EDITOR’S NOTE

Dear Readers,
I hope this finds you in good health and spirits despite the ongoing challenges posed by the global pandemic and the terrible consequences of the Ukraine war, there, in Iran, and elsewhere. That art can bring respite in challenging times is powerfully evoked in the current issue of the newsletter, which draws our attention to two outstanding exhibitions, one at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, the other at the Chester Beatty Museum in Dublin. Further, we are offered a close-up of the Islamic manuscripts—on loan from the British Library—that were on view at the Epic Iran exhibition of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. Several universities share their exciting Iranian Studies program and dissertation news, and we can read of the inspiring work done by artist Raheleh Filsoofi, as well as an interview with the writer Zara Houshmand about composing the memoir of Monir Farmanfarmaian.

In association news, last fall, AIS held elections for the position of president-elect and members of the AIS council. Congratulations are in order to Firoozeh Kashani Sabet who has been elected AIS President (beginning her term after MESA 2022), to Nahid Siamdoust and Assef Ashraf as new individual AIS Council members, and to Layah Ziaii-Bigdeli as new student council member.

Please take note of the important information conveyed on the next page by AIS Conference Chair Miguel Angel Andres-Toledo. We look forward to seeing you all at the AIS conference in Salamanca in August!!

I thank all contributors for their thoughtful submissions to this issue and wish everyone a healthy and fulfilling summer 2022. As always, please do get in touch, so that we can feature your exciting research, training and program news in future issues.

Best wishes, Mirjam Künkler
MESSAGE FROM THE AIS CONFERENCE PROGRAM CHAIR

Dear AIS Members and Friends,

It is my great pleasure to announce that the preliminary program of the AIS2022 Biennial Conference of Iranian Studies, which will take place at the Faculty of Philology of the University of Salamanca from August 30 to September 2, 2022, is available online on our website: https://associationforiranianstudies.org/conferences/2022

Please kindly check it to be sure you are among the more than 350 participants in the program!

On the previous link you will also find more details about our conference venue, accommodation and travel information. Apart from the panels, roundtables and special sessions of the conference, a sightseeing tour of Salamanca is planned on the evening of August 31 (registration on https://associationforiranianstudies.org/conferences/2022/information) and a concert of the Spanish-Iranian ensemble Badieh on the evening of September 1.

Participants who decide to reach Salamanca by train (www.renfe.com/es/en) will get a discount of 5% on the total amount with the authorization number 052207172, Congress/Fair: 13th Biennial Iranian Studies Conference (AIS2022).

The AIS2022 will primarily be an in-person event, but some participants, whose paper is marked in yellow in the program, are expected to present online. We will carefully take into account all the health measures in place at the time and the maximum capacity of each room available, always prioritizing health and security for all participants.

I look forward to welcoming you in Salamanca at the end of August 2022.

Sincerely yours,
Miguel Ángel Andrés-Toledo
(Program Chair / Conference Chair)
Review Essays

Under the Waves: The Many Lives of Moniru Ravanipur’s The Drowned
Fatemeh Shams

Letting Live in Revolutionary Iran
Milad Odabaei

Reviews

ISSUE 2, 2022
Editor’s Note
Sussan Siavoshi

ARTICLES

FOREIGN POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
Articles
“Betrayed into the Hands of the Enemy”: The 1795–96 Russian Investigation of the Death of Hedayat-Allah Khan of Gilan
Kevin Gledhill

William A. Figueroa

POLITICS AND HISTORY
Article
Select Tribes and Smugglers in Iran’s Eastern Borderlands, 1921–41
Mikiya Koyagi

The Hero of “the Noble Afshar People”: Reconsidering Nader Shah’s Claims to Lineage and Legitimacy
Ali Aydin Karamustafa

ART HISTORY AND LITERARY STUDIES
Article
The “Kāmūsī Corpus”: A Case Study in Manuscript Production and Knowledge Transmission in Ilkhanid Iran
Bruno De Nicola

AIS COMMITTEE FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM

On January 14, 2022, the AIS Committee for Academic Freedom issued a letter to express its deep sorrow and outrage regarding the tragic death of Mr. Baktash Abtin, the Iranian poet and board member of the Iranian Writers’ Association, due to delays in receiving medical treatment after contracting COVID-19 in Evin prison.

The letter can be found at:

AIS-CAF also issued a letter on March 7, 2022 to express its concern for the violations of academic freedom in Iran in light of a spate of dismissals of university faculty, including the dismissal of Professor Arash Abazari, Department of Philosophy of Science, Sharif University of Technology, Professor Mohammad Fazeli, Department of Sociology, Shahid Beheshti University, and Professor Reza Omidi, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tehran.

The statement can be found at:
https://associationforiraniansstudied.org/sites/default/files/Afghan%20bombing%20Letter%20to%20CAF.pdf
MEMBER NEWS

Abbas Amanat (of Yale University) has published the book 'Ahd-e Qajar va Sawda-ye Frang (عهد قاجار و سودای فرنگ), London: Mehr Publication, 2021, 333 pages, 19 illustrations. It consists of an introduction, seven chapters, and an epilogue. The book looks at various aspects of the Qajar era and its interactions with European modernity. The book can be acquired through customercare@iranfarhang.com and mozhgan@iranfarhang.com.

Mohsen Ashtiany (of the Yarshater Center at Columbia University) has received an honorary doctorate in the field of Civilizations of Asia and Africa from the University of Rome La Sapienza. On 19 October 2021, a ceremony was held in the Senate Room of the University’s Rectorate to confer it. The honorary degree recognizes the service Mohsen Ashtiany has rendered to Iranian Studies throughout his life’s work, as well as for the wide recognition of his contributions in the scholarly community and among the Iranian intellectual diaspora. Speakers at the ceremony included Antonella Polimeni (Rector of La Sapienza University), Federica Casalini (Coordinator of the Doctoral Program in Civilizations of Asia and Africa, Sapienza University), Carlo Cereti (Professor at Sapienza University), and Elton L. Daniel (Yarshater Center and University). The ceremony can be viewed in full at the institutional link: https://youtu.be/otfY-fGfjsk.


Mehrzad Boroujerdi (of Virginia Tech University) has been appointed Vice Provost and Dean of the College of Arts, Sciences, and Education at Missouri University of Science and Technology. He has also been awarded one of three inaugural Scholar Rescue Fund (SRF) Vartan Gregorian Research Grants. The grants honor the life and legacy of Dr. Vartan Gregorian, a champion for global peace and academic freedom, who worked throughout his life to expand access to education, to promote international exchange, and to preserve the lives and work of threatened scholars. The grants, each in the amount of $25,000, fund original research and projects that deepen knowledge of the threats faced by academics in diverse contexts across the globe and explore innovative ideas for supporting these scholars. Dr. Boroujerdi’s qualitative research project, involving in-person interviews and surveys, will catalogue the conditions that have impeded scholarly inquiry in Iran and Afghanistan and have led many scholars to leave their countries of birth. It will explore how displaced Afghan and Iranian scholars assess the measures that Western governments, universities, and civic and advocacy organizations have adopted to help them and will share these scholars’ ideas for the most effective support mechanisms. Dr. Boroujerdi is interested in talking to Afghan and Iranian academics and scholars who have been forced to leave their countries about their experiences. He can be contacted at mehrzad@vt.edu.

Peyman Eshaghi (of the BGSMCS, Berlin) has published the chapter “Mapping the trends in Iranian social, cultural, religious, and political thought from the post-1979 era to the present” in The Routledge International Handbook of Contemporary Muslim Socio-Political Thought. Routledge, 2021, pp. 450-463.

Manoutchehr Eskandari-Qajar has published a new book, titled The Artist and the Shah, Mage Publishers, 2022. The book contains the first-ever translation of two of Dust-Ali Khan’s memoirs as well as 280 photographs taken from public archives and private collections. The memoirs and most of the photographs are presented here for the first time in their proper context.


Raheleh Filsoofi (of Vanderbilt University) has received the 2021 Helene Zucker Seeman Curatorial Fellowship for Women for her curatorial exhibition “Reinterpreted/Reimagined” to be held September-December 2023 at the Fine Art Gallery at Vanderbilt University. The curatorial exhibitions, along with lectures and panel discussions, are designed to provide a unique opportunity to engage with the many voices and perspectives of notable contemporary women, queer and non-binary artist/scholars - ultimately building bridges between concepts, cultures, and communities.
**MEMBER NEWS CONT’D**

- **Ali Gheissari** (of the University of San Diego) published an expanded Persian version of “Khatt va Rabt: The Significance of Private Papers for Qajar Historiography,” in Ayneh-ye Pazhoohesh, No. 191 (32/5), Azar-Dey 1400 (December 2021 – January 2022), pp. 51-67. He also delivered the 2022 Ann Lambton Memorial Lecture, on “Unequal Treaties and the Question of Sovereignty in Qajar and early Pahlavi Iran,” hosted jointly by the Institute for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, Durham University, and the British Institute of Persian Studies, on April 06, 2022.

- **Carole Hillenbrand and Robert Hillenbrand** have each been awarded the Royal Asiatic Society Medal. During the award ceremony, which took place on the 7th of April 2022 in London, the recipients delivered two lectures, respectively: “The Golden Age of the Turks? The Seljuqs in the World History of Rashid al-Din” by Prof. Carole Hillenbrand, and “Ilkhanid Images of Majesty: the Seljuq monarchs in the World History of Rashid al-Din” by Prof. Robert Hillenbrand.

- **Peyman Jafari** (of the University of Amsterdam) has been awarded a VENI grant by the Dutch Research Council (NWO) for a project titled “Oil Frontiers in the British and Dutch Empires: Land, Labour and Environment in the Making of an Imperial Oil Regime, 1890-1940.” The global history project compares and connects two case studies: southern Iran while under the influence of the British Empire and the Dutch East Indies. It offers a bottom-up perspective on how oil frontiers transformed the countryside in these regions and integrated them into a global system through the movement of people, ideas and technologies. The project will be hosted at the International Institute of Social History at the University of Amsterdam as part of the Commodity Frontiers research group.


- **Lara Parodi** (of the University of Rotterdam) has won the 2022 Hasan-Uddin Khan Article Award, presented by the International Journal of Islamic Architecture (IJIA), for her article ‘Kabul, a Forgotten Mughal Capital: Gardens, City, and Court at the Turn of the Sixteenth Century’, published in Muqarnas 38, 2021, pp. 79-118. The award involves a cash prize of $1000 and a 2-year subscription to IJIA.

- **Pouneh Shabani-Jadidi** (of the University of Chicago) is the 2021 winner of the Lois Roth Prize for Literary Translation from Persian, for her co-translation of Hafez in Love: A Novel, originally titled: Hafez-e Nashenide Pand by Iraj Pezeshkzad, Syracuse University Press (2021). Together with Prashant Keshavmurthy, she has also published The Eight Books: A Complete English Translation (of Sohrab Sepehri’s Hasht Ketab), Brill 2022.

- **Ahmad Shahvary** (formerly of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran) announces the publication of several books on Iranian culture and history (among them “Decline of the Sassanian Empire”, “History of Parthian Empire”, “World Outlook of Omar Khayyam”). The books are available in pdf format free of charge here.

OBITUARY

Julie Scott Meisami, 1937-2021

With her insightful contributions to the study of Persian literature, Arabic literature, and comparative literature, our colleague Julie Scott Meisami has left us with many treasures. One of her monographs, Structure and Meaning in Medieval Arabic and Persian Court Poetry: Orient Pearls, was titled tongue-in-cheek to refer to her challenge to claims that this poetry was somehow deficient due to some modern scholars’ perception that its structure is too fragmented. In this book, Meisami delves into an astonishing range of poetic genres and their intersection with one another in Arabic and Persian poetry and criticism in order to assess each genre in connection with the historical, aesthetic, and religious aspects of the poets’ worldview, while engaging with colleagues in each of these fields and drawing on her ample knowledge of medieval European cultures for comparison.

In every topic of her scholarship, we gain access to the depth of Julie Meisami’s understanding of Persian and Arabic literature. Her article “Places in the Past: the poetics/politics of nostalgia” reveals the layers of meaning in the depiction of locations from gardens to palaces while she leads us in an exploration of the way that poets expressed their desire and devotion, whether to a beloved or a patron. In the article “The Body as Garden: Nature and Sexuality in Persian Poetry,” she demonstrates that the sensual description of the object of desire gives insight as much on that objectified person as on the poet’s own situation and mood. Meisami guides us through ideas about separation, union, and loss, the relationship between the body and the garden, and the vicissitudes of patronage. As she leads us in our examination of this topic in the ghazal, qasida, and masnavi, we begin to realize the use of imagery to imply the interconnections among sensual, emotional, political, and religious aspects of experience. These dimensions of her work—the focus on ethical implications and the multiple meanings of sensuality—can be viewed as a background for current research interests in the role of allusions to multiple genres, Islamic thought, erotic experience, and history in medieval Persian and Arabic literature.

Julie Scott Meisami pursued her brilliant career as a graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley, where she received a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature in 1971, then as a scholar and teacher at the University of Tehran (1971-1980), and at Oxford University, where she was appointed University Lecturer in Persian in 1985 and taught until her retirement in 2002. After moving back to California, she continued to work as a scholar and shared her guidance and advice with colleagues, and gave a public lecture at the University of California, Berkeley. She was unique in the breadth and depth of her knowledge of genres of poetry and prose in medieval Persian and Arabic literature as well as her incisive yet fair and objective assessment of the benefits and shortcomings of modern scholarship in these fields. She enriched our understanding of medieval Persian and Arabic literature and responded to the many cross-cultural misunderstandings about it in her scholarship that is always a pleasure to read and an inspiration to students and scholars. Julie Meisami’s leadership in the field continues to pave the way for Persianists and Arabists alike whenever they set out to begin a new research project in the field of literature.

Jocelyn Sharlet
University of California, Davis
The Foundation for Iranian Studies is pleased to announce that the Committee on Selection of the Best Ph.D. Dissertation of the Year on a Topic of Iranian Studies of the Foundation for Iranian Studies has chosen Paul Gerard Anderson’s dissertation “A Deluge of Tears: A Conflux of Persian Shi’i Literature, Ritual, and Identity in Martyrdom Narratives,” submitted to the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, as the recipient of the Foundation’s annual Ph.D. dissertation award for the academic year 2020-2021.

In making its decision, the Committee, following the criteria established by the Foundation’s Board of Directors, noted that Paul Anderson has made an “exceptional contribution to the field of Iranian and Middle Eastern Studies by, among other achievements, ‘stating clearly the study’s problematic ... constructing an adequate and efficient theoretical framework ... developing and using successfully a rigorous methodology to bring together a significant array of primary and secondary sources ... securing a judicious and affective connection between the immaculate history of Husayn ibn ‘Ali, Martyred grandson of the Prophet of Islam, and Hoseyn Beyhaq Kashefi, creator of Rowzat ol-Shohada, an exceptional narrative of Imam Husayn’s life and death produced in Persian ... adopting intellectually and practically an innovative approach to demonstrate the effect of Rowzat not only on the Safavid dynasty’s palpable commitment to the expansion of Persian culture, but also on the evolution of Shi’a Islam for the next centuries in Iran ... demonstrating originality in approach, balance in reaching conclusions, adeptness in conjoining thought, literature, and ability to relate and conjoin needed aspects of art, literature, and history ... excellent organization of the work.’”

2. Hajj provided the Iranian state with a unique chance to test, develop and modify its relationship with the Ottomans. This happened partly to the Qajar elites who traveled to Mecca through Ottoman territories in an informal, non-official and even unintended way.

3. International politics in Qajar Iran was created not only by formal policy, negotiations, and contracts but also by a wide range of informal communications in which hajj played an important role. As the Iranian political elites informally held the position of Iranian pilgrims’ administrators, they simultaneously proceeded with the Iranian state’s hajj administration and developed the presence and diplomacy of Qajars. In other words, I show that a part of the Iranian Qajar state’s trans-imperial, cultural, and international presence and influence was developed and guaranteed by the pilgrimages of its high-ranking officials.

4. Despite the conventional understanding that the creation of Iranian modernity in the late modern period is majorly based on traveling to the West and reading Western travelogues, the Iranian hajj, especially pilgrimages made by influential elites and notables, played an essential role in connecting Iranians to the outside world and thus contributed to Iranian modernity. The evolution of this “non-westward modernity” unfolded in close contact with the hajj, as an essential Muslim ritual and was constituted by getting in touch with the modality of dealing with modernity by fellow Muslims in different parts of the world, especially in the Ottoman lands and getting in contact with the Ottoman officialdom. It also helped them witness the Ottoman and other Muslims’ experience with modernity in terms such as political freedom, constitutionalism, human rights, technological changes, and industrial modernity. Hajj provided a brilliant opportunity for the conservative strata of the Iranian political elite to have close contact with ordinary and elite fellow Muslims from abroad and be influenced by their fellows’ understanding of modern concepts in Istanbul, Damascus, Beirut, Aleppo, Alexandria, and Cairo. Thus, beyond traveling to Europe and writing travelogues about the changes that happened there in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, which is generally considered the primary sources of inspiration for political freedom, constitutionalism, human rights, technological changes, and industrial modernity. Hajj also unfolded in close contact with the hajj, as an essential Muslim ritual and was constituted by getting in touch with the modality of dealing with modernity by fellow Muslims in different parts of the world, especially in the Ottoman lands and getting in contact with the Ottoman officialdom. 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greater Persianate world, and the Persian language. Twelve teachers/educators will create curricular materials on these subjects to implement in their classrooms. CMES will assure national dissemination of the materials. The project will be co-led by CMES Associate Director, Dr. Julie Ellison-Speight and School of Middle Eastern and North African Studies Assistant Professor Austin O’Malley. The team will be assisted by artist and community college educator Nazafarin Lotfi. The project benefits from co-sponsorship by the American Institute of Iranian Studies and the UA Roshan Graduate Interdisciplinary Program.


CMES also features Iranian studies content in outreach activities. Among these over the past year were a screening of director Massoud Bakhshi’s film, “Yalda: A Night of Forgiveness;” a virtual presentation to AP Comparative Government teachers about the past year were a screening of director Massoud Bakhshi’s film, “Yalda: A Night of Forgiveness;” a virtual presentation to AP Comparative Government teachers about relations between Iran and the US by Faten Ghosn, University of Essex, UK; and a two-part summer course on Iranian art—ancient, classical, and modern--presented by Andrew Zonoozi, received FLAS. Gianni Izzo, and Shabbir Agha Abbas received additional benefits from co-sponsorship by the American Institute of Iranian Studies and the UA Roshan Graduate Interdisciplinary Program.

Graduate students in MENAS And Roshan GIDP have had a productive year. Mojtaba Ebrahimian (Ph.D.) received a teaching position at Harvard University. Lexie Palmer, Andrew Zonoozi, received FLAS, Gianni Izzo, and Shabbir Agha Abbas received Roshan GIDP or Taleghani Fellowships. Sajedeh Hosseini received a highly competitive dissertation grant award from the College of Social and Behavioral Sciences. Shahram Parasteh has defended his MA thesis and will graduate this term. Robin Lesley Brackett, who had received her MA degree from Roshan GIDP, is continuing her doctoral studies at the University of Oregon.

### Modern Iran: A History in Documents
Edited, translated, and introduced by Negin Nabavi

Covering the period from the early nineteenth century to the present day, *Modern Iran: A History in Documents* brings together primary sources in translation that shed light on the political, social, cultural, and intellectual history of modern Iran. This book comprises a wide variety of documents from newspapers, periodicals, diaries, memoirs, letters, speeches, and essays, all of which have been translated from the Persian for the first time. It captures the momentous changes that society has undergone, encompassing not only political events and developments, but also ideas, perceptions, and mindsets. In addition to well-known texts from diplomatic conventions, the book features passages by lesser-known men and women who describe the reception of and response to major developments across the social strata. The book is divided into ten chapters, with the final one bringing together documents that offer insights into recent events; these documents highlight contrasting viewpoints expressed in the Iranian press regarding the nuclear agreement reached in 2015 between Iran and six world powers.

Negin Nabavi, associate professor at Montclair State University, is the author of *Intelligentsia and the State in Iran: Politics, Discourse, and the Dilemma of Authenticity* and *Iran: From Theocracy to the Green Movement*.

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**Part One – Iran in the “Long Nineteenth Century”: 1785–1911**

- Chapter 1: Qajar Rule, Society, and the Great Powers
- Chapter 2: Reforms, Economic Concessions, and Expressions of Dissent
- Chapter 3: Constitution and Constitutionalism: Debates and Developments

**Part Two – 1911–1978**

- Chapter 4: War, Coup D’État, Hopes, and Disillusionment
- Chapter 5: State-Building, the Politics of Modernization, and Its Discontents
- Chapter 6: Intellectuals, Islam, and the Search for “Cultural Authenticity”


- Chapter 7: The Months Leading to the 1979 Revolution
- Chapter 8: Defining the Islamic Republic
- Chapter 9: Voices of Reform and Societal Transformations
- Chapter 10: The Tenth Presidential Election and Its Aftermath

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**OF RELATED INTEREST**

- The Shites: A Short History
  - Halm, Heinz
  - HC ISBN: 9781558764361
  - PB ISBN: 9781558764378

- Iran: A Short History
  - Gronke, Monika
  - HC ISBN: 9781558764446
  - PB ISBN: 9781558764453

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Markus Wiener Publishers
www.markusiwiener.com
Agreement of Cooperation between Ehsan Yarshater Center and Sapienza University of Rome

The Ehsan Yarshater Center for Iranian Studies is pleased to announce the signing on 13 May 2022 of a Letter of Cooperation between the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of Sapienza University of Rome and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Columbia University to promote academic work of mutual benefit to both institutions in the field of Iranian Studies. Specifically, the agreement enables faculty and advanced students from Sapienza University to collaborate in the editorial work of the Yarshater Center, thus actively contributing to the activities of the Yarshater Center. It provides a framework for the reciprocal exchange of visits by scholars, research and training programs, organization of meetings and seminars, and other programs under the auspices of the Yarshater Center and the Department of Ancient World Studies at Sapienza University.

The staff of the Yarshater Center look forward to working with their colleagues at Sapienza University to promote and develop the Center's current projects, the Encyclopaedia Iranica and the History of Persian Literature series, and they believe that this collaboration will strengthen and enrich these endeavors.

News from the Persian Heritage Foundation

The Persian Heritage Foundation is pleased to announce that the following academic projects have been approved for funding in the most recent funding cycle:


The British Institute for Persian Studies (BIPS) will host the following webinars:

**Roi sur son Trône: the Achaemenid royal audience in late Qajar media with Lindsay Allen**
29 June 2022, 5PM BST
**REGISTER HERE** for the Zoom Webinar

This lecture aims to advance the case for specific patterns of neo-Achaemenid citation in the late 19th century by scrutinising selective Qajar-era appropriations of the royal audience scene. The scene, itself an archaising adaptation of pre-existing stagings of imperial kingship in ancient Western Asia, was visible (at the time) only on surviving door jambs at Persepolis. Redeployed in specific locations in the house of Qavam al-Molk in Shiraz, the scene also became for a while the most prominent neo-Achaemenidism in elite carpet production, seemingly signalling spatial and tribal as well as royal affinities. Allen argues that detailed multi-media mapping allows us to both refine and diversify our understanding of the intended meanings of pre-Islamic "influence" in the context of nineteenth-century Iran.

**The Mobility of Persian Artefacts: The Sanguszko Carpet in Motion with Dr Yuka Kadoi**
20 JULY 2022, 5PM BST
**REGISTER HERE** for the Zoom Webinar

Originally woven in Iran during the sixteenth century, one of the most celebrated classical Persian carpets to survive today — the "Sanguszko Carpet", currently housed at the Miho Museum in Japan — made an extraordinary intercontinental journey. It found its way to Europe during the early modern period and continued its journey across the Atlantic Ocean in the early twentieth century; furthermore, it went on an odyssey across the Pacific Ocean afterwards. In this illustrated talk, Yuka Kadoi makes a fresh analysis of the sociocultural migratory journey of the Sanguszko Carpet, while shedding new light on the mechanisms of cross-continental object sharing and networking across different oceanic spheres.

Please register for the webinar using this button.

**RECORDINGS OF PAST EVENTS CAN BE ACCESSED HERE**
A bilingual lecture series on Iran at UCLA has allowed the Iranian community of Southern California to further learn about their roots in their native language.

The series, sponsored by UCLA’s Program of Iranian Studies and supported by the Center for Near Eastern Studies, offers lectures in both English and Persian and primarily focuses on modern Iranian culture, politics and society, according to organizer Nayereh Tohidi.

The program is structured so most lectures are split into two days, one for each language, with each lecture followed by a Q&A panel, said Tohidi, a research associate in the Program of Iranian Studies and a gender and women’s studies professor at California State University, Northridge. Sundays are often reserved for lectures in Persian, while Mondays are mostly reserved for the same lecture in English.

Although there are occasionally lectures in only one language, Tohidi said she tried to invite lecturers who are comfortable with lecturing in both languages.

A cross-campus collaboration between professors from UCLA and California State University, Northridge created the Bilingual Lecture Series on Iran in 2003. Since then, the series has hosted a variety of speakers to provide lectures in Persian and English about topics such as Iranian politics, culture and society. (Constanza Montemayor/Daily Bruin senior staff)
EXHIBITION REPORT

Listening: The Fourth String
Report on an Artistic Collaboration:
Artist + Musician + Community = SOCIAL AWARENESS + SOCIAL CHANGE

Visual Artist: Raheleh Filsoofi https://www.rahelehfilsoofi.com
Musician: Reza Filsoofi http://www.historymiami.org/reza-filsoofi/

Listening: The Fourth String is a series of interactive multimedia installations and public performances that re-imagine the silenced existence of the Iranian musician and Sufi, Moshtagh Ali Shah (18th century) and emphasizes his historic contributions to music. The project addresses the concept of sound, suggesting the act of listening can nourish community engagement, promote social change, and contribute to a better future. The exhibition has been set via various events and the first phase was recently exhibited in The New Gallery at Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN.

The Fourth String is a reference to the traditional Iranian instrument setar. Literally translated from Persian, setar means three (se) strings (tar), and the Iranian setar is a three-stringed instrument. However, centuries ago, the Iranian Sufi musician Moshtagh Ali Shah added a fourth string. This dramatically changed the instrument from its original configuration, enhancing the sound and allowing musicians to explore more complex compositional and performance possibilities while retaining the traditional capabilities of the three-stringed instrument.

Shah's contribution to musical culture, despite its historical significance, remains obscure as he has been deliberately excluded from the majority of textbooks and research articles. His religious beliefs of Sufism, combined with his use of the setar in the recitation of the Qur'an, led to his tragic death by stoning and his elimination from Iranian musical history. Ironically, although his name has ceased to exist, the fourth string remains on the setar to this day as an invisible but manifest testament to Moshtagh Ali Shah's contribution, one that resonates in more than one way as a reminder of cultural innovation and courage.

The installation and performances intend to facilitate positive social change by educating those in attendance about Middle Eastern music, art and history through interaction and direct participation. It is also meant to serve as a tribute not only to Moshtagh Ali Shah, but to the many silenced and censored artists throughout history who have remained obscure. The installation endeavors to explore listening both as a concept and an act — through sounds, voices, instruments, perspectives, etc. — and highlight the null of the listening experience -- that which typically is unheard and often ignored in a performance. The goal is to challenge Middle Eastern stereotypes and broaden the participants' knowledge and understanding. Music and art have the potential to expand cultural awareness, acting as a bridge to thoughtful listening to each side of the cultural divide.

There are three components to this exhibition:

1) Installation and Performance

A Kermani rug that traditionally serves as a gathering place is transformed into a four-string instrument where artists and community members can experience sound and music together. In addition to community participation, local musicians have been invited to collaborate in an experimental performance with this instrument.
2) An Installation – Artists as Witnesses

In a multi-channel video, this installation provides an opportunity for underrepresented artists to collectively come together as witnesses and participants of social change in action. Close-ups of over 30 Middle Eastern musicians peer back at exhibition viewers.

3) Installation as a Platform for Learning and Engagement

An educational and interactive installation allows individuals to sit and play the setar. Three video monitors provide step-by-step instruction on a few basic strumming and picking techniques.

The installations, performances, and artists’ lectures intend to broaden participants’ knowledge and understanding of Middle Eastern music and its ethos. They provide unique educational and performance opportunities for the community. The exhibit showcases the dynamic aspects of Middle Eastern music, its capacity to integrate with other musical genres, and the potency of its contribution to the soundscape of the United States.

About the artists:

Raheleh Filsoofi is a multidisciplinary Iranian American artist based in the United States. Her work synthesizes sociopolitical statements as a point of departure and further challenges these fundamental arguments by incorporating ancient and contemporary media such as ceramics, poetry, ambient sound, and video to create a holistic sensory experience. Her interdisciplinary practices examine the literal and figurative contexts of border, immigration, land, and ownership. Raheleh is an assistant professor in Ceramics at Vanderbilt University.

Reza Filsoofi is a multi-instrumentalist, singer, and composer born in Tehran, Iran. Reza’s versatile musical styles combined with his expansive knowledge of different classical instruments have given him opportunities to collaborate with numerous artists and musicians in a variety of projects.

For over six years Raheleh’s and Reza Filsoofi’s socially engaged practices as visual artist and musician have brought groups of people together from diverse cultural backgrounds in South Florida and South Texas. They currently live and practice in Nashville, Tennessee.
EXHIBITIONS

**The Getty Museum in Los Angeles** is currently featuring the exhibition *Persia: Ancient Iran and the Classical World* (April 6–August 8, 2022, GETTY VILLA). It includes over 200 objects from ancient dynasties of Persia/Iran.

Ancient Iran, historically known as Persia, was the dominant nation of western Asia for over a millennium (about 550 BC–AD 650), with three native dynasties controlling an empire of unprecedented size and complexity. This exhibition, part of the Getty Museum’s program The Classical World in Context, explores the artistic and cultural connections between the rival powers of Iran, Greece, and Rome. Works on view include royal sculpture, spectacular luxury objects, religious images, and historical documents assembled from major museums in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East. The exhibition is supported by an immersive film presentation exploring the site and palaces of the ceremonial capital of Achaemenid Persia, Persepolis.

Also available is a website experience allowing for in-depth exploration of the magnificent palace complex of Persepolis and objects featured in the exhibition.

**The Chester Beatty Library in Dublin** is currently featuring the exhibition *Meeting in Isfahan: Vision and Exchange in Safavid Iran* (April 4–August 28, 2022). As the global silk trade boosted Iran’s economy, the popular rhyme observed: “Isfahan, nesf-e jahan” – “Isfahan is half the world”. In 1598 the city of Isfahan became the new capital of Iran, signalling a vibrant transformation of political, spiritual and cultural life under the Safavid dynasty. Wealthy, successful and ostentatious, Safavid Isfahan was a hub for dazzling urbanity throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. New vistas opened up as a modern urban layout was drawn across this ancient city, and European merchant travellers published breathless accounts of their experiences. Bringing together the internationally celebrated collections of the Chester Beatty with generous loans from the National Museum of Ireland, Meeting in Isfahan explores this cosmopolitan urban centre of trade, ideas and visual culture.

With 65 works from the Chester Beatty’s Persian, Turkish, Arabic and Armenian collections, as well as early printed books and maps from Europe, this exhibition features paintings and drawings by the most renowned artists of the Safavid period: Reza Abbasi, Muhammad Zaman, Mu’in Musavvir, and many others. Much of the exhibition can be visited online [here](#).
EXHIBITIONS CONT’D

Designed to enhance the exhibition, an academic conference, titled Seeing Isfahan: Perspectives on the Safavid Image, was convened May 27-28, 2022 which examined an illuminating cross-section of visual and intellectual culture in Isfahan. The keynote lecture, given by Massumeh Farhad (National Museum of Asian Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.), titled Towards a New Pictorial Language: Painting and Patronage in Seventeenth-Century Iran, can be viewed online here.

Pejman Akbarzadeh reports from the exhibition and his interview with curator Moya Carey, produced for Voice of America’s Persian Television:

Seventy works are on display; mostly from the Chester Beatty collection and some on loan from the National Museum of Ireland. Visitors have a special opportunity to look closely at magnificent examples of Persian paintings of the 16th and 17th centuries. Of these, the museum is particularly proud of a 1675 work by Muhammad Zaman, which describes the birth of Rostam, the legendary hero of Ferdowsi’s Book of the Kings [Shahnameh]. Curator Moya Carey comments: “The scene is very dynamic and cinematic. It shows us the labour of princess Rudabeh who is suffering a difficult childbirth. Her worried husband Zal is nearby. Years beforehand, Zal himself had been fostered as an infant by Simorgh, the wise magical bird of Persian mythology. Before they parted, Simorgh gave one of its feathers to the young Zal, to burn whenever he needed help. Now, Zal is in fear that his wife will die in childbirth, and so he finally burns Simorgh’s feather. The artist’s beautiful scene shows the bird arriving, and perfectly shares the dramatic urgency of Ferdowsi’s story.”

The art of Safavid Isfahan contains many examples of cultural exchange: references to India, China, Europe and the new Armenian population are visible. This confirms Isfahan’s famous cosmopolitan atmosphere. Moya Carey believes Isfahan’s cosmopolitanism can be seen even in the objects that people owned there: “One example might be a qalian which is on display in the exhibition. It was produced in Isfahan but follows the style of Chinese porcelain. Its tobacco was probably imported by Dutch traders. For all that, it is inscribed with 16th-century Persian verses by Ahi Shirazi. This shows an interesting mix of older heritage, new ideas and consumer tastes, and a cosmopolitan and lively outlook on the world.”

To support the exhibition, the Chester Beatty has organised a programme of virtual lectures and events on the history and art of Safavid Isfahan, listed on the museum website. “Meeting in Isfahan” will be open to the public until 28 August 2022. Watch highlights of the exhibition, produced by Pejman Akbarzadeh here: https://youtu.be/IXpxBogoGrQ

The astrolabe is an adjustable instrument that maps the stars, and has many other functions. The device can be set to the user’s location on earth, and to the correct time. On the front, the curling pointers on the openwork plate (‘ankabut in Arabic, or spider) are each labelled with a star’s name. Invented in late classical times, the astrolabe was perfected in the early Islamic period. Astrolabe, brass, with incised text, mapping lines and decoration, instrument with six latitude plates, openwork rule (‘ankabut), sight-rule (alidade), wedge (faras) and pin, dedicated to Safavid shah Sultan Husayn, produced and decorated by ‘Abd al-Husayn ibn ‘Abd al-A’imma’, Isfahan, Iran, dated 1120H, 1708-1709.
The exhibition **Epic Iran**, organised by the V&A with the Iran Heritage Foundation in association with The Sarikhani Collection, was organised into broad themes, the first four on Iran up to the advent of Islam, the fifth section, **The Book of Kings**, acted as an introduction to Islamic Iran primarily through the epic *Shahnamah* (Book of Kings) completed by the poet Firdawsi around AD 1010.

Tracing the history of the Iranian people from the beginning up until the defeat of the Sasanian ruler Yazdegerd III in 651, the *Shahnamah* combines myth and tradition in what is perhaps the best known work of Persian literature. Many hundreds of illustrated copies survive today dating from the Mongol period onwards. The story depicted here, in a manuscript dating from the Turkman/Timurid period shows Azadah, a slave-girl who was a fine harpist, riding behind Bahram on his camel on a hunting expedition. On this occasion Bahram performed the remarkable feat of shooting two arrows into one gazelle’s head, cutting off the antlers of another and hitting a third as it raised its foot towards its ear. When Azadah expressed sympathy for the gazelles instead of praise for Bahram’s skill, he took offense, flung her to the ground, and let his camel trample her.

The sixth section, **Change of Faith** explored Islam in Iranian culture, the transition from Arabic to Persian and the important Iranian contribution to Islamic science.

There are several different collections in Arabic and Persian with the title Qisas al-anbiya’, stories adapted from the Qur’an and other Islamic literature. One of the best-known and most illustrated is the collection composed in Persian by the 12th century writer Ishaq ibn Ibrahim al-Naysaburi. Add MS 18576 illustrated here is one of several known illustrated copies of al-Naysaburi’s compilation, all produced in Safavid Iran between 1565 and 1585. The portrayal of Adam and Eve agrees with a passage in the Qur’an (Surah 20, verses 120-21): ‘So the two of them ate of it, and their shameful parts revealed to them, and they took to stitching upon themselves leaves of the Garden.’ Their fiery haloes, however, indicate that they still had some prophetic status.
The tenth-century Iranian astronomer ʻAbd al-Rahman al-Sufi (903–86) is the author of several important Arabic texts on the stars and is regarded as one of the greatest Islamic scientists. His most important text, represented here, is the Kitab suwar al-kawakib al-thabitah, based on Ptolemy’s Almagest, in which he gives a full description of the classical system of constellations, observed both from the earth and from outside the celestial globe. The outlines of each constellation and the stars belonging to it are therefore drawn twice, their image mirrored in the second drawing.

Describing the rise of Persian poetry, the seventh section, Literary Excellence, was devoted to how Persian emerged as a literary language from the tenth century onwards. As a result of royal patronage poets flourished at court and workshops developed in which calligraphy, illumination and painting were practiced at the highest levels.

This manuscript, an anthology of poetry by Mu‘izzī, Akhsikati, Adib Sabir, Qamar, Shams Tabasi and Nasir Khusraw, was very likely copied in Tabriz in the scriptorium of the Ilkhanid historian and vizier Rashid al-Din. Copied by ʻAbd al-Mu‘min al-ʻAlavi al-Kashi between Dhu’l-qa‘dat 713 and Dhu’l-qa‘dat 714 (February 1314–February 1315), it closely resembles other secular manuscripts prepared for Rashid al-Din during the same period. The manuscript contains altogether 53 illustrations in a simplified Mongol style, mostly depicting, as here, the poet receiving a robe of honour from Sultan Sanjar.
Add MS 18113 contains three poems from the *Khamsah* (Five Poems) by Khvaju Kirmani (1290-1349?). The first, the story of the lovers Humay and Humayun, was completed in 1331 in response to a request to enchant Muslim audiences with a supposed ‘Magian’ theme. The poems were copied by the famous calligrapher Mir ‘Ali ibn Ilyas al-Tabrizi al-Bavarchi in 798 (1396) at the Jalayirid capital Baghdad. The paintings most probably belonged to another copy and were added afterwards. The artist of one of them was Junayd, a pupil of Shams al-Din who worked under the Jalayirid sultan Uways I (r. 1356-74), who inscribed his name on an arch in an illustration on folio 45v. The manuscript stayed in royal hands at least until the Safavid era when it was refurbished for the Safavid prince Bahram Mirza (1517-49), the youngest of the four sons of Shah Isma‘il (r. 1501-24).

This beautiful copy of the *Khamsah* (Five Poems) by the 12th century Persian poet Nizami entered the Mughal Imperial Library in Akbar’s reign and was regarded as one of the most treasured possessions in his collection. Its importance lies chiefly in its decoration and illustrations which include paintings by the master-painter of Herat, Bihzad (flourished during the reign of the Timurid Husayn Bayqara, 1469-1506). ‘The building of the palace of Khavarnaq,’ ascribed to Bihzad in a note underneath, shows the structure of the pavilion: the scaffolding, a ladder, men chipping bricks, transporting them and actually positioning them on the building.
Or.2265, a 16th century copy of Nizami’s *Khamsah* (Five Poems), is perhaps the most spectacular of our manuscript loans. Originally copied between 1539 and 1543 for the Safavid ruler Shah Tahmasp (r. 1524-76), it was augmented by the addition of 14 full page illustrations by some of the most famous court artists of the mid-16th century. Further pages were inserted probably during the 17th century, and again at a later stage, perhaps when the manuscript was rebound in the early 19th century at the court of Fath ‘Ali Shah Qajar (r. 1797-1834) who in 1243 (1827/28), according to a note inside, presented it to his forty-second wife Taj al-Dawlah.

The ninth section, *The Old and the New*, focussed on the Qajar dynasty (1789-1925), introducing an element of modernisation and developing new relationships with Europe.

With Firdawsi’s *Shahnamah* as a model, Fath‘Ali Shah commissioned the *Shahanshahnamah* (Book of the King of Kings) by the court poet Fath ‘Ali Khan Saba. Presented to the East India Company, this was one of several equally sumptuous copies given as diplomatic gifts to various European dignitaries.
Portrait of Nasir al-Din (r. 1848-1896), seated on a European style sofa, by Muhammad Isfahani. Iran, 1856 (BL Or.4938, f.4r). Public Domain

Although the exhibition has now closed, the published catalogue of Epic Iran is available by the three curators: John Curtis, Ina Sarikhani Sandmann and Tim Stanley

Epic Iran: 5000 years of culture.

Further reading

Most of these manuscripts have been digitised and can be explored by following the hyperlinks given above or by going to the British Library’s Digital Access to Persian Manuscripts page. The following blogs also give further information:

- An illustrated 14th century Khamsah by Khvaju Kirmani
- The archaeology of a manuscript: the Khamsah of Khvaju Kirmani
- Two Persian ‘Ming’ manuscripts on view at the British Museum
- A Jewel in the Crown: A 15th century illustrated copy of Nizami’s Khamsah (Or.6810)
- The Khamsah of Nizami: A Timurid Masterpiece

INTERVIEW

The Mirror Garden: Interview with Zara Houshmand, author of Monir Farmanfarmaian’s memoir

In 2021, the AIS newsletter featured an overview of the life and work of world-renowned artist Monir Farmanfarmaian. Delaram Hosseinioun, PhD candidate in Art History at Leiden University, has now interviewed Zara Houshmand, the biographer (and a lifelong friend) of Farmanfarmaian.

Zara Houshmand’s The Mirror Garden exceeds the norm of a memoir. It situates Monir Farmanfarmaian in the context of her time, following the cultural transformation of Iran from the modernization policies of the 1930s to the days of multi-party democracy in the 1950s, to the 1979 revolution, war and exile. Houshmand gives voice to Farmanfarmaian’s reflections on how she carved a path for herself, from the Tehran Museum of Art to the 2015 exhibit at the Guggenheim Museum New York, as the century’s foremost Persian female artist. Cherishing the distant but dear memories of her family and friendships with Andy Warhol and Jackson Pollock, turning the anguish and the loss of her beloveds to elegant mirrors, Farmanfarmaian is portrayed not only as a remarkable artist but a woman who did not cease to confront and challenge contemporary norms both in Iran and abroad.
INTERVIEW CONT’D

Delaram Hosseinioun: Can you tell us more about how you met Monir Farmanfarmaian, how she chose you to write her memoir?
Zara Houshmand: The very first time was when my family was living in the Philippines and she was on a visit in the 1960s. As we were the only Iranians living there at the time, she was invited to a gathering in our home. When I was living in Iran from 1970 until 1977, I was working with a group of photographers, including Bill Wright whom I later married, and who was very close to Monir. He travelled with her on some of her trips to the Turkoman region, photographing for her. Later we would go and retrace their steps and I was introduced to the things he discovered with Monir. She knew about my work with Bijan Mofid and our translation projects, and she knew about my aspirations as a writer, so when she was living in New York, she suggested that I might be interested in writing her story. I see a memoir just as a different art form, and that’s how it started.

D: How long did it take you and Ms Farmanfarmaian to craft this memoir?
Z: It took about two years, perhaps a bit longer. We started the interviews without any planned method. I had never done such interviews, but, as she would often wander with her memories, I had a sense that rather than organizing the interviews in advance it would be easier to let her just carry on. If there was repetition it would be interesting to see how she would narrate it differently on different occasions. She had an almost photographic memory, visual and precise, so that made it easier. After hours of recording and transcriptions, we had to organize it chronologically and of course to be selective to maintain the narrative. Nevertheless, she gave me a tremendous degree of freedom, partially due to her limited experience with written English, although she had been living here for decades and her English was very comfortable conversationally. She always said, “I am an artist, you are an artist, I trust you, take the material and make it into art in your way.” This was a wonderful gift of freedom. I recognized what I needed to do: to convey her sheer liveliness, to find the equivalent voice that expressed that personality in writing, and a style that matched what she was able to do visually.

D: Was this in Persian or English?
Z: Both. The interviews were mostly in English but sometimes she would switch to Persian and I could follow, back and forth, whatever she was comfortable with that day.

D: The memoir was published in 2007. Why did she decide to publish her memoir in that moment, after all these decades?
Z: I am not completely sure. She asked me before the death of her husband, though we did most of the work after his death. It wasn’t necessarily related to that context originally, although memories of their life together became an important part of it. I think she thought about writing it for a long time, and there were many considerations.
INTERVIEW CONT’D

Z: As a matter of fact, when they sent us that photo cover, which was a slightly different version, Monir and I both hated it, for different reasons. She was furious and angry about it. In my view, it portrays her as extremely submissive, that downward-looking gaze. It almost looks like she is in bondage. One aspect that I did like about that cover was the shadow, projecting her presence.

As one of the most prestigious publishers in America, they made their decision and as a graphic designer in the past, Monir also had her own views, of course. She also designed some other samples for them, but the editors were adamant. After reducing some decorative, orientalist aspects, we ended up with the current version.

D: After all these years, if you could rewrite or change some aspect of the book, what would it be?

Z: What I would change almost has nothing to do with the facts but the style perhaps. If you pay attention, it begins in an old-world style, evoking a fairy tale, and it becomes more modern as she becomes more modern. It makes sense logically, but personally, I don’t like the orientalist flavor of the beginning and it starts very slowly. It’s playing into a taste for orientalism which I am not happy about in retrospect.

D: Talking about her family and roots, from Qazvin to Tehran and then to Brooklyn, the initial narrative seems almost mystical, in the next chapters her words reveal the metamorphosis she is going through. If Ms Farmanfarmaian was alive today, would she change some aspects of this book?

Z: Probably not. Only the ending, meeting Prince Philip… all that happened after we finished the first draft. She wanted to highlight that, as it was something she was very proud of and, of course, she would have wanted to include her Guggenheim exhibition. This was the crowning of her career. I was more concerned about her personal story instead of the artistic career. It’s the question of whether a memoir is more the historical record of her accomplishments or the story of her life.

D: Which parts and aspects of her life moved you personally?

Z: Writing about her husband’s death and the memories that sparked, like a series of photographs. I remember when she told me that part of the story. She postponed it for a long time. We were in Berkeley when it came pouring out. I had to help her let off steam, so we got into the car and I drove into the mountains, just to let the words sit, and to let it rest. It was very moving to be with her when she told her story, and I don’t think she talked about it to many people. It was a challenge to record.

Also, the parts that responded to my own memories. The scene in the coffee house or the Turkoman material— that was very close to me. In theory, I was writing from her voice, but I was also writing my own memories of Iran in that period and my own explorations. When I first went back to Iran after I graduated from University, I was working with a company that did public relations, such as slide shows for the museums, for Kanoun Parvaresh Fekri Koudakan, so it involved travelling all over the country doing photography. We went way off the beaten track, it wasn’t just tourist stuff. It was a wonderful way to learn about Iran, to see the country, to interact with people. It was similar to a lot of what was reflected in her own travels. So, I could really relate to that. I remember, for example, there is a scene in the Turkoman stories, about the children bouncing on the carpet they were weaving, that was something I had seen and she had not seen. I inserted it like a small signature of my own.

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D: Have you seen the museum dedicated to Ms Farmanfarmaian, the first-ever preeminent museum named after a female artist in Iran, at Negarestan Palace? She donated 51 of her artworks to this museum.

Z: No, That is much more recent.

D: After her final visit, she decided to stay in Iran?

Z: For her exhibitions, she visited New York, but she did return to Iran and she was busy working, making art till her final days. Due to an accident in her apartment, she broke her shoulder, which slowed her down. She was immobile for a long time, but she kept herself busy with her art, both in the US and Iran. She never had that much dealing with the press, she wasn’t verbal in her expression.

D: What is your favourite work between all her collections?

Z: That’s an interesting question. It’s subjective, of course. Many pieces are my favourites for different reasons, but the memory box is one I lived with for thirty years. She gave it as a gift to my ex-husband, in thanks for the photography work he had done. It contains a lot of the old ones I had seen decades ago, before she left Iran in the 1970s—I saw art to me. I have another piece she gave me much later, that I am very fond of. Also, there was a series of new work she created quite recently, about the garden, which includes garden imagery, Chahar Bagh, and painting behind glass. They are more feminine and more like her older pieces, but with a fresh slant, and I think those are my favourites among them all.

D: Did she ever manage to retrieve her collections?

Z: Most got confiscated, in the past decades some of them were surfacing in Canada. There was a clear channel of the confiscated art, and at one point somebody tried to sell her art back to her, a sad story.

D: A century after her birthday, what makes her such an icon?

Z: A lot of the old ones I had seen decades ago, before she left Iran in the 1970s—I saw her as a Persian princess, and she resists the implied orientalism. But mostly, she was just doing what any immigrant in this country does, learning a new language, and more like her older pieces, but with a fresh slant, and I think those are my favourites among them all.

D: As was experiencing the socio-cultural transition of her era, the reader also witnesses her tendency towards modernism. Through her witty expressions, she recites how prude she used to be, or believing in old sayings, how she overcomes the embedded sense of tradition in her. Do you think she had to adopt a different persona based on American culture?

Z: I think even as a child she recognised that she was larger than life. She talks about some of the impressions her elder relatives had of her as a child. I think that strength was just who she was. I don't think she even thought of it as fighting. For a time after the revolution, it was very hard for her to keep going. She often had opinions about why and how she was not being treated as well as she should be, but I think the fighting instinct was so native to her that she was not even conscious of how different she was from the rest of the world.

D: In your view, what inspired her to confront and surpass obstacles?

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D: After her final visit, she decided to stay in Iran?

Z: No, That is much more recent.

D: What is your favourite work between all her collections?

Z: That’s an interesting question. It’s subjective, of course. Many pieces are my favourites for different reasons, but the memory box is one I lived with for thirty years. She gave it as a gift to my ex-husband, in thanks for the photography work he had done. It contains a lot of the old ones I had seen decades ago, before she left Iran in the 1970s—I saw art to me. I have another piece she gave me much later, that I am very fond of. Also, there was a series of new work she created quite recently, about the garden, which includes garden imagery, Chahar Bagh, and painting behind glass. They are more feminine and more like her older pieces, but with a fresh slant, and I think those are my favourites among them all.

D: Did she ever manage to retrieve her collections?

Z: Most got confiscated, in the past decades some of them were surfacing in Canada. There was a clear channel of the confiscated art, and at one point somebody tried to sell her art back to her, a sad story.

D: A century after her birthday, what makes her such an icon?

Z: A lot of the old ones I had seen decades ago, before she left Iran in the 1970s—I saw her as a Persian princess, and she resists the implied orientalism. But mostly, she was just doing what any immigrant in this country does, learning a new language, and more like her older pieces, but with a fresh slant, and I think those are my favourites among them all.

D: As was experiencing the socio-cultural transition of her era, the reader also witnesses her tendency towards modernism. Through her witty expressions, she recites how prude she used to be, or believing in old sayings, how she overcomes the embedded sense of tradition in her. Do you think she had to adopt a different persona based on American culture?

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A Century of Cello Music from Persia: 1921-2021

2021 marked the 100th year since the appearance of the first Persian composition written for the cello. The piece, entitled “Tchahargah”, was written in 1921 by Souren Arakelian, a professor at the Tehran Conservatory of Music. To commemorate this anniversary, the Persian Dutch Network in Amsterdam has published an anthology which includes cello works by four generations of Persian composers between the years 1921 and 2021.

Compiled by Pejman Akbarzadeh, these compositions have mostly been collected and restored from private archives in Tehran, Paris, and Montreal.

It is hoped that by publishing the anthology, “public awareness will be raised of Persian cello music, a genre that has been ignored until now in the world of music. Another goal is to encourage the cellists around the world to perform these neglected but amazing pieces. Most of the compositions in this anthology have never previously been published and, in addition to their historical value, they demonstrate how the use of Persian (Iranian) elements in cello compositions has evolved throughout the years”, Akbarzadeh points out in his introduction to the accompanying booklet.

Although the cello is a Western instrument, it shares several structural characteristics with a number of ancient Persian instruments - kamancheh in particular - giving composers and performers a useful tool for the expression of Persian musical idioms.

“A Century of Cello Music from Persia: 1921-2021” includes the following pieces:

1. Tchahargah (1921) Souren Arakelian
2. Poem in Shur (1953) Hossein Nassehi
3. Sonate (1965) Alireza Mashayekhi

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### CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

The UCLA Center for Near Eastern Studies and the Center for Iranian Diaspora Studies at San Francisco State University are pleased to open a call for paper submissions to their conference, “The Iranian Diaspora in Global Perspective.” The conference will be held on **February 16–17, 2023** at the University of California, Los Angeles and aims to support the growing field of Iranian Diaspora Studies by sharing new research and scholarship.

The conference will bring together senior scholars, mid-career scholars, and emerging researchers in any discipline who are contributing to and developing this emerging and transnational field. Panels and speakers are encouraged to showcase work on the Iranian diaspora in a global context, including but not limited to:

• Histories of Iranian migration and diaspora formation
• Sociological and cultural dimensions of Iranian diaspora communities
• Comparative studies, whether comparing across Iranian diaspora communities or between Iranian and other immigrant groups in differing locations
• Research on Iranian communities in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania; especially South-South relations
• Studies that cast light on the heterogeneity of Iranian diaspora communities and their migration experiences

The conference is also interested in creative expressions such as documentary film, fiction films, photography, and/or animations related to themes and experiences of the Iranian diaspora.

This conference will build and sustain a stronger academic community, draw attention to increasingly transnational elements of the Iranian diaspora, and highlight the importance of cross-disciplinary research and collaboration. Additionally, we will draw from selected 2023 conference presentations to invite papers for an edited volume that will be made available in open access format through an academic publisher such as University of California Press.

While we aim to hold the conference in person to benefit from the incomparable experience of in-person exchanges, we are taking COVID-19 into consideration as we plan possible modalities for the conference. Conference presentations will be in English. Travel and lodging will be covered by the conference.

Organizers:

Kevan Harris, Department of Sociology, UCLA

Persis Karim, Center for Iranian Diaspora Studies, San Francisco State University

Amy Malek, Department of International Studies, College of Charleston

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**Seeking science books in Persian or Dari**

Brattleboro Union High School, a rural school in southern Vermont has experienced a recent addition of several Afghan students who are in need of resources to support them, specifically biology, chemistry and other science books in Persian or Dari.

If you have information about purchasing such resources, please be in touch with the Librarian Marilee Attley at Brattleboro Union High School.

Brattleboro Union High School, 131 Fairground Road, Brattleboro VT 05301 The telephone number can be viewed here.
CALL FOR PAPERS

Ninth Biennial Convention of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies in Yerevan, Armenia

May 30-June 3, 2023

The Association for the Study of Persianate Societies (ASPS) calls for the participation of its members in its Ninth Biennial Convention, to take place in Yerevan, Armenia, May 30-June 3, 2023. Our meeting will be hosted by the Institute of Oriental Studies, Russian-Armenian (Slavonic) University.

The Deadline for Submission of Abstracts is September 30, 2022.

Please note that you must be a current (2022) ASPS member in order to submit your abstract. Otherwise your submission will not be considered. You must be a 2023 member to register and participate in the conference. To become a new member or renew your ASPS membership please proceed to our membership page. We will likely have a limited number of fellowships available for participants from Afghanistan and Central Asia, and for graduate students from the US. Details TBA.

All humanities and social science disciplines related to Persianate Societies are welcome. Pre-organized panels are strongly encouraged. Submissions for pre-organized panels must include a panel abstract of no more than 300 words plus individual abstracts of no more than 300 words for each panelist. Panels must be limited to a minimum of three panelists and a maximum of four.

Submissions for pre-organized panels and individual papers can be made by clicking here.

For those of you who were registered for the cancelled 2020 convention in Delhi, your registration has been automatically switched to the 2023 convention in Yerevan. You will also have the opportunity to present your previously submitted paper or submit a new proposal as part of the general CFP. If you are submitting a previously approved abstract from the cancelled Delhi convention, please indicate this in your new abstract submission.

We are very excited about the forthcoming Ninth Biennial Congress of the Association in Yerevan. One of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, Yerevan has connections to the Persianate world stretching back to antiquity and to the ASPS going back to 2004 when the city hosted our Second Biennial Congress. Yerevan’s rich history and cultural heritage offers many opportunities for visitors and provides a wonderful setting for our congress.

We look forward to an exciting ninth convention in Yerevan. Past conventions of ASPS have been held in Dushanbe/Tajikistan (2002); Yerevan/Armenia (2004); Tbilisi/Georgia (2007), Lahore/ Pakistan (2009), Hyderabad/India (2012); Sarajevo/ Bosnia and Herzegovina (2013); Istanbul (2015), and Tbilisi/Georgia (2018). We invite you to review our past programs. The ASPS Congresses have provided a rare and valued opportunity for scholars from across Asia, Europe and North America to participate in an interdisciplinary dialogue. The interchange of ideas has also found its place in our publication, the Journal of Persianate Societies, published by Brill Academic Publishers. We encourage you to take the opportunity to participate in this unique gathering.

For questions, please contact the Chair of the Convention and ASPS Secretary, Rob Haug at haugrt@ucmail.uc.edu.