











Masih Samimi

What catches the eye going through the works of Masih Samimi, Tehran-based artist and writer, is his massive collection of self-portraits, varying, in terms of medium, from images and paintings to temporary drawings in the sink of his bathroom with the trimmed pieces of his beard.

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I'm an artist who works at home, and thus, even before the corona crisis, I had been living in a self-inflicted quarantine for years, taking refuge in my isolation, from this city and its people. I always thought that that was being quarantined against the forces that tried to take me and my body back under the control of the norms of the docile city-citizen logic. During the crisis though, I started to realize the hidden forces of this double isolation, powerful and deforming forces which turn the home-studio into a solitary cell and together with the feelings of monotony and futility of this period, inflict me with serious mental pressures. I studied me and my body and realized how these forces, from the inside, lead to anxiety and a desire to be freed, and from the outside, to the disruption of my body's functions (nausea, insomnia, abnormal sexual arousal).

These forces were like a death knell for me, and re-reading my body was actually re-introducing me to the concept of death. Death as the ultimate release of the body, and as the body's attempt to free itself of itself, a study of death with apertures and mirrors.

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