



What role does art play, if any, in archiving and effecting collective memory.

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Here I am going to look at art, specifically painting and the role it plays in shaping and or documenting collective memory. My focus is on the artists who live away from their country of origin and are dealing with notion of identity and or memory.

When people think of diaspora populations, their first thought tends to be of refugee populations, the migrant crisis, and communities fleeing conflict as a result of what's reported in the media. However, this is only part of the story. Often these scattered populations across the globe continue to have an enormous impact on their homelands. I will be looking at the artists, art activists and very briefly writers who are living in exile.

I am interested in the politics of non-engagement; the activist artist, the historian artist and the storyteller artist.

Since 9/11 and the wars that followed; there has been a worldwide turn towards the political. The formal methods of contemporary artists are much more diverse now. Activism, artist initiated political movements, artist led workshops and community based works of arts are the common methods. I am interested in the role of Painting as a medium.

In Iran there is a 38 year history of political murals and propaganda posters and I am too familiar with the format.

Can representational painting with political and contemporary subject matter, fall straight into the land of propaganda? Or if it is not representing the history, can it misrepresent it?

In the process of writing this thesis and through my paintings; I am going to undertake a review of contemporary practice of recording and or making collective memory.

I will be looking at the subjective way artists look at factual events.

I think my starting point will be some big, open-ended questions.

What is the role of art, my art, in expanding the social and political imagination of my audience? What role if any does painting play in recording the history of the times it is made in, in the time of citizen journalism and mobile telephones.

What is the role of an artist, using such old fashion medium, in communicating and decoding values and stereotypical myths?