



Blank Pages of an Iranian Photo Album

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One of the most precious possessions of each Iranian household is the family photo album. A collection of memories on paper, protected by plastic or cardboard sheets and bound together by a richly illustrated cover, often showing scenes of snowcapped mountains and green valley's; a promise of hope and prosperity. The content of most albums are similar, an endless flow of snapshots taken in 1980s or even at the beginning of the 1990s of family gatherings with birthday cakes for the newborn children or growing up in the newly founded Islamic Republic of Iran. The yellowed albums and the pictures of smiling children dressed up in their best clothes are testament to our hopes and dreams, ending in blank pages when we grew up and our parents stopped taking our pictures. Reality took over, molding our ambitions and aspirations into a straight jacket tied firmly both by ideology and our own apathy.

As the recipient of the prestigious Carmignac Gestion Photojournalism Award 2014, renowned Iranian photographer **Newsha Tavakolian** (b. 1981) decided to follow Iranians from several generations with her camera, to continue their photo album as her vision of life in Iran now. She does not shy away from the complexity, inaccessibility, and myriad contradictions that shape her homeland. She manages to capture the full picture of contemporary Iran. Tavakolian mixes artistic creation and journalism with dexterity, starting from a shot of a family photo album to deftly, but unambiguously, chronicle middle class life.



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