

## In Sanaz Mazinani's Collages, Photographs Lie, Beautifully

ARTSY EDITORIAL

APR 25TH, 2014 8:34 PM

The camera never lies. So goes the old adage long since proven to be untrue. But we rely upon the camera to be our surrogate eye. It sees and records people, scenes, and situations most of us could never access, especially theaters of war, generating images that shape our knowledge and understanding. This is a paradox that mixed-media artist Sanaz Mazinani, born in Tehran the year before the Iranian Revolution began, understands well. As she describes it: "Photographs can create the illusion of knowledge when presented as proof or as document. To me, it must be acknowledged that at all times the photograph frames reality, thus alters potential perception. Furthermore, repetition and reproducibility empower images with the ability to construct and define history." She makes her case in the suite of eerily beautiful photographic collages currently on view at Taymour Grahne Gallery, in "[Sanaz Mazinani: Frames of the Visible](#)."

At first, the artist's irregularly shaped, brightly colored, and heavily patterned works do not appear photographic. Slightly raised from the wall, they read as fragments of Islamic architectural ornamentation or as swatches of embroidered or tie-dyed textiles. Look closely, however, and their pleasing abstract designs resolve into jarring images of explosions, warplanes, guns, and army maps. These are the images that stream in from the ongoing conflagrations in the Middle East, which Mazinani culls from the internet and splices together into kaleidoscopic arrangements, to startling effect.



In *Howitzer and Fireworks* (2014), she crafts a blush-pink, sparkling octagonal shape, like the celestial ceiling of a mosque, out of mirrored images of a sky lit up by fireworks, watched by a silhouetted man in uniform standing beside a massive Howitzer and an American flag at half-mast. It is unclear over which troubled country these fireworks explode—America? Iraq?—and what the occasion is. A blast of a different kind rocks the landscape in *Explosion* (2013). The feathery, glowing lines of umber, orange, and yellow in this jewel-like piece turn out to be the white-hot explosions of bombs, recently dropped on a desert landscape. In *Blue Angel* and *Gripen* (both 2013), the planes that perhaps dropped these bombs trace patterns in the sky, and across the faces of the compositions. In this conflation of fact and framing, and manipulative repetition, Mazinani proves that we should always be critical of the camera, and the images we consume.

*"Sanaz Mazinani: Frames of the Visible" is on view at Taymour Grahne Gallery April 23-May 24, 2014.*