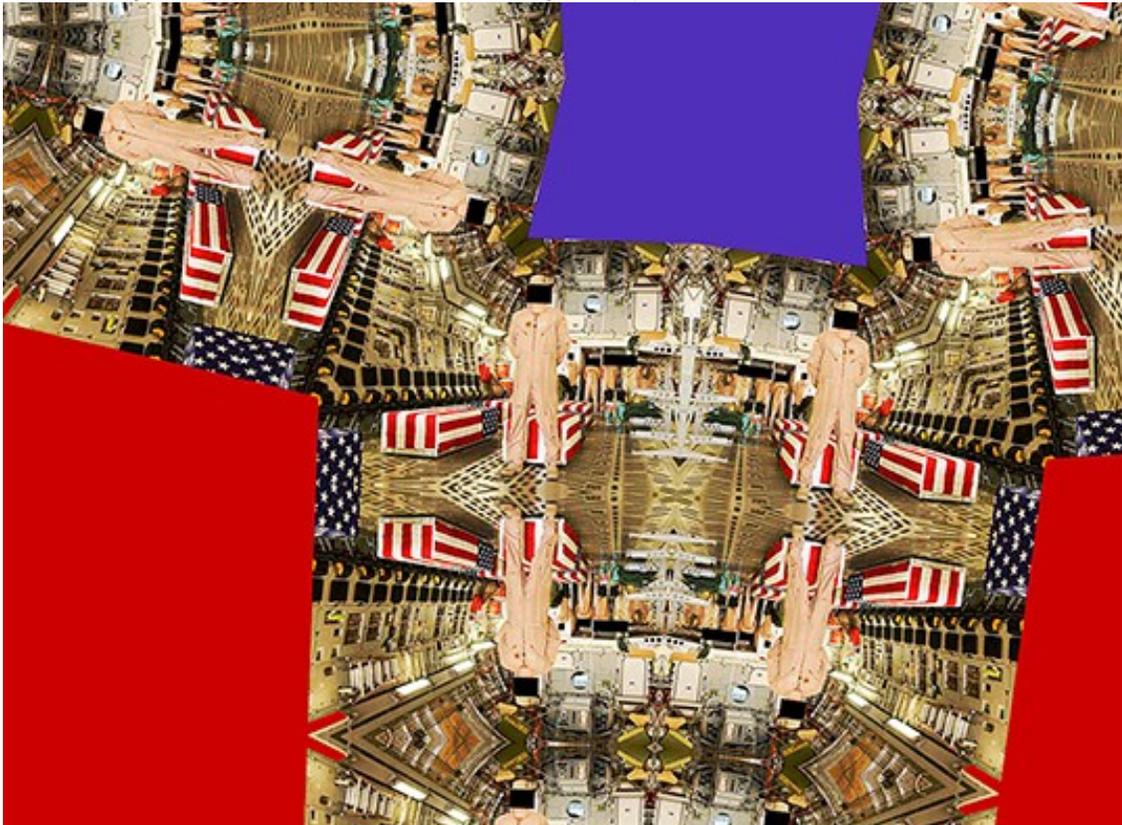


## Mirror image

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Detail of State Prism. Full image on front cover. | Photo by Sanaz Mazinani.

At first glance, artist Sanaz Mazinani's kaleidoscopic works swirl with colour and repeating patterns, but a closer look reveals disturbing imagery of conflict, war and finally reflections of ourselves. An exhibition of Mazinani's art, *Mirrored Explosions*, will be displayed at the West Vancouver Museum from April 13 to June 4, 2016.

Of Iranian descent, Mazinani works out of studios based in both Toronto and San Francisco. Although the geographic and cultural differences between western US and eastern Canada are a source of inspiration, her work focuses on global conflicts and how these are portrayed through the media and perceived by North American audiences.

“My ideas are more about our perception of war, and how we understand it and consume it through news media,” says Mazinani.

***Images, perception, interpretation***



Gripen. | Photo by Sanaz Mazinani.

To create her large, three-dimensional collages, Mazinani combs internet news sites for arresting images, usually of strife or war. Her work explores the remove between the actual event, the photograph that depicts it and the differences in perception that can shape how two individuals experience the same object.

“I often think about why certain photographs are published and how they inform our understanding of conflict,” she says.

Choosing from her collection of what she estimates to be 70,000 saved images, she then digitally repurposes the photos by multiplying them into repeating patterns to illustrate the coverage the original images receive in media outlets.

“To me, repetition and reproducibility empowers images to construct and define history, so I find great power in the photographic image,” says Mazinani. “One of my ongoing

subjects has been the media and how it influences us. By using appropriated images that circulate around us daily, I try to highlight the media's function within our society.”

To develop *Mirrored Explosions*, Mazinani worked with photographs of repatriated casualties from Afghanistan and Iraq released by the United States Department of Defence. She describes photographs of flag-draped coffins carried by soldiers in which all identifying features and captions have been concealed.

Mazinani's work also explores the interplay between the audience viewing her collages and the content each image conveys. She mounts the digital photographs on three-dimensional mirrored surfaces that reflect the person standing before it.

“I had been thinking of a way to directly involve the viewer in the subject at hand,” says Mazinani. “I thought about literally using a mirrored surface in the work so that when a viewer looks at the imagery, they simultaneously see themselves and hence are implicated in the subject.”

### ***Curating the curated***

Darrin Morrison, the director of the West Vancouver Museum, invited Pantea Haghighi to guest-curate the exhibitions. Haghighi is the owner and curator of Vancouver-based Republic Gallery. For *Mirrored Explosions*, Haghighi selected Mazinani's work because she wanted to introduce Vancouverites to a new artist.

“[I was] interested in how Sanaz Mazinani appropriates familiar images from news sources, yet challenges our reading of these images. Her work reinterprets the medium of photography,” she says.

As for Mazinani, she hopes that her work will create a platform from which others can consider differing perspectives and how they shape our relationship to conflict.

“After all, what gets ‘left out’ is often just as important as how what’s ‘left in’ is framed,” says Mazinani.