

Rachel Khedoori

By Kelly Nosari

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Artist Rachel Khedoori explores encounters with space and their psychological implications. According to the Venice Biennale's *Making Worlds* catalog, Khedoori's art practice 'invites viewers to see hidden or forgotten spaces' – spaces that are 'generated by the limits of memory'. In *Cave Model*, presented at that show, Khedoori referenced Plato's Cave Myth and cited it as a source of inspiration. Yet her art practice deviates from this allegory by not seeking to escape 'the cave' and thereby gain philosophical clarity. Instead, Khedoori directs us towards the untenable shadows that more often define the human condition.



Untitled (Iraq Book Project) 2008-2010. Installation view, Hauser & Wirth London, 2010.
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Khedoori experiments with ambiguous spaces through a diverse practice that includes installation, sculpture and film. The artist's current solo exhibition of new and recent work at Hauser & Wirth in London is remarkable for the artist's foray into documentation. *The Iraq Book Project*, an ongoing documentary piece, was first shown at The Box in Los Angeles in 2009. It is comprised of online news articles dating to the start of the Iraq War – 18 March 2003. Sourced from around the world, the articles are retrieved using the search terms 'Iraq', 'Iraqi' or 'Baghdad'. They are then translated into English, compiled and presented in a series of large books arranged chronologically. The articles are printed in a uniform, seamless manner and each is demarcated by title, date and source. These large books are arranged in the main gallery space at Hauser & Wirth on tables along with stools for gallery visitors to interact with the work. Khedoori's *Iraq Book Project* is an on-going effort that is updated continuously. Its conclusion will depend upon the length of the war.

Khedoori is certainly not alone in responding to the Iraq War, but has typically eschewed such content in her work. While *The Iraq Book Project* is somewhat of a departure, it can also be viewed as a repositioning of Khedoori's engagement with space. In this work, Khedoori locates information within the digital realm and extracts it. This process allows viewers to explore the changing face of and attitudes towards the war. It also stores information as a part of our collective memory that would otherwise be dispersed and largely be forgotten. Khedoori preserves war coverage and places it within the physical world. She chooses book form, which is a lasting and traditional mode of recording and passing on knowledge.



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A film installation and a photographic series are found upstairs in the American Room of the gallery. Film is an important medium for the artist, who has returned to it throughout her career. The photographic series is set in a natural Australian landscape at 5.00 am, while the film is set 12 hours later at 5.00 pm. For the film installation, Khedoori returns to the device of the mirror to manipulate the moving image. The film is projected onto a screen that meets a mirror at a 90 degree angle – causing the looped footage to appear to continually separate from itself as it plays. The Hauser & Wirth gallery points out that the affect is much like a Rorschach ink blot test. Yet, in this instance it is set in landscape and in motion. This work allows the gallery visitor to encounter ambiguous, psychologically-tinged space.

Rachel Khedoori's work has shown internationally since the mid-1990s. In 2001, the artist's high-profile solo exhibition at Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland brought her work increased international attention. Subsequently, Khedoori has taken part in several noteworthy group exhibitions. In 2008, the artist was included in the traveling exhibition *Visual Tactics or how pictures emerge*, which opened at Museum für Gegenwartskunst in Seigen, Germany. Khedoori's work received a lot of attention in 2009 when she took part in the Venice Biennale's *Fare Mondi/Making Worlds* exhibition and Paul McCarthy's *Low Life Slow Life: Part 2* at the CCA Wattis Institute in San Francisco.

Born in Sydney, Australia, Rachel Khedoori is the identical twin sister of fellow artist Toba Khedoori. She currently lives and works in Los Angeles CA and is represented by Hauser & Wirth and David Zwirner in New York. Khedoori received her BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute in 1988 and her MFA from the University of California in Los Angeles in 1994.



Untitled, 2010 (Film, 3:33 minutes). Installation view, Hauser & Wirth London, 2010.© Rachel Khedoori. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth. Photo: Peter Mallet.