

NEGAR TAHSILI

Almost a year ago, Todd Meany, a news anchor in Cleveland, Ohio, got a call from his producer about an unusual problem created by the coronavirus pandemic. Nobody could remember what day it was. What could a local newscast do? Create a morning show segment, of course, with a dash of seventies-style game show music: "What Day Is It?" While we were all staying inside—stripped of life's usual rhythm by the coronavirus pandemic—losing track of time was a common feeling. During the lockdown, I was thinking about what John Locke, the "Father of Liberalism," wrote about "freedom." He once famously contemplated the freedom of a prisoner who doesn't know that he is in jail. The question goes: If the prisoner makes no attempt to leave the locked room, and is able to do everything that he or she ever chose to do without hindrance, then can we really say that the prisoner is actually a prisoner? While the pandemic was holding the world hostage, was it possible to count ourselves free when we were compelled to self-isolate? What was/is the effect of social isolation on the brain? What happens when creative people are forced into isolation? Artists may have to adapt their ways of working in order to continue making art. Depending on the situation, a time of solitude can be either welcome or uninvited. To explore how it is possible to be creative during such a time, I invited Iranian artists to collaborate by filming their surroundings and giving virtual studio visits, along with artist talks—thus letting us dive into their sources of inspiration during the coronavirus pandemic. The result was four 20 minutes films, each an art piece of its own, bringing studio visitors into the creative world of these Iranian artists. Showing videos are combined with short artist talks and the whole package is a creative way of discussing about the impact of the pandemic on these Iranian artist's works and how they try to progress in future in Tehran in this situation. This project was initiated by me, Negar Tahsili and since I am in Europe I can present the the project and moderate it. All other artists will join online for their artist talk.



Negar Tahsili (b. 1980) is an inventor, filmmaker, and multidisciplinary artist. She directs films and works on interdisciplinary exhibition-based projects around the world. Her recent art projects have been based on the concept of cloning and displacement. One of her most recent projects involved re-curating and displacing Gabès Cinema Fen: Stuttgart, a Tunisian film festival at the Württembergischer Kunstverein. Apart from curating, she has had many exhibitions across the globe, and her documentary films about culture and art have been screened in international film festivals and featured on the international broadcasters like arte.