

Note (1)



The blurred boundaries between outside and inside or visible and invisible have always interested me. The covert - or deliberately rendered invisible - guides and controls the visible. Indoors can feel as though constantly subjected to a visual and mental dissection.

A façade is still only useful as a material barrier to weather events.

This impression of continual screening turns a personal cluster between 4 walls - far removed from any interference from the outside world - into a mental bankruptcy. Actions seem at times to have been coordinated from an invisible realm. All borders dissolve in the process of instrumentalisation. The necessity to be able to be everything at all times is not limited to the indoors or the outdoors.

Transparency appears to be a precept. The eye does not record or judge but penetrates everything and everyone. Who I am at home seems to be someone's business.

In Iran, public and private spaces seem to be pervaded by a metaphysical all-seeing eye. This externalised eye is invested with authority. It is actually possible to negotiate with this gaze. The public space, on the other hand, is controlled by a political viewpoint that enforces a specific identity and eliminates anything that does not comply with it. This identity goes back centuries and is both religious and political in origin. The two perspectives seem to be ineluctably intertwined. Public space is strict: the outdoors is public and the indoors is private. Today, the "outside" is imbued with a past that is subject to continual updating. The Ta'ziyeh is a phenomenon of daily life that contributes to this perpetual revisionism. Ta'ziyeh is a type of street theatre that creates a setting for social interactions. Ta'ziyeh performances provide a platform for coming together and function as the engine for a community populated by both religious and non-religious members. The Ta'ziyeh tents are a variety of sizes, thereby demarcating a space using the most rudimentary of means. They provide the infrastructure for a specific content. The aesthetic aspect of the tents is considered unimportant: they are simply inexpensive enclosures. They seem to be everywhere in the public space, apparently randomly and haphazardly erected on roadsides, squares and in alleys.

Any empty space is a potential tent site. There are large versions for performances and small ones where tea and food is served. They carry a religio-political message and inject the past into the future but not in any transformed or associative way: it is literal and repetitive. This literalness demonstrates the static, non-transformative nature of the identity that the political agenda imposes. Here, the outdoors appears to be almost a dressed set.

Indoors, on the other hand, seems to be a haven for personal fulfilment or, in the triumphant words of an Assyrian woman in Tehran with whom I stayed for a while: "Who I am and what I do at home is nobody's business!"