



Sohrab Safaie

Visual Artist

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📍 Rasht, Iran

🏳️ He/They

I am a queer/trans visual artist from Iran working with figurative drawing and body-centered imagery. In my country, both my identity and my artistic focus place me at continuous risk, the risk I face is structural and ongoing. It is embedded in legal frameworks, economic exclusion, social surveillance. Within the Iranian legal and social framework, queer and trans identities are criminalized and monitored.

Because of my queer identity, I have no real legal protection and face constant systematic discrimination. I cannot work safely in formal artistic environments, and attempts to sustain an independent practice have exposed me to harassment, threats of legal prosecution, and the risk of police intervention. Over time, self-censorship has become a survival strategy, limiting my ability to create freely.

Beyond professional restrictions, I have also experienced direct physical risk during public protests. In 2022, during the Woman, Life, Freedom uprising, I participated in public demonstrations believing that social transformation was possible. I was exposed to tear gas and violent repression by security forces. During the January 2026 protests, I was again subjected to extreme force, including batons, shotgun pellets, and live ammunition. A bullet fired in my direction missed me but struck a person running beside me.

These experiences underscore the physical and political vulnerability attached to both my civic participation and my identity. The pressures I face are ongoing and structural, constraining my artistic development and limiting my ability to exhibit, publish, or collaborate openly.

Temporary relocation would allow me to continue my artistic practice without fear of persecution, rebuild professional stability, and preserve the integrity of my work, and have stability in an environment where I can exist and create openly.

Sincerely,

Sohrab (Narjes) Safaie

Rasht, Iran, 02.2026