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JANUARY 2014

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BY ERIC PARNES

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سفارتخانه‌های که هنوز هست!

THE IRANIAN EMBASSY IN THE
USA, PHOTOGRAPHS BY IRANIAN
AMERICAN ARTIST **ERIC PARNES**

اریک اسماعیل زاده پارس

Born in the West with immediate family roots in Iran, Eric Parnes' vision reflects one's internal struggle to define identity and can be traced to early childhood experience. As a conceptual artist, the catharsis of creation has compelled him to examine and portray the perceived differences and similarities of the world in which he was born, as well as the echoes of the eras of my forefathers, allowing his concentration on crafting a series of works that revise and explore one's understanding of 'The Orient'. The term Orientalism has been commonly described as the Occidental West's long time attempt to depict the Middle East.

Fantasy-driven concepts and themes, often idealized or romanticized, provided for a continuous melding of these cultures, producing imagery that continues to affect our perception today. Reaching far beyond the borders of the United States and the Middle East, Parnes' art assesses the modern, the mystic, and the visceral reality of a "Neo-OrientalistTM." Today, the delineations between the East and West are increasingly blurred, with the cardinal points both exporting and interpreting their respective societies. As an artist seeking to define Neo-OrientalismTM, Parnes' work continues to explore this intriguing correlation and contribute to the intersection of culture and modern identity.





ballrooms echo the laughter and mingling of Hollywood celebrities, tycoons, socialites, diplomats, politicians and artists. Decadent soirees held by then-Ambassador Ardeshir Zاهدی were attended by the Shah and Shahbanu, her glittering tiara matched only by the brilliance of renowned beauties like Elizabeth Taylor. The glamour of Persia, its mysticism and exoticism was a rare world opened to the highest of American society in the 1970s, and just as quickly the doors were flung shut and forgotten. This Embassy has become figment of the imagination. Its interiors reflecting traditional elements of Persian folklore and design lie unbeknownst to the majority of Americans who live in its vicinity, and a faded memory to those who attended its vast receptions only four decades ago. This dissolution from the American consciousness is evident and palpable in the resulting grain quality of Parnes' images, which capture the haunting quality and eery silence of each abandoned room. The majestic building of the Iranian Embassy stands today a living testament to what once was, a silent memorial that is neither recognised nor visited. Eric Parnes peers inside this rich by-gone culture and era as an outsider, an apt metaphor for an American-born Iranian reaching into his own dreams.



For more information visit his website
www.eric-parnes.com



CUSTODIAN OF VACANCY

From the 16 December 2013 to 30 January 2014, Ayyam Gallery DIFC, Dubai is pleased to present 'Custodian of Vacancy: The Iranian Embassy in the USA', an exhibition of unique photographs by Iranian American artist Eric Parnes. Silent and inaccessible, the Embassy of Iran in Washington, D.C. has been closed since the fall of the Shah and the US Embassy hostage crisis of 1979. In this unprecedented and unique opportunity, Eric Parnes ventures into the calm of this defunct institution, providing a rare glimpse into a world forgotten by history. Once a hub of American celebrity merged with, and immersed in, Persian culture, the Iranian Embassy's current uninhabited status

still retains a particular rich aesthetic that captures the exclusive solitary nature of this institution. Parnes' photographs uniquely express a historic moment in time, while simultaneously conveying the immediacy in the artistic emotion of seclusion, by bringing the viewer to a magical space that was once celebrated and alive with vibrant festivities. Though cushioned alongside the active homes of other standing diplomatic missions from countries on Embassy Row, the Iranian Embassy stands as a custodian of vacancy, having sat in forced solitude for the past 12,000 days. Yet crossing through the gates bearing the traditional Persian coat of arms emblem the Lion and Sun, the dust casts a layer of enchantment over this derelict residence. As if peering through a portal to another world, gilded mirrors and stained glass windows reflect a past in which expansive



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