



ART

## BEHIND-THE-SCENES: DEMOLISHING BUILDINGS, BUYING WASTE

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Visual artist Nazgol Ansarinia speaks to us about her exhibition, *Demolishing buildings, buying waste*, ahead of its opening on 19 March.

"While at the first look, Tehran might look like a city that is in the process of building built, just the same amount of demolition and descruption is happening," says Nazgol Ansarinia. For her second solo exhibition at Green Art Gallery, Ansarinia explores the changing face of Tehran, where buildings, along with the memories they carry, are taken down and replaced with slightly taller apartment complexes. Progress, it seems, it not without ruination.

The title of the show, *Demolishing buildings, buying waste*, comes from spray-painted advertisements on the walls of low-rise buildings in Tehran. As Ansarinia describes them, these are created by businesses whose whole operation is to knock down buildings and retrieve valuable materials, including pipes or metal structures. Building owners get these demolition services for free, or sometimes receive a sum of money, depending on the price of the recovered materials.

Ansarinia's exhibition consists for four works of differing mediums: a major installation of ceramic bricks titled *The Mechanisms of Growth*, which explores the process of "turning rubble into repeatable construction units". There are also two videos, *Fragment 1* and *Fragment 2*. Ansarinia says, it is "a document of a demolition of a building, which I was present at its site from day one to day 16, where the building went from a perfectly liveable space into piles of rubble."

"The drawings are based on the building whose demolition I witnessed. I redrew it in a 3D program and then simulated the demolition again, so the rubble also comes from the simulation of the breaking of building material," she says. "There is no actual physical breaking from the pieces that you will see in the large installation."

Inside the gallery, the rubble has been arranged on the floor, laid on platforms that also appear as shards or fragments. They appear scattered and cohesive at the same time.

*Demolishing buildings, buying waste* is part of Ansarinia's documentation of the changes in Tehran's architecture and infrastructure, and what that means for people's daily lives. "I've been practicing as a visual artist for the past 14 years, and I moved back to Tehran 14 years ago," Ansarinia says. "I have many projects that are about the city, and in a way, from 14 years ago until now... the city has been changing. So you can that in a non-objective way,

I have been documenting these changes... The practice and the city have been changing side by side."

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***Demolishing buildings, buying waste* opens at Green Art Gallery on Galleries Night, 19 March, during Art Week at Alserkal Avenue.**

Video credits: Clip of *Fragment 1* by Nazgol Ansarinia. Part of *Demolishing buildings, buying waste*.

Courtesy of the artist and Green Art Gallery.

