We bring together three inspiring contemporary artists from around the globe, who are using everything from performance art to textiles to make a statement about some of the most pertinent political, humanitarian and feminist issues being faced in the Middle East today.
Have you always been inspired to address issues of national and cultural importance to the Middle East?
Many of my projects are working with contextual shifts and the Middle East is a context I personally relate to, as my father originates from Iran. I, however, was born, raised and live in Germany, so my relation to the region was always something distant to me, but something in which my interest still continues to grow.

Do you feel that in some way you are an ambassador for the Middle East in that sense?
No, I don’t think so at all and it has no influence on my work whatsoever. I feel an artist should also have the freedom to mess up, change and not be forced to represent something. Mahmoud Darwish once said, “I don't decide to represent anything except myself. But this self is full of collective memory.” I like this quote a lot.

Does living outside the Middle East gives you an element of artistic freedom?
That is an interesting point; I actually do think that is true. I work a lot in relation to Iran, but have the freedom to show projects outside of the country and can address social issues and restrictions quite freely. And, I often directly work with the differences and transitions between two places or contexts. At the same time, I try to avoid one-way narratives – it is more about putting things in relation, shifting things a bit and observing the outcome.

Do you see any direct ways in which your work has sparked a change?
Discourse, maybe, but change? If I want to change things, I should do something other than art. But, if I want people to think about our contemporary crazy world, about possible change and what this change could look like, then I think art can do a lot. I see art pieces that influence me and my life, so I am living proof of this theory.

Your work spans many mediums, from performance art to video installations. Which do you feel most at home working in?
Most of my works are initially conceptual, so I work with the medium that makes most sense for me. I end up doing video often – it’s a medium that allows me to work very directly, me and a camera. It is also non-exclusive as everyone nowadays has a video option on their phone, and it allows spatial as well as time-based arrangements.

What’s next?
I am currently preparing a solo exhibition at Art Foundation Erich Hausser in October, in which I will premiere new work. After that, I am going to Goethe Institute’s Villa Kamogawa in Kyoto for three months for a research project.

ANAHITA RAZMI
Represented by Carbon 12 in Dubai and inspired by a sense of the political, Razmi frequently returns to the work of feminist artists and icons such as Tracey Emin, adding a dash of her own irreverent humour along the way.