

Guardian of Ruins

Why are towers the symbols or icons of cities? Why do towers represent cities in a metaphorical or metonymical relation? Milad Tower is a phallic building that signifies progress, technological achievement, patriarchal authority, and panopticism. If Azadi Tower joins this authority with history and the aesthetics of Iranian architecture, Milad Tower boasts the potency of phallic power.

But more than anything, Milad Tower seems to function as a “guardian”. The question is: guardian of what? In Kaveh Sojoodi’s photos, Milad Tower seems to be a guardian of ruins. Kaveh Sojoodi’s city is deserted, it is unpopulated and what remains are ruins. The authority, eminence and surveillance of Milad Tower over the wasteland, lowland and ruined cityscape illustrates a strange signifying tension. More specifically, the apocalyptic atmosphere of the city is in sharp contrast with the modern and state-of-the-art tower. Accordingly, Milad Tower is the symbol of incomplete modernity, a modernity that is reduced to modernization and the only trace of this modernization are ruins. It is as if the time of the tower is in a schizophrenic rupture with the time of the context or the setting. This schizophrenia of identity is the result of the rupture between the signifier and the signified.

In Kaveh Sojoodi’s photos, Milad Tower boasts its authority, but it seems that no one or nothing has remained to witness this act of authority.

Amir Ali Nojournian

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