

**Bridge Obscura: Connecting Cultures**  
**through Sculpture Installation**

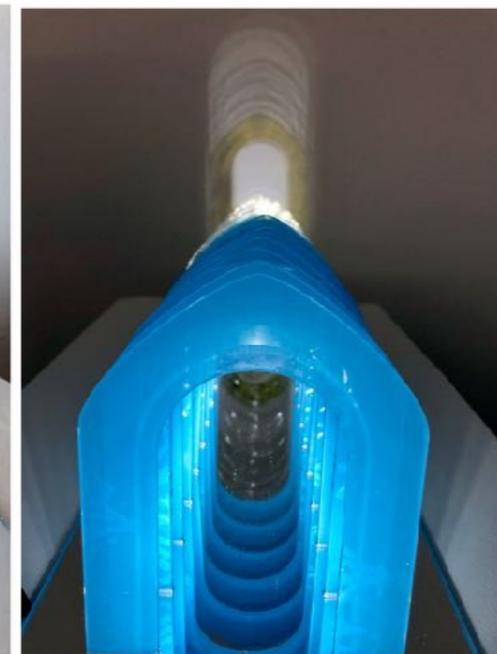
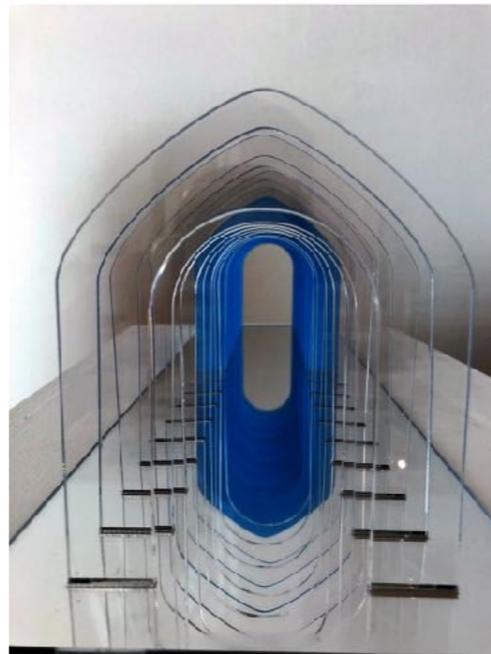
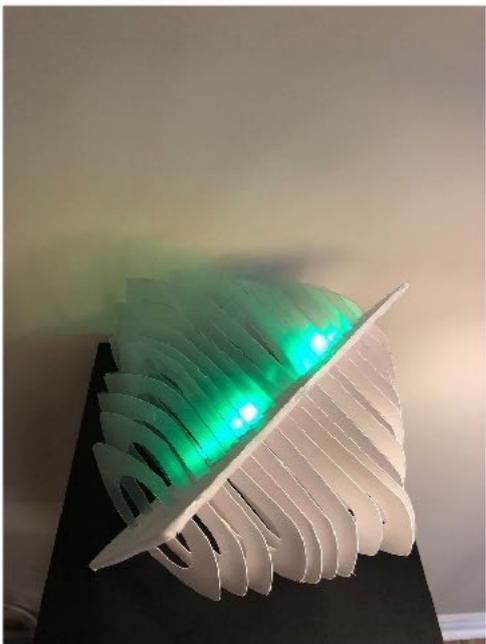
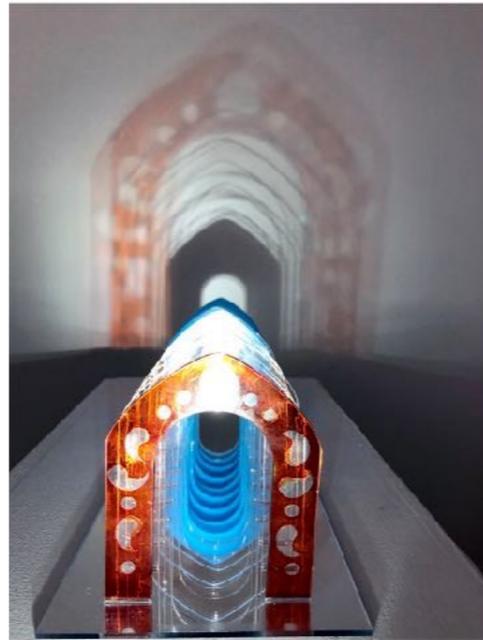
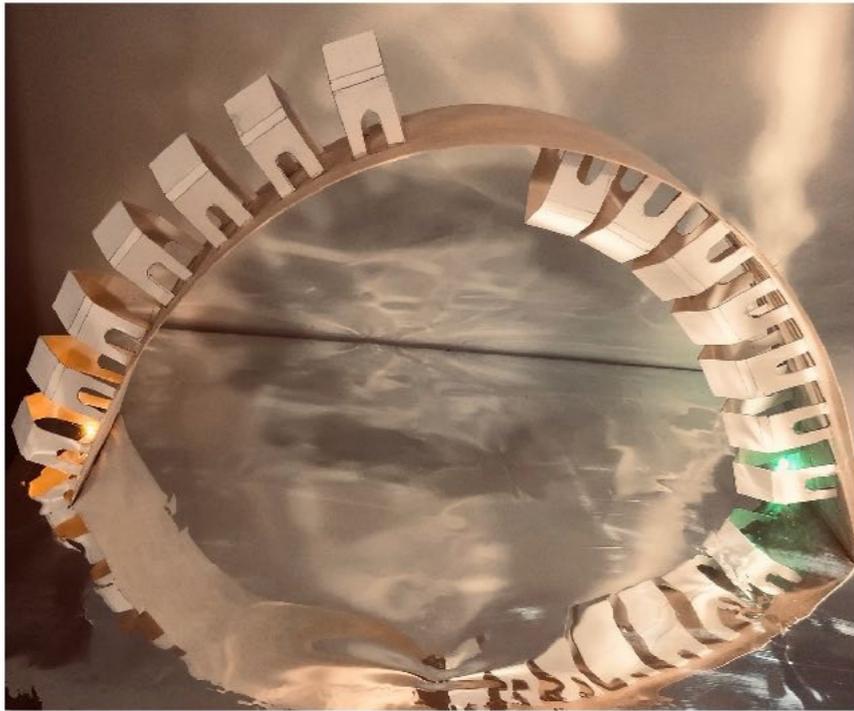
**by Shahrzad Amin**

## **Bridge Obscura: Connecting Cultures through Sculpture Installation**

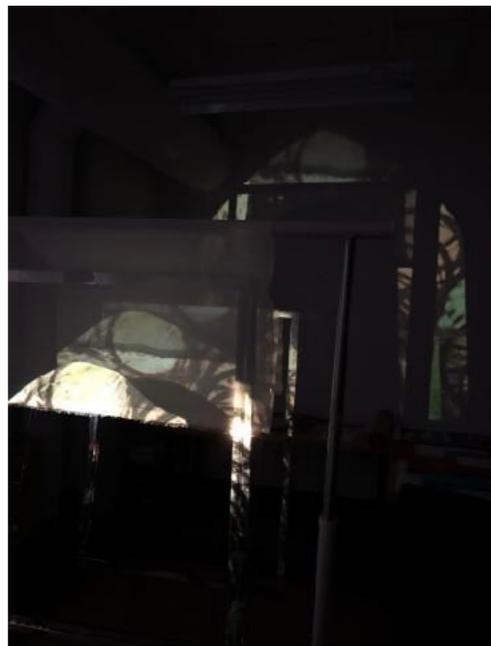
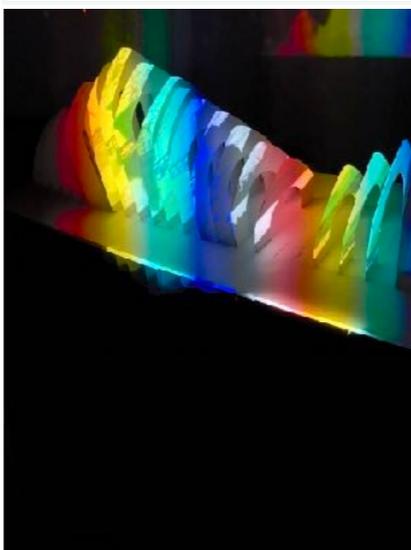
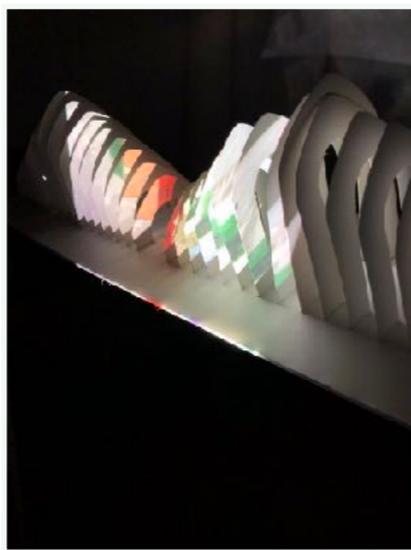
### ABSTRACT:

21<sup>st</sup> century Iran is often said to be a country in the grips of isolationism: imposed by both internal and external factors. On one hand, the sanctions applied by the US government isolate the country and restrict the living conditions and mobility of Iranian people, merchants, artists, and designers. On the other, international sanctions lead to political and cultural isolationism at the national level, making the country turn inward as a reactionary response and reinforcing the alienating cycle. Through the lenses of art practice, sensory ethnographic filmmaking, and architectural design, this paper examines the power and effectiveness of an art exhibition that features interdisciplinary sculpture installation, to express ideas about connectivity in such a climate of isolationism. The sculpture installation works in the exhibition highlight a social openness and necessity for global international connectivity, by applying the figure of the arch bridge (symbolic for Iran's once important status as a connector between civilizations along the path of trade routes) as a metaphor for overcoming cultural distances. In the influential collected volume, *The Social Life of Things*, cultural anthropologists Arjun Appadurai and Igor Kopytoff argue that objects (including architectural ones) in a given culture can reveal biographical information about the society at large, when one focuses on how they have been put to use and culturally redefined over time. The cultural responses to the biographical details of objects cast light on the aesthetic, historical, and political judgments and values that shape our attitudes. My thesis and exhibition take the arch bridge as an architectural object and formal representation of cultural referents along these lines, approaching the figure of the arch bridge biographically in order to generate an alternative space that connects contemporary Iranian culture to the rest of the world despite/against boundaries.

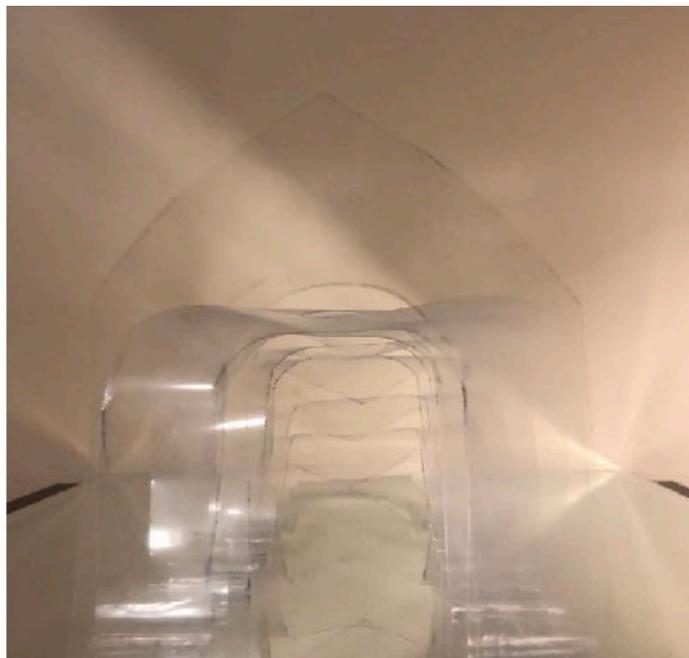
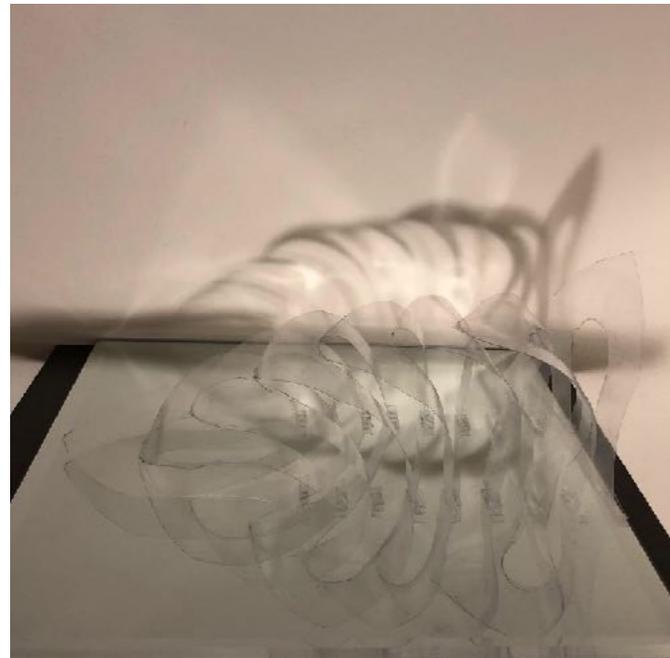
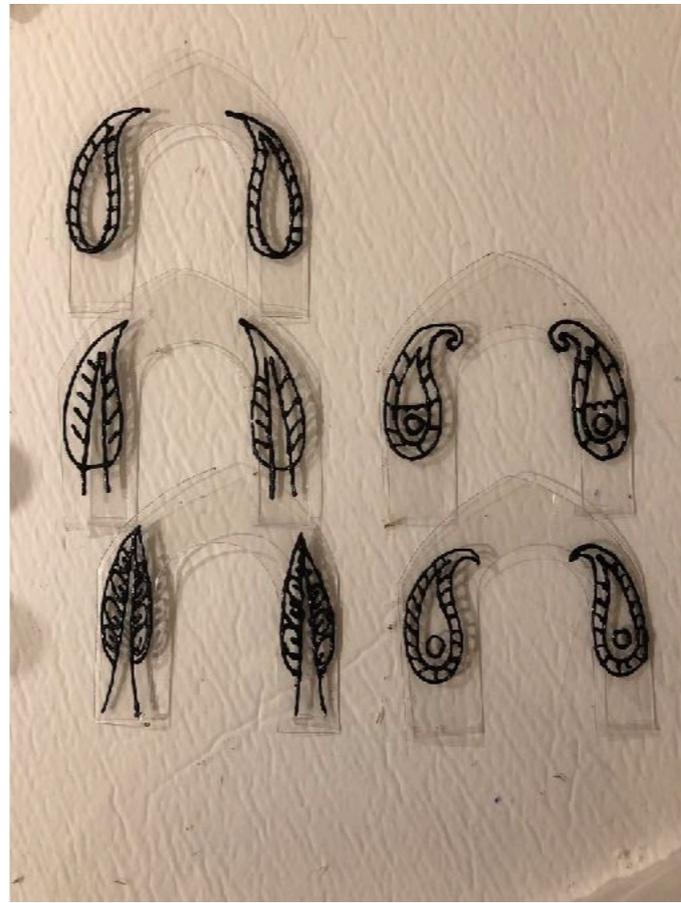
# Art Practice as Research (Studio Practice)



*Arch bridges, Prototypes, Lighting & Projection-Mapping, Shahrzad Amin, 2020*



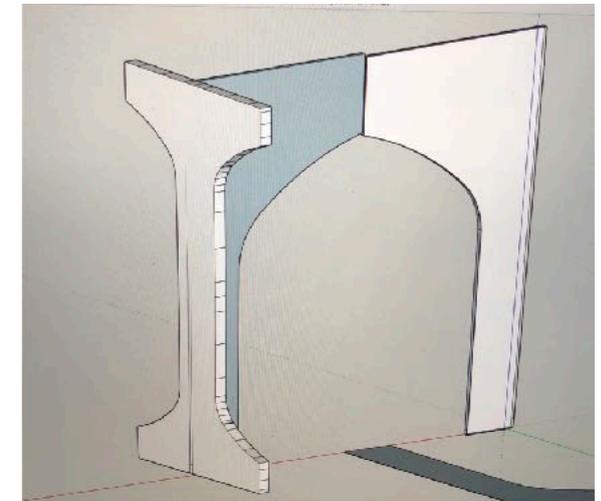
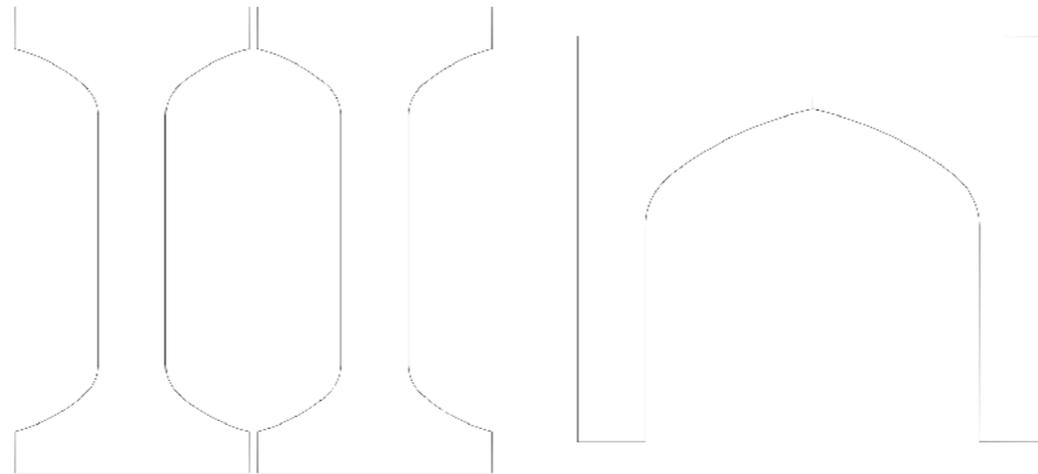
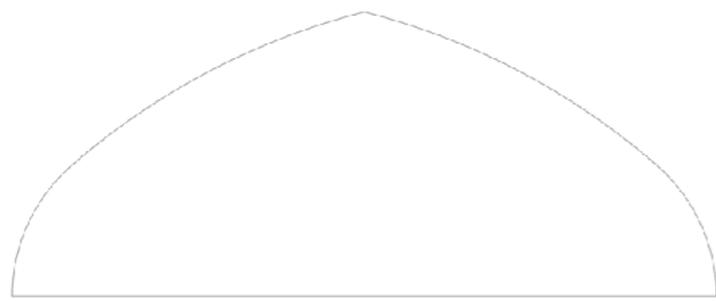
*Arch bridges, Prototypes, Lighting & Projection, Shahrzad Amin, 2020*



*Arch bridges, Prototypes, Shahrzad Amin, 2020*

# Final Project (Bridge Obscura) Process of Making

## A: Arch's Design



*Arch's Design, Illustrator, Shahrzad Amin, 2020*

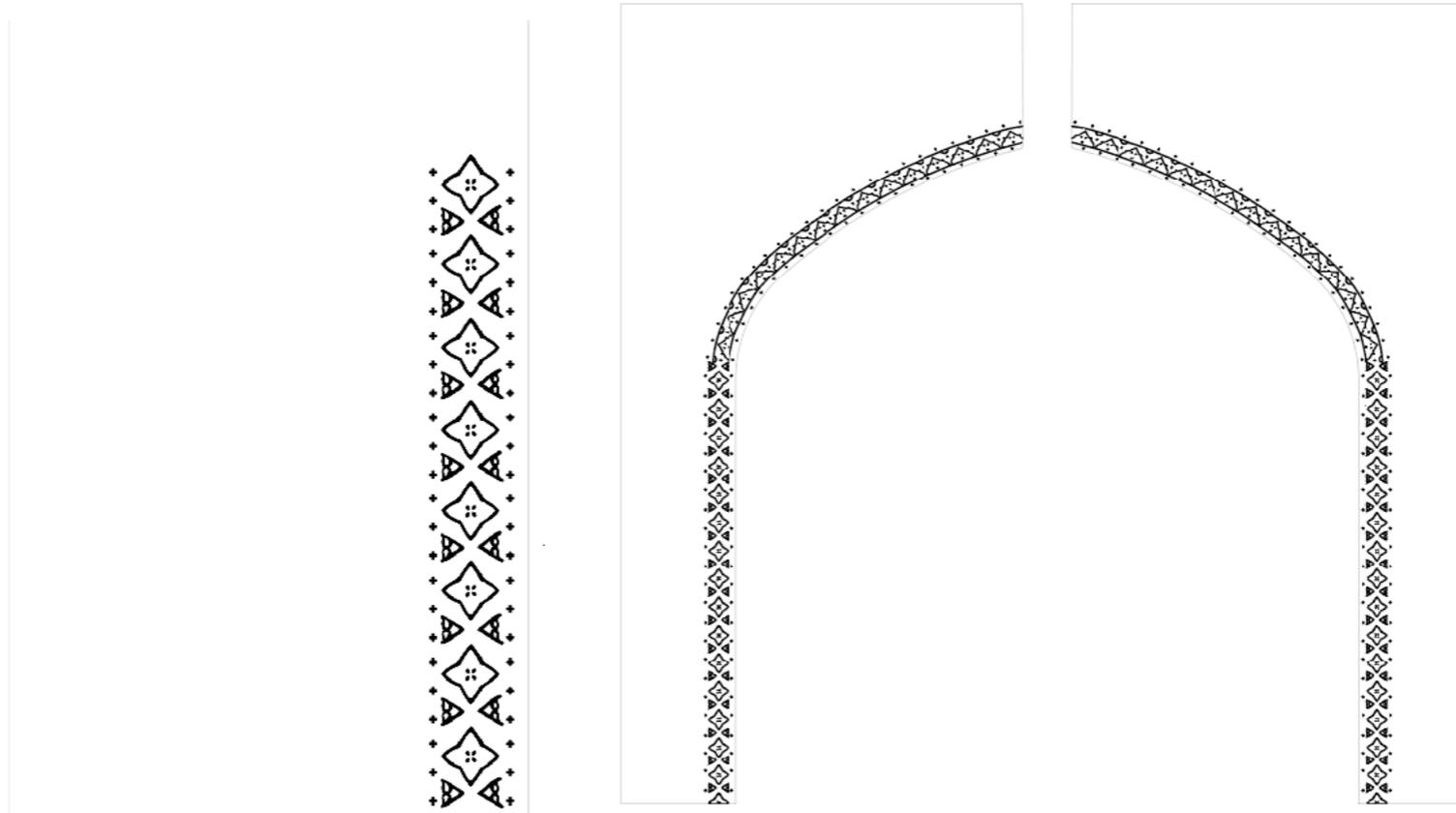
*Arch's Design, SketchUp, Shahrzad Amin, 2020*

## B: Pattern's Design



*Patterns, Block-Print, Shahrzad Amin, 2020*

The laser-engraved stamp motif ornamenting the first arch in my installation is inspired by the tilework of Grate Mosque or Jameh Mosque of Isfahan



*Patterns, Illustrator, Shahrzad Amin, 2020*

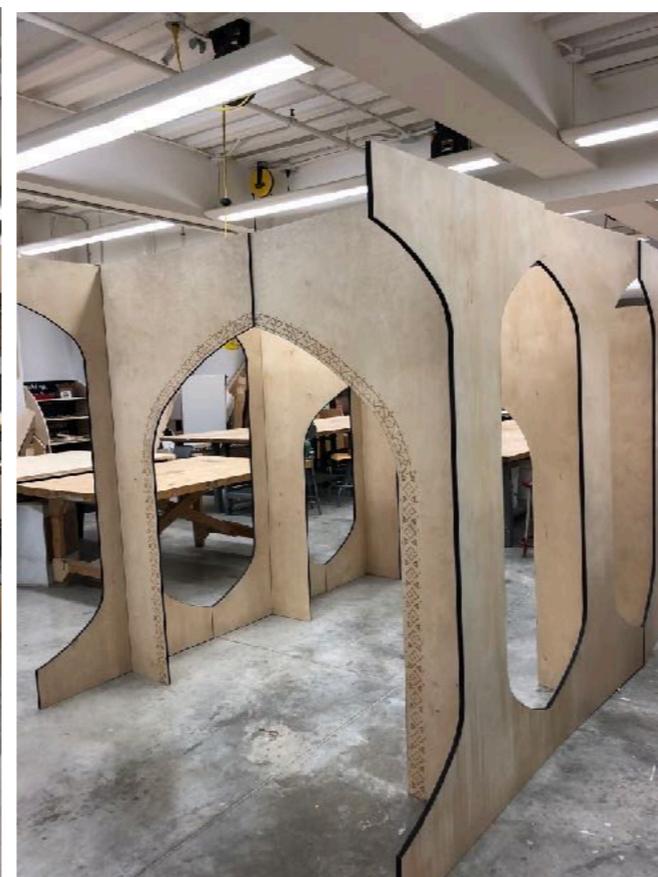
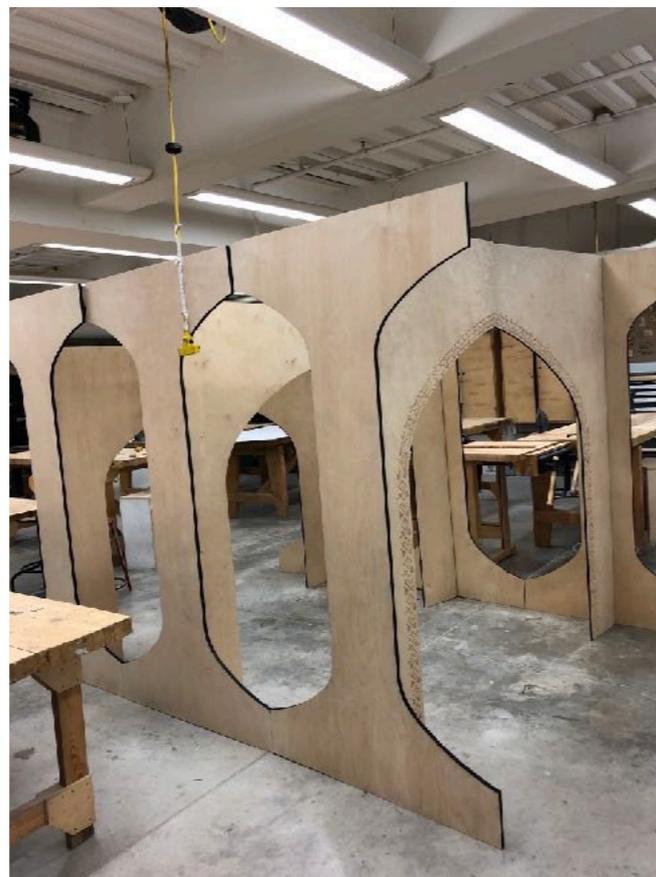
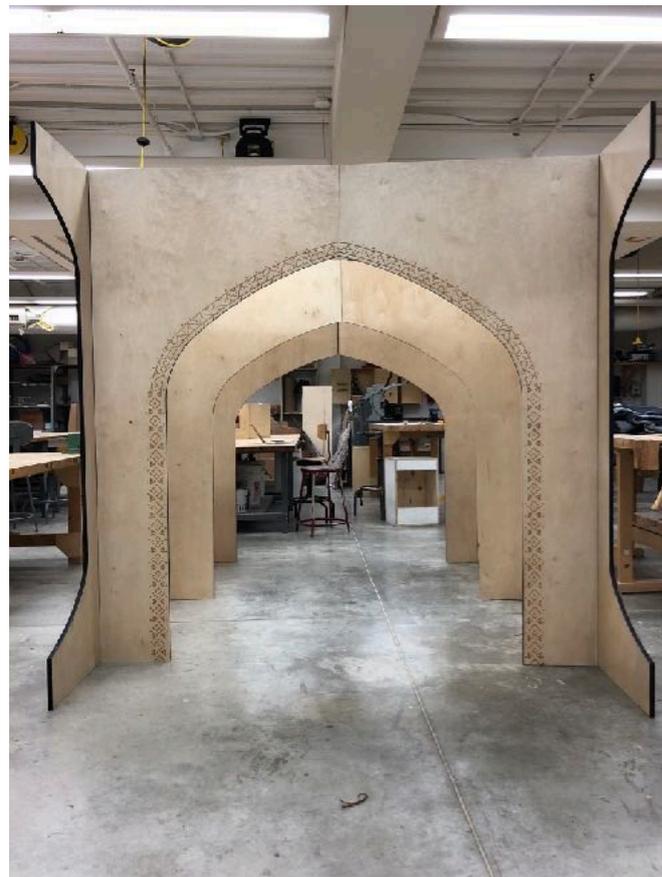
# The Process of Preparing The Arches



## C: Laser Cutting



*Bridge Obscura, Prototype, Shahrzad Amin, 2020*



*Bridge Obscura, Shahrzad Amin, 2020*

The arches are different in heights (200 x 200, 200 x 187 and 200 x 174cm) but the columns have the same measurement (100x200cm).

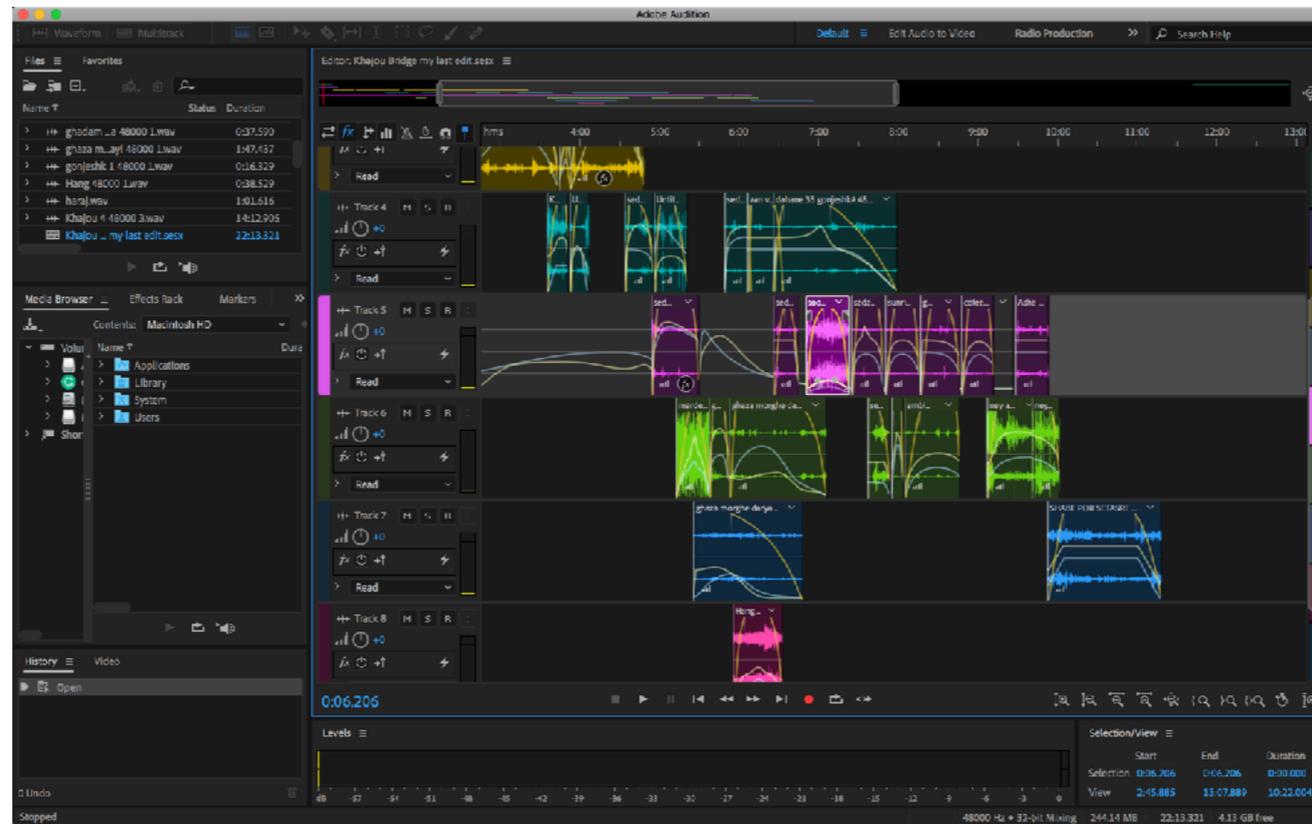
# Audio Document

I made separate visits to the two bridges and used Zoom Recorder H4n Pro to record sounds of targeted subjects and objects, as well as the general ambiance.

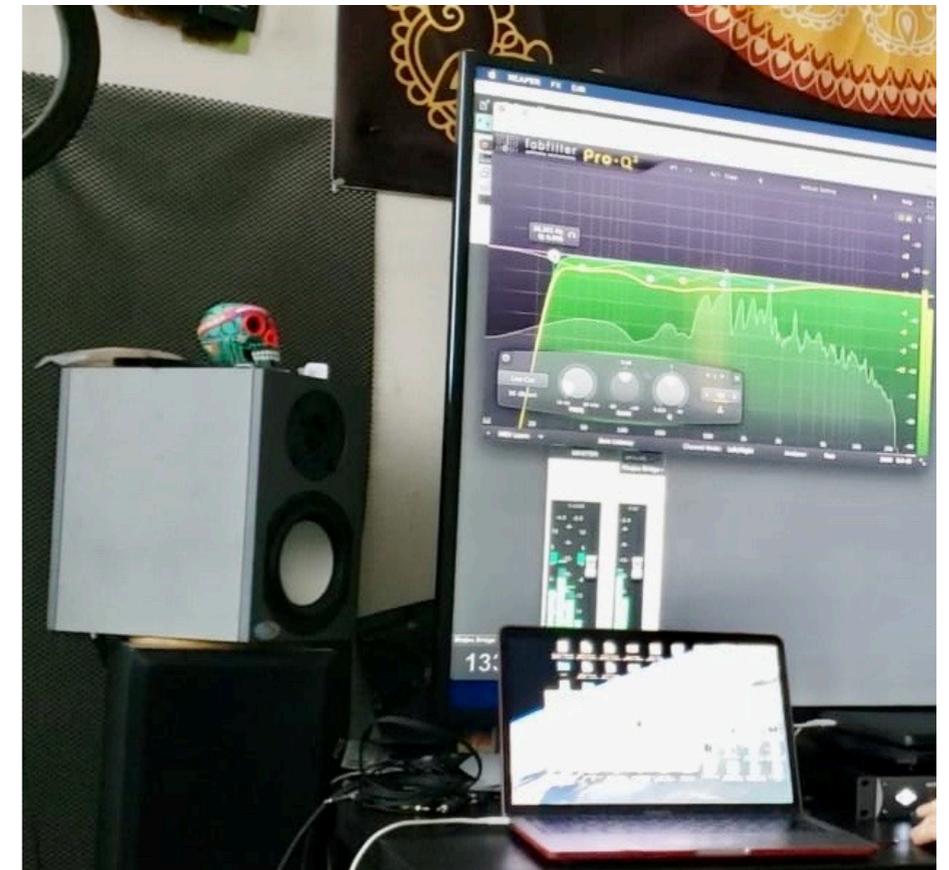
File's Name	Date	Location	Time of the day	Duration	Equipment	Who choose the bridge	Why choose the bridge
Si-O-Se Pol 1	Dec,12,19 Thursday	Si-O-Se Pol	8:22 Am	14 Minuets	Zoom Recorder (H4n pro)	Not crowded, No children, women more than the man, middle age, and older adults more than young people.	Younger>To reach the other side of the river. Older> Hangout and enjoy the day.
Khajou 1	Dec,12,19 Thursday	Khajou Bridge	10:30 PM	12 Minuets	Zoom Recorder (H4n pro)	Very crowded, On the bridge, people walk and enjoy the beauty of the bridge's view from the arches, and they listen to people who dance and sing, clap, and play under the bridge. Some people are sitting around the bridge to	Men sing different traditional songs. Women, listen, and enjoy. People play traditional instruments such as "Tonbak."  Most of the people come to hang out and enjoy their night.
Khajou 2	Dec,12,19 Thursday	Khajou Bridge	11:00 PM	4 Minuets	Zoom Recorder (H4n pro)	Vendors sell Persian style roasted corn, cooked fava beans and cooked beets in syrup, A man plays Ney-Anban (a type of bagpipe which is popular in southern Iran) Under each lower level arch, something unique	Most of the people come to hang out and enjoy their night.
Khajou 3	Dec,14,19 Saturday	Khajou Bridge (Tea House)	1:00 PM	11 Minuets	Zoom Recorder (H4n pro)	Not crowded, Young people and couples are Drinking traditional drinks or different types of coffee. They are enjoying the arche's view under the bridge. They are looking at the river and the birds flying on top of it while they are listening to the modern and traditional music	Tea house located on the lower level at the beginning of the bridge (southern side). People hang out together while they are listening to the modern and traditional music and enjoy looking at the river and the birds flying on top of it from the lower level arches
Khajou 4	Dec,14,19 Saturday	Khajou Bridge (Under the bridge)	1:15 pm	14 Minuets	Zoom Recorder (H4n pro)	Not crowdy, Hearing the birds singing and flying more than before on the water. The sound of water from the arches is beautiful; People go to the cultural center under the beginning of the bridge (northern side)	A middle-aged man is inspired by the beauty of the bridge and sings a traditional song. Pedestrians are listening to him. A young man sings a love song from Iraj Mehdian named Beautiful Fairy, Copple of
Khajou 5	Dec,19,19 Thursday	Khajou Bridge (on the bridge)	10:30 pm	4 Minuets	Zoom Recorder (H4n pro)	Very crowded, even motorcycle pass the bridge, a young man plays the Hang instrument, and people are passing him. He is sitting on the bridge close to the main street (southern side)	
Khajou 6	Dec,20,19 Friday( Weekend)	Khajou Bridge	11:00 Am	4 Minuets	Zoom Recorder (H4n pro)	Almost crowdy, people came on the bridge to celebrate the weekend (the day after Yalda night)	people came on the bridge to celebrate the weekend (the day after Yalda night)

File's Name	Date	Location	Time of the day	Duration	Equipment	Who choose the bridge	Why choose the bridge
Khajou 7	Dec,20,19 Friday( Weekend)	Khajou Bridge (Under the bridge)	4:40 PM	19 Minuets	Zoom Recorder (H4n pro)	All type of people most of them came from middle class, A vendor sells winter coat under the bridge near water. A woman starts to sing.	Hang out, enjoy the sunny weather, beautiful bridge, play traditional instrument named DAF, sing Roo-Hozi and traditional song. younger people play skate, volleyball, riding the bicycle
Khajou 8	Dec,20,19 Friday (Weekend)	Khajou Bridge (on the bank of bridge)	5:10 PM	6 Minuets	Zoom Recorder (H4n pro)	Birds' sound, not very crowdy, people walk beside the river toward khajou bridge. They feed the birds. The voices of singer on the bridge can be heard from distance.	
Khajou 9	Dec,20,19 Friday (Weekend)	Khajou Bridge (on the bridge), In the arches	5:40 PM	18 Minuets	Zoom Recorder (H4n pro)	Most of the crowd are young, the atmosphere on the bridge is completely different from the under it. Motorcycle and bicycle pass the bridge, people play modern music out of their cellphone	Most of the people on the bridge want to pass it to the other side or see the view of the river from it or take a picture.
Khajou 10	Dec,20,19 Friday (Weekend)	Khajou Bridge (beside the bridge)	6: 19 Pm	2.30 Minuets	Zoom Recorder (H4n pro)	Not crowdy, people walk beside the river, Kids run and laugh, the sound of Quran before azan	

## D: Sound Recording



*Mixing 38 audio Files, Adobe Audition, Shahrzad Amin, 2020*



*Sound mastering, Reaper Software Shahrzad Amin, 2020*

## E: Video and Projection Mapping

The video projected on the wall features footage that I shot in Iran (on Khaju and Allahverdi Khan bridges between December 20-21, 2019), with the aid of a videographer friend, Ali Reza Abab. We used a Canon 5D Mark IV camera, with 24-70 and 70-200 Canon lenses and a tripod. I looked in to 369 video files to create the final video. **Please click the links below to watch full version of the video and the sculpture installation.**

<https://youtu.be/sePkBggSf-c>

<https://youtu.be/1ZyReWkWYqc>

