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Worpswede: Anahita Razmi addresses women's roles in art

In Worpswede, Anahita Razmi is currently creating art for an exhibition dedicated to Paula Modersohn-Becker. Her work connects cultural identities with the role of women. What exactly is she planning?

By Dennis Glock

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While it rains or snows outside every now and then, Anahita Razmi has made herself comfortable in her studio in the Worpswede artists' houses. As much as she enjoys looking at the landscapes shrouded in fog, her eyes always automatically wander to the laptop. The German-Iranian artist is currently in the middle of her creative phase and is completely focused.

At the center of her work is a special project: In cooperation with the Worpswede Museum Association and the artists' houses, she is working on the painter Paula Modersohn-Becker, who was born 150 years ago next year. The works of art created during Razmi's stay in Worpswede will then be part of the exhibition "Paula Modersohn-Becker and her companions. The indivisible sky", which starts in the Worpswede museums at the end of June.

Worpswede is by no means new territory for Anahita Razmi. The Hamburg-born artist is very familiar with the myths and stories of the artist location. She is also familiar with Paula Modersohn-Becker. "If you grew up not far from here, as an artist you naturally deal with such a special place as Worpswede," she says and adds: "Paula Modersohn-Becker was a super exciting personality."

Other artists would also have liked the three-month scholarship in Worpswede. According to Philine Griem, artistic director of the Worpswede artists' houses, over 130 artists applied for this project. At the end of an intensive selection process, Anahita Razmi was chosen. But why? "Paula Modersohn-Becker's art and life left a mark that continues to have an impact today. Anahita convinced us with her concept. She manages to discover the relevance of back then in today's world," says Philine Griem.

The artist, who currently lives in London, typically uses installations, audiovisual media, photographs, objects and performances for her artistic expression. Her main concerns are political and social issues. She always looks towards Iran. "The freedom and self-determination of women is close to my heart, especially in Iran, this is something that is fought for every day. What is happening there is exemplary for what is currently happening in many places around the world. Paula also fought for her art back then," says the artist. She has already received numerous awards for her innovative and critical examination of cultural identities and global discourses.

Razmi describes the three-month work phase in the artist houses that is now ending as successful. Even though there is still a lot to do before the exhibition starts in June, she is convinced of her approach. Against the background of Paula Modersohn-Becker's life and work, she examined the history of the women's movement in Iran, the current status of Iranian women's struggle for freedom and self-determination and the invisible protagonists of this movement. "Sure, with my Iranian background, it's important to me to make the things that happen there visible," says Razmi.