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This Artist Created Beautiful Images From Photographs Destroyed by Harvey

When life gives you floods, make art on display starting August 4 at Vaughan Mason Fine Art.

By [Anna Lassman](#) • 8/2/2018 at 10:45am

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Avisheh Mohsenin, *Resurface- Excavation. 16*, Archival metal photo print, 2018.

IMAGE: [COURTESY OF ARTIST](#)

“IN LIGHT OF SOMETHING BAD, we can always find something good or make something good out of it,” says Avisheh Mohsenin, a local artist and economist who followed her own advice and created a new art collection from the remnants of her family artifacts disfigured by Hurricane Harvey.

Mohsenin was actually on vacation that last weekend in August, and it wasn’t until 10 days after the hurricane, once floodwaters receded, that construction crews axed down the door of her Tanglewood-area home to reveal drenched sheetrock and insulation. Picture frames and wall decor were flung across the floor, covered in mud. As crews took out piles of debris, Mohsenin quickly but carefully combed through her boxes of family photos and letters, many from relatives who are now dead.

In the new collection titled “Resurface”—making its debut at Vaughan Mason Fine Art on Saturday—Mohsenin documents the destruction and serendipitous creation found among her waterlogged family artifacts. The collection contains two parts: “Excavation” and “Reinterpretation.”



Avisheh Mohsenin, *Resurface- Excavation*. 27, Archival metal photo print, 2018.

IMAGE: [COURTESY OF ARTIST](#)

The “Excavation” portion features as-is aluminum prints of photos that endured the water and mud of the flooding. “There’s one image of my grandfather, where you can only see half his face, and the rest of the colors blend into what looks like fire,” she says. “It’s really random, but also really striking. I became immersed by the new imagery of it. The beauty that came out of these random works of chemicals and water and mud was a silver lining.”



Avisheh Mohsenin, *Tempo.Memoria .01*, Photo collage on canvas, 2018.

IMAGE: [COURTESY OF ARTIST](#)

In the “Reinterpretation” portion, Mohsenin, primarily a collage artist, did what she does best to combine pieces of old photos with pictures of her furniture and finishes from her reconstructed home.

“That was really the healing part of the process,” Mohsenin says. “This was fun, because it was positive. I was taking control over what I didn’t have control in.”

Proceeds from the show partially go toward the [Harvey Arts Recovery Fund](#), a collaborative effort of more than three dozens local arts organizations to support the community’s disaster recovery needs. Funds support artists who were already working on shoestring budgets—mainly individual artists and smaller arts and culture nonprofits—to help them rebuild and restore their livelihoods in the aftermath of lost studios, venues, and ticket sales.

“There will be a lot of thinking and reminiscing on the event,” Mohsenin says. “I was very keen on not making this self-centered or privileged work because so many people suffered. I wanted to make this a fundraiser. It’s a collective experience because Harvey had no boundaries in who was affected.”

The prices will be relatively accessible, with most pieces under \$1,000, and the show tells an uplifting story. “There are so many people that have such a sad, tragic, negative effects from what happened to them—she really became empowered by this,” says Heidi Vaughan, the gallery’s co-owner.

And of course, the exhibition roughly coincides with the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Harvey.

“For all of us, Avisheh’s images really tell a story of what happened,” Vaughan says. “It’s a beautiful way to commemorate this huge event that had an enormous impact on our city.”

Resurface. Aug. 4 through Sept. 1. Vaughan Mason Fine Art, 3510 Lake St. 832-875-6477. More info at vaughanmasonfineart.com.

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