

MEDIA RELEASE



Baha'i Martyrs of Iran

An installation project by
Shahriar Asdollah-zadeh

14 December 2009–7 February 2010



Image *Body Armour* copyright of the artist 2009

A powerful multimedia exhibition showcasing political plight and persecution!

Timed to coincide with two concurrent national touring exhibitions *Ey! Iran* toured by Exhibition Services Ltd. and developed by the Gold Coast City Art Gallery and *Exiles* by New Zealand artist Rudolf Boelee.

curated by Scott Pothan

This month on 12th November six million followers of Baha'u'llah founder of the Baha'i faith across the globe celebrate the 192nd anniversary of his birth in Iran in 1817. One month later the Whangarei Art Museum opens a suite of powerful exhibitions including *The Baha'i Martyrs of Iran* and *Ey! Iran* on Monday 14 December. The exhibitions will be officially opened by prominent local Baha'i personality and *tohunga whakairo* Te Warihi Heteraka.

Shahriar Asdollah-zadeh migrated with his family at the age of four to Auckland, New Zealand in 1989, where he still resides.

Learning more about his Persian heritage as he grew up in far-flung New Zealand particularly the persecution of his relatives in Iran in the 1980's for their belief in the Bahá'í faith, fanned the flames of Shahriar AZ's desire to use his artistry to raise awareness of social exile.

His most recent artwork www.worldartcollective.org has been broadcast on national television, exhibited internationally and featured in major daily newspapers, and magazines.

Shahriar launched the website in March 2008 and it has since become the global vehicle for raising awareness of human rights violations, injustices and persecution.

Shahriar has always been interested in the power of technology, particularly the internet, in opening broad avenues of interaction among the world's diverse populations. He aims to engage those who have been previously unexposed to what contemporary art can achieve socially.

"Artists are now able to use global communication as a medium to express the arts. Online social programmes such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter are rapidly growing like a living organism and millions upon millions are signing up to join these trends of modern age popular culture," says Shahriar.

This poignant and compelling exhibition includes a slideshow video of over 200 selected people from 1500 participants around the world holding signs of protest titled 'World Art Collective; Messages of Protest' and the Body Armour sculpture 'World Art Collective; Body Armour' a light-box sculpture 'Baha'i Martyrs of Iran' from which the

exhibition is named, and over 30 photographic images and sound recordings.

For further information on the exhibitions and images released for copyright, please contact:

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