



Title	<i>Mirror of my Heart</i> 2025, Edition 3/5, printed 2026
Gallery	Self-represented
Date of purchase	8/5/26
Buying Committee	Sarah George, Fiona Hardie, Wendy Kozica
Dimensions	91 x 61 cm
Medium	Still photograph. Archival pigment print on Hahnemuhle Photo Rag Baryta 315gms. Frame: Vic Ash Charcoal Gallery Profile/Drymount to KAPA/ArtGlass AR70 (Arten Fine Art Framing)

### CONTENT/SUBJECT/AESTHETIC QUALITIES

Sofi Basseghi is a Naarm-based visual artist and researcher, of Iranian/European heritage. Her multidisciplinary and collaborative practice examines contested histories within political and poetic landscapes, drawing on Persian poetry, mythology, and folklore to explore suppressed narratives, voices and experiences, particularly those of women.

Sofi has a Masters of Fine Arts and a PhD (Art) from RMIT, and is currently a lecturer there. She was a Board member of West Space from 2018-2022. Sofi has been the recipient of numerous grants, scholarships and fellowships. Her work has been exhibited at film festivals, museums and galleries nationally and internationally and is held in private and public collections.

Sofi was born in Iran in 1984 and emigrated with her parents (her father is an architect, her mother an educator) to Melbourne in 1998. She lives in Brunswick with her architect husband and two children.

This photograph is taken in a place close to the artists' heart, on ancestral land near Tehran, Iran. To her it is a place of peace and solitude, in a country that she says is now 'ruled by demons'. It is also currently at war, and suffering from drought and water shortages. The river in the photograph, that she used to play in, is no longer flowing.

The title of the work is drawn from a poem by a 13<sup>th</sup> century Persian poet known as *The Woman from Esfahan*. Through her longing for her lover, the poet arrives at self recognition, mirroring the ongoing search for identity felt by Iranians today.

In Sofi's words, "I too long for the flowing crystal clear waters of the Karag River cascading from the Alborz Mountains to once again nourish this land. I long for the darkness that has veiled this country to be lifted, and to return to this place when it is finally free from the grip of the tyranny that has left the land thirsty and starved its beings of joy. And yet, a faint glimmer of hope still flickers, for freedom, carried through the smoke that clouds the hearts of people."

### CONTEXT/TECHNIQUE

This photograph was taken while filming a video sequence for a work commissioned by the State Library of Victoria, which was part of a group show in 25/26 – Encounters with Misinformation. Sofi's was a multi-media work (entitled Seven Portraits Unbound) including manuscripts from the Library (on which the work was based), video and stills. The work was based around a 13<sup>th</sup> century poem that referenced seven pavilions for seven wives. Sofi's work linked a different poet to each pavilion with a different colour, day of the week and planet. She filmed and photographed a woman in each landscape/colour, wearing the colour, representing the meaning of the poem.

Mirror of my Heart honours and resurrects a woman poet; it represents the yellow pavilion, the sun, and Sunday. The face of the woman is reflective gold, she is surrounded by smoke, gold light shines through the trees and leaves. It reflects her search for identity and self realisation.

### **COLLECTION STATEMENT**

We came upon Sofi's work in an art auction at Substation, Newport. While Sofi receives commissions and appears in both solo and group exhibitions, she is not currently represented by a gallery – the scale and nature of her installations is perhaps more easily placed in institutions rather than private collections. For this reason we took care and time to select a work that is suitable for domestic settings.

Sofi's work is full of heart and purpose. It is feminist and political. It speaks of migration and estrangement from her place of birth, which continues to suffer at the hands of both its own government, as well as foreign forces. It also speaks of an enduring connection to her place of birth. With these characteristics Sofi's work is an ideal addition to our collection, adding to the diversity of voices and stories in it, reflecting the multiculturalism of Australia today.