



## Peabody Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology

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### **Azadeh Akhlaghi Named**

### **2019 Robert Gardner Fellow in Photography**

**(June 4, 2019, Cambridge)** The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, is pleased to announce the selection of the 2019 Robert Gardner Fellow in Photography. Following an international search, the Gardner Fellowship committee awarded the Fellowship to Iranian photographer **Azadeh Akhlaghi**. The Fellowship carries a \$50,000 stipend to begin or complete a proposed project followed by the publication of a book.

Akhlaghi is an Iranian photographer and filmmaker working with conceptual and staged photography to examine events in the history of Iran. Her previous work *By an Eyewitness* examined a series of deaths of prominent figures in Iran— including poets, writers, politicians, activists, and students—leading to the Islamic revolution of 1979; events that were never photographed. In a heavily researched body of work, Akhlaghi creates large scale (huge didn't sound quite right) montages that restage these key moments in a fusion of obvious fiction and performative realism. As anthropologist and art historian Christopher Pinney notes, "she deploys photography to illuminate key questions concerning national and personal histories, visual memory and evidence, and ultimately the manner in which humans construct their histories."



On 7 December 1953, at the Faculty of Engineering, Tehran University, three students – Azar Shariat Razavi, Ahmad Ghandchi, Mostafa Bozorgnia—were murdered by police. From *By an Eyewitness*. Photo by Azadeh Akhlaghi.

For the fellowship year, Akhlaghi will be working on the post-production of 15 new images along with documentation and research for *The Vicious Circle* (working title), a project that focuses on 11 incidents from the period of the Constitutional Revolution of 1908 to the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The result will be a manuscript for a book that will combine the 15 new photo event stagings with archival photographs, documents, and witness interviews.

Azadeh Akhlaghi was born in Shiraz (1978) and grew up in Mashhad, Iran. She graduated from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in the field of computer science. Since 2000 her passion, however, has been photography. After leaving Australia she resettled in Iran and worked as assistant director with the acclaimed Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami between 2005 and 2008. She also made several short films that were screened at film festivals in Oslo, Pusan, and Berkeley Art Museum. In 2009 her interest shifted to staged photography. Azadeh was a Sovereign Arts Prize Finalist in 2016, and was a recipient of the prize from the UN-Habitat Photography Competition 2009, London. Azadeh has participated in numerous art exhibitions and biennales such as the Contemporary Photography Museum, Chicago; Somerset School of Art in London; the Paris Photo,

Shanghai and Seoul Biennials; Photo London; the Contemporary Museum of Art, Tehran; and the Ulrich Museum, Wichita, Kansas

### **About the Robert Gardner Fellowship in Photography**

The Fellowship funds an “established practitioner of the photographic arts to create and subsequently publish through the Peabody Museum a major book of photographs on the human condition anywhere in the world.” The Fellowship committee invites nominations from experts around the world; nominees are reviewed and selected by a committee of four. The Fellowship provides a stipend of \$50,000 and is unique in its dedication to funding professional documentary photography.

The Fellowship was given by Robert Gardner, award-winning documentary filmmaker and author, whose works have entered the permanent canon of non-fiction filmmaking. Gardner’s works include the documentary films “Dead Birds” and “Forest of Bliss” and books *The Impulse to Preserve: Reflections of a Filmmaker* and *Making Dead Birds: Chronicle of a Film*. In the 1970s Gardner produced and hosted “Screening Room,” a series of more than one hundred 90-minute programs on independent and experimental filmmaking. The series, considered an invaluable historical record of modern cinema, has been transferred to digital format for archival preservation by The Paley Center for Media in New York City. Robert Gardner received Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from Harvard University and was director of the Film Study Center from 1957 to 1997. He was also founder and long-time director of the Carpenter Center for Visual Arts and taught Visual Arts at Harvard for almost 40 years. Gardner was a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. His most recent book, *Just Representations* (Peabody Museum Press and Studio7Arts, 2010), is a collection of his short prose pieces about film and anthropology. In April 2013, Robert Gardner was awarded the James Smithson Bicentennial Medal by the Smithsonian Institution. He passed away in 2014.

## **Robert Gardner Fellowship Recipients**

**2007 Guy Tillim** (South Africa). Tillim's Fellowship took him to five African countries to document grand colonial architecture and how it has become part of a contemporary African stage. An exhibition of his Fellowship work, *Avenue Patrice Lumumba*, was shown at the Peabody Museum in 2009, and was published in *Avenue Patrice Lumumba* (Peabody Museum Press and Prestel, 2009).

**2008 Dayanita Singh** (India). Singh's Fellowship work began as a visual diary and later evolved into "photographic fiction." Her Fellowship work was shown in the 2011 Peabody Museum exhibition *House of Love* and was published in a book of the same name by Peabody Museum Press and Radius Books.

**2009 Alessandra Sanguinetti** (USA/Argentina). Sanguinetti continued a multi-year profile of two girls living in rural Argentina and their wider social networks for a project called, "The Life That Came."

**2010 Stephen Dupont** (Australia). Dupont created a study of cultural erosion as well as a celebration of Melanesian people in *Stephen Dupont: Papua New Guinea Portraits and Diaries*. A companion two-volume publication, *Piksa Niugini*, was published by Peabody Museum Press and Radius Books, 2013.

**2011 Miki Kratsman** (Israel). Kratsman continued a project begun years ago to create a portfolio of photographs that explore how the medium of photography can be used to turn an ordinary moment in a person's life into a suspect one. Kratsman presents Palestinians as targets as though viewed from the perspective of a soldier; as *shahids* or martyrs as portrayed on neighborhood posters or placards; and as "wanted men." His volume, *The Resolution of the Suspect* (Peabody Museum Press and Radius Books), was published in 2016.

**2013 Yto Barrada** (Morocco/France) Barrada is working on "A Hole is to Dig," which engages the complex terrain of paleontology in her native Morocco. Barrada is exploring the topic from multiple human perspectives: from scientists, museums, and cultural heritage professionals, to those who collect fossils, and those who plunder and forge them.

**2014 Chloe Dewe Mathews** (United Kingdom) continued her work documenting the lives of people who live on the shores of the Caspian, examining their relationship to the

resource-rich but volatile lands on either side of the sea. Her resulting book *Caspian: The Elements* (Peabody Museum Press and Aperture) was published in September 2018, and the [exhibition](#) is on view at the Peabody Museum through March 30, 2020.

**2015 Deborah Luster** (United States) continues her investigation of violence, place, and prison, with a focus on Angola Prison. The site of the prison has been witness to slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, Black Codes, convict leasing, Jim Crow, the Trustee System, segregation, and mass incarceration.

**2016 Ilana Boltvinik and Rodrigo Viñas of TRES Art Collective** (Mexico) is developing the second phase of their project *Ubiquitous Trash*, a beach-waste, art-based, research series, which began in Hong Kong in 2015 and has expanded to Western Australian beaches. The project draws on the disciplines of biology, archaeology, economics, and anthropology to create a complex understanding of the material waste in public spaces.

**2017 Sammy Balogi** (Congo) is focusing on the Gendarmes Katangais, a rebel resistance group from the copper-rich Katanga province of DRC. The Katangese Gendarmes have influenced political landscapes in Central Africa since the Cold War and are likely to continue to do so.

**2018 Zhang Xiao** (China) returns during his Fellowship year to Shanxi, where he examines the annual spring festival (*shehuo*), focusing on the shift from the festival's traditional meanings and props to kitschy entertainment and consumption.

## **About the Peabody Museum**

The Peabody Museum is among the oldest archaeological and ethnographic museums in the world with one of the finest collections of human cultural history found anywhere. It is home to superb materials from Africa, ancient Europe, North America, Mesoamerica, Oceania, and South America in particular. In addition to its archaeological and ethnographic holdings, the Museum's photographic archives, one of the largest of its kind, hold more than 500,000 historical photographs, dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the present and chronicling anthropology, archaeology, and world culture.

**Location:** The Peabody Museum is located at 11 Divinity Avenue in Cambridge. The Museum is a short walk from the Harvard Square MBTA station. **Hours:** 9 A.M. to 5 P.M., seven days a week. The Museum is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. **Admission** is \$15 for adults, \$13 for seniors, \$10 for children ages 3–18 and for students with non-Harvard ID; free for children under age 3. The Museum is free to Massachusetts residents Sundays, 9 A.M. to noon, year-round, and Wednesdays from 3 P.M. to 5 P.M. (September to May). Admission includes entry to the Harvard Museum of Natural History. For more information call 617-496-1027 or go online to: [www.peabody.harvard.edu](http://www.peabody.harvard.edu).

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