

KATAYOUN AMJADI

S WORD AND LETTER TO BABA



JAN. 26 - FEB. 26

**ALICE R. ROGERS AND TARGET GALLERIES
SAINT JOHN'S ART CENTER, SJU**

Virtual Artist Talk/Q&A: January 28, 6 p.m.

S WORD and LETTER TO BABA are companion works which probe the power and efficacy of words and guns in a world consigned to both. S WORD draws from our deep history with the written word and tools of war and presents both as weaponized figures on paper scrolls. LETTER TO BABA is a video work seen as both documentary and diary, at once profoundly personal, yet speaking to universal truth and fear.

S WORD

In the beginning was word and sword, one begetting the other.

In opposition they appear as in a duel, but as equals on the scroll they are co-conspirators in conflict and resolution, and conflict again, bearing witness one to the other. Fearful weapons borne by warriors of hope, scrolls of law and banners of war, unfurling, time and again. Blood and ink spill to the same ground. Yet with the scroll there is no page to turn, no past to move beyond. What gets recorded, reminded, and what fades away into shadows and scars, becomes the ghost of the future. Can we learn to linger in the space between the bleed lines, or breathe life into the rift and wreckage left behind and waiting ahead?

LETTER TO BABA

In this beginning is a word, daughter to father. "Baba?" It is a simple inquiry, a request for presence and assurance in troubled times. Nothing is written. There is no paper, no pen, nor gun nor sword, just a word, spoken plainly, if not plaintively, of one seeking wisdom and insight from the past in order to illuminate what is now, in full measure, the nearness to war. The tender voice tinged with curiosity, fear and resignation, probes histories, close at hand and universal, for shards of truth in a world fractured and tilted badly off axis.

CONNECT

TOPICS AND THEMES THIS EXHIBITION ENGAGES WITH:

- Print Making
- Digital Art
- Peace Studies
- Linguistics
- Political Science
- History
- Sociology
- Religious Studies

ARTIST WEBSITE

[Katayoun Amjadi](#)

QUESTIONS

S WORD and LETTER TO BABA are companion works which probe the power and efficacy of words and guns in a world consigned to both.

- What connections did you draw between S WORD and LETTER TO BABA?
- Which imagery resonates with you from these works?
- How do these pieces make you feel?
- What questions does this work raise for you?

Amjadi's art attempts to understand the relationship between past and present, tradition and modernity, and individual versus collective identity, as well as to spur discussion about our understanding of time and the tangled roots of our histories.

- How do you see these relationships in the exhibit?
- In your studies, do you approach these questions? If so, in what ways?
- How are we asking these questions on campus?

When reflecting on her experience with her SJU residency, Amjadi states: "One of the things I found so inspiring when I was at St John's for my 2020 residency was the relationship between the Abbey and the library. One is truly a magnificent work of religious architecture while the other houses a phenomenal collection of text, scrolls, artifacts and history. Their proximity and essential relation of one to the other provided the impetus for the work I did during my residency that sought to question the age-old tension between the word and the sword."

- Where do you see this reflected in the exhibit? In what ways?
- Have you felt this relationship reflected in your experience at CSBSJU? If so, how?
- How do your surroundings and your location impact your work? Did your opinion on this change with the impact of the pandemic?