

ALA EBTEKAR

American / Iranian, born 1978



Born to Iranian parents in California, Ebtekar was raised in Berkeley, and he later obtained a Master of Fine Arts degree from Stanford University. A life-changing trip to Tehran at the age of 19 inspired a passionate interest in his Iranian roots. In particular the discovery of coffee shop paintings encouraged him to stay and explore the art of the region, and he went on to study Persian miniatures and calligraphy.

Morning Breeze & Buraq consists of 7 sheets of old Farsi manuscript. Through the ages, calligraphers and scholars have detailed this manuscript adding their notes and comments. With Ebtekar's further layering, he brings these

works into the present day to create what he sees as an "analogue blog," a blending of distant artistic languages. He uses faintly visible pencil, white gouache, acrylic and inks to illuminate his illustrations, which often provide ironic contrast with the texts' purpose and meaning.

The immediate aesthetic appeal of his drawings and paintings (these works can be perceived as both) is subdued and pleasing for those who want to go no further; but there is much more to unearth for those who delve into the complex, unresolved musings about the ways cultures and memory collide and blend in an increasingly global world. "My works are visual narratives that are a simultaneous deconstruction and reconstruction of time and space – a visual glimpse of a crossroad where present day events meet history and mythology, creating a 'synthetic epic' with many possible interpretations and outcomes."

Brief Biography

Ebtekar was raised in both Iran and the US. As a young teenager he joined the K.O.S. (Kids of Survival), working with artist Tim Rollins on collaborative artworks involving groups of urban youth. He received his BA from the San Francisco Art Institute, and in 2006 his MFA degree from Stanford. In the same year he received the San Francisco Foundation's Murphy & Cadogan Fellowships in the Arts Award.

His work is exhibited internationally and was recently featured in two prestigious exhibitions: *One Way or Another: Asian American Art Now*, a touring exhibition originating at the Asia Society, NYC, and in the 2006 California Biennial at the Orange County Museum of Art. In 2007, his work was featured in a solo exhibition at Gallery Paule Anglim in San Francisco, and in *Under the Indigo Dome* at The Third Line in Dubai. In 2007 he was awarded a six-month residency with Cite des Arts in Paris. This past year Ebtekar's work has featured in Bay Area Now 5, at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco and the Chelsea Art Museum's *Iran Inside Out* in New York.