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## گردش (Gardesh)

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# Gardesh

Senior Project Submitted to the Division of Art of Bard College

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# Annandale-on-Hudson, New York

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I was told that as a kid I found no purpose in trying to learn Farsi. I felt no reason to speak a language different than the one which surrounded me. Throughout my life and among all the Farsi words that have slipped by--in my parents' attempt to connect me to a part of my *self* I rejected--*Gardesh* is the only one in which I have found myself. In many ways learning this word completed this project for me. It is a word, to me, that is simultaneously in the past and the future. Just as I see this project, *gardesh* is a start of a succession where I find myself whirling on a larger path of travel, at times looking back at the trail that lead me to where I am.

*Gardesh* projects a moment of the past into an unidentifiable future. It confronts decisions made in my past that I had no control over and it comprehends the impact of decisions I made for myself. *Gardesh* is the expression of being thrown off orbit and having to find my way back. I searched for truth in many forms, I cherished the remnants of my grandfather's physical memories, I scanned them, searching for something that would tell me what and who I am. I found very little. Only glimpses captured on a strip of film; it contained a ceremony familiar to me, but I couldn't bring myself to relate to it. I realized, as I watched my grandfather's memories, I am who is trapped in the celluloid, and concurrently am not.

I created a space for his memories, my memories, to live. They orbit around a spaceship I built for myself, constantly reminding me of home when I get lost. I'm constantly reminded of my distance to those memories and the traditions captured in them. My commitment to religion is frail in comparison. My intimacy isn't limited to family and the one I love. I found solace in these artifacts. I

go back to them every once in a while to adjust my course, to remember ritual inherent in me. Born out of my grandfather's artifacts are my own, captured on the same material.

Celluloid is a material supposedly holding truth in place since it captures life as it was, but I found out very little when looking at images of my family from before I was born. It was only until I superimposed these two separate lives that I saw the space they allowed for each other. With light bleeding into itself I saw my past, which in this moment was nothing less than the present, appear in the spaces my life had left for it. I realized, as I whirled, my present isn't separate from that which has made me or that which I want to be, but is a synthesis of the small glimpses of what's ahead of us and behind us as we spin.

### گردش (gardeş)

1. (*a.*) Pertaining to, or resulting from, rotation.
2. (*n.*) The act of turning, revolving or orbiting around a central point; a revolution.
3. (*v.*) to whirl; a practice found in Turkish Dervish mystic traditions
4. (*n.*) Any return or succession in a series.
5. (*n.*) Regular change from one thing to another; part of a cycle which leads to the next.