

*inprint* is an exhibition of woodcuts, drypoints and monoprints by Iranian artist Akram Rahmanzadeh, exploring the human condition through placement and misplacement. The exhibition features a giant 5-metre woodcut *Requiem in Black*, and a series of miniature colour etchings. Rahmanzadeh's subject matter examines power relationships and social structures within institutional and public spaces in contrast to those of domestic spaces.

Inspired by Byzantine iconography, pre-renaissance painting and the spatial elements and motifs of Persian miniature books, Rahmanzadeh's work investigates the objective and descriptive space in visual narratives. Her ideas, usually form from memories, observations and some photographic references, and are researched through printmaking, drawing and painting.

Rahmanzadeh explores internal and external spaces. The architectural configuration in her work becomes a theatrical set, in which the characters find their role and orchestrate a visual narrative. In some of the smaller works, architectural features are used to divide spaces and create layers and compartments, and figures are placed onto architectural motifs and are engaged in different activities. The works become playful through the adoption of different perspective points, giving the works visual depth.

The series entitled *Hammam* (a persian word for public bath), is inspired by Rahmanzadeh's childhood experiences of this public space for bathing where women meet, socialise and relax. The series examines the exclusivity of this all female space, its social significance and celebrates the idea of the 'feminine' by challenging the 'ideal' female stereotype.

Traditionally the *Hammam* occupies a prominent place within the layout of a city and creates a significant communal space for everyday life. The act of bathing is a lengthy ritual. As well as cleansing the body, many other social interactions take place. The *Hammam* community is unlike any other and is far from the gaze of men, and this in itself empowers the women within this community. As a child the ritual of *Hammam* was a visual treat for Rahmanzadeh. The curious and innocent gaze that has been explored in this series of work is that of a child coming across the spectacle of the *Hammam* for the first time.

In the series of woodcuts entitled *Highfield House* the figures are based on real characters from a residential home for the elderly, fictionalised for these prints, looking at situations and activities that may take place in the home with both humour and irony. Her books, however, best illustrate her fascination with the 'internal' and the 'external', and give the viewer an opportunity to interact through the act of opening the box, entering the house and visiting the subsequent rooms.

Akram Rahmzadeh was born in Tehran, Iran. She came to England in 1985 to study Fine Art at Norwich School of Art and Kent Institute of Art and Design, finally receiving her masters from Chelsea School of Art and Design, London in 1993

Rahmzadeh moved to Somerset in 2000 where she currently continues her practice from a studio in Street.

She has exhibited at The Study Gallery Modern Art, Poole; Lighthouse, Poole; Lemon Street Gallery, Dublin; The Armory, New York; The Original Print Fair, Royal Academy of Art; Hodges Taylor Gallery, North Carolina; The Maidstone Museum and Art Gallery, Kent; The Rye Art Gallery, Sussex; and The Royal Museum and Art Gallery, Canterbury.

In 1995, she was selected to represent Great Britain at the Tallinn Printmaking Triennial, Estonia.