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Afroz Amighi "The Hidden State"

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Afroz Amighi, "The Hidden State," installation view

Afroz Amighi's "The Hidden State" brims with references to the customs, the beliefs, and the contemporary realities of the Middle East, realized with rare deference and delicacy. Iranian-born Amighi looks far afield, quoting motifs from Islamic artifice from as far west as Spain, drawing tent forms suggestive of the Syrian refugee camps now clustering on the Turkish border, and giving body to Sufic practice in the show's centerpiece, a trio of woven polyethylene curtains. Amighi's efforts exemplify those of a new generation of Near Eastern artists based in east and west alike who, even before the Arab Spring, have been reclaiming and reinterpreting the motifs and values of their cultures. They divest their subjects of exoticism but not of the exotic; rather, they harness the enduring allure of craft and language to today's concerns, cultivating a homegrown, and passionately felt, modernity. (Nicelle Beauchene, 21 Orchard St., NY; thru Dec. 23. www.nicellebeauchene.com)

- Peter Frank