"Slideshow" | Second Episode: "Khorramshahr Bears Witness"

Bahman Jalali

A Project by Alborz Kazemi

October 16 – November 6, 2026

Dastan:Outside
پروژه‌های بیرون از دستان

Focus Room



PRESS RELEASE

Dastan:Outside Projects, will open “Slideshow,” Episode 2, at Focus Room on Friday, 16 October 2026. With each episode, “Slideshow” projects a selection of photographs by a particular photographer onto the room’s walls. “Slideshow” is a project by Alborz Kazemi.

The second episode, titled “Khorramshahr Bears Witness,” is devoted to photographs by Bahman Jalali from the days of the war in Khorramshahr. In this episode, the images extend across two walls and two windows, drawing the viewer’s gaze from one wall to a window and then to the other wall. Throughout the exhibition, brief remarks by Jalali about his approach to photography recur over layered music, with noise entering at intervals; it is as though his voice reaches us in the aftermath of a powerful explosion, through the ringing that lingers in the ears. Sound and image each bring us face to face with the event—the event that Jalali’s camera recorded without sentimentality or sensationalism. As he himself puts it: “My work is not news reporting; it is documentary photography.”

Reflecting this documentary approach, Jalali’s photographs of Khorramshahr are arranged in a linear sequence, from the beginning to the final days of the war. The sequence begins with the first deployments and groups of combatants, gradually moving toward the devastating core of the war. The violence of battle reaches its peak midway through the exhibition, its horror so stark and overwhelming that it seems only an invisible witness could have stood at the heart of the battle to record such scenes. After this climax, Jalali’s gaze shifts from bodies caught in combat to the city’s lifeless body: deserted buildings whose ruin and silence speak of the violence etched into the city’s face. In this exhibition, Bahman Jalali’s photographs bear witness to an experience, and through them the photographer says only one thing: “I saw it.”

This episode was made possible with the assistance of Baygan Institute in facilitating access to the photographs, and with the collaboration of Rana Javadi. Peyman Houshmandzadeh provided Jalali’s audio recordings for the project, while Mani

Mohebali was responsible for the sound design.

Bahman Jalali (Tehran, 1944–2010) was an Iranian photographer, photography educator, and researcher of Iranian photographic history. He documented the Iranian Revolution and the early years of the Iran–Iraq War, particularly in Khorramshahr and Abadan. His books include Days of Blood, Days of Fire (1979), Abadan Fights On (1981), and Khorramshahr (1982–83).
In 2007, a retrospective of his work, curated by Catherine David, was held at Fundació Antoni Tàpies in Barcelona, Spain. A book on his work was published to accompany the exhibition. The exhibition was subsequently presented at Kunsthaus Graz, Austria, in 2009. In 2011, Jalali received the SPECTRUM International Photography Prize from Stiftung Niedersachsen, Germany. The award was accompanied by an exhibition of his work at Sprengel Museum Hannover and the publication of a multilingual book.
His work is held in the collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), the British Museum, the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery in Washington, D.C., the Musée d'arts de Nantes, the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, and private collections. His photographic archive is held at Sprengel Museum Hannover.





Bahman Jalali. "Untitled"
40 x 60 cm. Edition of 10 (#4/10)



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40 x 60 cm. Edition of 10 (#4/10)



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"Untitled"
60 x 40 cm
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Bahman Jalali
"Untitled"
60 x 40 cm
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BAHMAN JALALI

Bahman Jalali (19452010-) studied economics and political science at Melli university in Tehran, but very soon followed his passion for photography. In 1974 he joined the Royal Photographic Society in Great Britain and dedicated his life to photography. For 30 years he taught photography in different universities in Iran. He was a founding member of akskhane shahr, the first museum of photography established in Iran in 1997. He became the curator of the old photography of the museum.

In 1998 he started the Aksnāmeh “Letter of Photography” a quarterly photography magazine at the Cultural Research Bureau in Tehran in collaboration with Rana Javadi.

He had several exhibitions in Iran and abroad including exhibitions at Assar and Silk road Galleries in Iran, a retrospective at Antoni Tapies Foundation in Barcelona , 2007, Bahman Jalali Camera Austria, Kunsthaus Gratz 2009, Curated and also participated in “165 years of Iranian Photography”, Musée du Quai Branly, and “Between Hope and Chaos, the 30 years of Iranian Documentary Photography”, Monnaie de Paris, 2009, He also won the Sprengel International Prize for Photography in 2009, “excerpts from a lifework photography in Iran 19662010-”, Villa Romana Florence, 2010, a retrospective of his works at the Sprengel Museum in Hannover, 2011

His work is in several collections, including those in Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, Biritish museum, Los Angeles County Museume of Art (LACMA) Sprengel Museum, Hannover and Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art





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