keep their relationship with their homeland alive. I personally relate to the challenges he is talking about. I often think about how I voluntarily left my country and learned to communicate using a new language. I also find myself thinking about how much I miss my family, my country, and my culture. These things make me think of authorities, visible and invisible. The variety of people in charge or social setting that can affect our perception of choices available. I chose to leave the country when I could not see any way to grow or simply live in the dearest place for me in the world. I left the country where the current regime and the law enforcement are actively against me as a non-Muslim individual, as an

artist, and simply as a woman. Did I choose to leave, or did I have a better choice? How comfortable it could have been if being myself was enough. Diving into a new situation demands acquiring more and different sets of skills to be successful. Social behaviors and values are different in different societies. People living in a diaspora are often misunderstood, misrecognized, and even judged. Using a second language can be confusing and frustrating. We tolerate those unpleasant moments though because of the tiny hope we have in the second country, the hope that is stolen from us in our home country.

This definition of Diaspora by Wofford (74-75) also makes me think of the things a person living in a diaspora might lose over time. Learning another language back home opened new doors of understanding for me. Now after 3 years of being immersed in the language, I feel more comfortable using it to communicate. It is ironic that using the language I have put so much effort into learning, now feels strange to speak. I feel like I am losing or giving something up. It is like I am fading and someone new is appearing. Despite this, I keep trying to be better at the new language. Here is another concept that aligns with duality in my mind. I have two opposite points of view towards learning the language. This duality works well with the definition of cultural identity that Werbner & Funanti (153) talk about through Stuart Hall's ideas:

'Cultural identity,' argues Hall, 'is a matter of becoming as well as being. It belongs to the future as much as to the past . . . far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, [it is] subject to the continuous play of history, culture and power'. The idea of (national) identity as we knew it, one that is exclusive and static, has ended, argues Hall. In its place, we need to understand identity as *in fieri*, in the making, in continuous transformation. Identity is always in the process of formation, dynamic and never static, so that

identification is constituted by ambivalence, by the ‘doubleness of similarity and difference’.

Living in Diaspora, our understanding of everything, even our identity, changes constantly over time. This process of evolution and becoming occurs simultaneously with significant feelings of discomfort and displacement. Although, as these authors explain, I believe, by accepting identity as a dynamic concept and not searching for it just in the past, living in the new situation will be much easier. We need to accept that change is a fundamental part of our being.

Making art helps me to examine my memories in order to discuss and understand the experience of exile better. In the new circumstances, we need to know more about ourselves and our past. We need to redefine ourselves concerning the country we left behind, as well as part of a larger Diaspora. I feel resistance within myself not to leave home behind, at least not forever. Although I know to be able to navigate my life here and make peace with my new identity, I need to let go of some of my previous identity specially the parts related to social settings. For instance, I am using my mother tongue less and less, and it is sad. As Said (173) explains, “the achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever.” This sentence from Said’s (2000) text, *Reflection on Exile*, can also speak very deeply about the languages that are not spoken anymore. We need to accept we are going to be a new hybrid soul. The new circumstance is forming us, and it is part of the new person we are becoming. A person’s life is comprised partially of experiences, aesthetics, objects, and ideas from the first country and others from the second to make a third space for living in peace. This third space holds enough onto the home country that the person could stop mourning for it and continue with their lives. It is also close enough to the destination country that they would connect to the new place and start their life there, but it is not entirely any of these countries. Werbner and Fumanti (150) write:

The effective power of transnational aesthetics and the milieus imported and actively (re)created in exile through oratory, objects, foods, music, dance, and drama derives, not merely from a nostalgic desire to recapitulate or replicate a lost ambiance. It emerges from dialogical forging, in the here and now, of shared canons of taste among diasporic producers and consumers who collectively define what makes for social distinction and who together recreate the pleasure of joint celebration and worship.

In the new environment, people come up with new aesthetics in a way that has roots within both the first and the second country. This hybrid aesthetics is formed of mixed rules that make sense only within the third space. Specific people can relate to it, people who migrate from the same country to the same destination. The new situation commands new aesthetics. I notice this sometimes in the way that some of the Persian kids who are growing up here use the language. To understand them, you need to know both languages, Persian and English. I am not sure what the long-term effects will be regarding their knowledge of either language, but, for certain, it is a clear example of how things are juxtaposed in the diaspora. Sometimes after enough time passes the result is a new thing, totally separate from both roots; this is what happened to the language of people who live near the border of Mexico and the US, who have a unique dialect of Spanish now (Anzaldua, 77). Werbner & Fumanti believe that people in Diaspora are in some degree mimicking the lifestyle from their homeland and using it as a basis for the creation of a transnational aesthetic, an aesthetic that does not only belong to one nation or group but to many different people. In this way they find ways to both feel the authenticity of the culture they come from and relate to the present situation in the second country. It is a way to gain ownership in the site of exile (Werbner & Fumanti, 149). These authors are saying that diaspora aesthetics is a statement of diasporic independence that allows for *claiming* a relationship with the new land and culture. At the same

time, I believe, it helps diasporic subjects to reclaim the land that they left behind and maintain their relationship with it, from a far distance. This is important because people living in the diaspora are mostly excluded and not welcomed in their motherland or at least have a complicated situation for coming back, sometimes even for a short visit. I think diaspora is an attempt to change from a status of not belonging anywhere to a status of belonging strongly to two separate places. It is a departure from the pain of exile to making the new land, a new home, not just a last resort. Of course, there is some defining, and redefining involved, but it is going to result in much better feelings when you can call a place home. I faced the term last resort concerning the second country for the first time in a song called “Hana Mash Hu Al Yaman” which means Here is not Yemen from the Album of “Bayti Fi Rasi” (2019) Lyrics by A-WA (Tair Haim, Liron Haim, Tagel Haim), written & arranged by A-WA & Tamir Muskat. It made me think about the different lives people would have with a different perception of the second country. Their lives, happiness, welfare, and their contribution to society are heavily impacted by their understanding of the destination. Here are the lyrics translated into English:

Here is not Yemen / Land of wheat and barley, grape and olive / Fig and pomegranate, date  
and home / Where will I stake a home? / You have a tent, for now, / Or at least a small  
shack / Along with four other families / And here I will raise a family / Don't let them take  
your daughter / I'll find myself a job with an income / Either in cleaning or working the  
land / And I will learn the language / Lose the accent / With time I'll feel like I belong / I  
came to you a stranger / You saw me as primitive / I came to you fleeing / I saw you as a  
last resort

These artists are three sisters who are from Yemen who immigrated to Israel in their childhood. I enjoy how they explain diaspora from a feminine point of view, short and to the point. It fascinates me how listing fruits and vegetables can be this effective in defining a home. I also see they are making the point that immigration is not the immigrant's fault. It does not mean anything specific; we do not know what they went through to come up with the decision to leave their homeland behind and start over somewhere else. It specifically does not mean they are not from a sophisticated culture nor does it mean they are primitive. They are not terrorists, brutal and dangerous, just because they are not from the same country as us. Many aspects of life are common among humankind beyond any country or culture. If we acknowledge the importance of another's pain, we can overcome the borders and engage with others on a humane level.

## CHAPTER IV: ART AND COMUNICATION

Crises make a stronger “we”. When we experience similar moments in life such as longing for our country in exile, we are brought closer together and form the compassion to understand each other through the displacement and discomfort of the situation. Another way can be communication, especially through art, to go beyond the borders, not to underestimate other’s pain, and try to empathize with it. I think art can bring attention and awareness to the dilemmas related to borders and boundaries, the unjust laws created around them, and the human suffering that results. Art has a special role in hosting different ideas and concepts, bring even contradictory aspects together so going beyond divisions and separations. Ebrahimi, in her book, claims that humanities can help with these skewed understandings of others. She argues that:

Daring authors, including artists, graphic novelists, filmmakers, and memoir writers, have the ability to confuse and complicate set binaries. Their portrayal of the Other not as an enemy, but as someone relatable, perfectible, and human creates dissensus in the hegemonic discourse circulating against those who are supposedly unlike ourselves. . . Art that reaches out can bring visibility, raise awareness, and rearrange the lethal desires of domination...There are artists, authors, and other human beings who have built bridges over cultural estrangement via elements common to humankind: tales of suffering, exile, and reorientation. These artists are beacons of change from within, who break the happy consensus of war machines by offering a different glimpse into the life of the Other. In offering differences, they remind their audience of the similarities between the experiences of pleasure and pain of others and the self. The democratic process is made possible through



the occupation of the common imagination, through the dangerous endeavor that these artists undertake in hosting different voices and distant figures in the secluded shared space (Ebrahimi, 2-5).

In short, artists can give people the opportunity to know about others and to see that there is not much difference but mostly similarity; to see the human within the other and connect with them. My story, my hope, and my pain are of a very normal tangible human. I miss my home and my mother the same as any other human would. The way we perceive the concepts of borders and boundaries greatly influences our ability to empathize with those affected by displacement.

## CHAPTER V: MY PRACTICE

The concept of the nature of borders and boundaries was on my mind while I was making art, I wanted to go beyond language, I wanted to communicate to as many people as I can and show them empathy. I want to show through a lot of concealed issues. Many things never get talked about. We cover them and put a smiley face on top of a mutilated body. Many things are taboo to talk about. A beautiful, calm-looking surface covers the wounded body. The first layer is the welcoming layer, but there are many other layers not very pleasant to this story.

My studio practice and my writing have strong connections; however, they are separate entities. I can say, the concepts that I wrote about fueled my paintings. I believe writing and painting are two different languages and naturally, there is a gap between them. I do not think the written part of my thesis and my artworks are necessary each other's counterparts. In other words, I am not trying to illustrate the ideas I brought up here or create an exact picture of them. I am creating pieces to evoke feelings that can be in common with the ones my ideas can evoke.

My experience of displacement inside the border of my country under the dictatorship of the Ayatollahs and outside of it in the diaspora made me to try to come up with ways to connect and communicate. My paintings can be a kind of internal mental landscape or atmosphere that lets the audience relate to the feeling of my experience and have their own interpretation of them. However, I prefer to keep my pieces open for the audience to discover, do not make them to understand them in a very specific way, and keep them parallel to my writing as they are in a different language and they have their own way of communication.

## CONCLUSION

I believe art can be helpful in the problems related to borders and boundaries, through communication and awareness. Art can go beyond the borders and talk about brutalities toward people in the hope to stop it with enough public awareness and communication. I have been working with the concepts of home, displacement from it, and the suffering that is endured inside or outside of it; family relationships, and the traumas that family members can cause each other. These concepts are relevant to the country-size issues as well and paying attention to the relationships between these issues can help us to have better communication and help each other.

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