

TEA

TIME

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Before leaving home in Iran, I was studying Master of Architecture in University of Tehran. My thesis was about memories, immigrants and things they take with them, spaces they leave behind, melancholia for the lost objects, and the places they carry within themselves. There was specifically one question fluid in my mind; "If you have to leave home one day with a one-way ticket, what would you take with you?"

Personally answering, I thought about books, old photo albums, paintings, diaries, notebooks, cloths for sure, Oh! the green one, my niece's first drawings, dad's letters, jewelry, the old camera, lenses...

Since I can remember, days at home started with my mother looking for something and accidently dropping another thing and waking everyone up. She was always awake before anyone. First thing she would do before even washing her face, was to turn on the *Samavar*. *Samavar* is double size of a regular kettle with two handles and a flat surface on top for a tea pot. You can serve tea to more than twenty people with it. At that time, I couldn't understand why we don't have one of the small electric kettles which were nicer and faster.

I was an early morning kid, and day for me, would start by opening my eyes, washing my face in the washroom close to my room, and walking towards the kitchen while hearing the radio broadcasting old music. At home, the kitchen had a door with windows to the mountains; perhaps that was the main reason we got this house. I'd walk in, she was sitting with a glass-cup of tea, looking at the mountains from the window, *Samavar* was on, and so was the music. She'd turn around and ask: "tea?".

Tea was not on the list. When the time came up for me to leave home and fly 10,544 km away with a one-way ticket to Vancouver, I almost forgot about the list I had before. I started packing my life in two luggage and my mother would add stuff along way. She was a determined woman and it was hard to convince her that I might not need to take my pillow with me from Iran or that I can find dry vegetables in Vancouver too. She believed in home and the power of things that are attached to it, so she was trying her best to make me feel at home by giving me the most important pieces.

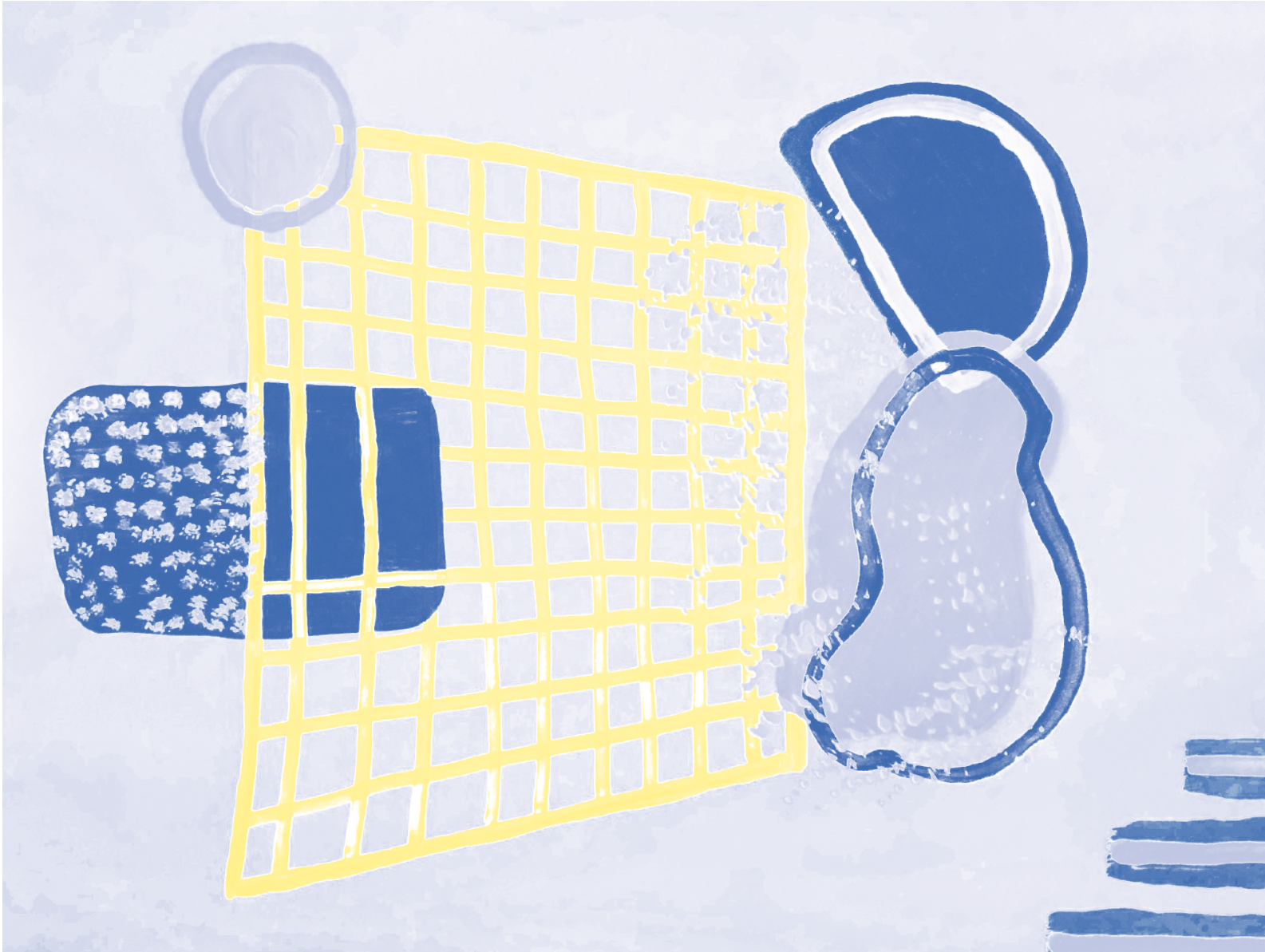
It took me a few months to fully unpack and find the tea collection she had put in there. Each in a small package with a hand-written recipe on a paper taped over.

"Golgavzaboon.

Dearest, brew this tea for yourself whenever you feel alone, separated, or segregated. It is black. Brew it for five minutes and then add a spoon of lime juice and see how the color changes from black to a beautiful purple. . . Things change. Always have a drop of joy, hope and patience in your tea, it will change everything. Drink it hot in cold days. I will miss you. Maman."

Or

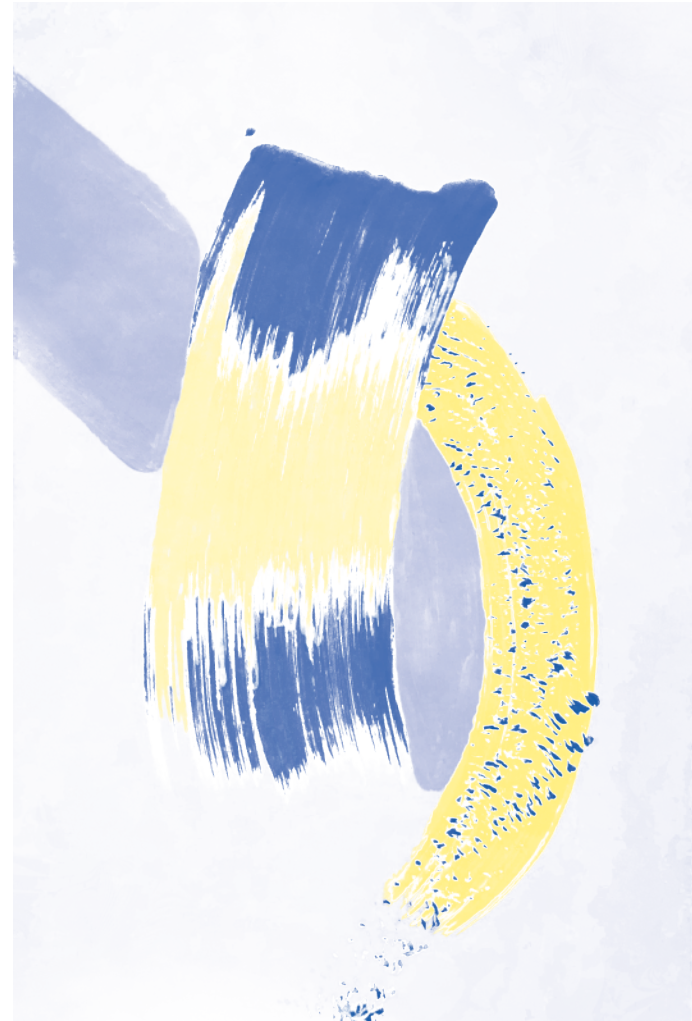
"Saffron tea is for celebrating of a good day. I put a lot of Saffron in your luggage hoping you will have many good days ahead of you. Take care of yourself. Maman."



Painting by Ashkan Maleki

TEA is about the quality of being, the quality of stillness and presence, the quality of thinking. It is about participation, engagement, reflection, revealing, sharing, learning with others.

Above everything it is about time.



Painting by Ashkan Maleki

Concession is a new socially engaged art project that explores the social and infrastructural context of 'concession stands' as a site for storytelling and dialogue around generosity, exchange, compromise, and permissions.

4 pm Vancouver Time
4 am Tehran Time

By utilizing existing concession stands in Vancouver Parks and community centres, the project will revolve around short and long-term participatory artworks created by emerging artists working with local food producers. These artworks will become an opportunity for iterative prototyping for the larger Concession project, with an aim to develop new forms of artist residencies, alternative social enterprises, and food-based infrastructures that expand how we think of food as a form of experiential storytelling.

Special thanks to:

Justin Langlois
Holly Schmidt
Ashkan Maleki
Aaniya Asrani
Annie Canto
Margaret Naylor



Painting by Ashkan Maleki