

Reviving Identity:

An Investigation of Identity in Iranian Artworks in the period 1958-1966 in relation to a
Contemporary Fine Art Practice

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD in
Fine Art at Lancaster University.

A substantial part of my project is in the form of an exhibition of visual art installed in the
Peter Scott Gallery, Lancaster University 21st- 29th September 2016. This exhibition will be
documented through photographs compiled on a CD in the permanent binding of this
thesis.

Declaration

I declare that the thesis is my own work, and has not been submitted in substantially the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

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Abstract

This practice-based research explores the notion of Iranian cultural identity as reflected in artworks exhibited in the Tehran Biennials (1958- 1966) and in a particular individual practice. This research uses the five Tehran Biennales and their national and international context as a tool to reveal the development of their influence on the construction of new images of Iranian identity.

The research frames these national exhibitions within the influence of Western modernism and Western critique of orientalism. It frames its enquiry in historical and theoretical research and my studio practice as a contemporary Iranian artist. It constructs a methodology appropriate for visual analysis across the five events and for examination and comparison of individual artists and artworks. A core aim of the enquiry is gaining better understanding of the tensions between Iranian-Islamic and pre-Islamic traditions and of the changing national sentiment and the influence of Western modernism in the arts. My method includes ‘action research’ that juxtaposes the theoretic, historic, and artistic aspects based on a ‘self-observer’ and ‘observer of others’. By its cycling of studio production and reflection through critical and visual analysis, this method has enabled me to explore theoretical and historical contexts in my works.

The research also examines the motivations and influence of Iranian state ideology on the formation and discontinuation of the biennales as instruments for cultural innovation and internationalisation. As all biennales by their nature seek to survey a field of activity, the research has remained sensitive to a wide range of artists engaged across a spectrum of practices between 1958 and 1966. For some, the period marked a return to their traditions and heritage to recognise and distinguish their national identity from Western art. For others, the new challenges enabled new representations relevant to Iran in the twentieth

century. Between these poles, there were many types of ‘return’ and re-emergence, some to Iranian and Islamic heritage, others to an earlier hospitality for international influence. This ten-year period holds the key to my own understanding of my studio practice and the emergence of collage as a technique central to my work. Collage and mixing media have become powerfully associated with the challenges I face in negotiating between East and West, old and new values, and my changing perceptions of myself. The different layers in collage and its variety of media metaphorically suggest the concept of Iranian identity as a layered and collective identity.

While my practice comprises autobiographical elements, it is nonetheless analytical in that it draws on the history of the Biennial period. The Tehran Biennials and their attempts to form a new Iranian art provide the background against which I project my conceptions of identity and memory. They are part of the legacy that enables me, a contemporary Iranian woman artist, to explore the various perspectives regarding Iranian identity and the means by which artists visualise it. Moreover, the practice-based method adapted in this research has enabled me to combine historical overview, visual analysis of modern art in Iran, and contemporary insights to offer new an understanding of how art reflects changing identities. This study defines identity, in a personal level, as a multi-layered identity, including fragmented and fragile layers that form within socio-cultural and individual values.

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Preface

Past: Iran

Before I have started my PhD journey, in my art practice, I had focused on space in particular cities' landscapes to investigate nature found in cities and the image of a garden. The first idea of these works came from the reflection of trees on water streams that can be seen all over Tehran.

These images recall the wilderness of different parts of Iran that I saw during my trips: fields and deserts that are ornamented with individual trees. Trees are one of the few elements of nature that play a role in the civic life of human beings. Forests become smaller and cities become bigger. And humans try to find a new way to recreate lost nature within cities. Therefore, they bring trees to cities, as an important element of nature, which look like strangers lost amongst buildings that stretch to the sky. This is how I define the existence of trees in cities: held captive in cities, trees imagine the free nature to which they belong.

In my paintings, trees remain as a shadow which is floating in their dreams. They are lost in the depths of cities. My garden's trees are floating in their ambition (Figures 1 and 2).



Figure 1 Untitled, 80 x 80cm, oil colour on canvas, 2009



Figure 2 Untitled, 80 x 80cm, oil colour on canvas, 2009

Past and Present: Iran and the UK

To explore my position as a person in relation to space –both geographical and social - influenced by social movements in my home city, I started to make identical collages on second-hand books by using my old self-portrait photos, drawings and paintings. In this project, I added my own dreams, nightmares and life experiences onto the pages which hold the previous owner's ideas (Figures 3 and 4).



Figure 3 From the Ideal Ego series, first book, 2011

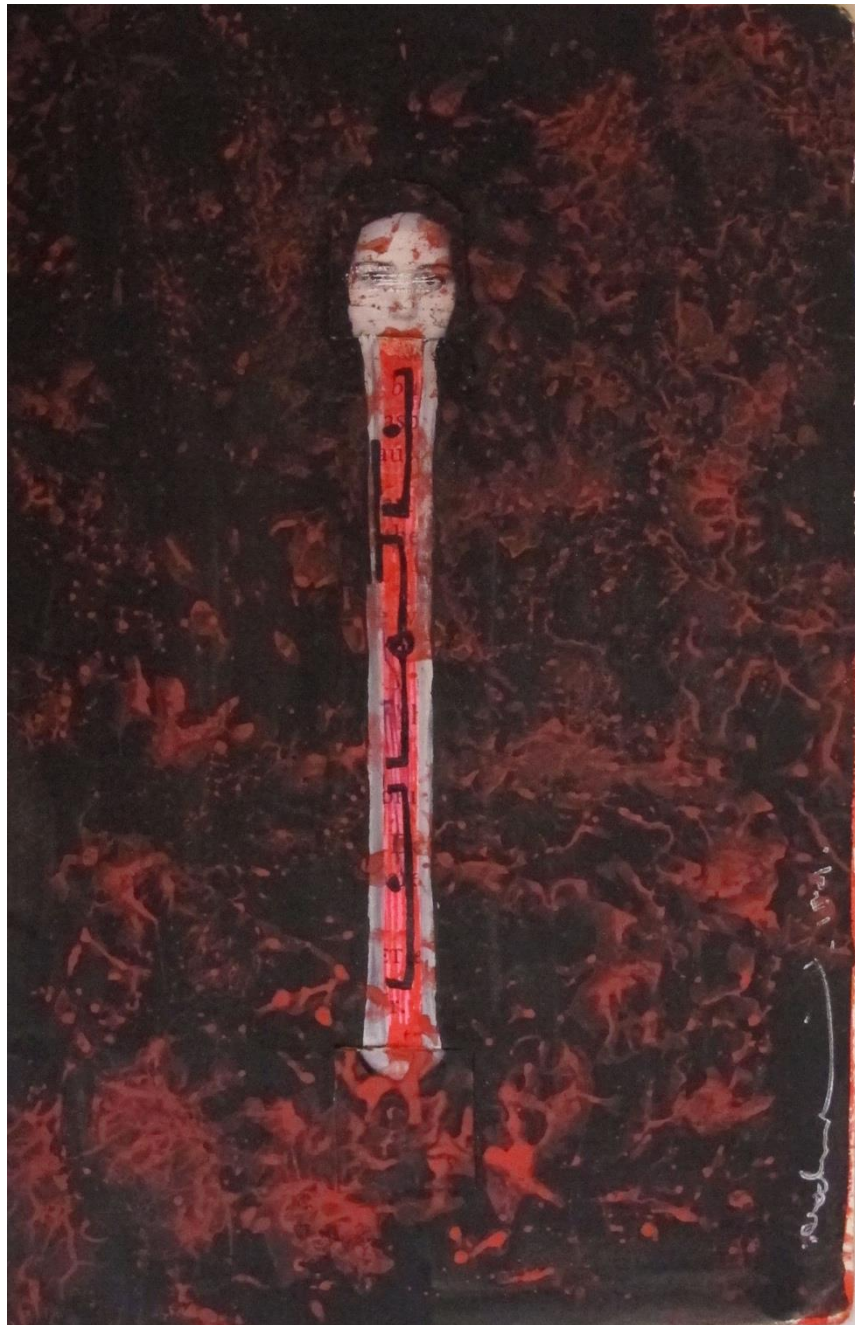


Figure 4 From the Ideal Ego series, first book, 2011

Present: The UK

In the different periods of my works, space, as a living environment, and my memories and experiences have a significant role. Moving from Iran to the UK has led to dramatic changes in different aspects of my life. This geographical relocation provides me with different conceptual perspectives on personal and social levels. It highlighted the role of personal memories and experiences in my works which appear as a new layer on my works. The impacts of these changes are reflected in my artworks by using new media such as video. It also can be seen in the art techniques that I used. For instance, collage represents the concept of collective identity, and transferring images on canvas metaphorically visualize the effects of moving from a place to another on a person. It also shows the damage remaining from this transition and the repairs which a person tries to make to them. In addition, I have always used photography at the base of my works. It has become more visible in the works that I made during my PhD studio practice. In this stage, the different layers of collage, drawing and paintings appear and reside closely.

Besides, my works have been profoundly influenced by the artistic and conceptual features of the artworks exhibited in Tehran Biennials. The manners that the artists choose to represent their Iranian tradition and national identity in being modern and international influenced my personal and artistic journey during my PhD. In other words, I traced the ways that the Iranian modern artists manage to make a balance between national and international levels in their artworks. This research brings these challenges and the solutions to the surface and offers a detailed visual analysis of them.

Furthermore, three major inspirations influenced my works: my living environment, nature, and the images in my creative mind. The first brings urban spaces and sign into my work, the second creates contrasts and harmony, and the third

challenges me to create imaginary aspects to make a new picture. All in all, I try to show all my concerns in my drawings and paintings with forms and colours. Moreover, I have a prevailing tendency to use contemporary and traditional symbols in my work; symbols entangled in our ordinary life, without which our humanity would be in question (Figures 5 and 6).

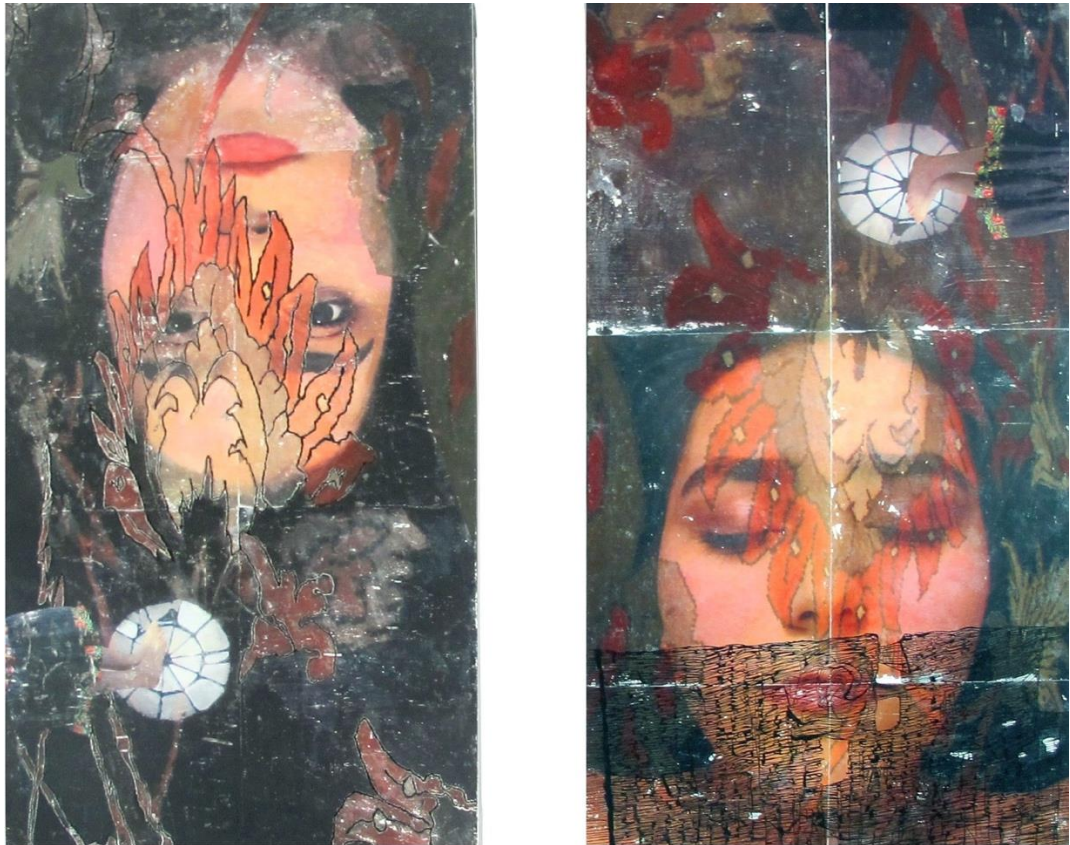


Figure 5 Negotiating 1, Mixed media on canvas, 2013, 102 x 56 cm

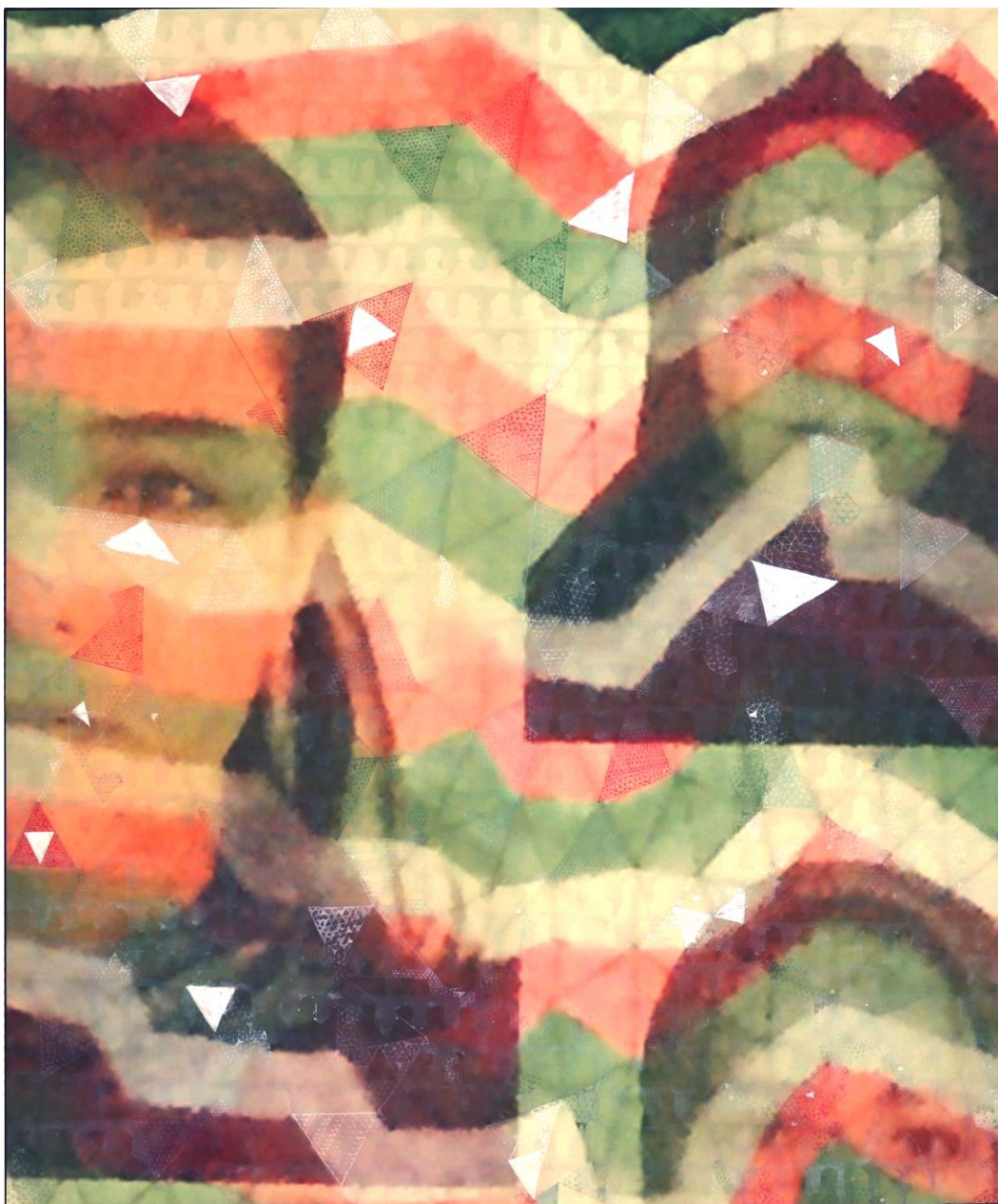


Figure 6 Disruption 1, Mixed media on canvas, 100 x 119 cm, 2016

1.1. Introduction

This practice-based research starts with self-observation. My perception of my social identity has been challenged and reshaped in a multi-cultural context, through my experience of living in and between Iran and the UK. This allowed me a panoramic view of how social identities interact, negotiate and differ.

In this research, I have followed in the steps of many other Iranian artists who, as Keshmirshekan (2013, p. 58) suggested, stepped outside their selves to have a critical view of their national roots. This led to dismantling the secrecy and transparency of the aspects of identity, and how they correlate with my experiences and self-perception. As Gramsci puts it, ‘the starting-point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is ‘knowing thyself’ as a product of the historical process to date, which has deposited in you an infinity of traces’ (Gramsci cited in Said 2003, p. 25).

Throughout my personal and academic experiences, I have constructed a sense of identity through a collection of socially-situated layers; a layering of perceptions, experiences and responses arising from a number of transitions, from the geographic to the conceptual. I have gone through these tensions when I left the comfort of my local community in Iran into the challenging new culture in UK. Moreover, analysing the artworks exhibited in the Tehran Biennials allowed me to place, conceptually, Iranian art against the wider backdrop of mid-twentieth century art with all its ruptures and innovations, and see the first steps of introducing modern art to Iranian society in a much greater depth.

The historical research enabled me to critically observe myself; my culture and training but also my ideologies. The outcome of this research is a detailed historical

¹ Note on Translation. The system of translation adopted in this study is based on the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. However, this system does not account for the use of more familiar forms of certain Persian names and places.

investigation of the impact of a sequence of internationally important public events, alongside and simultaneous to, the production of a contemporary studio practice enabling self-analytical autobiographical work in paint, collage and video.

The Tehran Biennials (1958-1966) were launched in the middle of the twentieth century in Iran as a medium through which Iranian modern artists, on one hand, and the state and art organisers, on the other, could achieve their artistic and political aims. Iranian artists and the government wanted to use art as a means to represent their historical heritage and traditions while at the same time capitalising on Western art styles. Tehran Biennials attempted to align Iranian contemporary art with Western modernist values by means of recycling earlier Persian models into a new art appropriate to the twentieth century. The analysis of Tehran Biennials reveals clearly how the cultural and socio-political conditions during those years influenced the formation of Iranian modern art, which is the basis for Iranian contemporary art.

1.1.1. Obstacles of the study

I encountered many fascinating and often surprising obstacles in carrying out this research. First, there was a lack of documentation concerning Tehran Biennials and documentation that did exist was geographically dispersed. For example, I found the catalogues for the first and third Tehran Biennials in a library in Mashhad in Iran, the catalogue for the second in Abbas Moayeri's studio² in Paris, the fourth catalogue in a library in Shiraz in Iran, and the fifth in the National Library of Iran in Tehran. Second, the Biennials' catalogues are executed in black and white, which imposes an obvious limitation on this study because these sources totally ignore the dimension of colour even though colour is an essential element in the artworks. Third, I could not identify the names of some participating artists in the Tehran Biennials since many of them remain

² Abbas Moayeri lives in Paris studying the Persian miniature and is determined to preserve the basic and artistic aspects of this traditional Iranian Art. In 1984, he created courses about this form of Persian art the Association for the Development of Cultural Activities (ADCA) in Paris in order to exhibit this noble art of his native land.

unknown today. Finally, the initiation and discontinuation of the Biennials is not documented in any material way save for the catalogues of each Biennial. Inasmuch as original source documentation for the Tehran Biennials is so lacking, I was compelled to make extensive use of Keshmirshekan's (2013) *Contemporary Iranian Art, New Perspective* as this work is one of the very few tenable resources. Thus, this work draws heavily on Keshmirshekan's work.

1.1.2. Scope of study

One of the gaps this study attempts to bridge is the lack of a detailed context-sensitive analysis of Tehran Biennials. Many art historians mentioned the Biennials in their writing as important historical events in Iranian modern art. Furthermore, most of the works about Tehran Biennials are descriptive and statistical presentations and lack a developed international perspective and critical analysis. There is a need to analyse the Biennials as important events that represent the development of art and the relationship between art and socio-politics changes. This analysis of the Biennials reviews how the Iranian government used these artistic events to enhance the state ideology in the society.

Secondly, although Iranian identity has been extensively researched in the fields of history, philosophy, and literature, there is a lack of research about how Iranian modern art constructed this identity. Therefore, this project investigates and identifies the period in the mid twentieth century where it is evident that Iranian artists are developing ideas and images that accommodate their senses of heritage and of selfhood and their responses to the changing social, political, and aesthetic conditions of that time.

This study consists of four chapters. The first takes the artworks as a starting point for an analysis of the implications of Iranian identity in different aspects of the subject regarding historical, social, and political themes. In doing this, I consider the

effects of orientalism³ and Modernity as the main arrows of the West's influence. Chapter 2 focuses on the Tehran Biennials, which attempted to align Iranian contemporary art with Western modernist values whilst at the same time recycling earlier Persian models into a new art for the twentieth century. This chapter outlines the history of Tehran Biennials. Additionally, it traces the different aspects of the Iranian identity and the effects of the West on the process and aims of the Tehran Biennials. Moreover, it develops a detailed analysis of the artworks exhibited in Tehran Biennials based upon the main subject and the themes that they represent via an iconographic study. This chapter traces how Iranian artists practiced to define a 'national art.' It discusses how these artists revived their Iranian identity by depicting the elements and symbols that represent pre-Islamic and Islamic Iranian heritage, that symbolise national sentiment, and that reflect Western influences. Chapter 3 places my work in the context of Iranian and another contemporary practice. It is a bridge between archival research of the Tehran Biennials and my work. Chapter 4 centres on my practice as it studies the influences of my Iranian heritage and the influences of Western society on my own practice.

1.2. Framework: The Academic Aspect of the Thesis

My research aims to explore and understand Iranian perceptions at a time of social and cultural change. I pay particular attention to the influence of modernity and orientalism and the manner in which these concepts contributed to the emergence of new expressions of the self, gender, religious belief, and national ambition. I pursue the enquiry through conventional academic research and through my practice as research, where each approach will inform the other yet make unique contributions.

The research questions are:

³ Guidance on the capitalization of orientalism, orientalist, oriental, and the Orient has been provided by the Oxford English Dictionary (http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/american_english/orientalism).

Research Questions 1: How has the expression of Iranian identity evolved in the artworks exhibited in the Tehran Biennials between 1958 and 1966? How have modernity and orientalism impacted upon this process?

Research Question 2: Can influences of the modern period be seen today and explored through an individual contemporary art practice?

The year 1958 witnessed the first Tehran Biennial, a milestone in the development of modern art in Iranian society. The year 1966 marked the fifth and last Tehran Biennial. This era in Iran between 1958 and 1966 is an essential reference point for understanding current artistic practices by contemporary Iranian artists. Through the documentation of the five Tehran Biennials, my study explores the challenges faced by fine artists negotiating between their pre-Islamic heritage and their Iranian-Islamic experience in the context of a new wave of Western influence. I address the overarching research questions through stages of focus on three subquestions:

Subquestion 1. How has Iranian identity been depicted in painting between 1958 and 1966?

Subquestion 2. What markers have modernity and orientalism left on Iranian modern art?

Subquestion 3. How are the tensions between Iranian-Islamic and pre-Islamic traditions, the national sentiment, and Western influence manifested visually in the articulation of artistic works?

This study investigates the challenges that modern artists encountered in their attempts to define the terms ‘national art’ and ‘national school of art’, within the artists’ sense of belonging to a nation that was facing Western influence. During this decade, it was not only modernism which influenced artists: young artists, moved by national sentiment, became increasingly concerned with understanding their national culture (Keshmirshekan 2009, p.15). When artists modernised their art, urgent questions related

to Iranian identity were raised concerning the construction of national identity in Iranian modern art.

The Tehran Biennials which ran for a decade beginning in 1958 were among the most influential national cultural achievements by collective actions across a broad front of cultural figures and pioneering modern artists. These Biennials helped the Iranian state and artists developing their unique identity and introduced them to national and international art media and markets. Notably, during this period, both artists and the government had similar objectives. They both wanted to revive Iranian heritage, modernise national identity, and promote understanding amongst different communities and sectors of Iranian society.

One way of thinking about Western influence upon Easterners is in the manner of Edward Said's discussion of orientalism. European culture managed and produced the Orient at the sociological and ideological levels (Mackenzie 1995, p.9). If we draw on questions of orientalism as raised by Said, 'the sense of Western power over the Orient is taken for granted as having the status of scientific truth' (Said, 2003, p.46). In the light of this slippery and multifaceted conception of identity, the Easterners' self-perception and, therefore, their understanding of their identity includes how the Western world defines *identity*. The clash of cultural understandings manifests in the idea of the artist's role and the ways that artists present themselves socially.

In my approach to Iranian modern art, I examine the combination of the spiritual and the material (East and West respectively). How does Iranian modern artists manage the tension between the spiritual and the material? Before modernity, 'the task of human creativity in Islamic thought is conceived as that of *referring to* and *making manifest God's creative work* rather than "showing off" one's own ability to create' (Nadarajan, 2007, p. 6, author's emphasis). In their attempt to balance the pre-Islamic and the Islamic Iranian identity with modernity, artists faced the problem of maintaining a balance between the

material and spiritual aspects of the society. The Iranian definition of the material world was based on Western values, which were not consistent with the artists' spiritual values. This inconsistency arose due to an exaggerated attempt, on the Iranians' part, to compensate for lack of material achievement (Banani 1961, p.157). I sought trace how artists of the time responded to relationships between Western materialism, the enduring orientalist characterisations of the 'exotic', and the range of contemporary Iranian conceptions of spiritual beliefs.

1.2.1. Methods

This research constructs a means of analysing the artworks exhibited in the Tehran Biennials and published in their catalogues⁴. To have a better understanding of the works exhibited in those years, I have separated and copied the images from the catalogues and arranged them into visual maps (visual maps 1 to 5). These visual maps offer a micro view of individual artworks exhibited in each Biennial. They also reveal the macro overarching tendencies in the five Biennials. Opening the 'Tehran Biennials' catalogues reveals the curatorial history of the artworks contained. Bringing the images beside each other represents a single body of artworks, collectively assigning a group identity while carrying forward their individuality and retaining their original status as when they were exhibited. Here, after five decades, we can go back in time to visit Tehran Biennials. Time and distance allow for a better understanding of individual artists, the strengths and weaknesses of the different Biennials, and enables us to identify and differentiate the early stages in the development of Iranian contemporary art.

This research employs 'action research' methodology, which constructs cycles of studio production and reflection through critical and visual analysis. My studio practice combines traditional (formal and technical) strategies with critical approaches that look at

⁴ 436 images of the artworks exhibited in Tehran Biennials published in the Biennials' catalogues. I saw a few of them in different exhibitions such as *Global/Local 1960–2015: Six Artists from Iran* (January– April 2016), Grey Art Gallery, New York University.

the role of ideology in the visual production. ‘To explore the meaning of images is to recognize that they are produced within dynamics of social power and ideology’ (Sturken & Cartwright, 2009, p. 22).

Therefore, this research juxtaposed the theoretic, historic, and artistic aspects that formed this research based on a ‘self-observer’ and ‘observer of others’ process (Gray & Malins, 2004, pp. 20-21). Self-observation introduces a critical point of view in the practice part of this research. Analysing the Tehran Biennials has been fundamental to introduce the perspective and experiences of the modern Iranian artists who investigated their national identity in their artworks.

Exploring these artworks has enabled me understand more fully the complexity of the historical process of modernisation in Iranian art and has provided me with conceptual tools—the interpretation of symbols, analyses of metaphors, and the significance of historical references—that I can refine and apply to the twenty-first century.

I reflect these conceptual tools in my practice. At a micro, local level, we are what we represent: a careful or careless selection of different layers of the social and historical context in which we live. Our everyday lives are composed of movements back and forth behind the scenes and on the stage, where we present our ‘selves’. Society does not provide us with clear instructions on how to act. Indirectly, society confines and forms us through a process of representation, mediated by language and other symbolic systems. These systems, historically, construct and, at the same time, confine our experience of forming our multi-faceted identity.

1.3. Framework: The Conceptual Aspect of the Thesis

This study accepts an understanding of identity as a combination and negotiation of different elements, which can be explained by the metaphor of layers and layering. Identity is not one-dimensional, but is comprised of multiple layers, each layer

representing one aspect of a person's identity and building additional layers through relationships and interactions with other people and through socio-political changes and social-historical memory. This enquiry demonstrates that in the art under analysis—an art derived from a narrative and depictive tradition—we will see how images and symbols are representative of both an interior and exterior world. In my practice, I explore the depiction of the layers of my identity, while I am researching the way that Iranian modern artists in the mid-twentieth century depicted their view of Iranian national identity in their works. This practice-based research is set between the different layers of historical facts, general themes, and art practices. The layers overlap and, at some points, they are transparent; by looking at one, we can see the other. In other cases, they are opaque and cover up all other layers. Reflected in these multiple layers are the history of negotiation, struggle, and reconciliation between the different, sometimes competing, sometimes, supporting, elements of identity.

1.3.1. Identity

Identity 'touches each one of us, reverberating within and throughout individual, social and cultural domains. The relationship between these is contingent, or in prospect, not already accomplished or given. Identity can be described as a process which entails differentiation between the self, not-self and other' (Steyn 1997, p. 1). Identity brings past and future together and explains the present time. It constructs the historical memory of a group of people who are living together as a nation.

My understanding of a person's identity is one formed by his or her individuality developing within social and cultural factors. 'By living in society, we live in ideology, and systems representation are the vehicles of the ideology' (Sturken & Cartwright 2009, p. 70). Individuals' identities are a combination of different aspects of an ideology represented in the social and cultural domains. Ideology is defined as 'the shared set of values and beliefs that exist within a given society and through which individuals live out

their relations to social institutions and structures. Ideology refers to the way that certain concepts and values are made to seem like natural, inevitable aspects of everyday life' (Sturken & Cartwright 2009, p. 445).

1.3.2. Iranian identity

Iranian identity is a collective feeling among the people who live in the historical lands of Iran and share historical experiences and cultural tradition (Ashraf 2012b). 'For about a century, Iranians, as "the first historical people" in the world, to use Hegel's statement, have been dealing with a crisis of identity as the result of problems they have faced in the reconstruction of their past, on the one hand, and the determination of their role in the modern world, on the other' (Moussavi-Aghdam 2014, p. 133). This historical self-conception is an essential part of the modern Iranian identity. It has been a focal feature in re-defining and reproducing the Iranian identity on a new basis. It is against this background that the Iranian state in the twentieth century tried to construct a new national identity, which took Iranian heritage as a starting point for renewal. Alongside cultural and technological influences from travel and trade, Persian and more recently Iranian self-image has been seen through the lens of Western academic studies.

Therefore, Iranian society, especially its intellectuals, started to know the West as a manifestation of modernity, while the West perceived Iran as a land of natural resources—an exotic, mysterious, and authentic culture. Worthy of exploration, a land having a very different history and culture but highly sophisticated world view.

1.3.3. Western impact: Orientalism perspective

Western studies about East (Orient) were published as orientalism studies. Iranian studies, a subset of orientalism studies, is an interdisciplinary field whose areas of interest involve the history, literature, art and culture of Iranian peoples. Exemplars such as the establishment of institutions such as the SOAS school of the University of London, founded in 1916 as the School of Oriental Studies, and The British Institute of

Persian Studies, established in 1961, to support research on Iran and the Persianate world, have helped to expand and publish academic research about Iran. In addition, academics, authors, and archaeologists such as Arthur Upham Pope and Henry Corbin influenced the way that Iranians, especially intellectuals, think of themselves and, through Western interpretations, provided a platform for Iranians to acquire knowledge about their cultural heritage and ancient history.

Orientalism is a dialogue, based on a distinction between Occident (West) and Orient (East). This dialogue is the basis of the West's representation of the East. As Karl Marx said of Easterners, 'They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented' (quoted by Said 2003, p. 293). Edward Said used the term orientalism in three interdependent senses: as an academic field, as a style of thought based on the distinction made between 'the Orient' and 'the Occident', and as 'a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient' (Said 2003, pp. 2-3).

The role of these modes of thinking can be seen in the way orientalist painters represented the Orient in their works, creating a visual culture about the East. 'Orientalist painter' is an extended term that can refer to 'a large number of artists who produced representations of the Orient, including South Asia and the Far East, between the eighteenth and the twentieth centuries' (MacKenzie 1995, p. 43).

Orientalist painters from the eighteenth to the twentieth century travelled to the East. Some of the orientalist artists established their 'studios in the East and sold portraits, street scenes, and topographical studies as souvenirs to travellers' (MacKenzie 1995, p. 48). Many of them saw the Middle East 'with total awe for the most minute

⁵ Arthur Upham Pope (1881-1969), quoting from Noel Siver (2005), 'American educator, author, and ardent advocate of Persian art and architecture. From the 1920s until his death in 1969 Pope introduced and promoted Persian art and culture through publications, exhibitions, congresses, lectures and graduate-level courses. His best-known work is "A Survey of Persian Art" (q.v.), published in six massive and well-illustrated volumes by Oxford University Press in 1938-39'.

⁶ Henry Corbin (1903- 1978), quoting from Shayegan (2011), 'French philosopher and orientalist best known as a major interpreter of the Persian role in the development of Islamic thought'.

detail of colour, light, skin, fabric, and texture’ (Davies 2005, p. 49). Orientalist painters—David Roberts⁷, Gustav Bauernfeind⁸, Herman David Solomon Corrodi⁹, Jean-Léon Gérôme¹⁰, Fredrick Arthur Bridgman¹¹—explored many different subjects such as Middle Eastern and Mediterranean history, desert climate conditions, the great pilgrim caravans, and Islamic architecture (Davies 2005, p. 51). These paintings do not only represent a genre, but a cliché of their approach. (Figure 7)

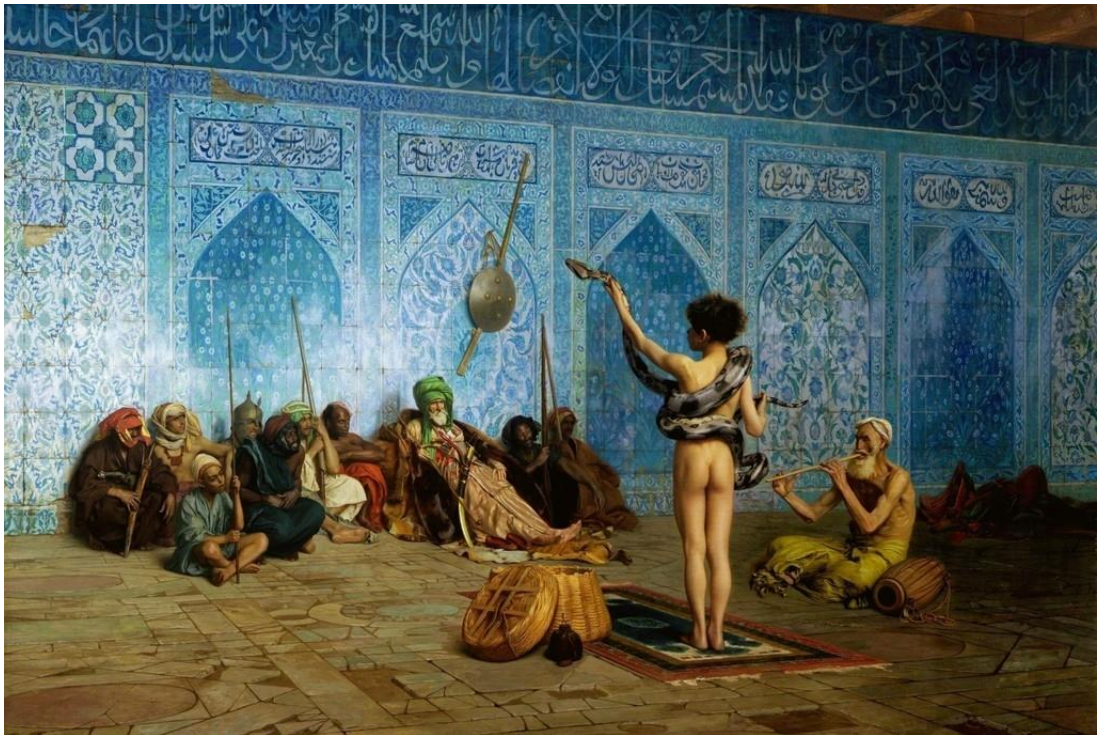


Figure 7 Jean-Léon Gérôme, *The Snake Charmer*, 1879, oil on canvas, 83.8 × 122.1 cm

MacKenzie (1995) believed that orientalist painters had informed the modern critics about orientalism. They ‘portrayed the decayed and backwards civilisations of the East in order to render them more amenable to the economic, cultural and political transformations of imperialism’ (p. 67). He continued that if orientalism is read in

⁷ Scottish orientalists (1796-1864).

⁸ German orientalists (1848-190).

⁹ Italian orientalists, (1844-1905).

¹⁰ French orientalists (1844-1904)

¹¹ American Orientalists (1847-1928)

alternative and more convincing ways, the nineteenth-century orientalists were culturally conservative and technically innovative. They found in the East ancient verities lost in their own civilisations and tried to discover echoes of a world that they had lost (MacKenzie 1995, p. 67).

Regardless of the genuine intentions of orientalist painters, their images formed our conception and visual culture about East. By showing different subjects such as daily life, historical, and religious sites and towns, these paintings preserve the image of East in the eighteenth, nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. They formed our contemporary understanding of the ancient East. In other words, the visual knowledge and memory that we, Easterners, have about our past were created from the point of view of Westerners who tried to discover echoes of a world that they lost in the East.

It is notable that in Iran before the late Safavid era (1502-1736), painting was most commonly applied to book illustration. This tradition, commonly called the Persian miniature, was fundamentally different from European paintings that remained a vibrant visual culture for contemporary Europe. Many European paintings of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries give valuable information about the landscape, the daily life of different classes of peoples, their lifestyles and living conditions, and the tools and clothes of the era. However, Iranians used oral and written literature to preserve their ancient heritage and culture, and even in Persian miniatures we see epic poems, myths, and religious themes rather than the real world of historical buildings, landscapes, and still-life. The influence of Persian classic literature can be traced in Iranian modern and contemporary arts. Moreover, museums which were built to house archaeological discoveries, such as the Iran National Museum (*Muze-ye Iran-e Bastan*) built in 1972, gathered antique items and assembled them together for the first time. They made visible the Iranians' ancient pictorial heritage which derived from to their pre-Islamic and Islamic eras forebears.

The lack of documentation concerning visual culture helped the orientalist paintings gain their current stature as an archive of the East visual heritage, used not only by the West but also by Easterners themselves. Based on this conception, we can argue that in the light of orientalist paintings' perspective toward the East, Iranian visual artists found these pictures as a window to their visual heritage and that these helped them to improve their vision of their past. Accepting the orientalist painters' perspective gives rise to the notion of internalised orientalism, meaning that the image that we, Easterners, have about our past is the lost image in the West civilisation. It also creates a mysterious conception toward the visual practices of Eastern artists. Consequently, the Eastern artists represent the unseen parts of their culture and the images that we cannot see in the West, namely, the mysterious or nostalgic images that please the Western audience and attract Western art markets and collectors. Orientalist painters, in the lost images, may have represented the exotic, mysterious, and authentic conception of the past after they had visited the large, cryptic ancient sites, buildings and sculptures which have been unknown to contemporary people.

The Western historians, archaeologists, politicians, and artists who have studied the East and investigated its history and culture lived in the East. They tried to represent and shape the Easterners' lifestyle and culture in all aspects based on the Western values, which recall the initial objection to the orientalist conception as claimed by Marx, '[...] they [Easterners] must be represented' (Said 2003, p. 293). For instance, the Western researchers and scholars inevitably saw Damascus and Jerusalem through the literature of Shakespeare and the Bible, rendering the reality of Eastern culture and behaviours subject to their expectations. From Said (2003), if we concede orientalism as a 'Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient' (p. 3), we accept the notion that the West had the power to re-create the East based on Western interests, giving a new cultural identity to the peoples who live in that part of the world by a

culture external to these peoples.

1.3.4. The Western impact: Modernism

The Eastern states such as Iran and Turkey facilitated the Western influence by adapting certain Western values and employing them in their societies. It is important to bear in mind that Iranian society did not become familiar with the concept of a “modern” society in the same way the Western nations did. The idea of *modernity*, as Marshal Berman believes, roughly started at the beginning of the sixteenth century after which Western societies passed through three different phases to reach their current concept of modernity. The first phase lasted until the end of the eighteenth century and witnessed some aspects of modern life, but did not see the construction of modernity as a definition of new socio-cultural attributes of people’s lives. The second phase began under the lights of the great revolutionary wave that swept the late 1700s, such as the French Revolution, which forced a sense of modernity on every aspect of personal, social, and political life. In the third phase, the process of modernisation affected world culture, achieving profound success in the visual and literary arts, but at the same time shattering into fragments resulted in losing touch with its roots (Berman 1983, pp. 16-17).

We can trace the influence of the West on Iran’s culture to the late Qajar dynasty, the last old kingdom in Iran, in the eighteenth century. At this time, the idea of nationalism was promoted as one of Western inspiration. ‘The nationalism as it developed towards the end of Qajar era and the Pahlavi period was itself a product of the Western influence and nationalism’ (Yarshater 2015, interview). In this respect, modern national sentiments developed under the influence of the Western ideology of nationalism. In Europe, a nation state would invest in institutions that reflected its particular self-image—a national theatre, a national gallery a national art school—all centralised and state sponsored. In Iran, it was in the Qajar era (1794 – 1925) that

Iranians became familiar with the products of the modern world such as electricity, railways, new educational systems, and opera salons. The construction of Tekia Dowlat, the Royal Theatre salon in Tehran, which was built in the 1870s, shows the influence of modernity in representing Iranian traditional arts. Interestingly, ‘according to many European visitors, its dazzling splendour and intensity of dramatic action overshadowed even the opera houses in Western capitals’ (Chelkowski 2009). By Reza Shah’s order, this salon was destroyed in 1947 and replaced by a bank building (Rubin 1994, p. 215).

The Qajar state, on a small scale, established schools that followed Western styles and recruited Western teachers. The government also sent students to European countries and employed Western counsellors. Later, they imported new technologies and created industries that helped in expanding Western modern-world values into Iranian society. These changes introduced notions of a modern society to upper-class Iranians. Ordinary Iranian society started to recognise the effect of modernity in daily life at the onset of the Pahlavi dynasty in the twentieth century. These changes coincided with the third phase of modernity in the West. In the twentieth century, ‘the process of modernization expands to take in a virtually whole world, and the developing world culture of modernism achieves spectacular triumphs in art and thought’ (Berman 1983, p. 17).

As discussed above, one of the reflections of orientalism could be seen in Easterners’ adoption of Western notions about the East. In the twentieth century, Iranian society underwent a significant socio-cultural change due to the Reza Shah’s modernisation policy, which compelled Iranian society to accept Western values, such as wearing Western-style clothes, the unveiling of women, and the introduction of European legal and educational systems. The impact these changes implanted in the minds of most Iranians was the notion that the West was more advanced than the East. To have a better life, they thought that they needed to follow Western styles in the

political, cultural, and social fields. By looking at themselves from a Western perspective, the core meaning of orientalism is activated: 'The West is better than the East.'

It is important to mention here that although the Iranian state tried to import the appearance of modernity, it did not accept one of the basic tenets of modernity, namely, a system of democratic rule. Rather, the Iranian state's aim was to sustain hegemony over the country. The result was a society that modernised some cultural and economic practices, but never gave up its old and traditional ways of thinking along the political dimension. In other words, Iranians were confined within the old social structures while attempting to adopt modernity, which created contradictions and eventual fractures in Iran's socio-political practices.

The discourse against the Westernisation of the Iranian society arose amongst Iranian intellectuals. The treatise *Occidentosis: a plague from the West (Gharbzadegi)* written in 1962 by Jalal Al-Ahmad (1923- 1969) an Iranian writer, thinker, and a social and political critic led the way in openly challenging the importation of western mores. He used the term 'Occidentosis', which is translated as 'Westernisation' and 'West toxination'. He described the relationship between Iran and West as unidirectional, in which Iran imported material and cultural commodities and models in different fields like industry and education, including the Iranian's own view of themselves. Dariush Ashoori (b. 1938), an Iranian researcher, author and translator believed that the Occidentosis theory - as a historical criticism of the relation between 'us' and 'West' was a form of our 'historical consciousness' in the contemporary era. He also argued that Al-Ahmad's book represented an intellectual position which counterposed the world of traditional culture and the modern world, which he called a 'third world' position (Ashoori 2009).

The above discussion touches upon the issue that Iranian society faced in the last century when the idea of modernity was introduced to the country. Iranians from all walks of life questioned the roles of tradition and modernity in their society. At that time,

the question of identity imposed itself heavily, making a balance between the traditional world and the modern one an important issue for Iranians. Through the traditional world, Iranians shared historical memory, heritage, and culture. Into this milieu, the West introduced a heretofore unknown concept of a modern society, based on the Western historical memory and cultural heritage. The tension between this chiefly Western ideation superimposed on the context of the values of tradition in Iran lies at heart of Ashoori's notion of 'third world'.

1.3.5. The Origin of the Iranian Nation: Perspectives

The primary concern of the Iranian intellectuals in the twentieth century was to reconceptualise the origin of the Iranian nation. Three main perspectives delivered different answers to this challenge. First, the romantic perspective reflected that the 'nations are natural and essential elements in history since time "immemorial"' (Ashraf 2012a). Second, modernist or post-modernist perspectives rejected the romantic view and defined the 'nation as a modern construct' (Ashraf 2012a). Finally, the 'civic nation' is 'the product of modernity and as such could not be applied retrospectively to pre-modern times, but it strongly rejects the modernist and post-modernist contention of a radical discontinuity between a modern nation and its historical past' (Ashraf 2012a). The three perspectives discuss the different aspects of identity from various perspectives, meaning that they are complementary rather than exclusive. All of them influenced, to varying degrees, Iranian intellectuals and formed Iranian society's conception of itself as a nation.

From a post-colonial point of view, the three perspectives might be seen emanating from a Western school of thought, reflecting the influence of the West on investigating the Iranian identity. The effects of orientalist's views as being of Western influence are very evident. For example, Said (2003) has shown the importance of such influence in the evaluations of cultures and people:

Orientalism is never far from what Denys Hay has called the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans as against at 'those' non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe: the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures. (p. 7)

European orientalists, as Mostafa Vaziri¹² (1993) claimed, highlighted the pre-Islamic and old national elements amongst Iranians. This was achieved through the transformation of Iran, as a geographical label, 'into a people endowed with all kinds of national and racial characteristics' (p. 3), which was partly done in order to advocate for the European political and racial ideology, arising from the authority of European orientalism. It can thus be argued that the pre-Islamic Iran's emphasis on the romantic-nationalist perspective is a direct result of the European influence. 'The resulting interest in antiquity awakened (or perhaps engendered) the pre-Islamic and ancient national consciousness of Iran' (p. 3).

Following European orientalists, Iranian thinkers and historians have explored their ancient history. Vaziri argued that the 'historians and historiography in Iran have been deeply affected by Western historical, archaeological, and philological finds and have put very little effort into developing their own systematic study of history, whether about Iran or about the outside world' (Vaziri 1993, p. 152). Thus, Iranian scholars adopted Western epistemological frames and methods to study their ancient and contemporary histories. In other words, we can trace the internalised orientalism in Iranians' way of thinking.

¹² Mostafa Vaziri, as of this writing, is a lecturer at the University of Innsbruck.

Before the modern era in Iran, Iranians knew themselves from classical Persian literature such as *Shahnameh*¹³ and other poems and mythical texts, which served as an ideological foundation of the Pahlavis' state. Iranian intellectuals in the early twentieth century attempted to demonstrate their identity by relying on their national history as represented in the history of the modern West (Moussavi-Aghdam 2014, p. 132). From the outset of the Pahlavi Dynasty in the 1920s, the state found the romantic narration of Iranian identity as their official ideology and tried to revive consciousness of ancient Achaemenian¹⁴ glory. The state constructed a modern Iranian national identity mostly based on pre-Islamic Iranian heritage combined with modern world values. The emergence of a romantic, nationalist perspective was influenced by the writings of both Western and Iranian scholars in the field of Iranian studies (Ashraf 2012a). They functioned as an ideological foundation for Iranian nationalist groups (Ashraf 2012a).

Similar circumstances and perspective are reflected in the research dealing with Iranian art history and thus shape the interpretation and understanding of our visual heritage. The impact of Western influence in Iranian art history is indisputable. The very first history was written by an American author and published in the west. This author was Arthur Upham Pope (1881-1969) who, along with his German editor Ernst Herzfeld (1879-1948), placed 'special emphasis on ancient Persian, articulated vis-à-vis the contemporary history of modern Western art' (Moussavi-Aghdam 2014, p. 135). Also, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, European and American archaeologists wrote about ancient Iran. Rizvi (2007) stated, 'Books on the art and architecture of Iran, which

¹³ *Shahnameh* (the book of kings) written by Abu'l-Qasim Ferdowsi Tusi (940–1020 CE) 'is the last and definitive retelling of the Iranian national saga in verse. This monumental poem of some 50,000 verses, completed in 400/1010 and dedicated to Mahmud of Gazna. The manuscript covers the whole of the legendary and, from the time of Alexander onward, the semi-legendary history of Iran. The poem begins with the "first king" Gayomart and continues through to the Arab conquest. It is justly regarded by Persians as their national epic *par excellence*' (Blois 1995).

¹⁴ Achaemenid dynasty ruled 700 to 330 B.C, also known as the first Persian Empire.

was called Persia by Western nations until 1935,¹⁵ were produced primarily in Europe and the United States and were based on archaeological data as well as material objects popular in the art market of the time' (p. 45). Consequently, Western historians and archaeologists had a very significant role in introducing Iranian ancient (pre-Islamic) heritage to Iranians. In other words, Iranians' knowledge about their own past reached them through the prism of the Western scholars' perspective.

The tendency to adopt the perspective of Western scholars in researching Iran's ancient heritage was followed by the 'nationalist and secularist views of Reza Shah's state and Iranian intellectuals alike, who were seeking their "authentic" identity with reference to an "integral", "monolithic," and "glorious" past"' (Moussavi-Aghdam 2014, p. 135).

The modernist and post-modernist perspectives can illustrate the integration of the different social groups in Iran. Although Iran included different groups of people with different languages and cultures, the Reza Shah's modernisation policy (1925-1941) could construct them as one modern nation. For example, all students with different linguistic backgrounds had to learn Persian at school as the official language of the country. In Pahlavi era, Persian was promoted as the 'key linking instrument for creating a national Iranian body and for instilling a cultural consciousness that Persian was the medium that brought cultural splendour' (Keshmirshekan 2013, p. 12). Modernisation policy brought dramatic changes to all aspects of Iranian life and contributed to the upheaval of the traditional pattern that had developed over many years, based on which the society had formed its identity. Subsequently, Iranians had to create a new pattern based on their new situation, specifically as occurring 'when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which "old" traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable' (Hobsbawm 1983, p.

¹⁵ Europeans known Iran as Persia until 1934 but people who lived in that geographical border known it as Iran. In 1934 Reza Shah Pahlavi, prompted by his Berlin Legation, decreed that henceforth the name 'Iran' would replace 'Persia' (Abrahamian 1982, p.143).

4). Artists during the 1940s and 1950s attempted reconstruct their works as Iranian rather than Western. These artists tended to embrace subjects and themes that would be immediately recognised as Iranian (Keshmirshekan 2009, p. 15). Thus, at the time when artists wanted to be modern and make modern art as equals with their Western compatriots, they returned to their traditions and heritage to recognise their identity and distinguish their national identity from Westerners in international festivals.

In contrast to the Iranian state's official ideology, which highlighted pre-Islamic Iran's heritage and ignored the Islamic tradition, most Iranians drew on the Islamic heritage to construct their identity. It was a source of symbols that formed the Iranian popular culture in the middle of the twentieth century. Analyses of the artworks exhibited in Tehran Biennials show a significant influence of the religious narratives on artists. For instance, the major *Saqqā-kāna* art movement in the 1960s, which appeared in the works exhibited in the third Tehran Biennial, was inspired by Shi'ite religious elements represented in abstract form. In these works, artists tried to make a balance between their Islamic heritage and the modern styles of art.

In this respect, two significant positions existed in the Iranian society at that time. The first was the official status of the state, which wanted revive the pre-Islamic heritage and introduce it to modern values, and the second was the middle and working class Iranians, who relied on their Islamic- Shi'ite- heritage in constructing their identity. In this socio-cultural and political struggle, Iranian modern artists, for example, the *Saqqā-kāna* Movement, tried to combine both trends; they adhered to modernism as a new frame of investigation and representation in their construction of Islamic symbols and themes.

Investigating my identity in this practice-based research showed me that the role of religious subjects, symbols, and elements in my works is slight, although I was born and raised in an Islamic country. It contrasts significantly the works of modern Iranian

artists who exhibited their works in the Tehran Biennials. Although they lived in a secular state, those artists relied heavily on the depiction of religious symbols and subjects. This understanding might indicate the ideological tension in the Iranian society between the hegemonic ideology, which defined the macro structures of the society, such as laws and the educational system, and the individuals' different beliefs. Individuals are not merely passive recipients of state's ideology, and throughout the biennales we see subtle forms of political and cultural resistance.

As discussed earlier, the three perspectives that explain the Iranian identity are not mutually exclusive. My conception of my identity as an Iranian woman is a blend of all three perspectives. While I was learning about Iran's history and its ancient civilisations or classical Persian literature, for example, *Shahnameh*, I became familiar with the romantic perspective that I belong to an old nation from which I inherit material achievements, spiritual values, and, more importantly, ancient glories. I look back to my heritage while living a modern life, which has its requirements and necessities that do not associate me with the past. Finally, at some point, I became fully involved in current life; having no chance to look back at my history or to contemplate the ancient glories of my nation. At such a convergence, the three perspectives merge and give three different points of departure for investigating various elements of the identity.

1.3.6. A Modern Iranian National Identity: Cultural Codes

Knowledge production is essential in people's identification of their identity. Since 'collections and exhibitions are historical, social and political events' (Lidchi 2013, p. 157), states invest in them to construct their national identities in accordance with the dominant ideology. By organising a cultural event, the state tries to create a new national identity to represent its ideal Iran. 'Members of the same culture must share sets of concepts, images and ideas which enable them to think and feel about the world, and thus to interpret the world, in roughly similar ways. They must share, broadly speaking,

the same ‘cultural codes’ (Hall 2013, p. xx). Therefore, the Tehran Biennials were a social, cultural, and political event established by the Iranian state with the hope that such an event would lead to the formulation of a modern Iranian national identity through art. To these ends, the Tehran Biennials were subjected to the hegemonic ideology in Iran. As Gramsci suggested, hegemonic ideologies seek social and cultural consent by proliferating particular ideas while excluding others, and allowing specific cultural practices while preventing others (as noted in Said 2003, p. 7). The Ministry of Culture was the founder of these events and necessarily exercised great power within the government. The Ministry appointed the Biennale’s organisers and jurors, indirectly exercising influence over artists and artworks. The artist selected represented the broad aims of the regime. The analysis of the works exhibited in the Tehran Biennials showed that the Iranian artists were influenced by the need to create new self-images woven from essential strands—Iranian pre-Islamic and Islamic heritages, national sentiment, and Western influence.

Since Biennials are a historically Western art event, studying them can explain the role of the West in Iranians’ understanding and representation of their identity. This study, therefore, aims at examining how the different elements of the Iranian identity are brought together by using Western concepts and styles and at providing a rigorous investigation of how orientalism and modernism influenced Iranians’ perception of their nation.

1.4. Historical Review

Artworks are reflections of the personal experiences of artists who are shaped by their social and cultural environments. In this sense, must be cognizant of the influence of the socio-political changes to which Iranian artists, as part of their society, have borne witness throughout the twentieth century. Iranian modern and contemporary art coincided with enormous transformations in Iran’s social, political and cultural systems.

Iranian society underwent a Constitutional Revolution (1905-1909) at the beginning of the twentieth century and an Islamic Revolution (1977-1979). The country witnessed the toppling of Reza Khan in a coup d'état in February 1921, the occupation of the country by the Soviet Union and Britain during the first WWI, and a further period of occupation by the Soviet Union, Britain, and USA in WWII; Iran then observed the ascendance of Mohammad Reza Shah to the throne in 1941, the August 1953 coup d'état against the liberal Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh and the White Revolution in 1962.

In the intervening period between the Constitutional Revolution and the Islamic Revolution Iran underwent a major socioeconomic transformation. The processes of urbanization and industrialization, the expansion of the educational and communication systems, and the creation of a centralized bureaucratic state all served to swell the ranks of the modern classes, especially the intelligentsia and the industrial proletariat, and to reduce the relative size of the traditional classes, notably the bazaar petit bourgeoisie and its clerical allies. (Abrahamian 1982, p. 530)

Abrahamian's narrative captured how different aspects of Iranian society underwent a remarkably fast process of modernisation in the twentieth century, although the beginning of the modernization started in the Safavid era (1501-1736), relatively late by Western comparison. While modernisation in Iran was a late starter, it accelerated and had a widespread effect due to Iran's geosocial history as a continental crossing point for ideas and practices. As a society, Iran has long been flexible and pragmatic in adapting new ideas, yet it has maintained strong and distinctive traditions.

1.4.1. The West Influence on Iranian Artists and Art

The very first evidence of the Western influence on Iranian artists and art can be seen in the late Safavid era (see table 1). Two main factors resulted in the East's and West's respective influences on Iran's arts in the late Safavid dynasty quite noticeable. First, in the Shah Abbas I era (r. 1588-1629), diplomatic and economic relations with

Europe and India were developed and foreign ambassadors and merchants were welcomed in Iran (Canby 1999, p. 96). Second, in the Shah Abbas II era (r. 1642-1666), artists were actually sent to Rome to learn about European painting (Falk 1972, p. 19). Hence, the foundation of Iranian modern and contemporary arts was set down under the influence of eighteenth and nineteenth century's European schools. For example, techniques such as oil painting on canvas, lacquerwares, glass and Europeanising style of painting had all been introduced by the late Safavid period to Iranian artists (Canby 1999, p. 176). Those influences not only affected the material aspects of the Iranians' art, but also inspired them in terms of the subjects and themes that they depicted. Illustrating the Persian literature masterpieces, such as *Shahnameh*,¹⁶ was the primary objective of classical Persian painting.¹⁷ In the late Safavid era, in addition to the illustrations, it was common to decorate palaces walls¹⁸ with fresco. Artist made 'easel paintings' and drawings in the western tradition that were not intended for book production. The subjects of these paintings were people's daily lives: Darvish, pilgrims, shepherds, landscapes, and the like. The influence of these type of themes and subjects on the Iranian art continued till the middle of the twentieth century as evident in the artworks exhibited in Tehran Biennials (discussed more fully later in Section 3.2). These subjects recall the influence of orientalist painting.

¹⁶ The Book of Kings.

¹⁷ *Šāh-nāma-ye Šāhior Šāh-nāma-ye Šāh Tahmāsbī* is one of the most popular versions of this book illustrated in the early Safavid period. *The book* was completed in the mid-1540s and commissioned by Shah Esmā'il for his son Šāh Tahmāsb.

¹⁸ One of the good examples of this type of painting remains on the Āli Qāpu's walls. Āli Qāpu is a grand palace in Isfahan, Iran, located on the western side of the Maidān-e Naqsh-e Jahān, opposite to Masjed-e Sheikh Lotf-ollāh.

Table 1

<i>Historical Periods</i>			
Period	Chronology	Event	
Safavied Dynasty	1502 - 1736		
Qajar Dynasty	1794 - 1925		
Constitutional Revolution (enqelab-i Mashroote)	1905- 1909	Resulted in the establishment of Iran's first parliament or <i>Majlis</i> on 30 Dec 1906	
World War I	1914- 1918		
Pahlavi Dynasty	1925- 1979		
Reza Shah Pahlavi	r. 1925- 1941	Abdication	
World War II	1939- 1945		
Allied occupation	1941- 1945/6		
Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi	r. 1941- 1979		
Coup d'état	Aug 1953		
White Revolution (enqelab-i Sipid)	1962		
Islamic revolution	1977- 1979		
Islamic Republic of Iran	1979 -Now		

The first direct contact with modernity and Iranian society goes back to Qajar era (1781-1925), specifically to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. During this period, the influence of the West made itself felt in Iranian society in two ways. First, there an economic penetration that led to the emergence of a cross-regional middle class. Second, a political penetration familiarised this middle class with a new Western concept, the melding of occupations and aspirations to form a distinctive intelligentsia (Abrahamian 1982, p. 50). In addition, Iran's relationship with Europe resulted in 'the revival of the translation of foreign texts and dispatch of talented young students to mainly European countries to further their studies' (Hosseini 2011, p. 21). During this time, the first widespread adoption of Western artistic techniques and worldview became

common among Iranian artists (Keshmirshekan 2009, p. 10). Also, in 1842, the first photographic camera was imported into Iran, and photography became a political tool for recording information from that era. These photographic images later became a very rich visual resource for artists to investigate their Iranian heritage.

Regarding painting, realism in European art can be identified in the depiction of objects. Oil painting had been one of the common materials used by artists. European painting styles had some influence on Qajar painting, such as in the heavy application of paint, and vibrant and saturated colours. In Qajar painting, still-lives were very realistic; humans were portrayed idealistically; and women, whose appearance was unusual in Qajar art, were depicted wearing very little despite the fact that Iran, at that time, had a very conservative Islamic society and women had to wear chador in public. In the twentieth century, chador had become an important pictorial object in artworks and we can trace its depiction in many works exhibited in Tehran Biennials (see Section 3.1).

1.4.2. The Influences of Orientalism and Modernism

The modernisation of Iran was accelerated by the accession of Nassir al-Din Shah in 1848 and under the premiership of Amīr Kabīr (Mīrzā Taqī Khan, Premier, 1848-1851). At this time, 'a large number of students were sent abroad who, upon return, were employed as administrators, specialists, managers, instructors, and artists' (Hosseini 2011, p. 21). Establishing Dār al-Fonūn (Tehran Polytechnic School), the first modern institution in Iran, in 1851 by Amir Kabir was a remarkable moment in Iran's educational system. European instructors, mainly French, Austrian, and Italian, trained students from the upper classes in the fields of medicine, engineering, military sciences, music, and foreign languages. After their return, Iranian students who were sent abroad generally became faculty members (Keddie 1991, p.182; Hosseini 2011, p. 21). According to Hosseini (2011), 'It was during this time that higher education became public and broke

out of the closed circle of clerics and royal court' (p. 21). Access to public education was a key moment when ordinary Iranians were exposed to new aspects of modern society.

The first modern art school in Iran, Academy of Fine Art¹⁹ (Madrasa-i Sanayi-i Mustazrafa), was founded by Kamal al-Mulk (Mohammad Ghaffari, 1848-1940) in 1911. Iranian art historian, Ruyin Pakbazz²⁰ (1998, p. 889) suggested that this year was a starting point for Iranian contemporary art (see Table 2). Kamal al-Mulk was a former student of Dār al-Fonūn and he promoted his art studies by a scholarly journey to Florence, Rome, Paris, and Vienna for three years. During his trip, Kamal al-Mulk ignored European contemporary art and spent all his time study European Renaissance and Baroque masters to extend his technical knowledge. Accordingly, he preferred European official art; the academic style favoured by the salon. On his return to Iran, 'Kamal al-Mulk tried to implement a Western artistic, educational system in his Madrasa, which 'blended traditional apprenticeship system with a European academy-style approach' (Keshmirshakan 2009, p. 11). Kamal al-Mulk's Madrasa 'never developed into a fully-fledged academy;' however, 'it confirmed the supremacy of Western or European art in Iran and also launched the careers of many great artists who continued to follow his teachings' (Keshmirshakan 2009, p. 12). The impact of Kamal al-Mulk's madrasa was fundamental to the early development of twentieth-century Iranian art. Many artists who attended this madrasa continued Kamal al-Mulk's art style. However, some of the young artists, such as Hossein Taherzadeh Behzad (1887-1925) and Mirza Hadi-Khan Tajvidi (1892-1940), tried to renew the Iranian classical miniature painting. Their endeavours can be seen in some of the works exhibited in the Tehran Biennials (see Section 2.5.9).

¹⁹ Keshmirshakan (2009) noted, 'Among the subjects taught were oil and watercolour paintings, sculpture, carpet weaving, drawing and, later, lithography' (p. 11).

²⁰ Ruyin Pakbaz is an Iranian Art historian, author, critic, and contemporary Iranian painter.

Table 2

Art Schools

School	Year/Place	Comment
Dar al-Funun (Tehran Polytechnic School)	1851 Tehran	
Madrasa-i Sanayi'-i Mustazafa (First Academy of Fine Art)	1911 Tehran	
Hunaristan-i Kamal al-Mulk (Kamal al-Mulk Fine Arts High School)	1928 Tehran	Founded by Ismail Ashtiani; after Kamal al-Mulk resignation had been reorganised and renamed School of Crafts and the Arts (Madrasa-I Sanayi 'va pisha va hunar)
Madrasa Sanayi-i Qadima (School of Traditional Arts)	1929 Tehran	
High School of Traditional Arts	1929 Isfahan	The aim of this school was to follow the development of the School of Traditional Arts.
University of Tehran	1934 Tehran	Designed as a centre for scientific and cultural modernism
Faculty of Fine Art	1939 Tehran	Under the direction of André Godard, French archaeologist and architect. In 1945 the classes were moved to their permanent home, when the new building of the Academy of Fine Arts was completed in the southeaster corner of the Tehran University campus.
Hunarkada-i Hunar-hay-i ziba (College of Fine Arts)	1940 Tehran	Merged the School of Architecture with the School of Crafts and the Arts.
Hunarkada-i Hunar-hay i Taz'ini (Tehran Faculty of Decorative Arts)	1961 Tehran	The purpose was training experts in the applied arts.
Daneshgah-i Honar-i Tehran (Tehran University of Art)	1980 Tehran	Five different institutes of arts (Farabi University, Tehran Faculty of Decorative Arts, Tehran Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Conservatory of Music and National Music Studio) combined together and Tehran University of Art was founded.

Opening art schools and offering national scholarships to Iranian students for further study in Europe continued in Pahlavi era. Reza Shah Pahlavi (r. 1925-1941) supported modern and traditional arts such as painting and calligraphy (Keshmirshekan

2009, p. 12). After World War I, Iran suffered from the lack of a central power when Reza Khan came to power in a coup d'état in February 1921. A new era thus started in Iran's history. His 'achievements could be summed up under three headings: building up the infrastructure of a modern state, asserting independence from foreign domination, and launching sociocultural reforms' (Lenczowski 1979, p. xvi). In the Reza Shah era, for the first time since the Safavids, the regime could control society by legislative instruments. It was possible to implement the social, cultural, and economic reforms which reformers such as Prince Abbas Mirza, Amir Kabir, Sepahsalar, Malkum Khan, and the Democrats of the Constitutional Revolution did not achieve during the previous century (Abrahamian 1982, pp. 135-136).

Reza Shah's modernization policy influenced a spectrum of Iranian social life. The government policy in the Pahlavi era (1925-1979) was a decisive factor in the creation of a unified nation. Iranians thus started to define themselves as one national collective. Consequently, substantial changes were witnessed in different fields such as the settlement and disarmament of the tribes, the building of modern armed forces and the bureaucracy, the introduction of Western clothing, the unveiling of women, the construction of roads, railway lines and port facilities, the beginnings of industrialization, and the introduction of European-style legal and educational systems (Hambly 1991). This policy encouraged Iranian society to Westernise itself. However, it was not easy to convince people to change their ideology and lifestyle. In many cases, the government had to use force to make people abide by the new rules.

No less significant, the state implicitly declared its secular character by projecting typically Western material goals; by interference in the people's daily lives with regard to street attire, the unveiling of women and female education; by the introduction of such innovations as European-style family names and a non-Islamic calendar; and by pronouncements and legislation which made it clear that women and members of

religious minorities were now to be regarded as full citizens of the state on an equal footing with Muslim males. (Hambly 1991, p. 233)

This policy was controversial and was at the core of much discussion and research. Ann K. S. Lambton, for instance, accused it of being ‘too quick’ because it failed to synthesise accurately the (Western) new and (Eastern) old (Banani 1961, p. 151). In contrast to some other Eastern leaders, such as Kemal Atatürk in Turkey, who reformed their nations via modernisation policies (like Reza Shah in Iran) and tried to ‘burn the bridges with the past’, Reza Shah ‘not only maintained the institution of monarchy but also promoted a revived consciousness of ancient Achaemenian²¹ glory, particularly through architectural symbolism’ (Lenczowski 1979, p. xvi).²² Interestingly, during this time, policy makers did not press Iranian artists to modernise. Nonetheless, the changing social atmosphere led to substantial changes in Iranian art. Besides, the Western academics who worked in Iran’s universities and the Iranian artists who returned from the West exerted the most influence. Under the influence of modernisation, the art landscape in Iran had taken a new direction.

New professional and cultural values including research methods thus started to grow in the changing Iranian society. The School of Traditional Arts (Madrassa Sanayi-i Qadima), University of Tehran, and the Faculty of Fine Art were founded in 1929, 1934, and 1939 respectively. By establishing these universities and accepting the Western models and methods in teaching and studying, the government familiarised the Iranian society with the culture of the West. André Godard, the French archaeologist and architect, and the first head of the Faculty of Fine Art in Tehran University ‘was

²¹ The Achaemenid Dynasty, also known as the first Persian Empire, ruled from 700 to 330 B.C.

²² Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi (r. 1941-1979) adopted the same policy. He ascended to the throne on September 16, 1941.

commissioned by Merat²³ to structure the foundations of an art school modelled after the École des Beaux-Arts. The same method and curriculum were adopted, taking course outlines and projects translated into Persian and used in teaching' (Keshmirshekan 2013, p. 52). The faculty were a mixture of Iranians and foreigners. The Western teachers included 'Frenchmen Maxim Siroux and Dubreuil, a Swiss named Mores, and an American called Khachik Babluyan who were architects working for Sentab (an architectural consultants company operating in Tehran)' (Mujabi 1998, p. 7). Additionally, Iranian artists and architects incorporated into the faculty Mohsen Forughi, Sadiqi, Heidarian, Obadi, Mohsen Moqaddam, and Madame Ashub, the French wife of Dr Amin Ashubfar (Mujabi 1998, p. 7). Under their supervision, Iranian young artists became familiar with Western art techniques in both technical and subject aspects. Cumulatively, these changes had a significant influence on Iranian art and artists and helped them to adapt new visual languages appropriate to the changing context at the end of the 1950s. The material provided by Western scholars helped the Iranian artists to construct a new Iranian identity.

Between 1941 and 1953, Iran enjoyed an open political system in which the intelligentsia—not the clergy—mobilised the common people against the established structures of power. Socialism and secular nationalism inspired a discontented public (Abrahamian 1982, p. 531). In an atmosphere of change, Iranian artists returned again to Western approaches to art. This decade ended in the August 1953 coup d'état, known in Iran as the 28 Mordad coup and it was directed 'against the liberal Iranian Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh and head of the National Front movement. This coup, allegedly carried out with the support of the CIA, resulted in overthrowing Mosaddegh's nationalist government and establishing an era now referred to as the second period of the Pahlavi monarchy' (Keshmirshekan 2013, p. 91).

²³ Esmail Merat was the Minister of Education and the second dean of the Tehran University from 1938 to 1941.

Teachers and students who graduated from the Faculty of Fine Art of Tehran University participated as some of the organisers, jury members, and artists in the Tehran Biennials. Iranian students who studied within Western-based educational systems learned to see their society and culture the way their teachers did. In other words, Iranians, during the last centuries had come to know themselves and understand their past through Western eyes because Western archaeologists and historians wrote most of the resources that gave them information about their heritage. For example, works exhibited in Tehran Biennials combined western art style with Iranian elements and symbols to represent Iranian nationality and identity. As such, one way of looking at modernity in Iranian artworks is to track artists' styles, techniques, and the materials they used in creating their works.

This artistic endeavour in forging elements and symbols that represent the Iranian identity while responding to Western forms mirrors to a great extent the political elite's systematic process of Westernisation of the Iranian society while simultaneously reviving unique elements of the Iranian (historical) identity. This does not necessarily mean that political systems always control artistic movements. On the contrary, the creative movement offered the politicians a pattern that reconciles the Western influence with Iranian identity, which shows the decisive role of this movement in the formulation of the political tools that created the modern Iranian society.

By the late 1940s, contemporary artists such as Mahmud Javadipur, Ahmad Esfandiari, and Jalil Ziapur, through their exhibitions, lectures, and articles, had exerted considerable influence on modern art in Iranian society. At that time, the Iranian government only accepted the traditional miniature painting and crafts. 'Up to the early 1950's [sic], the only artists that the government institutions recognised as such and undertook to display their works in domestic and foreign exhibitions were miniature paintings and master craftsmen' (Mujabi 1998, p. 16). The first exhibitions of modern art

were held in foreign cultural institutes, such as the Irano-Soviet Cultural Relations Society (Voks) and the Franco-Iranian Cultural Institute. Later, leading Iranian artists, such as Hossien Kazemi and Javad Hamidi, showed their works in private galleries, such as the Apadanna Gallery²⁴ and Saba Gallery. Meanwhile, Jalil Ziapur, Gholam-Hossien Gharib, and other leaders in art, literature, theatre, and music published magazines such as *Khorus Jangi* (*Fighting Cook*), the *Kavir* (*Kevir*), and the *Panje-ye khorus* (*Claws of the Cock*) to expose Iranian society to modern art (Mujabi 1998, pp. 16-18). One can see these exhibitions and publications as ‘manifesto events’ designed to proselytise new art and ideas and to win over converts.

The artistic movement’s efforts to introduce the modern did not go unchallenged. In its early stages, modern art received little attention and barely any official support. On the contrary, ‘the government officials often regard the modernists as some anarchists who are secretly plotting to destroy the country’s national and cultural heritage, and this misconception becomes a chronic misunderstanding which refuses to go away for many years’ (Mujabi 1998, p. 19). In 1953, the coup d’état against Mosaddegh led to political changes that allowed modern art to obtain governmental support. Two major exhibitions of the modern works were held in 1953, one in Mehragan Club and the other in the palace of Prince Gholam-Reza Pahlavi. These exhibitions ‘placed modern art under the spotlight and bring [sic] it out into the open from its confined life in avant-garde circles’ (Mujabi 1998, p. 20).

The establishment of the Tehran Biennials in 1958 offered official support for modern artists in Iran. This event ‘canonised the modernist trends in harmony with the state’s ideology of progress, modernization and secularism’ (Moussavi-Aghdam 2014, p. 137). As Marco Grigorian (1958), Tehran Biennial founder, claimed, the administration of Tehran Biennials would follow the intentions of the king to promote national arts

²⁴ *Apadanna Gallery, Home of the Fine Arts*, is the first private gallery in Iran; it was founded by Javadipur, Kazemi, and Ajudani in the spring of 1949.

(Grigorian 1958, p. 4). After holding the first and second Tehran Biennials, the government and specialists, such as organisers of Biennials, detected a gap in the representational scope of art in the early 1960s. They observed that the objective of Tehran Biennials in articulating a national art was not entirely achieved. It can be argued, then, that the notion that art should represent Iranian identity was established as a general aim but had not achieve fruition in actual artworks.

The educational system under which Iranian artists studied was in conflict with the aim of Tehran Biennials, which was to 'promote national arts'. In other words, when the art education in art schools and universities was based on the Western art syllabus and style, Iranian students in the academic education familiarised themselves with Western ideals of modern art more than they did the Iranian traditional art and craft. To be clear, the art educational system was not in alignment with the objectives of art directors in the country. As a response, the Ministry of Culture and Art established Tehran Faculty of Decorative Arts (Hunarkada-i Hunar-hay-i Taz'ini) in 1961 to train experts in applied arts. As we discussed above, Iranian artists in the 1950s and 1960s challenged the conflict between their old traditions and new art styles. They tried to achieve a balance between their heritage and their national sentiment favouring the new modern life. They strove to invent new traditions based on their old heritage. According to Hobsbawm (1983), "*Traditions*" which appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented' (p. 1).

One of the major socio-political events which affected the perception of society was the White Revolution (enqelab-i Sipid) in 1962, which happened during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi. According to Hambly (1991), 'By the summer of 1962, the Shah had reigned for twenty years [...]. His survival had been chiefly due to American support. As an opportunist, he now proceeded with his plans for his so-called "White Revolution", a grand design intended to make him the ultimate beneficiary of

both his people's longing for material improvement and of the American conviction that reforms were essential if further modernization was to be achieved' (p. 279). The White Revolution failed to deliver on its principal aims. It raised expectations but did not succeed in providing the longed for consumer products, better housing, or the benefits of modern urban life. As Ervand Abrahamian (2008) argued, the White Revolution led to tensions in the society. First, different social groups and institutions, such as trade unions, independent newspapers, and political parties, were systematically eliminated. Second, the gaps between different social classes widened. Finally, the increase in oil revenues proved to have little effect on people's lives, basically because the lack of accountability and transparency led to public dissatisfaction (p. 123-154).

The White Revolution in 1962 did not affect the Tehran Biennials directly, but its socio-political impact left traces the works of the third and fourth Biennials. Works like *Revolt*, *the fall*, and *Protestation* problematize political issues by the title that artists chose and by the use of certain visual elements (discussed in Section 3.2.1 and illuminated by Images 6.3, 29.4, and 100.4). The fifth Biennial was converted to a *Regional Biennial of Tehran* under the influence of a political agreement between Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) was a multi-governmental organisation that was originally established on July 22, 1964 by Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey to allow socio-economic development of the member states. The fifth Biennial also turned out to be the last Biennial because of disagreement between the Farah's office and the Ministry of Culture, which had hosted all five Biennials. The RCD agreement and the circumstances of the decision to cease the Biennials becomes a central theme of this study (see Chapter 2).

Iranian society experienced different wars, coups and massive changes in the twentieth century and the various kings who ruled during those years practiced different readings of modernity in the society. By reforming traditional madrasa to Western-style

schools, these schools benefitted from Western teachers and lesson syllabi. By sending students to Europe on national scholarships, the state tried to transform the traditional Iranian society into a modern society. Meanwhile, the Western scholars, by providing the materials helped the state to construct a new Iranian identity. The creation, rise, and fall of modern art in Iran was influenced by political decisions and social movements which can be seen in the initiation and demise of the Tehran Biennials. The Tehran Biennials exemplified the state of the arts in Iranian society in the middle of the twentieth century. It can be argued that politicians and art organisers used their power and money to direct the artists' towards their aims. Iranian society at the time was not yet ready for modern artists. As we can see in a letter from one Iranian modernist painters to another—Bahman Mohasses to Sohrab Sepehri—Mohasses was so happy because Sepehri managed to leave the country. After that, he mentioned 'regulations' which he received about Tehran Biennials. In this letter, he mocked the holding of Tehran Biennials and believed that the organisers not only did not understand what the “modern” was but also had no idea about the tradition (Mohasses 1957). The purpose of this study, therefore, is to offer a systematic analysis of these Tehran Biennials, from an artistic point of view, to uncover the relation between art and its social context at that time.

Chapter 2. A National Identity in Fine Art: The Tehran Biennials

This chapter investigates the Tehran Biennials to study how the expression of Iranian identity evolved in the artworks presented in these Biennials. It also discusses the challenges that modern artists of the era encountered in their attempts to define the terms of a 'national art' and a 'national school of art' that would set out a national cultural identity offsetting the Western influences. The Tehran Biennials were highly influential on Iranian art despite their span of life. Running from 1958 to 1966, the Biennials offered official support to modern artists both by presenting their artworks in Iran and by representing Iran in international art festivals. They marked a turning point in Iranian art, which developed its boundaries and changed the relationship between art, artists, and society. The first Tehran Biennial in 1958 introduced Modernism, which became the conventional manner of art in the country.

This chapter is divided into five parts. The first part presents the description of data that is available from the Biennials, in particular from the Biennials' catalogues. The second part studies the formation of the Tehran Biennials and their goals in the context of Iran's society and the government, and the generalized influence of the West. The third part will investigate the jury, art specialists who evaluated artworks exhibited in Tehran Biennials and distributed the award, as one of the main influential factors in this event, looking at how the interests of jury members served in Tehran Biennials and affected young artists. The fourth part traces the different awards which were given in these Biennials. The fifth part provides a detailed analysis of the artworks exhibited in the Tehran Biennials to explore the visual ways that artists practiced to represent their national identity.

This discussion will be followed by tables which offer historical information about the main social and international movements that influenced the Iranian culture and society and its viewpoint on the world. Further tables hold statistical data about

artists, artworks, organisers, and jury members in the Tehran Biennials. There are also visual maps that aid in conceptualizing the artworks and themes present in the Biennales. In addition, appendix A provides an in-depth analysis of artworks categorised based on their themes and meanings.

2.1. Description of data

In viewing the Tehran Biennials as a socio-artistic event in Iran, we can see shifts that occurred in the Iranian society regarding both artistic and social behaviours. The impact of the West is highlighted in the techniques, styles, and the perspective that the artists used to depict their subjects. As we will discuss in this chapter, the Biennials' organisers refused to exhibit artworks that used the Iranian traditional artistic styles.

2.1.1. Biennial Catalogues

Catalogues were published for each of the five Biennials, all in black and white. In comparison with the first Tehran Biennial's catalogue, the subsequent four catalogues are more organised. In the first catalogue only the artists' name and the names of artworks or techniques were mentioned, but from the second Biennial to the fifth, in addition to the artists' and artworks' names, material and the size of the artworks were cited. From the second Biennial onwards, the organisers added a list of the artists who participated in the Biennial into the catalogues and the artworks were arranged in alphabetical order, based on the artists' surnames. Regarding the design and appearance of the Biennials' catalogues, the first one was in a rectangular format, with two works printed alongside each other on some pages, whereas the other four catalogues were presented in a square format with only one work printed on each page. In the fifth Biennial's catalogue, the papers used were colour coded to represent the various countries: yellow for Iran, red for Turkey and blue for Pakistan. Regarding languages, in the first four catalogues Persian and French were used but in the fifth, French was replaced with English.

All of these changes in the catalogues show how the organisers tried to improve the quality of Biennials in all aspects in order to step closer to the professional level of art festivals in every respect. Additionally, the use of French and English in these catalogues further shows the influence of the Western culture and standards.

Before the 1960s, France had the largest influence on the Iranian culture, as exemplified by the fact that most Iranian students completed their studies in French universities. This influence can also be seen in the Biennials. Despite the fact that the three non-Iranian jury members in the first Tehran Biennial were from Italy, the organisers preferred to use French as the second language of the catalogue. Using English in the catalogue of the fifth Tehran Biennial shows the influence of the other two countries who participated: Pakistan and Turkey. After this period, during the 1960s and 1970s, the largest influence on the Iranian culture was from the United States.

2.1.2. Biennial Venues

In the 1950s and 1960s, the infrastructure of Iran was not prepared for holding a modern art exhibition. Thus, the organisers of Tehran Biennials considered the lack of suitable exhibition venues in Tehran as an obstacle to developing the Tehran Biennials into an 'Asian Biennial' (Tajvidi 1960, p. 14; Tajvidi 1962, pp.14, 15). Later on, in the 1970s, there was an increase in the building of special spaces for arts such as the Museum of Ancient Iran (Muze-ye Irân-e Bâstân) in 1972, the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, and the Niavaran Cultural Centre in 1977 (see Table 3).

Table 3

Galleries and Museums

Gallery or Museum	Reference Date
Apadana Gallery	1949 Tehran, the first Tehran private gallery
Saba Gallery	1949 Tehran
Aftab	
Mehrshad	
Mes	
Litu	
Borghese	Art Galleries founded in Tehran and other cities in 1950s and 1960s
Zarvan	
Zand	
Saman	
Seyhoun	
Talar-i Qandriz	
Sirous Gallery	An art gallery in Paris which exhibited modern Iranian art and design
Modern Art Gallery (Honar -i jaded)	1955 Tehran, one of the first private galleries established by Jazeh Tabatabai
The Museum of Ancient Iran (Muze-ye Irân-e Bâstân)	1972 Tehran
Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art	1977, established under the umbrella of the Farah Pahlavi Foundation. It was planned by Kamran Diba.
Niavaran Cultural Centre	
The Glassware and Ceramic Museum of Iran	1980 Tehran

The first four Biennials were held in the Abyaz Palace and the fifth was presented at the Ethnography Museum. Abyaz Palace, part of the Golestan complex in southern Tehran, was built in the Qajar era (1794 -1925). The architecture of Abyaz Palace (Figure 8) is a mixture of European eighteenth century and Qajar styles; the exterior of this Palace, with white stucco carvings on the façade was inspired by European eighteenth-century style. Simple patterns and lines were used for the windows due to the influence of European architecture, but the gate of the palace was built entirely of geometric designs of Qajar architecture.



Figure 8 Abyaz Palace in Golestan Complex. 2016, Tehran. ©Narges Takht Keshian.

Abby Weed Grey, the American art collector, travelled to Iran in 1960. Her trip coincided with the second Tehran Biennial. She described the Golestan Palace in her autobiography; *The Picture is the Window; the Window is the Picture* (1983), as a place full of ‘glitter and more glitter... marble floors covered with Persian rugs, gardens of pansies, fountains jetting rainbows in the setting sun, chandeliers, mirrors inside and out. Lots of sparkle but no life’ (Gumpert 2002, p.18). This description applies to a large extent to the typical Iranian Garden²⁵. Based on Grey’s (1983) description, the Biennial site was surrounded by a typical Iranian Garden, showing images and reproductions of the Iranian heritage and identity that formed it. The exhibition building itself was a depiction in miniature of modernism in Iran: An old building with a mixture of Europe’s eighteenth-century style and Iranian traditional style architecture presents the newly formed Iranian modern art. This idea of using an old place for a new function brings the theory of *invented tradition* by Hobsbawm to mind, positing, ‘[A]daptation took place for

²⁵ Iranian Garden becomes an important theme for Iranian artists to focus on; and in 2004, Tehran Contemporary Art Museum hosted an exhibition with the title ‘Iranian Garden’.

old uses in new conditions and by using old models for new purposes. Old institutions with established functions, references to the past and ritual idioms and practices might need to adapt in this way [...]’ (Hobsbawm 1983, p. 5).

Thus, while the focus of the Tehran Biennials was on emerging relations with Western modernity and the creation of an Iranian Modernism, Abyaz Palace, used for administrative affairs of prime ministers and Cabinet meetings, was adapted to a new function to hold a contemporary art exhibition. This mixing of old and new neatly illustrates Iran’s attempt to innovate at that time, with a new generation of young artists trying to acknowledge a thousand-year-old heritage and, at the same time, maintaining their modern identity.

2.1.3. Artists’ Participation

The number²⁶ of artists who participated in Tehran Biennials increased between the first and fourth Biennials²⁷ (see Table 4-8 in Appendix). This fact can be read as a positive perception of the Iranian artists toward these Biennials. Even though, as we discussed before, due to the sudden change in the government’s perspective toward the modern art, some of the Iranian modern artists, such as Bahman Mohasses, had a sarcastic reaction toward it. In a letter to Sohrab Sepehri, in response to the call for the Biennial’s exhibition, he wrote that a country [Iran] which still does not have a bourgeois intellectual class, cannot have an art Biennial. He added that those who talk about modern art, have so far no understanding of neither modern nor tradition, and were not expected to understand these in the future either (Mohassess 1957). Although the tension between the Iranian modern artists and the government can be observed, we cannot see any opposition movement against the Biennials. For example, even Bahman Mohassess,

²⁶ These data, number of artists and artworks which applied in this research, collected from Tehran Biennials’ catalogues (1958- 1966).

²⁷ From 54 artists in the first Biennial to 68, 109 and 112 artists in the second, third and fourth Biennials. In the fifth Biennial, only 37 artists invited to participate.

despite his pessimism about these events, participated in the second and third Tehran Biennials.

The transition of Iran from its characterization as a traditional society into a modern one, of which the Tehran Biennials were an instance, presented a limited opportunity for women to have their voices heard. The Biennials were an opportunity for women, who up to this point were mostly represented through men in areas such as the social, political, and the arts. Despite the rise of some female artists,²⁸ most of the participants were male, and in the fifth Biennial, only 10% of invited artists were women. Furthermore, no woman represented the female artists' society as an Iranian jury member. These numbers suggest only the slightest shift concerning the role of women in the Iranian society, including the arts. While minimal, their involvement suggests the slight change of women's roles in the Iranian society from traditional duties to more active role in society. Tehran Biennials offered an official space for Iranian modern artists to show their works and, as such, the Biennials were valuable for the opportunity they provided for women to express themselves on a national scale as well as international art festivals. Women also found the Biennials a stage to represent the Iranian female society from its own perspective.

2.1.4. Gathering the artworks

For the first four Biennials, the organisers called for artworks about six months before the start of the Biennials. This six-month gap gave time and opportunity to young artists and those living outside of the country to make their artworks specifically for the event and to send their works to the country. Moreover, this time enabled the organisers to bring together artworks from all around Iran, not only from Tehran or the big cities.

²⁸ In the first Biennial, 17% of artists were female. This number decreased to 16% in the second and third Biennials, but increased to 22% in the fourth Biennial.

The fifth Tehran Biennial was very different from the other Biennials. In addition to Iran, Turkey and Pakistan were also represented. In previous Biennials, organisers tried to gather the results of the artists' last two years of works from inside and outside Iran so that the best could be chosen to represent the country in international events. In the fifth Biennial, the organisers invited only 37 well-known artists to participate. Akbar Tajvidi, the third Tehran Biennial's director, justified the change in choosing the artworks as an attempt to respect the methods used by Pakistan and Turkey and also to acknowledge the limited exhibition space, which would allow a smaller number of Iranian works (Tajvidi 1966, p. 24). Although the Iranian artists were not satisfied with the new selection process, this shift, from a professional point of view, aligned the selection methods employed in Tehran Biennials with most of the international Biennials and art festivals, which invite a country, gallery, or an artist to present their works in that event.

The other change was in the manner of choosing artworks for the Venice Biennial—the selection by Iranians themselves of the works to send to the Venice Biennale—suggesting a true boost in confidence among Iranians and the alignment of their artistic knowledge with that of the Westerners. One of the main reasons for holding the Tehran Biennials in April, was to identify the artists and artworks to be represented in the Venice Biennial, following their showcasing in Tehran. However, the fifth Tehran Biennial was launched on 21 June, about two months later than usual and after the Venice Biennial. This change suggests substantial alterations of the Biennial goals. In 1966, the works of three Iranian artists—Parviz Tanavoli, Hossein Kazemi and Kamran Katozian—were chosen by an Iranian board to represent Iran in Venice Biennial (Tajvidi 1966, p. 178). In other words, it was the first time during those years that Iran represented itself in an international art fair without the direct supervision of Westerners.

2.2. Formation and Discontinuation of Tehran Biennials

The formation and the discontinuation of Tehran Biennial were directly influenced by the political intentions of the time. As I will argue, Tehran Biennials were not only formed in accordance with certain political values and intentions, but also continued, changed form, and were eventually discontinued as the political atmosphere changed.

The Tehran Biennial began with the support of the General Administration of Fine Art, founded in 1951 under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture. The institution was to maintain Iranian traditional arts and encourage artists in restoring, extending, and preserving national arts, developing culture, and preserving Iran's ancient civilisation and heritage. This department was transferred to the prime minister's office in 1961 and was merged into the Ministry of Culture and Arts in 1964 (Anonymous 1970, p.132).

Marcos Grigorian noted in the catalogue of the first Tehran Biennial, 'We owe the organising of the Tehran Biennial and effective participation in the Venice Biennale to the General Administration of Fine Arts. This administration follows the intentions of the King to promote national arts' (Grigorian 1958, p. 4). This note shows that the Tehran Biennials started when the Iranian government and parts of the artistic society shared certain goals. Accordingly, it is not a surprise to see the Biennial organisers adapt the exhibitions to the government objectives and interests. For example, in the fifth Biennial, the organisers changed their approach because of the Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD) political agreement to promote socio-economic development between Iran, Pakistan and Turkey. This political agreement led to major shifts in the fifth Biennial, as is reflected in the titles: whereas the titles of the first four Biennials were simply *Tehran Biennial*, the fifth one became *Regional Biennial of Tehran*, emphasising the role of the regional participants.

The first Tehran Biennial took place on 14th April 1958. The fifth and final one was held on 21st June 1966. Tehran Biennials discontinued because of disagreements between the Ministry of Culture and Farah's office (Afsarian 2009, p. 175). I would argue that these disagreements arose due to the conflicting values held between the two. Whereas the Ministry of Culture was more interested in events showcasing Iranian paintings and sculptures, Farah's office took more interest in events such as the Shiraz Festival of Art,²⁹ held between 1967 and 1977, which did not include paintings and sculptures. Farah took power as the Queen of Iran in 1959, a year after the first Tehran Biennial and the fact that the Shiraz Festival of Art was launched only a year after the fifth Biennial, could be further evidence of such conflicting values. There would not be another Biennial held for twenty-five years after that. From 1966 to 1979 Iranian fine artists exhibited their artworks in some national and international festivals run by private galleries and Western countries' cultural offices in Tehran and by Farah's office. Meanwhile, the central government and artists sought to expand the impact of art and visual culture in Iranian society. From 1966, there was a concerted effort to broadcast programmes about Iranian artists and their activities. This was done through the broadcast of art news and cultural events in Iran and other countries on radio and television, an increase in the number artistic columns in newspapers and magazines, and new art topics in school curricula. (Mohajer 1998, pp. 72, 73).

In 1979, the Islamic revolution reshaped social and political life in Iranian society. Art movements changed abruptly from contemporary modes to ones based on revolutionary aspirations and Islamic ideological traditions (Keshmirshekan 2009, p. 26). The first Biennial after the 1979 revolution was held in 1991. The content of these later Biennials was radically different from those held before the revolution. However, there

²⁹ This was an international art festival held annually from 1967 to 1977. The festival programme included music, dance, drama, poetry, and film.

remained certain similarities between the way these events were approached in the Pahlavi era and the Islamic government. For instance, Iranian artists continued to participate in the Venice Biennials after the revolution, under the supervision of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, which is itself was under the supervision of Iranian government. As such, the artworks presented in such international art festivals would reflect and be constrained by the new government's ideology, one that would have the Islamic values at its core. This is comparable to the participation of artists in the international scene during the Pahlavi era, which sought to showcase the modernisation of Iran. In both cases the aim of participation in arts fairs was to promote the government's values and intentions.

The Tehran Biennials were created to achieve three main goals: (a) to help Iran's art directors and artists participate successfully in international art fairs, (b) to introduce modern art to the Iranian public, and (c) to create a unique 'national school of art'. Close relationships with the West influenced policy makers and the governments' attempts to highlight its relations with the regional cultures. An example of this was seen in the promotion of Iranian artistic and intellectual ideas in the Biennials and in the presence of other countries in the region.

Biennial, originally a Western invention, is an event in which artworks from different countries are brought together for exhibition. In international biennials, such as the Venice Biennial, each artist is representative of the art of his or her own country. This means that artworks become ideological tools for displaying various cultures and societies. Choosing a biennial as a form for representing artworks in Iran shows the impact of the Western conception on the exhibiting artworks inside and outside of the country. It is worth noting that more than half of Grigorian's introduction in the first Biennial catalogue was devoted to explaining the literal meaning of the term *biennial* for his readers. He introduced the Venice Biennial by a short historical survey, explaining

how the Venice Biennial was formed, what the prizes were, and how other countries participated in it. Thus, this suggests that the Iranian audience at the time had no knowledge concerning this Western form of art exhibition

The influence of the West was not limited to organisational matters, but can also be seen in the artworks themselves, in the use of techniques, and in the choice of subject matters. However, that the West had *influence* on Iranian art should not be regarded as an attempt to mimic the Western art. As Tajvidi claimed regarding the artworks exhibited in the third Biennial,

If some of the works show an inclination towards ‘informal’ or ‘abstract’ style, they should not be considered as an imitation of Western art, but rather, it should be borne in mind that we, too, are living in the twentieth century. Though we may in some ways differ from the citizens of the Western world so far as our material life is concerned, we are confronted with the same problems as they.

(Balaghi 2002, p. 22)

In the twentieth century, the social life in Iran was dominated by both tradition and modernity. The traditional education model was replaced by a Western educational system. Schools and universities were founded on the model of Western schools, styled with the same courses, differing only in the language in which they were presented. The teachers were either foreigners or Iranians who were educated in the West. Governmental scholarships were given to the top Iranian students to pursue their studies in European universities.

All of these changes show the Western impact on life and manners of thinking for Iranians, which includes artists and intellectuals. The significant shift in Iranian lifestyles and viewpoints reinforces Tajvidi’s arguments that Iranians did not distinguish themselves from the rest of the world. As Tehran Biennials’ goals show, Iranian artists at that time sought to have an influential role in the art world (Grigorian 1958, p. 4). The

value of being successful in the international art festivals such as Venice Biennial and Western art markets was vital for the 'Tehran Biennials' organisers. They also looked for an art style which was modern and traditional simultaneously.

It was in order to reach these goals that Iranian artists in the 1950s and 1960s used Western techniques and materials while trying, at the same time, to bring their Iranian identity into their artworks. Nancy Jachec,³⁰ who did research on the Venice Biennial, showed that this goal was achieved. She argued that the Iranian artworks exhibited in the late 1950s and early 1960s in Venice Biennial,

were presented as having used abstract tendencies in their own traditional painting as a point of entry into Informalism. Although the legibility of a national style remained important to their commissioners, that their art was a synthesis between eastern and western sensibility was a persistent theme, highlighted the value that these states placed on strong relations with the West. (Jachec 2007, p. 163)

However, these artworks that were successful in the international fairs could not achieve the same level of success in Iran. The reasons for this have two interpretations. In the first instance, such artworks were seen as complex and ambiguous for their audience. For example, Pakbaz believes that Iranian intellectuals in Iran found abstract painting meaningless. Since, on his account, modern artists ignored the historical links between art and literature in Iran, and focused instead on visual qualities and sought a formal solution to adhere to the modernist aesthetic (Pakbaz 2007, p. 129). The second reason appeals to the process of modernism in Iran. For instance, Grigorian, the founder of Tehran Biennial, believed that modern art did not satisfy the public taste because modernism did not develop properly in Iran (Grigorian 1958, p. 5). He hoped that the Tehran Biennial might bring modern art and artists into the public eye and reconcile the public with

³⁰ Dr Nancy Jachec is currently Principal Lecturer and Head of the History of Art Department at Oxford Brookes University.

modern art. However, the majority of Iranians in the late 1950s were not interested in modern art.

This lack of interest was reflected in an article published in an Iranian magazine a month after the first Tehran Biennial. The article, highly critical of modern artworks, argued for the incompetency of the artists producing these works, arguing that these were few in number, were unimaginative, and had poor artistic taste. These people then, ‘create meaningless forms by drawing a few lines and using various revolting colours, and then not only call them a painting but also seek to receive glory and praise for them’ (Anonymous author, cited in Mohajer 1998, p. 47). It is therefore apparent that Iranians preferred realistic and classical Iranian art, which had no place in Tehran Biennials. However, at that time some artists, especially Kamal-al Mulk’s pupils and Miniaturists, worked in those traditional themes.

The organisers of Tehran Biennial did not achieve their last goal, which was to make a ‘national school of art’. Since the artists’ achievements in the Tehran Biennials did not contribute significantly to a national school of art. As Pakbaz argued, Iranian artists in the best conditions have been able to achieve a personal synthesis but never established a mutual dialogue or conducted experiments among themselves. An example of this disunity is the observation that if one artist got an achievement in their works, others either cannot, or do not want to, expand on those achievements. This is why there is not even a single school of art, in the western sense of the word, in the 60 years of the modern art history in Iran (Pakbaz 2007, p. 129). The failure in the formation of a school of art is despite the existence of various artistic movements, such as *Saqqā-kāna* movement (see Table 9).

Table 9

Art Groups and Movements

Group	Period and Focus
Khorus Jangi association (Fighting Cock)	Founded by Jalil Ziapour in 1949
<i>Saqqā-kāna</i> movement	1960s
Naqqashi-khat movement (calligraphic painting)	The focus was on calligraphy and the artists' emphasis on tradition. 1960s

As Yarshater noted about 60 years after the Tehran Biennial:

To a certain extent, the Biennials helped to create a movement towards a national style of painting. The *Saqqā-kāna* School, which attracted many artists, wholly or partially, was greatly helped by the Biennials. However, as Iran like some other countries in the Near and the Middle East remained subject to influence from the West and continued to be so in Pahlavi era and after the Islamic Revolution, it is hard to speak of a national school of painting (Yarshater, 2015, interview).

It is worth noting, however, the formation of a personal voice in the works of Iranian artists in this period of time, which will be looked at in more detail in the following chapters.

2.3. The Jury

The selection of jury members for Tehran Biennials was, as I will argue in this section, in line with the anticipated need of receiving approval from the West, which were seen as more complete and progressive. As such, thriving to be 'more like' these Western pieces, was part of the rationale behind the employment of western jury members (see Table 10).

Table 10

Tehran Biennial (1958-1966) Directors and Jury

	1st Biennial	2nd Biennial	3rd Biennial	4th Biennial	5th Biennial
Year	1958 (1337S)	1960 (1339S)	1962 (1341S)	1964 (1343S)	1966 (1345S)
Location	Abiaz Palace	Abiaz Palace	Abiaz Palace	Abiaz Palace	Ethnography Museum
Festival Director	Marco Grigorian	Akbar Tajvidi	Akbar Tajvidi	Parviz Moayed Ahd	Akbar Tajvidi
Jury	Irene Brion (It) Giovanni Carandente (It) Gaspar del Corso (It) Mohsen Foroughi (Ir) Ehsan Yarshater (Ir)	Gino Bachetti (It) Giulio Carlo Argan (It) Frank Elgar (Fr) Kurt Martin (Ger) Georges Pillement (Fr) Mohsen Foroughi (Ir) Parviz Moayed Ahd (Ir) Mohsen Vaziri-Moghadan (Ir)	Giulio Carlo Argan (It) Frank Elgar (Fr) Palma Bucarelli (It) Jacques Lassaigue (Fr) Kurt Martin (Ger) Mohsen Foroughi (Ir) Parviz Moayed Ahd (Ir)	Palma Bucarelli (It) Kurt Martin (Ger) Giulio Carlo Argan (It) Jacques Lassaigue (Fr) Mohsen Foroughi (Ir) Parviz Moayed Ahd (Ir)	Charles Estienne (Fr) Adrian Heath (UK) Giorgio de Marchis (It) Jacques Lassaigue (Fr) Zainul Abedin (Pak) Sabri Berkel (Tur) Mohsen Faroughi (Ir) Parvis Moayed Ahd (Ir) Houshang Seyhoun (Ir) Mohammad Amin Mirfendereski (Ir) Akbar Tajvidi (Ir)

Although there were some Iranian members of Jury, the main part of the board was constituted by foreign, mainly European jurists. Most notably, among the Iranian jurists were Mohsen Forugi and Parviz Moayed-Ahd. Forugi (1907-1983) was the second head of the Faculty of Fine Art in Tehran University and the first Iranian in this role (André Godard was the first head of the Faculty of Fine Art). He was a pioneer of modern architecture in Iran and graduated from École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. He ‘was well acquainted with Western art and possessed some samples of it’ (Yarshater, 2015, interview). Forugi’s approach to building design was fundamentally modern although he had an extensive knowledge of traditional architectural principles (Frye, 2012). Moayed-Ahd (1930- 2016) who also studied in Paris, was an associate professor of architecture at

the Faculty of Fine Arts in Tehran University. European jurists included Kurt Martin and Jacques Lassaigue. Martin was born in Zurich, Switzerland but his home country was Germany. He was the director of the Munich Gemäldesammlungen from 1957 to 1964. Lassaigue was the head of the French Union of Professional Art Critic and France *Commissioner* for the *Venice Biennial*.

In the fifth Biennial, in addition to the European juries, two members were from Asia, Zainul Abedin from Pakistan and Sabri Berkel from Turkey.³¹ Abedin, originally from Bangladesh, was the head of an Art College in Dhaka. Berkel was the head of the State Academy of Fine Arts in Painting in Istanbul. The four Western members included Charles Estienne who was an art critic and member of the French Association of Art Critics, Adrian Heath who was an art critic and artist from the United Kingdom, Giorgio de Marchis who was the superintendent of the National Gallery of Modern Art in Rome and Tony Spitters, the General Secretary of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA).

Jury members were all selected based on their experience (Yarshater, 2015, interview). Choosing the international jury members was in line with the objective concerning the influence of jury members on selecting artworks to show in international exhibitions. The number of jury members was different in each of the five Biennials of Tehran.

The international jury members, involved in the Tehran Biennials, had various responsibilities in their countries at the time; from working in the fields of journalism and art criticism, to being experts in art history and taking roles such as directing different art exhibitions. Moreover, the backgrounds of the Iranian jury members show that not only did they have knowledge about Iran's heritage, but also by studying in Europe, such as France and England, they were familiar with the art and culture of the West. The

³¹ During all five Tehran Biennials out of 35 jury members, 21 were foreigners (19 European, one from Pakistan and one from Turkey) and 14 members were Iranian.

employment of international jurists, as well as Iranian ones, was done ‘in order to avoid the accusation of being biased’ (Tajvidi 1962, p. 16). It was further argued that ‘information from external referee’s views who are aware of current trends in contemporary art raises the possibility of success in international art exhibitions’ (Tajvidi 1962, p. 16).

In the first and second Biennials, international jury members had the largest influence on the selection of the works, both for exhibition in Tehran, and to be sent to international art fairs. In contrast, in the third Biennial, a board³² was assigned by the organisers to select artworks that complied with the standards of the Biennial and thus could be exhibited. The criteria for selection of artworks had two main points of concern. First regarding the ‘artistic originality’ of the piece of work. This was aimed at eliminating works that were a direct copy of a Western piece, as well as those mimicking such works. The second point was aimed at acknowledging the personal voice in the works of various artists. The selected works were to reflect the best in each artist, representing their art as a whole in one piece (Tajvidi 1962, p. 17, 18). The second point was of especial interest, since it would determine the best works that would be sent to Venice Biennial.

Some artists were against the participation of non-Iranian members in the Biennials’ jury. They believed that the international judges were not able to distinguish between good and bad Iranian art. However, the fourth Tehran Biennial organisers, again, claimed that ‘Iranians were not aware of trends in international art and markets and without external judges’ help would not know which artworks would be successful in international festivals’ (Moayed-Ahd 1964, p. 19). This debate would later be articulated in a more sophisticated way by Jalal Al-Ahmad. He attributed the insistence of some

³² Members of the *board of international office of public relations and publications* (shora-i omur-i namayeshgah-ha-i edare-i ravabet beinalmelali va entesharat) were Hayede Gharegozlou, Akbar Tajvidi, Javad Hamidi, Bejan Safari, Jalil Ziapour, Houshang Kazemi, Parviz Moayed Ahd and Nader Naderpour.

organisers to have Western jury by the deep influence of the West over the East. He believes that the occidentotic nations seek to learn about themselves from the western point of view based on the assumption that Western writings are scientific and proper sources of knowledge (Al-Ahmad 1984, p. 98).

Tehran Biennial organisers, as mentioned in the introduction of the third Biennial's catalogue, believed that the secret of success in international events laid in presenting artworks in line with the Westerners' taste (Tajvidi 1962, p. 16). In Iran following a Western style of art was not a new occurrence - not only in art but also in society and lifestyles. Arguably the Tehran Biennial organisers, by choosing Western judges, started to think like Westerners about Easterners. This confirmed the idea that 'if the Orient could represent itself, it would; since it cannot, the representation does the job, for the West, and *faute de mieux*, for the poor Orient' (Said, 2003, p. 22); on the other hand, by accepting only modern artworks which are 'in the theme of overall view of exhibition' and rejecting works 'even if a great piece of Miniature' they also rejected the traditional manner of art (Moayed-Ahd 1964, p. 19). As Akbar Tajvidi, commissioner of Iran at the 1960 Venice Biennial explained 'in spite of its rich cultural and artistic tradition, Iran could not remain indifferent to those universal problems of art that at this moment preoccupy artists of all countries' (Jachec, 2007, p. 161). He credited the cultural exchanges between Iran and the West as having given Iranian artists the insight necessary to 'reconnect [them] to international artistic tendencies' in form and in content'. This is an instance of what Al-Ahmad **terms an** Occidentotic action: 'We remain altogether ignorant of Iranian painting -representational and miniature painting- but, in imitation of the Biennial exhibitions, we regard even fauvism and cubism as dated' (Al-Ahmad 1984, p. 128).

2.4. Awards and Winners

The data regarding the winners of the Biennials, include only the artists awarded, and not the artwork for which they were granted the prize. Thus for those artists who exhibited multiple works, it remains unknown which piece in particular was praised with the awards. Furthermore, the information regarding the awards, shows a significant success for the female artists who participated in Tehran Biennials.³³ Nine different prizes were awarded to the artists during the five Biennials (see Table 11). Moreover, the number of awarded artists and the style of artworks varied in each Biennial. Awards were distributed based on the techniques used in the artworks. The majority of the awarded pieces were those of paintings and sculptures. The only exception was in the fourth Biennial, where two works of collage and mosaic are among the winners (see Table 12).

Table 11

Types of Awards in Each Tehran Biennial

	1 st Tehran Biennial	2 nd Tehran Biennial	3 rd Tehran Biennial	4 th Tehran Biennial	5 th Tehran Biennial
Royal Court Prize	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grand Prize of the Ministry of Art and culture	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Second Prize of the Ministry of Art and culture	✓	✓		✓	✓
Gold Medal	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Silver Medal			✓		
Winning Point		✓	✓		✓
Exchange three-month study in Shiraz and Esfahan		✓			
Exchange three-month study in Italy				✓	✓
Golden Officer' Point					✓

³³ Overall, the 22% of awarded artists are female artists, it is 4% more than the average of them who participated in the all five Biennials.

Table 12

Statistic Information Based on the Art Techniques in Tehran Biennials

		1 st Tehran Biennial		2 nd Tehran Biennial		3 rd Tehran Biennial		4 th Tehran Biennial		5 th Tehran Biennial	
Number of winners		9	17%	18	26%	16	14%	10	9%	8	22%
Number of artworks		14	23%	23	31%	21	16%	18	14%	9	15%
	Painting	6	10%	17	23%	16	12%	10	8%	8	13%
	Drawing	3	5%	2	3%	1	1%	2	2%	-	-
Technique	Sculpture	4	7%	2	3%	2	2%	2	2%	1	2%
	Print	1	1%	2	3%	2	2%	2	2%	-	-
	Collage	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1%	-	-
	Mosaic	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1%	-	-

The distribution of the awards in the Tehran Biennials was one of the most influential aspects of the Biennials for the young Iranian artists. They found inspiration in the awarded artworks, since these were seen as the accepted model of the art-styles approved by the jury members. This influence forced the organisers to emphasise that the aim of this exhibition was not to promote competition among artists. ‘We do not want to choose one special style in art as preferable to others. In this exhibition, we want to collect the artworks of all true ‘artists’ to illustrate a detailed diagram of the quantity and quality of today’s Iranian visual art’ (Tajvidi 1960, p.13). However, as we can see in the awards’ distribution pattern, it can be argued that the organisers expressed their preferences indirectly, determining the kinds of artworks which they sought to be presented in the exhibition. (see Visual Maps 90-94)

The pattern of distributing awards in Tehran Biennials suggests a shift in the official conception towards the modern art style—from a conservative point of view to a more open and liberal perspective. For example, the Royal Court Prize was awarded for figurative works which were influenced by Western art styles in the first and second Biennials. Therefore, they partly accepted modern art as the official language of art. For

example, the influence of Expressionism can be detected in the *Veiled women* by Sirak Melkonian and *Pigeon blue* by Parviz Tanavoli (image 21.1, 14.2). Both of these artists, in addition to the influence of the western art styles, depicted elements and subjects which represented Iranian culture.



Image 21.1. Sirak Melkonian, *Veiled women*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 14.2. Parviz Tanavoli, *Pigeon blue*, Gouache, 29 x 30, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

In contrast, the official changes in perspective can be seen in the praise given to *Rhythmic movement* by Mohsen Vaziri-Moghaddam (image 56.2), which was awarded with the Royal Court Prize.



Image 56.2, Mohsen Vaziri-Moghaddam, *Rhythmic movement*, Oil on canvas, 105 x 151, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

This work is a piece of abstract art, without any influence from the Iranian heritage, neither in the art style nor in the choice of the subject. From the third Biennial, the Royal Court Prize was only given to the artists who used abstract style; some of these works use the style without depicting Iranian symbols such as *Abstract* by Behjat Sadr (image 54.3).



Image 54.3. Behjat Sadr, *Abstract*, Oil on canvas, 148 x 100, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

On the contrary, some artists represented motifs and symbols from Iranian tradition via abstract art style, for instance, *K+L+32+H4+* by Hossien Zenderoudi (image 112.3).

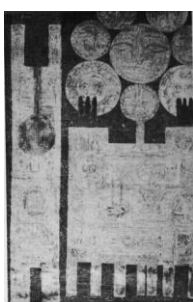


Image 112.3. Hossien Zenderoudi, *K+L+32+H4+*, Essence, 150 x 225, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

The influence of the awards is noteworthy, both on the submission of artworks for the following years and for the process of selecting the winning pieces. Throughout the years, we see a decrease in the number of figurative artworks, which comprised the most awarded works at the first Biennial. This comes in contrast to the increase in the number of abstract works of art. On the other hand, while in the first Biennial, the influence of the traditional Iranian style of painting is more readily observable, these influences seem to become less apparent in the following exhibitions. For example, while in *Lovers* by Manoutchehr Sheybani (image 35.1) one sees the strong influence of Qajar paintings, both in content and style, the later works, such as *Union* by Zhazeh Tabatabai (image 27.5), represent these influences more subtly.



Image 35.1. Manoutchehr Sheybani, *Lovers*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 27.5. Zhazeh Tabatabai, *Union*, Ink on canvas, 85 x 183, from Fifth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1966, Tehran, Iran: Ministry of Culture and Arts.

In the latter, the personal voice and style of the artist is more apparent, through the composition and the use of symbolism. That these works were winners of the same

prize in the first and the fifth Biennials respectively further indicates the evolution to which the process itself for identifying the best works was subject. In this sense, then, we see a development not only in the artworks presented, but also in the jury members' rationale for choosing the winners.

Over the course of the five Tehran Biennials, an increasing number of artists represented elements, symbols, and objects from their Iranian heritage in their works and combined them with the Western art styles, in particular with abstract representation. They started to internalise and combine the modern art styles with their individual knowledge and experiences to represent their artistic voices. When the awards tended to be granted to the abstract artworks and to those that represented symbols and elements from Iranian heritage, this tendency affected the artists who wanted to exhibit their works in the next Biennials. Increasing the number of abstract works exhibited in the Biennials shows the influence of the jury's perspective on the Iranian artists in creating abstract works and the state's points of view in terms of accepting the jury's artistic point of view. I examine such influences in the next section.

2.5. Visualising Identity: Tracing Subjects and Themes in the Artworks in Tehran Biennials

This section offers a detailed analysis of the artworks exhibited in the Tehran Biennials based on the main subjects and the themes. Analysis is not restricted to iconography or formal concerns of composition, coloration or attribution, for example, but also considers the wider context of social, political, and cultural influence. The analysis takes account of the fact that images were created under the conditions of social power and ideology (Sturken & Cartwright 2009, p. 22).

I have found visual maps to be a practical way to investigate three areas (see visual maps 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5). First, these visual maps bring artworks next to each other without highlighting the names of the artists; the artists' names might contribute to a pre-

judgement on the part of the viewer. Second, they offer a visual summary of the five Biennials, helping us to recognise the topics and areas with which artists, the Biennials' organisers, and the jury members were concerned. Third, images can be more eloquent than words in expressing artists' ideas. When artworks stand side by side, they make it possible to compare artworks and identify ways in which they express their ideas.

In forming these visual maps, I categorized the artworks into two broad groups. The first group is based on the principal subject of the artworks including gender and groupings of men and women, the role of animals, appearance of location and landscape, and works of the imagination, including abstraction (see Visual Maps 6-50 in Appendix C). The second group is based on the theme and the meaning of the artwork's title or visual elements.

The subgroups here include reference to Persian literature and myths, historical subjects, social subjects, and daily life, religious subjects, Iranian popular objects, specific regions in Iran, elements of Iranian classical painting, art and craft, use of calligraphy, and reference to West/East (see Visual Maps 51-89 in Appendix C). To classify the works in the above subgroups, I have considered the dominant elements and subjects in each work. Each image can also be interpreted within several of the areas.

2.5.1. Main subjects

The first Tehran Biennial had a large number of figurative artworks. This number gradually decreased the five Biennials (see Table 13).³⁴

³⁴ The number of figurative artworks (depicting men, women, men and women, and humans and animals) exhibited in Tehran Biennials declined from 63% in the first Biennial to 42%, 37%, 26% and 19% in the second, third, fourth, and the fifth Biennials, respectively.

Table 13

Tehran Biennials in Statistics

		1 st 'TB (1958)		2 nd 'TB (1960)		3 rd 'TB (1962)		4 th 'TH (1964)		5 th 'TH (1966)	
Numbers of artists based on biennials' catalogue		54		68		109		112		37	
Numbers of artworks published in biennials' catalogue		61		74		129		131		61(41)*	
Number of female artists		9	17 %	11	16 %	17	16 %	25	22 %	6	10 %
Techniques of artworks	Painting and Drawing	54	88 %	67	90 %	112	87 %	109	83 %	46	75 %
	Printing	1	2 %	2	3 %	9	7 %	7	5 %	7	12 %
	Sculpture & Relief	6	10 %	5	7 %	8	6 %	15	12 %	8	13 %
Main subjects	Man	7	12 %	4	5 %	14	11 %	7	5 %	2	5 %
	Woman	23	38 %	22	30 %	21	16 %	15	11 %	2	5 %
	Woman with Chador	10	16 %	4	5 %	4	3 %	9	7 %	-	-
	Naked woman	2	3 %	5	7 %	9	7 %	2	2 %	-	-
	Man and Woman	5	8 %	3	4 %	12	9 %	10	8 %	3	7 %
	Human and Animal	3	5 %	2	3 %	2	1 %	3	2 %	1	2 %
	Animals	3	5 %	6	8 %	10	8 %	2	2 %	1	2 %
	Still life	10	16 %	7	9 %	9	7 %	9	7 %	1	2 %
	Landscape	5	8 %	14	19 %	28	22 %	33	25 %	4	10 %
	Abstract paintings	4	7 %	13	18 %	30	23 %	47	36 %	23	56 %
	Imagination	1	1 %	3	4 %	3	2 %	5	4 %	4	10 %
	Reference to Persian literature and myths	2	3 %	2	3 %	8	6 %	2	2 %	1	2 %
Theme & Meanings	Reference to historical subjects	2	3 %	1	1 %	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Reference to social subjects and daily life	7	12 %	4	5 %	4	3 %	6	5 %	3	7 %
	Reference to religious subjects	7	12 %	4	5 %	7	5 %	12	9 %	2	5 %
	Reference to Iranian popular objects	3	5 %	1	1 %	4	3 %	2	2 %	-	-
	Reference to specific region in Iran	3	5 %	6	8 %	2	1 %	9	7 %	2	5 %
	Reference to elements of Iranian classical painting, art and craft	7	12 %	5	7 %	9	7 %	7	5 %	5	12 %
	Use of Calligraphy	-	-	1	1 %	4	3 %	6	5 %	4	10 %
	Reference to West or East	1/-	1/- %	3/-	4/- %	2/-	1/- %	1/ 1	1/1 %	-	-

*The list of exhibited works in the fifth Tehran Biennial published in the catalogue which is 61 artworks, but Only 41 image of the artworks printed in the catalogue. The statistic numbers of this Biennial are based on the artworks printed in the catalogue

As the biennales progressed, abstract works became more popular, ranking as the most prevalent kinds of work from the third Biennial.³⁵ Iranian artists' approach to abstract art suggests that they found Western modernist modes of representation as a suitable means for representing their culture. The artworks exhibited in the first Tehran Biennial show a transition in the Iranian artists' practices from the Iranian painting tradition and the

³⁵ The number of abstract paintings steadily increased during the five Tehran Biennials from 7% in the first Biennial to 18%, 23%, 36% and 56 in the second, third, fourth and the fifth Biennials, respectively.

Kamal al-Mulk's school to modern art. The wide variety in the types of work presented supports the idea that the Iranian artists at that time were experimenting with those different art styles: the traditional style, accepted in the Iranian society, and modern art, the dominant style in the West. As Mujabi claims, the relation between tradition and modernisation and the question of tradition and national cultural identity was a challenge for the Iranian artists in the mid-twentieth century (Mujabi 1998, p. 15). This experimentation can be seen in the art styles, subjects, and themes that artists depicted in their works.

An example of this interplay of elements, of traditional and modern art, in the artists' works is seen in the depiction of the human body. Under Islamic law, the depiction of human body is banned both in paintings and sculptures. Since the acceptance of Islam in Iran, some 1,400 years ago, artists depicted plants, animals, and geometric motifs in their art. Working within such limits meant that Iranian artists were not unfamiliar with abstract art, describing it as non-figurative forms. This description of abstract art reminds us of the kind of art which was used for centuries to illustrate books and decorate buildings in Iran and which was recognised as a branch of Islamic Art. As such, in thinking about their heritage, Iranian artists found a new way of using abstract art, a way that could be traced to Islamic art. Examples of such experimentation could be seen in works that materialised Western influences in the abstract arts presented in the Biennials.

The influence from the West was not limited to the artistic styles used by Iranians, but also existed in the manner in which such styles were developed. European modern artists were inspired by Eastern and African art and craft. For instance, abstract artists such as Kandinsky and Klee travelled to North Africa to develop their sense of colour and design (MacKenzie 1995, p. 66). Similarly, Iranian artists such as Jalil Ziyapour and Parviz Tanavoli, in the mid twentieth century, travelled across Iran and

studied different tribes and their cultures. The result of these studies can be seen in their artistic practices includes the works they exhibited in the Tehran Biennials (images 43.1, 12.5). While adopting stylistic traits from Western Modernism Iranian artists were also inspired to make field trips expressly to research local and regional arts and crafts.



Image 43.1. Jalil Ziyapour, *Zeynab Khatoon*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

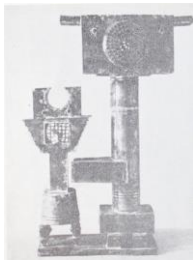


Image 12.5. Parviz Tanavoli, *The poet and Farhad's Beloved*, Copper sculpture, 170x 124 x 45, from Fifth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1966, Tehran, Iran: Ministry of Culture and Arts.

Most of the works that represented abstract painting exhibited in the first and second Biennials followed the Western style of abstract art. On the other hand, the inspiration of the pre-Islamic and Islamic Iranian tradition to make abstract art are recognisable in the works exhibited in the third, fourth, and the fifth Tehran Biennials. Artists recalled visual elements from their Iranian pictorial heritage and combined them with the Western style of art as can be seen in *Composition* by Hossein Kazemi, *The singing of the star* by Said Shahlapour and *Composition No. 22*, by Faramarz Pilaram (image 77.3, 56.4, 9.5).



Image 77.3. Hossein Kazemi, *Composition*, Oil, 85 x 138, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran Iran, Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 56.4. Said Shahlapour, *The singing of the star*, Gouache, 15 x 30, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran Iran, Central Administration of Fine Arts-Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 9.5. Faramarz Pilemari, *Composition No. 22*, oil, 105 x 280, from Fifth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1966, Tehran, Iran: Ministry of Culture and Arts.

After abstract painting, landscape paintings were second in popularity in the Tehran Biennials.³⁶ Most of the artists depicted landscapes of the urban, rural, and natural sights of different parts of Iran, highlighting specific local features that can be seen in historical sites such as *Public bath*, by Anouch (image 73.2).



Image 73.2. Anouch, *Public bath*, no material, no size, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

³⁶ In the first Biennial, 8% of artworks presented landscape. This figure would increase to 19%, 22% and 25% in the second, third and fourth Biennials respectively. Moreover, only 10% of published artworks in the fifth Tehran Biennial catalogue depicted landscape.

In addition to such depictions, one artist, Edict Aivasian exhibited a drawing of an *Oil refinery* of a modern factory from the southern part of Iran.

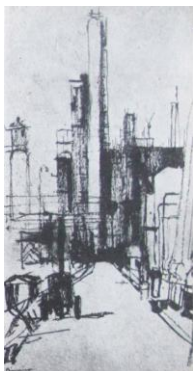


Image 8.2. Edict Aivasian, *Oil refinery*, Drawing, 41 x 28, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Otherwise, some of the artists depicted a landscape of non-Iranian cities, for instance, *Roman yard*, by Mansoureh Hosseini and *New York*, by Iran Darroudi (Images 7.1, 72.2).



Image 7.1. Mansoureh Hosseini, *Roman yard*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 72.2. Iran Darroudi *New York*, Oil, no size, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

In the third and fourth Biennials, contrary to the previous Biennials, most of the artists did not offer a realistic take. They simplified forms and used different artistic techniques to depict their subject. Highlighting various regions of Iran in the title of works exhibited in the fourth and fifth Biennials are clearly descriptive. They tried to illustrate the unique views which belong to the Iranian natural scene. *Composition N.1*, by

Sohrab Sepehri³⁷, is a good example of the way that Iranian artists represented their Iranian heritage; not only by depicting the symbols and elements belong to Iranian pictorial heritage but also with engaging their understanding of the Iranian spirit (image 67.2).



Image 67.2. Sohrab Sepehri, *Composition N.1*, Water colour, 70 x 50, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

The feature of Sepehri's work is that he combined the Expressionism from Western art with his innate eastern mysticism (Jachec 2007, p.161).

The imagination subject in this research refers to the artworks that depicted a variety of topics derived from the artists' imagination.³⁸ They used surreal, abstract, or formalist art styles to depict their ideas. In these works, artists pictured diverse subjects related to their personal experiences or beliefs as can be seen in *My dream*, by Korous Salahshoor, and *I fear God*, by Houshang Pir-Davari (image 30.1, 74.2).



Image 30.1. Korous Salahshoor, *My dream*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

³⁷ Awarded the Grand Prize of Fine Art in the second Tehran Biennial and represented Iran in the Venice Biennial.

³⁸ Depicting imagination subjects increased slightly from 1% in the first Tehran Biennial to 4%, 2%, 4% and 10% in the second, third, fourth and fifth Biennials.



Image 74.2. Houshang Pir-Davari, *I fear God*, no material, no size, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.

Moreover, some artists were inspired by the Iranian tradition as can be seen in *Opening*, by Reza Shaibani, and *Neither bird nor man*, by Zhazeh Tabatabai (image 57.4, 28.5).



Image 57.4. Reza Shaibani, *Opening*, Oil, 74 x94, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 28.5. Zhazeh Tabatabai, *Neither bird nor man*, Sculpture in metal, 104 x 76 x 48, from Fifth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1966, Tehran, Iran: Ministry of Culture and Arts.

This was a new practice in the Iranian art, since the traditional Iranian art styles were more commonly concerned with depicting that for which there already was a description, such as a story or image represented in a work of literature. In taking one's imagination as the subject of depiction, Iranian artists took the Western artworks as their main inspiration, as a practice for which such depictions of imagination were nothing new.

Depicting still-life is one of the main subjects in art of a Western tradition. As we discussed earlier, Iranians in both pre-Islamic and Islamic eras used to narrate stories in their works. This can be seen in the Achaemenid reliefs in the pre-Islamic era, as well as

in the book illustrations in the Islamic period. In contrast to this Iranian tradition, in the first Biennial, a large number of artworks represented still life.³⁹ For example, *Bones* by Javad Hamidi, in the choice of subject and depiction style, shows a significant influence of Western art (image 12.1).



Image 12.1. Javad Hamidi, *Bones*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Although this approach which was followed by other artists in the next Biennials, some of them depicted objects familiar to Iranians, recalling their heritage and culture. As such, Fereydoun Rahimi-Assa in *Jar* represented elements and symbols that belonged to an ancient Iranian civilisation (image 23.2).



Image 23.2. Fereydoun Rahimi-Assa, *Jar*, Oil, 71 x 59, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Taking up and developing the genre of still life enabled Iranian artist to represent Western art, Iranian artists used the depiction of still life to represent their cultural and historical elements. Depiction of animals is one of the subjects of art seen in all cultures. Also, this subject is one of the oldest depicted by humans. Images of animals had a significant role in the Iranian art in both pre-Islamic and Islamic eras. Artists who

³⁹ Depicting still-life followed a downward trend from 16% in the first Tehran Biennial to 9% in the second, 7% in the third and fourth Biennial and 2% in the fifth Biennial.

depicted animals in Tehran Biennials⁴⁰ not only used symbols and elements from the Iranian pictorial heritage, but also depicted mythical and iconic animals from Iranian contemporary literature. For example, Parviz Tanavoli in *Maternal love*, Mashhadi-Zadeh in *Cow* and Hadi Hazaveyi in *The doe* took inspiration from the Iranian visual heritage and calligraphy (images 31.1, 109.3, 106.3).



Image 31.1. Parviz Tanavoli, *Maternal love*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 109.3. Mashhadi-Zadeh, *Cow*, glazed-earthenware sculpture, 40 x 60, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 106.3. Hadi Hazaveyi, *The doe*, Gouache, 50 x 38, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Reza Bangiz and Sadegh Tabrizi referred to Phoenix, a mythical bird based on pre-Islamic Iranian myth (images 11.2, 126.3). Moreover, Aziz Raghebi in *Blind owl* referred to Iranian modern literature, a surrealist story written by Sadegh Hedayat in 1937 (image 10.1).

⁴⁰ The number of artworks that represent animals fluctuate wildly from 5% in the first Biennial to 8% and 7% in the second and third Biennials and 2% and in the fourth and fifth Biennials.



Image 11.2. Reza Bangiz, *Phoenix*, Gravure, 74 x 49, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

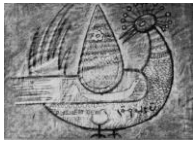


Image 126.3. Sadegh Tabrizi, *Phoenix*, Drawing, 80 x 56, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 10.1. Aziz Raghebi, *Blind owl*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Overall, analysing the works with reference to the main subjects they depict, shows the gradual changes in the artists' perspective in depiction topics that belong to their heritage but use Western art styles. It also shows the impact of Western art expanded not only in using abstract art style but also in the subject that artists depicted such as still-life.

2.5.2. Themes and Meaning

The section investigates the ways in which Iranian artists represent various aspects of their identity, through the visual elements and titles used in their works. This section is divided into nine smaller parts with the focus on the specific themes represented in the works (see Table 13). Here I will summarise key points but further in-depth analysis of artworks in each of the categories below can be found in Appendix A.

2.5.2.1. Reference to social subjects and daily life

Some of the Iranian artists focus on representing current socio-political issues. Less attention is given to integrating elements and symbols of ancient Iranian identity. These artworks recorded valuable aspects of Iranians' everyday life and traditions from

different social aspects, in order to bring to light the political issues of the time.⁴¹ Also, these works documented the ordinary people's habits and appearances. Many of the works represented this theme in the first Biennial, concentrating on the traditional and ordinary aspects of everyday rural and urban life. The next Biennials dealt with such issues too, but referred to political issues as well, as a consequence of the significant political shifts in the society, such as the 1953 coup d'état and 1962 White Revolution (Enqelāb-e safid).

The depiction of ordinary people and their everyday ways of life documented the habits, tools and costumes which were being replaced with their modern counterparts. For example, *Shepherd*, by Koroush Farzami, shows a rural scene: a shepherd wearing traditional shoes, coat and hat⁴² (image 2.1).



Image 2.1. Koroush Farzami, *Shepherd*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Although this work does not show any exceptional artistic vision, it was awarded the *Second Prize of the Ministry of Art and Culture* in the first Biennial, which suggests that the depiction of the traditional items assisted the jury in making this selection. Consequently, many of the artists exhibited a significant number of works representing many types of

⁴¹ 12% of the whole works exhibited in the first Tehran Biennial represented *social subjects and daily life*, declining in the next Biennials to 5%, 3%, 5% and 7% respectively.

⁴² The shepherd's clothes are known as Gopeng or Kordin in the local language. It is a felt robe made by different types of fleece or mohair of a goat. It covers the body down to the knees. It is open from the front and has no sleeves. It protects shepherds from cold and rain. The design of this article of clothing has minor differences in each region of Iran such as with the usage of the Bakhtiari people, a southwestern Iranian tribe.

clothing belonging to different parts and tribes of Iran in the next Biennials (as discussed in Section 2.5.8).

The depiction of various traditional objects, with significant symbolic meanings in various artworks is notable. In particular, the juxtaposition of various elements, with contrasting associations in Iranian culture, can be seen as a capturing of a certain moment in the modernisation process of Iran. For example, Tabatabai in *Pigeon racing* and Paian-Tabari in *Bath* represent secular and religious items, the two contrasting poles found in the society, in one frame (images 40.1, 19.3).



Image 40.1. Jazah Tabatabai, *Pigeon racing*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran, Iran: Central of Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 19.3. Azizollah Paian-Tabari, *Bath*, Oil, 50 x 71, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

The mosque represents the religious identity of the society while pigeon racing represents the modest and informal leisure pursuits of the ordinary Iranian. Similarly, Paian-Tabari in *Bath* depicts two contrastive social elements: a half-naked woman taking a bath in the middle of a yard, which is strongly opposed by Iranian social values, and a view of two buildings in the background with dome and minaret which are usually symbols of mosques.

2.5.2.1.1. Representation of women

Different perspectives of women in Iranian society are represented in the artworks exhibited in Tehran Biennials. Such works depict the contrast between traditional and modern female roles in Iranian society. Whereas traditionally the female role was limited to housekeeping and taking caring of children, in the more contemporary setting women have more responsibility in the society and outside of the house. It should be noted, however, that these traditional and contemporary views, are often in tension with one another. The way that artists depict female subjects reveals these tensions in society.

2.5.3. Reference to religious subjects

By depicting religious ceremonies, symbols, and elements especially from Shi'ite tradition, artists represented the religious side of the Iranian society and their Islamic heritage. In the early Biennials, obvious religious references were made, both in the title of the artworks and in the visual elements depicted. Some of these visualisations included the depiction of mosques' architectural and interior decoration, prayers, and women wearing the *Chador*. Iranian mosques are usually decorated with rhythmic forms of calligraphy, geometric shapes, and abstract forms of plants. In later Biennials, elements and symbols of religious ceremonies were presented in abstract forms. In these works, the artists created a new form in which to express an aspect of Iranian identity based on religion. This form, despite depicting religion as one of the main features of Iranian society at the time, was inspired by Western art styles, in particular abstract art. In other words, in these works, artists used western art styles to make modern artworks based on Iranian religious tradition.

I also depict religious elements in my work such as hijab, which I have to use as an Iranian woman in my daily life. These elements appear in my works of the second-hand books and represent a wider social experience of my daily life. Besides, I

symbolically recall religious elements in Iranian society as discussed in chapter 4 (see section 4.3).

2.5.3.1. Representation of Shi'ite Beliefs

Many of the works that depicted religious themes have focused on traditions related to the Shi'ite system of belief, which is adopted by the majority of Iranians. While some artists depicted traditions and ceremonies of Āšūrā's march⁴³, such as procession⁴⁴, *Saqqā-kāna*⁴⁵, and *Rozekhāni*⁴⁶, others chose a meticulous way of depiction, going beyond the subject and representing it in a symbolic way. They depicted the elements and symbols utilised in the march such as 'alam' (a symbol belonging to Āšūrā's march) and Kotal⁴⁷.

2.5.3.2. Depiction of Chador

Chador is a generic Islamic symbol for the role of women in Islamic society and it represents the religious part of the Iranian society. The decrease of depicting chador suggests the diminishing of the dominance of local perspectives and an outward looking view among the Iranian artists during the Tehran Biennials.⁴⁸ While, if we concede the depiction of naked women as an influence of Western art, these works suggest the

⁴³ The tenth day of Muharram (the first month of the Islamic calendar) is known as Āšūrā and it the day of martyrdom of Imam Hussein (the third Shi'ite's Imam). For Shi'ites, a day of mourning for the martyrdom of Imam Hussein, and for Sunnis, it is a day on which fasting is recommended (Ayoub 1987).

⁴⁴ Procession (*Zanjir-zani*) is part of the Shi'ite rituals observed in the first 10 days of Moharram. These rituals commemorate the Battle of Karbalā and the martyrdom of Imam Hussein. People use chains to flog themselves on their back, along with narrating the Ashoura story in rhythmic poems and using musical instruments such as drums and cymbals.

⁴⁵ *Saqqā-kāna* is a public place where people drink water to remember the thirstiness of Imam Hosayn and his family on Āšūrā day. They also light candles for their vows.

⁴⁶ *Roze-khani* is an elegiac rhyming poem written to commemorate the martyrdom and valour of Imam Hosayn and his comrades of the Karbalā.

⁴⁷ This is a religious banner made with a long piece of wood covered with cloths to represent an arm.

⁴⁸ The number of artworks depicting chador decreased from 16% in the first Biennial to 5%, 3%, and 7% in the next Biennials, respectively. In the fifth Biennial, no artwork depicts this element.

Iranian artists practice to westernise the subjects of their artwork.⁴⁹ Surprisingly, neither chador nor naked woman were depicted in the artworks exhibited in the fifth Tehran Biennial.

In the present day, chador is frequently depicted in the Iranian contemporary and Middle Eastern arts. This might be due to the Western stereotypical representation of the Middle Eastern face and image that basically arises from the orientalist's works of centuries past. The contemporary artists in the Middle East seem to be influenced by this stereotypical representation, most likely bearing in mind that such depictions are preferred in the Western art markets. Furthermore, the political and social issues in the Middle East influence artists to depict these type of element, in order to express their views with regard to these issues.

2.5.3.3. Depiction of Spiritual Beliefs and the Religions other than Islam

The use of religious symbols and subjects, and in particular the Shi'ite traditions, are important in two ways. Not only do they show the significant role of religion in Iranians' everyday life, but also indicate that Iranian artists, by depicting these elements from the inner layers of Iranian society, made accessible an otherwise unseen and mysterious part of Iranian tradition to the West. By using abstraction, they transfer the elements through a language familiar to Westerners. These abstract works recall the orientalist concept of representing a mysterious and lost land.

2.5.4. Reference to Historical Subjects

While Iranian artists were searching for the elements of their historical identity to reach a 'national school of art', less attention was given to the integration of historical subjects of ancient Iranian identity or historical characters. This contrasts with the official ideology of the Iranian state, based as it was on reviving the consciousness of ancient

⁴⁹ The numbers of artworks depicting *naked woman* fluctuated in the Biennials from 3% in the first Biennial to 7% in the second and third Biennials and 2% in the fourth one. In the fifth Biennial, no artwork depicts this subject.

Iran, in particular Achaemenian glories, which was only reflected in *Darius's cart*⁵⁰, an iron sculpture by Parviz Tanavoli (image 13.2).

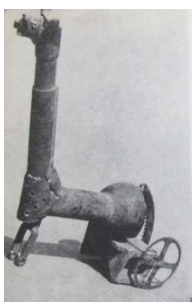


Image 13.2. Parviz Tanavoli, *Darius's cart*, Iron, no size, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central of Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

The small attention given to historical subjects, and in turn the artists' frequent focus on the use of symbols, shows a preference on the part of the artists to emphasise their Iranian identity in their works through a symbolic language rather than directly.

2.5.5. Reference to Iranian Popular Objects

Artists represented Iranian traditions by depicting popular objects such as shisha, a pitcher of water, and carpet.⁵¹ Depiction of these objects show the artists' endeavour to represent part of Iranian culture via visual language. In these works, they not only show objects as symbols, but also refer to the conceptual meanings that these objects contain from Iranians' perspective.

In my work I used a few elements of Iranian carpet as discussed in section 4.4.

2.5.6. Reference to Persian Literatures and Mythology

Classical Persian literature and mythology,⁵² contemporary Persian literature, lyricism and romantic poetry, and epic poetry inspired artists to represent their Iranian

⁵⁰ Darius (486- 550 BCE) was the third king of the Persian Achaemenid empire. Achaemenid elements and symbols were represented in the arts and architecture of the Pahlavi era to revive the glory of Achaemenid period.

⁵¹ The number decreased from 5% in the first Tehran Biennial to 1%, 3% and 2% in the next Biennials, respectively. Moreover, no published artwork in the fifth Tehran Biennial's catalogue represents this theme.

⁵² In the first and second Tehran Biennials, only 3% of artworks represented literature and myth. The trend sees a slight rise in the third Biennial to 6% before settling back to 2% in the fourth and fifth Biennials.

heritage in their artworks. Borrowing subjects and themes from well-known literary works is suggestive of the artists' endeavours in creating a piece of art aimed at a local set of audiences. As we discussed earlier, the impact of literature on Iranian identity is undeniable and Iranians' knowledge of their heritage is significantly formed by literature.

In depicting these themes, many artists struggled to find a new visual language to represent their subjects. In other words, they could not go beyond the boundaries of literary texts and oral traditions to depict their subjects. The artists were surrounded by the boundaries set by literature and remained captive to the representational powers of the texts, although some of the artists, by using modernist idioms, tried to represent a new image of old texts.

Throughout the Biennales, it is evident that reference to Persian literature, myths, and Iranian traditions were signposts to identity. Although these subjects recall traditional Persian paintings, artists did not use the manner of miniature painting in their works. Most of them used the Western artistic style to depict their subjects. However, few could achieve a new artistic voice adequate to their experience and most works remained illustrations.

The influence of Persian literature in my works can be seen in the use of Persian book as a theme of some of my works as discussed in section 4.3.

2.5.7. Use of Calligraphy

Calligraphy emerged in the Achaemenid and Sassanid eras. In the Islamic era, calligraphy was further refined through designing and writing the Quran, decorating buildings such as mosques, and decorating crafts such as plates and jars. Calligraphy also arose in the copying of precious books. Examples include *Šāh-nāma* and other poetry books, where the calligraphy usually accompanied illustrations. Different types of Persian

and Arabic calligraphic forms were used. In the twentieth century, calligraphy became one of the main features of Iranian modern and contemporary art.

The use of calligraphy in painting flourished in the middle of twentieth century in Iran. During the Tehran Biennials, calligraphy appeared extensively in artworks.⁵³ Although calligraphy in the artistic sense has always been part of Iranians artistic tradition and can be traced in different historical periods in Iran, only slowly over a long period did it become a dominant artistic style among Iranian artists.

Calligraphy, as a traditional Iranian form of art is important to Iranian artists. Writing is an old tradition among Iranians in all eras, helping them to record their history. This can also be seen in the remains of relics from the pre-Islamic era, which have since become a core part of Islamic art. These facts show why and how calligraphy found its primary position in the Iranian modern and contemporary arts. It also indicates that in depicting Iranian identity in visual arts, artists found calligraphy as one of the fascinating elements in the Iranian heritage. Furthermore, due to the nature of Persian fonts, artists can depict them in many different compositions, and these fonts can further be seen as decorative designs especially to persons who cannot read the language these fonts mediate. These qualities make the Persian calligraphy, which Iranian artists started to use in their works, a unique element in their works.

2.5.8. Reference to specific regions in Iran

Iranian artists, by referring to the different part of Iran, depict Iranian traditional life, rural people, and the nomadic tribes as well as their habits and traditions.⁵⁴ Although these works also document towns and their symbols, in some of the artworks, only their titles refer to the regions. The visual elements do not help the viewer to recognise the

⁵³ There was no exhibited artwork representing calligraphy or orthography in the first Tehran Biennial. During the next Biennials, the number of works increased with a gentle slope with 1%, 3%, 5% and 10% in the second, third, fourth, and fifth Biennials respectively.

⁵⁴ The number of artworks depicting this theme fluctuates considerably, from 3% in the first Biennial to 8%, 1%, 7% and 5% in the next Biennials respectively.

place. Interestingly, to represent this theme only a few artists chose an abstract style while others preferred a realistic approach. The realistic manner suggests that the artists sought to document the culture and habits of the people.

Most of the artists who exhibited their works in Tehran Biennials used the title to communicate better with their viewers. A new approach to choosing titles is evident in the fourth and fifth Biennials. Some artists refer to 'Iran' as a place in the title of their works, such as *Iranian dance*, by Marie Shaianse, *Iranian tree*, by Abolghassem Saidi, and *Iranian spring*, by Massoud Arabshahi (images 52.4, 131.4, 29.5).



Image 52.4. Marie Shaianse, *Iranian dance*, Gravure, 34 x 49, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

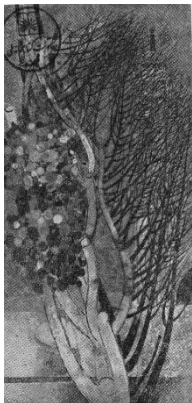


Image 131.4. Abolghassem Saidi, *Iranian tree*, Oil, 150 x 80, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 29.5. Massoud Arabshahi, *Iranian spring*, Oil, 133 x 190, from Fifth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1966, Tehran, Iran: Ministry of Culture and Arts.

These three artists, by referring to 'Iran', not only bring together all the different people who live in Iran from different ethnicities, cultures, and even languages, but also introduce a kind of national identity which the Biennials organisers were looking for. Iranian artists explored the different regions of Iran, in particular those with historical significance. To represent them, they not only depicted the traditions and local elements, but also tried to represent a part of their Iranian heritage, rooted in the same ancient traditions but adapted to the local customs.

2.5.9. Reference to elements of Iranian classical painting, art and craft

The use of items and symbols that belong to the Iranian visual heritage of the Pre-Islamic and the Islamic eras can be traced in some artworks exhibited in Tehran Biennials.⁵⁵ To depict these elements and symbols, some of the artists used the Western art styles. Others used the achievements of the old generation of Iranian artists who, during the early twentieth century, tried to renew the two-dimensional and flat miniature paintings. These artists brought a realistic point of view to the traditional miniature paintings, and 'while the subject-matter remains almost unchanged compared with classical Persian painting, the content and style of portraiture seem different in terms of characters and the depiction of social figures- in contrast to the traditional approach, which was to portray literary or mystical personalities' (Keshmirshekan 2013, pp. 46, 47). The influence of the renewal of miniature painting manner continued until the middle of the twentieth century, as we can see in many artworks exhibited in the first Tehran Biennial.

2.5.10. Reference to West/East

The 'West', as a theme, was not as common as one might expect. While many artists applied Western techniques and approaches, few addressed its essential historical

⁵⁵ The tread decreased from 12% in the first Biennial to 7% in the second and third and 5% in the fourth Biennial; again reached 12% in the fifth Tehran Biennial.

and political essence. Those that depicted the West did so principally through images of European and American cities.⁵⁶

Noteworthy here is the fact that these works represented the West from an Eastern perspective. This can be seen as the flipside of orientalism, where the East is depicted through a Western perspective. The Iranian representations of the West in these artworks are mostly concerned with scenes not seen in Iran, the places that uniquely show the Western cities and even their picturesque cultures.

2.6. Summary

Before the first Tehran Biennial in 1958, Iranian artists had not achieved noteworthy success in international festivals. It was after 1958 that Iranian artworks started to receive considerable international attention. The Tehran Biennials offered a space for Iranian artists and art directors to bring all works together in a complete collection of Iranian contemporary art for international art organisers and collectors.

The Biennials' organisers believed these events would be instrumental to the success of Iranian artists in other international Biennials, such as the Biennale de Paris in 1961. The organisers also claimed that success in the Paris Biennale was attributable to the previous Tehran Biennials (1958-1960) and other exhibitions held during those years. However, whilst the organisers attributed this success to the variety of the artworks presented and the Western influence on these works, they also believed that such Western influence caused chaos among Iranian artists. This chaos could only be eliminated through a national style of art (Tajvidi 1962, pp. 11, 12). Meanwhile, in order to gain a similar success within Iranian society, the artists shifted their focus towards a form and style of art which the wider society could understand and to which it could connect. This fact encouraged artists and Tehran Biennial organisers to search for a

⁵⁶ Only 1% of artworks in the first, third, and fourth Tehran Biennials referred to West or East. This trend increased to 4% in the second Biennial, and no artworks represented this theme in the fifth Tehran Biennial.

national, yet new and independent, style and set of topics that could reflect the needs of society as a whole.

The identification of the artworks with modernism in their first appearance in an international exhibition was not accidental. Throughout history, arts in Iran have been tied to political change. Looking back from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries, kings had dedicated art schools and artists. Artists received special titles and they illustrated books, such as *Šāh-nāma*, for the kings. These illustrated books, named after the kings and the painting schools for the most part, were also named after the city in which they did their illustrations. For example, the *Šāh-nāma-ye Šāh* or *Šāh-nāma-ye Šāh Tahmāsbī* was created in the early of the sixteenth century by artists at the royal atelier in Tabriz, the capital of the Safavid monarchy at the time. Art in Iran has been a royal monopoly. Under this system of semi-patronage, artists were not completely free to follow their aspirations; they had to consider their king's desires as well. As mentioned, such circumspection was still prevalent in the time when Tehran Biennials were held, and it continues to exist within a more modern ideological framework under the Islamic Republic.

This setting still defines and informs relationships between artists and the government, in spite of contemporary artists' attempts to abandon it and follow their own aims. This tension confronts the contemporary artist with certain potentially severe restrictions, such as not being allowed to exhibit his or her works publicly.

The artworks exhibited in the Tehran Biennials show a mosaic of cultural and geographical diversity in Iran that reveals its richness to outsiders. The works reflect an attempt by Iranian artists and art directors to incorporate the cultural and geographical elements as signifiers in the formation of their national identity. As such, the variable elements in the exhibited works construct the identity of Iran and Iranians. For instance, the modernist artist, Zenderoudi, adapted Islamic symbols to the contemporary world,

following Al-e Ahmad's attempts to reconcile religion and modernity (Daftari 2002, p.72). Iranian artists invented a new visual language which formed a rich visual heritage for Iranian contemporary artists. Unlike some of the prevailing orientalist notions that represent the East as passive, merely represented from the eye of the occident, the works prove that a process of negotiation took place between East and West. Later, these Iranian artists managed to develop a unique means of representation which fit universal values. This is noticed by identifying the rhythm of change on the artworks exhibited in each of the Biennials. The analysis shows that the Iranian artists negotiated new ways to present themselves by adapting Western conceptual and technical tools and materials. At the same time, they continued to acknowledge their national and historical heritage and celebrate their changing culture. They tried to challenge the established borders between the West and the East and represent themselves as contemporary.

In addition, the historical investigation of Tehran Biennials and the analysis of the artworks they exhibited show that cultural hegemony not only functioned from above, as the state's ideology, but also from below as imposed by people's ideological interpretations. For instant, the Iranian secular government transformed traditional Iranian society to a modern state by encouraging artists to make modern and abstract art style. On the other hand, artists tried to bring together the two main ideological poles in the Iranian society by depicting elements and symbols which have their roots in the Shi'ite system of belief ceremonies. In other words, Iranian artists who may have not been religious, found the core of Iranian national identity among the religious symbols and ceremonies. By representing them in abstract art styles, they explored a way which included the goals and desires of both sides; the state and the people.

In the next chapter, I address the different aspects of this study on my work in relation to other contemporary artists.

Chapter 3: Placing the layers of theoretical, historical and archival research via studio practice

3.1. My practice in context: Contribution to knowledge

The thesis is an outcome of a two-fold research: theoretical, historical and archival research which investigates the concept of Iranian Identity by using Tehran Biennials as a case study, and a studio practice. The historical research offers a new perspective on the development of modernism in Iranian art history Iranian modern art history and the steps that artists took to achieve an Iranian modern art which, while it had its roots in tradition, was international in its outlook. The research furnished me with more accurate knowledge of my Iranian heritage in the depth and complexity of our pictorial heritage. The studio practice results in new artwork while also in a sense visualising the theoretical/historical research. Making artworks in reference to my identity by using elements and symbols from my memories, experiences and my Iranian cultural heritage sets a new perspective for me while doing the theoretical and historical research. Without the practice, some of the historical and theoretical material would not have developed in this particular way. For example, the notion of identity turned from a subjective and instinctual concept to a tangible and substantial form located as layers. As such, the idea of layering expands in the theoretical and historical aspects as a metaphorical concept. In other words, the archival research and my studio practice are woven into each other. So part of the original contribution to knowledge is bringing theory and practice together into this investigation.

In terms of methodology, this research, tries to meet different perspectives toward Iranian identity and find the traces that they left in Iranian visual heritage in the mid twentieth century by using different methods such as archive, literatures and interview. Archival research was undertaken in Mashhad, Shiraz, Tehran and Paris; literature review and library research in Lancaster; interviews in Iran, Paris and New York and numerous gallery visits from London and Paris to New York. My research, as

practice and theory, has been tested through presentation at conference in Vienna⁵⁷ and publication in postgraduate research journals⁵⁸ and exhibited in Lancaster⁵⁹. Moreover, the two aspects of this study- the academic and studio- have sat alongside and informed each other, literally on my studio table. My paintings have been challenged by my reading and my writing affected by my studio practice.

The academic element of this study sets out to track, analyse and describe the traditions, values and practices that have contributed to new visualisations of national identity. Studio practice sets action research methods in train to explore selected motifs and compositions seen in the biennales for potential re-application today. By thinking of the theoretical, archival and historical research as layers of conceptual knowledge and understanding integrated with the layers of a painter's experiences skills and reflection, the layer of studio practice would add a very personal and even vivid aspects on them. Hence, investigating the past by using a mixed tool kit of conventional and new approaches, offers a new perspective toward the past and at the same time brings shades of the past to the current time. To put it simply, these are methodologies that are commonly used in historical and theoretical research. But in the studio practice there are methodologies that are productive and distinct to practice. This study brought these normally separate methodologies together. In addition, practices are given an opportunity to reflect on the history and theory from different stand points and through different lenses.

⁵⁷ Takhtkeshian, F. 'The I-Eye: The Multi-layered Identity', Presentation at the Second International Identity conference held in Vienna, Austria between 6-7 September 2016.

⁵⁸ Takhtkeshian, F. 'Formation of a Different Medium of Perception'; *The Luminary*, the online post-graduate journal based at Lancaster University, (2013).

⁵⁹ *In-betweenness*, Group exhibition of Lancaster PhD Art and Film students, The Storey Gallery, November 2015. And, *Layers of Identity*, The LICA Building, Lancaster University, September 2014.

3.2. The bridge

The theoretical and historical research and archival work provides me with means and conceptual tools to view Iranian tradition, heritage and society differently. It offers a way of looking at the significant symbols, references and materials in artworks exhibited in Tehran Biennials. So the objective of this part of my research is to present a model for investigation and archeologically revealing significant moments in my own training, my own growth and autobiography. It was also decisive in choosing different symbols and elements from my heritage to bring them to my practice. The research expresses my deepening knowledge of the concept of Iranian identity and Iranian and non-Iranian artists' and historians' conceptions. As such, digging through the historical archive gave me ways of thinking about how I can critically reflect on my own autobiography archive.

The Biennial enabled current Iranian art practices to be foregrounded and shown in international contexts. They also made it possible for Iranian artists to be innovative in employing concepts and using material and media. An enduring impact of the biennales was that this foregrounding of art became ever more public and international. They also offered Iranian artists, art schools and students new ways to think about art. Similarly, in my art, I am recovering and representing aspects of ancient, historical and traditional culture; Iranian and international. Through my studio practice I re-cycle, I take experiences from my past and my knowledge of history and bring them into the 21st century, and mix them via film, videos, installation, with new ideas about deconstruction. So in a miniature way I am doing something not dissimilar to what the biennales did.

Moreover, my studio practice which explores a very personal experience, draws a framework of how to look and what to find in analysing the artworks and the process of organizing the Tehran Biennials. Studio practice enables me to have a deep and sensitive treatment of the fabric while looking at archival material. It imports an imaginatively interpretative skills used in the studio, which are not used all the time in the archive or

historical research. but they do give me another tool. So that is what comes from the studio into my academic research; a sympathetic way of interpretation. These are the special skills of a practitioner, an extra-sensory feel for colour, texture and how an artist has molded their subject.

I benefited from the theoretical framework in developing some skills in the studio. For instance, collage is the main technique that is used in most of the artworks. Collage visualises the concept of collective identity and represents them as different layers. Besides, the method of transferring images and peeling the paper to reach the photos metaphorically represents the idea of moving from a place to another, in addition to layering identity. As such, these skills developed as a result of using materials and images and as a result of the way text, images and the relationships between them are imaginatively interpreted.

To conclude, archives integrate different layers of their historically embedded art practices. As Stuart Hall argues, ‘photography is a representational system, using images on light-sensitive paper to communicate photographic meaning about a particular person, event or scene. Exhibition or display in a museum or gallery can also be thought of as ‘like a language’, since it uses objects on display to produce certain meanings about the subject matter of the exhibition’ (Hall, 2013, p. xxi). When we go to museum, we experience a huge cultural layering –the archive as a set of veins and skins that represent and relay the information, experiences and images on them. I have decoded and absorbed the layers into my practice as an artist, and the collage techniques I use are a direct mirror of archival layering.

3.3. My practice in a contemporary context

I selected an example of a group of artists, 2 Iranian and 2 Western, who are working with ideas such as re-location and changed identities. In terms of art techniques these artists are recycling images, representing ideas of immigration and moving from

one place to another, and referring to national and historical elements. This section follows with a visual map (see Visual Map 95 in Appendix C). that places my works besides these contemporary artists. The aim of this is to position myself in contemporary practice and demonstrate the relationships between the theoretical, historical and archival research.

Among the many Iranian and international artists whose works inspired me, I choose Bahman Jalali (1944- 2010), Shirin Neshat (b. 1957), Yinka Shonibare (b. 1962) and Laure Prouvost (b. 1978). Their techniques and the way they look at their subject and bring together past and present is inspirational. For example, their approach to history and contemporary time and represent them simultaneously can be seen in the use of traditional art techniques such as sculpture and painting along with newer media like photography, video and installation.

Bahman Jalali is an Iranian amateur and self-taught photographer.

The various stages and moments in the works of Bahman Jalali, from his documentary projects to the *Image of Imagination* series, realised using the negatives of the Qajar photographs, relate in a complex manner to cultural history and memory (but also to that which has been suppressed), through a process of anamnesis that leads us to certain obscure points originating in forgotten images. (David, 2007, pp. 6-7)

Jalali, in the *Image of Imagination* series⁶⁰, used his imagination as a filter and tried to reproduce the images that he saw on his journeys in Iran. This series is a selection and combination of ‘different images of the Qajar period taken from the photographic collection of the Golestan Palace’ (Jalali, 2007, p. 176). As Jalali claimed in this series he created ‘a world that one finds only in the imagination. In the space between the tangible

⁶⁰ The *Image of Imagination* series includes 6 different phase: *Image of Imagination: Black and White I* (2000), *Sepia* (2002), *Red* (2003), *Flowers* (2004), *Mirror* (2005) and *Black and White II* (2008).

and virtual, where time is set aside, a world emerges that brings these two realities ever closer' (Jalali, 2007, p. 176). As such, his work primarily deals with a piece of the past but brings it forward in a contemporary image. As the name *Image of Imagination* suggests, it is an imaginative recreation of something lost.

My work draws on some of the ideas and images of Jalali's work. His works have a strong association with memory and imagination which create past and present. His works are also distinguished by symbolic use of colour and historical photos. By using old images and adding his memories to them, he brings the historical images into the present time. I draw upon on Jalali's works by combining different layers of past, present, memories and experiences and bring them together. I use my old images and add my old and recent memories to them.

The role of memory and imagination can be seen in the works of Shirin Neshat. She went to the United States to pursue her study in 1975, but the uncertainties that resulted from the Iranian Revolution (1978-79), followed by the hardships imposed by the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88) compelled Neshat to remain in the United States (Ho, 2015, p. 11). Only in 1990 was she able to visit Iran. The *Women of Allah* series is the outcome of this visit and other subsequent visits. '*Women of Allah* shows an artist grappling with the shifting and contradictory ideologies that have been projected on the figure of the Iranian woman, both by the government of Islamic Republic and by the West' (Ho, 2015, p. 17). In these works, Neshat represents her reading of the changes that had taken place in Iran since she had left the country (Ho, 2015, p. 14). She claims that 'I seem to have framed subjects that are directly related to my experiences as an Iranian woman living abroad. In many ways I feel like even my female characters to some degree embody my own characteristics and nature. They are often loners, outcasts, rebellious against every norm and form of authority' (Neshat, 2015, p. 34).

In the *Women of Allah* series, she is ‘usually posing for the picture herself while having a friend trigger the shutter. She inscribes the resulting print with patterns and handwriting in Persian’ (Ho, 2015, p. 16). She uses different elements and symbols which are ambiguously layered, with a number of possible readings.

Subtle dissonances in the *Women of Allah* images reveal that, while seeming to conform to the strictest Islamic-Iranian codes of dress, Neshat’s *Women* appear wearing heavy eye makeup [...], veils that can look more like a nun’s habit than a chador, and “henna tattoos” that reference a cultural practice that is non-Islamic in origin, and wielding a weapon made in America, a Reminglo rifle (Ho, 2015, p. 17).

The role of place, Iran before and after revolution, and its changes are highlighted in Neshat’s works. She ‘has described making art as her way of building a “bridge” to Iran-both it’s present reality, which she can observe only from a distance, and the country of her memory and imagination’ (Ho, 2015, p. 11). Similar to Neshat, I use elements and symbols which have their roots in my memory and experiences. I also try to make a bridge between the two different places in which I have lived, Iran and the UK, and make a balance between the different layers of my knowledge. Neshat works also significantly inspired me to use the serial form in making artworks. ‘There are thirty-eight *Women of Allah* photographs and, as with Cindy Sherman’s *Untitled Film Still* or Tseng Kwong Chi’s *Ambiguous Ambassador* series, important meaning can be found in the differences and gaps between the images’ (Ho, 2015, p. 17). Likewise, I work in a serial form. Each work is a layer of my identity. And when I exhibit them side by side, a viewer can see and read the gaps between them and what is absent in the work and invisible to them but non the less important to its construction and meaning. As such, working in a serial form can reveal the non-depicted parts and represent them between the non-existed lines.

Yinka Shonibare was born in London, grew up in Nigeria and returned to London to continue his art school education (Chambers, 2014, p. 297). Shonibare 'brought together studies of African art practices –often depicted were wooden caryatid figures- juxtaposed with all manner of consumer items, readily available on high streets and other retail outlets' (Chambers, 2014, p. 297). He 'attempted to fashion new languages, new dialogues, and new terms of reference to describe the peculiarities of his life and his identity in late 1980s London' (Chambers, 2014, p. 298). Shonibare recycled an enormous number of cultural references from Nigeria, such as colourful African batik fabric and African Dutch wax fabric, to question cultural and national meanings. In my works, I take European books as an unfamiliar substrate and collage over images and elements from my cultural heritage. I weave my memories and experiences from Iran, Tehran, and the UK. The books themselves as solid cultural artefacts and the images which I made in them metaphorically represent my traveling and re-locating. They hold the knowledge I gained from these two different places in which I have been living in the last few years. They also contain all cultural and national definitions which I have encountered during this time. My work recycles patterns and fabrics and re-purposes them.

Laure Prouvost, a French artist based in London, in her work *Wantee*, 2013- video installation displays a transnational imagination which travels back to other places and environments. She uses different layers of her memory, fiction, reality and art history together and presents them via modern technology. The concepts in this work, which I saw in the Grizedale Arts exhibition in 2013, inspired me. The fact that this artist moved to the UK to continue her study and the references to her memory in her work highlighted the importance of personal memory and experiences in my journey from Iran to the UK. This highlighted my past and raised questions about how I want to keep and represent my memories and personal experiences in my works. The combination of

conventional and contemporary techniques and approaches- of mixing old and new media- and dissolving the boundaries between the artwork and environment provoked me to rethink how I might curate and present my own work for exhibition. The whole exhibition space becomes part of my work. Visitors not only observe artworks, they also walk inside them to live the experience.

My journey to the West has given me a first-hand chance to see and experience many contemporary art practices which challenge new and traditional art media and concepts. In my practice I bring together old and new media to present Iranian culture from my own perspective based on my memories and experiences.

In the next chapter, I address how my own practice negotiates similar challenges.

Chapter 4. The I-Eye: The Multiple Self

As we have seen, by the middle of the twentieth century, and in the context of the Biennales, Iranian artists reimagined cultural codes that had long been part of their heritage. These cultural codes, maintained in symbols, elements, colours, and subjects formed the conception of Iranian visual culture for contemporary Iranians, including artists. In other words, I can say that the Iranian modern artists used the elements and subjects of Iranian heritage, as represented by Western Orientalists scholars and artists, as well as their knowledge about the Iranian culture and history to reflect their contemporary experience. They produced a new visual identity based on the Iranian traditions and modern values. This is the legacy that I, as an Iranian artist in the twenty-first century, inherit.

In my practice, I explore the notion of identity through different media: collage, painting, drawing, and video. While thoughts of selfhood, nationality, and gender have long informed my practice, issues of identity have become foregrounded since my move to the UK. Different questions have started to penetrate my mind: What is 'identity'? Is identity a fixed quality? At the personal level, is it necessary to depict my identity in my work or not? If the answer is yes, how can I represent it? Thus far, I am still looking for a firm answer to these questions. The outcome of this research has enabled me to better locate my practice in this context.

While researching identity, I have found myself as a multi-layered person: a construction of individual and collective. Identity is the perception persons have of themselves. We also perceive ourselves from the perceptions of others. I perceive the fragments of myself in the society and, as an artist, I try to put them together while knowing the fragments in my multi-layered identity for contradictions and ironies. That, in fact, is why it is a multi-layered self. Every time I examine a layer, elements of my identity appear or disappear and I try to replace or move the layers. The different aspects

of my identity are hidden in various layers of artworks. I want to find out the subtle dialogue between 'I' and 'Eye'; how identity is constructed by self-perception and others' conceptions. I attempt to capture the dialogue between 'I' of reflection and 'eye' of depiction. The 'I' is an internal view that indicates a self-perception, while the 'eye' is an external view of the society towards that self.

This collection of thoughts, feeling, and experiences unified in this research comes from my awareness of myself. The historical research has enabled me to observe myself critically—as an artist composed of academic training and cultural inheritance, a rational being—and to observe myself as instinctive and creative, a sensing and feeling being. Moreover, the idea of collecting different components in one place can be seen as the result of this practice-based research using different types of traditional and new media to make artwork. The outcome of this research is a self-analytical autobiographical work in paint, collage, and video.

This chapter divides into three main sections. The first section divides into two parts. The first of these investigates the techniques, materials, and concepts explored during the course of this practice-based research. The second part explores the implications of the manner of displaying the works. The second section of the chapter examines the notion of layers in visualizing identity and the third considers the concept of fragmented identity in art practice.

4.1. Circle; Materials and Concepts

To explore the idea of layers of identity in my practice, I used self-portrait, Iranian motifs from the traditional cloth and carpet, images and recorded film of aeroplane, and landscape pictures, all of which affect my notion of myself. These motifs and images manifest in collages, paintings, and videos. They represent my memories, experiences, and emotions. Images represent real life in the works. Photos create an image of reality in our minds that is combined with colours and drawings that represent

my emotions and elements I inherited as an Iranian. Colours and drawings are from different objects, times, and places. They complete each other and magnify particular aspects of the historical moment captured by photos.

Using second-hand books and photos metaphorically represents the idea of collection—a collection of elements of tradition. Iranian culture is a collection of different traditions of various civilizations. The art works from each historical stage show the influence of other cultures and civilizations on the Iranian culture. For instance, the impact of Assyrian and Mesopotamia arts can be traced to Achaemenid arts; and Parthian and Sassanid arts were influenced by ancient Greek art and Roman art (Pakbaz 1998, pp. 765, 767).

Collage as an art production technique, utilises parts, sections, and incomplete material. It forms its images from elements that have previously appeared elsewhere. Fragments are placed alongside and over each other purposefully to form images and narratives that contain juxtapositions and discontinuity. The success of collage often rests on a type of mixing, yet results in an unsmooth blend. 'It first became an acknowledged artistic technique in the early 20th century, when it drew much of its material from the proliferation of mass-produced images in newspapers, advertisements, cheap popular illustrations, etc.' (Chilvers and Graves-Smith 2009). In this way, collage, metaphorically, visualises the fundamental concept of a person's identity as the integration of cultural influences. In addition, collectivity, as a significant factor in making collage, recalls the concept of Iranian identity as a collective feeling between Iranians as discussed in Chapter 1.

From this perspective, all of the works presented in this practice-based research initially developed around the idea of collectivity. Collage is a plural and impure mix of sources and images. It is, in my view, uniquely suited to exploring Iranian experiences. As a technique, collage helps me to express how I feel about my identity, which is a

collection and reflection of society, the times I relate to, my past which still has its effects on my character, and new experience that change me every day. Collage also reflects my artistic and geographical journey to the West. In a sense, my entire practice is a collage; it includes a variety of media and it relies on layering associations. While the paintings might be interpreted as the most 'final' of my works, they are nonetheless exhibited in relation to other media which speak to and interrupt them.

Iranian identity is a collective feeling among the people who live in the historical lands of Iran and share historical experiences and cultural traditions. When we look at collage as a technique, it is not hard to recognise different elements that came together to make the final work. Working on a page at various times by re-drawing, adding a little paint, and sometimes adding objects that I find, brings different aspects and different feelings from the work together and, at the same time, by working on different works, I confer on them the same experience. So this group of works constitutes a collection of thoughts, feelings, and experiences that are brought into one place without paying attention to their chronological orders. In other words, I am questioning these orders. This group of works made in the books reflect my conceptions and experiences concerning my identity. The collages are an 'open work' (Eco 1989); they do not aspire to completion or to a final consummate form.

Alternatively, the works on canvas not only hold my thoughts and feeling, but also document the stories of my experiences in moving from one place to another. This story, completed during the process of work, starts from making of the sketches to the creating of final pieces by printing, transferring images, drawing, painting, and sewing on them. This process brings the idea of removing and selecting layers of identity to represent the image I want others to see.

To make sketches for paintings, I used Photoshop. Working with Photoshop offered the potential for more layers, keeping and erasing parts of them to make different versions of

the composition with almost the same constituent elements and images (Figures 9 and 10).

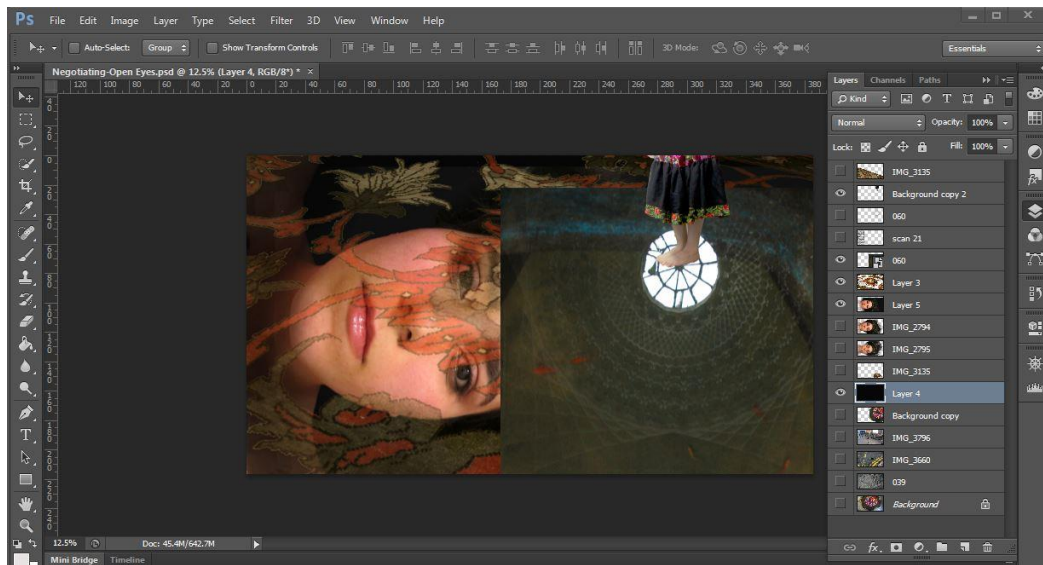


Figure 9 Digital sketches in progress from Negotiation 1, 2013.

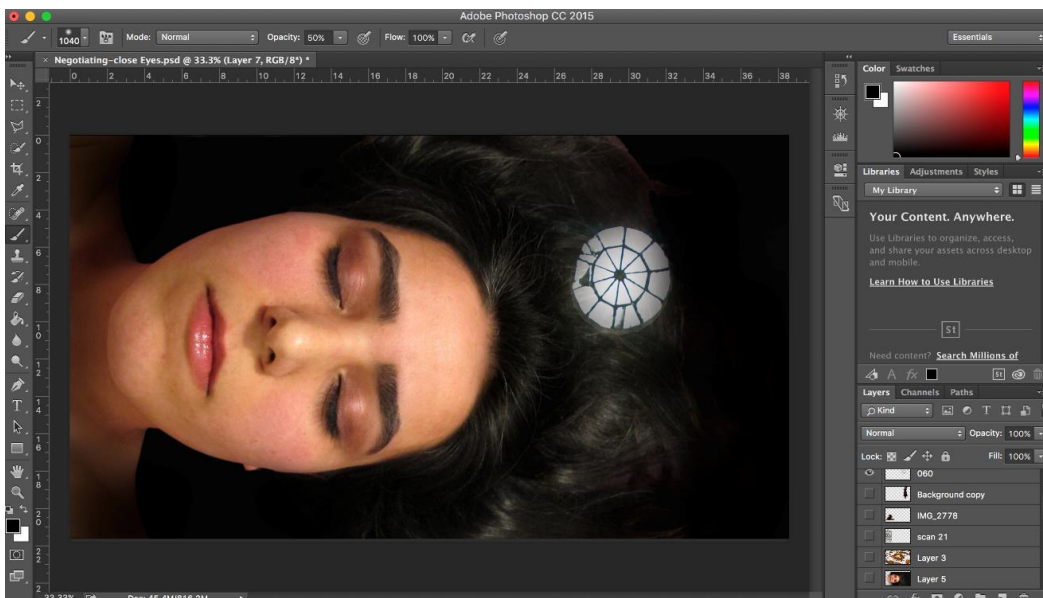


Figure 10 Digital sketches in progress from Negotiation 1, 2013.

Photoshop also allowed the visualisation of the idea of secrecy and disclosure, since some images are transparent whereas others are opaque, and some layers merge together.

Images (layers) overlap until the final composition is formed. These layers, which also contain pictures, elements, and symbols of my identity, metaphorically visualize the concept of collective identity, the challenge I face in my self-definition, and how I want to present myself and my identity.

In the process of printing, the virtual layers in the digital sketches disappeared and the final print becomes flat (Figure 11).



Figure 11 Final print from digital sketches of Negotiation 1, 2013.

The final print recalls the original images upon which I started work. However, the images were constant and just represented a moment in a place or an object. The sketches represent a multivalent image of different places and objects that overlapped and dissolved into each other. It is like a pause on a timeline—a point under a magnifier. However, in my opinion, these digital sketches were not complete yet. They did not hold the experience of moving from a place to another. I wanted to find a way to transfer this experience in my practice. Moving from one place to another, while adding new knowledge on the person, stretches the old experiences and habits and this may result in a dramatic change in that person's lifestyle and the way of thinking. In my experience, this was not a simple change. Moving from Iran to the UK was such a dislocation on so many basic aspects—culture, customs, and language—as to have a profound impact on my ideology, lifestyle, and even ways of thinking. As such, these differences generated the necessity of learning a new set of socio-cultural relations based on the new values in the new place. The experience, metaphorically, inculcated in me the notion that I am living in

two parallel universes. Thus, the new layers that add on the previous layers of my identity through this displacement have deeply enriched my life experiences.

By making collages in books I learned that the time I spent on each work added a critical layer, the layer that documented and represented the feelings, memories, and experiences that dominated me at that time. I decided to transfer these digital sketches to actual paintings. Among the different options, such as printing them on photographic paper or using the traditional painting techniques, I decided to restrict the technique used in this research. This restriction, metaphorically, represents the limitations that the societies' ideologies apply in my everyday life. For instance, my vision formed by living in Iran as the community in which I grew up and the UK as a place to which I moved. Both settings shaped my beliefs, goals and expectations, but at the same time gave me a framework within which to think about and experience it. Moreover, I wanted to develop a technique that captured visually the idea of layering from the metaphoric aspect of this research to a real and touchable experience.

In making the paintings, I transferred images on canvas by printing the digital sketches on regular print paper and using medium gel to attach the prints on canvas (Figure 12).



Figure 12 Transferring image on canvas from Negotiation 1, 2013.

The pictures are placed face down, and after hours of saturating and peeling the paper, the image appears. Peeling paper to find the image on it metaphorically recalls the idea of investigating the different aspects of identity to keep and erase parts of them. The transferring process affects the quality of images by removing some details, damaging, and scratching the image. This practice recalls the influences remaining in a person when moving from one place to another. It also highlights the concept of fragmented identity—the relationship between the fragmentary as a cultural concept and the formal and visual qualities of damaged images.

Thus, she holds traditions and ideologies from the society in which she lived in. She hides herself behind them, in her safe zone, and highlights some aspects of them, the ones closer to her, namely, her memories. The layers started fragment, the cracks in them appearing whilst moving to a new place with its own challenges and limitations. She had to pick and re-define her values and describe new ones based on both old and new settings. The ideologies and traditions inevitably merge (Figure 12).

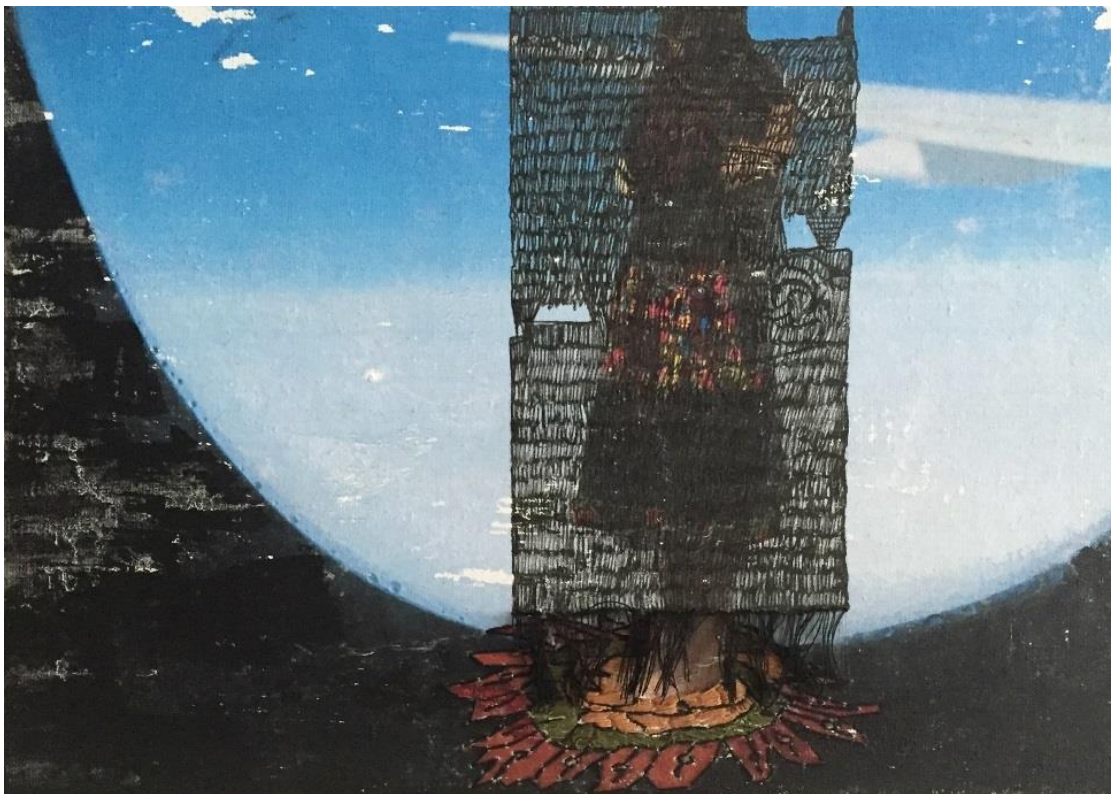


Figure 13 Untitled, 2014.

In addition to some layers of drawing, painting, scratching, and collaging, I used thread to sew some parts of the motifs in paintings (Figure 14).

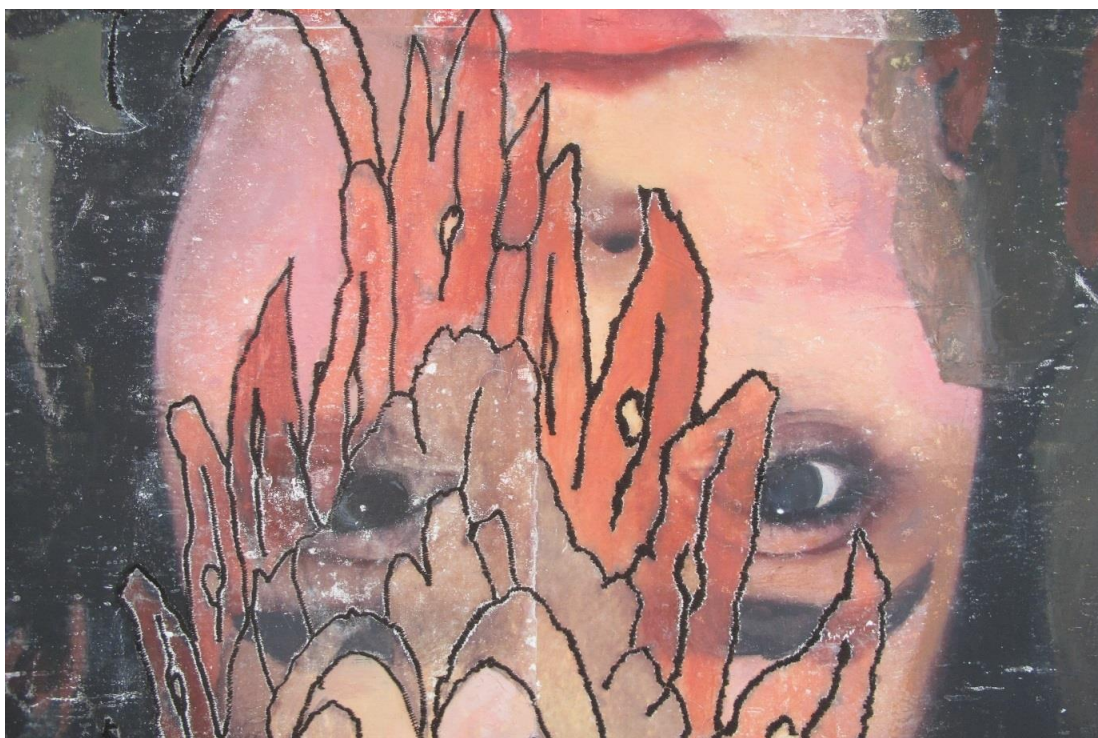


Figure 14 Sewing, detail form Negotiation 1, 2013.

Sewing motifs on my face is a metaphor of attaching tradition onto the identity of a person. Sewing was an important hobby in my own upbringing. While I was a teenager my mother as a member of a generation that preceded me, taught me how to make an embroidery work, a handicraft art that she had learned from her mother. Moreover, I leaned different styles of needlework at school in a course that familiarised teenagers with various (traditional and new) arts and craft. This transfer of traditions, in this case the use of thread, from one generation to the next allowed me not only to adopt and import a feminine tradition into my works that had its roots in my adolescent experiences and memory, but also, simultaneously, to remove this tradition's limits and personalize and re-frame it based on my current needs.

The other material that I used is the mirror, which, traditionally in Iran, is used to decorate buildings (Figure 15).

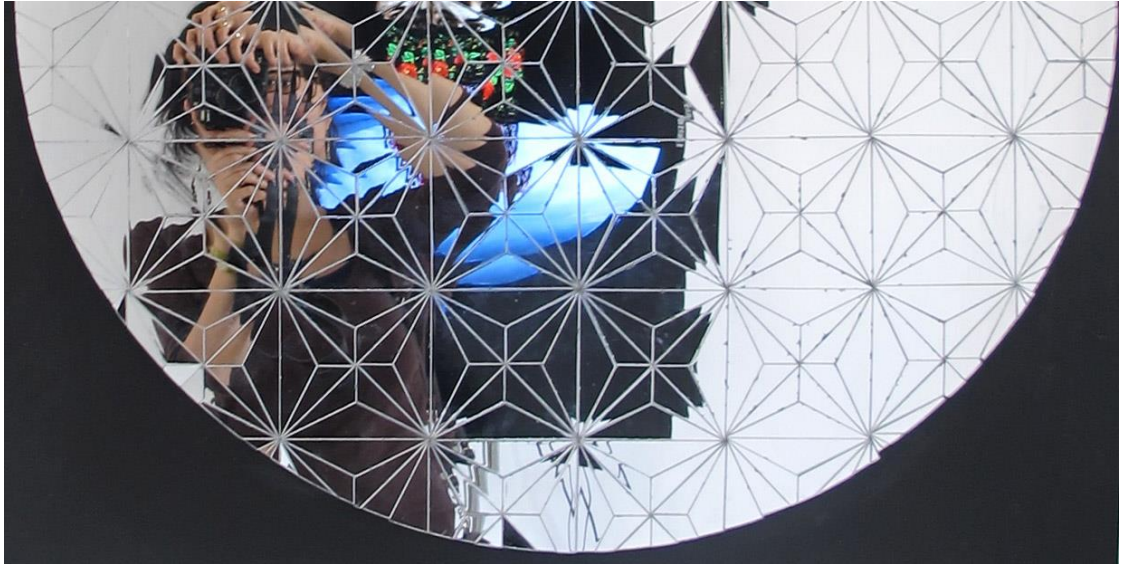


Figure 15 Mirror, detail form Negotiation 2, 2013.

In my work, the mirror is cut into small pieces in the form of a geometric motif often used in Iran's Islamic art.

Finally, videos set the different layers and elements of identity into motion. Moreover, video enables other dimensions such as time and movement to appear in the work, which collage and paint do not. While these works are in video and technologically very different, they share a common root with the collages. I borrowed images and visual elements from the second-hand books and combined them with films and pictures that I saw in Iran and the UK (Fig. 16).



Figure 16 Still from Untitled. video. 28", 2013.

My first treatment of visual elements from the UK, as a new place and space, appears in this project (Figure 17).



Figure 17 Ingleborough Cave, North Yorkshire, England.

The new location introduced a new context, language, culture and perspective to me. Some were completely different to what I knew and experienced in Iran and Persian culture. All of these images, elements, pictures, and films became an individual transparent layer. They, collectively, perform a circle: they walk and flow inside or outside of one another, cover or uncover and appear or disappear within each other. They are a

mixture of different themes, dreams, and imaginary places and states that had elements of secrecy and disclosure.

All the works investigate the concept of identity via different perspective and materials. The appearance of the works (texture and size) show a very different visual quality from each other. The different textures and sizes refer to the quest of exploring the different aspects of identity, such as personal versus public levels. In these works, working is a book represented the personal aspects of identity, which recalls privacy. A book as a piece of work can be both public or private. It can be opened and read, hence acknowledged and made public, or it can remain closed and private for a duration. This comes as a contrast to a work of art on a canvas, which by its very nature is a public work that the artist intends to be shown to others. It is only with the help of an external tool (e.g., a piece of cloth) that the artwork can be made private. As such, the artwork lacks the double property of a book.

4.2. A Multi-Modal Installation: Uniting Traditional and New Media

I display my artworks in a multi-modal installation, which includes collages, paintings, and videos (Figure 18).

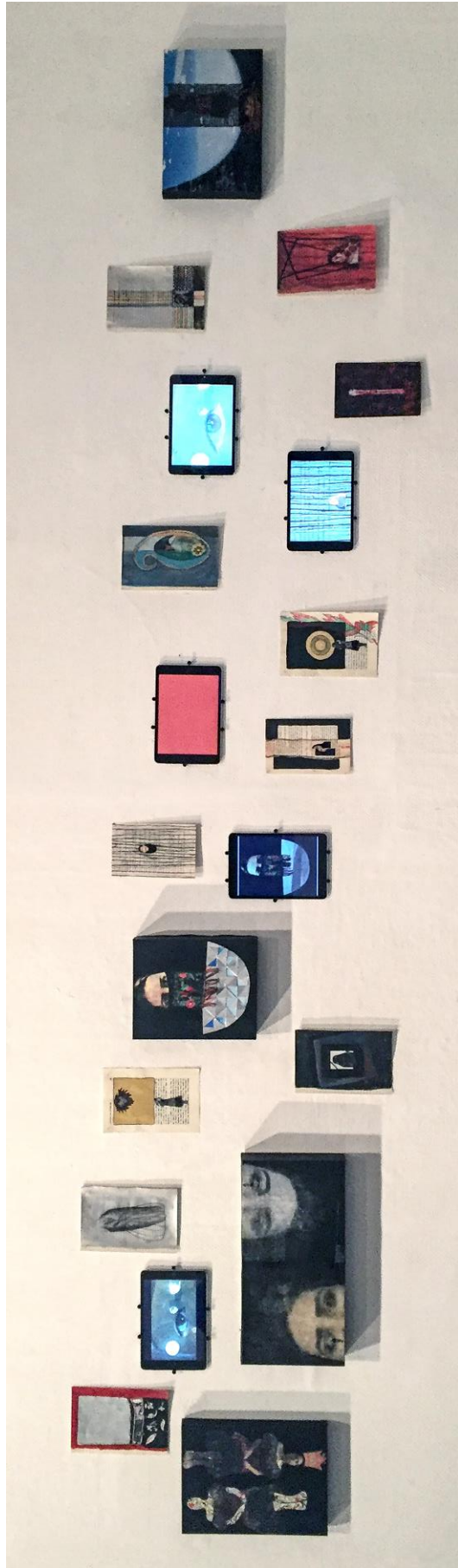


Figure 18 Displaying works in The Story Gallery- Lancaster- UK, *In-betweenness*, 2015

This mode of presenting unites traditional and new media together. Working within traditional and new media represents my conception of my identity: a mixture of traditional and modern values. This conception recalls the experience of living in a second phase of Western modernity—a Post-modernity, one that includes memories and experiences from the past and premonitions of the ‘what it is like to live, materially and spiritually, in worlds that are not modern at all’ (Berman 1988, p. 17), a sense that we live in two separate worlds simultaneously. This reflects my personal conception of my identity as a macro example, which one could extend to Iranian society. In this respect, today’s Iranian society is living in a modern world, while at the same time holding its spiritual and traditional values.

The traditional and new media also represent different visual qualities. For example, the collages evoke the feeling of a transitional, unstable situation. The videos on iPads show a paradoxical quality of the idea of secrecy and constant (Figure 19).

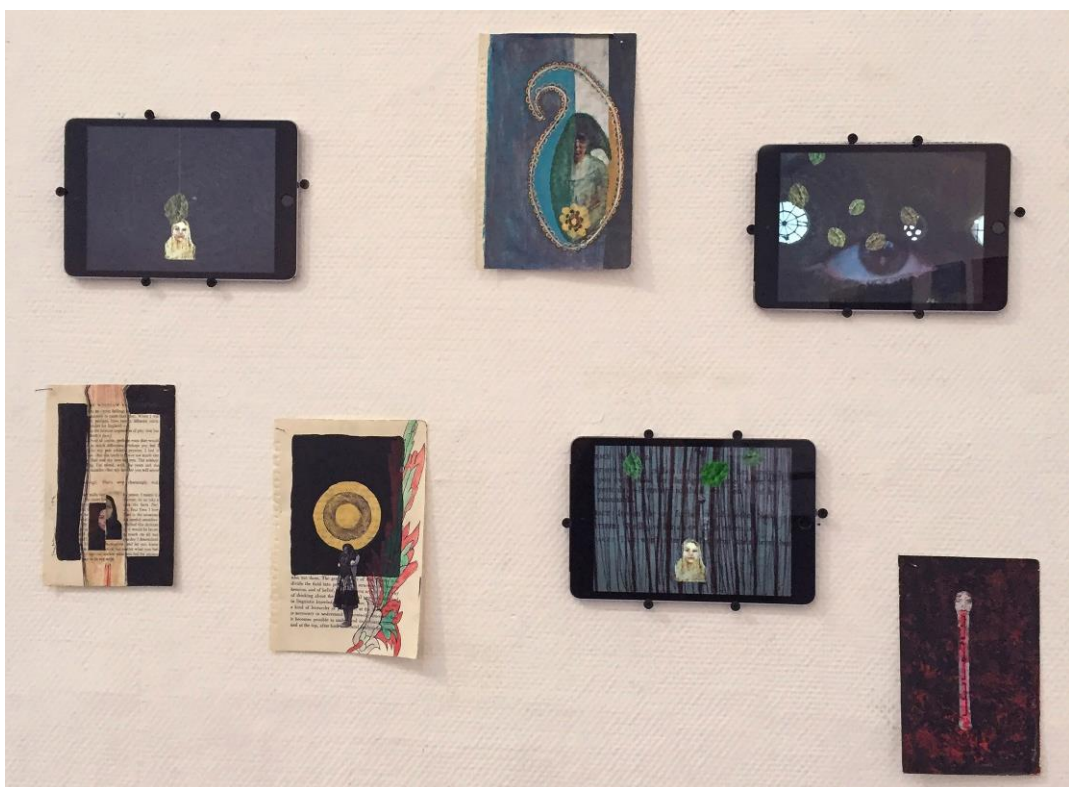


Figure 19 Detail from *In-betweenness*, 2015.

The images continually change and move, however, all of them are limited in a fixed frame. The pages from the book are separated from their original locations and are attached on the wall without frames to recall the fragile quality of identity. Moreover, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Europeans and Americans brought some of the Iranian manuscripts to the West and separated the pages to sell them to different museums and collectors. Each page became a single, dislocated masterpiece that lost its identity as a component of a book. To present *Ideal Ego* with reference to this historical experience, I decided to open the books binding and present each page as a separate work. Displaying works visually in this way represents the different aspects of a person's identity, individual and social aspects in a body of works. In addition, this way of exhibiting the works reflects the concept of collective identity.

By opening the binding and displaying them together, I decode the layers and question the ideas of secrecy and disclosure (Figure 20).

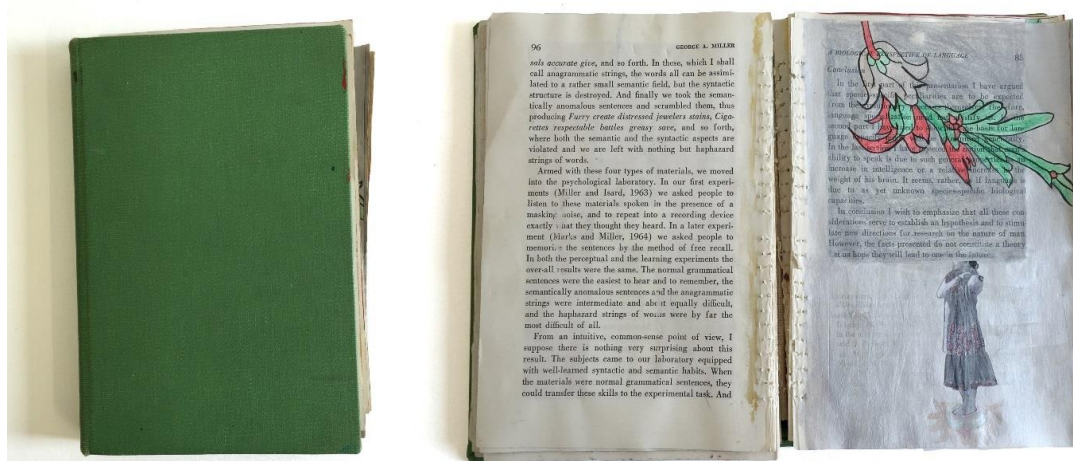


Figure 20 From the second book.

Now the pages would not cover each other, and the viewer can look at all layers simultaneously. However, these layers are not complete, as some of the pages are still in the book, and if the viewers want to see all pages, they need to look into the book.

Combining two different viewers' experiences highlights the concept that identity is a selection of different layers and that the person can decide to represent either. Whilst opening the binding and removing some pages from the book and, at the same time, having access to the rest of the book, challenges the concept of a constant timeline of making artworks and experiencing different things. As a result, we would never be able to see and understand all layers as they really are.

This manner of presentation aims to make the audience see the works altogether while at the same time their eyes move between them. In each individual work (collage, painting and video), I made compositions of different layers that fell next to and top of one another. This does not stop until the viewers make another combination in their minds. Different layers of each work will remain in their memory, and, by looking at the works, the elements will form a new composition in their minds.

4.3. Ideal Ego

The title *Ideal Ego* refers to the quest of finding my identity within all the places, time, culture, and feelings. Simply stated, *Ideal Ego* is an ideal image which everyone imagines of his or her perfect self (Kanwal 1988, p. 5). This group of works developed around the idea of taking a closer look at the world around me and at the same time observing myself (Figure 21).

Self-observation as one of the critical key methods in this research is also reflected in the underlying concept of these works. According to the literature looking at this conception, which originated with Freud (1921, cited in Kanwal 1988, p. 5), this ideal ego is tightly connected with ‘self-observation, the moral conscience, the censorship of dreams, and the chief influence in repression’. In this respect, these works, by questioning ‘the perfect self’, convey different perceptions of self in relation to personal and social issues.

Rooted in Chapter 1’s discussion about Iranian identity as a collective identity, I decided to use second-hand books (in English and Persian letters) as a medium for this series. These books belonged to another person and were filled with the previous owner’s dreams and ideas—a metaphor for the cultural heritage that belonged to the previous generations. Cultural heritage is written into our subconscious selves and becomes part of our character. We can cover or highlight our cultural heritage, but not purify it; they influence us always. Also, the books convey their previous owners’ experiences and dreams, which are variably embedded in the words, colours, and lines. They exist as hidden layers that incorporate elements of the cultural heritages of the owner and the writer alike.

The reasons I chose these books from hundreds are the quality of their pages, particularly their paper, which allows me to use different types of materials such as ink, watercolour, gouache, acrylic, and coloured pencils on them. The titles of these books are not important for me. I bought them in Tehran and chose an English one because for Iranians Roman letters look like a texture. In the UK, I realised that everyone who looks at my works also asks me whether the letters are related to my work or not. I even did not read the pages while I was working on them. It was not important what was written and the words did not affect me. After exhibiting the book pages in England and discussing their issues and ideas with an English speaking audience, I repeated the

experience on a Persian book. This book is a popular edition of *Golestān* (The Rose Garden) by Sa'di, written in 1258, which is one of the most influential books in Persian literature. This experience aimed to change the perception of myself and my audience. I aimed to identify the effect of the Persian text on the overlaying images on works and on the non-Persian and Persian language audience including myself.

When I started to work on the Persian book, I faced the first challenge. It was so hard for me to draw lines and paint on this book. I was too scared to destroy the book. On the contrary, while I was working in the English books, destroying them was the last thing on my mind. It was not a valuable book based on its subject matter or its price. However, the Persian book is a landmark in Persian literature and this fact made drawing on it hard for me. I grew up with the concept that the old Persian literature, including this book, is part of my heritage and I have to respect it. Drawing on this book, for me, means questioning its value. The second challenge was that I could not stop reading. The words of the books distracted me and did not help my concentration solely on my visual experience. It has been too hard to draw, paint, or collage on this book without being influenced by their words. This made painting go slowly. One of the solution I found to deal with this fear was to start to work on a page with adding a colour all over the page. This helped me to ignore the words on the page, but the process almost destroyed the paper before I could work with it.

Working in a book reminded me of the old Persian art of illustrating, miniatures. Moreover, the books I worked in became disassembled in the same way that pages of manuscripts are detached and spread out through different museums and collections. This also recalled my journey abroad and that I have detached myself from my origin, the society and land where I belong, and started an adventure. Artists usually illustrate Persian literature books, especially the *Šāh-nāma* (The Book of Kings). These books were usually produced for Kings in the court painting workshop and, because of this support,

artists had access to high quality and expensive materials such as gold and silver.

Nowadays, gold remains as it was in the paintings, but the silver has oxidised and turned black.

The colours that I used most in my works are red, turquoise, gold, silver, and black (Figure 22). Red is the colour I used to express my feelings. It is the colour of blood and violence, a symbol of the current situation of the Middle East and the everyday phobia of an unstable situation that can cause a war or an economic collapse, and the socio-political issues that Iranian society has experienced. Turquoise, gold, and silver are the colours I borrowed from my Iranian heritage. Black is the silver that became black after years. Black is the colour that I mostly could see around me in Tehran, the colour most woman chose to wear, and the traditional colour of *chador*. In addition, because of the air pollution in Tehran most days the city is grey. The visual elements used in these books are borrowed from many different places and times are of Iranian historical symbols, daily life, my visual memory, my old self-portraits and found objects.

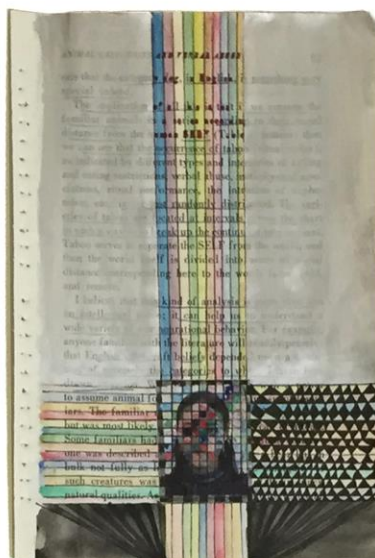
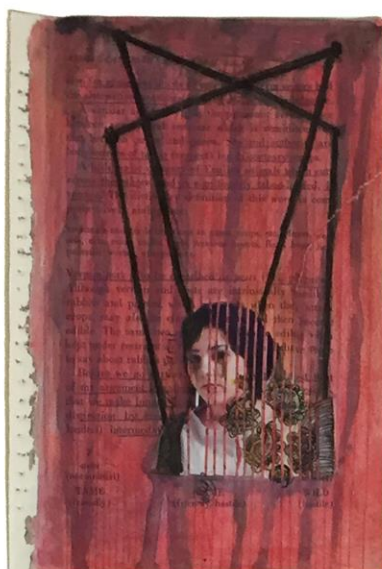


Figure 22 Figure 16. From *Ideal Ego* series, second book, 2013-16.

4.4. Fragmented Identity

Motivated by the *Ideal Ego* work, The *Fragmented Identity* series examines different scales and techniques and highlights my personal experience of moving from Iran to the UK. Whereas the books were a visual diary for my everyday life, this body of work grew out of looking in more depth at particular moments in the visual diary, in particular, the photos I took previously when I visited historical sites in Iran and the images I took during my trips between Iran and the UK. For example, the image of a plane window which represents a modern theme of mobility from one place to another appears at this time in my work. Moreover, in the collages I focused on the face and body. but in this series I chose eyes, which attract attention more than other parts of the face. I emphasise the eyes because, I believe, they are like a gate between the *inside* and *outside* of our body, enabling movements between the two. Here, the body is a physical frame for us through which we observe and experience the world. It also defines some limitations for us to experience the world. Eyes are a metaphoric gate that facilitates moving between reality and imagination (Figure 23).

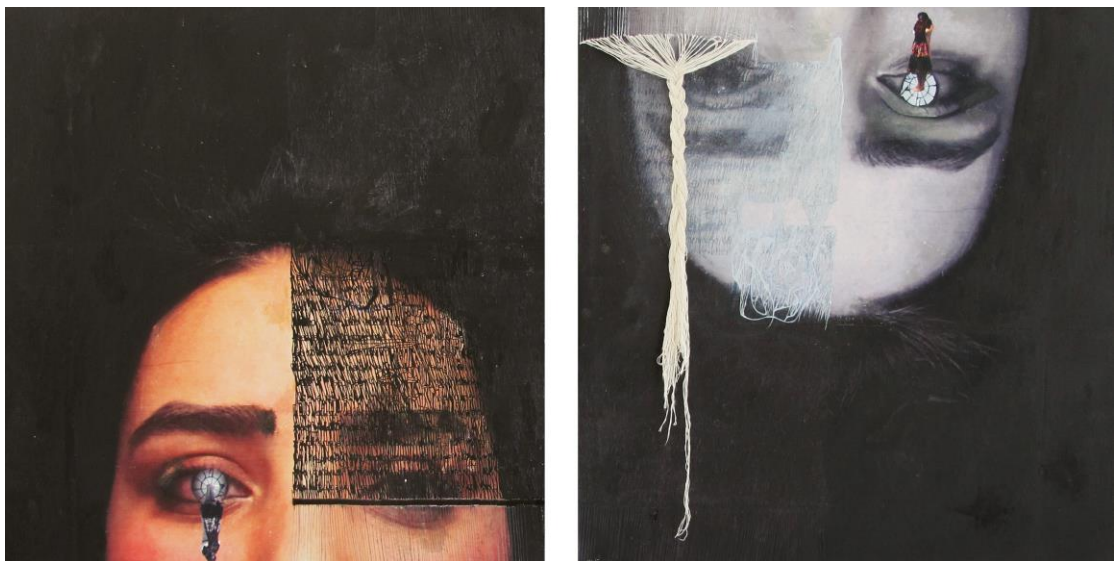


Figure 23 Detail form *Negotiation 3*, 2014.

Motifs and symbols from Iran's culture and history appeared in my practice when I moved to the UK (Figure24).



Figure 24 From Fragmented 2, 2015.

Their appearance, due to the manner in which they (symbols) can be both personal and public, bridge from the individual into the social. These symbols provided a form to highlight my individual identity as an Iranian (in the new society). I research into my past

to find some elements of social critique, elements which belong to memories from my childhood, and my memory and experience of living in Iran. This process is similar to the artworks in the Tehran Biennials which combined symbols and elements from Iranian history and culture.

Some of the works presented under this title are diptych pieces. One completes the narration of another, but they also have their own narration. In this series of work, I have been more selective in choosing and keeping the layers of different symbols and images. Self-portrait is used in the works to highlight the question of identity. 'Portrait, by its very nature, reflects the emotions and actions of its specific subject, and its subject alone. It also does not engage with universality and the focus remains squarely on the named individuals who are represented' (Mullins 2008, p. 8). This stands in contrast with Iranian modern artists who did not use self-portrait in the representation of their Iranian identity. The artists used social and cultural symbols that represented the Iranian identity, reflecting the closeness between artists and society and in establishing a collective identity. Their works combined all elements to come up with one unified homogeneous identity. In contrast, my works have a centre, myself, around which a number of dynamic layers of the Iranian visual heritage revolve. This might arise from the new world(s) we live in. Contrary to the traditional material and cultural boundaries of our world, there is the virtual world which enjoys boundary looseness. The latter is a world of individuality where subjects have more freedom in the formation of singular identities. The individuals are thus more conscious of the elements they try to combine in the construction of their identity and the way they want to be perceived. Nonetheless, the traditional boundaries of the collective identity cannot be completely ignored, but they become less restrictive of the individuals' freedom of choice due to the borderless new world we live in.

A self-portrait is a significant element of the new borderless world that reveals part of our identity. Covering the face of the portrait while keeping her eyes for

observation metaphorically represents the movement to a new place. When the subject moves to a new location with little knowledge about language and culture, it is only her eyes that are the primary focus of observation. By covering her face, she becomes less visible to outsiders but still able to watch them quietly and eagerly. It hides the unique individual so that observers can identify with the portrait. The eye contact with the portrait penetrates the psyche of the observers. They may start looking at themselves to see what is in them that attracts those eyes (Figure 25).



Figure 25 Untitled, 2014.

Covering the face is a popular image that the orientalist painters bring from the East. Nowadays, in some Arab states, women still wear burqu' to cover their face, which is rare in Iranian culture. However, this is not the case in this portrait, as it does not represent a burqu' that covers the whole face. Nonetheless, this does not prevent stereotypical point of view from observers, recalling a sense of collective identity for the East. The influence of the Iranian society, in which I grew up, was profoundly evident in realizing this portrait. Covering the face metaphorically represented the Iranian political culture in the previous century in Iran. It was a culture that hid and suppressed political and ideological tensions. In the portrait, the subject hides herself behind the elements and symbols of traditions.

Self is a fragile concept that can be easily influenced. As we discussed in the first chapter, identity, constructed from various layers, touches each one of us, reverberating within and throughout individual, social and cultural domains. The relationship between these is contingent, or in prospect, not already accomplished or given. Identity can be described as a process which entails differentiation between the self, not-self and other. (Steyn 1997, p.1)

The layers make explicit some parts of the identity while hiding others in a dynamic process which is sensitive to internal and external influences. It is a state of secrecy and disclosure. Although the layers of identity make one self, they are not homogeneous. The layers can be different and contradictory as they are collections of past and future.

The concept of fragmented identity is visualized in my work by the mirror. I cut the mirror into small pieces in the form of a geometric motif that is often used in Iran's

Islamic art. The mirror, on one hand, represents the form of the traditional *Art of mirror*⁶¹ in Iran and, on the other hand, it breaks the face of the person who looks to see themselves in it and depicts a fragmented image of them (Figure 26).



Figure 26 Mirror Work in a mosque in Tebran.

Mirror as a motif was used by Iranians contemporary artists. For instance, Monir Farmanfarmaian used the mirror in her work and represented it as an abstract work. As such, this element in my work represents the tradition of mirror art in Iran.

The mirror is located below the observing eyes of the portrait, hiding her identity and realising its layers in fragmented pieces. The mirror breaks down the face of the spectator

⁶¹ *Art of mirror* or (Ā'ĪNA-KĀRĪ) is 'the practice of covering an architectural surface with a mosaic of mirror-glass. It is often dismissed as a gaudy and decadent kind of Persian architectural decoration' (Sims 1984).

(see Figure 12). It makes explicit the different aspects of the spectators' identity—fragmented and disconnected. Spectators thus get the chance to look beyond what they think of their identities as unified and homogeneous. The mirror, eyes, and viewers ultimately make a cycle of observation; the eyes watch audiences who in turn observe the reflection of their identity in the broken mirror. They realise how fragile the layers of their identity are. The mirror also shows that the identity is not completely detached from other selves. It is rather formed partially from the relationship between different identities.

The fragmented face, as a symbol of identity, could suggest the challenges that moving to a new place bring, as it highlights the question of the value of heritage. In this way, the conflict between tradition and modernity will begin to appear. 'The cornerstone of the Western philosophical tradition has been the notion of a single unitary subject, construed as identical with itself. Identity becomes a question for ontology. Self-identity is a problem for philosophy and philosophy's definition of itself' (Steyn 1977, p. 1). The covered face at the upper side of these mirrors could be everyone, or anyone. The face is covered with a piece of cloth as a symbol of the past and of old heritage, but the eyes are open. They are observing a new place and new values and, at the same time, they cannot ignore the past. The video that plays beside this work has the same composition and employs the same elements; the only difference is that instead of the mirror, a video of an aeroplane's take-off is playing (Figure 27). This film suggests change—a modern way of moving from a place to the other, a palpable shift.



Figure 27 Still from Negotiation 2. video. 1' 30", 2014.

The Eye, as mentioned in the Negotiation 2 work representing a covered portrait (Figure 26), is not only her means of observation, but also a gate through which she observes others and others observe her. A layer of the identity is connected with others identity; she is what others believe she is.

The Eye became a prominent layer when she moved to another place, in a state of uncertainty. She was watching quietly to see what people think and expect of her, then

act accordingly. Then, the Eye was the means of negotiation between the uncertain internal and the new external. When she covered her face, she hides the different. That is why the distance between I and Eye shrank; her uncertain individual was transparent. The more she becomes relaxed in the new context, the more she brings back her I, from memories, experiences, and knowledge originating for her in Iran. She gradually becomes visible. Sometimes she becomes confident of reconciliation with the new context. She closes her eyes. When she is uncertain, she opens her eyes and become transparent. When she is confident and reconciled with the new context, she closes her eyes. She becomes complete. She becomes visible. I-Eye is thus the space of negotiation of the fragmented identity, where the internal and external, the past, present, and future meet. At this time, different traditions and ideologies meet, place on top of each other, and giving rise to the idea of secrecy and disclosure. The layers merge into each other and lose their pure context. They can be interpreted in relation of other layers, and form her multi-layered identity.

Heritage and its role in the formation of collective and individual identities is central to these works. Heritage, however, is a slippery term that can be viewed from different perspectives. Is heritage an external reality? Or is it a subjective view of the past? It is both, I believe. My heritage is merged with my conception of my past. It is represented by the collective memory of the society. However, it is also what I learned about my heritage. As such, heritage is a reconstruction of history from an ideological point of view. It is an external reality that is shaped and adapted by the dominant historical view. Consequently, in searching for identity, I need to identify and understand the process of history that constructed my identity the way it is.

In the mid-twentieth century, Iranian artists started to search for their Iranian identity. They looked in Iran's history and travelled through the country in order to document the country's heritage and traditions. I followed the same route, but I went

back into *my* past and *my* memories, thus putting a personal spin on the matter. I looked for the photos I took during my travels in Iran. To see landscapes, historical sites and different cultures in Iran, I visited various towns and cities, such as Kerman, Persepolis and Saqqez in Kurdistan. I documented many different items and photos from these places. At this stage, motifs and elements of my Iranian heritage appeared in my work. I am more occupied with the history and dynamics of my own identity, my own self. The artists chose prototypical elements that represent the Iranian history and culture. I, however, chose elements that I owned and dealt with in my own world. I chose things I used or lived with. For instances, the motif in Figure 17 is taken from a carpet in my house in Iran. It is an object of which I have a memory, independent of its own traditional symbolism. It is part of my history in that place, and the fabric depicted in a few works represented one of the popular cloth designs in the local dresses of Kurdish women (Figure 28). In this way, I reverse the stereotypical way of representation and depiction of the Iranian identity. I created a new perspective to look at the heritage of the Iranian individual.



Figure 28 Local cloth of Kurdish women.

In the *Negotiation 1* (Figure 29), the motif of the carpet merged with the portrait as a symbol of tradition that is always present in our identity. The light round shape is borrowed from an image of the shadow of an old public bathroom's ceiling in Kerman, Iran. This shape is based on a hole on the roof of certain buildings to transfer day light into building. In Iranian architecture it is a popular design that is used in the public buildings such as mosques and bazars.



Figure 29 *Negotiation 1*, 2013.

The composition of both works is almost the same. The only differences are the eyes; they are open on one and closed on the other. After transferring these two sketches onto canvas, the story of each work narrates itself. Both works show two different manners with traditions and heritage. The face with open eyes represents a person who has taken a critical look at the traditions and heritage that into which she was born and within which she has lived. However, one just watches in silence everything around her;

the other accepts her society with all of its belonging as they exist. She is observing how tradition has begun to pale and sometimes be represented in a wrong way. Nonetheless, she does not try to repair or criticise them. She closes her eyes and draws alongside her heritage. On the other hand, in the work with open eyes, she found herself in the same situation but decided to keep her eyes open and be selective. She repairs some damaged parts, keeps the parts that she wants and re-describes and re-illustrates parts from her society's traditions. In other words, she has made her own narration of her traditions. At this stage, sewing as a traditional Iranian female skill entered into my works. I repeated this old tradition by using a dark thread to sew the outlines of the carpet's flowers. This technique, visually, connects the different layers that merge together, and metaphorically the technique combines the layers of identity together. The sewing lines combine the manner of my old Iranian tradition in painting with an aspect of my female character.

In the other work, the woman with the closed eyes, I keep not only the damaged parts from transferring but also I deliberately create several scratches on it. Those scratches are a sign that traditions get stale over time and the forms or ceremonies that remain as tradition have descended into mere habits that are increasingly insignificant. Those scratches scrape colours and blur traditions and even represent them in a different way.

This suggests that if we leave traditions to find their place in current life, they would move, change, and weaken. Even the plain colours that fill some parts of the flower could not prevent this from happening. The lines that cover her mouth are the only strong (bold) form in this work. This drawing was informed by the sketch book; it reminds me of the carpet with the warp of letters and weft of lines. The drawing lines cover her mouth. They represent a self-imposed silence, a silence that is adorned and admired.

4.5. Me, Myself, and I: Relocate the Multi-Layered Identity

My journey to the West resulted left my self-perception in chaos. Who am I? How do I want to represent myself in the new place? I had no relevant comfort zone, and a tension between my old values and the new ones set in. Whilst the new layers appear, the old ones move forward and backward to relocate themselves. For exploring my traditions and the identity which was familiar to me, I used different elements and symbols recalling Iranian traditions in combination with my memories and experiences. In this way, I consciously represent my Iranian roots in my works. From another perspective, I hide myself, as an individual person behind my heritage. I whirl without landmarks between two worlds and their values.

When the new place becomes familiar, I become more visible. At this stage, however, the elements and symbols are covered with more tangible and transparent layers, but they still exist and exert influence. A new aspect demonstrates in the works, however. My new personal experiences are shaped by displacement and artistic vision that straddle two opposing cultures. As such, the layers are more in control; they can move more freely, and their secrecy and disclosure qualities are visible (Figure 30).

The colours remain almost the same as before, but silver has become more dominant in the works and the colours' representation roles have slightly changed. For instance, silver in addition to its traditional character, as discussed, evokes the modern world. Metallic grey, a tone of silver, is one of the most dominant colours to be found everywhere in our contemporary world, for instance in a vast range of equipment and building interiors and exteriors. In this sense, the elements of tradition are, metaphorically, sinking in a layer of silver. Although this colour masks the old layers, it is the culture forming this layer and giving them an identity. The shadows of tradition give richness to the new layer. Traditions remain steady beneath the new layer of the new world. Nonetheless, there is continuity between the worlds.



Figure 30 A page from the third book, 2016.

4.6. Summary

Throughout my personal and academic experiences, I have developed a sense of identity as a collection of socially-situated layers, a sense that arises from the tensions that have pulled at me since I left the comfort of my local community in Iran to merge into the challenging new culture of the UK.

In exploring the theme of identity, I looked deeply into the subtle dialogue between 'I' and 'Eye'. The boundary of negotiation between the individual I and the collective penetrating through the Eye. My collages show how identity is constructed by self-perception and others' conceptions. I use images transformed into canvas to demonstrate my journey. While doing so, some details of the images are lost, representing the transformations of my identity while adapting to the new place and space. I also draw and collage on second-hand books which hold their ex-owners' experiences. These experiences are an essential part of my newly adapted identity, which demonstrates the entanglement of one's self-perception in what previous owners felt and experienced. I also use videos to make visible the layers of identity and to show how they

combine and are negotiated. They help demonstrate how identity is not a singular oneness, but a collection of fragile layers that, while they overlap and adapt, also modify or exclude each other.

The multi-model installation shows how the old traditions are adapted in the new world. While juxtaposing drawing, painting, and videos, the installation makes visible the layers of identity and their contextual sensitivity. My works unite opposites by mixing traditional and contemporary images and references while using conventional and new technologies. They alternate between exposure and retreat and, one by one, hide and exhibit the different layers of my identity. The pages require a patient, solitary investigation. They certainly reveal hidden meanings, but they require interpretations and linkages before full understanding can be achieved.

My works show how identity is a sum of social experiences and cultural traditions. Identity is not something inherent, but something acquired. It is formed by a dialogue between the 'I' as individual values and the 'Eye' as a window towards familial and social values that construct the identity of the family and the society.

Conclusion

The central theme of this study is identity, in particular, Iranian identity. The study explores the notion of Iranian identity in the artworks exhibited in Tehran Biennials between 1958 and 1966. It traces the representation of the tensions between Iranian-Islamic and pre-Islamic traditions, the national sentiment, and the Western influence such as *orientalism* and *modernity* in the articulation of artworks. To achieve its objective, it was necessary to develop a view of identity as multi-layered, which necessitated an exploration of the concept of identity within its socio-historical context. Ultimately, the study articulates new topics, images, and approaches that are the consequence of changing relationships between Iran and the West and the manner in which the Tehran Biennials were an instrument of state ideology in art.

The thesis introduces an original constellation of art practice, archival research on Tehran Biennials and the concept of Iranian identity within Persian culture, tradition and history. It also brings together the normally separate methodologies used in historical, theoretical, archival and art practice. The thesis is a contribution to cultural understanding of Iranian identity. The thesis reconstructs the cultural understanding of Iranian identity in the middle of the twentieth century with a focus on the Tehran Biennials as a case study. More particularly, emphasis is put on the way that the Biennials refracted the changing dynamics in Iranian international relations, and the way that the Iranian state used this cultural event to change the image of Iran outside the country. So the Biennials had national, social and also cultural roles which led to a richer understanding of Iranian history. In my art practice, I benefit from different art techniques such as collage, transferring images and video to visualize my understanding of my identity as an Iranian woman. I challenge the idea of time as a one dimensional continuum and propose, instead, a surface which goes forward and backward in the same time.

My practice repeatedly makes near identical self-portraits in second-hand books, alongside portraits in painting and video to explore my multi-layered identity. Through my practice, I aim to have a better understanding how my identity has evolved and is evolving as the result of my geographical journey to the West. Our knowledge of our history deeply influences our present conception of ourselves (Gramsci, cited in Said 2003, p. 25). In this sense, I, as an Iranian artist, must investigate my identity and my Iranian pictorial heritage since history forms my understanding of Iranian art and since identity underpins understanding of my contemporary context. This historical examination imports different perspectives from other artists who passed along the same route. As such, the iconographical studies of the works exhibited in the Tehran Biennials reveal knowledge of a moment in the history of modern art in Iran. In addition, investigating the modern artists' ideas and artworks gives me a chance to build on their practice without repetition. Therefore, since the Iranian artists at that time attempted to represent a societal-national level of identity by depicting elements and subjects that recalled Iranian identity as a nation, I explore my own personal experience as an Iranian woman but in the context of an understanding of identity at a broader social level.

To foreground my understanding of identity within my practice, I developed a methodology which involved two distinct modes of thinking—as a 'self-observer' and 'observer of others'. These two positions juxtaposed the theoretic, historical, and artistic aspects of the study. I would like to consider the critical and visual analysis which gives me more accurate knowledge of my Iranian heritage as significant layers in my experience. These two poles of my research form the base of my practice. They brought the notion of fragmented and collective identity into my practice. Moreover, they show the fragility of the layers. That collage is the central technique in my work aligns with the concept of collective Iranian identity. My practice includes a variety of media, relies on layering associations that recall the diversity of Iranian identity. I use my old photos and

different elements and colours that represent my memories and experiences. Although the intention of these elements and colours have become modified during my time living in the UK, the new values re-shape the old ones and the old and new layers of my identity relocate one another.

Exploring the notion of identity within visual arts articulates the 'self' as a visible form. It reveals visually the invisible and meanings hidden within text and the spoken word. This study shows that representing identity through visual elements offers a direct way to communicate with audiences from different backgrounds. It also shows more tangible qualities of the way that a person perceives their traditions. Exploring identity visually reveals an individual's interior world and represents a subjective quality in an objective one.

This research has examined Iranian identity and the substantial socio-political changes which affect it. Exploring the Tehran Biennials shows how Iranian artists and government internalised the concept of orientalism. I have demonstrated how the conservative point of view of the Iranian government towards modern art arose from its fear of the unknown. At a wider level, the fear emanated from a negative public attitude towards modernity. Later, the Iranian government adopted a more internationalist modern artistic perspective that was articulated through, for example, the appointment of experienced international jurors and support for new artistic approaches through the targeted award of Biennial prizes. Thus, the Tehran Biennials represent the moment that Modernity was prevailing in Iran and becoming the state's new face in the international events to project a 'progressive' image of Iran. Furthermore, the analysis of works exhibited in the Tehran Biennials show the various visual representation styles such as subjects, themes, elements, and art styles that Iranian artists used to balance between Iranian-Islamic and pre-Islamic traditions, national sentiments, and Western influences.

In addition, one could observe a clear correlation between politics and art in Iran during 1940s and 1950s, especially in the Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi era, which is manifested by some influences of the state's ideology on the Tehran Biennials. After the 1953 Coup, the state dramatically changed its position regarding modern art. Due to overthrowing Mosaddegh, the liberal Iranian Prime Minister, 'the Shah consolidate his power' (Abrahamian 1982, p. 419), and align the state with its new international trading partners. As a result, the state gained its power over the society and it changed the socio-political atmosphere. Thus, not only did the state support modern art by hosting the Tehran Biennials, but also encouraged Iranian modern artists to find a 'national school of art' based on their Iranian heritage and modern style of art. Second, the fifth Tehran Biennial converted to a 'Regional Biennial' under the influence of a political agreement: Regional Cooperation for Development (RCD). This deal between Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey was supposed to develop socio-economic relations, but it also influenced the Tehran Biennials which are a national cultural event. Moreover, this Biennial was the last one due to the disagreement between Farah's office and the Ministry of Culture, which had hosted the event. Consequently, the discontinuation of the Tehran Biennials was due to the struggle between these different groups in the state. The Iranian government used Tehran Biennials, which is a cultural and artistic event, to form a modern Iranian society and represent the state internationally.

Introducing Iranian art to international art markets and festivals that continues to this day has been one of the significant achievements of the Tehran Biennials. Some of the artists who exhibited their works at the Tehran Biennials became pioneer artists in Iran and well-respected in the international art world. For instance, Hossien Zenderoudi and Mohsen Vaziri-Moghaddam are ground-breaking artists who changed the face of Iranian art, inside and outside of the country. These artists, by integrating the Iranian visual heritage and the Western style of art, have contributed a new visual language. They

originated a new style in Iranian art and changed the conception of Iranian art from a very classical, old style to a modern one. Furthermore, the way that they used pictorial Iranian heritage and adapted it with a modern style of art inspired Iranian contemporary artists. Although these artists attempted to make a 'national school of art', they emphasised the need for the individual artist's voice in the works. Moreover, all of the works exhibited in the Tehran Biennials, regardless of their individual success or failure, formed the nucleus of Iranian modern art.

The dialogue between traditions and modernity in Iranian society and between artists and the public at that time recalls my journey to the West. It resembles the tension between my old values I acquired in Iran and the values of a new place in the UK. This caused chaos in the layers of my identity, and I felt this instability strongly in the studio. In my early work, I sought to achieve a re-balancing. In the beginning, the old values came up and became the top layer, which can be seen in the use of Iranian elements and symbols in my works. They become my tools to embed my heritage and roots in the new place where I had no historical or cultural connection. In contrast with the Iranian artists in the middle of the twentieth century, I wanted to find my own narration of my identity from the very beginning. By moving to a new place, I was stripped of secure anchors of family and culture. To survive, I had to rely on myself. In this sense, the centrality of the 'self' appeared due to my feeling of individuality. I did not feel myself as a representative of my country.

The 'self' was more important for me than being a national representative. Using my self-portrait can show this aim very well. Unlike the Iranian artists who participated in a national festival and represented the country, I started this exploration with a personal motivation. My objective and methodology are also motivated by the post-modern values which placed emphasis on subjectivity of the individual more than on the meta narratives of nation-states.

Regarding future work, identity at a personal level, also, can be explored by using psychological theories in making artworks. Although this practice-based research touches this aspect, my emphasis was on the socio-political and cultural values. In the light of the socio-political and cultural values, there is a great deal of space to explore identity from the psychology of a person.

Tracking the pioneers will uncover further important contextual material that will bring to light international connections and influences, innovations in practice, and new relationships to history, socio-political movements, and theory. Thus, enabling continuation of this work to the present day will give a clear idea about Iranian contemporary arts. This method can apply to art events, in particular, to Biennials held after 1979 and the Islamic revolution in Iran. The comparison between the Biennials before and after 1979 could show the influence of the state ideology on art and artists and the manner of the revolution's representation of national identity. I hope the combined study of Iranian artwork from the modern period and a contemporary practice can resonate in further research into the expression of heritage and cultural identities.

Appendix A In-depth analysis of artworks

Reference to social subjects and daily life

In light of the rapid socio-political changes in Iran over the last century, several artworks documented important aspects of the public and private life, with the artist using high contrast in the paintings to convey different ideas regarding this life. As such, the emphasis in these works is more on depicting the main subject than the details. For example, Joseph Abrahamian, in *Justice*, by depicting unequal elements represents a corrupt judiciary system (image 1.2).



Image 1.2. Joseph Abrahamian, *Justice*, Oil, 90 x 50, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central of Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

He depicts Lady Justice, the symbol of justice, with a focus on scales in the front of the frame. The depiction of the eyes in this piece is noteworthy. Although in most representations of Lady Justice, we do not see her eyes, not only are they depicted in this work, but the asymmetry seen in this depiction emphasises the corruption of the Justice system at the time. One possible interpretation could be that through this asymmetry, the artist had intended to show the inequality in the way the Justice system viewed different people. It is by virtue of the subject matter of artworks, as well as their unique way of representation that such works become noteworthy.

Following a similar approach, some artists aim to represent the economic gaps in the society through, for example, the depiction of the lives of the poor in the country.

Ali-Asghar Davoudi in *Poverty*, by depicting the poor woman who is covering herself with a *Chador* with her baby in front of her, represents the profound effects of the poverty on children and perhaps their hopeless future (image 36.3). It also may suggest a deep despair of some in the society about their future.



Image 36.3. Ali-Asghar Davoudi, *Poverty*, Oil, 25 x 35, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Certain depictions represent the changes brought about by the process of modernisation. These include the depiction of local jobs and social roles, as well as traditional working spaces, which were disappearing as a result of the mechanisation of industries. Examples of these depictions include an untitled engraving work by Parviz Tanavoli, *Dervish* by Mahmoud Sina, and *Assar-i wheel* (Assar-i is a traditional oil factory) by Sumbat Kevreghian (images 15.2, 118.3, 125.4).



Image 15.2. Parviz Tanavoli, *Untitled*, Gravure, 42 x 40, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Art—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 118.3. Mahmoud Sina, *Dervish*, Drawing, 5/23 x 30, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 125.4. Sumbat Kevreghian, *Assar-i wheel*, Drawing, 40 x 50, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

These types of works give us much useful information about the traditional spaces and buildings, since they are no longer seen in Iran. Some of the buildings have been transformed into museums while others were demolished or transformed into modern workplaces. For instance, Tanavoli in his engraving documents two elements of the Iranian society which would later be replaced by modern counterparts: public baths, as a traditional social space, and a Dallak, a traditional worker in the public baths, responsible for bathing and even massaging the customers (image 15.2). Similarly, in *Darvish* by Mahmoud Sina (image 118.3), we see the representation of an important character type in Iranian culture, which again is seen less and less following the modernisation of the country. 'Darvish' is the term used to describe individuals in society who are characterised by their traits of spirituality and detachment from the material world. The choice of the subject being depicted is thus important as it gives a piece of information regarding the past ways of life in Iran.

Representation of women

Such tensions are apparent from a comparison of two works with a woman and a shisha as their main subjects, which communicate radically different ideas (images 24.1, 33.2).

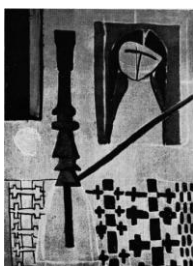


Image 24.1. A. Haroutonian, *Woman and shisha*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Images 33.2. Bijan Saffari, *Woman and shisha*, Aquarelle, 68 x 48, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

In Iranian culture, both women and shisha represent pleasure; thus, the depiction of both of these elements in one frame creates a sense of pleasure in the audience. In the first case, *Woman and shisha* by Haroutonian (image 24.1), we see a shisha in the front with a picture of a woman on the wall in the background. This depiction is a representation of the traditional views of women in Iran. This is seen through the positioning of the female, as one in the background, being merely a decorative object with a similar status to the shisha and the Iranian gabbah rug. Haroutonian emphasised the concept of the pleasant scene in his painting by depicting the shisha pipe as moving upwards and out of the frame, leaving the person who is using it unknown. In contrast, in the other work, Bijan Saffari depicts a woman who is using the shisha, and thus has a more dynamic role (images 33.2). Her body covers the whole space of the frame as she holds the shisha in her hand. This composition implies a degree of agency and independence associated with the woman. The way she is dressed resembles the depictions from the Qajar era of women in the Royal Court. This manner of depiction of women is further reminiscent of some Orientalist paintings.

Reference to religious subjects

In this vein, *Woman and mosque*, by Parviz Kardan, and *Minarets*, by Hussein Zenderoudi, exhibited in the first and fifth Biennials respectively, are good examples of how Iranian artists moved from a precise way of depiction to abstract forms over the decade of the Tehran Biennials (images 37.1, 19.5).



Image 37.1. Parviz Kardan, *Woman and mosque*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 19.5. Hussein Zenderoudi, *Minarets*, Water colour, 149 x 97, from Fifth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1966, Tehran, Iran: Ministry of Culture and Arts.

Both artists depict the exterior of a mosque without reference to its interior decoration, which are essential features in Iranian mosques' architecture. Kardan depicts the mosque in simple forms, emphasising its architecture by elegant and narrow dark outlines (image 37.1). On the other hand, Zenderoudi simplifies the traditional minarets design into geometric forms, such as circles and rectangles, and he depicts them in an abstract art form (image 19.5).

Moreover, some artists such as Sharzad Mohtasham and Seifeddine Jahanbani, represented scenes of people praying, with men wearing both traditional clothes

associated with clerics, as well as a Western style of clothing, and women wearing the chador. Noticeable in these works is the depiction of people practicing their religion, regardless of their social strata, as reflected by their different clothes (images 11.1, 29.3).



Image 11.1. Sharzad Mohtasham, *prayer*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 29.3. Seifeddine Jahanbani, *prayer*, Oil, 70 x 90, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Representation of Shi'ite Beliefs

For example, the 'procession' is depicted by three artists. All of them chose the same subject and title for their works, while adopting different perspectives to depict it. Tanavoli and Zakarians depicted a distant view of the happening, a point of view of the audience who is observing that moment (images 22.1, 44.4).



Image 22.1. Parviz Tanavoli, *Procession*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 44.4. Sarkiss Zakarians, *Procession*, Gravure, 19 x 45, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Bangiz illustrates the ceremony from a point of view of a participant in the middle of the procession's rows, making the viewer feel like an insider in the ceremony (image 7.4).

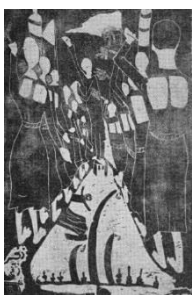


Image 7.4. Reza Bangiz, *Procession*, Gravure, 74 x 102, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central of Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

The shadow of an 'alam appears on the ground, in the front of the print's frame, making it seem as if the viewer himself or herself is carrying the 'alam and taking part in the ceremony.

A symbolic manner can be traced in some artworks which represented Ashoura's march. They also use abstract art style to depict their subject. *The blades*, by Faramarz Pilaram, is a good example of the combination of the influence of Western art style and Iranian heritage (image 23.3).



Image 23.3. Faramarz Pilaram, *The blades*, Gouache, 198 x 83, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts-Publications and Relations Dept.

Persian painting tradition, symbols, and beliefs of Shi'ite tradition and Western abstract art style have formed the different layers of this painting. In this work, Pilaram depicts the various parts of an 'alam, in an abstract composition. He also writes a famous Shi'ite saying, in Arabic alphabet letters, which can be seen on the banner of an 'alam. A close look at this painting reveals the different layers that Pilaram puts on each layer to express his concept. The title, using the Āšūrā's symbol and the calligraphy on the painting, reveals the religious idea behind this work. These are the elements that refer to Shi'ite Islam and Iranian belief. The gold colour used in most parts of this painting brings to mind the gold traditionally employed in the miniatures' painting. Also, the frame presented within the main painting's frame resembles traditional Persian miniatures. On the two sides, he breaks the frame in a way similar Iranian miniatures. However, the abstract way used in the composition is based on the Western manner in art, indicating the influence of Western abstraction on his work.

As seen earlier, one of the achievements of the Tehran Biennials was the *Saqqā-kāna* movement seen in the third Tehran Biennials by displaying *K+L+32+H+4* by Zenderoudi (image 112.3).

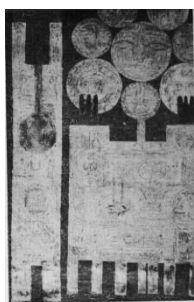


Image 112.3. Hossien Zenderoudi, *K+L+32+H+4*, Essence, 150 x 225, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.

Iranian artists such as Parviz Tanavoli and Charles Hossein Zenderoudi, in their search for local Iranian raw materials, were fascinated by the simple forms, repeated motifs, and bright colours (Keshmirshekan 2013, p. 94). They used religious ceremonies, objects, symbols, and elements especially from Shi'ite tradition in their abstract paintings, which resulted in the formation of the Saqqā-kāna movement, to make a new modern art style which represented their Iranian national identity. Kamran Diba, the former director of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, likened this movement to Spiritual Pop Art, as an art movement which looks at the symbols and tools of a mass consumer society as a relevant and influencing cultural force. Saqqā-kāna artists looked at the inner beliefs and popular symbols that were part of the religious and culture of Iran, and perhaps, consumed in the same ways as industrial products in the West. (Diba 1989, p. 153, cited in Balaghi 2002, p. 27).

The symbol of Hamsa, a palm-shaped talisman, was a significant motif in Saqqā-kāna movement. In Shi'ite tradition, it symbolises the severed hand of Hazrat Abbas; it also represents an amulet against the evil-eye in many different cultures. Various depictions of this symbol were exhibited in the Tehran Biennials, for example, in *Opening*, by Reza Shaibani, and *Talisman*, by Mahmoud Gharadjedaghi (images 57.4, 72.4).



Image 57.4. Reza Shaibani, *Opening*, Oil, 74 x94, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 72.4. Mahmoud Gharadjedaghi, *Talisman*, Painting on skin, 60x 50, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.

Shaibani depicts some of the symbols that represent people's vows (image 57.4). By calling it *Opening*, he hints towards an aspect of these religious ceremonies that no artist before had recorded. They might have noticed it. 'Opening' is a belief that people gain their material demands by vowing and attending the religious ceremonies.

Depiction of Spiritual Beliefs and the Religions other than Islam

The depiction of religions other than Islam can be seen only in two artworks. Although Christian artists had a strong presence in the Tehran Biennials, and some of them were pioneer of modern art in Iran, only two artworks in the third and fourth Biennials represented Christian elements: *Search the Cross*, by Sharyar Shafigh, and *Messiah*, by Aghdas Vakili (images 50.3, 101.4).



Image 50.3. Sharyar Shafigh, *Search the Cross*, Oil, 5/21 x 32, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 101.4. Aghdas Vakili, *Messiah*, Gouache, 42 x 57, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran Iran, Central of Administration of Fine Arts-Publications and Relations Dept.

Furthermore, some artists referred to religions by depicting the spiritual atmosphere in the holy spaces as well as showing a religious tradition. They depicted temples, sanctuaries, sepulchres, and stories common to all Abrahamic religions, such as *Noah's Ark*, by Darioush Mazkouri, and *The Raphael angel in Sara's parents*, by Soudabe Ganjeie (images 96.3, 127.4).



Image 96.3. Darioush Mazkouri, *Noah's Ark*, Xylography, 5/43 x 33, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran Iran: Central of Administration of Fine Arts- Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 127.4. Soudabe Ganjeie, *The Raphael angel in Sara's parents*, Oil, 54 x 73, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central of Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Depicting the personal experiences of religion, as opposed to the more common depictions of religion as a collective social experience, is evidence of the Western influence on artists and is seen in Houshang Pir-Davari's work, *I fear God* (image 74.2).



Image 74.2. Houshang Pir-Davari, *I fear God*, no material, no size, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.

What makes his work unique is that, through the artwork, he expresses his own personal views on religion. Pir-Davari chose an abstract way to express his feelings. By using

contrast, thick outlines and broken lines, he tried to convey a sense of fear to the audience.

Reference to Historical Subjects

Only a few works in the first and second Biennials depicted a popular historical subject or character.⁶² All artists use the title of their works as a reference to the era that they draw on, such as *Guard the tomb of Amir Timur*⁶³, by Reza Forouzi, and *Anabita*⁶⁴, by Korous Salahshoor (images 8.1, 13.1).



Image 8.1. Reza Forouzi, *Guard the tomb of Amir Timur (Old man)*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 13.1. Korous Salahshoor, *Anabita*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Reference to Iranian Popular Objects

To take two objects as examples, the water pitcher which, in Islamic traditions, alluded to health and benefits (images 49.1, 19.3).

⁶² Only 3% and 1% of artworks in the first and second Biennials represent historical subjects. No published artworks in the other Tehran Biennials' catalogues represent this theme.

⁶³ Note that the English title of this work was *Old Man*.

⁶⁴ A Persian goddess of water, hence associated with fertility, healing, and wisdom.



Image 49.1. Cyrus Malek, *Still Life*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 19.3. Azizollah Paian-Tabari, *Bath*, Oil, 50 x 71, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Representations of old doors fascinated many artists because of their unique appearance and function (images 124.4, 126.4).



Image 124.4. Sumbat Kevregghian, *Dardasht*, Watercolour, 30 x 40, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

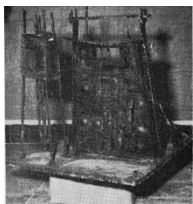


Image 126.4. Syrus Gha'em-Maghami, *A door to the seven regions*, Iron. 60 x 66 x 67, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

These doors, in addition to their visual values, indicate the different social status of their owners according to different elements such as the materials of which the door is constructed and the doors' decorations. Furthermore, these doors have two separate

handle shapes, with each sounding a different tone when struck. The different tones would let the people inside the house know whether the one knocking on the door is a man or a woman, so that the women inside the house would know whether to don their hijab. Furthermore, Gha'em-Maghamsi in his iron sculpture, *A door to the seven regions*, acknowledging the importance of such semiotic significances, depicted one of the Iranians' mythological beliefs⁶⁵, thus bridging the gap between ancient Iranian beliefs and the contemporary Shi'ite system of beliefs.

Depiction of carpet and shisha as elements of socio-cultural heritage, show the impact of orientalist paintings and photographs on Iranian artists. These objects show popular habits in the society (images 24.1, 33.2, 90.4).

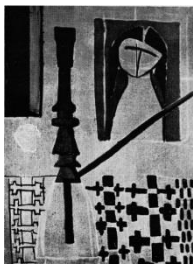


Image 24.1. A. Haroutonian, *Woman and shisha*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Images 33.2. Bijan Saffari, *Woman and shisha*, Aquarelle, 68 x 48, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

⁶⁵ 'Seven regions, the usual geographical division of the world in Iranian tradition. Ancient Iranians, who may have believed in a tripartite division of the earth [...], developed an orderly picture of the world, envisioned as vast and round and encircled by a high mountain' (Shahbazi 2012).



Image 90.4. Asghar Mohammadi, *Narrator*, Oil, 110 x 40, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Furthermore, Iranian carpet becomes a symbol to convey part of Iranian cultural element. Reza Forouzi in *Turkmen woman* documents the tradition and materials which are used to make a carpet and Darioush Houshmand in *Artist's room* shows the carpet as a decoration in a room (images 69.3, 107.3).



Image 69.3. Reza Forouzi, *Turkmen woman*, Lithograph in colours, 21x 28, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 107.3. Darioush Houshmand, *Artist's room*, Oil, 46 x 61, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Reference to Persian Literatures and Mythology

Notwithstanding, *The poet and Farhād's beloved*, by Parviz Tanavoli untied all the frames defined by literature, with the tradition of illustration (image 12.5) ⁶⁶

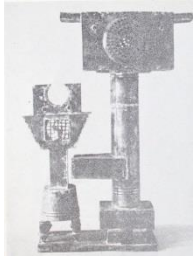


Image 12.5. Parviz Tanavoli, *The poet and Farhad's Beloved*, Copper sculpture, 170x 124 x 45, from Fifth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1966, Tehran, Iran: Ministry of Culture and Arts.

Tanavoli introduced a new perspective in visualising a text, bringing a poetic sense into his work. Tanavoli not only used symbols and elements of Iranian heritage to depict a mythical story, but also found a way to import the mysticism aspect of literature and visualise it. Tracing back Tanavoli's works exhibited in the third Biennial, a painting in gouache technique, *Farhād dreaming*, and a sculpture, *Farhād and doe*, much like his other works exhibited in the fifth Biennial (images 25.3, 26.3), show his inspiration from the romantic poetries.



Image 25.3. Parviz Tanavoli, *Farhād dreaming*, Gouache, 53 x 80, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

⁶⁶ Base on the Biennial catalogue, Tanavoli exhibited two other artworks in the fifth Tehran Biennial, but there is no recorded image of the works—a painting *The poet and the cry of distress* (oil on plaster) and a copper sculpture *Last poet of Iran*. The subject of both works suggests a strong inspiration of the Persian literature on the artist.

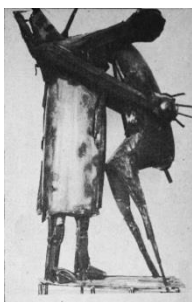


Image 26.3. Parviz Tanavoli, *Farhād and doe*, Sculpture, 130 x 250 x 60, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.

Tanavoli was fascinated by the character of Farhād⁶⁷ and his story, and thought of Farhād as one of the first Persian sculptors before Islam. The figure of Farhād as a sculptor and a romantic figure in Persian legends and literature influenced Tanavoli's works (Coustou 2015). As such, for Tanavoli, this character made up for the absence of sculptures in Islamic Iran, since Islam bans the practice of sculpting. However, Iranians started to consider daily objects as small sculptures and used many different ways to design them as practical-decorative objects such as locks, which Tanavoli used in his latter works.

The largest number of works categorised under the Iranian literatures and myths were inspired by the epic literature of Iran, and specifically by *Šāh-nāma*. Modern Iranian artists, by choosing the stories from this book, returned to the Iranian pictorial heritage. This book is 'the last and definitive retelling of the Iranian national saga' (Blois 2011), which is in line with the Iranian state's ideology at the time who sought to represent its identity through the pre-Islamic tradition in Iran. It is worth noting that the *Šāh-nāma* was written in post-Islamic Iran and yet all the illustrated copies of this book were made in the Islamic period, even though the content of the book narrates the ancient Persian

⁶⁷ Farhād is 'a romantic figure in Persian legend and literature, best known from the poetry of Nezāmī Ganjavī as a rival with the Sasanian king Kosrow II Parvez (r. 591-628) for the love of the beautiful Armenian princess Šīrīn' (Moayyad 1999). Nezāmī 'in his narrative poem Kosrow o Šīrīn, probably finished in 1180, Farhād appears at a point when relations between Šīrīn and her royal lover are strained. Acting on Šīrīn's request, Farhād, described as an architect and sculptor well-versed in the sciences and also endowed with immense physical strength, undertakes to cut a stone canal for the flow of milk from the pasture to her palace' (Moayyad 1999).

mythologies. As such, these works show how Iranian artists employed the Western art style to reconcile the state's ideology with the content of this book, which belongs to the pre-Islamic era, and its pictorial heritage which belongs to the Islamic era.

To depict stories from Šāh-nāma none of the artists followed the traditional manner for representing the epic stories in Persian painting, namely by miniature, which show a more detailed depiction of the heroes, their battle clothes, and the different war instruments. In contrast, they did not illustrate the stories at all, but rather depicted different characters, such as Rostam, one of the epic heroes of the Šāh-nāma, as seen in the *Battle between Rostam and Ashkeboos*, by Houshang Kabir, and *Haft khaṇ-e Rostam* (the seven quests of Rostam), by Mehdi Ebrahimian⁶⁸ (images 80.3, 107.4).



Image 80.3. Houshang Kabir, *Battle between Rostam and Ashkeboos*, Oil, 40 x 70, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 107.4. Mehdi Ebrahimian, *Haft khaṇ-e Rostam* (the seven quests of Rostam), no material, 79 x 62, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Ebrahimian used simple forms and attempted to visualise the image in a poetic way. He used a different quality of rhythmic lines and various types of geometric shapes and textures to create the poem's atmosphere. Some artists aimed at illustrating the stories from Šāh-nāma in their work, for example, Fahimeh Navai in an untitled

⁶⁸ The Persian title of this work suggests that he depicted the first quests (stage) of Rostam's journey: *Rakhsb kills lion*. His horse, Rakhsb accompanied Rostam during his seven quests. In the first stage, while Rostam was sleeping, a lion attacks them but Rakhsb manages to kill it.

xylography work shows different parts of the battle between Rostam and Sohrab (image 103.3).



Image 103.3. Fahimeh Navai, *Untitled*, Xylography, 102 x 180, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

She made use of the tradition of the book illustration in this artwork, which depicts different parts of the story in one frame and connecting the parts by using visual elements between the frames. This included writing some parts of the poems around the pictures. However, as with the other artists, the technique adopted by the artist leads to simple forms and fewer details.

Depicting contemporary Persian literature can be seen in *Blind Owl*⁶⁹, by Aziz Raghebi, and *The child and the broken jug*⁷⁰, by Faradjollah Rakhshai (images 10.1, 42.3).



Image 10.1. Aziz Raghebi, *Blind owl*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 42.3. Faradjollah Rakhshai, *The child and the broken jug*, Oil, 48 x 58, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

⁶⁹ The Blind Owl (*Buf-e kur*) (1937) is a surrealist story written by Sadegh Hedayat (1903- 1951).

⁷⁰ This painting recalls the story of a famous poem, Orphan, by Parvin Etesami. Parvin Etesami (1907- 1942) is one of the notable contemporary Persian poets who wrote classical poetry in modern times.

Furthermore, some artists referred to literature in the titles of their works, for example, *Illustration of a poem*, by Manouchehr Safar-Zadeh, where the literary content is not revealed by merely looking at the painting (image 57.3).



Image 57.3. Manouchehr Safar-Zadeh, *Illustration of a poem*, Oil, 150 x 200, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

The artist found the title sufficient to alert viewers to his theme. The other artist, Asghar Mohammadi, in *Narrator*, portrays one of the old traditions amongst Iranian families: storytelling (image 90.4).



Image 90.4. Asghar Mohammadi, *Narrator*, Oil, 110 x 40, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran Iran: Central of Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Use of Calligraphy

The second Tehran Biennial witnessed the first use of hand-written calligraphy, with the intention of keeping the simplicity of the handwriting, rather than adding to its aesthetics through artistic manipulation. Parviz Tanavoli, in an untitled engraving work wrote a word in a box-like frame (image 15.2).



Image 15.2. Parviz Tanavoli, *Untitled*, Gravure, 42 x 40, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

This work suggests inspiration by the way that miniature painters used to combine the orthography and illustration together. They used a frame to separate the text from the painting. Tanavoli, in the upper-left corner of his painting, writes *Feminine* in Persian (zanane). With slightly different qualities, this style of using calligraphy can also be seen in other works: an untitled Xylography work⁷¹, by Fahimeh Navai, *Procession*⁷², by Reza Bangiz, and *Talisman*⁷³, by Mahmoud Gharadaghi (image 103.3, 7.4, 72.4).



Image 103.3. Fahimeh Navai, *Untitled*, Xylography, 102 x 180, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

⁷¹ Navai depicted the battle between Rostam and Sohrab. In three sections out of five in her work, she wrote some parts of the poem around the pictures. In the upper left side, she framed the image with the writing in a circle. Also, there are two lines; one on the left-middle section and the other one on the upper right side of the work, representing the poems which describe the story of images.

⁷² In the bottom left the side of the painting, Bangiz wrote the title of the painting in Persian, *Zanjir-zani*. He did not use a frame to emphasise the written part. Rather, he put it in a light form which is so similar to the symbol of the Cypress tree.

⁷³ Gharadaghi depicted a right-hand palm and an eye under it; then around and above it, he wrote in Persian letters talismanic prayers about evil-eye.



Image 7.4. Reza Bangiz, *Procession*, Gravure, 74 x 102, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 72.4. Mahmoud Gharadjedaghi, *Talisman*, Painting on skin, 60x 50, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.

While this does not suggest a re-emergence of calligraphy as an art form, it is evidence that artists were recycling elements from their pictorial heritage into a modern visual identity. They suggest the consciousness of Iranian artists in using their pictorial heritage and also their meticulous observation in searching among their visual tradition to make a modern visual identity.

The use of this form of calligraphy led to the first practice of combining calligraphy and painting that contributed to *Naqqashi-khatt* (calligram)⁷⁴ which is still used by many contemporary Iranian artists. Emphasising the pictorial representation of calligraphy, *Siyah-mashq* is one form of the Persian calligraphic heritage that Iranian artists in the middle of the twentieth century used as a practice sheet.

When the letters are written without any particular meaning, is a typical traditional calligraphic mode in which the meaning is secondary to the pictorial

⁷⁴ This term 'consists of two words: *Naqqashi*, meaning painting, and *Khatt*, which means script. The combination of these two words is used to denote those paintings that have been produced by professional calligraphers as well as painters' (Keshmirshekan 2013, p.179).

representation of calligraphy. It usually consists of a superimposition of lines and words without regard to continuity or meaning: the antithesis of the literary aspect of classical calligraphy. (Keshmirshekan 2013, p.131)

As Keshmirshekan notes, Charles Hossein Zenderoudi, one of the founding members of the *Saqqā-kāna* movement, was the pioneer of the calligraphic approach (Keshmirshekan 2013, p.137). In *The blue hole*, he was inspired by some different types of calligraphy styles such as *nask* and *bannani*⁷⁵, as branches of Kufic script⁷⁶. He depicted them with free hand style in a circle composition (image 115.4).

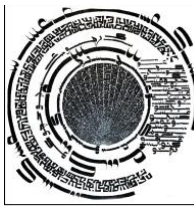


Image 115.4. Hossein Zenderoudi, *The blue hole*, no material, 170x 170, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.

The writing is not readable, which suggests the artist's concentration on the composition, representing them in a rhythmic order. Put differently, in such cases, the artist's aim was to make an abstract painting while using Persian calligraphy tradition.

Using calligraphy also reflects the traditionally close relationship between art and literature in Iran. Some artists were moved by different styles of the Islamic calligraphy, such as *nask*, *bannai*, *tolt* ⁷⁷, in addition to the Persian calligraphic style, *šekasta-nasta'liq*⁷⁸.

Using the Islamic themes and/or elements as well as an Islamic calligraphic style can be

⁷⁵ *Bannai* or *ma'qeli* style is 'an unadorned form of Kufic consisting entirely of straight lines set vertically or at acute or obtuse angles. [...] Specimens of *ma'qeli* Kufic can be seen in some of the Timurid and Safavid mosques and edifices at Mašhad, Isfahan, and elsewhere. Today there are still a few tile designers expert in *ma'qeli*, which is sometimes (but not often) still used in decorative tile work on buildings' (Yūsufi 1990).

⁷⁶ The Kufic script was in common use in Persia for five centuries following the Arab conquest, mainly for copying the Koran and for decorating buildings, vessels, and books. [...] The use of decorative (*mošajjari*) Kufic script attained its highest artistic perfection in Persia, where it was widely used up to the 16th century and continued thereafter to be cultivated up to the present time' (Yūsufi 1990).

⁷⁷ The *tolt* script appears to have evolved through several channels from a style called *kaṭṭ-e jalil* "the majestic script," which was a derivative of Kufic' (Yūsufi 1990).

⁷⁸ "The *šekasta-nasta'liq* which emerged in the early 17th century and spread in the later Safavid period consequently differed from proper *nasta'liq* only in so far as some of the letters were shrunk (*šekasta*, lit. "broken") and detached letters and words were sometimes joined' (Yūsufi 1990).

traced in some of the artworks, for instance, *Prayer*, by Vossatollah Majd-Abadi-Farahani, *The Doe*, by Hadi Hazaveyi, an untitled painting by Rouin Pakbaz, *The blades*, *Composition No.33*, an untitled sculpture, and *Composition No. 22*, by Faramarz Pilaram (images 88.3, 106.3, 11.4, 23.3, 15.4, 8.5, 9.5).



Image 88.3. Vossatollah Majd-Abadi-Farahani, *Prayer*, Oil, 60 x 80, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 106.3. Hadi Hazaveyi, *The doe*, Gouache, 50 x 38, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

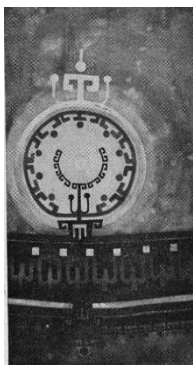


Image 11.4. Rouin Pakbaz, *Untitled*, Gouache and Oil, 50 x 90, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

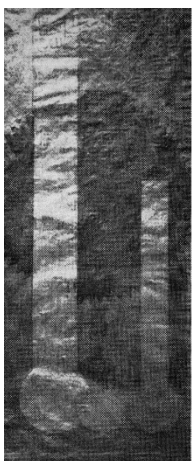


Image 23.3. Faramarz Pilaram, *The blades*, Gouache, 198 x 83, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

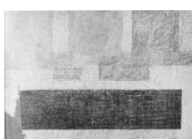


Image 15.4. Faramarz Pilaram, *Composition No. 33*, Gouache, 200 x 135, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 8.5. Faramarz Pilaram, *Untitled*, Sculpture, Copper engraving, 208 x 76 x 11, from Fifth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1966, Tehran, Iran: Ministry of Culture and Arts.

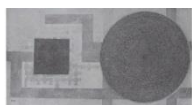


Image 9.5. Faramarz Pilaram, *Composition No. 22*, oil, 105 x 280, from Fifth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1966, Tehran, Iran: Ministry of Culture and Arts.

Majd-Abadi-Farahani in *Prayer* used *tolt* style of script to represent the written verses of Quran as they appear on the tile works used to decorate mosques in Iran (image 88.3).



Image 88.3. Vossatollah Majd-Abadi-Farahani, *Prayer*, Oil, 60 x 80, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Hazaveyi illustrated a story of the Prophet Mohammad with the doe. He depicted a doe at the centre of his work, two minimal forms of a tree on each side and two spiral lines. The doe's shape shows that he tried to follow the *bannai* style script. He also repeated the word *Mohammad*, which is written the same way in Persian and Arabic. The letters written inside the doe's body, as well as the name of the Prophet, follow a free-hand version of *bannai* style script (image 106.3).



Image 106.3. Hadi Hazaveyi, *The doe*, Gouache, 50 x 38, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Faramarz Pilaram used *tolt* style of script and in both works he wrote, “*There is no god but Allah, Muhammad is the messenger of God, and Ali is the friend of God*,” a famous saying for Shias that can be seen on the religious banners or decorations of religious buildings (images 23.3, 15.4).

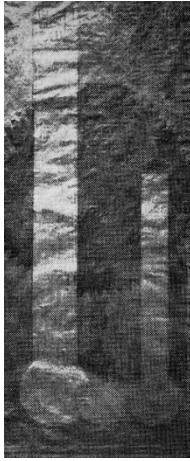


Image 23.3. Faramarz Pilaram, *The blades*, Gouache, 198 x 83, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

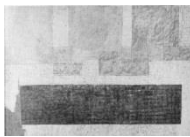


Image 15.4. Faramarz Pilaram, *Composition No.33*, Gouache, 200 x 135, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.

The use of calligraphy in the artworks he exhibited in the fifth Tehran Biennial, suggests the function of calligraphy as a texture. In contrast to most of the artists who used calligraphy, Pilaram tried to follow the aesthetic values of the font. Furthermore, Hossein Sassan in his painting *Writing* sought to depict a common Persian calligraphy style, *ṣekasta-nasta'liq*, in a new artistic form (image 32.4).

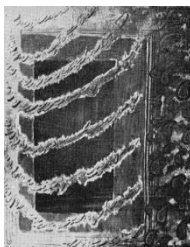


Image 32.4. Hossein Sassan, *Writing*, Oil, 100 x 115, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central of Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.

As the Persian title of this work, *The motion of line in painting*, suggests, Sassan's intention is to represent the natural motion of this kind of calligraphy in abstract form.

He also depicted the symbol of the Cypress tree that resembles the tradition of decorating calligraphy papers. Although the artwork shows a failed attempt, the artist's practice deserves reflection, as Sassan separated a classical calligraphic page into different layers and re-combined its elements to create a new and modern interpretation of traditional calligraphy.

The use of Latin letters seen in a few works exhibited in the fifth Tehran Biennial not only suggests a new approach to calligraphy among Iranian artists, but also shows a new aspect of the Western influence on the Iranian artists; for example, *Golnar & me*, by Kamran Katuzian (image 35.5) shows a strong influence from Pop art in particular.



Image 35.5. Kamran Katuzian, *Golnar & me*, Oil, 120 x 149, from Fifth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1966, Tehran, Iran: Ministry of Culture and Arts.

Similarly, in *Tombstone our graves*, Gholam Hossein Nami was influenced in particular by Western abstract art. He depicted the old tombstones in Iran by using a few Latin letters alongside elements that recall the forms of a tombstone (image 41.5).

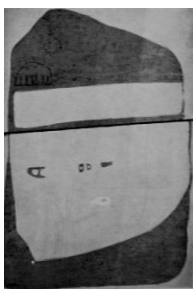


Image 41.5. Gholam Hossein Nami, *Tombstone our graves*, Oil, 100 x 140, from Fifth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1966, Tehran, Iran: Ministry of Culture and Arts.

Reference to specific regions in Iran

The use of symbolic and abstract art styles, representing the artists' conceptions and experiences of a specific place, can be seen in *The memory of Shiraz*, by Fereydoun Rahimi-Assa, and *Pas-Qaleh*, by Menoshan Azam-Zangueneh (images 25.4, 5.2).



Image 25.4. Fereydoun Rahimi-Assa, *The memory of Shiraz*, Gouache, 55 x 39, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran Iran, Central of Administration of Fine Arts- Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 5.2. Menoshan Azam-Zangueneh, *Pas-Qaleh*, Drawing, 48 x 34, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

For instance, Rahimi-Assa, in *The Memory of Shiraz*, in addition to the title of his works, which refers to a historical city of Iran, depicts cypress trees and bitter orange trees, which are symbols of Shiraz (image 125.4).



Image 125.4. Sumbat Kevreghian, *Assar-i wheel*, Drawing, 40 x 50, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

The realistic style in documenting the landscapes helps in preserving images about to get lost in the modernisation of the country; for example, Sumbat Kevreghian, in *Dardasht*⁷⁹, depicts the door and walls of an old building. The wooden door is decaying, and the bottom of the walls next to the door is falling. The decorations on its upper part suggest the building's prior thriving days (image 124.4).

⁷⁹ An area in Isfahan, located in the central part of Iran.



image 124.4, Sumbat Kevreghian, *Dardasht*, Watercolour, 30 x 40, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran Iran, Central of Administration of Fine Arts- Publications and Relations Dept.

In depicting the different regions of Iran, there are remarkable depictions of women in their local costumes, representing their unique cultures, such as *The Kurdish-Ghouchani woman*⁸⁰, by Jalil Ziyapour, *Women from Ghassem-Abad*⁸¹, by Hassan Ghaemi (images 34.2, 40.2).



Image 34.2. Jalil Ziyapour, *The Kurdish-Ghouchani woman*, Oil, 200 x 83, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 40.2. Hassan Ghaemi, *Women from Ghassem-Abad*, Oil, 122 x 216, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.

The women's costumes have different designs and are made from different materials in each region of Iran. For example, Ziyapour depicts details of the clothing and shoes of a woman from the southern part of Iran (image 34.2).

⁸⁰ Kurdish-Ghouchani's people are Kurds who live in the northeast of Iran.

⁸¹ Ghassem-Abad is a village located in North of Iran that is well-known for its local dance and clothes.

The influence of Western art style, especially Cubism, are recognizable in this work. This series of Ziyapour's work 'had been created with broken, sharply angular lines based on traditional coloured tiles, and can be considered the practical application of the artist's proposals for developing a modern visual language on the basis of Iran's national heritage, which he had propounded in Iran's artistic circles as early as 1948' (Keshmirshekan 2013, p. 60).

Among the artists exhibited in Tehran Biennials, Sarkis Zakarians is one who depicted a traditional ceremony as well as local dress. In *Qashqai dance*, he depicted men and women from Qashqai tribe⁸² standing in rows and dancing beside each other, thus illustrating their local form of dance (image 45.4).



Image 45.4. Sarkis Zakarians, *Qashqai dance*, Sketch, 30 x 36, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central of Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.

The dancers wear similar local costumes, women with long dresses scarfs and headbands and men with special clothes, known as Arkhaleq, and twisted long scarfs around their waists. The representation of the idea of modernization in the twentieth century and the rapid growth of cities in rural spaces can be seen in a few works such as *Northern of Tehran*, by George Abrahamian, and *Tehran*, by Morteza Karimi (images 3.1, 81.3).



Image 3.1. George Abrahamian, *Northern of Tehran*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.

⁸². The people of this tribe are a conglomeration of different ethnic origins who live in the central and southwestern parts of Iran.



Image 81.3. Morteza Karimi, *Tehran*, Oil, 66 x 70, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Painting the landscape of towns and cities documents the appearance of the place. However, today, after about six decades, these images reveal the enormous changes that such places have undergone. Today, the northern part of Tehran and Alborz slopes is filled with high-rise apartments and the centre of the city looks so remarkably different that these paintings barely resemble the place as one sees it today. Apart from this, Edict Aivasian, in *Oil factory*, represents a symbol of modernisation in the country, which can be seen in the southern part of Iran (image 8.2).

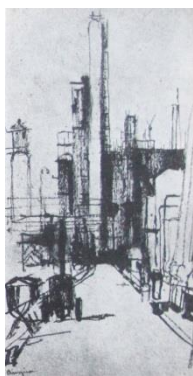


Image 8.2. Edict Aivasian, *Oil refinery*, Drawing, 41 x 28, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

The influence of hometown can be seen in Hossein Mahjoubi's works, such as *The houses of Labijan*, *The houses of Gilan*, and *Tiled roofs of Labijan* (images 88.4, 89.4, 39.5).



Image 88.4. Hossein Mahjoubi, *The houses of Lahijan*, Watercolour, 43 x 72, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central of Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 89.4. Hossein Mahjoubi, *The houses of Gilan*, Drawing, 26 x 50, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central of Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 39.5. Hossein Mahjoubi, *Tiled roofs of Lahijan*, Water colour, 81 x 117, from Fifth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1966, Tehran, Iran: Ministry of Culture and Arts.

Mahjoubi was born in Lahijan⁸³ and, in these works, he depicts landscapes from there. Also, due to the different climate of this region, the architecture of the houses is different in comparison with other parts of Iran which makes his works more attractive for his viewers.

Reference to elements of Iranian classical painting, art and craft

The influence of the renewal of miniature painting manner of choosing subjects and painting techniques can be traced in a number of works such as *Lovers*, by Manoochehr

⁸³ Lahijan is one of the cities of Gilan province in the northern part of Iran.

Sheybani, *Composition*, by Laal-Riahi, and *The child and the broken jug*, by Faradjollah Rakhshai (images 34.1, 35.1, 42.3).



Image 34.1. Laal-Riahi, *Composition, Lovers*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 35.1. Manoutchehr Sheybani, *Lovers*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 42.3. Faradjollah Rakhshai, *The child and the broken jug*, Oil, 48 x 58, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

The theme 'lovers', used by Sheybani, is a subject based on the lyricism and love poems in Persian literature that were often used by Iranian artists (image 35.1). The use of this theme in Iranian art, and the inspiration for it from Persian literature becomes more clear when comparing two works working within the same theme and bringing out their similarities. Sheybani's work, *Lovers*, recalls a painting, *Ayaz and Uzra*, attributed to

Sani al-Mulk⁸⁴ or a follower of his that was created in the middle of the nineteenth century in Iran (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Attributed to a follower of Sani al-Mulk, *Ayaz and Uzra*, mid-19th century, Oil on canvas, 97 x 65 cm.

In addition to the subject, other elements, such as the composition of the two paintings, the positioning of figures, the details of faces, and the style of the male character's hat are found in both artworks. These works share the Western painting techniques and styles that were common at the time.

In *Ayaz and Uzra*, 'the whole composition is arranged on a two-dimensional surface without any unnecessary or overemphasised feature. It is through this very intricate arrangement of light and dark, warm and cold colours, concrete and abstract forms that the head of two lovers rise, touching each other's cheeks passionately' (Hosseini 2011, p. 23). In comparison with Sheybani, who used curved lines, the lines in Sani al-Mulk's work are more stable. Furthermore, Sani al-Mulk followed a realistic manner while Sheybani tried to avoid details in depicting figures. On the other hand, some of the similarities can be attributed to the same origins and thematic inspirations in both works.

The titles that artists chose for their artworks are also worth examining. Sani al-Mulk chose the name of two lovers from the classical Persian literature 'Ayaz and Uzra'. However, Sheybani simply chose a name based simply on the theme—*Lovers*. While the

⁸⁴ Mirza Abolhassan Khan Ghaffari known as Sani al-Mulk (1814-1866) was a painter in Qajar Court. According to Robinson (2011), 'Between 1846 and 1850 he was in Italy, studying and copying the works of the Italian masters in Rome, the Vatican, Florence, and Venice'. He also was Kamal al-Mulk's uncle.

name that Sani al-Mulk chose shows his interest in keeping the old tradition of linking painting with literature, Shaybani tried to focus instead on a moment between two lovers. In addition to the above influences, some artists use the main features of Persian painting: tradition, including outlines, the motif of miss-sun, and the symbol of cypress tree⁸⁵ in their works. The symbolic face of *miss-sun* (khorshid khanoom), which is an ancient Iranian motif where a woman is portrayed as having joined eyebrows, black hair with a defined centre part, side-over eyes, and small lips is seen repeatedly in Tehran Biennials. It should be noted, however, that these influences inspire the depiction of the motif, while the techniques used in the paintings are significantly different. For instance, whereas in miniature paintings, artists used fine and smooth lines to depict the outlines or the objects in their paintings, the works exhibited in the Biennials present different qualities in lines.

The Iranian painting heritage, especially the late Safavid period drawing style and the Qajar painting style has influenced Iranian modern and contemporary artists. Some of the artists who exhibited their works in Tehran Biennials adopted the Qajar techniques and composition. Others capitalised on the main features of the late Safavid and Qajar painting styles. Both groups combined the old and modern art styles.

The impact of the Qajar painting style regarding composition and depiction of details can be seen in *Cupbearer* by Aghdas Vakiki (image 59.2).

⁸⁵ A cypress tree (Sarv) is laden with symbolism in Persian culture; it 'is often mentioned in classical Persian poetry as a distinguished garden tree and occurs in a variety of metaphors ... referring to the graceful figure and stately gait of the beloved ...for representations of the pyramidal cypress, its symbolism, and its persistence in Persian art Prominent among cypress motifs in the art of the Islamic period is the well-known *bot(t)ajeqqa'z* or *hūta kerqa'z*, which often occurs on shawls (*termas*), carpets, and other textiles and is believed by some scholars to be a stylized pyramidal cypress with the top bent by the wind' (A'lam 2011).



Image 59.2. Aghdas Vakiki, *Cupbearer*, no material, 71 x 48, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

The subject's makeup, clothes, jewellery, and even the curtain in the background all show the profound influence of Qajar painting style. Moreover, by choosing a title referring to Persian literature, she also tried to keep the historical boundaries between painting and literature.

The main features of the Qajar painting style combined with the Western painting style can be seen in *Portrait* by Judy Farmanfarmaian (image 67.3).



Image 67.3. Judy Farmanfarmaian, *Portrait*, Oil, 57 x 100, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

In this work, the figure's position and the depiction of the subject's beard are based on Qajar painting approaches. Despite the influences of various Qajar features, this work differs from the artworks from this era, since unlike Qajar paintings, the background of this work was plain. Further, there is no sign of the decorations that normally draw the attention in the Qajar paintings. One may think that in this painting, Farmanfarmaian detached the character from his original space and attached him on a new space that could be anywhere.

In the same way, *Portrait*, by Hossein Mahjoubi, is a combination of the Qajar, late Safavid, and modern art styles (91.3).



Image 91.3. Hossein Mahjoubi, *Portrait*, Oil, 77 x 35, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

The figure's style, clothes, round face, joined eyebrows, big eyes, and small mouth, in addition to depicting a longer upper part of the body, all reveal a strong influence of drawings from late Safavid and Qajar periods. Additionally, influences from Western styles, in particular from Impressionism, can be seen in this work.

Flowers and birds are conventional topics in the Seljuk, Safavid, and Qajar eras. This combination was repeated in different arts such as miniatures, tiles works, and handicrafts and can be seen in the untitled print work by Ahmad S'alamat (image 48.3).



Image 48.3. Ahmad S'alamat, *Untitled*, Xylography, 27 x 34, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

The inspiration of much earlier pre-Islamic art of Iran can also be traced in some artworks exhibited in Biennials. For example, Fereydoun Rahimi-Assa, in *Jar*, combines

abstract art with elements and symbols that can be seen on jars belonging to the ancient civilisation in Sialk⁸⁶, which dates back to 5500–6000 BC (image 23.2).



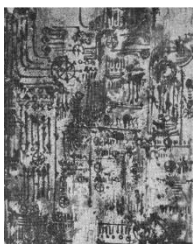
Image 23.2. Fereydoun Rahimi-Assa, *Jar*, Oil, 71 x 59, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central of Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Moreover, the shapes and the material, resembling earthenware, that Abbas Mashhadi-Zadeh used in *Cow*, recall the works which can be found in the ancient civilisations' sites in different parts of Iran, such as Marlik⁸⁷ (image 109.3).



Image 109.3. Mashhadi-Zadeh, *Cow*, glazed-earthenware sculpture, 40 x 60, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central of Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Furthermore, Massoud Arabshahi in his works exhibited in the fourth Biennial, took inspiration from ancient symbolic motifs such as the wheel and the sun, alongside geometric shapes and lines, and composited them in an abstract style (images 62.4, 63.4).



⁸⁶ Tepeh Sialk is a large ancient archaeological site in a suburb of the city of Kashan in central Iran. *tappeh* in Persian means 'hill' or 'mound'.

⁸⁷ Marlik Hills is an ancient site near Roudbar in Gilan, in the north of Iran. The site of a royal cemetery and artefacts found at this site date back 3,000 years. The cow's form is so similar to the humped cow statues found in Marlik; big body, short legs, and a hump on its back.

Image 62.4. Massoud Arabshahi, *Composition*, Oil, 119 x 146, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 63.4. Massoud Arabshahi, *Untitled*, Sketch, 45 x 34, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central of Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.

Reference to West/East

Depicting the unfamiliar scenes can be seen in *Roman yard*, by Mansoureh Hosseini, *Garden-party*, by Nina Azari, *Along the Seine*, by Behrouz Golzari, *New York*, by Iran Darroudi, *Landscape of Rome*, by Anna Avakian, *The streets of Spain*, by Derakhshande Zaimi, *Temple*, by Margueritte Franguian (images 7.1, 2.2, 43.2, 72.2, 7.3, 45.3, 67.4). Only an abstract painting *Classic Japanese* by Farzaneh Kheirloomoum referred to the East in its title (image 21.4).



Image 7.1. Mansoureh Hosseini, *Roman yard*, no material, no size, from First Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1958, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 2.2. Nina Azari, *Garden-party*, Oil, 60 x 70, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts—Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 43.2. Behrouz Golzari, *Along the Seine*, Watercolour, 32 x 22, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 72.2. Iran Darroudi, *New York*, Oil, no size, from Second Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1960, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 7.3. Anna Avakian, *Landscape of Rome*, Oil, 38 x 60, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 45.3. Derakhshande Zaimi, *The streets of Spain*, Gravure, 35 x 48, from Third Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1962, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 67.4. Margueritte Franguian, *Temple*, Oil, 48 x 66, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.



Image 21.4. Farzaneh Kheirloomoum, *Classic Japanese*, no material, 19x53, from Fourth Tehran Biennial's Catalogue, no author 1964, Tehran, Iran: Central of Administration of Fine Arts— Publications and Relations Dept.

Table 4

*Artists and Artworks, First Tehran Biennial (1958) **

Artist	Artwork's title	Artist	Artwork's title
Nasser Oveissi	Sad Saghi	Masoud Karim	Duet
Koroush Farzami	Shepherd	Farideh Sabi	Still Life
George Abrahamian	Northern Tehran	Laal Riahi	Composition
Laal Riahi (F)	Chadori	Manoutchehr Sheybani	Lovers
Hassan Ghaemi	Woman threading needle	Mohammad Sedigh	Man with Pipe / Iranian Man with Pipe (in Persian)
Sh. Lucas	Still life	Parviz Kardan	Mosque and Woman
Mansoureh Hosseini	Roman Yard	Rostam Voskanian	Bust
Reza Forouzi	Old man/ Guard the tomb of Amir Timur (title in Persian)	Tamara Shirvani	Merrymakers
Neli Ellayan	Pic Nic	Jazah Tabatabai	Pigeon racing
Aziz Raghebi	Blind Owl	Sohrab Sepehri	Still Life
Sharzad Mohtasham	Congregation	Talat Akhoondzade	Landscape
Javad Hamidi	Bones	Jalil Ziapour	Zeynab Khatoon
Korous Salahshoor	Anahita	Changiz Shahvagh	The Girl
Golli Iranpoor	Motherly love	Houshang Azizi	Harlot
Ardeshtir Mohasses	Dessign	Sada Asslanian	Design
Manoutchehr Sheybani	Women of the south	Edward Simonian	Portrait
Ashot Minassian	Giraffe	E. Abrahamian	Still Life
Marco Grigorian	Sun and Image	Cyrus Malek	Still Life
Ashot Minassian	Musicians	Arthur Minassian	Adam and Eve
Changiz Shahvagh	Chadori	Avakian	Still Life
Sirak Melkonian	Veiled Women	Garnik Bahramian	Landscape
Parviz Tanavoli	Procession	Farshad Montakhab	Houses
Parviz Tanavoli	Mourning Call	Morteza Momayez	Abstract
A. Haroutonian	Woman and Pipe	Aivazian	Abstract
Golli Iranpoor	Figure	Hakimi	Portrait
Ahmad Esfandiari	Still Life	Hakimi	Composition
Morteza Momayez	Woman and Coat Stand	Monir Farmanfarmaian	Abstract
Masoud Karim	Relaxation	Sirak Melkonian	Lino-Cut (Technique of artwork)
Alireza Yahyavi	Still Life	Edward Adamian	Self Portrait
Korous Salahshoor	My Dream	Mahjoobi	Abstract
Parviz Tanavoli	Maternal Love		

Table 5

Artists and Artworks, Second Tehran Biennial (1960)

Artist	Artwork's title	Material	Size
Joseph Abrahamian	Justice	Oil	90 x 50
Nina Azari	Garden- Party	Oil	60 x 70
Mehdi Azemoum	Bouquet	Gouache	42 x 63
Ahmad Esfandiari	Still Life	Oil	60 x 40
Menoshan Azam-Zangueneh	Passghale	Drawing	48 x 34
Nelly Elaian	Alone	Aquarelle	35 x 24
Serge Avakian	Portrait	Gouache	43 x 26
Edict Aivasian	Refinery	Drawing	41 x 28
Nasser Oveissi	Bride	Oil	120 x 90
Nasser Oveissi	----	Drawing	----
Reza Banquiz	Phoenix	Gravure	74 x 49
Garnik Bahramian	Fontaine Votive	Oil	45 x 59
Parviz Tanavoli	Darius's cart	Iron sculpture	---
Parviz Tanavoli	Pigeon bleu	Gouache	29 x 30

⁸⁸ White rows show female artists and grey ones show male artists.

Parviz Tanavoli	---	Gravure	42 x 40
Mohammad Tavakkoli	---	Terracotta	H. 26 cm
Heshmat jazani	Femme et miroir	Oil	78 x 51
Hassan Haji-Nouri	prayer	Clay	---
Mansoureh Hosseini	Abstract	Oil	30 x 40
Javad Hamidi	Naked	Oil	73 x 48
Keivan Khosrovian	Abstract	Gouache	70 x 34
Ali-Asghar Davoudi	Two lovers	Oil	50 x 70
Fereydoun Rahimi	jar	Oil	71 x 59
Mehranguiz Rakhsha	Composition	Oil	69 x 99
Manouchehr Rezai	Abstract	Gouache	80 x 60
Ardeshtir Zandnia	flower	Gouache	28 x 36
Abolghassem Saidi	Hiver / Winter	Oil	87 x 145
Marie Chainse	Landscape	Oil	69 x 85
Changiz Shahvagh	squat	Sculpture	---
Changiz Shahvagh	Composition	Oil	40 x 61
Manouchehr sheybani	Composition	Oil	70 x 84
Mohammad Sedigh	Petite gypsy	Drawing	16 x 11
Bijan Saffari	Woman and Hookah	Aquarelle	68 x 48
Jalil Ziapour	Femme Kurd de Ghouchan	Oil	200 x 83
Jazeh Tabatabai	rotisserie	Oil	109 x 139
Javad Ameri	Landscape	Oil	58 x 78
Houshang Azizi	Portrait	Oil	37 x 47
Abolfazl Omoumi	Hunting Scene	Oil	123 x 75
Reza Forouzi	Model	Gouache	40 x 29
Hassan Ghaemi	A woman from Ghassem-Abad	Oil	122 x 216
Ataollah Fargang-Ghahramani	Raisin	Oil	69 x 51
Behrouz Golzari	Movement	Drawing	61 x 48
Behrouz Golzari	Au bord de la seine	Aquarelle	32 x 22
Hossein Kazemi	---	Gouache	---
Alex Gueverguise	---	Oil	101 x 77
Cyrus Malek	Cock	Gouache	61 x 39
Cyrus Malek	---	Drawing	---
Majid Mohkami	Bas-relief	---	22 x 26
Ardeshtir Mohasses	---	Drawing	14 x 21
Manoush Mgrditchian	Landscape	Oil	57 x 43.5
Morteza Momayez	Composition	---	79 X 56
Sara Shahrzad Melamed	Girls	Oil	80 x 60
Leyly Matine-Daftary	Head	Oil	58 x 44
Hartoun Minassian	Abstract	Oil	58 x 37
Setrak Nazarian	Composition	Oil	88 x 62
Mohsen Vaziri-Moghadam	Mouvement de Rythme	Oil	105 x 151
Parviz Vaziri-Farahani	---	Copper	46 x 60
Rostam Voskanian	Girl Shiraz	Oil	74 x 62
Aghdas Vakili	Eanson	---	71 x 48
Vram Nazarian	Undecided	Oil	100 x 72
Lucas	Plant	Oil	72 x 50
Edward Simonian	Public garden	Oil	42 x 62
Chehre Nazi	rainbow	Oil	54 x 47
Tamara Mani-Ghalem	Abstract	Oil	50 x 40
Bahman Mohasses	Composition	Gouache	49 x 68
Yahya Badi-Massoud	Composition	Gouache	28 x 40
Sohrab Sepehri	---	Water colour	70 x 50
Monir Farmanfarmaian	Landscape	Oil	68 x 53
Leyly Farmanfarmaian	Portrait	Oil	64 x 74
Bahman Forsi	legend	Oil	70 x 45
Hossien Zenderoudi	Portrait	Oil	45 x 29
Iran Darroudi	New York	Oil	---
Anouch	The public bath	---	---
Houshang Pir Davari	I fear God	---	---

Table 6

Artists and Artworks, Third Tehran Biennial (1962)

Artist	Artwork's title	Material	Size
Ahmad Esfandiari	Procession	Oil	46 x 60
Fereshteh Afchar	Landscape	Oil	34 x 49
Victoria Afshar	Composition	Oil pastel	50 x 70
Hannibal Alkhass	---	Ink	45 x 175
Hannibal Alkhass	Composition	Oil	46 x 58
Kazem Almai	Revolt	Watercolour	25 x 38
Anna Avakian	Landscape of Rome	Oil	38 x 60
Serge Avakian	Portrait	Pastel	21 x 33
Reza Olia	naked	Drawing	46.5 x 33.5
Reza Olia	naked	Sculpture	28x 40x 60
Nasser Oveissi	Pan player	Drawing	46x 28.5
Nasser Oveissi	Player Tambourian	Gouache on canvas	89 x 78
Edic Aivasian	Abstract	Oil	50 x 70
Reza Banquiz	Still Life	Oil	45 x 70
Bahman Boroudjeni	---	Watercolour - drawing	11.5 x 23
Boushehri	Still Life	Oil	47 x 75
Vladimir Bitdavid	Landscape	Gouache	24 x 33
Rouin Pakbaz	Painting	Pastel	35 x 49.5
Azizollah Paian-Tabari	Bath	Oil	50 x 71
Houshang Pour- Karim	Portrait	Oil	81 x 65
Houshang Pour- Karim	The horse	Drawing	79 x 53
Mohammad Pouladi	Painting	Oil	31 x 41.5
Faramarz Pilaram	The Blades	Gouache	198 x 83
Sadegh Tabrizi	Still Life	Oil	21 x 55
Parviz Tanavoli	Farhad dreaming	Gouache	53 x 80
Parviz Tanavoli	Farhad and doe	Sculpture	130x250x60
Mohammad Tavakkoli	---	Sculpture	52x20x38
Heshamt-allah Jazaini	Composition	Gouache	47 x67
Seifeddine Jahanbani	common prayer	Oil	70 x 90
Jafar Hadjiani	Portrait	Oil	40 x 66
Mansoureh Hosseini	Abstract	Oil	85 x 150
Mehdi Hosseini	Found the track	Oil	180 x 70
Simin Khakpour	Travellers	Pastel	23 x 30
Massoud Khatibbi	maternity	Oil	70 x 90
Bahman Dadkhah	Landscape	Oil	47 x 65
Ali-Asghar Davoudi	poverty	Watercolour	25 x 35
Iran Darroudi	Painting	Oil	79 x 48
Kamran Diba	Digestion	Oil	124 x 85
Soussan Ragheb	Still life	Oil	41 x 50
Fereydoun Rahimi-assa	In deep space	Oil	98 x 136
Fereydoun Rahimi-assa	Composition	Xylography	43 x 58
Faradjollah Rakhshai	The child and the broken jug	Oil	48 x 58
Hamid Zarrine-Afsar	---	Xylography	50.5 x 36
Hamid Zarrine-Afsar	Portrait	Oil	50 x 75

Derakhshande Zaimi	The streets of Spain	Gravure	35 x 48
Derakhshande Zaimi	Still life	Oil	45 x 65
Karim Zand	Perspective sphere	Drawing	50 x 65
Ahmad Salamat	---	Xylography	27 x 34
Esmail Shahroudi	Landscape	Oil	36 x 54
Sharyar Shafigh	Search the Cross	Oil	21.5 x 32
Changiz Shahvagh	Abstract	Oil	66 x 100
Changiz Shahvagh	Woman	Sculpture	165x150x100
Reza Sheibani	Landscape	Oil	50 x 70
Behjat Sadr (Royal Grand Prize)	Abstract	Oil	148 x 100
Behjat Sadr	Black and white	---	156 x 33
Mohammad Sedigh	Love of two cats	Oil	31 x 41
Manouchehr Safar-Zadeh	Illustration of a poem	Oil	150 x 200
Manouchehr Safar-Zadeh	Design	Watercolour	43.5 x 50
Jazeh Tabatabai	Neon No 1	Oil	50 x 65
Jazeh Tabatabai	---	Iron sculpture	58 x 42 x 20
Abdollah Ameri	Landscape	Oil	36.5 x 30.5
Massoud Arabshahi	Composition	Oil	150 x 120
Nasi Atri	The Negress and mirror	Oil	60 x 90
Bagher Aghighi	Abstract	Gouache	35 x 41
Margueritte Franghian	Composition	Oil	48.5 x 29.5
Bahman Forsi	Love	Pastel	67 x 48
Judy Farmanfarmaian	Portrait	Oil	57 x 100
Reza Forouzi	River	Gouache	29 x 41
Reza Forouzi	Turkmen woman	Lithograph in colours	21 x 28
Cyrus Ghaem-Maghami	Goat	Relief	50 x 72
Cyrus Ghaem-Maghami	Design	Drawing	45 x 60
Mansour Ghandriz	Composition	Oil	65 x 80
Mansour Ghandriz	Composition	Drawing	44 x 49
Zia Ghahhari	The lives	Oil	58 x 84
Farrokh Ghahraman-Pour	---	Xylography	13 x 18
Ataollah Fargang-Ghahramani	Dance	Gouache	48 x 74
Hossein Kazemi	Composition	Oil	85 x 138
Talie Kamran	Portrait	Gouache	31.5 x 22.5
Talie Kamran	Woman sitting	Drawing	14 x 18
Houshang Kabir	Fight Rostam and Ashkboos	Oil	40 x 70
Morteza Karimi	Tehran	Oil	66 x 70
Khalil Kamali	Composition	Oil	49.5 x 70
Behrouz Golzari	War and peace	Sculpture	50 x 65 x 70
Behrouz Golzari	Landscape	Drawing	37.5 x 25
Kazem Gavahi	Composition	Oil	80 x 100
Cyrus Malek	Composition	Oil	65 x 160
Leyly Matine-Daftary	Composition	Oil	47 x 98
Vossatollah Majd-Abadi-Farahani	prayer	Oil	60 x 80
Zahra Majidi	Landscape	Oil	38 x 46
Manijeh Mossaed (Homa)	Landscape	Oil	54 x 74
Hossein Mahjoubi	Portrait	Oil	77 x 35
Ali-Asghar Mohammad-Esmail-Ghomi	Marsh	Watercolour	41 x 59
Ardeshtir Mohasses	Landscape	Ink	29 x 39

Ardeshtir Mohasses	Design	Drawing	15 x 22
Bahman Mohasses	Counterpoint special	Oil	70 x 100
Darioush Mazkouri	Noah's Ark	Xylography	43.5 x 33
Hadi Makarechian	Abstract	Oil	25 x 38
Morteza Momayez	The thrust of the sun	Oil	70 x 100
Morteza Momayez	Trees	Drawing	34 x 50
Fereydoun Michantchi	Landscape	Gouache	34 x 49
Hartoun Minassian	Landscape	Oil	23 x 30
Mohammad-Taghi Naji	Landscape	Watercolour	31.5 x 46.5
Fahimeh Navai	---	Xylography	102 x 180
Mohsen Vaziri-Moghadam	Composition No 3	Sand Painting	150 x 100
Mohsen Vaziri-Moghadam	Drawing No. 6	---	33.5 x 58.5
Hadi Hazaveyi	The doe	Gouache	50 x 38
Darioush Houshmand	Artist's room	Oil	46 x 61
Seyed-Mojtaba Seyed-Rabi	Village	Oil	50 x 75
Abbas Mashhadi-Zadeh	Cow	Glazed earthenware sculpture	40 x 40 60
Ebrahim Moghbeli	Still life	Watercolour	20.5 x 15
Mahin Azima	Abstract	Pastel	30 x 58
Hossien Zenderoudi	K+L+32+H+4	Essence	150 x 225
Leyly Farmanfarmaian	Portrait	Oil	60 x 90
Mehdi Azemoun	Abstract	Oil	50 x 65
Abolghassem Saidi	---	Oil	210 x 170
Soudabeh Ganjei	Abstract	Oil	100 x 80
Mohammad-Taghi Naji	Landscape	Drawing	25 X 18.5
Mahmoud Sina	Dervish	Drawing	23.5 x 30
Ali-Asghar Davoudi	---	Drawing	29 x 34.5
Habib Mohammadi	Black eyes	Oil	40 x 55
Massoud Arabshahi	naked	Drawing	23 x 34
Reza Banquiz	---	Etching	78 x 51.5
Golpayeghani	Death and Life	Gouache	70 x 100
Behrouz Golzari	Melody	Watercolour	15 x 22
Javad Hamidi	Cat	Oil	49 x 63
Sadegh Tabrizi	Phoenix	Drawing	80 x 56
Bahman Boroujeni	Landscape	Oil	40 x 55
Jafar Rouhbakhshi	Landscape	Oil	70 x 100
Farideh Gohari	Abstract	Oil	38 x 46

Table 7

Artists and Artworks, Third Tehran Biennial (1964)

Artist	Artwork's title	Material	Size
Emma Abrahamian	Woman	Bronze	72 x 33 x 41
Bahman Azarfahimi	Sketch	Stone sculpture	55 x 25 x 30
Ardeshtir Arjang	The wait	Sculpture	20 x 20 x 37
Ahmad Esfandiari	Painting	Oil	74 x 104
Mass'oud Achouri	The poor	Watercolour	52 x 62
Ardeshtir Arjang	Nude	Bronze	64 x 106
Reza Bankiz	Procession	Gravure	74 x 102
Mahmoud Teimouri-Pour	Still life	Oil	43 x 70
Sadegh Barirani	Spring	Oil	59 x 39
Sadegh Barirani	Sketch	---	15 x 15
Rouine Pakbaz	---	Gouache & Oil	50 x 90
Azizollah Payan-Tabari	Flowers and vase	Oil	65 x 55

Ebrahim Posht-Panah	the anonymous path	Oil	76 x 136
Arpiar Petrossian	Passghale	sketch	23 x 36
Faramarz Pilaram	Composition No.33	Gouache	200 x 135
Mehri Tabarrok	Mother and child	Wood	28 x 44
Mohsen Jamali	Portrait	Sketch	22 x 37
Mohammad Ebrahim Jaafari	Still life	Oil	70 x 100
Parvin Hadj-Dai	Abstract	Oil	59 x 38
Zahra Khajeh-Nouri	Landscape	Gouache	60 x 72
Farzaneh Kheirloomoum	Classic Japanese	---	19x53
Bahman Dadkhah	Painting	Oil	46 x 65
Victoria Daneshvar (Fardjam)	Exile	Oil	65 x 78
Bijan Dowlatshahi	Family	Oil	79 x 99
Fereydoun Rahimi-Assa	The memory of Shiraz	Gouache	55 x 39
Fereydoun Rahimi-Assa	Khark Island	sketch	54 x 78
Faradjollah Rakhchai	Composition	Oil	60 x 70
Nasser Rezvanian	Landscape	sketch	46 x 60
Zaman Zamani	The fall	sketch	49 x 67
Manouchehr Sadat-Afsari	Girl standing	sketch	26 x 55
Mahmoud Zanganeh	Mosque	Oil	68 x 100
Hossein Sassan	Writing	Oil	100 x 115
Alireza Ahmadi-Peikarsaz	Goose	Iron	27 x 37 x 74
Victoria Afshar	Composition No.3	Gouache	61 x 87
Parvin Teimouri	Woman sitting	sketch	20 x 25
Bijan Elahi	Sunset through the trees	Oil	31 x 49
Bijan Elahi	Footwear	sketch	24 x 30
Mir-Abdorrezza Dariabeigui	Abstract	Monotype	23 x 36
Mir-Abdorrezza Dariabeigui	Abstract	Engraving	36 x 32
Parviz Dibai	N0. 111	Oil	39 x 55
Parviz Dibai	Sculpture 13	---	40 x 28 x 28
Massoud Khatibi	The forms and colours	Collage	48 x 60
Sahand Rafi'i Tabatabai	Seated Woman	sketch	46 x 31
Sarkiss Zakarians	Procession	Gravure	19 x 45
Sarkiss Zakarians	Ghashghayi dance	Sketch	30 x 36
Iran Zargarpour	Still life	Oil	53 x 43
Rokn-ed-dine Sepehri	The Sanctuary	Oil	90 x 120
Bahman Borudjeni	Resurrection	Oil	90 x 210
Bahman Borudjeni	Life	Gravure	50 x 65
Shokoufeh Chakeri	portrait of Gigi	Oil	43 x 73
Marie Chainse	Mother	Oil	125 x 90
Marie Chainse	Iranian dance	Gravure	34 x 49
Marie Chainse	The woman and flower	Mosaic	70 x 95
Ahmad Shoeibi	Away from family	Oil	200 x 200
Souri Shoghi	Flower show	Gouache	70 x 116
Said Shahlapour	The singing of the Star	Gouache	15 x 30
Reza Shaibani	Opening	Oil	74 x 94
Ghobad Shiva	Composition 0085	Oil	140 x 110
Habibe Ameri	House	Oil	51 x 66
Jazeh Tabatabai	Our time	Collage	55 x 129
Jazeh Tabatabai	The Bird	Iron	100 x 138 x 195
Massoud Arabshahi	Composition	Oil	119 x 146
Massoud Arabshahi	---	Sketch	45 x 34
Nazi Atri	Root	Sketch	38 x 56
Bagher Aghighi	Still life	Oil	65 x 110
Abdolhamid Fatemi	Abstract	Oil	94 x 67
Margueritte Franguian	Temple	Oil	48 x 66
Monir Farmanfarmaian	Painting	Oil	60 x 45
Youness Fayaz	Painting	Oil	50 x 90
Massoud Ghaderi	Ceramic	Oil	50 x 70
Kambiz Ghodsi	Abstract	Oil	70 x 40
Mahmoud Gharadaghi	talisman	Painting on skin	60x 50
Mansour Ghandriz	Painting	Oil	75 x 90
Kamran Katouzian	my grandfather when he was young	Oil	121 x 122
Kamran Katouzian	Drawing with two colours	Sketch	24 x 34
Kamran Katouzian	scream	Iron	56 x 190 x 28

Ali Ghahari	Miniature	Plaster	70 x 50 x 22
Hossein Kazemi	Composition	Oil	200 x 140
Houshang Kazemi	Composition No. 3	Watercolour	54 x 77
Houshang Kabir	Lonely tree	Oil	40 x 80
Houshang Kabir	Stork	Drawing	18 x 35
Mas'oud Karim	Composition	Gouache	44 x 80
Parviz Kalantari	Gossiping	Gouache	60 x 90
Behzad Golpayegani	Composition	Oil	120 x 80
Morteza Ganjouri	Bazar	Oil	31 x 40
Cyrus Malek	Painting	Oil	110 x 95
Ali-Asghar Mohammad Esmail	To ground	Watercolour	44 x 68
Hossein Mahjoubi	The house of Lahijan	Watercolour	43 x 72
Hossein Mahjoubi	the house of Gilan	Drawing	26 x 50
Asghar Mohammadi	Narrator	Oil	110 x 40
Habib Mohammadi	Landscape	Oil	39x 54
Hassan Mohammadian	Landscape	Oil	39 x 55
Manijeh Mosaed (Homa)	Noah's Ark	Oil	69 x 98
Ebrahim Moghbeli	---	Drawing	29 x 26
Morteza Momayez	Composition	Oil	100 x 70
Shokrollah Manzourolhagh	The shapes	Oil	57 x 78
Shokrollah Manzourolhagh	The shadows	Gravure	62 x 37
Gholamhossein Nami	Composition	Oil	49 x 97
Shayesteh Nabavi	The candle and me	Oil	50 x 70
Setrak Nazarian	Protestation	Oil	124 x 106
Aghdas Vakili	Messiah	Gouache	42 x 57
Hadi Hazavehi	Piece No. 1	Deer Skin	75 x 56
Hadi Hazavehi	sculpture	---	84 x 60
Ginous HaShemi	Early Spring	Oil	50 x 70
Abdollah Ameriolhosseini	Spring	Oil	80 x 100
Nasrin Azarba	Spring	Oil	40 x 60
Mehdi Ebrahimi	Seven khans' Rostam	---	79 x 62
Heshmat Jazani	Painting	Gouache	73 x 55
Hassan Haji-Nouri	The veiled woman	---	56 x 20 x 10
Mansoure Hosseini	Abstract	Oil	180 x 90
Javad Hamidi	Composition	Oil	100 x 70
Simin Khakpour	Wall	Oil	80 x 54
Simin Khakpour	the shepherd	Drawing	65 x 50
Hamid Zarin-Afsar	Composition	Oil	50 x 65
Hossein Zenderoudi	The blue hole	---	170 x 170
Mahmoud Sina	Landscape	Oil	48 x 75
Changiz Shahvagh	Painting	Oil	---
Changiz Shahvagh	Sculpture	Cement	---
Manouchehr Sheibani	Abstract	Oil	119 x 80
Behjat Sadr	Abstract	Oil	---
Bejan Farzani	Poppy	Watercolour	50 x 38
Ingrid Ali-Abadi	Still life	Watercolour	51 x 36
Ingrid Ali-Abadi	---	Drawing	51 x 36
Sumbat Kevreghian	Dardasht	Watercolour	30 x 40
Sumbat Kevreghian	Pole wheel	Drawing	40 x 50
Syrus Gha'em-Maghami	a door to the seven worlds	Iron	60 x 66 x 67
Soudabe Ganjei	the Raphael angel in Sara's parents	Oil	54 x 73
Gholamreza Mahboubi	Artist's wife	Oil	38 x 54
Mehdi Vishkai	Portrait	Oil	87 x 99
Fereydoun Mishanchi	the strange bird	Plaster	69 x 63 x 136
Abolghassem Saidi	Iranian tree	Oil	150 x 80

Table 8

Artists and Artworks, Fifth Tebran Biennial (1966)

Artist	Artwork's title	Material	Size
Ali Azergin	Composition	oil	85 x 120
Ardeshtir Arzhang	Ghosts	engraving on bronze	198 x 48

Ahmad Esfandiari	Composition	oil	90 x 70
Nasser Oveissi	Rider	oil	117 x 110
Reza Bankiz	composition	gravure	132 x 83
Sadegh Barirani	Bird	oil	120 x 86
Bahman Borujeni	Painting	oil	48 x 48
Faramarz Pilaram	Sculpture	Copper engraving	208 x 76 x 11
Faramarz Pilaram	Composition No. 22	oil	105 x 280
Mohammad Pooladi	Composition	oil	120 x 120
Sadegh Tabrizi	Composition	Oil on skin	44 x 60
Parviz Tanavoli	The poet and Farhad's Beloved	Copper sculpture	170x 124x 45
Heshmat Jazani	Composition	Oil	70 x 100
Mohammad Ebrahim Ja'fari	A moment and I	Oil	77 x 54
Javad Hamidi	Composition	Oil	100 x 80
Mansoureh Hoscini	Genesis	Oil	81 x 140
Mir Abdor Reza Daryabegi	Symphony of existence and non-existence	Oil	120 x 300
Hamid Zarin Afsar	Landscape	Synthetic colour	146 x 97
Hossein Zendehtroudi	Minarets	Water colour	149 x 97
Abolghassen Saeedi	Green composition	Oil	198 x 196
Ma'soumeh seihoun	Composition	Oil	77 x 140
Mary Shayans	The couple	Fresco	75 x 95
Changiz Shahvagh	Sculpture	Metal	226 x 96 x 43
Changiz Shahvagh	Composition	Oil	110 x 56
Ahmad shocibi	Life	Oil	100 x 50
Jalil Ziapour	Popular poem	Oil	120 x 170
Zhazeh Tabatabai	Union	Ink on canvas	85 x 183
Zhazeh Tabatabai	Neither bird nor man	Sculpture in metal	104 x 76 x 48
Massoud Arabshahi	Iranian Spring	Oil	133 x 190
Massoud Arabshahi	Victorious Manes	Plaster	100 x 55 x 22
Bahram Alivandi	Feast	Oil	106 x 157
Hamid Fatemi	Composition	Oil	85 x 113
Monir Farmanfarmayian	Flower	Oil	79 x 65
Mansour Ghandriz	Composition	Oil	100 x 70
Kamran Katuzian	Golnr & me	Oil	120 x 149
Hossein Kazemi	Composition	Oil	109 x 179
Sima Kooban	The death of the sun	Oil	120 x 200
Lili Matin Daftari	Mother & child	Oil	122 x 69
Hossein Mahjoubi	Tiled roofs of Lahijam	Water colour	81 x 117
Morteza momayyes	The story of Gasting into well	Black & white design	34 x 26
Gholam Hossein Nami	Tombstone our graves	Oil	100 x 140

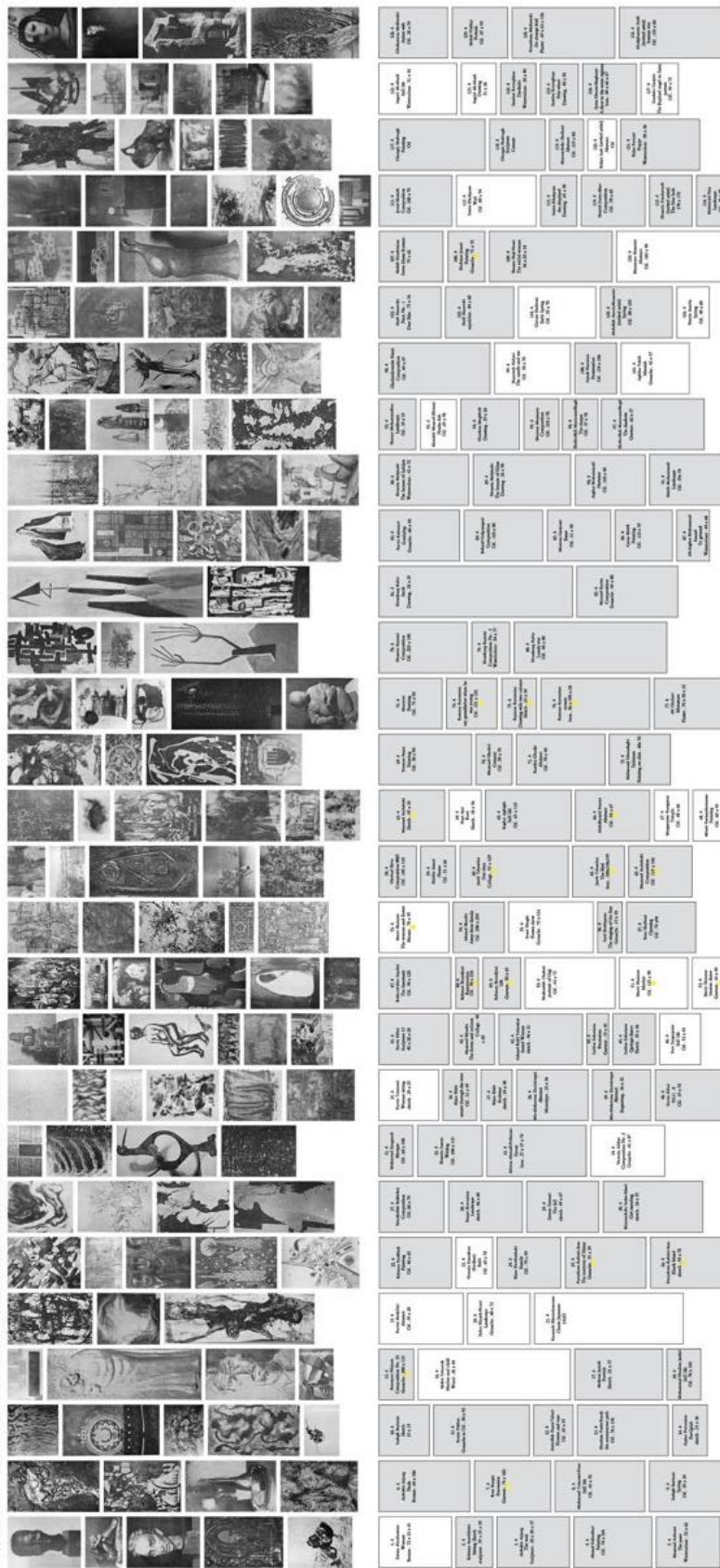
Appendix C. Visual Maps



Visual Map 5, no author 1962, Third Tehran Biennial Catalogue, Tehran Iran, Council of Administration of Fine Arts Publications and Relations Dept



Visual Map 4: an author PM, Fourth Tehran Biennial Catalogue, Tehran Iran, Council of Administration of Fine Arts Publications and Relations Dept

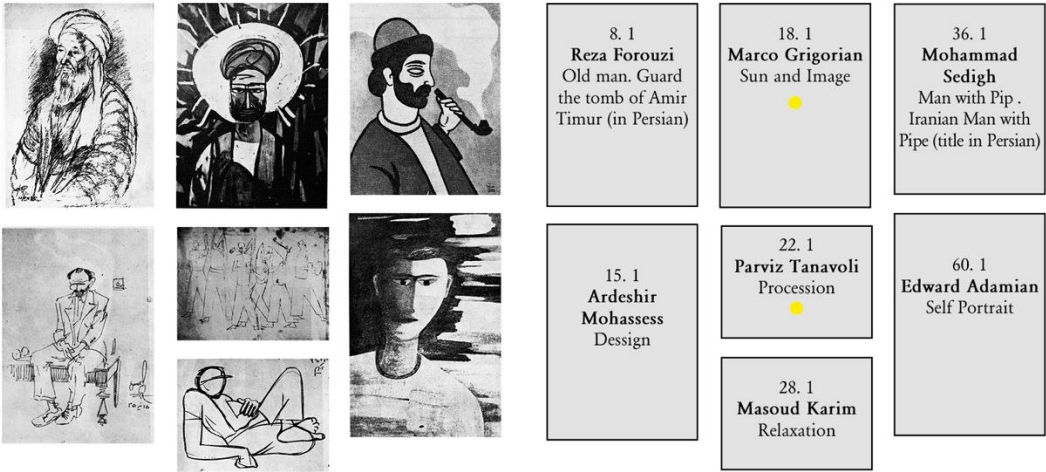


Visual Map 5, no author 1966, Fifth Tehran Biennials Catalogue, Tehran Iran, organised by Ministry of Culture and Arts with the cooperation of Cultural Committee of RCD, Published by the Ministry of Culture and Arts

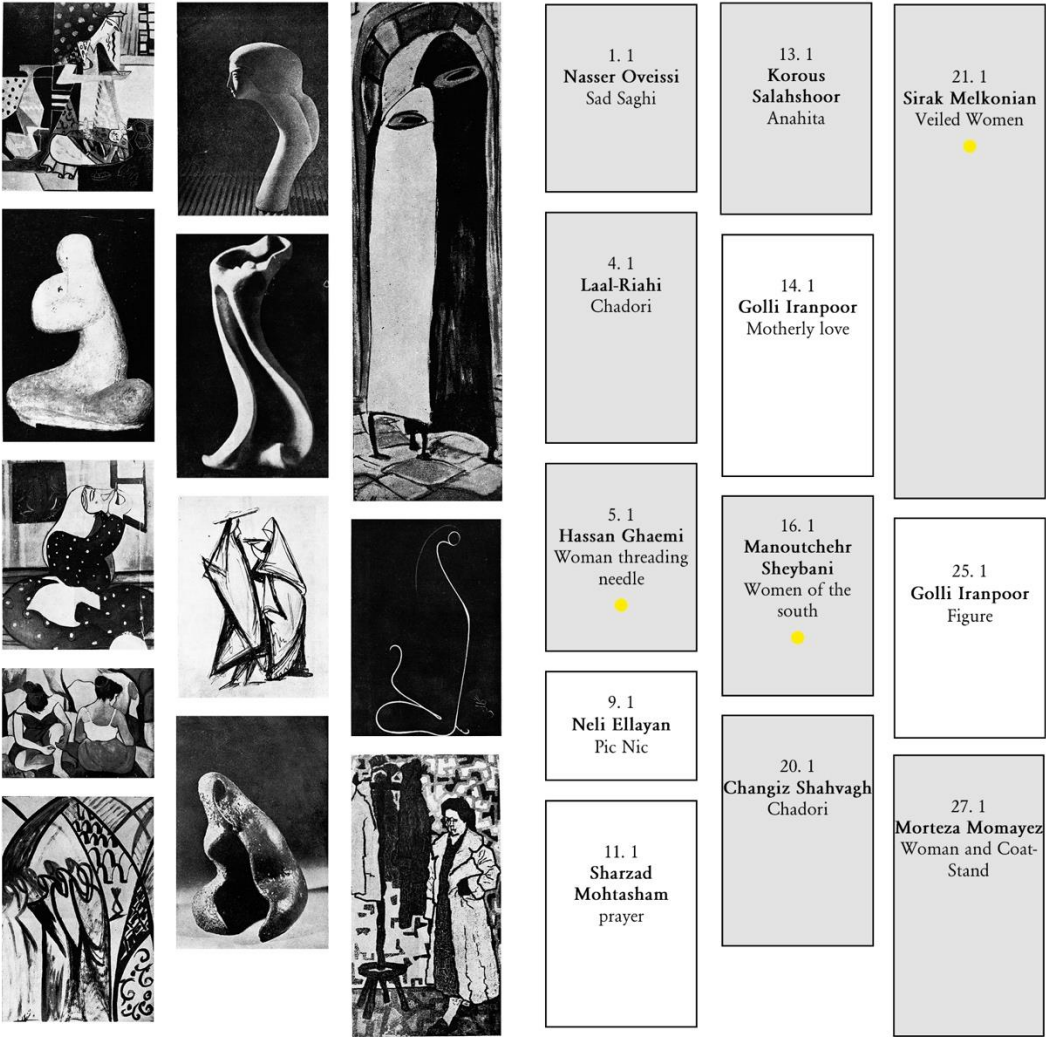


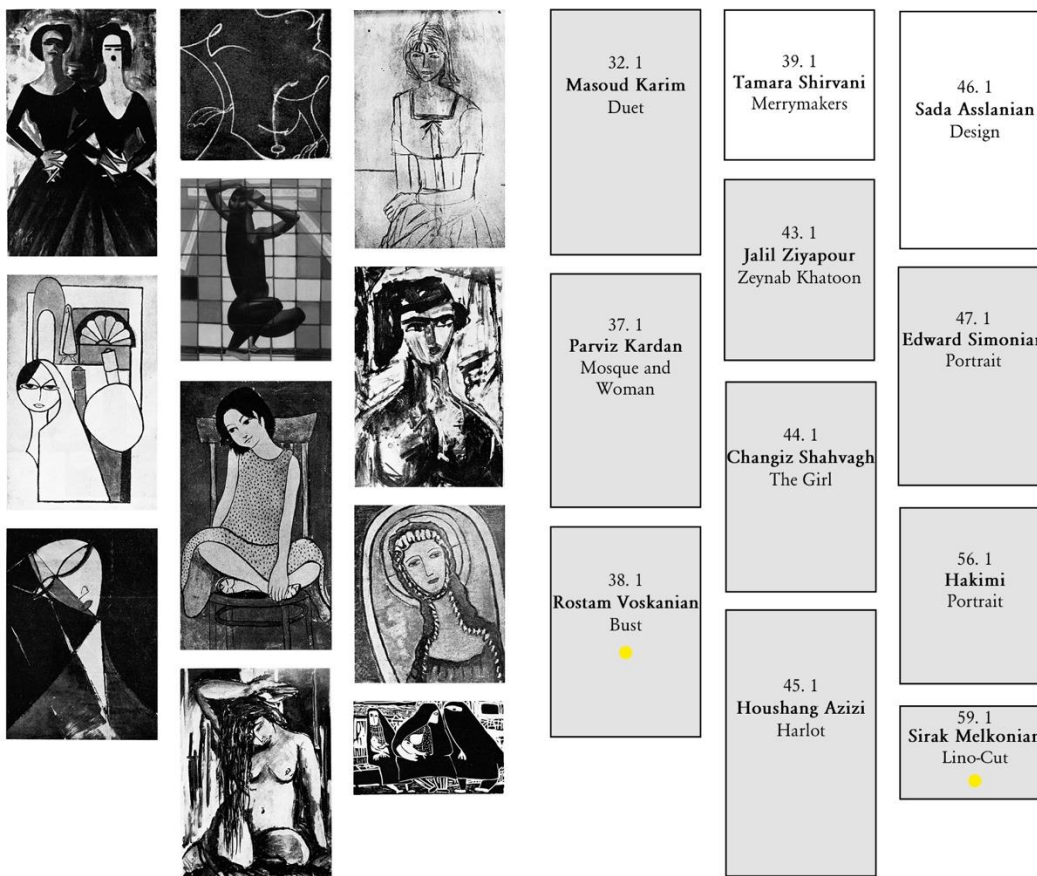
1. 5 Ali Asergin Composition oil . 85 x 120	7. 5 Bahman Borujeni Painting oil . 48 x 48	12. 5 Parviz Tanavoli The poet and Farhads Beloved Copper sculpture . 170 x 124 x 45	17. 5 Mir-Abdol-Reza Daryabegi Symphony of existence and non-existence Oil . 120 x 300	22. 5 Mary Sharyans The couple Fresco . 75 x 95	26. 5 Jalil Ziapour Popular poem Oil . 120 x 170	30. 5 Masoud Arabshahi Victorious Manes Plaster . 100 x 55 x 22	34. 5 Mansour Ghandriz Composition Oil . 100 x 70	38. 5 Lili Matin-Dafari Mother & child Oil . 122 x 69
2. 5 Ardehshir Arashang Ghosts engraving on bronze . 198 x 48	8. 5 Faramarz Pilaram Sculpture Copper engraving . 208 x 76 x 11	13. 5 Heshmat Jazani Composition Oil . 70 x 100	18. 5 Hamid Zarin-Afzar Landscape Synthetic colour . 146 x 97	23. 5 Changiz Shahvagh Sculpture Metal . 226 x 96 x 43	27. 5 Zhaezeh Tahatabai Union Ink on canvas . 85 x 183	31. 5 Bahram Alivandi Feast Oil . 106 x 157	35. 5 Kamran Katuzian Golnae & me Oil . 120 x 149	39. 5 Hossein Mahjoubi Tiled roofs of Lahijan Water colour . 81 x 117
3. 5 Ahmad Esfandiari Composition oil . 90 x 70	9. 5 Faramarz Pilaram Composition No. 22 oil . 105 x 280	14. 5 Mohammad Elrahim Jafari A moment and I Oil . 77 x 54	19. 5 Hossein Zendehroudi Minarets Water colour . 149 x 97	24. 5 Changiz Shahvagh Composition Oil . 110 x 56	28. 5 Zhaezeh Tahatabai Neither bird nor man Sculpture in metal 104 x 76 x 48	32. 5 Hamid Fatehi Composition Oil . 85 x 113	36. 5 Hossein Kazemi Composition Oil . 109 x 179	40. 5 Morteza momayyes The story of Gasting into well Black and white design . 34 x 26
4. 5 Naser Oveisii Rider oil . 117 x 110	10. 5 Mohammad Pooladi Composition oil . 120 x 120	15. 5 Javad Hamidi Composition Oil . 100 x 80	20. 5 Abolghasem Saedi Green composition Oil . 198 x 196	25. 5 Ahmad doostchi Life Oil . 100 x 50	29. 5 Masoud Arabshahi Iranian Spring Oil . 133 x 190	33. 5 Monir Farmanfarmaian Flower Oil . 79 x 65	37. 5 Sima Kooaban The death of the sun Oil . 120 x 200	41. 5 Gholam Hossein Nami Tombstone our graves Oil . 100 x 140
5. 5 Reza Bankiz composition gravure . 132 x 83	11. 5 Sadegh Tabrizi Composition Oil on skin . 44 x 60	16. 5 Manooureh Hoscini Genesis Oil . 81 x 140	21. 5 Masoumeh schoun Composition Oil . 77 x 140					
6. 5 Sadegh Rafirani Bird oil . 120 x 86								

Visual Map 6. First Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Man

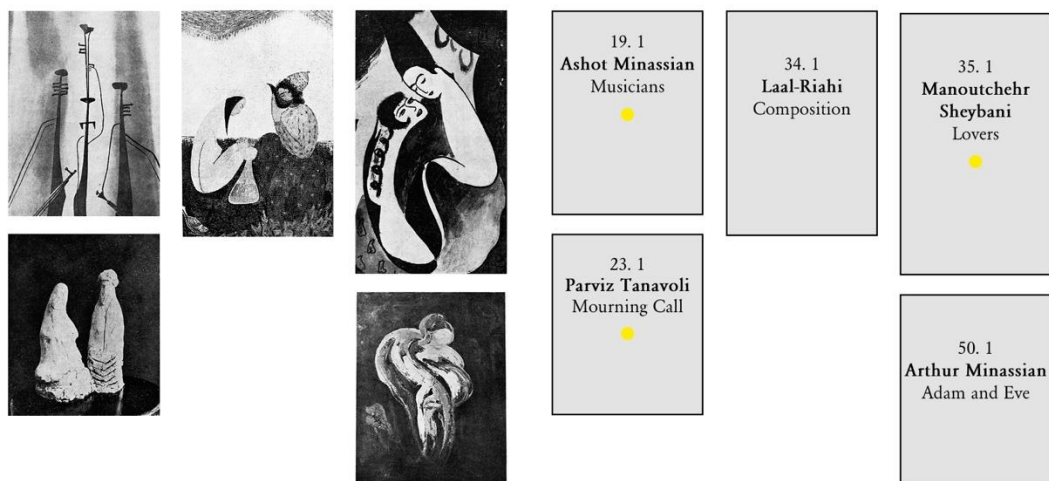


Visual Map 7. First Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Woman

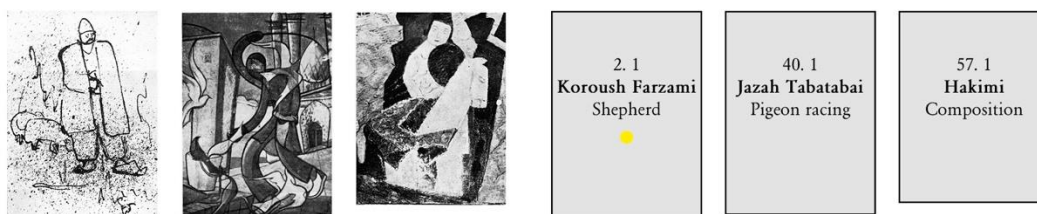




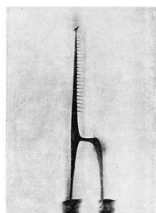
Visual Map 8. First Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Man and Wmoan



Visual Map 9. First Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Human and Animal



Visual Map 10. First Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Animal



10. 1
Aziz Raghebi
Blind Owl

17. 1
Ashot Minassian
Giraffe

31. 1
Parviz Tanavoli
Maternal Love

11. 2
Reza Bangiz
Phoenix
Gravure . 74 x 49

Visual Map 11. First Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Still life



6. 1
Sh. Lucas
Still life

26. 1
Ahmad Esfandiari
Still Life

48. 1
E. Abrahamian
Still Life

29. 1
Alireza Yahyavi
Still Life

12. 1
Javad Hamidi
Bones

33. 1
Farideh Sabi
Still Life

49. 1
Cyrus Malek
Still Life

24. 1
A. Haroutonian
Woman and Shisha

41. 1
Sohrab Sepehri
Still Life

51. 1
Avakian
Still Life

Visual Map 12. First Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Landscape



3. 1
George Abrahamian
Northern of Tehran

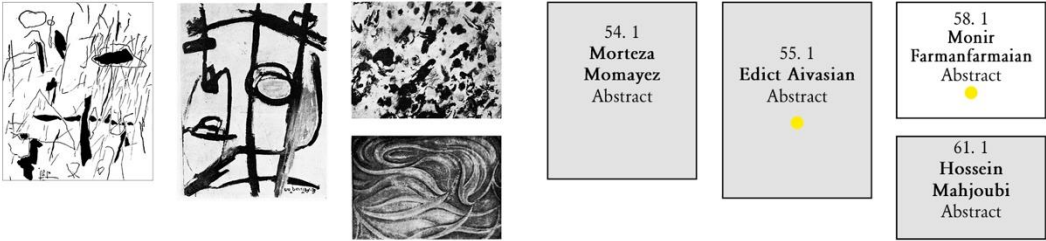
42. 1
Talat
Akhondzade
Landscape

52. 1
Garnik
Bahramian
Landscape

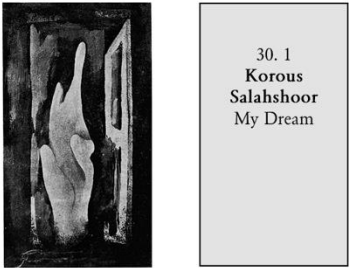
7. 1
Mansoureh
Hosseini
Roman Yard

53. 1
Farshad
Montakhab
Houses

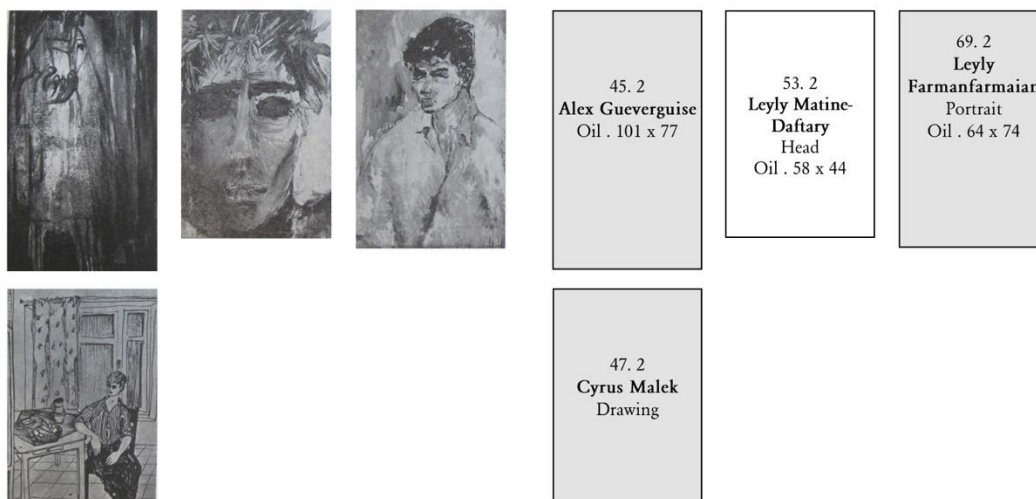
Visual Map 13. First Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Abstract Painting



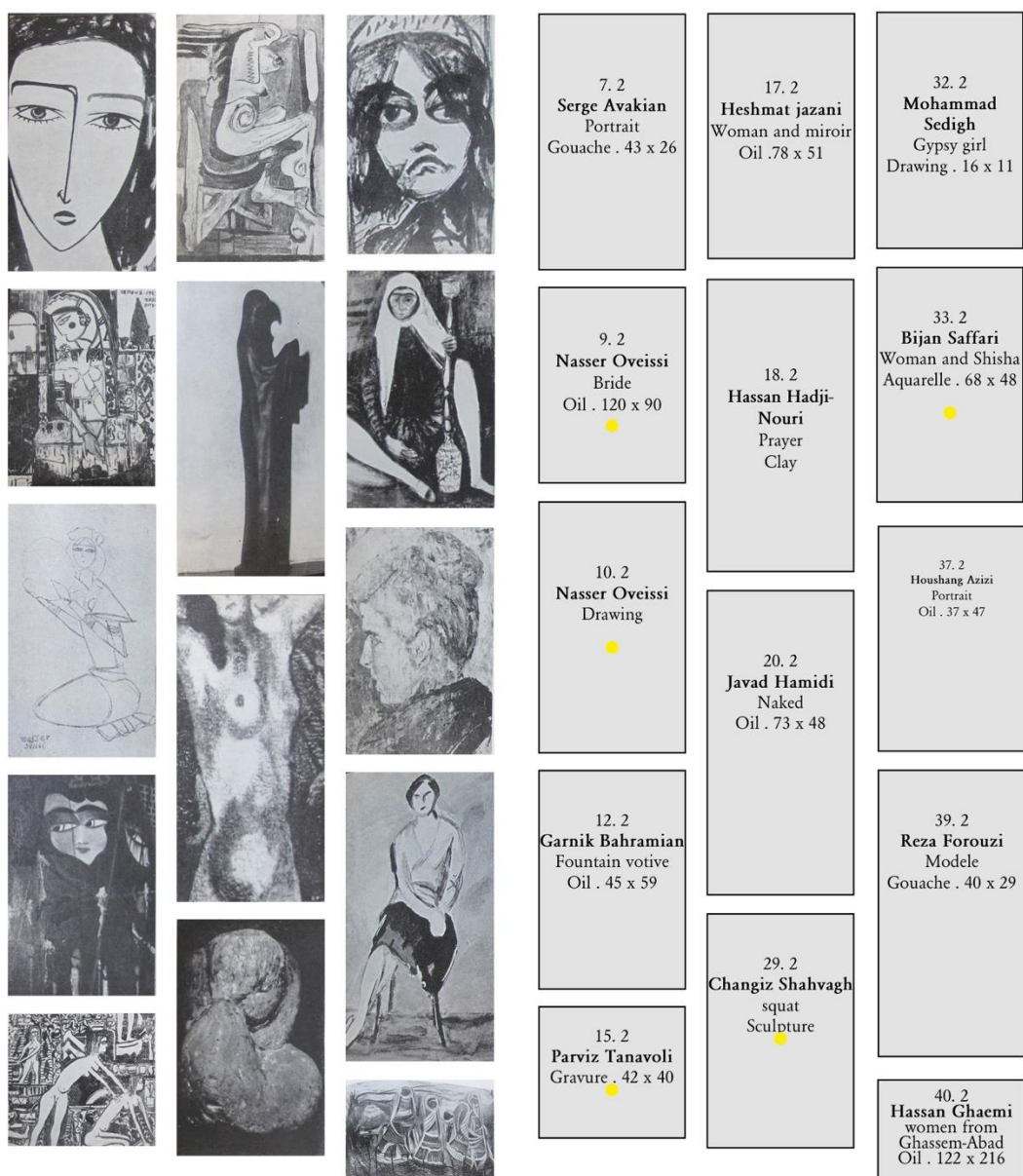
Visual Map 14. First Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Imagination

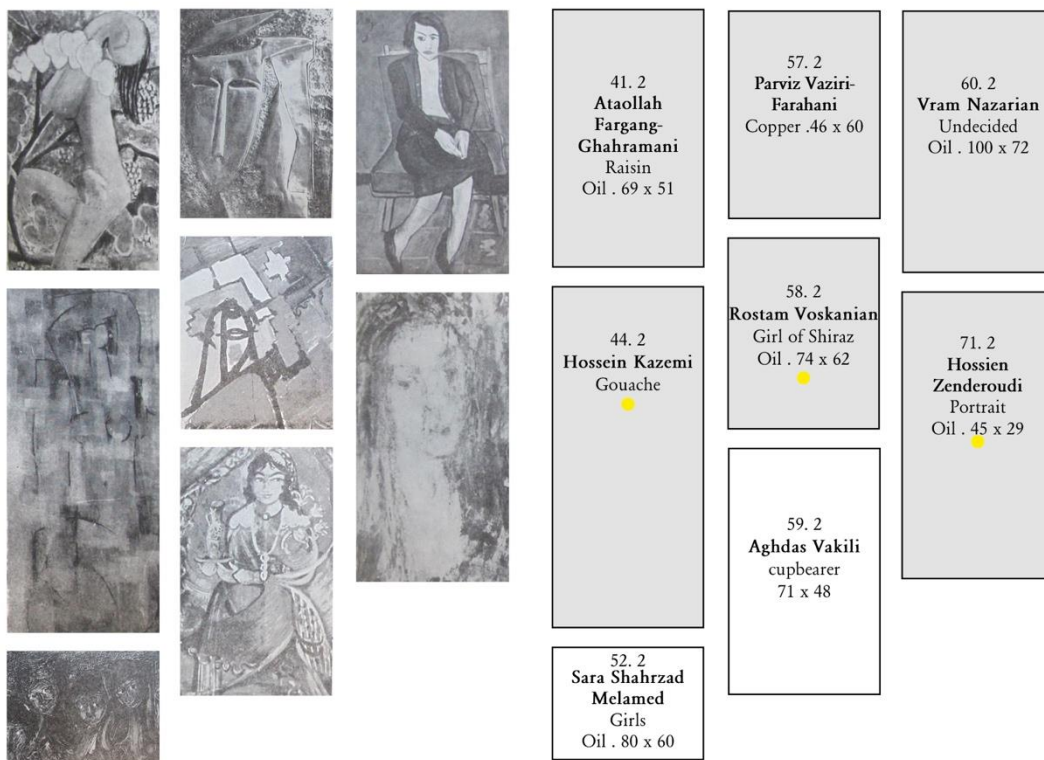


Visual Map 15. Second Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Man

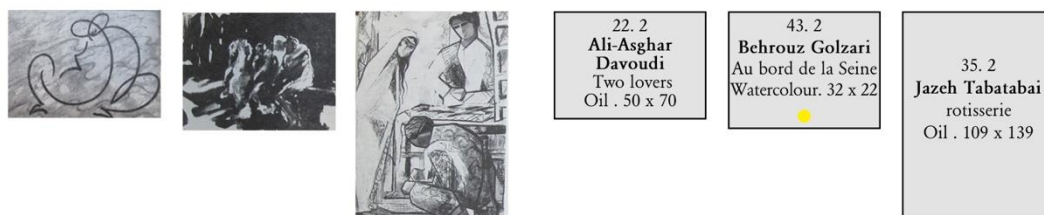


Visual Map 16. Second Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Woman

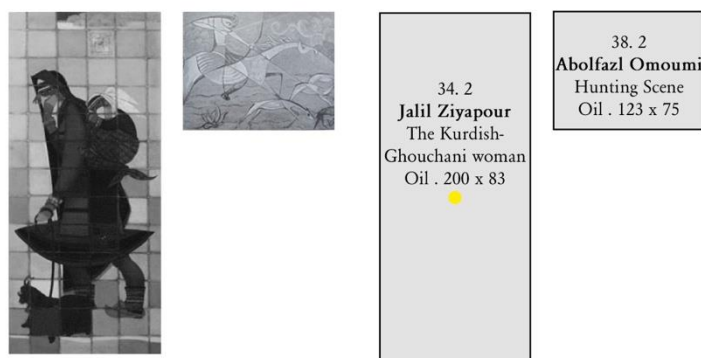




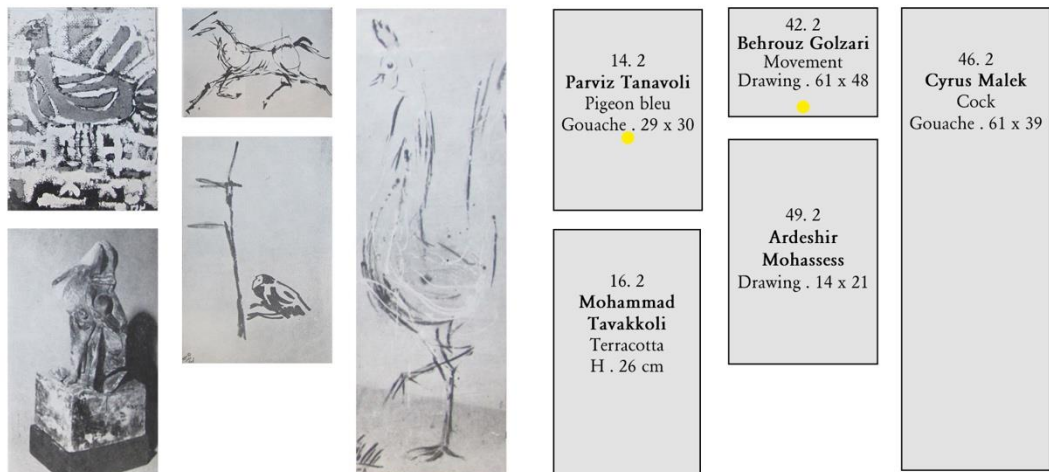
Visual Map 17. Second Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Man and Woman



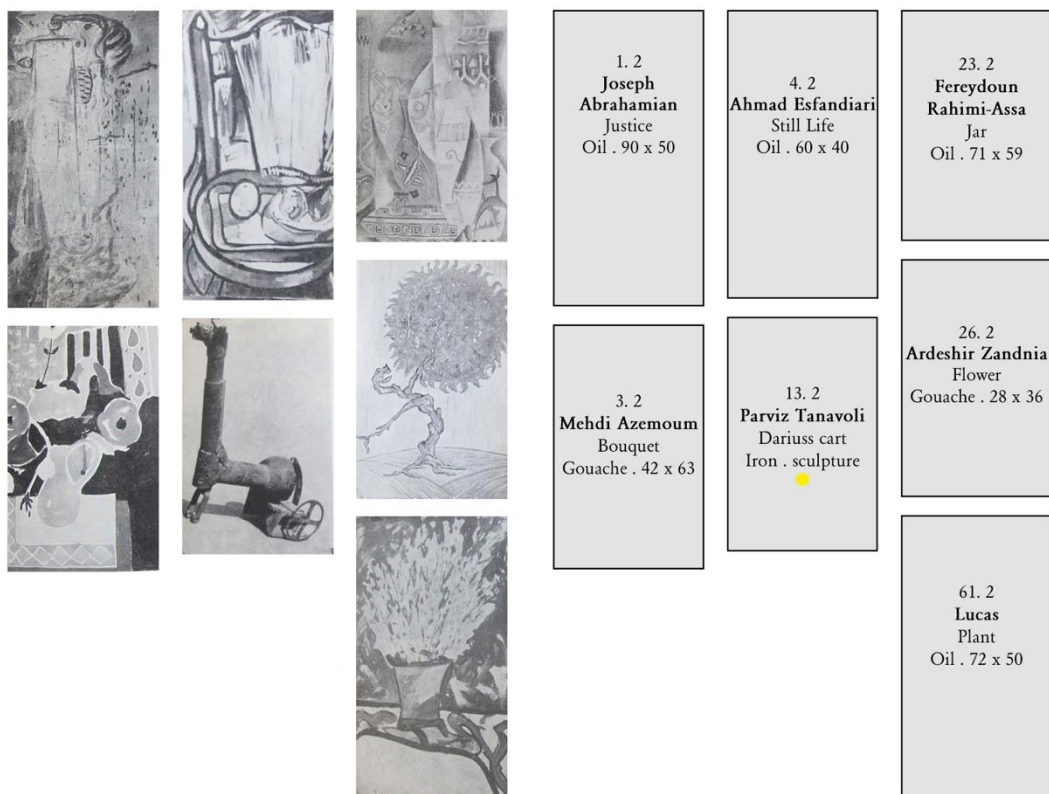
Visual Map 18. Second Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Human and Animal



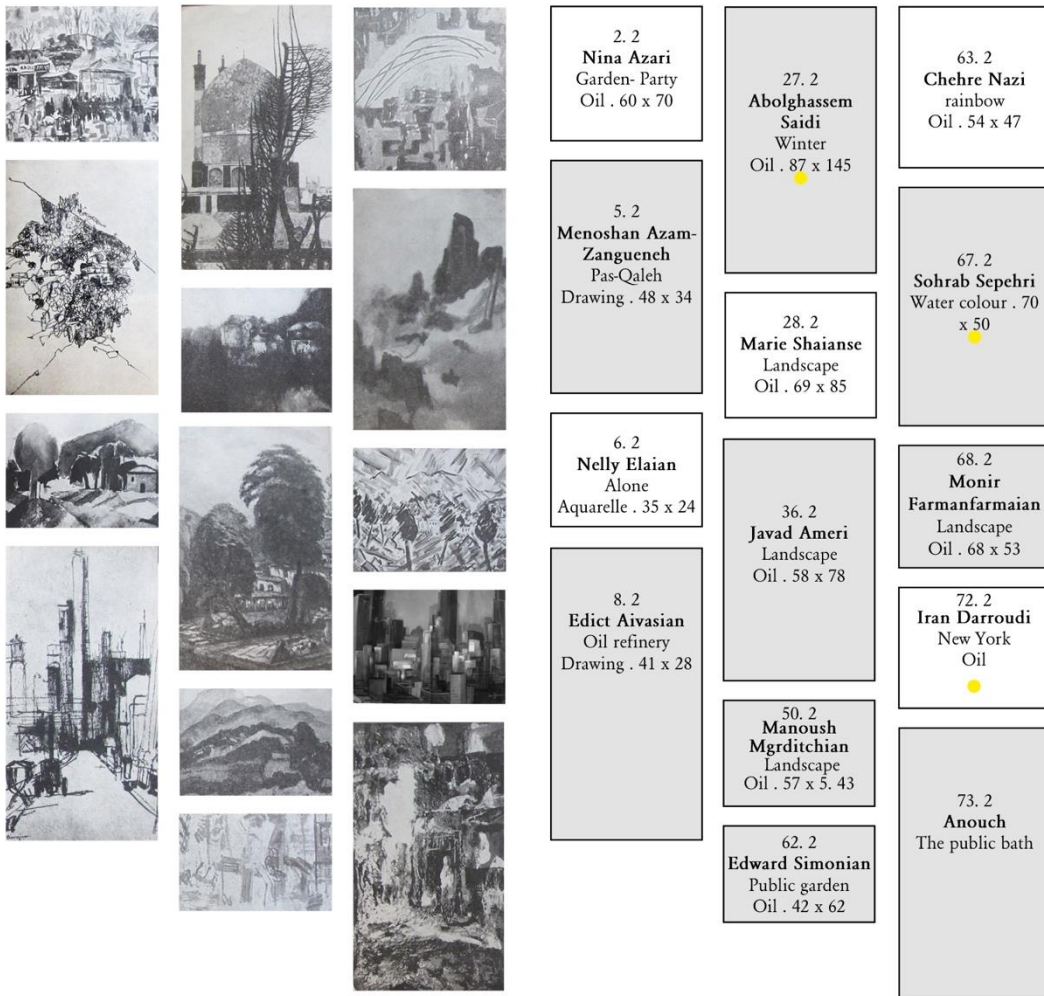
Visual Map 19. Second Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Animal



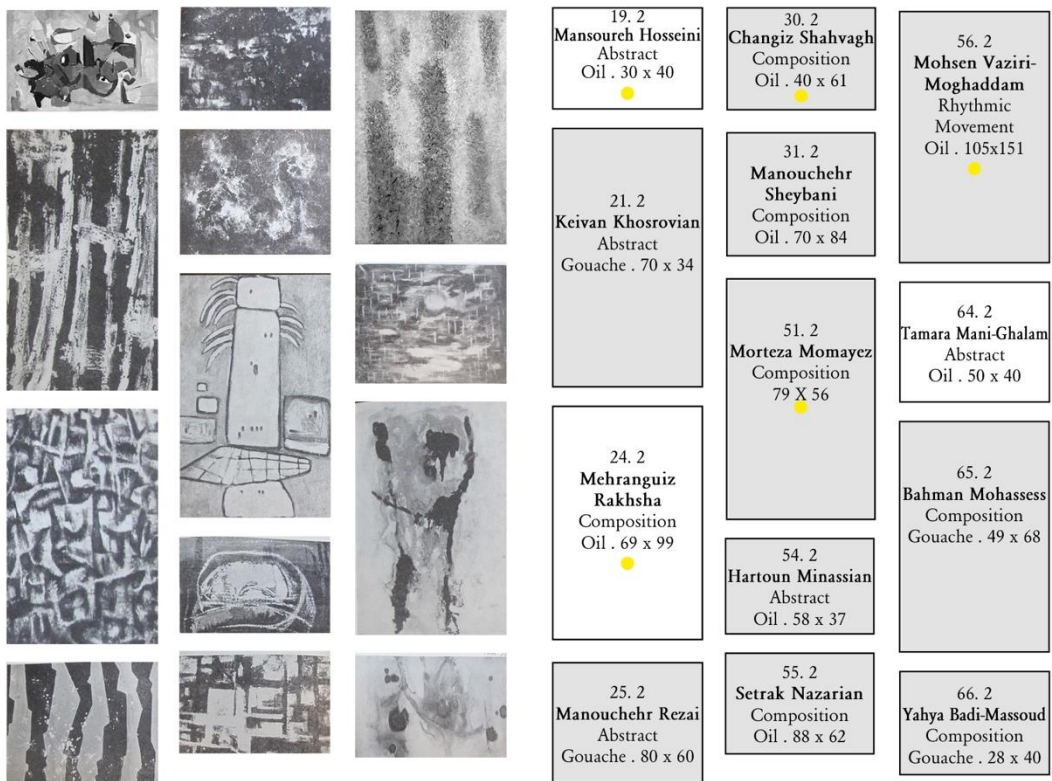
Visual Map 20. Second Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Still life



Visual Map 21. Second Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Landscape



Visual Map 22. Second Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Abstract Painting



Visual Map 23. Second Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Imagination



Visual Map 24. Third Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Man



1. 3
Ahmad Esfandiari
Procession
Oil . 46 x 60

29. 3
Seifeddine Jahanbani
prayer
Oil . 70 x 90

94. 3
Ardeshir Mohassess
Design
Drawing . 15 x 22



6. 3
Kazem Almai
Revolt
Watercolour . 25 x 38

42. 3
Faradjollah Rakhshai
The child and the broken jug
Oil . 48 x 58

113. 3
Leyly Farmanfarmaian
Portrait
Oil . 60 x 90



20. 3
Houshang Pour-Karim
Portrait
Oil . 81 x 65

67. 3
Judy Farmanfarmaian
Portrait
Oil . 57 x 100

118. 3
Mahmoud Sina
Dervish
Drawing . 5. 23 x 30



22. 3
Mohammad Pouladi
Painting
Oil . 31 x 5. 41

72. 3
Mansour Ghandriz
Composition
Oil . 65 x 80

121. 3
Massoud Arabshahi
naked
Drawing . 23 x 34

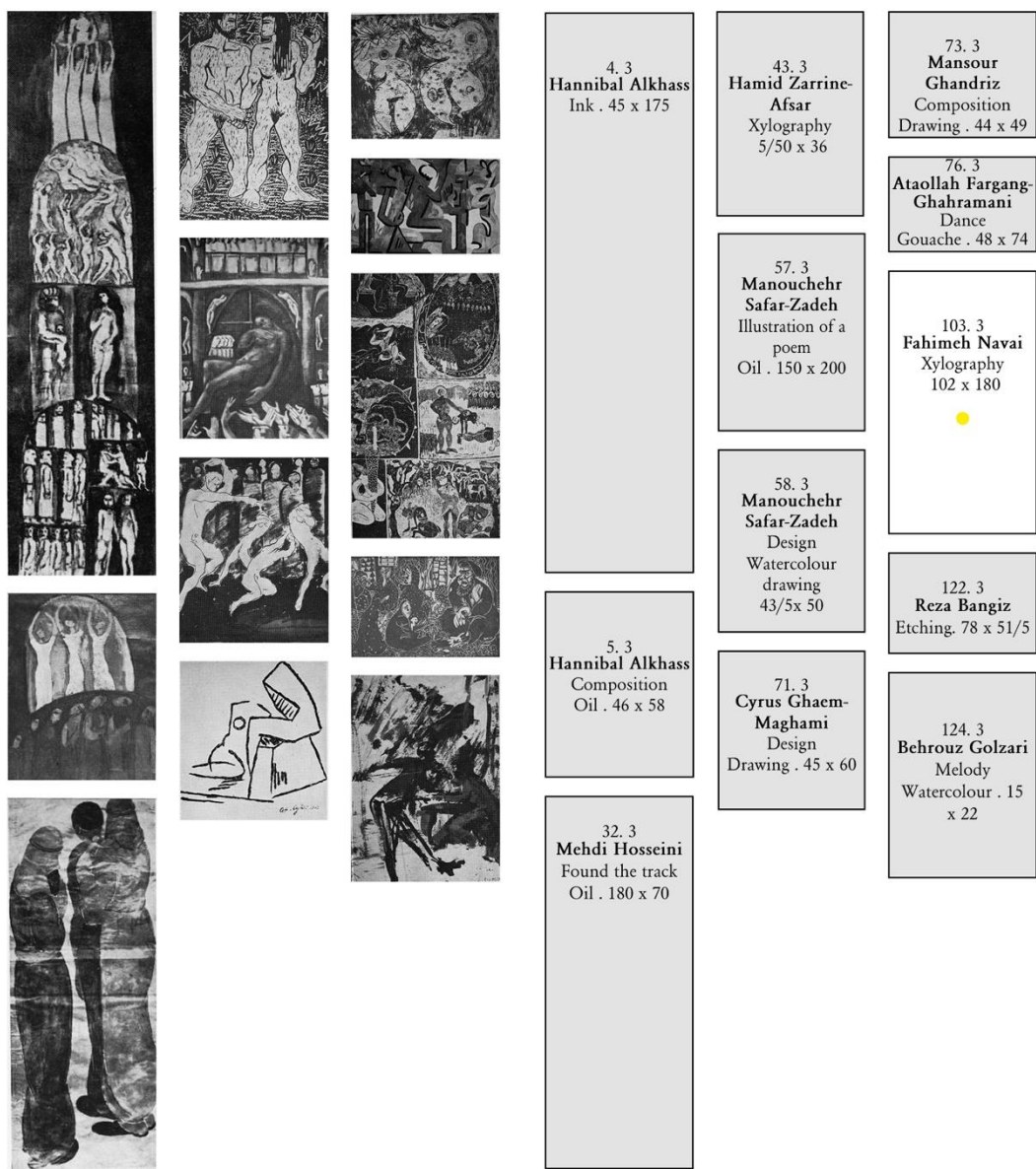


88. 3
Vossatollah Majd-Abadi-Farahani
prayer
Oil . 60 x 80

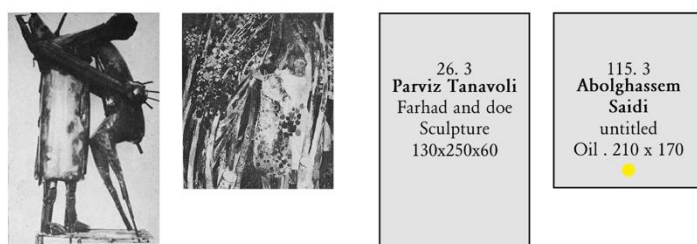
Visual Map 25. Third Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Woman



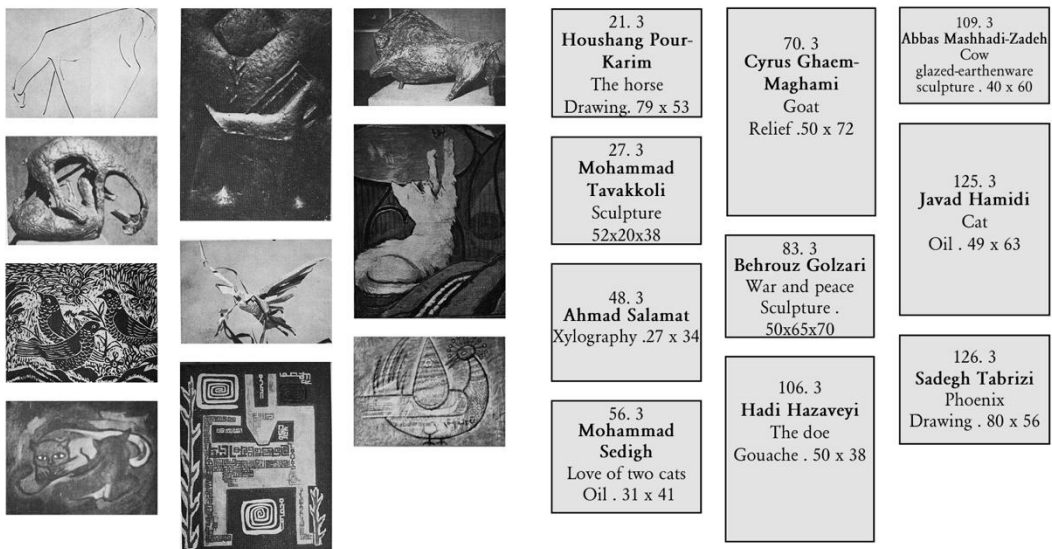
Visual Map 26. Third Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Woman and Man



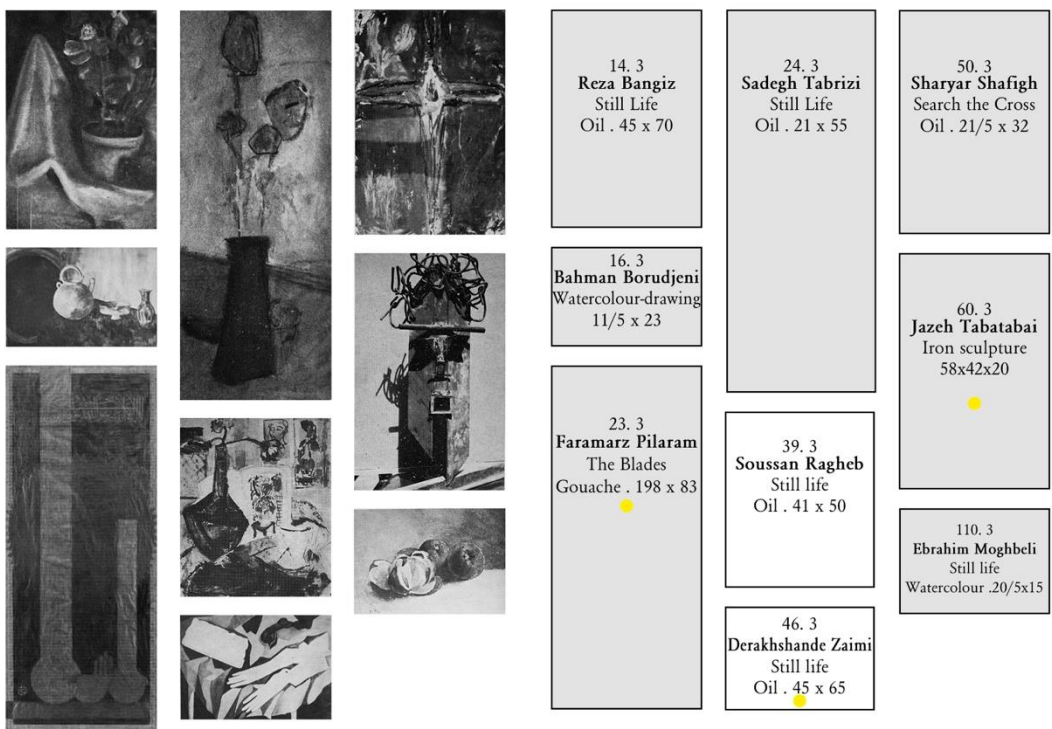
Visual Map 27. Third Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Human and Animal



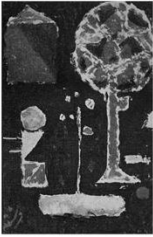












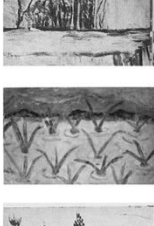
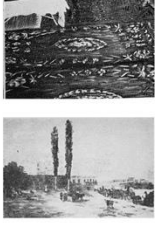


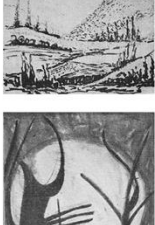


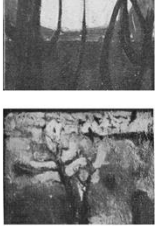






Visual Map 28. Third Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Animal



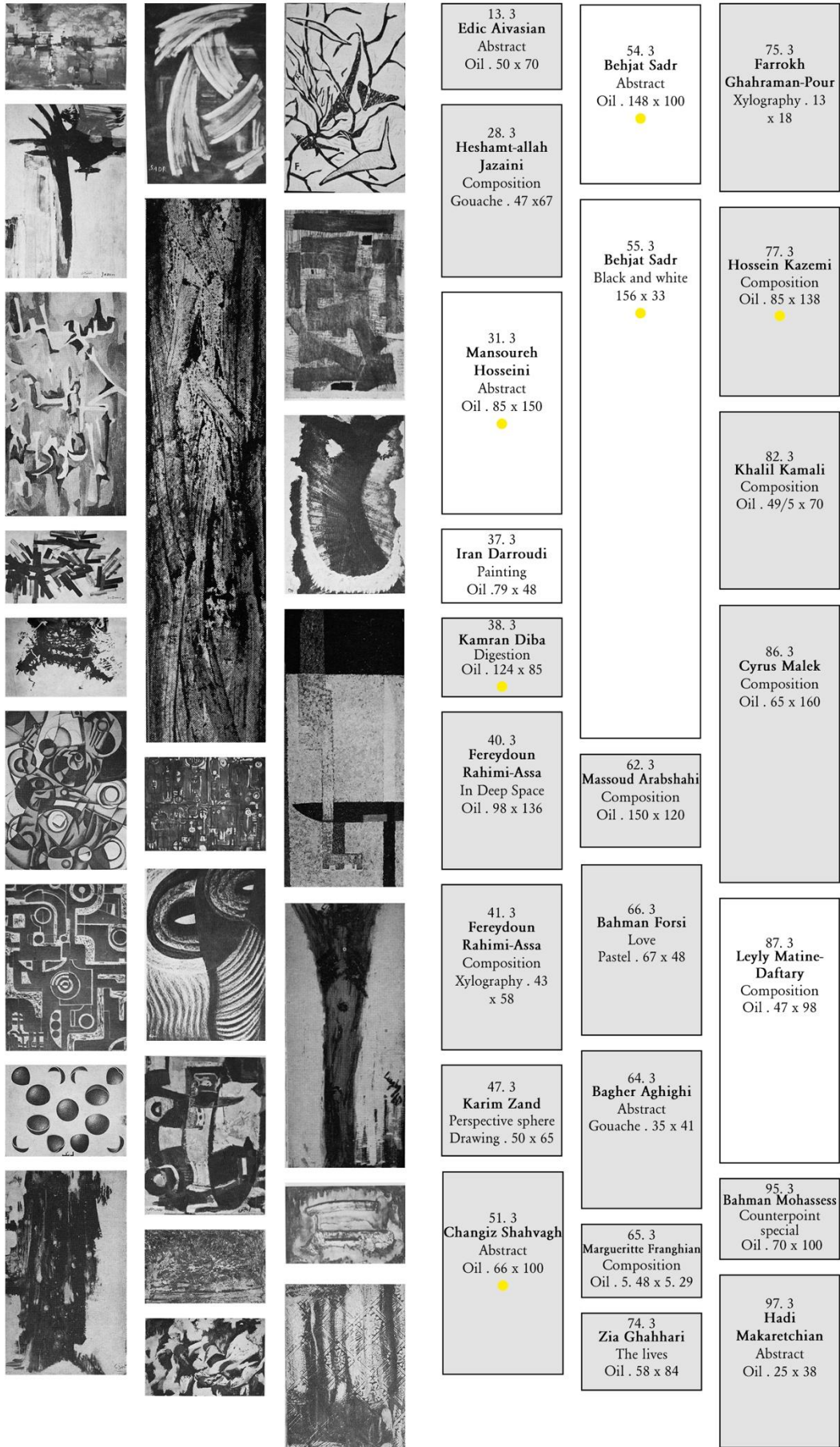
Visual Map 29. Third Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Still life

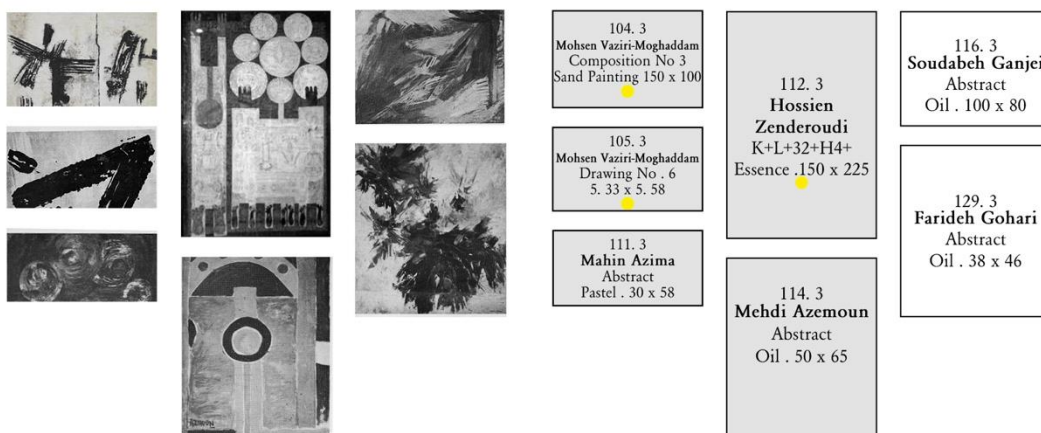


Visual Map 30. Third Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Landscape

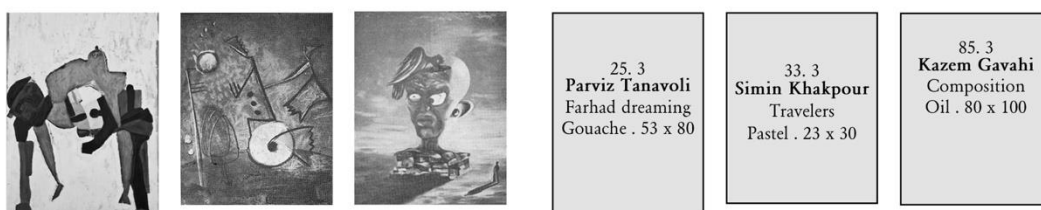
			2. 3 Fereshteh Afshar Landscape Oil . 34 x 49	61. 3 Abdollah Ameri Landscape Oil . 5. 36 x5. 30	99. 3 Morteza Momayez Trees Drawing . 34 x 50
			3. 3 Victoria Afshar Composition Oil pastel . 50 x 70	81. 3 Morteza Karimi Tehran Oil . 66 x 70	100. 3 Fereydoun Michantchi Landscape Gouache . 34 x 49
			7. 3 Anna Avakian Landscape of Rome Oil . 38 x 60	84. 3 Behrouz Golzari Landscape Drawing 37/5 x 25	101. 3 Hartoun Minassian Landscape Oil . 23 x 30
			17. 3 Vladimir Bitdavid Landscape Gouache . 24 x 33	89. 3 Zahra Majidi Landscape Oil . 38 x 46	102. 3 Mohammad-Taghi Naji Landscape Watercolour 31/5x 46/5
			35. 3 Bahman Dadkhah Landscape Oil . 47 x 65	90. 3 Manijeh Mossaed (Homa) Landscape Oil . 54 x 74	107. 3 Darioush Houshmand Artists room Oil . 46 x 61
			92. 3 Ali.A.M.M.E Ghomi Marsh Watercolour . 41 x 59	93. 3 Ardeshtir Mohassess Landscape Ink . 29 x 39	108. 3 Seyed-Mojtaba Seyed-Rabi Village Oil . 50 x 75
			45. 3 Derakhshande Zaimi The streets of Spain Gravure . 35 x 48	96. 3 Darioush Mazkouri Noahs Ark Xylography 43/5x 33	117. 3 Mohammad-Taghi Naji Landscape Drawing . 25 X 18/5
			49. 3 Esmail Shahrودي Landscape Oil . 36 x 54	98. 3 Morteza Momayez The thrust of the sun Oil . 70 x 100	123. 3 Golpayeghani Death and Life Gouache . 70 x 100
			53. 3 Reza Sheibani Landscape Oil . 50 x 70		127. 3 Bahman Boroujeni Landscape Oil . 40 x 55
					128. 3 Jafar Rouhbakhshi Landscape Oil . 70 x 100

Visual Map 31. Third Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Abstract painting

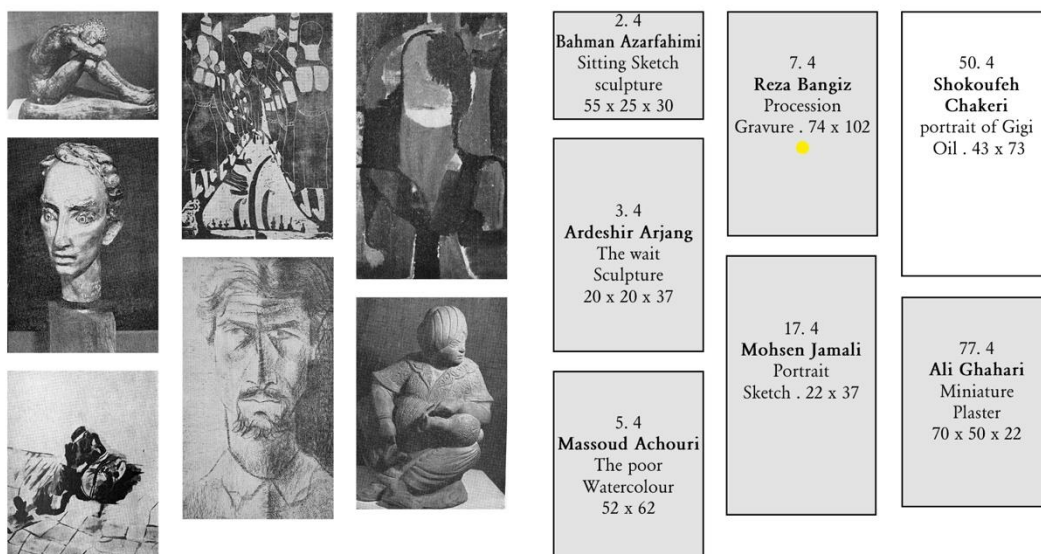




Visual Map 32. Third Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Imagination



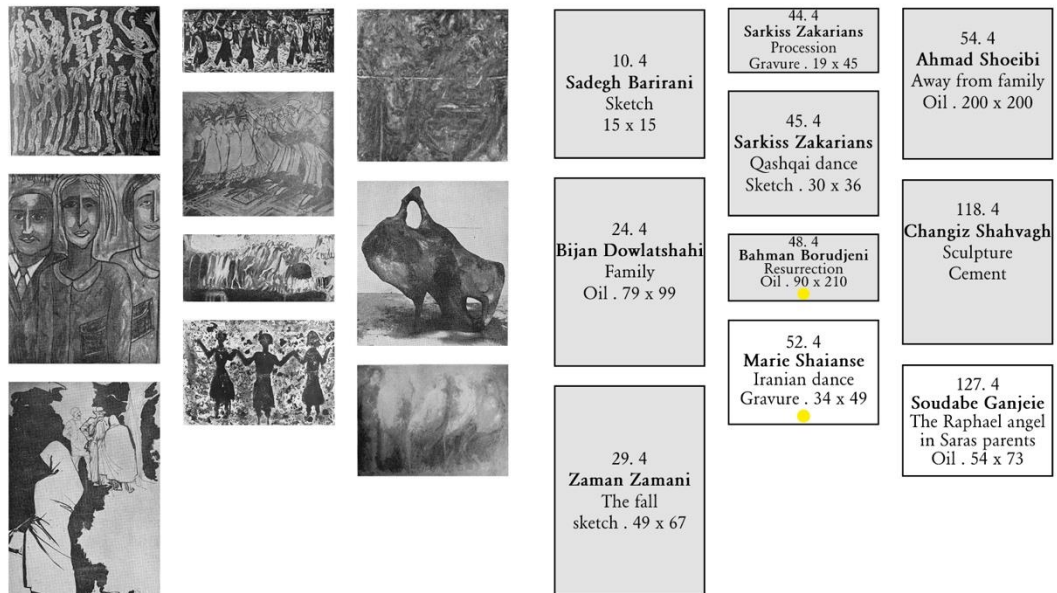
Visual Map 33. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Man



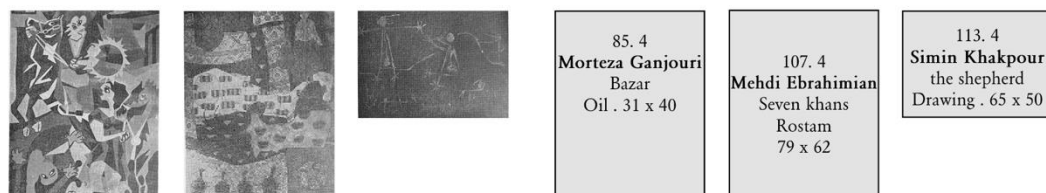
Visual Map 34. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Woman



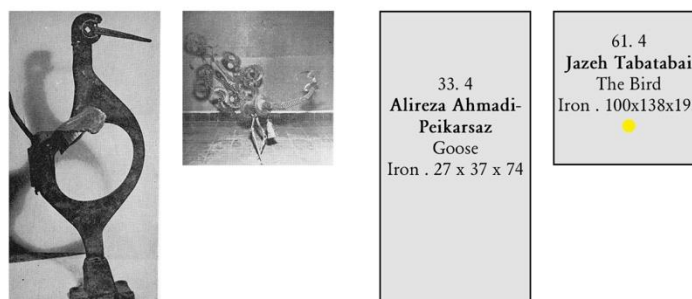
Visual Map 35. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Man and Woman



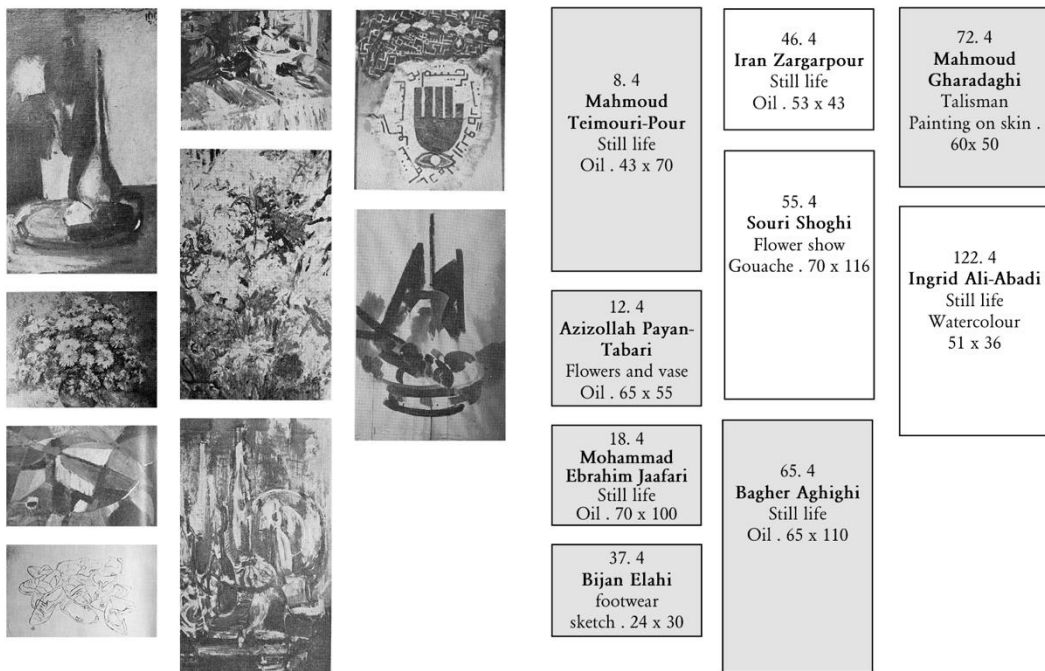
Visual Map 36. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Human and Animal



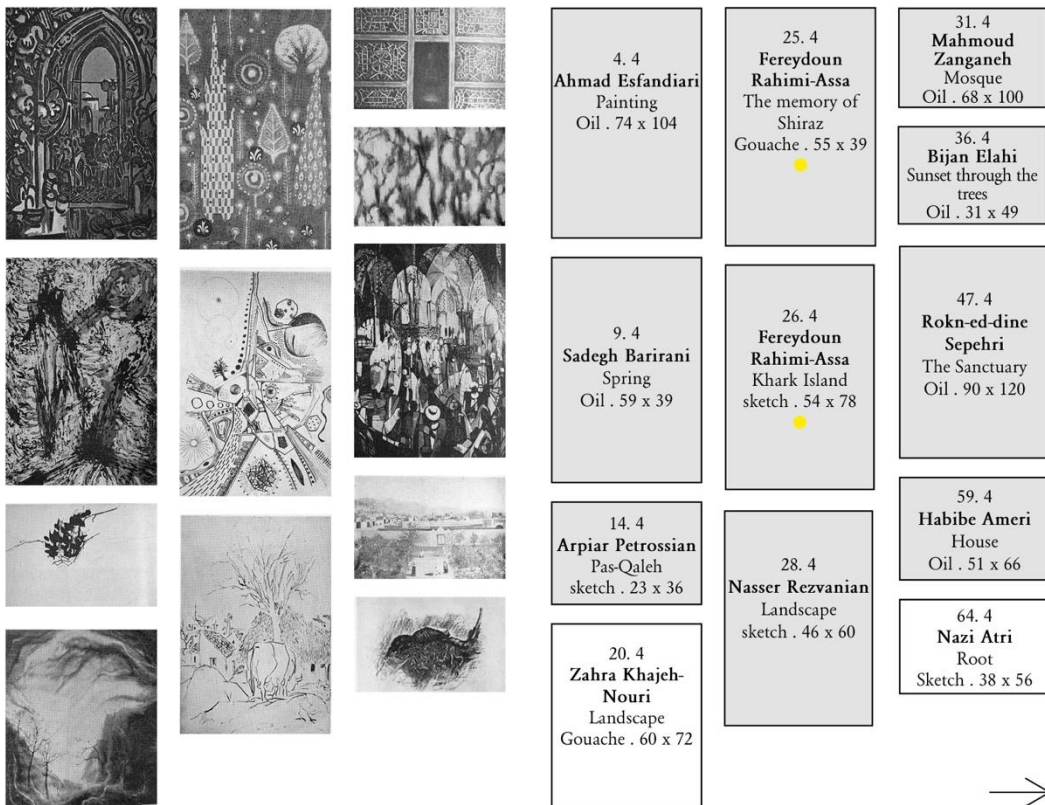
Visual Map 37. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Animal

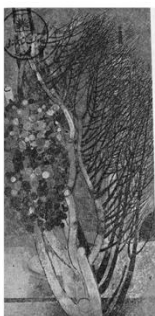
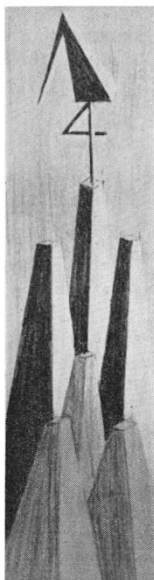
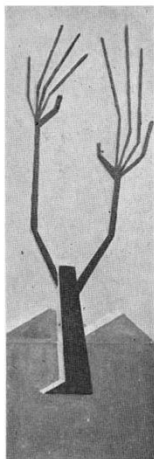


Visual Map 38. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Still life



Visual Map 39. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Landscape





67. 4
Margueritte Franguian
Temple
Oil . 48 x 66

79. 4
Houshang Kazemi
Composition No.3
Watercolour
54 x 77

80. 4
Houshang Kabir
Lonely tree
Oil . 40 x 80

81. 4
Houshang Kabir
Stork
Drawing . 18 x 35

87. 4
Ali. A. M. Esmail
To ground
Watercolour
44 x 68

88. 4
Hossein Mahjoubi
The houses of Lahijan
Watercolour
43 x 72

89. 4
Hossein Mahjoubi
The houses of Gilan
Drawing . 26 x 50

91. 4
Habib Mohammadi
Landscape
Oil . 39x 54

92. 4
Hassan Mohammadian
Landscape
Oil . 39 x 55

93. 4
Manijeh Mosaed (Homa)
Noahs Ark
Oil . 69 x 98

95. 4
Morteza Momayez
Composition
Oil . 100 x 70

96. 4
Shokrollah Manzourolhagh
The shapes
Oil . 57 x 78

104. 4
Ginous Hashemi
Early Spring
Oil . 50 x 70

105. 4
Abdollah Ameriolhosseini
(invited artist)
Spring
Oil . 80 x 100

106. 4
Nasrin Azarba
Spring
Oil . 40 x 60

112. 4
Simin Khakpour
Wall
Oil . 80 x 54

116. 4
Mahmoud Sina
Landscape
Oil . 48 x 75





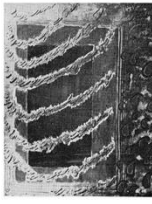









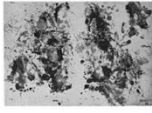







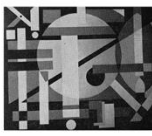

121. 4
Bejan Farzani
Poppy
Watercolour
50 x 38

124. 4
Sumbat Kevreghian
Dardasht
Watercolour
30 x 40

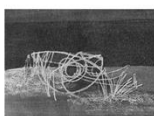
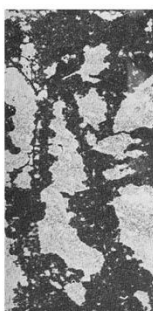
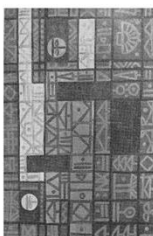
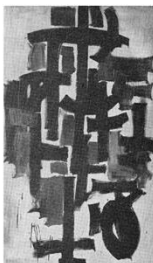
125. 4
Sumbat Kevreghian
Pole wheel
Drawing . 40 x 50

131. 4
Abolghassem Saidi
(invited artist)
Iranian tree
Oil . 150 x 80

Visual Map 40. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Abstract painting

			11. 4 Rouin Pakbaz Gouache and Oil 50 x 90	27. 4 Faradjollah Rakhchai Composition Oil . 60 x 70	56. 4 Said Shahlapour The singing of the Star Gouache . 15 x 30
			13. 4 Ebrahim Posht-Panah the anonymous path Oil . 76 x 136	32. 4 Hossein Sassan Writing Oil . 100 x 115	58. 4 Ghobad Shiva Composition 0085 Oil . 140 x 110
			15. 4 Faramarz Pilaram Composition No .33 Gouache . 200 x 135	34. 4 Victoria Afshar Composition No .3 Gouache . 61 x 87	62. 4 Massoud Arabshahi Composition Oil . 119 x 146
			19. 4 Parvin Hadj-Dai Abstract Oil . 59 x 38	38. 4 Mir-Abdorrezza Dariabeigui Abstract Monotype . 23 x 36	63. 4 Massoud Arabshahi Sketch . 45 x 34
			21. 4 Farzaneh Kheirloomoum Classic Japanese 19 x 53	39. 4 Mir-Abdorrezza Dariabeigui Abstract Engraving . 36 x 32	66. 4 Abdolhamid Fatemi Abstract Oil . 94 x 67
			22. 4 Bahman Dadkhah Painting Oil . 46 x 65	40. 4 Parviz Dibai N111 . 0 Oil . 39 x 55	68. 4 Monir Farmanfarmaian Painting Oil . 60 x 45
			23. 4 Victoria Daneshvar (Fardjam) Exile Oil . 65 x 78	41. 4 Parviz Dibai Sculpture 13 40 x 28 x 28	69. 4 Youness Fayaz Painting Oil . 50 x 90
			42. 4 Massoud Khatibi The forms and colours Collage . 48 x 60	49. 4 Bahman Borudjeni Life Gravure . 50 x 65	71. 4 Kambiz Ghodsi Abstract Oil . 70 x 40
					73. 4 Mansour Painting Oil . 75 x 90





74. 4
Kamran Katouzian
my grandfather
when he was young
Oil . 121 x 122

75. 4
Kamran Katouzian
Drawing with two
colours
Sketch . 24 x 34

78. 4
Hossein Kazemi
Composition
Oil . 200 x 140

82. 4
Masoud Karim
Composition
Gouache . 44 x 80

84. 4
Behzad Golpayegani
Composition
Oil . 120 x 80

86. 4
Cyrus Malek
Painting
Oil . 110 x 95

97. 4
Shokrollah Manzourolhagh
The shadows
Gravure . 62 x 37

98. 4
Gholamhossein Nami
Composition
Oil . 49 x 97

100. 4
Setrak Nazarian
Protestation
Oil . 124 x 106

101. 4
Aghdas Vakili
Messiah
Gouache . 42 x 57

102. 4
Hadi Hazavehi
Piece No . 1
Deer Skin . 75 x 56

103. 4
Hadi Hazavehi
sepulcher . 84 x 60

108. 4
Heshmat Jazani
Painting
Gouache . 73 x 55

110. 4
Mansoure Hosseini
Abstract
Oil . 180 x 90

111. 4
Javad Hamidi
Composition
Oil . 100 x 70

114. 4
Hamid Zarin-Afsar
Composition
Oil . 50 x 65

115. 4
Hossein Zenderoudi
(invited artist)
The blue hole
170 x 170

117. 4
Changiz Shahvagh
Painting
Oil

119. 4
Manouchehr Sheibani
Abstract
Oil . 119 x 80

120. 4
Behjat Sadr
(invited artist)
Abstract, Oil

126. 4
Syrus Ghaem-Maghani
A door to the seven
regions
Iron . 60 x 66 x 67

130. 4
Fereydoun Mishanchi
the strange bird
Plaster . 69 x 63
x 136

Visual Map 41. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Imagination



57. 4
Reza Shaibani
Opening
Oil . 74 x 94

60. 4
Jazeh Tabatabai
Our time
Collage . 55 x 129

76. 4
**Kamran
Katouzian**
scream
Iron . 56 x 190 x 28



70. 4
Massoud Ghaderi
Ceramic
Oil . 50 x 70

123. 4
Ingrid Ali-Abadi
Drawing
51 x 36

Visual Map 42. Fifth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Man



26. 5
Jalil Ziapour
Popular poem
Oil . 120 x 170

40. 5
Morteza momayyes
The story of Gasting
into well
Black and white
design . 34 x 26

Visual Map 43. Fifth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Woman



35. 5
Kamran Katuzian
Golnae & me
Oil . 120 x 149

38. 5
Lili Matin-Daftari
Mother & child
Oil . 122 x 69

Visual Map 44. Fifth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Man and Woman



22. 5
Mary Shayans
The couple
Fresco . 75 x 95

27. 5
Zhazeh Tabatabai
Union
Ink on canvas . 85
x 183

31. 5
Bahram Alivandi
Feast
Oil
106 x 157

Visual Map 45. Fifth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Human and Animal



11. 5
Sadegh Tabrizi
Composition
Oil on skin
44 x 60

Visual Map 46. Fifth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Animal



6. 5
Sadegh Barirani
Bird
oil . 120 x 86

Visual Map 47. Fifth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Still life



33. 5
**Monir
Farmanfarmaian**
Flower
Oil . 79 x 65

Visual Map 48. Fifth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Landscape



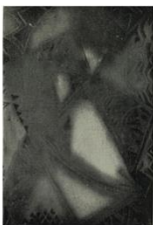
18. 5
**Hamid Zarin-
Afsar**
Landscape
Synthetic colour .
146 x 97

19. 5
**Hossein
Zendehtroudi**
Minarets
Water colour . 149
x 97

20. 5
**Abolghassen
Saeedi**
Green composition
Oil . 198 x 196

39. 5
Hossein Mahjoubi
Tiled roofs of
Lahijam
Water colour
81 x 117

Visual Map 49. Fifth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Abstract painting



1. 5
Ali Azergin
Composition
oil . 85 x 120

3. 5
Ahmad Esfandiari
Composition
oil . 90 x 70

4. 5
Nasser Oveissi
Rider
oil . 117 x 110

5. 5
Reza Bankiz
composition
gravure . 132 x 83

7. 5
Bahman Borujeni
Painting
oil . 48 x 48

8. 5
Faramarz Pilaram
Sculpture
Copper engraving
208 x 76 x 11

9. 5
Faramarz Pilaram
Composition No. 22
oil . 105 x 280

10. 5
**Mohammad
Pooladi**
Composition
oil . 120 x 120

12. 5
Parviz Tanavoli
The poet and
Farhads Beloved
Copper sculpture .
170 x 124 x 45

13. 5
Heshmat Jazani
Composition
Oil . 70 x 100

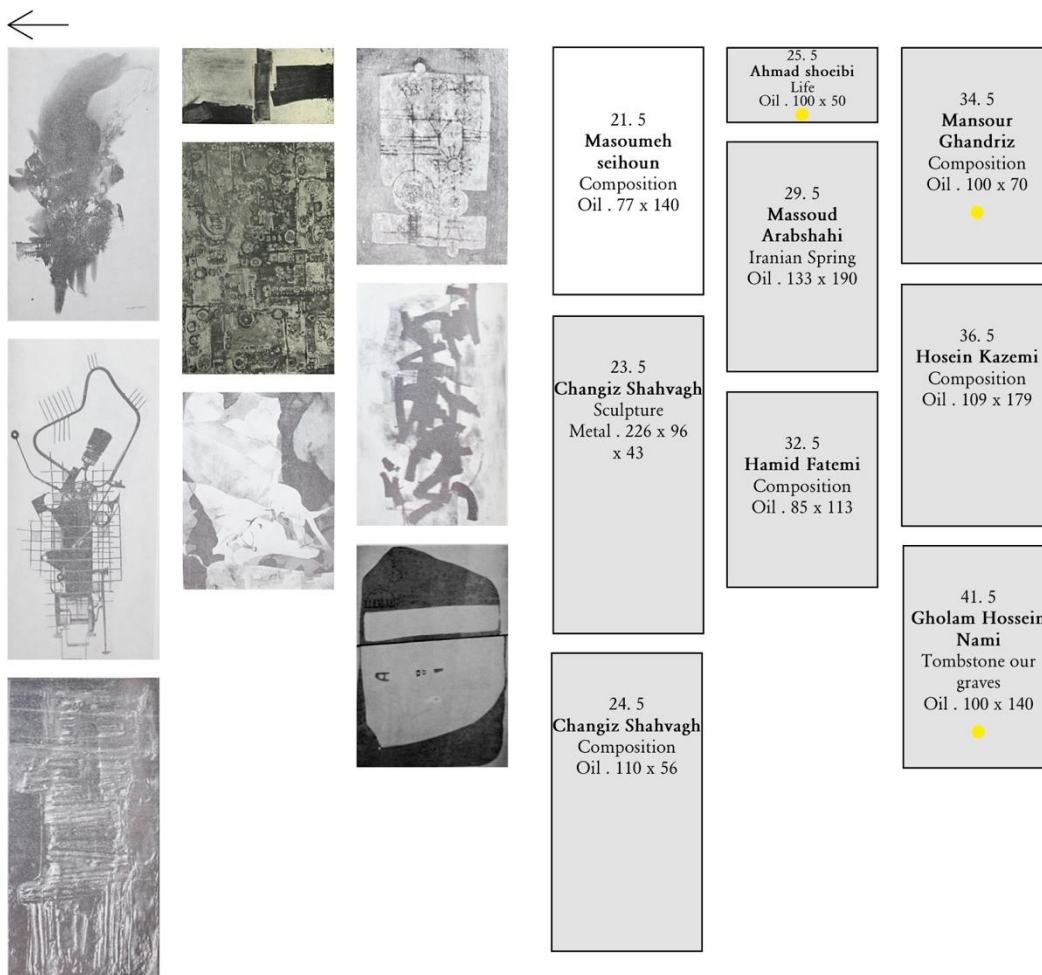
14. 5
**Mohammad Ebrahim
Jafari**
A moment and I
Oil . 77 x 54

15. 5
Javad Hamidi
Composition
Oil . 100 x 80

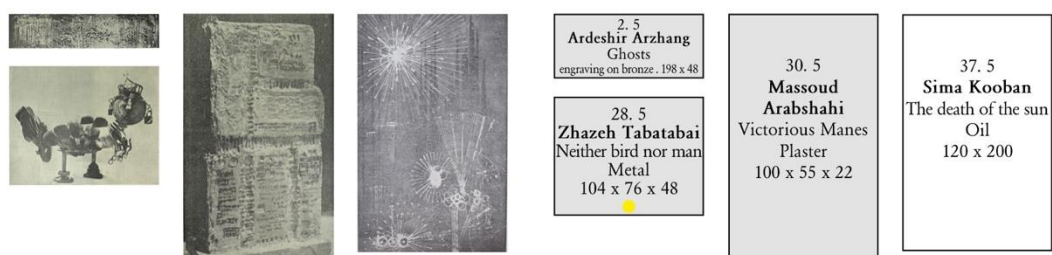
16. 5
**Mansoureh
Hoscini**
Genesis
Oil . 81 x 140

17. 5
Mir-Abdol-Reza Daryabegi
Symphony of existence and
non-existence
Oil . 120 x 300

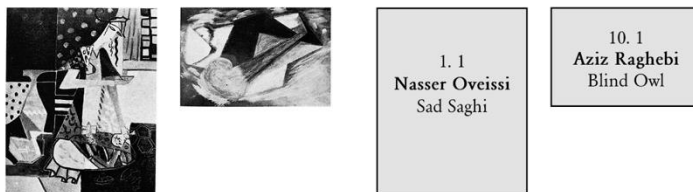




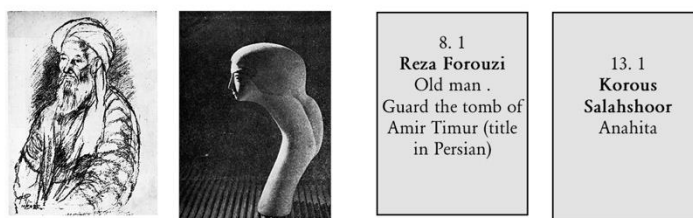
Visual Map 50. Fifth Tehran Biennial, Main Subjects: Imagination



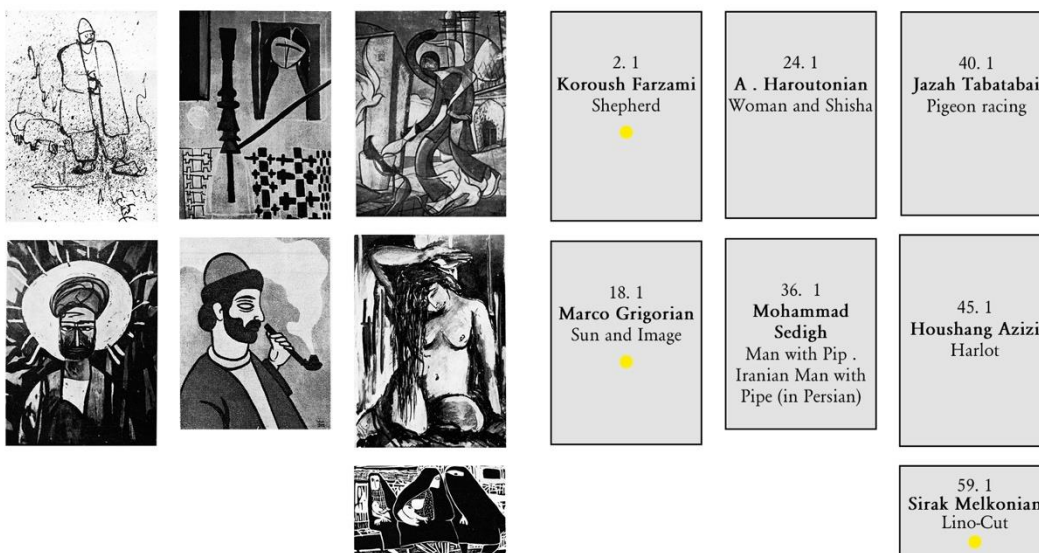
Visual Map 51. First Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to Persian literature and myths



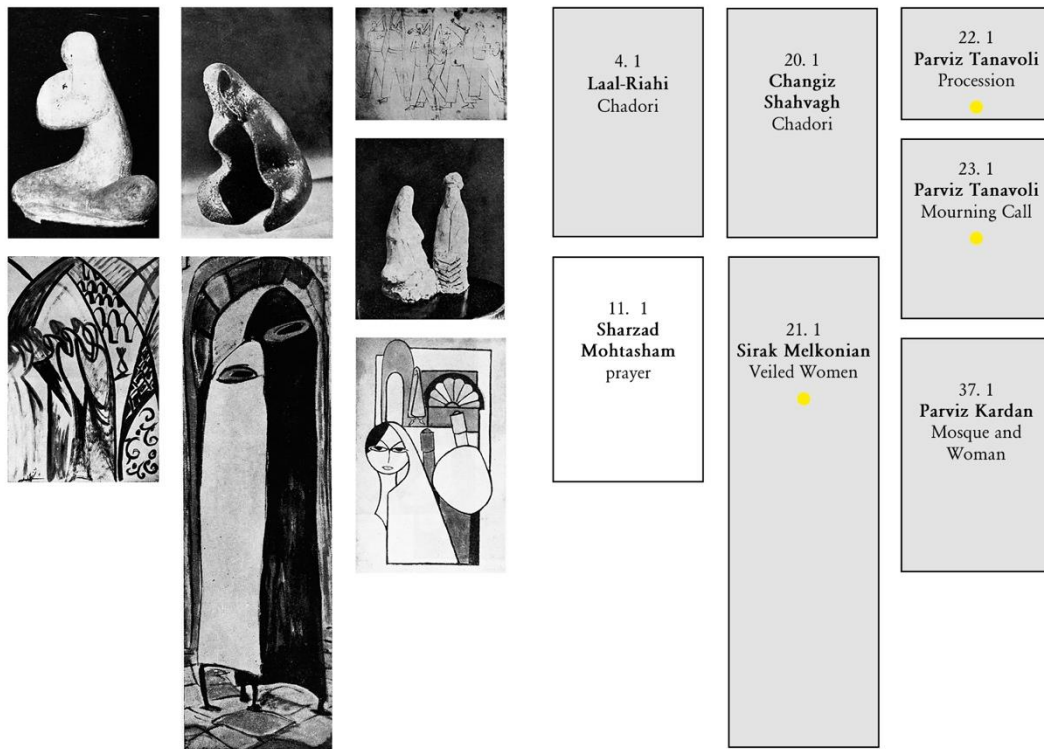
Visual Map 52. First Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to historical subjects



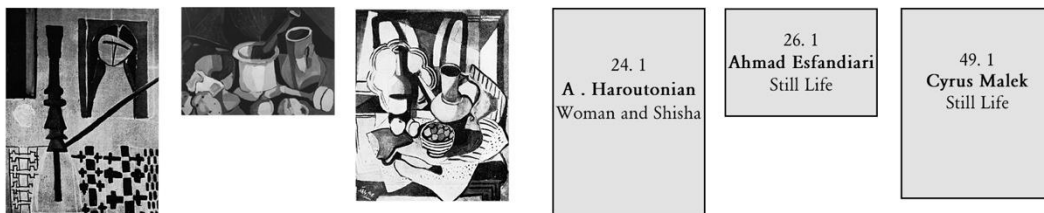
Visual Map 53. First Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to social subjects and daily life



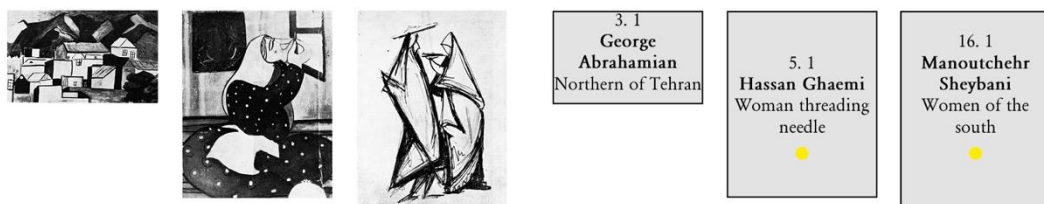
Visual Map 54. First Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to religious subjects



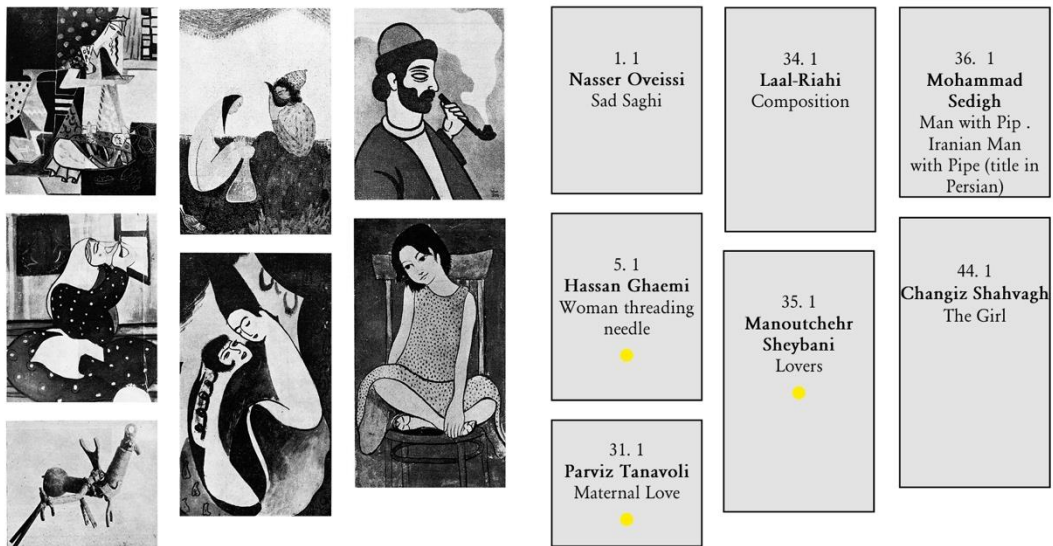
Visual Map 55. First Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to Iranian popular objects



Visual Map 56. First Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to specific region in Iran



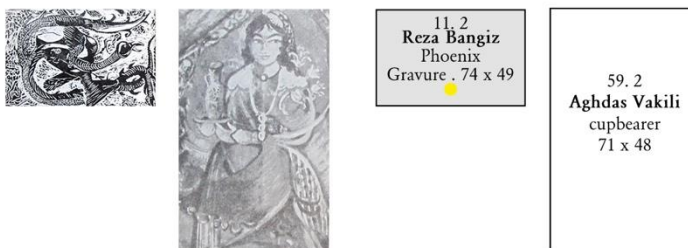
Visual Map 57. First Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to elements of Iranian classical painting, art and craft



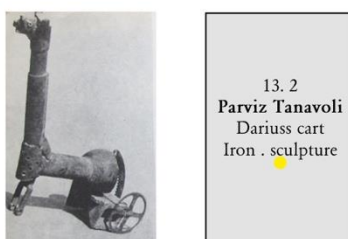
Visual Map 58. First Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to West or East



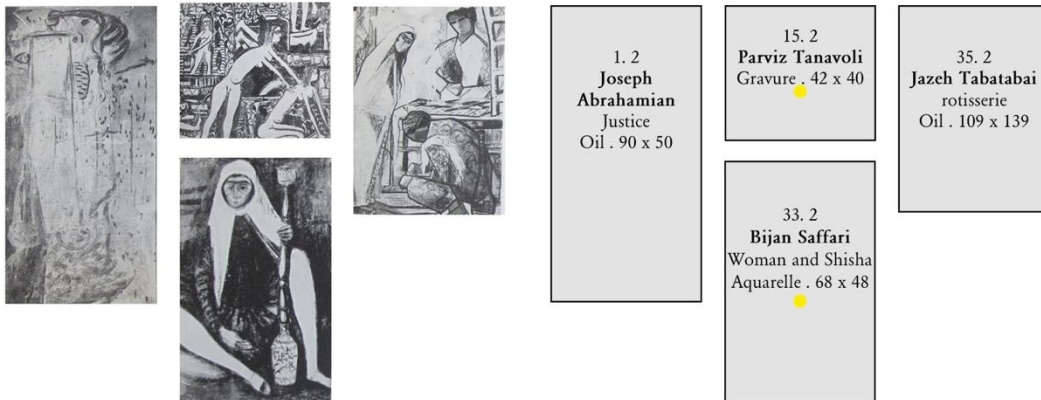
Visual Map 59. Second Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to Persian literature and myths



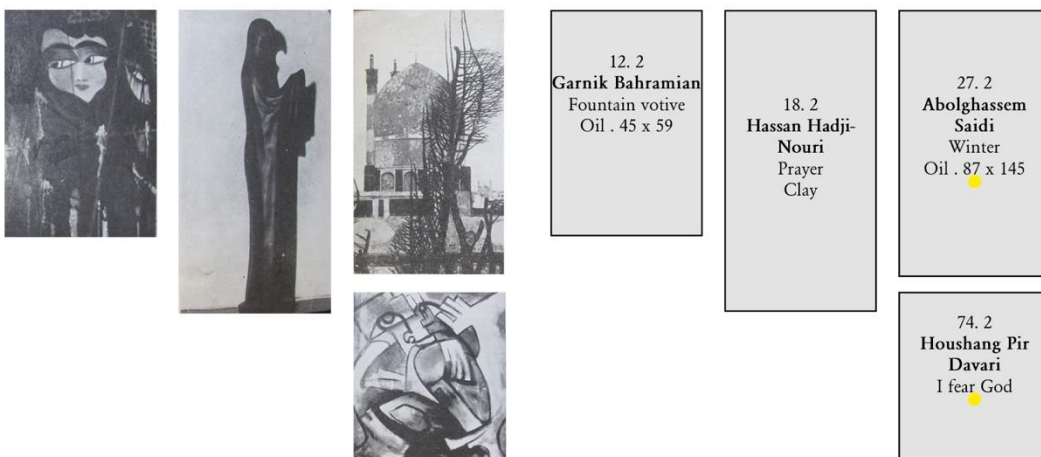
Visual Map 60. Second Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to historical subjects



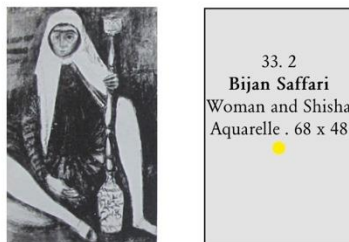
Visual Map 61. Second Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to social subjects and daily life



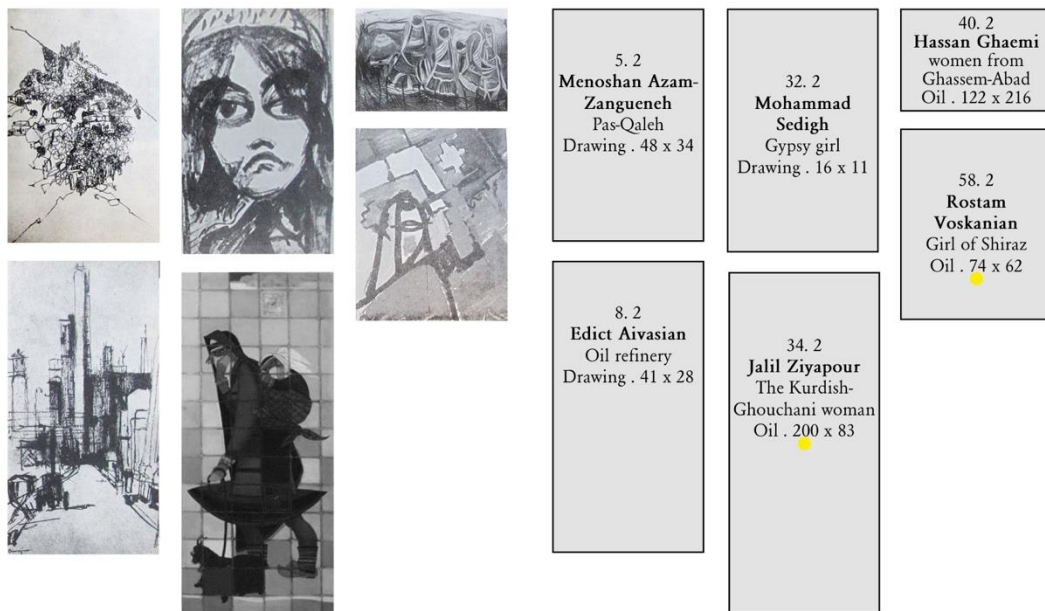
Visual Map 62. Second Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to religious subjects



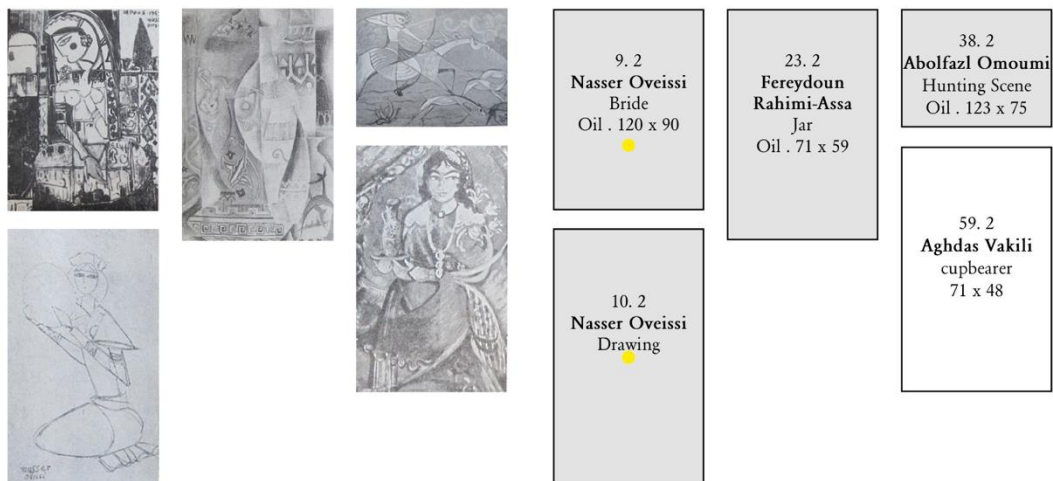
Visual Map 63. Second Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to Iranian popular objects



Visual Map 64. Second Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to specific region in Iran



Visual Map 65. Second Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to elements of Iranian classical painting, art and craft



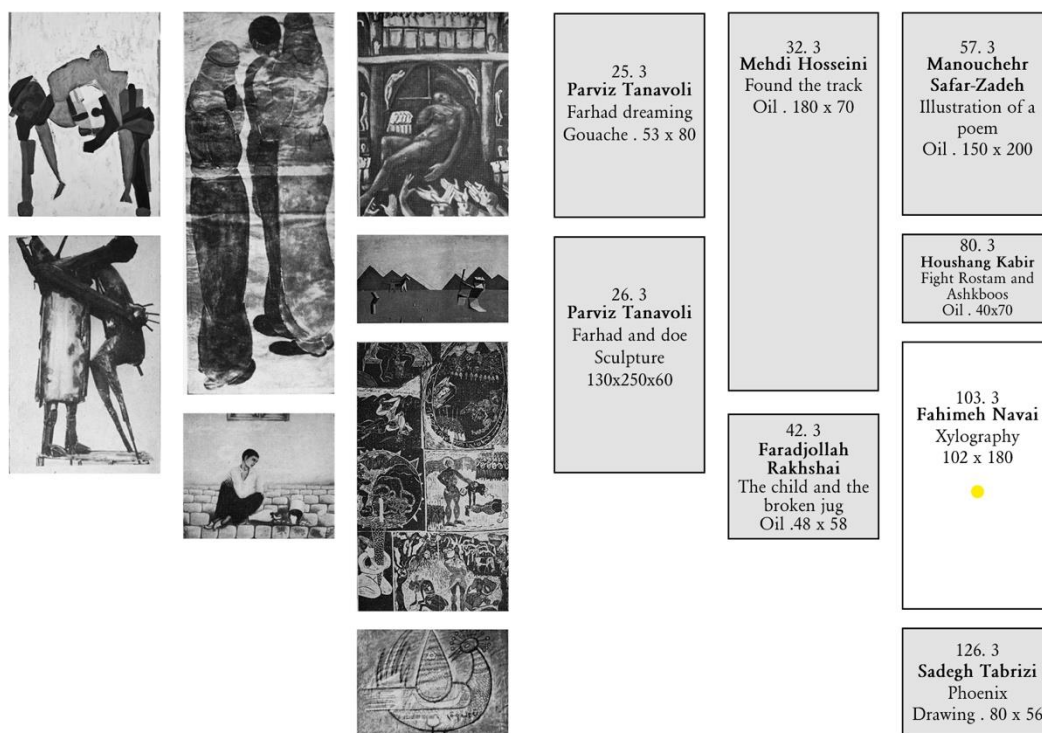
Visual Map 66. Second Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Use of Calligraphy



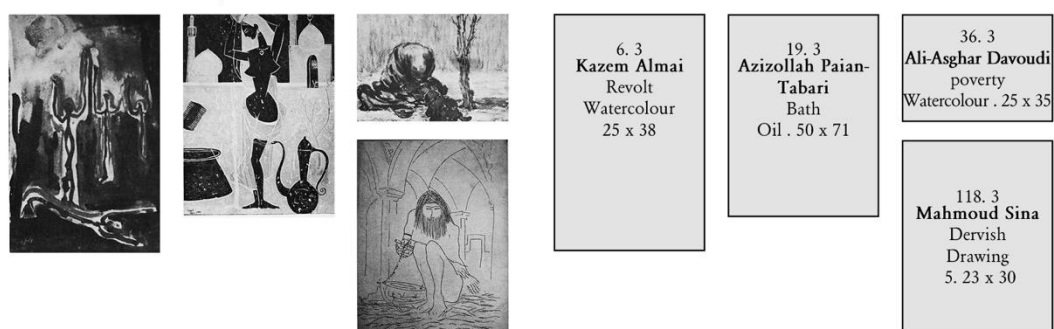
Visual Map 67. Second Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to West or East



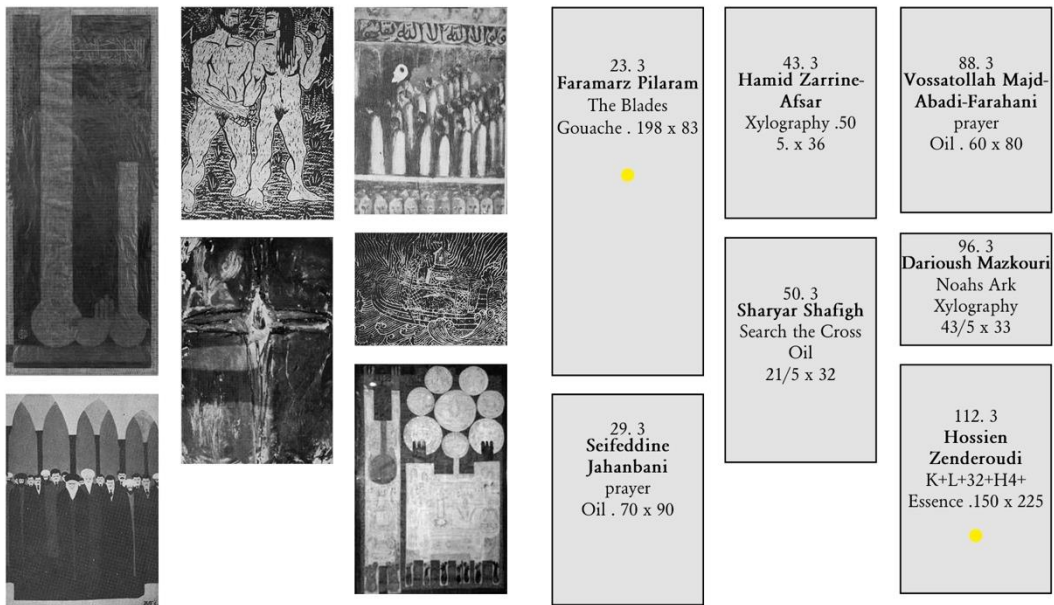
Visual Map 68. Third Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to Persian literature and myths



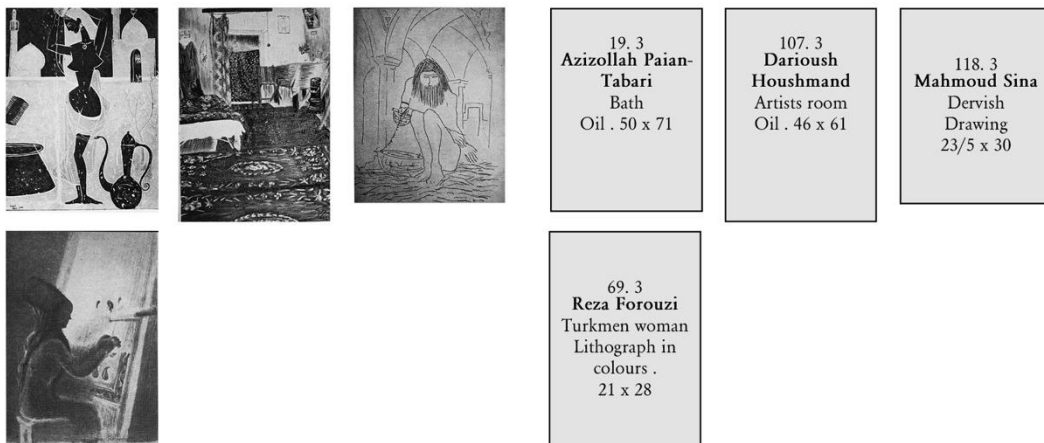
Visual Map 69. Third Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to social subjects and daily life



Visual Map 70. Third Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to religious subjects



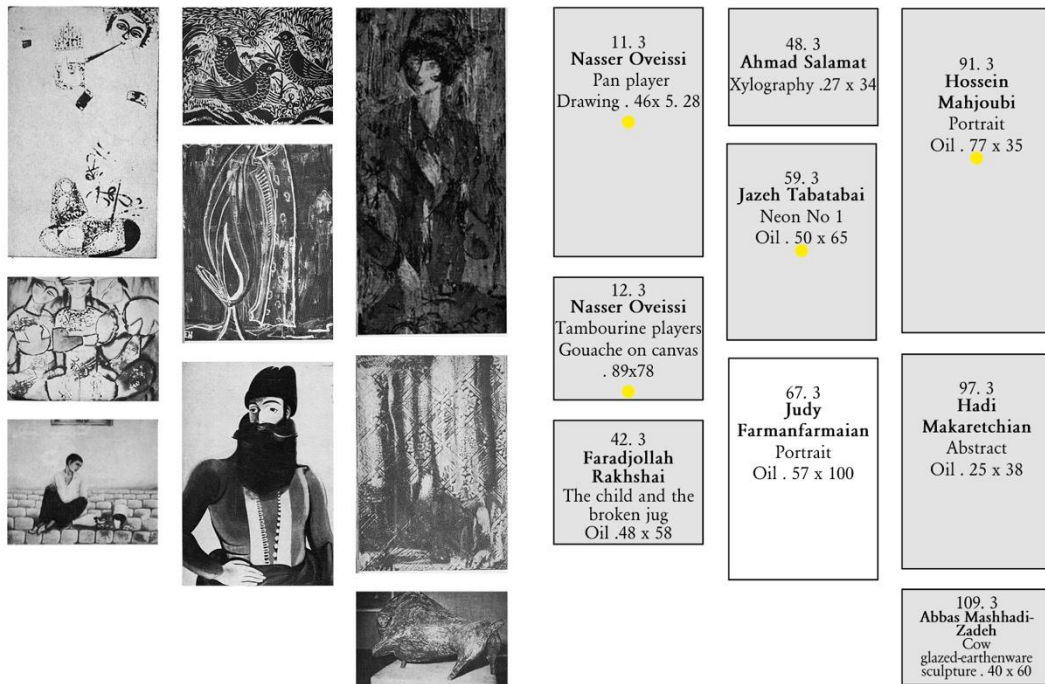
Visual Map 71. Third Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to Iranian popular objects



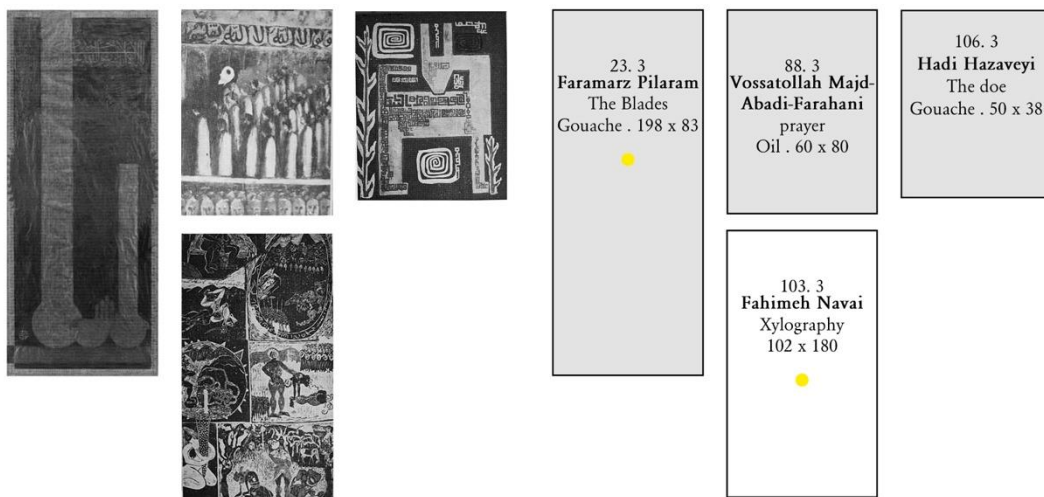
Visual Map 72. Third Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to specific region in Iran



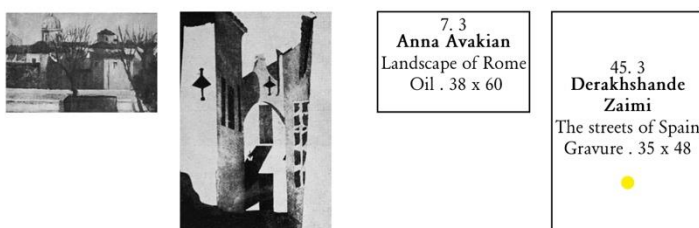
Visual Map 73. Third Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to elements of Iranian classical painting, art and craft



Visual Map 74. Third Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Use of Calligraphy



Visual Map 75. Third Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to West or East



Visual Map 76. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to Persian literature and myths



90. 4
Asghar Mohammadi
Narrator
Oil . 110 x 40

107. 4
Mehdi Ebrahimian
Seven khans
Rostam
79 x 62

Visual Map 77. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to social subjects and daily life



5. 4
Massoud Achouri
The poor
Watercolour . 52 x 62

83. 4
Parviz Kalantari
Gossiping
Gouache . 60 x 90

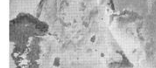
87. 4
Ali. A. M Esmail
To ground
Watercolour
44 x 68

100. 4
Setrak Nazarian
Protestation
Oil . 124 x 106

125. 4
Sumbat Kevreghian
Pole wheel
Drawing . 40 x 50

29. 4
Zaman Zamani
The fall
sketch . 49 x 67

Visual Map 78. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to religious subjects



7. 4
Reza Bangiz
Procession
Gravure . 74 x 102

57. 4
Reza Shaibani
Opening
Oil . 74 x 94

103. 4
Hadi Hazavehi
sepulcher . 84 x 60

31. 4
Mahmoud Zanganeh
Mosque
Oil . 68 x 100

67. 4
Margueritte Franguian
Temple
Oil . 48 x 66

109. 4
Hassan Haji-Nouri
The veiled woman
56 x 20 x 10

44. 4
Sarkiss Zakarians
Procession
Gravure . 19 x 45

72. 4
Mahmoud Gharadaghi
Talisman
Painting on skin . 60x 50

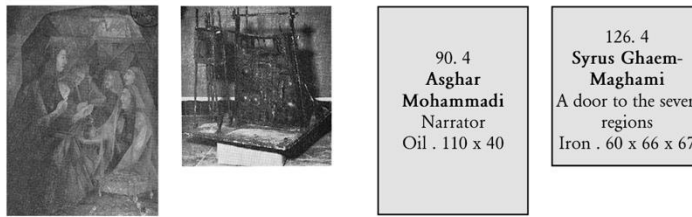
47. 4
Rokn-ed-dine Sepehri
The Sanctuary
Oil . 90 x 120

101. 4
Aghdas Vakili
Messiah
Gouache . 42 x 57

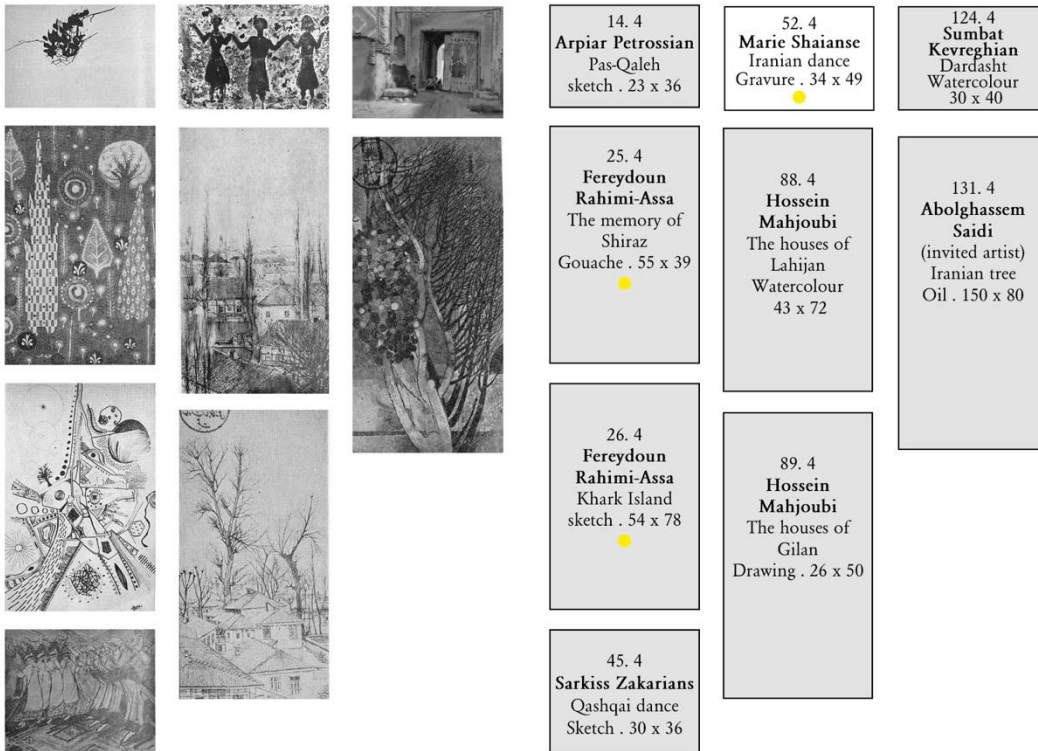
48. 4
Bahman Borudjeni
Resurrection
Oil . 90 x 210

127. 4
Soudabe Ganjei
The Raphael angel
in Saras parents
Oil . 54 x 73

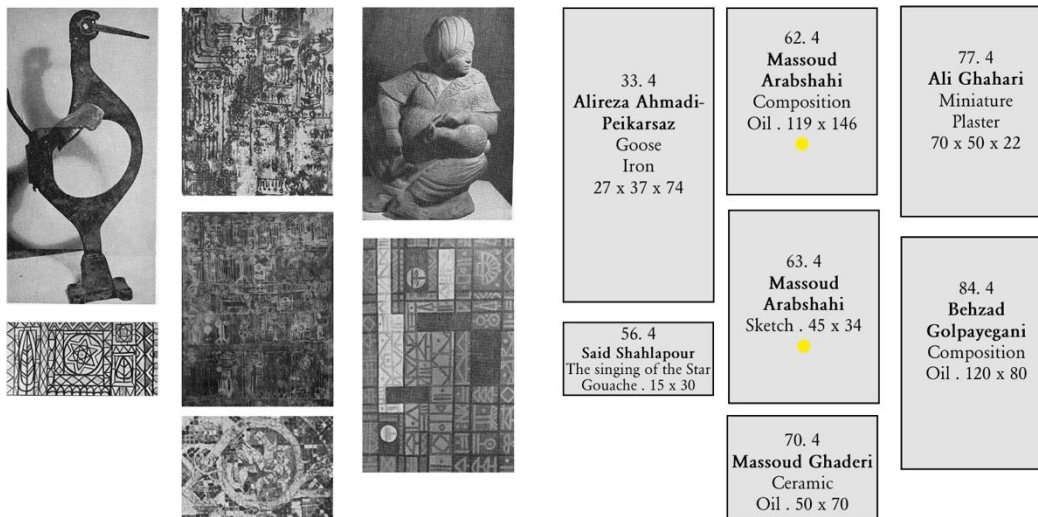
Visual Map 79. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to Iranian popular objects



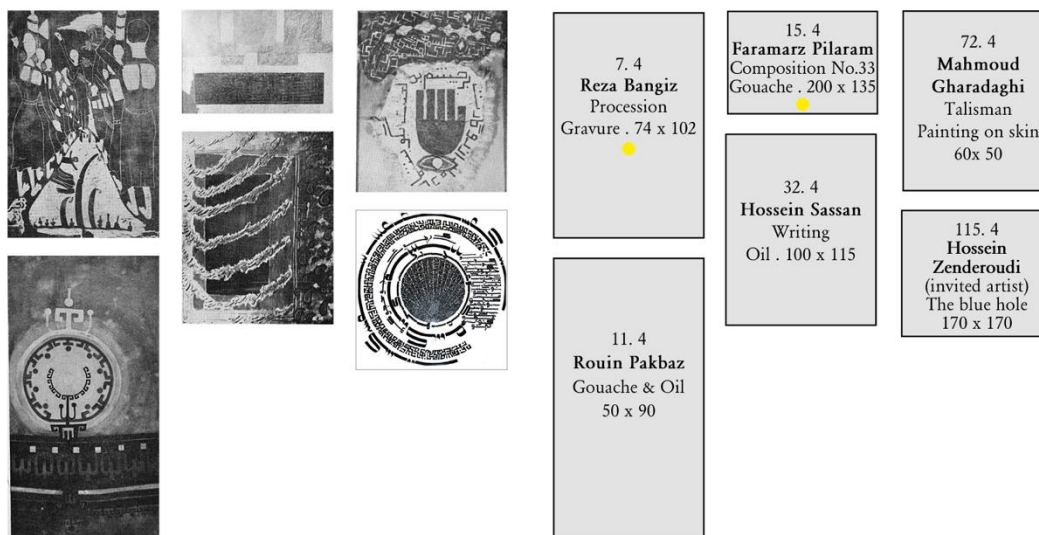
Visual Map 80. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to specific region in Iran



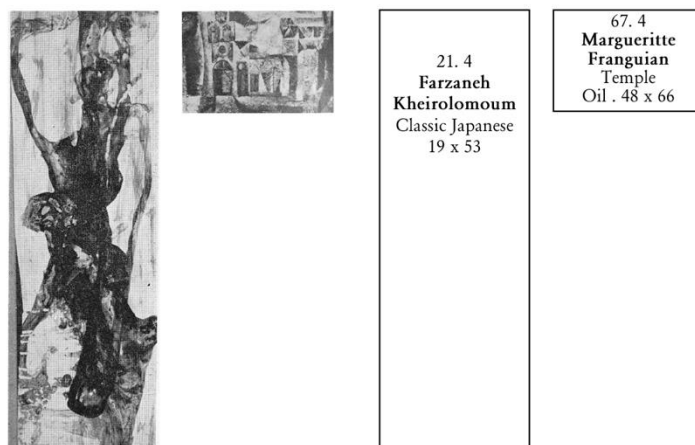
Visual Map 81. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to elements of Iranian classical painting, art and craft



Visual Map 82. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Use of Calligraphy



Visual Map 83. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to West or East



Visual Map 84. Fifth Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to Persian literature and myths



12. 5
Parviz Tanavoli
The poet and
Farhads Beloved
Copper sculpture
170 x 124 x 45

Visual Map 85. Fifth Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to social subjects and daily life



11. 5
Sadeqh Tabrizi
Composition
Oil on skin . 44
x 60

22. 5
Mary Shayans
The couple
Fresco . 75 x 95

38. 5
Lili Matin-Daftari
Mother & child
Oil . 122 x 69

Visual Map 86. Fifth Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to religious subjects



19. 5
Hossein Zendehtroudi
Minarets
Water colour
149 x 97

40. 5
Morteza momayyes
The story of Gasting
into well
Black and white
design . 34 x 26

Visual Map 87. Fifth Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to specific region in Iran



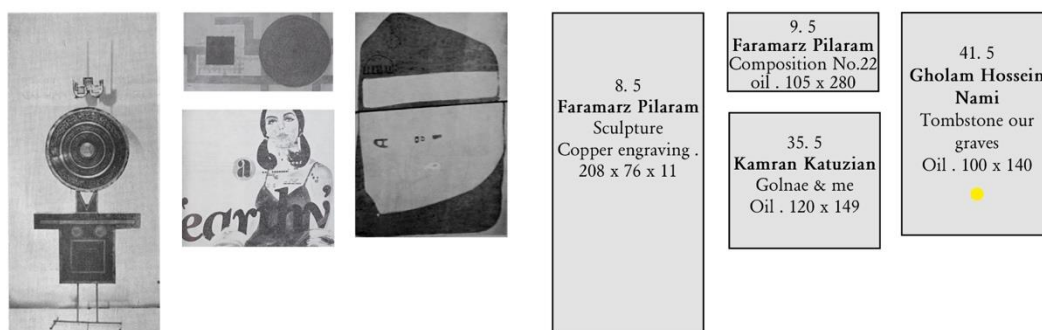
29. 5
Massoud Arabshahi
Iranian Spring
Oil . 133 x 190

39. 5
Hosein Mahjoubi
Tiled roofs of
Lahijam
Water colour
81 x 117


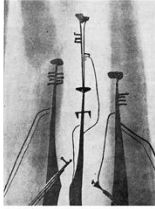







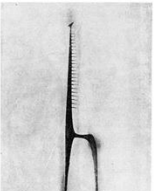
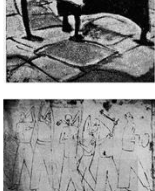




Visual Map 88. Fifth Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Reference to elements of Iranian classical painting, art and craft



Visual Map 89. Fifth Tehran Biennial, Themes and Meaning: Use of Calligraphy





Visual Map 90. First Tehran Biennial, Awards and Winners

			2. 1 Koroush Farzami Shepherd (SP)	19. 1 Ashot Minassian Musicians (RCP)	31. 1 Parviz Tanavoli Maternal Love (SP)
			5. 1 Hassan Ghaemi Woman threading needle (SP)	21. 1 Sirak Melkonian Veiled Women (RCP)	35. 1 Manoutchehr Sheybani Lovers (SP)
			16. 1 Manoutchehr Sheybani Women of the south (SP)		38. 1 Rostam Voskanian Bust (GM)
			17. 1 Ashot Minassian Giraffe (RCP)		55. 1 Edict Aivasian Abstract (GP)
			18. 1 Marco Grigorian Sun and Image *	22. 1 Parviz Tanavoli Procession (SP)	58. 1 Monir Farmanfarmaian Abstract (GM)
				23. 1 Parviz Tanavoli Mourning Call (SP)	59. 1 Sirak Melkonian Lino-Cut (RCP)



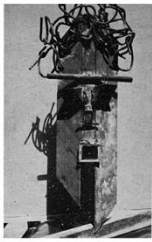



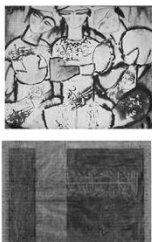








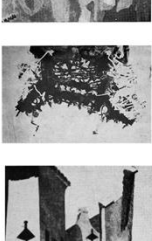

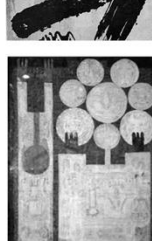
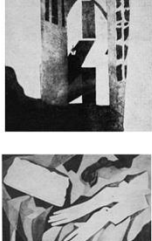
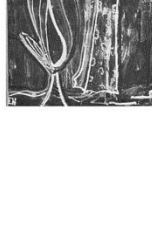

* Grigorian did not accept the award because he was one of the Biennial organisers.

- (RCP) Royal Court Prize
- (GP) Grand Prize of the Ministry of Art and culture
- (SP) Second Prize of the Ministry of Art and cul-ture
- (GM) Gold Medal
- (SM) Silver Medal
- (WP) Winning Point
- (ESH) Exchange three-month study in Shiraz and Esfahan
- (EI) Exchange three-month study in Italy
- (GOP) Golden Officer Point

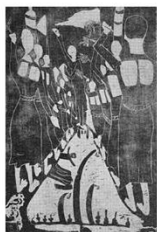


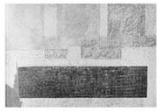



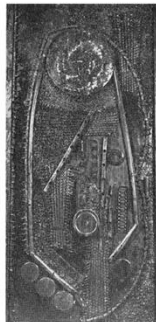


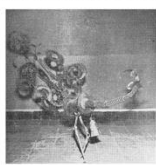
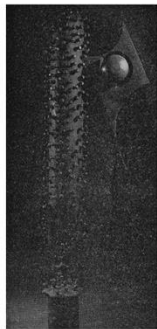
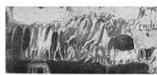

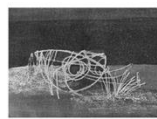



Visual Map 91. Second Tehran Biennial, Awards and Winners

			9. 2 Nasser Oveissi Bride Oil . 120 x 90 (ESH)	27. 2 Abolghassem Saidi Winter Oil . 87 x 145 (SP)	44. 2 Hossein Kazemi Gouache (GM)
			10. 2 Nasser Oveissi Drawing (ESH)	29. 2 Changiz Shahvagh squat Sculpture (SP)	51. 2 Morteza Momayez Composition 79 X 56 (WP)
			11. 2 Reza Bangiz Phoenix Gravure . 74 x 49 (SP)	30. 2 Changiz Shahvagh Composition Oil . 40 x 61 (SP)	56. 2 Mohsen Vaziri-Moghaddam Rhythmic Movement Oil . 105x151 (RCP)
			13. 2 Parviz Tanavoli Dariuss cart Iron . sculpture (RCP)	33. 2 Bijan Saffari Woman and Shisha Aquarelle . 68 x 48 (GM)	58. 2 Rostam Voskani Girl of Shiraz Oil . 74 x 62 (WP)
			14. 2 Parviz Tanavoli Pigeon bleu Gouache . 29 x 30 (RCP)	34. 2 Jalil Ziyapour The Kurdish-Ghouchani woman Oil . 200 x 83 (GM)	67. 2 Sohrab Sepehri Water colour 70 x 50 (GP)
			15. 2 Parviz Tanavoli Gravure . 42 x 40 (RCP)	42. 2 Behrouz Golzari Movement Drawing . 61 x 48 (ESH)	71. 2 Hossien Zenderoudi Portrait Oil . 45 x 29 (WP)
			19. 2 Mansour Hosseini Abstract Oil . 30 x 40 (WP)	43. 2 Behrouz Golzari Au bord de la Seine Watercolour . 32 x 22 (ESH)	72. 2 Iran Darroudi New York Oil (WP)
			24. 2 Mehranguiz Rakhsha Composition Oil . 69 x 99 (WP)	74. 2 Houshang Pir Davari I fear God (WP)	






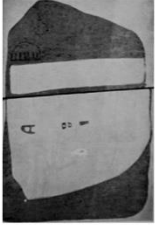

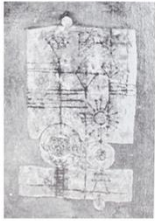

Visual Map 92. Third Tehran Biennial, Awards and Winners

			3. 3 Victoria Afshar Composition Oil pastel . 50 x 70 (WP)	51. 3 Changiz Shahvagh Abstract Oil . 66 x 100 (GM)	60. 3 Jazeh Tabatabai Iron sculpture 58x42x20 (SM)
			11. 3 Nasser Oveissi Pan player Drawing . 46x 5. 28 (GP)	52. 3 Changiz Shahvagh Woman Sculpture 165x150x100 (GM)	77. 3 Hossein Kazemi Composition Oil . 85 x 138 (GM)
			12. 3 Nasser Oveissi Tambourine players Gouache on canvas 89x78 (GP)	54. 3 Behjat Sadr Abstract Oil . 148 x 100 (RCP)	91. 3 Hossein Mahjoubi Portrait Oil . 77 x 35 (WP)
			23. 3 Faramarz Pilaram The Blades Gouache . 198 x 83 (SM)	55. 3 Behjat Sadr Black and white 156 x 33 (RCP)	103. 3 Fahimeh Navai Xylography 102 x 180 (WP)
			31. 3 Mansourreh Hosseini Abstract Oil . 85 x 150 (WP)	104. 3 M.Vaziri-Moghaddam Composition No.3 Sand Painting 150 x 100 (GM)	105. 3 M.Vaziri-Moghaddam Drawing No.6. 33/5x58/5 (GM)
			38. 3 Kamran Diba Digestion Oil . 124 x 85 (SM)	45. 3 Derakhshande Zaimi The streets of Spain Gravure . 35 x 48 (SM)	112. 3 Hossien Zenderoudi K+L+32+H4+ Essence .150 x 225 (RCP)
			46. 3 Derakhshande Zaimi Still life Oil . 45 x 65 (SM)	59. 3 Jazeh Tabatabai Neon No 1 Oil . 50 x 65 (SM)	115. 3 Abolghassem Saidi untitled Oil . 210 x 170 (WP)

Visual Map 93. Fourth Tehran Biennial, Awards and Winners

			7. 4 Reza Bangiz Procession Gravure . 74 x 102 (GM)	52. 4 Marie Shaianse Iranian dance Gravure . 34 x 49 (SP)	66. 4 Abdolhamid Fatemi Abstract Oil . 94 x 67 (GM)
			15. 4 Faramarz Pilaram Composition No .33 Gouache . 200 x 135 (SP)	53. 4 Marie Shaianse The woman and flower Mosaic . 70 x 95 (SP)	74. 4 Kamran Katouzian my grandfather when he was young Oil . 121 x 122 (RCP)
			25. 4 Fereydoun Rahimi-Assa The memory of Shiraz Gouache . 55 x 39 (EI)	60. 4 Jazeh Tabatabai Our time Collage . 55 x 129 (RCP)	75. 4 Kamran Katouzian Drawing 24 x 34 (RCP)
			26. 4 Fereydoun Rahimi-Assa Khark Island sketch . 54 x 78 (EI)	61. 4 Jazeh Tabatabai The Bird Iron . 100x138x195 (RCP)	76. 4 Kamran Katouzian scream Iron 56 x 190 x 28 (RCP)
			48. 4 Bahman Borudjeni Resurrection Oil . 90 x 210 (SP)	62. 4 Massoud Arabshahi Composition Oil . 119 x 146 (GP)	108. 4 Heshmat Jazani Painting Gouache . 73 x 55 (GM)
			49. 4 Bahman Borudjeni Life Gravure . 50 x 65 (SP)	63. 4 Massoud Arabshahi Sketch . 45 x 34 (GP)	
			51. 4 Marie Shaianse Mother Oil . 125 x 90 (SP)		

Visual Map 94. Fifth Tehran Biennial, Awards and Winners

			<p>15. 5 Javad Hamidi Composition Oil . 100 x 80</p> <p>(GP)</p>	<p>27. 5 Zhazeh Tabatabai Union Ink on canvas 85 x 183</p> <p>(SP)</p>	<p>38. 5 Lili Matin-Daftari Mother & child Oil . 122 x 69</p> <p>(GOP)</p>
			<p>19. 5 Hossein Zendehtroudi Minarets Water colour 149 x 97</p> <p>(WP)</p>	<p>28. 5 Zhazeh Tabatabai Neither bird nor man Sculpture in metal 104 x 76 x 48</p> <p>(SP)</p>	<p>41. 5 Gholam Hossein Nami Tombstone our graves Oil . 100 x 140</p> <p>(EI)</p>
			<p>20. 5 Abolghassen Saeedi Green composition Oil . 198 x 196</p> <p>(RCP)</p>	<p>34. 5 Mansour Ghandriz Composition Oil . 100 x 70</p> <p>(RCP)</p>	
			<p>25. 5 Ahmad shocibi Life Oil . 100 x 50</p> <p>(WP)</p>		

Visual Map 95, My practice in a contemporary context

Images removed because of copyright reason.

Appendix D Interview

This email interview took place on the 25th February 2015 with Professor Ehsan Yarshater.

1. What additions do you think Tehran Biennials make to the Iranian Art?

By bringing a comprehensive sample of Persian contemporary art together it served as a further stimulus to Iranian artists.

2. Do you think that Tehran Biennials achieved the aims they were lunched for?

I believe they did in so far as painting, which was before the Biennials mostly confined to illustration of books to become a major and developing Iranian art.

3. Why did Tehran Biennial shut down in 1966 although, in this year, Tehran Biennial's directors achieved one of the declared aims; holding an Asian Biennial that Iran, Pakistan and Turkey were part of?

As I was no longer residing in Iran, but was living and teaching in New York, I cannot say with certainty what was the reason for not renewing the Biennials.

4. How did curatorial vision over the five Tehran Biennials develop and grow?

As I was not a curator for any of the Biennial exhibitions I can only guess that it stimulated among the artists the desire to be exhibited in a biennial considering the good reputation and success of earlier of the first biennial.

5. Based on your suggestion in the introduction of the first Tehran Biennial that 'during the last two centuries, after the fall of miniature art from the late Safavid period and the short period of Realism begun by Kamal al-Molk's and ending by his students, the signs of new movement are observable in Iran's painting art. And Iranian modern artists started to make a new style in Iran's fine art which would bring glory for them' (Yarshater, 1958, p. 2).

- Do you believe that Iranian artists succeeded in creating a 'national school of art'? Do you think that Iranian contemporary artists have any unique identity in their artworks compared with other international artists?
- How were Iranian regional, ethnic and religious differences represented in Tehran Biennials? Was that an attempt to emphasize the national identity against Western influence?

To a certain extent the Biennials helped to create a movement towards national style of painting. The Saqa-khaneh School, which attracted many artists, fully or partially, was greatly helped by the biennials. But as Iran like some other countries

in the Near and the Middle East remained subject to influence from the West and continued to be so in Pahlavi era and after the Islamic Revolution, it is difficult to speak of a national school of painting.

6. On what bases were the judges selected? Did the jury members have any influence on artists to continue special techniques, subjects, elements and so on?

They were selected because of their experience. Mohsen Foroughi was well acquainted with Western art and possessed some samples of it. The Italian jurist was selected both because of his experience and also in order to include a non-Iranian jurist to strengthen the international character of the judges. I had published a series of articles on modern art, particularly from Impressionism onward and later two volumes on Modern Painting.

7. Selecting artists and artworks to represent Iran in international art festivals has been an important issue for Iranian artists and art directors. In the mid twenty century Iranian art directors launched the Tehran Biennials (1958-1966) to find a means to select artworks to represent Iran in international art festivals, especially Venice Biennial. International jury members helped Iranians to choose the artworks for international art exhibitions. In the fifth Tehran Biennial and nowadays Iranians do the selections by themselves.
- What is your opinion about the way artworks were selected to represent Iran in international art festivals and markets? Did Western opinions have any effect on the decisions? In other words, do Iranian artists and art directors, in their selections, follow the Western taste to be successful in international art festivals and markets?
 - What does the Iranian curator seek in international biennials? Were there any differences between the artworks exhibited inside and outside Iran?

The Biennials provided a good opportunity for the innovative artists to have their work exhibited, thus providing a stimulus for them to work harder and to get acquainted with the latest developments in Western art. Even though some of the artists like the post-Impressionism Gauguin and Van Gogh or Pollock or those who allowed themselves to become inspired by African art did not find conspicuous followers in Iran.

8. Did the Cold War cultural politics make Modern/ Abstract Art expand in Iran during 1950s and 1960s?

I don't think that the Cold War and the hostile relations between the West and the USSR played a role in the development of painting in Iran. Social realism that developed in the USSR did not find followers in Iran; Abstract painting was again a direct influence from Western Europe.

9. In your opinion what was the impact of Modernity and Orientalism upon art works during 1950s and 1960s? What was the influence of Modernisation Policy on artists and their artworks during 1950s and 1960s?

These were again instances of Western influence in Iran.

10. What was the reaction of Iranian society regarding the artworks exhibited in Tehran Biennials?

I believe that the first and second Biennials have a positive response from the artists as well as the viewers and so they helped further development of painting in Iran and deepen the influence of the West, while attempts were made to create a national school of art. The Saqa-Khaneh School as I mentioned was an instance of these tendencies.

Please note that nationalism as it developed towards the end of Qajar era and the Pahlavi period was itself a product of Western influence and nationalism.

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