

Akel, Joseph, "Amir Nikravan: Internal," in *Amir Nikravan: Internal*, (Los Angeles: Workspace editions, 2011), page 1 of 2.

*For outness is but the feeling of otherness (alterity)
rendered intuitive, or alterity visually represented.*

- Coleridge

It is fitting that Amir Nikravan would chose to title a body of work *Internal* when it is, in fact, so consciously eruptive of boundaries. Fitting, perhaps, because it points to a larger conceptual program at work within Nikravan's compositions, one that seeks to unsettle fundamental notions of process and reception. To be sure, Nikravan is playing with us, drawing upon a nebulous web of entrenched assumptions between aesthetic presentation and expectation as a means by which to irrupt existing notions of efficacy and certitude - creative, metaphysical or otherwise.

There is a dynamic mutability and liminality throughout the *Bruise* and *Screen Painting* series that together join to form *Internal*. When viewed as a whole, they resist the ready unification of concept and production so easily imposed through our desire for appellation. It is this resistance to the association of effect with cause that most directly invests Nikravan's works with a collective alterity.

Thus, to adduce the photographic in works that feature no verifiable aspect of their mechanical epithet raises questions not only of this epithet, but also the constellation of expectations that demarcate its boundaries. Inscribing the photographic eidolon within the mounted, marred sheets of muslin that comprise his *Bruise* series, Nikravan evinces a semblance of reproduction while simultaneously implicating our complicity in ascribing an aesthetic corollary. Whether or not the works are photographically produced is perhaps beside the point. The desire here is not to reproduce for its effect, but rather to affect a sense of reproduction that undermines our understanding of its process.

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And, if the *Bruise* series' success lie in the degree by which it obfuscates process with effect, Nikravan's *Screen Paintings* do so through their gradually abstracted transparency. In the large perforated screens writ in pale, neutral tones marked out by geometric forms, Nikravan's compositions destabilize a traditional binary of apprehension between object and subject. With the varying opacity of applied paint, the beholder's gaze is able to penetrate the pixilated screens to the wall beneath. Through this variegated transparency, the compositions exist both as planar surfaces opening onto an Albertian metaphysical plane, while simultaneously accessing the very corporeal structures that enframe it (the wall, gallery, etc.). Out of this dual apprehension, first of the planar surface, then of its physical surroundings, the *Screen Paintings* disclose a world in which the composition, and the beholder, exist in concomitant unity, isolated and indistinct.

Importantly, as with both the *Bruise* and *Screen Painting* series, what is expected withdraws at the insistence of what is presented. Within this space, the remove between the two, we find a potential for revelation. And this is important: in the punctured and petrified diaphanous textiles of Nikravan's *Internal* series, what lies behind is found to be internal and in the realization of such, the veil that occludes the external is rent.

- Joseph Akel, 2011