

ELNAZ JAVANI | الناز جوانی



Elnaz Javani is an Iranian-American artist and educator working across textiles, sculpture, and drawing. Her practice delves into personal and cultural memory, often reflecting on her experience of migration and identity. Javani's intricate works frequently incorporate traditional textile techniques, exploring how material and process can serve as vehicles for storytelling. She has exhibited her work nationally and internationally, frequently addressing themes of displacement, the body, and the intersection of personal and collective histories through the lens of fiber art. Javani holds an MFA in Fiber and Material Studies from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where she received the New Artist Society Merit Scholarship, and a BFA from Tehran University of Art.

Working across textiles, drawing, and print, she explores how image-making within fiber-based craft structures can cultivate a sense of place and belonging through storytelling. Her practice weaves together personal archives, fictional narratives, and lived experience, often situated at the intersection of gender, migration, identity, and culture.

Through material manipulation, Javani constructs layered, fragmented surfaces drawn from labor-intensive, bodily engaged processes rooted in cultural and domestic spheres – such as embroidery, collage, dyeing, and various fiber techniques. These tactile methods carry emotional resonance and embedded histories, allowing her to investigate the possibilities of handwork as both material and conceptual strategy.

The repetitive, meditative nature of these practices enables Javani to consider how attention, labor, and power can be reoriented as acts of devotion and care. The resulting objects and visual dialogues form intimate spaces of refuge, resistance, and connection.

She is the recipient of the Terra Foundation Grant 2025, the New Voices 2024 award from Print Center New York, the 2024 and 2025 CSU Professional Development Awards, a 2023 Chicago Individual Artists Program grant, and the 2023 Center for Craft Artist Cohort Grant. She has also received Faculty Enrichment Grants from SAIC (2021–2022) and was named one of Chicago's Breakout Artists of 2022. Additional awards include a Spark Grant from the Chicago Artists Coalition (2021), the Kala Art Institute Fellowship and Residency Grant (2020), the Define American Art Fellowship Grant (2020), and the Hyde Park Art Center Flex Space Residency Award (2019).



EDUCATION

- 2015** School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL Master of Fine Arts in Fiber and Materials Studies, New Artist Society Scholarship & Full Merit Scholarship
- 2011** Art University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran, Bachelor of Fine Arts in Studio Practice, Graduated with Honors with a focus on Textiles. Selected in Studio and history of Contemporary Art study in Europe

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2025** Inner Compulsion, the Esther and John Clay Fine Art Gallery, Laramie, WY, USA
- 2024** Oddments, UNC Mariani Gallery, Greeley, CO, USA
Inner Compulsion, Lynden Sculpture Garden, River Hills, WI, USA
- 2023** Dwelling Places, Tiger Strikes Asteroid Gallery, Chicago, IL, USA
- 2022** Phonetic Fragments, (two person show), Roots & Culture, Chicago, IL, USA
- 2021** Exo, (two-person show) Devening Projects, Chicago, IL, USA
There you were, and then you were there more, A+C architects Gallery, Skokie, IL, USA
- 2020** Your Residue ته مانده تو , One after 909 Gallery, Chicago, IL, USA
- 2019** Inner Compulsion, OGGI Gallery, Chicago, IL, USA
- 2017** Unfolded, La Caja Blanca Art Gallery, Palma De Mallorca, Spain
- 2016** To Cut a Tongue that Has Not Been Tamed, La Caja Blanca Art Gallery, Palma De Mallorca, Spain
- 2013** Dealing with People, CAC Ses Voltes International Residency Program Gallery, Palma De Mallorca, Spain
Fate, Homa Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2011** Flood Carried Sarah Away, Homa Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2010** Broken glasses, The Art Gallery of Tehran Art University of Arts, Tehran, Iran

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2025** (Forthcoming) Abu Dhabi Art Fair, Abu Dhabi, UAE
Editions Dubai Art Fair, Rarares Gallery, Dubai, UAE
MENA Art Fair, Liberty Belac gallery, Paris, France
Gregory Allicar Museum of Art, Fort Collins, CO, USA
In Women's Words, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran, Iran
- 2024** SEAMS, Portrait Society Gallery of Contemporary Art, Milwaukee, WI, USA
New Voices: Ritual , Print Center New York, NY, USA
Falling into Language , Craft Contemporary Museum Los Angeles, CA, USA
- 2023** Tryst Alternative Art Fair, Los Angeles, CA, USA
Terrain Exhibitions, Twin Flat Projects, Oak Park, IL, USA
Life Cycles, DePaul Art Museum, Chicago, IL, USA
Light in Darkness, Homa Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2022** Why am I not Being Seen, Museo de Arte Contemporaneo, Madrid, Spain ARCO Expo, Madrid Museum, Madrid, Spain
Newcity's Breakout Artists show, Chicago Artists Coalition, Chicago, IL, USA
Jameel Arts Center, Mojgan Endgavi Collection, Dubai, UAE
- 2021** In Good Company, Mana Contemporary, Chicago, IL, USA
Once upon a time, Foundry Gallery, Dubai, UAE
Sea of Fertility: Looking at the Invisible, Kala Art, Berkeley, CA, USA
JUSTMAD, International Contemporary Art Fair, Madrid, Spain

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2020** SOMOS LA RABIA Y LA VOZ, Espacio Anexo, THE LIMINAL, Valencia, Spain NO- Rooz, Langer over Dickie Gallery, Chicago, IL, USA
Pop Up Shop Show, Langer over Dickie Gallery, Chicago, IL, USA
Drawings, paintings, maybe a sculpture 3, Everybody Gallery, Chicago, IL, USA
- 2019** Prints United, Spudnik press, Chicago, IL, USA
In Sound, Collaboration with Nesrine Khodr, Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL, USA
Refugees, Galicia Contemporary Art Center, Galicia, Spain
PlayGround, Hyde Park Art Center, Chicago, IL, USA
WOM4WOM, D.Varelli Gallery, Chicago, IL, USA
Paper Art fair, New York, New York, USA
Transistors, Ralph Arnold Gallery, Chicago, IL, USA
Part7, 12 Openings, Compound yellow gallery, Oak Park, IL, USA
- 2018** Newland, Museo de Arte Contemporaneo de Castilla y Leon, Leon, Spain
Moving_image_00:00 , ACRE, Chicago, IL, USA
Through Her Eye, Mana contemporary, Chicago, IL, USA
Connected, Mottahedan Projects, Dubai, UAE
Montakhab-e Nasl-e No, Homa Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2017** Sedentary Fragmentation, Heaven Gallery, Chicago, IL, USA
Reproducible , the Art Museum of Pereira, Columbia, USA
ECHO, Gallery Kayafas, Boston, Massachusetts, USA
Reproducibles , Quinta Cultural, Bogota, Columbia, USA
Waste Lands, Museum San Telmo, San Sebastián, Spain
Tecnologías de la violencia, Arts Santa Mónica, Barcelona, Spain
- 2016** Beirut Art Fair, Endjavi Barbe Art Projects, Collonge Bellerive, Switzerland
SEW+ZAN, Azad Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2015** 5+6, Mottahedan Projects, Dubai, UAE
Country-Home, CUE Art Foundation, New York, NY, USA
Luminarts Cultural Foundation Visual Arts Competition at Union League, Chicago
Final Show, Sullivan Galleries, Chicago, IL, USA
Good News from Iran, Mottahedan Projects, Dubai, UAE
Drawing Weeks, Homa Art gallery, Tehran, Iran
Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal USA Presidential Award Exhibitions, Chicago, IL, USA
- 2014** Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal USA Presidential Award Exhibitions, Chicago, IL, USA
Good News from Iran, the Munich cultural center at Pasinger Fabric, Munich, Germany
Sense of Self, the Arts Exchange at the Xchange Gallery, Atlanta, Georgia, USA
Fractured yet Rising, ARC Gallery, Chicago, IL, USA
- 2013** Good News from Iran, Frank Pages Gallery, Geneva, Switzerland
Drawing Week, Homa Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
Play, Shirin Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
- 2012** Lost World, ENDJAVI-BARBE ART PROJECTS, Bâtiment d'Art Contemporain, Geneva, Switzerland
Persbook Art Festival, Sin Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
Window, Farvahar Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran
Progressive Youth, Mellat Art Gallery, Tehran, Iran

RESIDENCIES

- 2025** (Forthcoming) Bullukian Foundation, Paris, France
(Forthcoming) BAS Art Collection, Istanbul, Turkey
(Forthcoming) Houston Center for Craft contemporary, Huston, TX, USA
Oxbow School of Art (Summer), Saugatuck, MI, USA
- 2024** Prairie Sea Projects, Alma creative residency, Joes, CO, USA
Lynden Sculpture Garden, Milwaukee, River Hills, WI, USA
BAS Art Collection, Istanbul, Turkey
Oxbow School of Art (winter), Saugatuck, MI, USA
- 2021** Kala Art Institute Fellowship Residency Program, Berkeley, CA, USA
- 2019** Hyde Park Art Center Residency Program, Chicago, IL, USA
MASS MOCA Residency Program, North Adams, MA, USA
- 2018** De-construkt Residency Program, Brooklyn, New York, USA
- 2015** Vermont Studio Center, Accepted Fellow, Johnson, Vermont, USA
The Munich cultural center at Pasinger Fabrik, Munich, Germany
- 2013** CAC Ses Voltes International Residency program, Palma De Mallorca, Spain
Spain Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró a Mallorca, Palma De Mallorca, Spain
- 2012** Poster for Tomorrow Artist in Residences, Paris, France
The Geneva Council Travel and artist in Residence, Geneva, Switzerland
Art study in Europe

DEALING WITH PEOPLE

The image shows a modern architectural courtyard. The walls are made of large, light-colored panels with a pattern of small, dark, circular perforations. A curved, vertical metal partition with a ribbed texture separates the space. In the foreground, there are two simple, low-profile benches with wooden tops and metal legs. The ground is a smooth, light-colored concrete or stone surface. The overall atmosphere is clean and minimalist.

DEALING WITH PEOPLE

RARARES



Pic 1. Elnaz Javani, *Dealing with People*, installation view, San Telmo Museum, San Sebastián, Spain | Courtesy of the artist



Pic 2. Elnaz Javani, *Dealing with People*, installation view, San Telmo Museum, San Sebastián, Spain | Courtesy of the artist

Dealing with People, installation

Dealing with People by Elnaz Javani is an installation consisting of a container, searchlight and an audio track looping inside the container space. With fragments drawn from my fieldwork and research, the artist worked on an audio piece, which was partly made with the dispatch communications between the National police of Spain during their process of tracing and following the human traffickers. Cargos were one of the vehicles or rather instruments with which they smuggled different groups of

immigrants throughout Europe. Known for their modular structure in shipment of goods and being an object of capital flow, cargo became a space to “host” and re-enact these audio recordings; immaterial traces of the immigration process. *Dealing with people* was originally installed in “Port de Palma” at the port in Palma de Mallorca, but recently Javani has reinstalled it in the Centre d'Art Santa Mònica and the San Telmo Museum as well.

DEALING WITH PEOPLE

RARARES



Pic 3. Elnaz Javani, Dealing with People, installation view, Palma de Mallorca, Spain | Courtesy of the artist

MY EFFIGIES



MY EFFIGIES



Pic 1. Elnaz Javani, *My Effigies*, 2020; stuffed object made of white muslin fabric, hand sewn with black thread covered the external layer with stories in Farsi & Azari calligraphy, variable dimension | Courtesy of the artist

My Effigies, 2020

Installation *My Effigies* by Iranian artist Elnaz Javani consists of twelve soft objects made from muslin fabric, hand-sewn with black thread and enveloped in stories written in Farsi and Azari calligraphy. These pieces draw from my childhood memories and my bilingual experience, where language was a space of both intimacy and separation.

The Effigies function as symbolic bodies negotiating boundaries – between past and present, inner and outer worlds, what fits and what does not. Growing up bilingual

RARARES



Pic 2. Elnaz Javani, *My Effigies*, 2020; stuffed object made of white muslin fabric, hand sewn with black thread covered the external layer with stories in Farsi & Azari calligraphy, variable dimension | Courtesy of the artist

meant constantly shifting between linguistic structures, expectations, and cultural spaces. In this series, language becomes not just text but architecture, something that shapes form, constrains it, and allows it to expand. The soft objects embody this push and pull: compressed forms that resist containment, or gently stretched shapes that test their limits. Through repetitive stitching, writing, and shaping, each effigy becomes a tactile record of navigating boundaries – physical, psychological, and linguistic.



Pic 3. Elnaz Javani, *My Effigies*, 2020; stuffed object made of white muslin fabric, hand sewn with black thread covered the external layer with stories in Farsi & Azari calligraphy, variable dimension | Courtesy of the artist

DWELLING PLACES

DWELLING PLACES



Pic 1. Elnaz Javani, *Sunrise Green*, 2023 – 2024, from the series *Dwelling Places*; hand stitched embroidery, hand dye fabric, appliquéd cotton fabric, sublimation printing, 43 x 27 inches; fragment | Courtesy of the artist

Dwelling Places

The series *Dwelling Places* by Elnaz Javani explores how the body is affected and shaped by its negotiations with the objects and spaces around it. Javani creates surfaces where identities are continually reconsidered and set into new relationships with their surroundings, highlighting the slippage and instability that are always present. Through material manipulation, layering, and repetition, the works investigate how the body inhabits space, adapts, and asserts presence, revealing the ongoing dialogue between self, environment, and the traces of memory embedded in both.

Experiencing Javani's solo show is like entering a layered, immersive landscape where memory, identity, and corporeal presence converge. Hanging textile-based works, and a few quietly placed on pedestals, emerge from complex processes of dyeing, printing, sewing, and embroidery, with the process itself functioning as metaphor. In works like *Coming Undone* and *Midnight Sun*, swatches appliquéd onto backing fabrics through repeated sublimation printing create swirling, marble-like patterns that suggest reflections of sunsets on water – fractured, fluid, and subtly interconnected, much like the

RARARES



Pic 2. Elnaz Javani, *Piece of Blue*, 2023 – 2024, from the series *Dwelling Places*; hand dye and sublimation printing on drop cloth, 39 x 30 inches; fragment | Courtesy of the artist

self negotiating multiple layers of experience.

Other pieces, such as *Piscina* and *Conquered*, reveal figures whose forms are continuously constructed and revised. Layers of hand-painted dyes, bleaching, and embroidered threads accumulate, subtract, and redefine the contours of each figure. These manipulations echo the body's instinct to adapt while preserving its essence, illustrating how identity is always in flux – awkwardly layered, imperfectly fitted, yet ultimately cohesive. Each addition, subtraction, or overlay contributes to a unique assemblage, emphasizing that the self is not static but constantly being worked, reworked, and situated within its environment.

Through subtle gestures, tactile surfaces, and carefully layered processes, *Dwelling Places* traces the ongoing negotiation between body, space, and memory, offering a poetic reflection on how identity and presence are continually shaped by the material, emotional, and spatial contexts we inhabit.

DWELLING PLACES

RARARES



Elnaz Javani

Two piece in sequel, 2023-2024

Hand stitched embroidery, hand dyed fabric, appliquéd cotton,
sublimation printing on cotton fabric
53 x 44 inches

DWELLING PLACES

RARARES



Elnaz Javani

Midnight Sun, 2023-2024

Hand stitched embroidery, Hand dyed Fabric, Appliquéd cotton fabric,
sublimation printing and discharge printing
40x43 inches



Elnaz Javani

Distant Closeness, 2023

Hand-stitched embroidery, hand-dyed fabric, applied cotton fabric,
sublimation printing and discharge printing on cotton fabric
116.8 x 142.2 cm

An abstract collage artwork featuring layered textures and colors. A central dark grey, textured rectangular piece is surrounded by various other elements: a large, flowing blue shape on the left, a yellow shape at the bottom right, and a small white oval with a blue and green floral design in the center. The background is a mix of dark green and brown tones with some gold-colored lines and a small blue flower-like shape in the bottom left corner.

PHONETIC FRAGMENTS



Pic 1. Elnaz Javani, *Sunset Blue*, 2022 – 2023, from the series *Phonetic Fragments*; hand stitched embroidery, hand dyed Fabric, appliquéd cotton, 18x15 inch; fragment | Courtesy of the artist



Pic 2. Elnaz Javani, *Temptation*, 2022 – 2023, from the series *Phonetic Fragments*; hand stitched embroidery, hand dyed Fabric, appliquéd cotton, 56x64 inch; fragment | Courtesy of the artist

Phonetic Fragments

The project *Phonetic Fragments* explores the experiences of diasporic identity through the lens of body and space. The series investigates how fragmented memories and embodied experiences can be reconstructed through visual storytelling. Using textiles, stitching, and surface manipulation, the works isolate gestures, forms, and traces of the body, creating a dialogue between presence and absence. Each fragment functions as a suspended moment – capturing memory, movement, and the negotiation

of space in relation to selfhood.

The works consider how the body inhabits, adapts to and claims its environment, reflecting on vulnerability, transformation, and belonging. Through repetition, layering, and material exploration, *Phonetic Fragments* maps internal states onto physical form, highlighting the intersections of memory, identity, and the corporeal experience of navigating multiple worlds.

PHONETIC FRAGMENTS

RARARES



Elnaz Javani

Chasing the Blue Horizon, 2022-2023

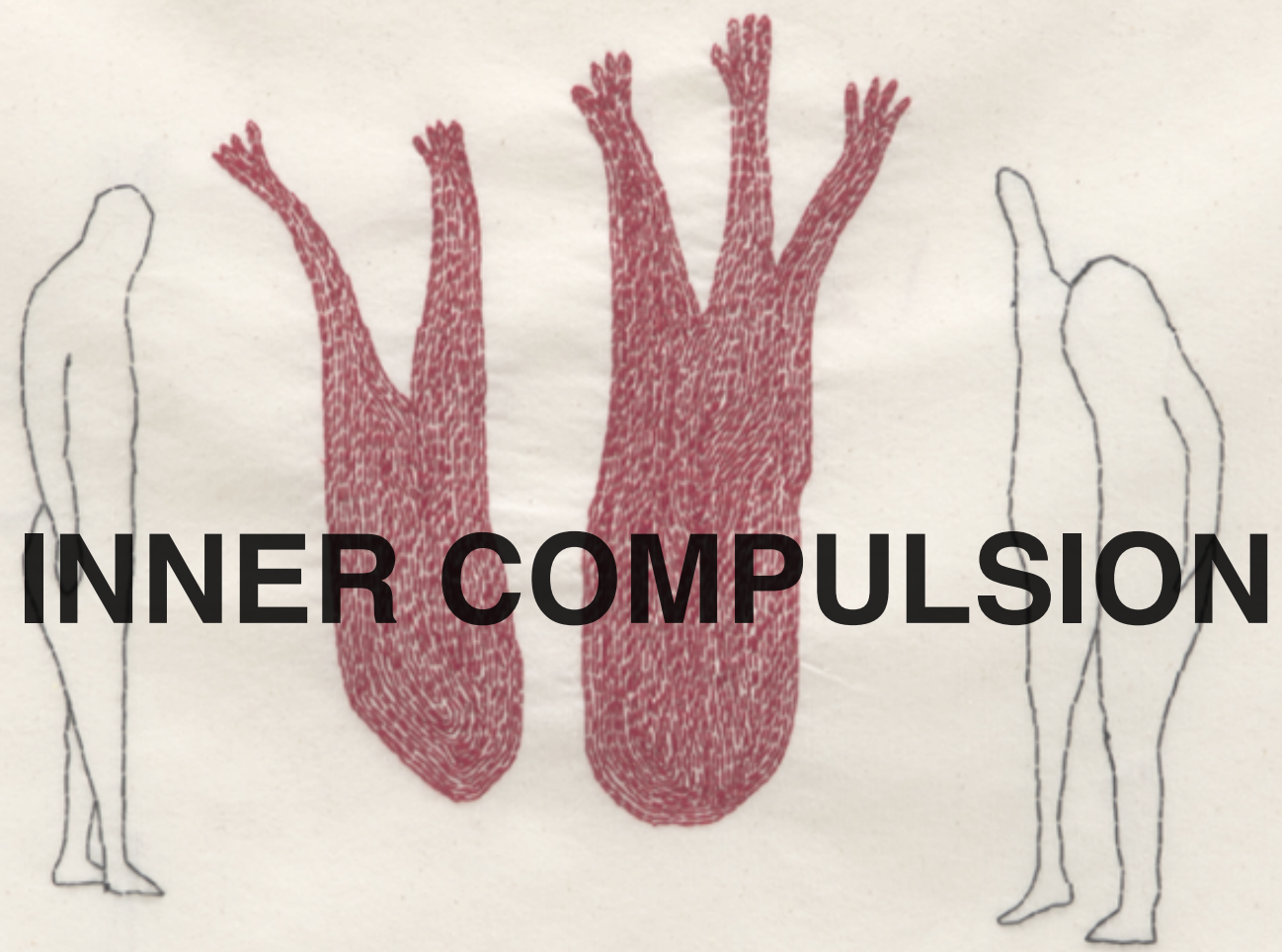
Hand stitched embroidery, hand dyed Fabric, appliqué cotton
41x33 inch



Elnaz Javani

Wavering Faith, 2022-2023

Hand stitched embroidery, hand dyed Fabric,
appliquéd cotton and chiffon
59x37 inch



INNER COMPULSION

INNER COMPULSION



Pic 1. Elnaz Javani, *Carrying out your weight*, from the series *Inner Compulsion*; 45.7 x 45.7, hand-stitched embroidery on muslim fabric; fragment | Courtesy of the artist

RARARES

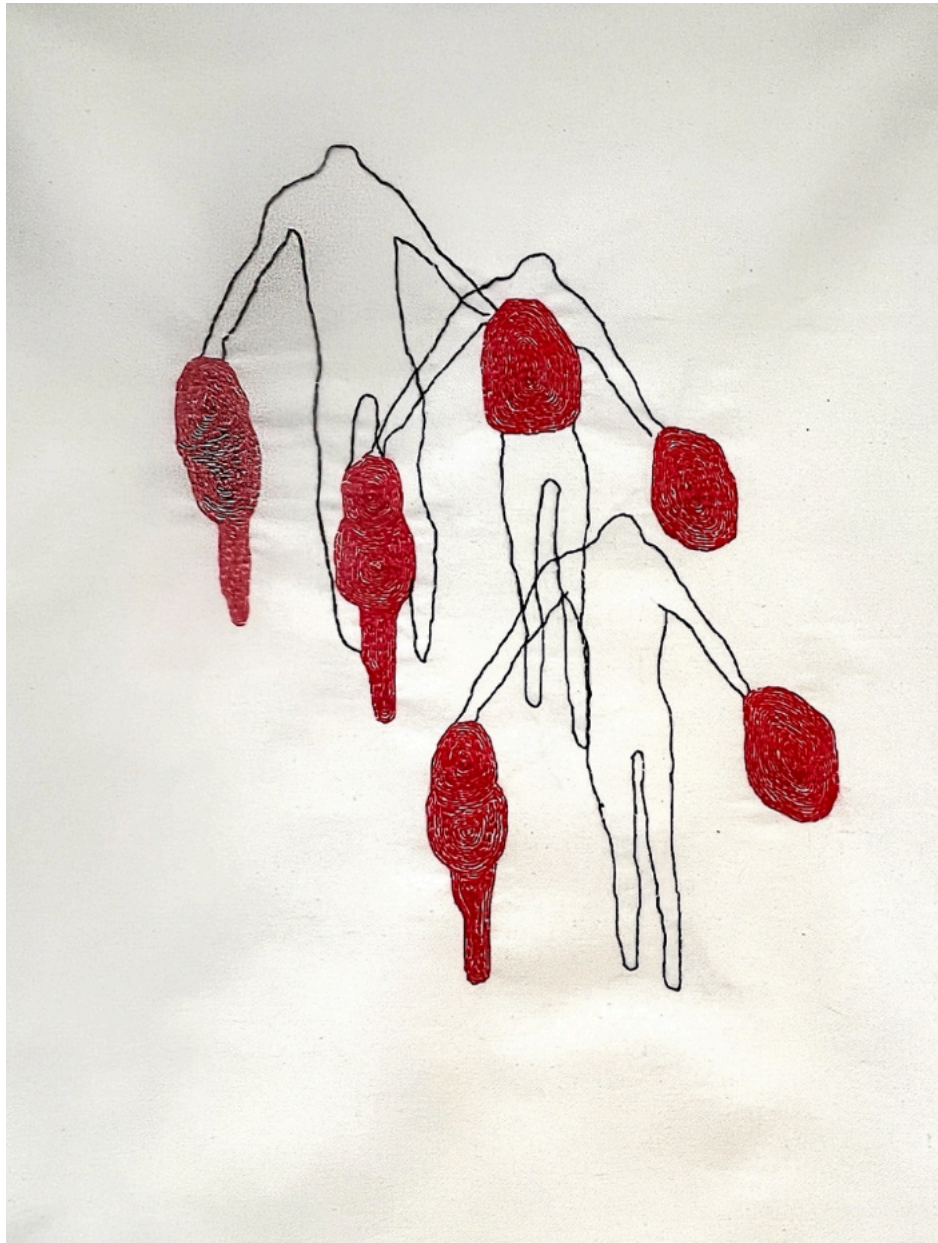


Pic 2. Elnaz Javani, from the series *Inner Compulsion*; hand-stitched embroidery on muslim fabric; fragment | Courtesy of the artist

Inner Compulsion (2013 – 2019, 58 pieces total)

The series *Inner Compulsion* emerged from an exploration of duration, repetition, and the relationship between body, time, and labor. These ideas are embodied through black and red hand-embroidered stitches on muslin fabric, forming fictional autobiographies that unfold across a seven-year span. Each piece constructs a visual narrative within an ongoing continuum. Through slow, deliberate marks, the works reveal intimate tensions and psychological states, responses to an inner force that seeks to understand the self in relation to daily experience.

The series functions as a method of tracking one's being over a defined period. Repetition becomes a way of pausing and holding moments of transformation, shaped by memories, stories, and past events and continually reinforced by the present. The process is an intuitive study: slow drawings rendered through thread, serving as a visual record of time, its passage, and the histories that accumulate within the body.



Elnaz Javani
Red Holes, 2018

Hand-stitched embroidery on muslin fabric
33 x 58.4 cm



Elnaz Javani

I sniff their aged smell, 2019

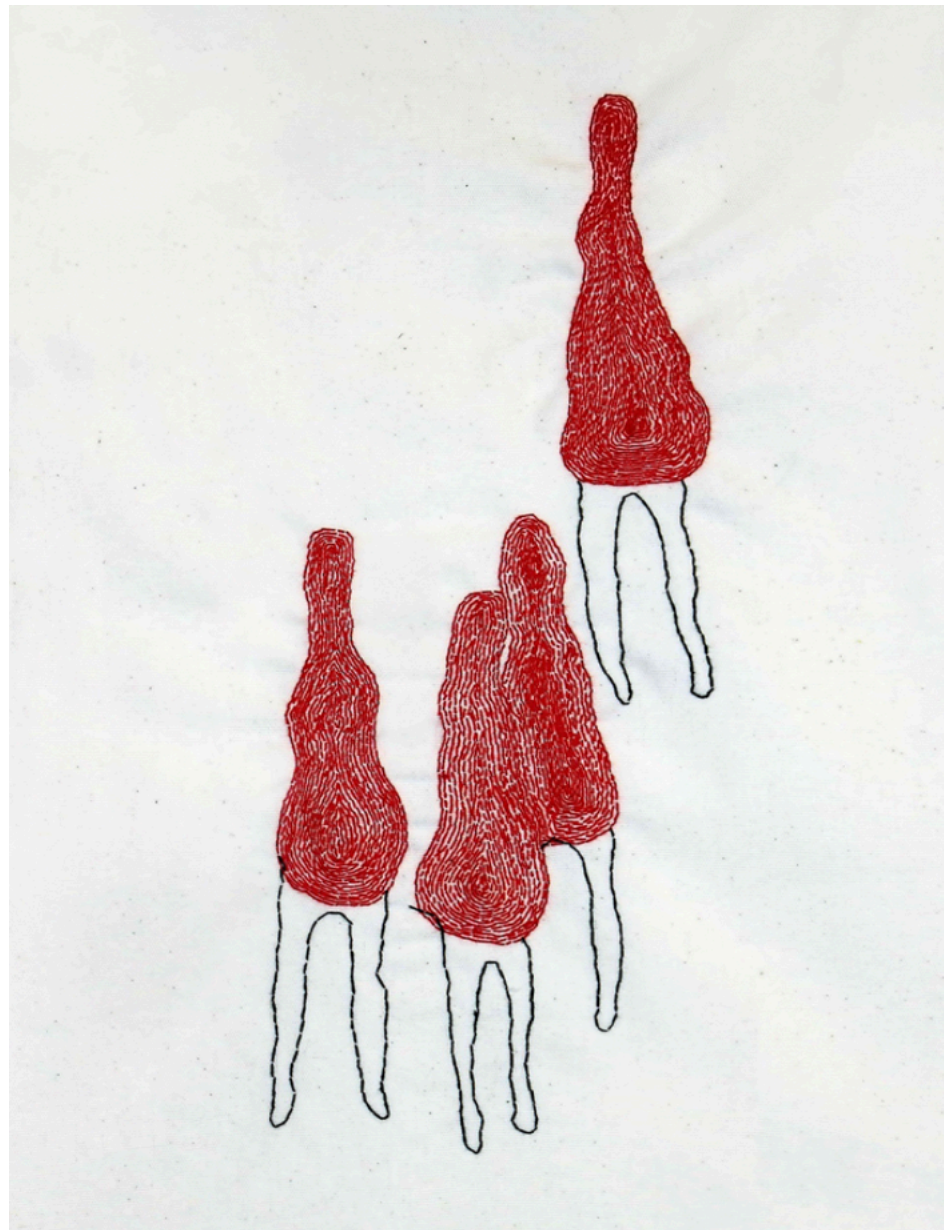
Hand-stitched embroidery on muslin fabric
45.7 x 45.7 cm



Elnaz Javani

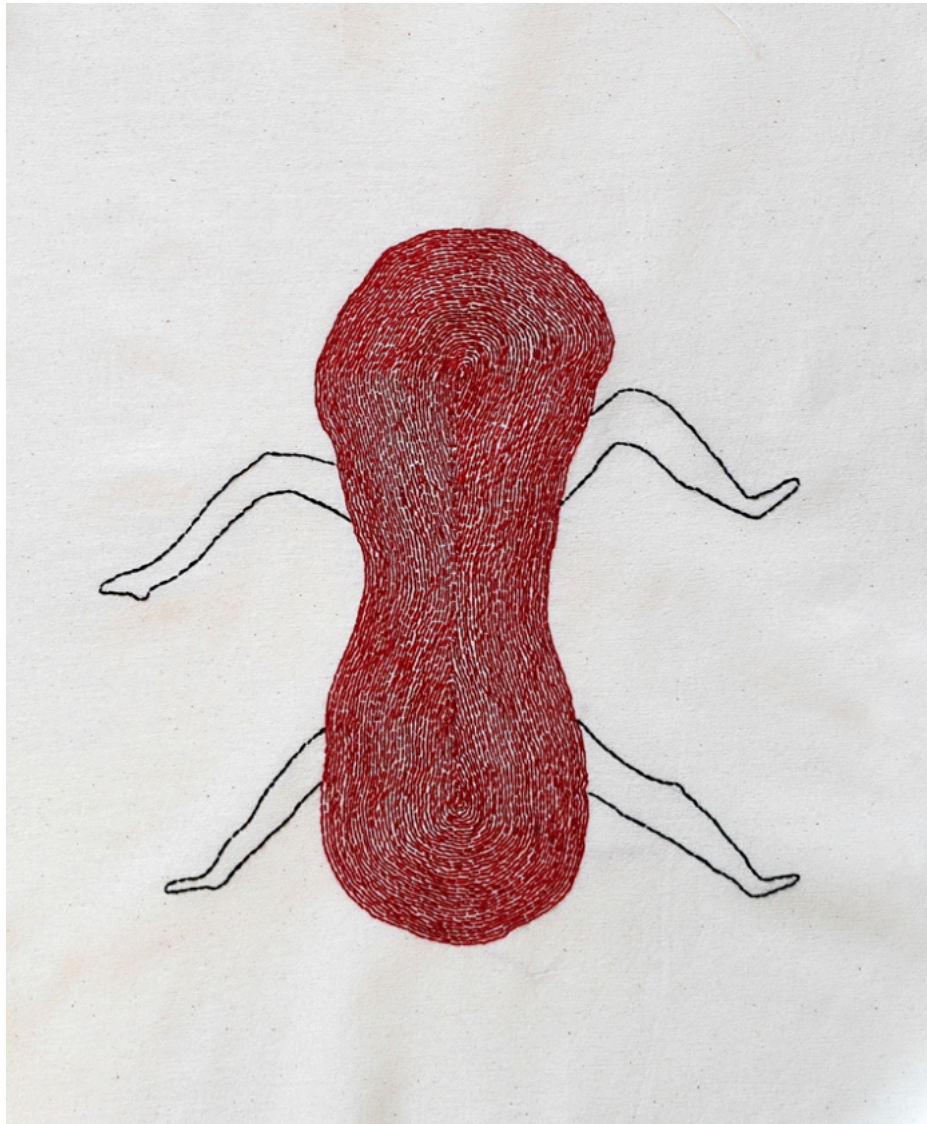
Carrying Out Your Weight, 2019

Hand-stitched embroidery on muslin fabric
45,7 × 45,7 cm



Elnaz Javani
Mainstay, 2018

Hand-stitched embroidery on muslin fabric
33 x 58.4 cm



Elnaz Javani

Two-way Resistance, 2019

Hand-stitched embroidery on muslin fabric
45.7 x 55.9 cm



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