

# Yasi Alipour



## Recommended by Phong H. Bui

Stemming from a profound sense of dislocation, an inherent desire in Yasi Alipour's work is her intense search for the synthesis of two seemingly opposite cultures, that of her native Iran, and that of New York, where she works and lives. Her discovery of folding as a geometric action provides her a pictorial opportunity to explore the history of sacred geometry and its relevance in our world. This unique process opens a new examination into the tactile materiality of paper. From the celestial to the earthbound, the spiritual to the material, the imaginary to the real, binaries coincide in Alipour's unique proscenium as ways to reinvent her new vision of mathematics, logic, the notion of counting, and the interrelatedness of energy among and between things. Her delicate balancing act has always existed in the minute differences of construction and destruction, stability and fragility, light and dark, and above all the emphasis on folding as her ultimate personal form of drawing and beyond.

*Phong H. Bui, Fall 2020*

## Bio

Yasi Alipour (Columbia University, MFA Visual Arts 2018) was born in Tehran, Iran, in 1989. She is an Iranian artist/writer/folder who currently lives in Brooklyn and wonders about paper, politics, and performance. She uses text and intricately folded pieces of paper to elucidate counternarratives about Iran. In her series "As Dreams Become History," Alipour asked friends living in the Iranian diaspora and born after the revolution to share second-hand memories of that decade shared by family and older siblings. These texts she paired with sheets of paper printed with black ink and then folded into geometric tessellations referencing Islamic geometric abstraction. Her research-based practice spans sculpture, installation, performance, drawing,

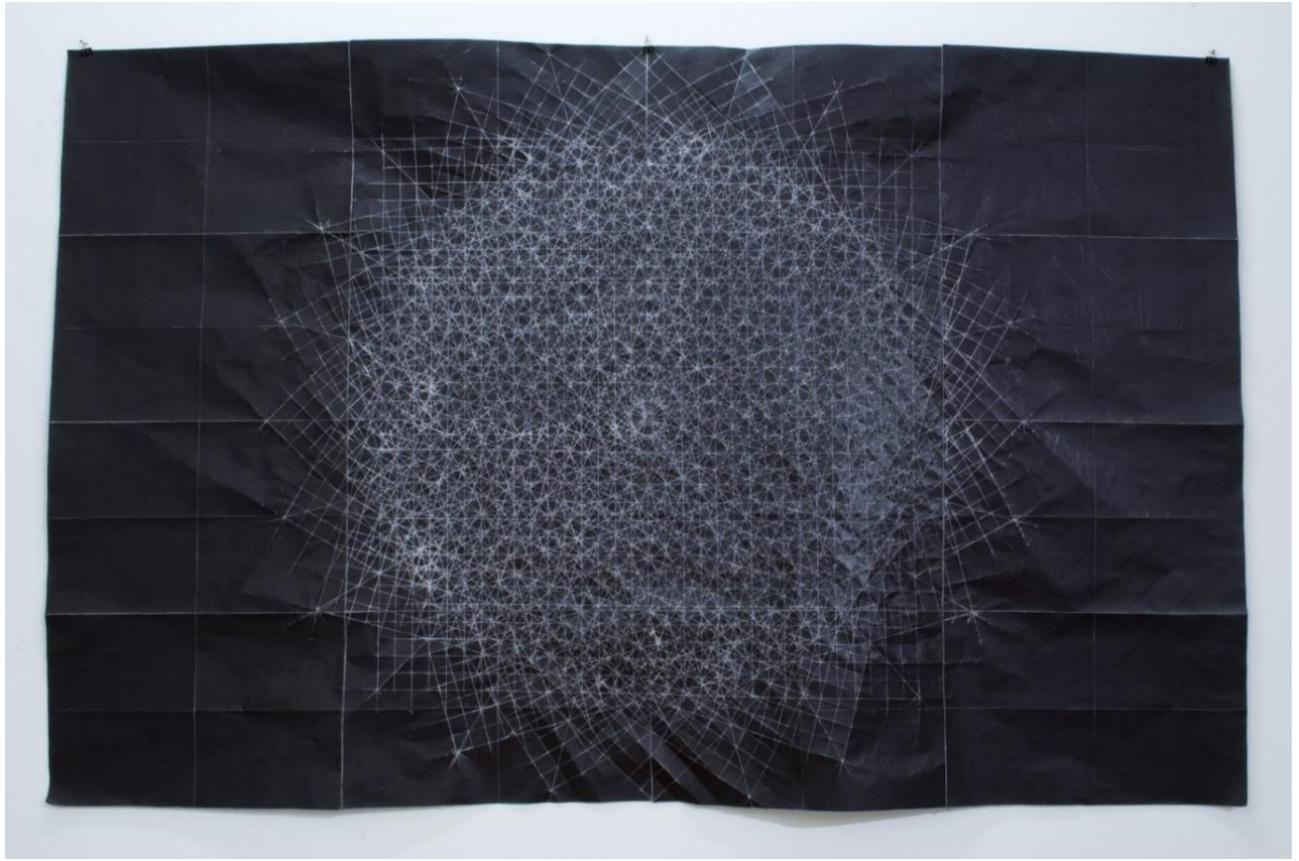
writing, lectures, and experimentation and probes personal history to parse issues around political instability and interrupted histories. Her artistic practice is founded on the lived experience of a Middle Eastern queer and a citizen of a politically unhinged era. Alipour teaches at Columbia University and SVA and is currently a resident at the Sharpe Walentas Studio program.

## **Artist Statement**

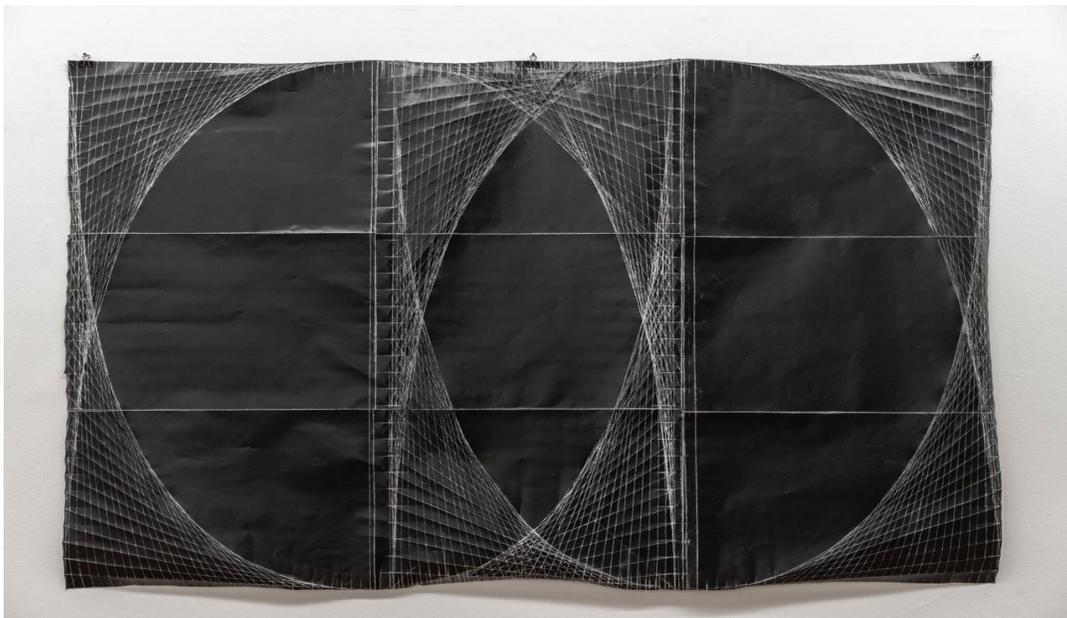
There is a small mathematical idea, the Liar's Paradox. A simple thought has been corrupting the system for centuries now. I first heard of it as I was finishing my thesis in Computer Science at the University of Tehran. It was 2009, the golden days of the Green Movement. We pursued our education in between protesting, canceling classes, boycotting, debating, worrying about friends in prison, and smoking way too many cigarettes. "This statement is a lie." As easy as that and logic crumbled all around us. My work starts there. Being locally censored and globally sanctioned is not a bitter joke. It's mundane life. "All I say are lies," and the whole system of binary logic crumbles. I make work to understand this common situation while refusing to conform to its corrupt logic.

In my visual practice, I spend hours and hours folding paper to meditate on three forms, each signifying a different perspective on the legacy of the Middle East's Abstract Geometry. What does it mean to long to speak the language of these forms, to have my body in conversation with them? My first inspiration comes from standing in one of the most iconic mosques of the Middle East, Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque, in Isfahan. For years now, I return to this moment. In my folds, there has been a constant and continuous attempt to understand, speak with, and make the patterns that cover the ceiling of such mosques. The second design is a take on the outsider perspective. Here I focus on a form I found one random day standing in New York's Irving Plaza, a page found in an American book dedicated to "Sacred Geometry." I recognized that I could "read" these forms since my hand could fold a black piece of paper and find this form again. The third and final recurring pattern is an ode to the longing for logic. Here I borrow from an algorithm for a mathematical drawing, one I encountered years ago in my middle school math book. That's where all my folding began. Now, so many years later, the three forms come together; folding is a gesture to make marks, to write, to destroy, to follow a logical structure until it has to face the failure of its material, paper.

These days I work on An Ode to Mapping, a series of visual studies that consider locality and displacement while wondering what it means to long to speak of a city and a history that functions by disguising itself.



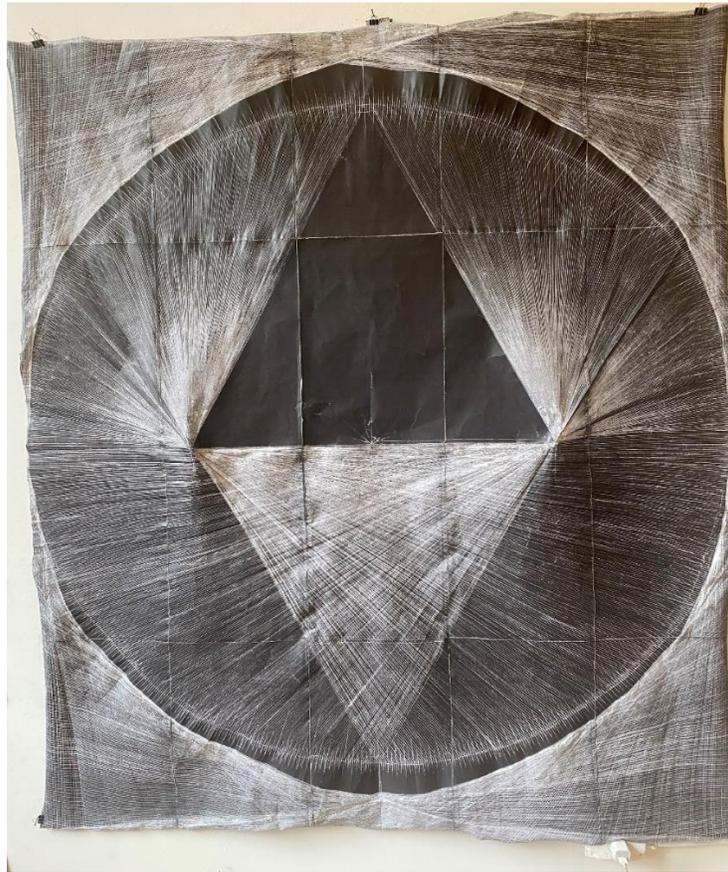
*Yasi Alipour 2019. As Dreams Became History. 64"x41" Fold, Pigmented Paper*



*Yasi Alipour 2019. Untitled, To Fakhri Garakani. Fold, Pigmented Paper 48"x31"*



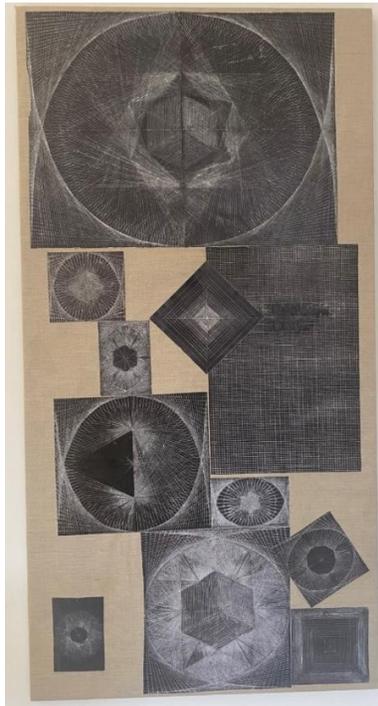
*Yasi Alipour 2020. Untitled Cyanotype. 25"x40" Fold, Cyanotype.*



*Yasi Alipour 2020, Untitled 55"x66" Hand Fold, Pigmented Paper*



*Yasi Alipour 2019 (left). Untitled 20.5"x32"; 2020 (right), An Ode to Mapping 22" x34" Fold, Pigmented Paper*



*Yasi Alipour 2020. Untitled 40"x60" Fold, Pigmented Paper, Mounted on Board*