

Saksumdal Tempel

«Tamam Shod»
Fatemeh Ekhtesari

07.05 - 04.06.2022

«Tamam Shod» by poet Fatemeh Ekhtesari comprises two recently produced wooden sign-works displayed in separate locations: Saksumdal Tempel and Lillehammer library. The exhibition examines the relationship between written and visual language, and the institutional frameworks constituting its use. Both works will be on display throughout Sigrid Undset-dagene / Norsk litteraturfestival.

1:

Installed at Saksumdal Tempel's premises—a worn-down former domestic building, situated in the rural outskirts of Lillehammer - «Tamam Shod» is an embossed wooden relief sign, mimicking decorative wall plaques, common in Iranian households. Its title, the phrase «Tamam Shod», is a so-called *Penglish* (Persian-English) translation of «تمام شد» meaning «(something) finished». The sign might read as laconically declaring a 'dead end' for potential visitors of the otherwise empty and remote exhibition space. However, by contradicting the forthright positivity of the ordinary wall-plaque, which usually recites parts of poems (or Quranic verses) of hope and inspiration for its residents, this somewhat dark statement suggests a possible resistance to domestication and traditional expectations of poetic statements. Hereby the exhibition invokes the methods of the so called *Postmodern Ghazal* literary movement which serves as the basis for Ekhtesari's poetry work, known to challenge the traditional Persian Ghazal prose by skewing its formal and ideological restrictions.

2:

In collaboration with Litteraturhus Lillehammer a sign reading «عکسبرداری ممنوع» (photography forbidden) is mounted in connection to Leseriet, a study room for poetry at Lillehammer library. By blurring the line between practical information / behavioral control, decor and poetry, the work creates an enigmatic confusion which is underlined by its insertion of foreign language in a Norwegian public space.

«عکسبرداری ممنوع» originates from informational signs in Iranian Islamic holy shrines—public spaces for religious sanctity typically decorated with textual ornaments; merging decoration with religious recitations honoring its buried Imam. As in art museums, libraries and alike, the informational sign is a paradoxical entity within the aesthetic regime of the religious temple. On one hand it is installed to prevent possible tourist interruption of its congregation's contemplative state. On the other, by being trivial in its function it risks becoming this exact eruption by leading its spectator's mind onto practical concerns. In some cases, the pragmatic solution to this dilemma is to craft the sign decoratively to fit the overall interior, making it a semi-camouflaged reminder of a house rule that is then both written and unwritten. Akin to similar signs like the "قبله"—pointing the direction to the Kaaba, the photography ban sign may unintentionally visualize the interrelation between religious devotion, intellectual contemplation and crowd control.

Fatemeh Ekhtesari (b.1986, Iran) is a poet, editor and social activist. She has published eight books in Persian and one bilingual poetry collection in Persian and Norwegian: «Vi overlever ikke» (Transfer, 2020). Upcoming books are «Hun er ikke kvinne» (Aschehoug, 2022) and «Ebi» (Lulu, 2022). Ekhtesari is also chief editor of the «Iranian Independent Literature Magazine», recently published on the topic of translation.

Opening hours Lillehammer library: Mon.-Thur.: 10-18h, Fri.: 10-18h, Sat.: 11-15h
Opening hours Saksumdal Tempel: Open all days by appointment, 0047-40852545
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