



PARASTOO JAFARI

## New Word, Other Value

Artistic Modernism and Private Patronage:  
Associations and Galleries in Pre-Islamic Revolution Iran

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# New Word, Other Value

Artistic Modernism and Private Patronage:  
Associations and Galleries in Pre-Islamic Revolution Iran

by  
Parastoo Jafari

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*To Soori and Ali*



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## Preface and Acknowledgements

The main objective of the present study is to investigate Iranian art from the perspective that artists themselves observed it. Selecting to work with this method was important for me according to two reasons: first, at the same time that it proceeds within the theoretical considerations, it shuns an evaluative analysis, and instead, pays attention to observation and collection of the data. Second, hearing narrations around art history by the artists, if not necessarily a preliminary step, is important as a parallel phase of the work. This becomes particularly meaningful when we come to such topics as “modern art,” as its definition has much to do with the intellectual and contextual constellation of each artist while not losing connections with fields of the politics, economics, society, etc.

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Parastoo Jafari



## Summary

Artistic modernism, in the form of a collective and cultural work by Iranian modern artists, came to light at the first private art associations and galleries since the 1940s. That means, the project for institutionalization of modern art in Iran began as being promoted both culturally and privately by artists on their own. This book tries to spotlight both *cultural* and *private* qualities, to question the essentiality behind these two features, and to compare them against their *commercial* and *public* alternatives. By raising questions around these features, it draws more attention to the formative bases of the idiosyncrasies in Iranian artists and the new dispositions that made them work differently—a different work being recognized as “Iranian modern art” and being investigated not for its fidelity to a homogenizing set of definitions, but for those being definitive on their own.

The book concentrates on Fighting Cock as the first private art association (1948) to investigate the particularities around artistic modernism in Iran. The decision to work with this association, on the one hand, is to show how the Iranian state’s cultural policies, economic developments and a political atmosphere influenced artists in their first measures for the promotion of modern art and, on the other hand, to explore how they worked out the new idiosyncrasies as first modern artists within these contexts. In doing so, the book brings into view the collective work between Fighting Cock and Apadana (first private art gallery) and pays particular attention to the association’s manifesto, magazine and debates as essential tools of a cultural and private patronage.

Two artistic approaches are discussed in Fighting Cock’s different phases of work and the book discloses the extent these inclinations influenced the association for its cultural and private strategies: an early phase beginning with emphasis on a “national school of art” and the other with more concern for “art for art’s sake.” Also, the book works out to show how, drawing into later decades, important artists’ groups and galleries adopted the same cultural and private role as in Fighting Cock and how their similar advocacy of modern art accordingly divided the artistic space into two mainstreams (with national attributes or art for art’s sake). Although emergence of the commercial galleries and formation of a market for modern art took control of these developments and disturbed the significant role played by the pioneering artists since the 1960s, the book contends that the artistic modernism in Iran owes to the cultural contributions of the modern artists and should be studied under what it defends as a “cultural patronage.”



# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

The first signals of modern art appeared in Iran within the newly established Faculty of Fine Arts (1940) at University of Tehran (1934) in the early 1940s. The foundation of the University of Tehran was in line with modernization plans of the first Pahlavi State (1925–1941) and sought to execute a comprehensive modern education system. Nevertheless, the young students who had become familiar with a conservative Western modern art at the faculty were not welcomed by the state outside the academy. This cold shoulder by the official authorities was due to the cultural policies that rather emphasized the national identity. As a result, the modern art that was taught at the faculty remained suspicious for the state. After two decades, and according to the politico-economic changes, the regime adopted new policies to support the modern artists. The launch of *Tehran Biennial of Painting* in 1958 was the first official measure by the state. With the turning of the official administrators and Iranian middle class to modern works via financial contributions, a market was gradually shaped for modern art in the middle of the 1960s.

In a timespan of two decades, the 1940s and 1950s, or, more specifically, during the period between foundation of the Faculty of Fine Arts and the inaugural of *Tehran Biennial of Painting*, the new artistic developments in Iran, thus, went through other ways, nearly independent from the regime's cultural expediencies. In fact, the upper hand of the state for possession of various sources of power and their enforcement over art and culture left more independent movements undiscovered. The main purpose of the present study, therefore, is to shed light on the independent movements that were shaped in this period. These movements began in 1945 with the first graduated series of modern artists from the Faculty of Fine Arts and, in the first place, were undertaken via a collective work between artists and by establishment of their own private art associations, galleries and artists' groups. *Anjoman-e honari-ye korus jangi* [Fighting Cock Art Association] (1948) was the first private art association established for the purpose of promoting the modern art in Iran and collaborated with other modern artists, in particular, with *Apadāna* [Apadana] the first private art gallery (1949). The significant point about these associations and galleries is that due to lack of adequate financial sources and unfamiliarity of the society with modern art, their activities were focused on cultural preparation of their audience than the creation of a commercial market.

Regarding the above description of the issues, the major question of this study is to understand "How the modern artists could institutionalize modern art in Iran through cultural activities?" and, accordingly: Why did the initial measures by modern artists appear first in forms of cultural (and not sales or commercial) activities? What were these activities precisely? What were the necessities for a collective

work in forms of art associations and galleries? How did the contextual factors (politics, society and economy) influence artists in their activities? How did these activities contribute to formation of the audience or a market? This study presumes the institutionalization of the modern art in Iran having been mainly a cultural project undertaken by artists privately and via collective work and, for the theoretical structure, it is centered around two theoretical axes: first, to review the definition of “modern art” and its applicability to Iranian art or, in general, to non-Western art. Second, to consider the common practices of institutionalization of modern art in the world and within the Iranian context. For the first axis, those theories are employed that emphasize the necessity of a refreshed approach, as opposed to canonical concepts of “modernity” and “modernism.” In other words, the theories that reclaim local modernities and modernisms with emphasis on analysis of the intellectual history and modern artistic practices of each region are applied. For the second axis, it benefits theoretical discussions by the French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu (1930–2002), for his analyses on autonomization of the artistic field within different fields of power. Bourdieu’s work is adopted due to its attention to the artistic autonomy as a significant requisite of the modern art that has to be achieved by modern artists both on their own and via collective and cultural activity. Selection of the cultural or avant-garde (and not sales or commercial) associations and galleries as the samples of this study is also defensible with regard to these two theoretical axes. That means, autonomization of modern artists and their settlement in the field of art is in constant contrast with the market’s financial logics and it, rather, provides artists a symbolic reputation. It is this symbolic status for which modern artists can challenge their established competitors and demand autonomy from the most prevalent fields of power.

As an outline of the chapters, this book includes five main chapters and a final discussion with appendices. In Chapters 1 and 2, i.e. Introduction and Theoretical Considerations, the essential information will be provided for entering into the next main chapters. In Chapter 1, after issuing questions, the abstract terminologies will be defined and the history of artistic patronage in Iran and artists’ positions in relation to it will be reviewed. In fact, this historical review is essential for understanding the presumed shift from state patronage toward more private sectors in 1940s Iran. With a review of the existing studies on the subject, Chapter 1 will be linked to the theoretical discussion in Chapter 2. The review of contributions will show what works have been done so far in various aspects of the subject and how the present study can build a theoretical structure upon these works in order to support its hypothesis and to fill in the gaps. In Chapter 3, a contextual study of the shift toward autonomy in the field of the arts will be provided. In this chapter, there is an attempt to show how centrality of academia ended in an anti-institutional tendency in artists. It will also provide a discussion of the socio-political contexts which made artists adopt the role of intellectuals and defend a non-political art (art

for art's sake). Chapters 4 and 5 will more precisely explain how the institutionalization of modern art in Iran occurred based on a cultural patronage by artists. For this argument, Chapter 4 will focus on the rebellion of the first graduates from Tehran's Faculty of Fine Arts, their establishment as the first private art association, issue of the first manifesto as well as art theory. In Chapter 5, artists' modes of activity will be studied. It will explain how artists defined a new paradigm of artistic subjectivity, what features this new paradigm had and what their cultural activities referred to.

## 1.2 Revisiting the Terms

According to the contexts of the terminologies applied, some definitions should be amended and adjusted to refer to their precise function in the given contexts. Therefore, the definitions provided in the following paragraphs should not be considered as general descriptions or common connotation of each term.

*Iranian Modern Art:* A fundamental step in studies on modern art in non-Western contexts is to provide a theoretical argument that defines the exact application of this terminology in these contexts. This argument should be able to answer common questions as whether modern art from non-Western countries is a prolonged and imitative practice of the Western model, or possesses its own peculiarities. If there are peculiarities, how are they distinguished from their Western counterparts? But basically, nomination of an optimal terminology that reflects attributes of regional modern arts is a highly controversial and difficult task. This is due to conflicts between different approaches to the term "modern" in these countries. One rejects application of *modern* for the regional arts due to their lack of similar intellectual, economic and social contexts as in Euramerica. This rejection, however, arises from an emphasis on epistemological and existential prerequisites for the experience of modern art. Therefore, this approach defends the dichotomy of the West as the origin of the modern art and rest of the world as the importer and imitator of the Western prototype.

Another approach includes those theories that focus attention on the individualistic features of each region and try to define modern art in non-Western regions. In contrast to the previous approach, they refuse emphasis on any fixed temporal and spatial attributions. Their methodology considers the intellectual and socio-cultural histories of each region and their relevance to their modern artistic practices. In this process, local modern artists are no more passive receivers or adopters of the Western modern art, but they instead process their past actively with the new developments via a self-reflection. These theories precisely emphasize on the dynamic moment of encounter of local artists with Western modern art and argue that it should be aggrandized in order to understand the regional modern arts. In this encounter, a resistance by local artists is observed against the stereotypical homogenization of an artistic globalism—a resistance as a result of a historical



awareness of artists of their local means that enables them to enact their aesthetic practices in a discursive way.<sup>1</sup> The central definition attributed by these theories to the local artworks is “innovation.” That is, in the cultural condition of the modernizing countries, innovation makes the primary foundation of artists’ thought.<sup>2</sup> This innovation is independent from any of such definitions as new, old or Western. Instead, it reveals itself in a set of challenges that make artists reorient their senses of *self*.<sup>3</sup> What happens to the non-Western modern artists is that they are cut off from the historical dependencies of what is labeled as “primitive” otherness and begin to reflect on adaptation, adoption and transformation of various elements (e.g., image, subject matter, technique, style, etc.) that work in a system of exchange between local and international artistic habits. The dynamism of this process of exchange reveals itself on various levels, from a simple stylistic adoption to a broader adaptation of Western styles to their existing local motifs in an interrogatory method to a fusion of both that leads to transformation of the styles.<sup>4</sup>

The terms “avant-garde” or “avant-gardism” are also used in this study regarding certain discussions about modern art or modern artists wherever it intends to describe the qualitative conditions of artists’ movement. The three primary conditions upon which this work allows application of the term avant-garde are the same that Peter Bürger argues as conditions for avant-garde movements of the 1920s (i.e. Futurism, Dadaism, Surrealism).<sup>5</sup> The first condition refers to formation of an artistic autonomy which has to occur by loosening the artists’ dependence on patrons and their replacement with an anonymous dependence on the market or, at least, isolation of artistic genius from the masses, society and the market; it is this initial phase in which the artist becomes critic of its society. The second condition is intensification of aestheticism for artists as a result of the created autonomy. The attention to aestheticism is along with abandonment of the society and meaning in art and literature, and instead, the formation of a consciousness on the part of the artists to symbolism, form, techniques and material. The third condition is the negation of the cultural boundaries. Although cultural negation is a common feature of both modernism and avant-gardism, modernism is less radical about it. In other

1 This historical awareness has also been defended by Iranian experts with more sociological concerns. For them, although modern painting in Iran was an outcome of a general approach to European modernity, it was based on a socio-political and cultural awareness of Iranian intellectuals about their society. [See: Aryanpour, Yahya. *Az šabā tā nimā [From Saba to Nima]*. Tehran: Zavvār, 1995.]

2 The idea of modern art as artistic innovation by Iranian artists is, however, discussed by some Iranian critics such as Roueen Pakbaz in other ways. Pakbaz’s argument is that the historical necessities for modernism could never exist in Iran. Therefore, the project of modern art in Iran is nothing more than innovative imitation or adaptation by Iranian artists. [Roueen Pakbaz, “Honar-e mo’āšer-e irān: modernism yā nowāvari [Iranian Contemporary Art: Modernism or Innovation],” *Honar-hā-ye tajasomi*, no. 7 (1999): 170–73.]

3 Terry Smith, “Rethinking Modernism and Modernity Now,” *Filozofski Vestnik* XXXV, no. 2 (2014): 277.

4 *Ibid.*, 284 & 304.

5 Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), x–xv.

words, modern artists reject merely the traditional artistic and literary techniques, whereas avant-gardism has an all-encompassing attack to alter the institutionalized commerce with art. Regarding this, the terms avant-garde or avant-gardism in this study refer to any situation in which these three conditions appear with artists playing a more radical role.

It is also important to define which artistic medium is intended by Iranian modern art. In order to answer to this question, it should be noted that the major education in modern art at the Faculty of Fine Arts was first in the field of painting. One important reason for the primacy of painting over other visual arts was centrality of painting as a subject of artistic patronage for the courts and royal workshops as the foremost artistic form.<sup>6</sup> Even with establishment of the first art schools and academies, still painting was the most important major and the first graduated modern artists from the Faculty of Fine Arts were all painters.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the beginning of modern art in Iran was with painting and it was during the 1950s and 1960s when foreign-graduated artists gradually promoted their learnings about the new developments in other media.<sup>8</sup> Regarding the Fighting Cock Association, painting was also used as the primary medium and the members constantly introduced their aim

6 It should be noted that painting included a range of various historical forms such as fresco, miniature, book illumination, underglaze and oil painting, and its popularity was beyond newly patronized art forms of sculpture or photography during Qajar era (1785–1925). In fact, according to religious bans on sculptures as types of idolatry, sculptors were long recognized as engravers and were intermixed with painters. Or, for instance, the interest of Safavid kings in picturing their own icons in the European style also left sculpture in shadow of painting. It was since the late Qajar, particularly under Naser al-Din king of Qajar (1848–1896) that foreign travels by artists introduced sculpture in its European and independent form in Iran. [See: Tanavoli, Parviz. *Tārīḫ-e mojasamasāzi dar irān [A History of Sculpture in Iran]*. Tehran: Naẓar, 2013.] Also, photography as an art form was yet to be born during 1925–1945 after undergoing the socio-political upheavals for transformation of an absolute monarchy into a constitutional monarchy. This period, which is known as the years of transition (1880–1900) could, in fact, release photography from the monopoly of the royal courts and let the camera slip through various hands in public studios with a range of clientele. Prior to this period, photography was considered a royal art whereas our main resources today about the early years of the daguerreotype and photography in Iran (1842–1852) are the court chronicles. In the formative years of photography (1850–1880) it was only with the establishment of *Dār al-fonun* [Dar al-Fonoun] (1852), Iran's first state university, that photography began to be taught as part of the curriculum. [See: Sheikh, Reza and Carmen Pérez González. "Editorial." *Journal of History of Photography*, no. 37 (2013): 1–5.]

7 *Madrasa-ye ṣanā'īye-e mostazrafa* [Kamal al-Molk School of Fine Arts], as the first modernized academy of visual arts (1911), included courses of painting, miniature, sculpture and illumination. Nevertheless, this school began its work with painting and later on sculpture was added to its majors. Or, the main instructor of sculpture at the Faculty of Fine Arts was Abu al-Hasan Khan Sadiqi. He was an eminent student of Kamal al-Molk and had also established workshops of sculpture at his school. Abu al-Hasan Khan was rather inspired by Kamal al-Molk's academic Realism than the modern art.

8 Each of the private art associations and galleries that were founded by more independent modern artists, concentrated almost on introduction of certain modern styles in different media. Similar to the Fighting Cock Association that promoted Cubism and Surrealism, other styles such as Expressionism, Pop Art, Abstract Expressionism and Conceptual Art were respectively introduced by the Aesthetic Gallery, *Gāleri honar-e jadid* [Modern Art Gallery], *Gāleri gilgamesh* [Gilgamesh Gallery] and *Gruh-e honarmandān-e āzād* [Independent Artists Group] since the early 1950s.

as making a change to *Iranian art* in general.<sup>9</sup> It was this general approach that the association recruited from different fields of art and literature. The articles in the main publication of the association (*Fighting Cock* magazine), in addition to painting, included a range of subjects from other fields of art and literature, or in many of the texts or debates by members discussions are observed that concern “art” in general terms. As a result, in the present study the term Iranian modern art has both general and specific meanings. That is, wherever artists discuss the general artistic developments in modernism and study them in Iranian modern art, obviously this term has more general connotations. But for debates and reviews that association makes on exhibitions, artists or critics, Iranian modern art points precisely to Iranian modern painting.

*Patronage:* This study considers the act of patronage to be undertaken by Iranian artists on their own and through promotion of modern art that was in contrast with the artistic taste of other established patrons. In fact, the term “patronage” is applied with respect to the general structures of the classical definitions of this term but still with a generic deviation from them.<sup>10</sup> If one considers the concept of patronage relying on the relation between the patron and recipient, here it has been attempted to refer to another form of patronage with emphasis on the fact that different forms of patronage can be created through acts of patronage.<sup>11</sup> For understanding this form of patronage; i.e. the act of patronage by artists on their own, one needs to consider the following points about the act of patronage: on the one hand, the act of patronage is based on the act of *exchange* and this exchange can intangibly occur for the acquisition of merit, legitimation and status. On the other hand, the act of patronage can simply include a range of concerns, occasions and objects encapsulating acts and functions of these acts.<sup>12</sup> Now, another crucial fact about the act of patronage is to accept that different forms of patronage in any society also tell something about the ambient social, political and economic relationships in that society.<sup>13</sup> Barbara Stoler Miller and Richard Eaton also pinpoint this relation between patronage and recipient.<sup>14</sup> The most important feature they

9 Jalil Ziapour, “Naqš-e nehzat-e korus jangi [The Role of Fighting Cock Movement],” *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1979): 4.

10 In the classical definition of the term “patronage” the relation between patron and the recipient was rather with the aim of social institution of the patron in political, religious and prestigious terms and at the same time to endorse the financial needs of the recipient. The major forms of patronage until the 19th century or until emergence of the bourgeoisie were the influential politico-religious institutions such as courts and churches or aristocrats, nobles and wealthy families—the pattern which with formation of the middle class in the 19th century gave way to more public and private institutions.

11 Romila Thapra, “Patronage and Community,” in *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture*, ed. Barbara Stoler Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 19.

12 Ibid.

13 Burton Stein, “Patronage and Vijayanagara Religious Foundation,” in *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture*, ed. Barbara Stoler Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 160.

14 Barbara Stoler Miller and Richard Eaton, “Introduction,” in *The Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture*, ed. Barbara Stoler Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 1–16.

defend for a new form of patronage is a capability to affect promotion of new stylistic attributes such as creation of a new form and content. In other words, the new patronage should be able to present its world via administration and new subjects into plastic artworks. Also, whatever benefit and values that force a change in established forms of patronage should be convincing for both patron and the recipient. For instance, what new message is supposed to be conveyed to the audience via a different artistic production and how significant this different message is for the new patronage? With regard to the mentioned features of different acts of patronage, attribution of the term patronage to artists' cultural role seems also possible. In simple words, activation of artists for support and promotion of modern art was in line with the aim of attaining a legitimate status (as modern artists) and acknowledgement of their productions (as modern works of art) in their field. This lack of legitimacy was due to a void of support from the classical forms of patronage<sup>15</sup> and artists' activation was supposed to compensate this void.

*Cultural Role:* Regarding the given definition for the term patronage, the "cultural" role was the main feature of the patronage exercised by the artists for promotion of the modern art in Iran. As a matter of fact, cultural role should be added to the historical connotation of the term patronage as *financial* support. It is the centrality of these two dimensions of the patronage (commercial and non-commercial) that artistic institutions (galleries, associations or artists' groups) are distinguished in two major types of sales (commercial) institutions or the cultural or avant-garde (non-commercial) institutions. In other words, in commercial institutions emphasis is put on sale of the art whereas in non-commercial institutions the main aim is creation and promotion of a new art school.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the cultural role of such associations and galleries is to present and mark important dates in history through introduction of new art styles. These institutes contribute to this role by a systematic and logical development of art.<sup>17</sup> This cultural approach, thus, is in contrast to the commercial approach, which pursues decorative qualities and higher accessibility of the artworks to make them tailored to larger buyers. The cultural concern is suspicious of immediate success but instead cares for adding new names (artists and schools) to the history of art over the course of time and by cultural activities such as publication, exhibition and so forth.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The major forms of artistic patronage in Iran were practiced by the court and aristocrats within the state's bureaucracy. The minor private forms that were provided by religious or wealthy families, either like in rich families looked up to royal workshops and supported similar works with lower quality, or had ritual and votive motivations.

<sup>16</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 103.

<sup>17</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art: Genesis and Structure of the Literary Field*, trans. Susan Emanuel (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 145.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

*Private Art Associations and Galleries:* The first private art associations and galleries in Iran emerged out of informal artists' groups based on cooperation of modern artists, or they were artist's ateliers in which artists took on the cultural role via exhibition, publication and debates for promotion of certain modern styles. But understanding of the term "private" requires attention to the contextual features of artists' movement toward autonomy and privatization within their field. Above all, it should be noted that since the principal artistic patronage in Iran was provided by the court and the aristocracy connected to the court, therefore, the term private refers to a type of patronage that either counteracted the state's patronage or was independent from it. However, it was not until the late 1950s when the Iranian state's cultural policies turned toward modern art. Before that, the first private associations and galleries acted both independently of, and in opposition to, the state. Although the border between private and state administrators was less distinctive from 1960 on, the most cultural or avant-garde institutions still used to shun the financial supports offered by the state.

The role of the state in formation of the autonomous and private art institutes by Iranian artists can be understood based on Pierre Bourdieu's analyses of the term "state" and its relation with the private sectors in the fields of art and culture. These analyses consider artists' autonomy and artistic privatization at the time artists liberated themselves from a dependency on state and the academy. As a result, the artistic production of the artists became restricted to their own limited market with a sort of deferred economy. In Bourdieu's theory, understanding of the term private relies on an understanding of the term state and its influence on artists' efforts for privatization in arts. The state is an ensemble of administrative and bureaucratic fields that are sites of struggle to constitute and impose their authority. It is within these fields that the governmental (public) agents and private sectors constantly confront and compete for legitimacy and power in their own fields.<sup>19</sup>

The act of cultural patronage by Iranian private associations and galleries was also a means of confrontation in order to establish modern art in a void of state legitimacy. Bourdieu also argues that competitions do not only occur in open conflicts, but also during interactions between the state and private sector. These interactions are, in fact, a type of competition within private institutes and with one another to orient their activities with state policies.<sup>20</sup> This condition was precisely observed in Iran since the early 1960s, when the state decided to support modern artists. In this new space, sales or commercial galleries competed with their cultural or avant-garde counterparts to attain legitimacy via promotion of those works of art that were in line with cultural policies.

<sup>19</sup> Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc J.D. Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 109 & 111.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

*Pre-Islamic Revolution (1940s–1970s)*: The timespan of the early 1940s to the late 1970s has been selected according to certain reasons. The Faculty of Fine Arts was established in 1940. The first series of Iranian modern artists graduated from this faculty and they founded the first private art associations and galleries from the mid-1940s onwards. The cultural role played by these private institutes for the promotion of modern art was very much influenced by the social and politico-intellectual grounds of the society at this time. This cultural contribution was carried out by the next cultural or avant-garde associations and galleries until the late 1970s. With the occurrence of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, the cultural policies of the Islamic state and the politico-intellectual contexts of the society underwent considerable changes. These changes created new grounds in which artists and their private institutes could no longer follow the same cultural approaches as in the pre-Islamic Revolution era.<sup>21</sup> As a result of this change, the period of this study has been restricted to include associations and galleries that were active prior to the Islamic Revolution.

*Fighting Cock Art Association (1948)*: There are three main reasons for selection of the Fighting Cock Art Association among other private art associations and galleries that were active during 1940s–1970s. First, due to the fact that Fighting Cock was the first private art association, it is easier to study the grounds for detachment of the modern artists from the established patronage toward an autonomous status. Second, Fighting Cock was among the very few private institutes that had various forms of cultural activities such as publication of a manifesto and magazine, holding debates and participating in art exhibitions.<sup>22</sup> This wide range of activities, therefore, will provide more a comprehensive means of survey in the cultural role of the private institutes of this period. Third, Fighting Cock can suitably represent the collective quality of the cultural works that were exercised at associations and galleries of this period. This is because, on the one hand, Fighting Cock's foothold was not appropriate for display of the artworks and this role had to be compensated by other exhibition spaces such as Apadana Gallery. On the other hand, Fighting Cock and the Apadana Gallery were established around the same time (1948–1949) and their members were all from the first series of modern artists at the Faculty of Fine Arts. The shared objectives of both centers, namely the promotion of the modern art, expedited this collective work between them.

<sup>21</sup> With the Islamic Revolution in 1979, new rules were applied by the Islamic state to the field of art and culture. As a result, the art associations and galleries of the pre-Revolution were closed from the early 1980s and only a few of them re-opened in the same decade. The decade of the 1990s also underwent important changes toward a more liberal economy and it affected both cultural and commercial aspects of private art institutes in their works.

<sup>22</sup> The only art gallery or association which had similar range of cultural activities was *Tālār-e irān* [Hall of Iran] in 1964.

### 1.3 Historical Trajectory

To reveal differences in acts of patronage within the public and private sectors, the following paragraphs attempt to provide a historical review over the condition of artistic patronage in both sectors. A major finding of this review shows that the field of power in its various forms of courts, clergies and aristocrats had the pulse of artistic developments in its hands. In other words, the path to artistic developments began within the field of power and continued into the private fields of art guilds and independent ateliers of artists. Although the private fields followed the field of power, their productions differed from field of power regarding both the subject matter and material quality of the works. For instance, artistic productions in private circles in the Ancient Greece were rather considered as crafts than fine arts and, in order to be considered as art, they had to be dedicated to religious centers as objects.<sup>23</sup> Both in Ancient Greece or the early Roman Republic, these artists were treated as dependent similar to hangers-on of lower social status and as manual laborers who rarely had freedom in choosing their themes, styles and materials.<sup>24</sup> This dependency of art on the field of power was to the extent that during the Middle Ages any disconnection from the field of power rejected that work as a work of art.<sup>25</sup> Also, it should be noted that the patronage provided by the field of power was based on socio-political intentions and, as a result, artists remained largely unknown compared to their patrons.<sup>26</sup>

It was not until the late Renaissance and Baroque period (second half of the 17th century) that a new understanding was shaped about art and the artists became clearly distinguished from the craftsmen. The experiences of the Industrial Revolution and Enlightenment in Europe assisted replacing landholding with a trade gradually questioned any secular or religious authority and substituted it with tolerance and diversity.<sup>27</sup> In fact, since the Renaissance a fluid setting was shaped in which no single institution dominated the social landscape.<sup>28</sup> This important change, along with this new setting, was a “shift in patronizing class”<sup>29</sup> from the field of power (as a monopoly) to a rising middle class including artists too. The artists involved themselves in the acts of artistic production via non-commissioned

23 Vernon Judson Harward, *The Greek Domestic Sculptures and the Origins of Private Art Patronage* (Michigan: University of Microfilms, 1982), 3.

24 Barbara K. Gold, *Literary and Artistic Patronage in Ancient Rome* (Austin: University of Texas, 1982), xiii–xiv.

25 Robin Cormack, *The Byzantine Eye: Studies in Art and Patronage* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1989), 159.

26 Gold, *Literary and Artistic Patronage*, xiv.

27 Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters: A Study in the Relation between Italian Art and Society in the Age of Baroque* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1963), 316.

28 Jonathan K. Nelson and Richard J. Zeckhauser, *The Patron's Payoff: Conspicuous Commissions in Italian Renaissance Art* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2008), xiv.

29 Marjorie Garber, *Patronizing the Arts* (Princeton: Princeton University, 2008), 9.

or self-commissioned status or by selling “off the shelf” images made by replicas or more efficient techniques.<sup>30</sup> It was within this space that artists refused to confine themselves to official and inflexible doctrine of the academies and followed a conscious policy to adapt themselves to society. This refusal of academia by artists had two major reasons: first, a social inclination in artists who believed that the academy’s confinements disconnected them from society and, second, a stress on significance of their intellectual attainments. In fact, artists considered these two conditions the requisites of their social success, which had to be achieved not through an academic, but rather a general education.<sup>31</sup> Accordingly, shortly after the foundation of academies by states, artists complained about the stagnant space of the academies. The central discussions supported by the artists were their interest in liberal arts, anarchistic tendencies and concept of genius.<sup>32</sup> It was this rejection of the academy that made artists carry on their education in bohemian styles outside the academic space. They began to display their works independently from academia and state-established salons. It became intolerable for the artists to see their works destined to decorate the temples, palaces or to be exhibited in shops or streets like cheap goods for sale. As a result, artists began showing their works at private galleries and this became a channel for art to be argued, criticized, bought and sold as well as a channel for artists themselves to become more visible than ever before.<sup>33</sup> In other words: “[...] these exhibitions did help to bring artist and public together, and did provide a forum where values other than those established by the state and the aristocracy could be discussed.”<sup>34</sup> The artistic patronage was displaced from political and religious fields of power to more private fields such as collectors, tourists, dealers, merchants and wealthy families. Also, new patrons arose from an elite middle class who felt the need to communicate their status and, for the first time, an environment was created in which artistic innovation was valued and encouraged by the patrons.<sup>35</sup> As John Clark discusses the condition of artistic patronage in the modern age in Asia and the East, in modern art there was an uneasy collaboration between modern artists and the field of power as their patrons. In fact, artists had begun to set up private studios, galleries and societies to promote their artistic purpose and art schools since the early 20th century. The domination of a nationalist discourse supported by the governments of this period, though, caused some collaboration between states and those artists who showed nationalistic inclinations in their modern works. Nevertheless, the major modern

<sup>30</sup> Louisa C. Matthew, “Focus on the Artist and the Middleman: Materials, Workshop, Production and Marketing during an Age of Transition,” in *The Art Market in Italy: 15th–17th Centuries*, ed. Marcello Fantoni et al. (Modena: F. C. Panini, 2003), 14.

<sup>31</sup> Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, 19.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 329.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 121–29.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 331.

<sup>35</sup> Nelson and Zeckhauser, *The Patron’s Payoff*, xiv–xv.



artists were against such ultra-nationalist approaches.<sup>36</sup> According to Clark, a common patronage in these regional countries was exercised by the cultural policies of those regimes. That is, there was a hierarchical organ of direct or indirect intervention in the art world in terms of national art salons (in Iran this role was played via biennials). The artists' response to this type of patronage was, therefore, varied. The artists either spent a great part of their lives in the shadow of these policies and organized artists' groups against them, or they tried to beat a lonely path to personal expression or formal development outside it—i.e., organizing separate exhibitions outside and against salons.<sup>37</sup>

Reviewing Iranian art history indicates that the centrality of artistic patronage was with the kings and their courts, rather than the private sector. The private sector included mainly the private art guilds that, although were independent in their activity, were subordinate to the courts. The guilds covered a range of *Kārkhāna* [workshops] and *Dokān* [shops] of crafts and arts since the 15th century. The existence of the guilds was very dependent on *Ustād* [master] and merchants since they offered both training and goods to sell.<sup>38</sup> The reasons for the centrality of the courts in the patronage of arts (compared to the guilds) altered in different Persian dynasties. The most common purposes behind court patronage were buttressing the legitimacy of the ruler, providing a cultural confidence in their relation with Europe, reflecting the magnificence and superiority of the courts to people and provoking a national unity by authorizing kings' national legitimacy. This predominance of the court patronage to the private sector can be tracked in different periods of Iran's history of art. That is, the most outstanding artworks<sup>39</sup>—either in material or subject—were produced in courts and the minor or provincial types of the same artworks were made in the market and private ateliers for personal usages or sale. For instance, there was a historical dependence of different art forms on court-sponsored architecture (temples, palaces or public constructions) from Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BCE) to Pahlavi dynasty (1925–1979). It was this centrality that made the history of Iranian architecture not about the history of architects, but its patrons.<sup>40</sup> This dependence reveals the high functionality of the artworks for the courts whereas attribution of the term “Court Style” to these works has become common for many of these epochs. The field of miniature painting and the analysis of the paintings based on their subjects during different periods also approve the close reliance of the artworks on the court patronage. For instance, the idea of

36 John Clark, *Modern Asian Art* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1998), 177.

37 *Ibid.*, 180.

38 R. G. Mukminova, “Craftsmen and Guild Life in Samarqand,” in *Timurid Art and Culture: Iran and Central Asia in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Lisa Golombek and Maria Subtelny (The Netherlands: Leiden, 1992), 29–32.

39 The works of art such as fresco and mural painting, relief, watercolour, book illustration, decorative painting on objects, oil painting and so forth.

40 Mina Marefat, “The Protagonists who Shaped Modern Tehran,” in *Téhéran Capitale Bicentenaire*, ed. C. Adle et B. Hourcade (Paris–Tehran: Institut Français de Recherche en Iran, 1992), 95.

thanatopsis, which was prevalent in the history of Iranian literature, was missing in Persian miniatures. A plausible reason is because miniatures of a superior quality (that were imitated by the private sector) were ordered by court and royal families, and since these clients were not fond of such subject matters, Persian miniatures rarely reflected ideas concerning death or morbidity in general.<sup>41</sup>

The royal libraries and workshops, in which illustrated manuscripts and miniature paintings were produced, imposed unitary styles over the field of art either directly or indirectly and, as a result, the provinces lost their cultural autonomy.<sup>42</sup> This was due to the organization of the libraries and workshops that restricted the artistic innovation to these centers. In fact, at the libraries and workshops the most outstanding artists were active and exploited new forms and techniques which later were taken up and imitated by provincial or commercial artists in private sectors.<sup>43</sup> The system of education at these workshops was hierarchical and it was based on master-apprenticeship method. That is, a student learned a technique by copying works by the master—a chain that assured continuity of one style. Even the qualified artisans from the private sector did not have an easy entry to the royal libraries and workshops. In fact, the courts had a closed system of education with a preference for sons of royal masters and court slaves. The outsiders could only be recruited to collaborate on specific projects. The mere relation between royal workshops and provincial ateliers was through the chief of royal workshops, whose task was also to act as liaison between private guilds and the court.<sup>44</sup> Also, the inclination of kings toward European art made them employ European artists for their royal ateliers since the Safavid dynasty (1501–1736), dispatch Iranian young artists to Europe and academize art education based on European systems during Qajar dynasty (1785–1925) and specially since the second half of 19th century. The patronage provided by Qajar kings and their various measures in favor of arts transformed their courts to the major channels for the import of Western art styles.<sup>45</sup> Among other important measures which paved the way for artistic developments and emergence of the new Western styles were the importation of photography (1842), lithography print machine and foundation of the first Public Printing Press (1861), and publishing the first newspapers (1837). The European Naturalism and academic Realism that were promoted via courts during the late Qajar provoked an

41 Major reasons for centrality of thanatopsis as a concept in Iranian literature are found in both historical and cultural contexts: that is, on the one hand, ceaseless wars and their devastating effects. On the other hand, an inability to help the real world and thus surrender to the world inside. [Javad Mojabi, *Sarāmadān-e honar-e now [Masters of Modern Art]* (Tehran: Behnegār, 2014), 12.]

42 A. Welch, "Art in Iran IX. Safavid to Qajar Periods," in *Encyclopedia Iranica* (London, U.K: Encyclopedia Iranica Foundaion, 1987), 620.

43 Adel T. Adamova, *Medieval Persian Painting: The Evolution of an Artistic Vision* (New York: Bibliotheca Persica, 2008), 31.

44 Maryam Ekhtiar, "From Workshop and Bazaar to Academy: Art Training and Production in Qajar Iran," in *Royal Persian Paintings*, ed. Layla S. Diba (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 54 & 56.

45 Ekhtiar, "From Workshop and Bazaar to Academy," 50.

individualism in artists as a means of self-expression. It should also be noted that such individualism simultaneously encouraged artists to neglect demands of their patrons and to approach other subjects from their personal perspectives.<sup>46</sup> The obvious evidence of this change was appearance of artist's signature with date on their works in the second half of 19th century—a habit that was not common due to superiority of the name of patron.

For the private methods of patronage in Iran, the artists from the private sectors were not acknowledged as artists but “craftsmen” or “artisans” who had to make their objects at their houses with materials of lower value.<sup>47</sup> For utilizing materials of value in their works, the craftsmen and artisans required support of private patrons from a more prosperous class that mainly included nobles, wealthy families, religious figures and women. In addition to the lower quality and stylistic imitations from the works produced by royal artists, the productions of the private sectors also differed in their subject matters from the court art. It was according to these differences that one observes a dual classification in artistic productions based on whether they were produced by the private or royal artists. For instance, from the 14th century on, when illustrated manuscripts increased in number and became the object of mass production, two types were differentiated: “metropolitan” or “provincial” manuscripts that were made by independent artists, and “royal” or “workshop” manuscripts that were produced at royal libraries and courts. These two types also had different functions. The manuscripts created at the royal libraries and workshops were considered as prestigious productions and with large formats and heightened semantic significance had to reflect life at the court. But the provincial productions had commercial purpose and with small formats and modest conceptions were mainly made for reading or decorative utilities of the common public.<sup>48</sup> This dual classification, nonetheless, should not be considered as the private sector's inability to contribute to development of the new art styles. Certain dates in Iranian history, although not comparable to court patronage, reveal initiatives by private sector that led to formation of new stylistic features. The major condition of these privately run developments was artists—either from royal or independent workshops—coming into contact with unofficial circles out of courts. In other words, since the Timurid dynasty (1370–1507) and later during the Safavid era artists developed relations with other guilds, such as poets, athletes, mystics, etc. Although these relations were not as effective as the predominant influence of the court ateliers, they inspired artists with more realistic and routine subjects in their works.<sup>49</sup> Another influential condition was when a void of court patron-

<sup>46</sup> Mahshid Modares. “Art Patronage of the Nineteenth Century Iran,” (2012). <http://www.dl.edi-info.ir/Art%20Patronage%20of%20the%20Nineteenth%20Century%20Iran.pdf>, accessed August 28, 2018.

<sup>47</sup> Arthur Upham Pope, *Masterpieces of Persian Art* (London: Peter Owen, 1945), 53.

<sup>48</sup> Adamova, *Medieval Persian Painting*, 31.

<sup>49</sup> The best examples were two master miniature artists Kamal al-Din Behzad (c. 1450–1535) in the Timurid era and Reza Abbasi (c. 1565–1635) in the late Safavid reign. Behzad was inspired by Sufism of such

age occurred. Under the reign of Shah Tahmasp I (1514–1576)—the second Safavid king—the Shah’s disinterest in works of his court’s atelier since the mid-16th century opened a space for other forms of patronage. In Shiraz, Herat and other cities, for instance, the merchants and less powerful patrons of limited means supported production of more commercial works. The Single-Page Miniature was a new invention by provincial and family ateliers and desperate court artists.<sup>50</sup> This new format (paintings separate from books) replaced the laborious and costly miniatures for illustration of manuscripts at royal workshops with modest single-page paintings that were mainly created for sale. In fact, the main reason for separation of painting from book was that the new patrons could not afford books, whereas the royal libraries could. This was, therefore, a new change toward more independence for the provincial artists.<sup>51</sup> In contrast to the sophisticated works of the royal workshops, the single-page works included realistic execution of more modest subjects with less dedicative or celebrative features. Another privately run development was a commercial style of painting in Shiraz known as Shiraz Style in the 16th century which was very suitable for the purpose of trading and sale. This style was attributed to the works with simple drawings and compositions of landscapes or constructions, and due to their less demanding production, they could be made in multiple editions for sale.<sup>52</sup> The milieu that was formed since the 16th century with tinted single-sheet and commercial works evolved into the representational art in Iran and prepared the ground for later large-scale canvases painted in oil.<sup>53</sup>

Added to the single-page paintings and the commercial production of artworks in private ateliers, there were also other forms of art productions that exclusively began within the private sectors. A major part of this type of productions included lacquer paintings since the Zand dynasty (1751–1794) applied on routine objects such as pen boxes, mirror cases and jewelry boxes or objects used for public monuments. The main reasons for the private source of these works were, first, their low-cost compared to the large-scale paintings and book illustrations undertaken by courts and, second, an increase in European painting models and objects in the houses of the Iranian upper class and wealthy families.<sup>54</sup> As it was mentioned, the thematic aspects of works produced in private sectors also differed from those at

poets as Nur al-Din Nur al-Rahman Jami (1414–1492) and Nizam al-Din Ali Shir Navai (1441–1501) and also their realistic approaches affected Behzad in his figurative paintings. Reza Abbasi also, due to his mystic inclinations, was constantly suspected as a royal painter and calligrapher.

<sup>50</sup> Adamova also argues other origins of court painters losing interest in book illustration going back to the late 15th century. First, the appearance of new aesthetic ideals and enriched thematic repertory in painters inspired by their relations with poets. Second, the inspiring role of European developments such as prominence of secular elements. Third, the increasing passion in the West for collecting Persian miniatures and drawings in albums. [Adamova, *Medieval Persian Painting*, 69–70.]

<sup>51</sup> Roueen Pakbaz, *Naqāshi-ye irān [Iranian Painting]* (Tehran: Zarin wa simin, 2005), 96.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

<sup>53</sup> Adamova, *Medieval Persian Painting*, 64.

<sup>54</sup> Pakbaz, *Naqāshi-ye irān [Iranian Painting]*, 96.

royal workshops. In public houses (e.g., bazaars, bathhouses, caravanserais, post-houses, coffee-houses and mosques) the major subjects were selected from Persian epics, religious, erotic and European prints and were worked in oil, frescos, tiles and lithographs.<sup>55</sup> Another production of this type was *Qahva-kāna* [Coffee-House] or later *Čāi-kāna* [Tea-House] painting. This type of independent painting emerged in the Safavid era with a rise in private sector's demand for detachable and portable murals with epic and religious subject matter.<sup>56</sup> The Coffee-House painting, in fact, represented a type of Iranian folk art that was rooted in growth of the Shiite sect with its travelling preachers and *Parda-dār* [icon-bearers] in the country.<sup>57</sup> These paintings, therefore, reflected national desires, religious beliefs and cultural zeitgeist of the middle layers of provincial life. The embracing of folk art affected by Iran's Constitutional Revolution (1905–1911)<sup>58</sup> meant that the Coffee-House painting met more social tolerance. This genre of painting was first worked with the aim of decorating walls and ceilings of rich families and with rise in demand it led to the appearance of specialists in this field. The artists began apprenticeship since childhood and having mastered the techniques, they accepted commissions from coffee houses. The owner of the coffee house provided artists studios and materials of their work, as well.<sup>59</sup>

As being described, the artistic patronage in Iran mainly circled around the courts at royal libraries and workshops. In contrast, the private sectors did not possess considerable autonomy for supporting stylistic and technical developments in their own fields and, therefore, they imitated royal artists with a lower quality of works. Since the first half of the 20th century (i.e., with emergence of the first modern artists in Iran), though the government almost lost its centrality in artistic developments. In other words, institutionalization of new art styles occurred out of state's domain and went rather through an independent process by artists. As this study will examine, an approximately similar process, was also observed in the regional countries or the West. In fact, the shift of artistic patronage from official toward more private forms was historically affected by events of modernity and modernization. They were these contextual changes that grounded the modern artists' revival against the top-down impulse of art education being practiced via institutions such as academies and art salons.

55 Willem Floor, *Wall Painting and Other Figurative Mural Art in Qajar Iran* (California: Mazda, 2005), 131.

56 Karim Emami, *An Exhibition of Coffee-House Painting* (Tehran: Iran-America Society, 1967), exhibition catalogue, Tehran, Autumn, 1967, n.p.

57 *Ibid.*, n.p.

58 Iran's Constitutional Revolution, as Iran's first modern revolution that sought to replace the monarchy with a parliamentary system, was the result of a range of intellectual forces. The nationalist aspirations of the revolutionaries (added to their liberalism and secularism) prepared a good context for works which rather considered Iranian identity. [Hadi Seyf, *Suta delān: naqāši-ye kiālisāz-e mardom-e kuča wa bāzār* [*The Heartbrokens: The Imaginative Painter of the Common People*] (Tehran: Kānun-e parvareš-e fekri-ye kudakān wa nowjavānān [Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults], 2004), 13.]

59 Emami, *An Exhibition of Coffee-House*, n.p.

## 1.4 Contributions to the Subject

Founded on the questions and adopted methods in this study, two main series of literature are examined. First, those resources that investigate the peculiar role of artists in the promotion of modern art with attention to the definition of modern art in other contexts than the West. Second, the resources that provide information on institution, motivations and activity terms of Iranian private art associations and galleries in the 1940s–1970s. The first series of studies is applied in the theoretical discussion in Chapter 2 and the second series is employed in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 for discussing contexts, contributors and their activity modes in the development of modern art. Selection of the resources in the first series depends on the hypothesis which relates the promotion of modern art to the artists and should theoretically support possibility of this role by artists. In other words, the theories are required to defend the role of artists versus (or in competition against) other forms of power affecting the field of art. The most known theoretical attempts in socio-cultural studies to account for the elusive character of power in modern society are the “disciplinary power” by Michel Foucault (1926–1984) and Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of “symbolic power.” Foucault’s theory of disciplinary power argues a substantial shift in early means of asserting power of a sovereign. According to this theory, the power no longer is a single hierarchical authority, but is spread horizontally and thus invisibly, due to its continual presence. Such power is exercised via bureaucratic structures in schools, workplace, religious institutions, etc. Bourdieu’s theory of symbolic power considers art, religion and language as powers for constructing the reality. The symbolic power is defined in and by a determinate relationship between those who exercise power and those who undergo it.<sup>60</sup> The theories of Foucault and Bourdieu have thus successfully challenged assumptions on modern socio-cultural and political institutions. Despite similarities between their works, Bourdieu’s theory has been selected for the purpose of present study. The reason for this preference is that although both Foucault and Bourdieu attempt to combine analysis for power with modernization, they pursue this aim differently. Foucault’s theory emphasizes a complex of disciplinary institutions, but Bourdieu’s theory pays attention to relations of power and systems of artistic knowledge that shape the behavioral and cognitive dispositions of the artists.<sup>61</sup> Bourdieu, instead of discussing the historical roots of disciplinary power, talks more specifically about the mechanisms that allow power to be reproduced. Also, the difficulty of working with Foucault’s theory in this study is due to its highly radical stances that make it impossible to identify any determinate social location of exercising power within

<sup>60</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, “Symbolic Power,” *Telos*, no. 38 (1978–1979): 77 & 83.

<sup>61</sup> Ciaran Cronin, “Bourdieu and Foucault on Power and Modernity,” *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 22, no. 6 (1996): 56 & 67.

field of art or of resistance to its operations by artists. Bourdieu's work avoids this problem by providing a symbolically mediated interaction between artists' "habitus" (human capacities of artists as agents) and social structure. That is, Bourdieu's work connects relations of domination to more identifiable agents and institutions of the modern state. In contrast to Foucault's monolithic notion of disciplinary society, Bourdieu relates an explanatory role to the concept of artists as subjects and his theory offers a more empirically analytical framework for decoding operation of power and orienting artists' resistance to its domination.<sup>62</sup> In other words, Foucault's notion of resistance to power is problematic because the source of artists' resistance is not clear. Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power, by contrast, solves this problem with its emphasis on the symbolic aspect of power that enables him to give more plausible account of the role of the state in the exercise of power and the role of artists in their resistance. Bourdieu, in fact, has helped this problem by defining a dialectical interrelation between class struggles in the social field and symbolic struggles in the specialized artistic field, which underlies relations of symbolic domination.<sup>63</sup> The suitability of Bourdieu's theory of symbolic power for this study, therefore, not only lies in its support of promotion of modern art by artists on their own and as a resistance to the artistic policies of the field of power, but also for its emphasis on collective, cultural and non-commercial aspects of the artists' role that he argues by determinate concepts of "field," "habitus," "position," "disposition" and "position-taking."

Another series of literature required in this work includes theoretical discussions on modern art in non-Western contexts. Two major theories that with review of concepts and terminologies have resisted the Eurocentric approaches to modern art are theories of Postcolonialism and Multiple Modernities. These theories have a common emphasis on the relevance of the socio-cultural history of the countries to the modern issues and their event as active cultural reception, rather than a mere act of adoption and passive transferal of developments from outside. This study applies ideas by a series of thinkers who cast doubts on generic definitions for modernity and artistic modernism and review those terminologies both theoretically and stylistically in the West and non-West (e.g., Terry Smith and Bernard Smith).<sup>64</sup> These ideas also include works by those authors who concern the problem of modernity and modernism particularly within the colonized regions by issuing methodological questions, attention to the intellectual history and the role of the middle class in non-Western regions (e.g., Iftikhar Dadi, Keith David Watenpaugh,

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 55–56.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 61 & 64 & 71.

<sup>64</sup> Smith, Terry. "Rethinking Modernism and Modernity Now." *Filozofski vestnik*, no. 2 (2014): 271–319 & Smith, Bernard. *Modernism's History: A Study in Twentieth-Century Art and Idea*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998.

Barbara Weinstein, Ricardo A. Lopez and Sanjay Joshi).<sup>65</sup> It is attempted also to investigate and describe the complicity of encounter of the non-West with Western culture with such postcolonial concepts as “blind-spot” that defends the non-Western modern art and values its dynamic process of formation (Homi K. Bhabha) or “counter-hegemonic identity” discourses that emphasize on the discursive construction of the *self* in the non-Western artists in their encounter with the West (Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak).<sup>66</sup> Additionally, this study investigates ideas that point to the possibility of the multiple modernities based on socio-cultural and multilateral entanglements in works by such authors as Peter Burke, Michael Werner and Benedicte Zimmermann.<sup>67</sup> In fact, the major attempt by these authors is to question the legitimate and hegemonic terminologies that emphasize distinctive borders between an original Western modern art and its replication in the rest of the world. In the theoretical discussion, it has been referred to terminologies that deconstruct such borderlines—e.g., “transculturation,” “acculturation,” “accommodation” and “assimilation” suggested by Andre Gunder Frank, “hybridization” or “cross-pollenization” by Serge Gauvin and Alexander Bailey, and “cultural métissage” by Serge Gruzinski.<sup>68</sup> In order to reduce the ambiguity of these terminologies, it has also been referred to works by authors like Monica Juneja, who more precisely argues these new terminologies in Eastern modern art as unsettling boundaries against homogenizing globalism in a discursive way. Similarly, the theoretical chapter will argue other authors like Franziska Koch whose idea about the regional modern art necessitates thematization of “multi-centered” modernisms or Oartha Mitter, Geeta Kapur and Kobena Mercer who defend it as a reshaping of the selfhood via a growing self-conscious in local artists.<sup>69</sup>

The theoretical discussion will also inspect the studies by Iranian thinkers and their approach to terminologies of modernity and artistic modernism in Iran. For this series of resources, two major ideas are argued. The first idea considers an epis-

65 Dadi, Iftikhar. *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010; Watenpaugh, Keith. *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006; Joshi, Sanjay. “Thinking about Modernity from the Margins: The Making of a Middle Class in Colonial India.” In *The Making of the Middle Class: Toward a Transnational History*, edited by A. Ricardo Lopez and Barbara Weinstein, 29–44. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012 & Lopez, Ricardo A. “Conscripts of Democracy: The Formation of Professional Middle Class in Bogota during the 1950s and early 1960s.” In *The Making of the Middle Class: Toward a Transnational History*, edited by Keith David Watenpaugh, 161–95. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006.

66 Moore-Gilbert, Bart J. *Postcolonial Theory, Contexts, Practices, Politics*. London: Verso, 1997.

67 Kaufmann, Thomas Da Costa and Michael North. “Introduction.” In *Artistic and Cultural Exchanges between Europe and Asia (1400–1900): Rethinking Markets, Workshops and Collections*, edited by Michael North, 1–8. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010.

68 Kauffmann, Thomas Da Costa. “Interpreting Cultural Transfer and the Consequences of Markets and Exchange: Reconsidering Fumi-e.” In *Artistic and Cultural Exchanges between Europe and Asia (1400–1900): Rethinking Markets, Workshops and Collections*, edited by Michael North, 135–62. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2010.

69 Wille, Simone. *Modern Art in Pakistan: History, Tradition, Place*. New Delhi: Routledge, 2015.



temological quality for the Western modern discourse and considers its application to Iranian art an epistemological error. The core point about this idea is emphasis on conditions of Iranians *encountering* the Western civilization and their lack of preparedness that is mentioned as loss of similar Western criticality. To some Iranian thinkers like M. A. Homayoun Katouzian this loss is result of an *absent rationality* which happens in the absence of critical thinking and autonomy of individuals and creates a narrow understanding of the West in this encounter.<sup>70</sup> Or, for other thinkers like Morad Farhadpour, it is a lack of historical preparedness that creates a “hysteric encounter” or as Dariush Shayegan names it a void which makes a “dual thinking” or “cultural schizophrenia” and causes a pendulum movement between untruthful fascination with the West and anti-Western inclinations.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, these Iranian thinkers consider an imitative and uncreative translational quality for modern art in Iran that makes them call it rather a “quasi-modernism” than modernism. This quasi-modernism is also argued by other authors as failure of modernism from below (private sector), and instead, as a necessary replacement with the authoritative modernization by the state from above (Touraj Atabaki).<sup>72</sup> Among these thinkers, there are also authors whose rejection of Iranian modernity or artistic modernism aroused out of the argument that there is a basic incongruity between the Western history of art and Iranian art. Therefore, they complain that Iranian art cannot be aligned with Euramerican modern art and any comparison between them is an error. These authors suspect the orthodox definitions of tradition and modernity in Western theories for analysis of Iranian art and consider these concepts resulted by an Orientalist effect. Nonetheless, they as well denounce interpretations of Iranian artistic development as modern and criticize these artistic developments for their eclectic features (Aryasp Dadbeh, Iman Afsarian and Siamak Delzendeh).<sup>73</sup>

The other major idea is less unbending toward the experience of modern art by Iranian artists. These authors have rather a nominalist approach to modernity with emphasis on modernization and technique but no fixed temporal, spatial and

70 Sadeghi, Mohammad. *Nowsāzi-ye nātāmām: goftogu bā moḥammad ‘ali homāyun kātuziān [Unfinished Modernization: An Interview with Mohammad Ali Homayoun Katouzian]*. Tehran: Pāyān, 2013.

71 Sokhanvari, Hossein. “Honar wa rošanfekri-ye mā tā āḡar-e ḡaṡ nemiravand: āsibšenāsi-ye honar wa rošanfekri-ye irāni dar goftogu-ye morād farhādpur wa šāleḡ najafi [Our Art and Intellectualism Will Not Reach the End: Social Pathology of Iranian Art and Intellectualism in Conversation between Morad Farhadpour and Saleh Najafi].” *Sināmā wa adabiāt*, no. 40 (2014): 182–91 & Haghdar, Ali Asghar. “Dāriuš-e šāyegān wa negāḡ be donyā-ye modernite [Dariush Shayegan and Outlook on the World of Modernity].” *Nāma-ye meybod*, no.1 (2001): 30–33.

72 Atabaki, Touraj, ed. *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2007.

73 Dadbeh, Aryasp. “Nistengāri-ye nābeḡeradāna [An Irrational Nihilism].” In *Dar jostojū-ye zamān-e now [In Search of the New Time]*, edited by Iman Afsarian, 119–40. Tehran: Ḥerfa-honarmand, 2016; Afsarian, Iman. “Ḡala-e važ‘iyat-e aknun [The Void of Present Time].” In *Dar jostojū-ye zamān-e now [In Search of the New Time]*, edited by Iman Afsarian, 233–40. Tehran: Ḥerfa-honarmand, 2016 & Delzendeh, Siamak. *Taḡvolāt-e tašviri-ye honar-e irān: baresi-ye enteḡādi [Visual Transformations of Art in Iran: A Critical Review]*. Tehran: Naḡar, 2016.

existential addresses. In other words, they agree on the encounter of Iranian artists with the Western modern art based on an active *mutation*. This idea argues a type of mutation which occurs through the artist's self-reflection and, therefore, is along with more active signification. This mutation is, in fact, a pendulum movement between artists' past and present with emphasis on survival and reprocessing of the past (Roueen Pakbaz, Karim Emami and Aydin Aghdashlou).<sup>74</sup> Therefore, the quasi-modernism defended by this idea rather points to gradations of modernity versus the dichotomy of modern and non-modern, and instead of assimilation, it emphasizes on aspects of becoming modern (Masoud Kowsari).<sup>75</sup> So this idea, in contrast to the previous one, does not deny artistic modernism in Iran, but its main argument is to review suitability of Western theories for the study of Iranian modern art. These authors criticize a Eurocentrism which through "otheration" creates one-modernity and one-West and employs such terminologies as "modern," "the Middle East," etc., as traps of this accreditation. Or even much further, they condemn this centrality of the West making modernity and colonialism as two sides of the European coin (Masoud Kamali, Hamid Keshmirshekan and Hamid Dabashi).<sup>76</sup> The present study considers these Iranian thinkers almost in line with those theories that are selected for its methods by non-Iranian thinkers. This is mainly because of their attention to the dynamic moment of *encounter* of artists with the Western modern art and the solution they offer for understanding this moment. The appealing argumentation of this idea is its stress on local artworks as fragments and allegories that can implicate memories of their region and produce other narrations of modernity peculiar to that region. This emphasis on *narrations* of modernity is to the extent that some authors draw attention to the mutual influences between Western and regional modernisms in approaching traditions of each other. But, according to the predominance of Eurocentrism, adaptation to Western traditions by non-Western artists is only considered as an anachronism (Fereshteh Daftari and Nada Shabout).<sup>77</sup> A solution offered by these authors, therefore, is to relate concepts of modernity and modernism to no determinate single definition and to

74 Pakbaz, Roueen. *Contemporary Iranian Painting and Sculpture*. Tehran: High Council of Culture and Art: Center for Research and Cultural Co-ordination, 1974; Emami, Karim. "Modern Persian Artists." In *Iran Faces the Seventies*, edited by Ehsan Yarshater, 349–64. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971 & Aghdashlou, Aydin. "Naqāshi āyna-ist bāztābanda-ye farhang-e mo'āṣer-e irān [Painting is a Mirror Reflecting Contemporary Culture of Iran]." *Honar-hā-ye tajasomi*, no. 5 (1999): 60–79.

75 Kowsari, Masoud. "Modernite, jāme'a wa honar dar irān [Modernity, Society and Art in Iran]." *wHerfa-honarmand*, no. 18 (2006): 150–55.

76 Kamali, Masoud. *Multiple Modernities, Civil Society and Islam: The Case of Iran and Turkey*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006; Keshmirshekan, Hamid, ed. *Contemporary Art from the Middle East: Regional Interactions with Global Art Discourses*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2015 & Dabashi, Hamid. *Iran: A People Interrupted*. New York: New Press, 2007.

77 Daftari, Fereshteh. *The Influence of Persian Art on Gauguin, Matisse, and Kandinsky*. New York: Garland, 1991 and Shabout, Nada. "The Challenge of Arab Modern Art." In *The Future of Tradition—The Tradition of Future*, edited by Chris Dercon, Leon Krempel and Avinoam Shalem, 43–49. München: Prestel, 2010. Exhibition catalogue, München, Winter, 2010–2011.

study them as experiences peculiar to their certain time and place of occurrence. In addition to theories of Postcolonialism and Multiple Modernities that support a plural approach to the experience of modernity, these authors also point to applicability of social theories for understanding the mutual relations between countries in these developments (Kamran Matin).<sup>78</sup> There are Iranian thinkers whose ideas can be placed somewhere between these two major ideas. Javad Tabatabai, for instance, has developed the theory of *Iran's Declination*. He condemns Iranian modernity to failure due to its sudden “rupture” with tradition (or a *continuity after rupture*) instead of a rupture in the course of evolution as in the West (or a *rupture after continuity*). But at the same time, Tabatabai’s solution to break free with this situation is to approach the Western theoretical systems using a creative and precarious method. This method, in fact, refers to active (not selective) manipulation of Western theories by local thinkers through review of Western concepts and their critical thematization.<sup>79</sup>

In the following paragraphs, those resources are reviewed that relate to the contexts and terms of institutionalization of modern art in Iran by artists and their cultural contribution via the first private associations and galleries. The necessity of this series of resources is according to the theoretical discussions adopted: An understanding of modern art in Iran (or the region) relies on understanding Iranian intellectual history and scrutinization in the modern art practices introduced by Iranian artists. For this aim, one is required to aggrandize the regional peculiarities of these works (i.e., idiosyncratic styles upon discursive articulations of the Western modern styles) and artists’ frameworks (i.e., institutions, groups and networkings with intellectual and literary circles). This creates a difficult aspect of the data collection. These difficulties are described at the same time that the existing studies are reviewed: First, there is a considerable gap of analytical and critical work entering the subject of the first private art institutions and the role that these centers have played in promotion of the modern art in Iran. The most prominent works done in this area come from two main resources. One includes a series of articles with a historical approach and provides information on founders and chronological data about exhibitions and programs of the most renowned cultural and commercial galleries in pre-Islamic Revolution era (Dariush Kiaras).<sup>80</sup> Another series of resources includes books either written by the gallery owners or association members, or interviews which reviewed the activities of their insti-

78 Matin, Kamran. *Recasting Iranian Modernity: International Relation and Social Change*. New York: Routledge, 2013.

79 Tabatabai, Javad. *Tamoli darbāra-ye irān: dibācha-i bar nazārya-ye enḩetāt-e irān [A Thought on Iran: An Introduction to Iran's Declination Theory]*. Tehran: Minu-ye kerad, 2016.

80 *Tāriḩça-ye gāleri-hā-ye tehrān* [“History of the Galleries of Tehran”] is the title of a series of articles about public and private art galleries in Tehran during 1940s–1970s (about 24 galleries) by Dariush Kiaras in *Tandis* visual arts biweekly. The magazine published these articles in Issues 191–238 (2011–2012).

tutes. Although these books are mainly written as introductions to the associations and galleries, they sometimes contain valuable analyses about the significance of these centers in the promotion of Iranian modern art and they provide firsthand pictures of artists, exhibition posters, catalogues and other publications.<sup>81</sup> Nonetheless, complementary sources are required to prepare the ground for a more analytical and critical discussion. The most crucial venues are the public and private archives.<sup>82</sup> These archives provide different unattended documents containing important information about the contexts and terms of collective works by modern artists in their associations and galleries. These documents can be classified as:

1. Special publications by associations and galleries in forms of magazines, statements, catalogues, etc.<sup>83</sup>
2. Articles, reviews and interviews with artists that were simultaneously published in other newspapers and periodicals about exhibitions and activities of these associations and galleries.<sup>84</sup>
3. Published books by founders or members of the associations and galleries on their works.<sup>85</sup>
4. Audio and visual resources in forms of films, interviews, talks and photographs about artists and their private institutes.<sup>86</sup>
5. Works of art at public and private collections—private

**81** Pakbaz, Roueen, and Hasan Morizinejad. *Tālār-e qandriz: tajroba-i dar 'arza-ye ejtemā'i-ye honar [Hall of Qandriz: An Experience in Social Presentation of Art]*. Tehran: Herfa-honarmand, 2016; Pakbaz, Roueen. *Tālār-e irān [Hall of Iran]*. Tehran: Ministry of Culture and Art, 1976; Tanavoli, Parviz. *Ātolia kabud: kāterāt-e parviz tanāvoli [Atelier Kabud: Memories of Parviz Tanavoli]*. Tehran: Bongāh, 2015; Saheer, Hamid. *Ātaš dar del-e tāriki [The Fire at the Heart of Darkness]*. Tehran: Donyā-ye now, 2014 & Hariri, Naser. *Darbāra-ye honar wa adabiyat: goft wa šonudi bā ma'šuma seyħun [About Art and Literature: An Interview with Masoumeh Seyhoun]*. Babol: Āvišan, 2002.

**82** The main public archives visited for the purpose of this research are the National Library and Archives Organization of Iran; Islamic Consultative Assembly Library, Museum and Documentation Center; Central Library and Center for Documents and Resource of Tehran University; Central Library and Center for Documents of Tehran's University of Art; Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMOCA); Library and Archives of Institute for Iranian Contemporary Historical Studies; Islamic Revolution Documents Center; Malek National Library and Museum Institution; Archives and Museum of Golestan Palace; Archives of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting & Archives and Library of Congress.

**83** A complete edition of periodicals and publications of main associations and galleries discussed in this research are found in National Library and Archives Organization of Iran and Islamic Consultative Assembly Library, Museum and Documentation Center. The most important examples are the Fighting Cock Association's three-series magazine (1948–1979) and the association's manifesto *Nightingale's Butcher* (1951).

**84** Since there has been not enough work done on collecting these documents, it is therefore necessary to have access to entire issues of newspapers and periodicals that reflected news about activities of the first associations and galleries. Three main archives that provide a complete access to these documents are Islamic Revolution Documents Center; National Library and Archives Organization of Iran and Islamic Consultative Assembly Library, Museum and Documentation Center.

**85** According to the private publication and limited edition of many of these books, there is a rare and restricted accessibility to them. As a result, in addition to a combination of the public archives, also it is essential to have access to private archives of individuals and collections of artists (or their families). For instance, the published format of theory of Fighting Cock Association by Jalil Ziapour (main founder of the association) exists in the private collection of Ziapour's family (Mahsha Ziapour).

**86** The audio-visual documents applied to this research were mainly interviews and documentary movies about founders of associations and galleries. These documents can be found either in public archives such as Audio-Visual Archives of Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting or in private collections. Also, the audio-visual departments of public archives retain pictures in relation with exhibition activities of these

collections are particularly noteworthy due to their unpublished or unexhibited works, memories, manuscripts and photos.<sup>87</sup>

Another principal method that can help filling the unwritten history of the first associations and galleries is interview. In this work, 15 in-person interviews are made. These interviews include 5 target groups: 1. Founders or members of art associations and galleries such as a founding member of *Tālār-e irān* [Hall of Iran] in 1964 (anonym), Gholamhossein Nami (a founding member of *Gruh-e honarmandān-e āzād* [Independent Artists Group] in 1974), Bijan Basiri (painter and director of private art gallery of *Šahr* [Shahr] in 1976) and Hamid Saher (sculptor and director of the public art gallery of *Takht-e jamšid* [Takht Jamshid] in 1977). 2. Critics who simultaneously wrote reviews on exhibitions and activities of the associations and galleries such as Aydin Aghdashlou (painter and critic at *Andiša-ye now* magazine (1954)) and Iran Darroudi (painter and critic at *Talāš* magazine (1966)). 3. First private purchasers and collectors of the modern works (Ali Ladjevardi).<sup>88</sup> 4. Families of main founders and affiliates of the first association and gallery; i.e., Jalil Ziapour, Gholamhossein Gharib, Morteza Hannaneh and Manouchehr Sheibani (Fighting Cock Association) and Mahmoud Javadipour and Hossein Kazemi (Apadana Gallery). 5. Experts and researchers whose studies include first associations and galleries such as Javad Mojabi, Sheis Yahyaie, Mohsen Shahrnazdar and Dariush Kiaras.

The second considerable gap in studies approaching the subject of modern art in Iran is a lack of adequate attention to the contextual factors of the artistic developments. There have not been many works in which the influence of political, intellectual and socio-economic grounds during the 1940s–1970s are adequately discussed. The necessity of attending to these grounds becomes obvious according

centers; e.g., photos, posters, catalogues and invitation cards. These documents are mainly found in Library and Archives of Institute for Iranian Contemporary Historical Studies; Central Library and Center for Documents and Resource of Tehran University; Central Library and Center for Documents of Tehran's University of Art and National Library and Archives Organization of Iran.

**87** A part of the pictures used in this research are photographed from Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMOCA), Malek National Library and Museum Institution, Golestan Palace, Negarestan Museum, Sa'adabad Palace and Museum, etc. Nonetheless, it should be noted that a considerable number of works (specially those that were never displayed or the unpublished materials like artists' personal memoirs, manuscripts and photos) are held in private collections. In this study, the private collections of Mahmoud Javadipour (a founding member of Apadana the first private art gallery) and private collection of Jalil Ziapour (a founding member of Fighting Cock first private art association) should be mentioned. Mahmoud Javadipour's collection is held by his wife Nezhat Amirkafi at artist's atelier and house in Tehran or by his daughter Newsha Djavadipour at her house in Munich. Jalil Ziapour's collection is held by his wife Shahin Saber Tehrani and his daughter Mahsha Ziapour at artist's house in Tehran.

**88** The Ladjevardis were one of the first Iranian entrepreneurs that began their work in 1951 in the industrial field. Although the family pioneered large-scale purchase of works by Iranian modern artists since 1973, this was merely done to decorate the headquarters of their renowned company *Gruh-e šan'ati-ye behšahr* [Behshahr Industrial Group] and it lacked any purpose of investment or art collection. The company was inspired for the idea of purchase and display of art works at its office buildings by David Rockefeller and the American Chase Bank's similar experience. [Ladjevardi, Ali (chief art purchasing officer at Behshahr Industrial Group), in discussion with the author, January 16, 2017.]

to the historical changes that they underwent during this time. For instance, the national modernization plans of the Iranian state, which were supposed to be followed within fields of art and culture, enjoyed five series of Economic Plans by the regime (1946–1978) and filled up these fields with financial supports. The social context also underwent formation of a middle class from which the modern artists aroused. This new middle class grew gradually with the ideas of reform through modern education and increasing contacts with the West since the late 19th century. With the turn of the 20th century, this class became the main arm of state's bureaucratic modernization or, more independently, exercised its own power through developing intellectual circles in politics, arts and literature.

For the significant effect of these grounds on Iranian modern art, Chapter 3 is allocated to a contextual study of them. The main researches applied in studying the contexts are selected from various fields relating to each context. That is, in addition to those studies that directly address contexts of art and cultural developments in Iran, there will be a review over those resources that specially study political, intellectual and socio-economic grounds in Iran during 1940s–1970s. The authors who directly argue contexts of artistic developments in Iran, do so by approaching artistic subjects with sociological, art historical, philosophical and critical points of view (Hamid Keshmirshakan, Javad Mojabi, Hossein Amirsadeghi, Morad Saqafi, Morad Farhadpour and Saleh Najafi).<sup>89</sup> For some other authors, they refer to the contexts while discussing the state's national modernization policies in fields of art and culture during this period (Talinn Grigor, Bianca Devos, Christoph Werner, Mina Marefat and Afshin Marashi).<sup>90</sup> The books that examine each context separately are mainly resources in the field of politics that study the role of the state in

<sup>89</sup> Keshmirshakan, Hamid, ed. *Contemporary Art from the Middle East: Regional Interactions with Global Art Discourses*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2015; Keshmirshakan, Hamid. *Honar-e mo'āser-e irān: riša-hā wa nazargāh-hā-ye nowin [Iranian Contemporary Art: New Roots and Perspectives]*. Tehran: Naẓar, 2015; Amirsadeghi, Hossein, ed. *Different Sames: New Perspectives in Contemporary Iranian Art*. London: Thames and Hudson, 2009; Mojabi, Javad. *Nawad sāl nowāwari dar honar-e irān [Ninety Years of Innovation in Iranian Art]*. Tehran: Peykara, 2016; Mojabi, Javad. *Piṣgāmān-e naqāṣi-ye mo'āser-e irān: nasl-e aval [Pioneers of Contemporary Persian Painting: First Generation]*. Translated by Karim Emami. Tehran: honar-e irān, 1997; Mojabi, Javad. *Sarāmadān-e honar-e now [Masters of Modern Art]*. Tehran: Behnegār, 2014; Saqafi, Morad. "Šahr wa 'arza-ye ejtemā'i-ye e honar: negāhi be tajroba-ye tālār-e qandriz [City and Social Presentation of Art: A Review of the Experience of Hall of Qandriz]." *Goftogu*, no. 13 (1996): 37–53 & Sokhanvari, Hossein. "Honar wa rošanfekri-ye mā tā ākar-e ẓaṭ nemiravand: āsibšenāsi-ye honar wa rošanfekri-ye irāni dar goftogu-ye morād farhādpur wa šāleḥ najafi [Our Art and Intellectualism Will Not Reach the End: Social Pathology of Iranian Art and Intellectualism in Conversation between Morad Farhadpour and Saleh Najafi]." *Sināmā wa adabiāt*, no. 40 (2014): 182–91.

<sup>90</sup> Grigor, Talinn. *Building Iran: Modernism, Architecture, and National Heritage under the Pahlavi Monarchs*. New York: Pariscopes, 2009; Devos, Bianca, and Christoph Werner, ed. *Culture and Cultural Politics under Reza Shah: The Pahlavi State, New Bourgeoisie and the Creation of a Modern Society in Iran*. London: Routledge, 2014; Marefat, Mina. "The Protagonists who Shaped Modern Tehran." In *Téhéran Capitale Bicentenaire*, edited by C. Adle et B. Hourcade, 95–125. Paris–Tehran: Institut Français de Recherche en Iran, 1992 & Marashi, Afshin. *Nationalizing Iran: Culture, Power, and the State 1870–1940s*. Seattle: University of Washington, 2008.

promoting a nationalistic discourse and its interaction in art and cultural policies. In other words, the national modernizing plans of the Pahlavi regime heavily affected positions, dispositions and position-takings by artists within these fields (Nikki R. Keddie, M. A. Homayoun Katouzian, Yann Richard and Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet).<sup>91</sup> The main targets of resources on intellectual contexts are independent literary and political circles of intellectuals who reacted against, or independent from, the state and pursued their own understanding of modernism and nationalism. The significance of intellectual context is due to the interactivity of artists with these literary and political intellectuals. Therefore, reviewing the works on new literary and intellectual movements in Iran should be considered a crucial source of data (Javad Tabatabai, Babak Ahmadi, Ali Mirsepassi, Mehrzad Boroujerdi, Negin Nabavi, Hasan Mirabedini and Shams Langeroudi).<sup>92</sup> The most useful resources on socio-economic grounds are those that precisely follow these developments along with factors of political and intellectual effects. In other words, this study surveys the socio-economic contexts based on those works that examine these two grounds for their influence on formation of new social structures and emergence of the middle class. Economic measures by the government and their influence on the new disposition of the middle class comprise the central focus of these studies. The relevance of these grounds to the institutionalization of the modern art is due to this emerging middle class. This social class (modern artists also arising from this class) mainly concerns topics of modernity and modernism due to its financial and intellectual competence (Ervand Abrahamian, M. A. Homayoun Katouzian, Touraj Atabaki and Amin Saikal).<sup>93</sup>

91 Keddie, Nikki R., and Rudi Matthee, ed. *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interaction in Culture and Cultural Politics*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002; Katouzian, Homa. *The Persians: Ancient, Medieval and Modern Iran*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009; Richard, Yann. "Du nationalism a l'islamisme: dimensions de l'identite ethnique en Iran." In *Le fait ethnique en Iran et en Afghanistan*, edited by Jean-Pierre Digard, 267–75. Paris: CNRS, 1988; Kashani-Sabet, Firoozeh. "Culture of Iranian-ness: The Evolving Polemic of Iranian Nationalism." In *Iran and the Surrounding World: Interaction in Culture and Cultural Politics*, edited by Nikki R. Keddie and Rudi Matthee, 162–81. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002.

92 Tabatabai, Javad. *Tamoli darbāra-ye irān: dibāča-i bar nazārya-ye enḡeḡāt-e irān [A Thought on Iran: An Introduction to Iran's Declination Theory]*. Tehran: Minu-ye kerad, 2016; Ahmadi, Babak. "Havā-ye tāza: fazā-ye rošanfekri-ye daha-ye 1340 [Fresh Air: Intellectual Space in the 1960s]." *Herfa-honarmand*, no. 18 (2006): 105–17; Mirsepassi, Ali. *Intellectual Discourse and the Politics of Modernization: Negotiating Modernity in Iran*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000; Boroujerdi, Mehrzad. *Iranian Intellectuals and the West: The Tormented Triumph of Nativism*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1996; Nabavi, Negin. "The Discourse of Authentic Culture in Iran in the 1960s and 1970s." In *Intellectual Trends in Twentieth-Century Iran: A Critical Survey*, edited by Negin Nabavi, 91–108. Florida: University Press of Florida, 2003; Mirabedini, Hasan. *Šad sāl dāstān-nevisi-ye irān [One Hundred Years of Fiction Writing in Iran]*. Tehran: Češma, 2004 & Langeroudi, Shams. *Tāriḡ-e taḡlili-ye še'r-e now [Analytical History of Modern Poetry]*. Tehran: Markaz, 1991.

93 Abrahamian, Ervand. *A History of Modern Iran*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008; Abrahamian, Ervand. *Iran between Two Revolutions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982; Arghandehpour, Karim. *Dar jostojū-ye jāme'a-ye nātāmām: goftogu bā moḡammad 'ali homāyun kātuziān [In Search of an Unfinished Society: An Interview with Mohammad Ali Homayoun Katouzian]*. Tehran: Ney, 2014; Atabaki, Touraj, ed. *The State and the Subaltern: Modernization, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2007 & Saikal, Amin. *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: Iran from Autocracy to Religious Rule*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009.

## 2 Theoretical Considerations

This chapter has a theoretical emphasis on a methodological approach to the subject of modern art in general or, more specifically, to the artistic modernism in non-Western contexts. The emphasis on a methodological study is due to a prevailing ambiguity toward the way modern art from these non-Western regions is defined and, as a result, its effect on understanding of the works by local artists. For the case of this study, for instance, there is a mainstream of scholars who basically contest the possibility of modern art in Iran, or, at least, they find it difficult to define the “non-Western modern art” based on Western theoretical conducts. This is notwithstanding the fact that being said, there are other scholars who emphasize on a refreshment of the unique perspectives in understanding and interpretations brought to modern art from contexts other than the West. This book acts upon two closely interdependent axes: first, the definition of modern art for the non-Western regions, and second, practices applied by artists for the institutionalization of modern art. It has been attempted to show how these two axes complement each other within the context of modern art and around Iran.

For these axes of focus, two theories are applied predominantly: first, the theoretical commentaries that assume a necessity for a refreshed approach to canonical concepts of modernity and modernism. By using these theories, one actually defends an understanding of modern art that is based on analysis of the very intellectual and cultural history and modern artistic practices of each region from within.<sup>1</sup> Second, this study will draw upon ideas that consider the institutionalization of modern art, its procedures and practices. The theories used, therefore, are differentiated in two ways; first, Non-Western Modern Art: Terminology and Definitional Attributes, and second: Cultural Privatization and Domination of the Dominated. After that, there will be an analysis of both theories in their relation to: Iranian Modern Art and Domination of Modern Artists. Above all, this chapter begins with controversies that exist among Iranian scholars regarding their approach to modern art in Iran. This prelude is necessary to explain to build a discussion with attention to these controversies and how this work defends its argument according to the two theoretical axes discussed.

In a general overview, two types of ideas are predominant among Iranian scholars. First, there are those who generally consider epistemological and existential prerequisites for the “modern” project. The advocates of this idea share similar arguments based on dichotomy of the West (as in the center) and the rest (in the periphery). They regard the absence of Western rationality in the Iranian intellect

1 Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim*, 3.



as a historical prerequisite. This loss is referred to as an *absent rationality*<sup>2</sup> in the absence of critical thinking and autonomous individuality and, as a result, creates a narrow understanding of Western civilizations. The significance of this hypothesis is to the extent that some argue it as the main reason for the failure of modernization from below.<sup>3</sup> Or, contrarily, some scholars confirm this failure by supporting the necessity of its replacement with an authoritative modernization from above.<sup>4</sup> Many feel there was a lack of historical preparedness in authoritative modernization of Iranian modern art, resulting in it often being referred to as “quasi-modernism.”<sup>5</sup> For many of these thinkers, artistic modernism in Iran was not original, and without its origin it could not reach beyond a mere imitation of the Western heritage; it was based only on repetition and uncreative translation. According to Morad Farhadpour, a critic and philosopher, the originality of Western modernism basically appears in a *cleavage* within historical movements that paved the way for creativity and ability. But since Iranian art had lost its historical connection with tradition, this cleavage could never happen and Iranian modernism was not only superficial, but also deceitful.<sup>6</sup> For some other thinkers, only the politico-intellectual forces could benefit the modernization during Iran’s Constitutional Revolution (1905–1911) and the modernization process in Iran was a political project being grounded on an epistemological void. As they allege, this distorted prospect to the West provoked a pendulum swing between untruthful fascination with the West on one extreme and anti-Western inclinations on the other.<sup>7</sup> Other thinkers also approve of such void as a *historical destiny*<sup>8</sup> within which non-Western civilizations have delayed adapting themselves to the world. They describe this situation as a “dual thinking” or “cultural schizophrenia”<sup>9</sup> that occurred upon a split between Western modernity and Eastern civilizations. These critical perspectives accuse Iranian modern art of being a simplified replica of Western modern art that gradually depleted Iranian art of its own peculiarities and uniqueness. Many of these peculiarities, they contend, cannot be aligned with those of Euramerican modern art and, therefore,

2 Sadeghi, *Nosāzi-ye nātāmām [Unfinished Modernization]*, 12.

3 Modernization “from below” refers to the autonomous movements by various social groups and sectors—not classes—that led to Iranian Constitutional Revolution in the early 20th century. Lack of socio-intellectual, economic and political preparedness of the country are the main reasons to revolution’s failure in its main goals (except for rule of law); i.e opposition to monarchy, formation of a national government and social freedoms, etc. [Shahrokh Meskoub, “Dalāyel-e šekast-e mašruṭa [Reasons to Failure of Constitutional Revolution],” *Donyā-ye eqtešādī*, September 28, 2017.]

4 Atabaki, introduction to *The State and the Subaltern*, xiv.

5 Sadeghi, *Nosāzi-ye nātāmām [Unfinished Modernization]*, 17.

6 Sokhanvari, “Honar wa rošanfekri-ye mā [Our Art and Intellectualism],” 182.

7 Haghdar, “Dāriuš-e šāyegān [Dariush Shayegan],” 30.

8 *Ibid.*, 31.

9 Dariush Shayegan, the Iranian cultural theorist and philosopher, coined the terms “dual thinking” or “cultural schizophrenia.” Nevertheless, in his later discussion on the idea of cultural duality, he changes his approach toward a socio-cultural pluralism that is instead affected by discussions of globalization and cross-cultures.

they should not even be compared to the Western history of art.<sup>10</sup> Basically, these thinkers consider such comparisons incongruous; they criticize the act of attributing Western concepts, such as “tradition,” to Iranian art. As they argue, tradition can only be defined together and within Western modernity, whereas, for the Iranian artists, there has never been this polemical way of thinking. These thinkers consider it a conceptual crisis and argue that the usage of concepts such as tradition and modernity for non-Western cultures is the Orientalist effect.<sup>11</sup> For these thinkers, the question of *tradition* and *modernity* in Iranian modern art should not even be asked. Put simply, because Iranians never experienced that necessary individualism, therefore their conception of modern art was an eclectic one. Such eclecticism was not but *anachronism* or *timelessness*. That is, the ideologized intellectuals selected something from their historical concerns, and due to lack of a historical continuity, they postponed their answers for the future.<sup>12</sup> Therefore, application of the Western modern discourse, as the main discourse of the episteme, is an epistemological error for a correct analysis of the Iranian art. It is this belief that some views assume no necessity for defining modernism for Iranian art and consider it something to be done independently from Western theories.<sup>13</sup>

The second type of ideas belongs to those thinkers who consider the encounter of Iranian art with the West afforded via a process of “transmutation.”<sup>14</sup> Although transmutation forms the major argument by these thinkers, this concept lingers between both groups of thinkers. That is, for those who defend prerequisites for the modern project, transmutation results from “mere reception and mimicry”<sup>15</sup> or “without self-reflection.”<sup>16</sup> But for those who discuss transmutation positively, this term implies a more active signification and conveys a pendulum swing between past and present with the emphasis on survival and reprocessing of the past.<sup>17</sup> In fact, these thinkers seem to have a nominalist approach to modernity, along with

10 Aryasp Dadbeh, “rūḥ-e zamān wa rūḥ-e honar-e qājār [The Zeitgeist and the Spirit of the Qajar Art],” in *Dar jostojū-ye zamān-e now [In Search of the New Time]*, ed. Iman Afsarian (Tehran: Ḥerfa-honarmand, 2016), 40.

11 Dadbeh, “Nistengāri-ye nābeḡeradāna [An Irrational Nihilism],” 135.

12 Aryasp Dadbeh, “Tavahom [Delusion],” in *Dar jostojū-ye zamān-e now [In Search of the New Time]*, ed. Iman Afsarian (Tehran: Ḥerfa-honarmand, 2016), 153–54.

13 Delzendeḥ, *Taḡavolāt-e taṣviri [Visual Transformations]*, 416.

14 Aydin Aghdashlou and Roueen Pakbaz are among Iranian critics who significantly apply the term “transmutation” as an incontestable change for recent developments in Iranian art. For Aghdashlou, although transmutation provided Iranian artists more freedom, he blames its imitative qualities. Pakbaz also sees transmutation as an ideological effect that occurred with no correct comprehension of Western modern art, nevertheless, he agrees on the active role of Iranian artists for sustaining the quality of originality in their works. [See: Aghdashlou, Aydin. “Naqāṣi āyna-ist bāztābanda-ye farhang-e mo’āṣer-e irān [Painting is a Mirror Reflecting Contemporary Culture of Iran].” *Honar-hā-ye tajasomi*, no. 5 (1999): 60–79 & Pakbaz, Roueen. *Contemporary Iranian Painting and Sculpture*. Tehran: High Council of Culture and Art: Center for Research and Cultural Co-ordination, 1974.]

15 Aghdashlou, Naqāṣi āyna-ist bāztābanda [Painting is a Mirror Reflecting], 64.

16 Roueen Pakbaz, “Nim qarn naqāṣi-ye now [Half a Century of Modern Painting],” *Jām-e jam*, July 11, 2001.

17 Emami, “Modern Persian Artists,” 349.

particular emphasis on modernization and technique, without considering fixed temporal, spatial and existential issues. One significant argument by them is to define gradations of modernity versus dichotomous notions. Although they might still apply the term quasi-modernism, the dichotomy of modern or non-modern is refused by them. The quasi-modernism, as they put it, should not convey that there is a prototype for modernism and others try to assimilate it; instead, it refers to aspects of becoming modern.<sup>18</sup> So clearly, these thinkers do not deny the occurrence of modernity and artistic modernism in Iran, but their main argument is that Western classical theories are not suitable for the study of other modernities. They criticize Euro-centrism or universality of Europe and consider it as a general category, which intends through “otheration” to create one-modernity and one-West.<sup>19</sup> In fact, acclaiming universality presumes mere authorization and accreditation of Euramerica’s legitimacy for overshadowing art from other regions. The intensity of these objections is to the extent that their proponents also consider expressions such as “art history” (modern, contemporary, the Middle East, etc.) as traps for this accreditation.<sup>20</sup> These proponents even go further and announce modernity and colonialism as two sides of the European coin: “[...] we become modernized and colonized at one and the same time.”<sup>21</sup> Therefore, they stress on a dynamic moment of encounter between the West and the rest, especially for the colonial regions known as *the Middle East*. They argue that this moment should be aggrandized, and by doing so, one should pay direct attention to the artworks as fragments, ruins and allegories that implicate traumatic memories of other regions.<sup>22</sup> So clearly, this is a stress not with regards to limiting the definition of modernity to the West, but within histories of colonialism that consider other narratives of modernity (with Iranian modernity as one).<sup>23</sup>

To follow the ideas that criticize modernism as mere aesthetics of modernity in the discourse of Western history, there is a strong hypothesis that defends mutual influences for both Western and non-Western modernisms. This mutuality should, in fact, be studied according to the approach that Western and non-Western modernisms show to their traditions. Nevertheless, based on the Eurocentrism of art history, such a mutual approach is considered as a mere anachronism for other regions than Europe. According to thinkers who support the idea of mutual influences, the innovative reaction of Western modern artists in their encounter with Eastern (or Persian) arts has been left overlooked or studied merely in terms of an

18 Kowsari, “Modernite, jāme’a wa honar [Modernity, Society and Art],” 151.

19 Kamali, *Multiple Modernities, Civil Society and Islam*, 2.

20 Keshmirshakan, *Contemporary Art from the Middle East*, 3.

21 Dabashi, *Iran: A People Interrupted*, 46.

22 Keshmirshakan, *Contemporary Art from the Middle East*, 4.

23 The idea of “Iranian modernity” has turned into an arguable topic among Iranian thinkers, still none of their narrations could have been able to solve the controversy over the tradition-modernity dichotomy. [Delzende, *Taḥavolāt-e taṣviri [Visual Transformations]*, 426.]

*Orientalist* approach to these regional arts. The theoretical works by theorists like Edward Said have argued this gap was influenced by colonial interests, but more investigation is necessary regarding the field of visual arts.<sup>24</sup> Similar discussions theoretically reject the historicity of modernism in Europe and consider it affected by identity politics. This identity politics is willing to overlook non-Western artists' fascination with Western art as a form of an Occidentalism similar to Orientalists viewed the *Orient* and, as a result, exerts an unequal power that allows Western artists' adaptation and philosophical reformulations of Islamic (or Eastern) aesthetics passing without commentary.<sup>25</sup> The main defense of these thinkers, as discussed, is to contend that there is no common definition for modernity, and although it has quintessential similarities, which appear through experience, these experiences vary depending on their time and place. Their argument is rather to apply other theories, which support a plurality for modernity such as Postcolonialism and Multiple Modernities or, in general, a social theory that solves this problem by emphasis on international relations.<sup>26</sup>

Another type of ideas, which this study calls the third type, sits in borders of the two above-mentioned ideas and actually, a number of thinkers already discussed for both are inspired in their argumentations by this third category. Mainly issued by Iranian thinker Javad Tabatabai, this category of ideas describes the failure of Iranian modernity due to two extremist inclinations; i.e., imitating either the local tradition or Western modernity. Similar to the arguments in the first type of ideas that consider a cleavage with the historical past, Tabatabai also refers to failure of Iranian modernity for its "rupture" with tradition. This rupture, in contrast to Western modernity that occurs in following a gradual continuity in tradition (*rupture after continuity*), has occurred abruptly and without a process (*continuity after rupture*) in Iran.<sup>27</sup> In other words, the main discussion is that the Western modernity was shaped out of a slow evolution in concept of tradition, but Iranian traditional intellect had lost its influence even long before emergence of Iranian modernity. Tabatabai's solution to drop out of the current condition is where the present study finds more affinity with the thinkers from the second type of ideas. That is, he suggests application of Western theoretical systems to local system of intellect but in a creative and precarious method. In other words, attainment and understanding of a local modernity is only possible via active manipulation of Western methods. This manipulation occurs adaptively, not selectively, by local thinkers and should be based on critical review and thematization of principal concepts (e.g., modernity and tradition).

24 Daftari, *The Influence of Persian Art*, 2.

25 Shabout, "The Challenge of Arab Modern Art," 45 & 47.

26 Matin, *Recasting Iranian Modernity*, 3.

27 Javad Tabatabai, "Tamoli darbāra-ye irān [A Thought on Iran]," *Nāqed*, no. 2 (2004): 45.

## 2.1 Non-Western Modern Art: Terminology and Definitional Attributes

The mainstream views on modern art among Iranian scholars and its controversial condition make it necessary to begin with an argument on definition of modern art in non-Western contexts. Both the approaches discussed above are considerable, yet they need special attention in order not to be interpreted as generic and broad. There are scholars who insist on the renewal of fundamentalist terminologies. A large part of the criticisms issued are fed upon institutional and social contexts in which art and history give way to possibility of modernities and modernisms. Attention to humanitarian thought and action from a non-Western perspective will open the space for histories which will carry along controlling factors such as race, gender, regionalism and so forth to form national identities and modernities. Two main theories that have strongly resisted the Eurocentric approach for terminological definitions are Postcolonialism and Multiple Modernities. At the heart of these theories, there is an emphasis on both artistic and cultural history of developments; an emphasis on the relevance of the socio-cultural history to the modern issues and their occurrence as active cultural reception than a mere act of adoption and passive transferal of developments from outside.

There is a range of thinkers who have cast doubts on generic definitions and have highlighted ways of reviewing them. Among them, some have studied the stylistic changes of modern art in both West and non-West whereas others have concerned the problem of modernity and modernism in particular within the colonized regions, and have called attention to questions of methodology and intellectual history of these regions with attention to the significant role of the middle class. There are also postcolonial theorizers and those who in following postcolonial studies point to the possibility of multiple modernities based on socio-cultural and multilateral entanglements. For the purpose of this survey, studies are reviewed by which the legitimate and hegemonic dichotomy of modern or non-modern loses luster, and instead, are replaced by other defining terminologies. But the theoretical discussion of present study still does not side with qualities of many of these new terminologies since they can be too ambiguous.<sup>28</sup> Instead, it sides with what Monica Juneja describes in her introduction to *Modern Art in Pakistan*; “unsettling boundaries which position locality as resistance to an equally stereotypical homogenizing globalism,” or where she again emphasizes “a historical awareness of the local means viewing the site both as space to enact aesthetic practice and as a dis-

<sup>28</sup> For instance, the “cultural globalization” for non-Western modernities or such terminologies as “transculturation,” “acculturation,” “accommodation” and “assimilation” suggested by authors like Andre Gunder Frank or hybridication and “cross-pollenization” by Serge Gauvin and Alexander Bailey, and “cultural métissage” as cultural globalization by Serge Gruzinski. [Kauffmann, “Interpreting Cultural Transfer,” 139–40.]

cursive field, an enabling position that opens the way for self-reflexive agency.”<sup>29</sup> In fact, authors like Juneja who are after thematization of “multi-centered” modernisms, or likewise those who discuss these developments as the colonial reshaping of selfhood via a growing self-conscience, are among thinkers whose attention to the local and geographical capacities of these changes can provide us with more nuanced tools of analysis.<sup>30</sup>

In searching out alternative definitions for concepts of modernism and modernity, the ideas of Terry Smith, Australian art historian, due to their emphatic revisit of these concepts are noteworthy. Quoting the anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot, Smith considers modernity as a murky term that belongs to a family of words one may label “North Atlantic universals”; i.e. a term by which one projects North Atlantic experience on a universal scale. Seemingly, Trouillot argues that descriptive terms as such also carry “visions of the world,” preferred ones, offered seductively, as if they were natural, and simply rational: “[...] chunks of human history that have become historical standards. But belonging to that class does not depend on a fixed meaning [...]. It is a matter of struggle and context about and around these universals and the world they claim to describe.”<sup>31</sup> In fact, Trouillot sees this the very same critique used for terms like “the West” which is “always fiction, an exercise in global legitimation”: “[...] the projection of the North Atlantic as the sole legitimate site for the universal, the default category, the unmarked—so to speak—of all human possibilities [...]. As in all default categories, the West as the universal unmarked operates only in opposition that it marks. [...] in its most common deployments as a North Atlantic universal, modernity disguises and misconstrues the many ‘Other’ that it creates. A critical assessment of modernity must start with the revelation of its hidden faces.”<sup>32</sup> Smith holds the same idea for concepts such as East, America, Asia, East or central Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and argues that: “Any revisiting of modernism, any mapping of multiple modernities in the arts or any other sphere must account for the operations of this double-dealing structures, must track the activities of its agents on both sides of the divide that it constantly recreates, and probe its weakness for spaces in which to exercise autonomy.”<sup>33</sup> Also he criticizes this claim that the world, as history will do, continues to modernize itself based on modernist imperatives and argues that these views are redundant and entail naivety.

According to Smith, if one understands modernism to be the most definitive set of responses within the arts to modernity, therefore modernity should be understood as the confluence of social, economic and political forces that definitively

29 Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan*, xiv.

30 Similar notions are found in studies by Partha Mitter, Geeta Kapur and Kobena Mercer.

31 Smith, “Rethinking Modernism,” 287.

32 *Ibid.*, 287–88.

33 *Ibid.*

shaped the experience of modern life. At the same time, he disapproves of attributing accurate dates to particular fields of practices such as history of thoughts and art making, and similar to periodizing of modernity and modernism, he finds them both contentious acts. The reason for this is that the occurrence of these responses is uneven in time and space and they are not necessarily connected points. Also, for each situation these responses were operated distinctively, therefore everything about their comparability can be controversial.<sup>34</sup> The modernity which he is talking about is based on non-capitalist social formations—not-modern at their core—that took shape within a condition under modernization and as a response to it. These formations were social organizations in Asia and Africa and their modernizing ways shared some but not necessarily all characteristics of Western capitalism: “All of these formations, not only those definitive in Euramerica, were the base—the actual material, physic, social, cultural and political conditions—that shaped the superstructural—ideational, rhetorical, discursive—domains within which modernism influenced the basic relations between people in society, how they used their tools, how they saw their surroundings, including each other.”<sup>35</sup>

Therefore, Smith sees it crucial to notice that definition of modernity as a term deals rather with cultural condition in which absolute necessity of innovation becomes a primary fact of life, work and thought. It is not bound to a state of being modern or the position between old and new, but the accumulation of the very impact of modernization on individuals. So the sense of being modern is much more active, engaged and widespread than occasional and circumstantial occurrences, and as a dynamic process happens within society as it is undergoing modernization: “It is an unfolding of active processes, of changes in all spheres, away from accepted traditions, customary conventions and current practices toward imaginary, often utopian, futures. It is experienced as a constant encounter with the new as a set of challenges and thus demands a reorientation of our sense of self around the presumption that change is the inevitable result of the functioning of forces outside of ourselves, is largely unpredictable and yet may be influenced, to some degree, by individual belief and action [...]. Modernity is living in, and with, perpetual flux.”<sup>36</sup>

Based on this definition of modernity, its effect on the arts is observed in inventions and artistic strategies essentially connected to forces of social modernity. In fact, this view of modernity and modernism cuts off any crucial dependencies of non-European modern art on what historically has been signaled as *primitive* otherness.<sup>37</sup> The local artists adopt, adapt and often transform the elements that cir-

34 Ibid., 271.

35 Ibid., 275.

36 Ibid., 277.

37 Ibid., 284.

culate throughout a system of exchange.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, one sees that regional, local and even national modernisms have occurred all over the world since the 1920s, each with their own distinctive concerns and values. So Smith's criticism points to the historical nature of the modernity and the solution for this is what he suggests in three items: first, attention to the burgeoning of art and ideas about art from previously colonized or less *advanced* countries and regions of the world since the 1950s.<sup>39</sup> Second, one should be aware of the fact that becoming contemporary of art, as a world phenomenon, is something that occurs differently in each place, because it grows not only from local *modernisms* (whatever they may be), but also from the specifics of the negotiations between traditionalisms, indigeneities, and modernizations in that specific place; this occurred not only in art journal articles, but at every level of personal and collective life. Third, the fact that even art by Euramerican artists during the modern period has come into view for research and evaluation itself as richly complex provincial art. By that, he emphasizes that, far from being a monolithic enterprise, European art has always been product of internal warring between various cultural values. That is why the *West versus the Rest* debate has sharpened this obliviousness to earlier modernizations in other regions.<sup>40</sup>

What causes damage is the approach to an accurate, realistic and generative art historical program in reference to each and every element of complex artistic achievements and questions such as whether, or not, or how and to what degree, it was modernist. It seems that for Smith, the application of the term "modernist" is connected to the wrong expectation one makes about *agency* of the artists for being modern. Based upon this, he argues, one should not expect all artists in the West and non-Western societies have had the same kind and degree of agency both within their own complex culture and in relationship to other dominant cultures. A European-aspired model of agency involving an individual with a free will, who contracts with others to form a society organized to preserve and encourage the flourishing of that will, as he discusses, is a naive presumption. It is a simplistic view to accept that every artist everywhere at every time had total free agency. All these disputes by Smith should be noted for what he mentions as result of such an approach, i.e. if one follows these studies as such, then he or she is doing the job of playing "catch-up modernism": "[...] confined to showing how these artists were totally modernists, albeit in their own specific and located way. The goal becomes to write each artist into a universal narrative of the shared evolution of modernism,

<sup>38</sup> Peter Burke, in contrast to what Michael Espagne and Michael Werner named "transfers culturels," finds it seductive due to its lack of adequate description of what the encounter between cultures can be. Instead, he argues for the term "cultural exchange" through which information and objects may flow in different directions, even unequally. [Kaufmann and North, introduction to *Artistic and Cultural Exchanges between Europe and Asia (1400–1900): Rethinking Markets, Workshops and Collections*, 1.]

<sup>39</sup> Smith names this as "iconogeographic turning" within the art world. [Smith, *Rethinking Modernism*, 284.]

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.



the outline of which has been set by developments in Euramerica. This is to fall for a fiction, to perpetuate the master-slave relationship, and, strategically to play a losing game."<sup>41</sup> Therefore, a history with this presumption that every artist always aspires to modernize (whether successful or not, or even refused to do so), then such history and ideas on modernity, modernization and modernism are Western fictions (historical constructions) as part of ideological machinery of imperialism and colonization—the very case which was seen in both metropolitan centers and colonies themselves: “[...] freedom of certain Europeans had depended upon the un-freedom of others, and depends increasingly on the oppression and exploitation of others elsewhere in the world—not only recalling them as ‘pre-modern,’ but also contemporaneous cultures, those subject to colonization, were designated as ‘not modern’ being placed into an stage of the story of human evolution. So European modernity originates in this ontological violence toward itself and its necessary others.”<sup>42</sup> It is this understanding about definition of modernity that obliges us to pose some necessary questions: What was most at stake in artistic modernism that set a high bar for those who would be categorized as modernist artworks in contexts other than Europe? What do we make of aspirations of modernist innovation and reflexivity in the work of certain non-Western artists? If these innovations and reflexivity are distinct, then shouldn’t we expect that larger claims would also be different in kind?<sup>43</sup>

Regarding this condition, Smith justifies the way non-Western modern artists have reacted. It is natural that the first step for these artists, critics and others was to break free from this belief that the art made away from Western centers was derivative, delayed and underdeveloped. So their encounter with the art from these centers took on different routes such as hyper-conformity in terms of doing better what they do with appropriate recognition; also to compromise as the most common pathway and creating a reimagined art as a bolder option which could lead to better idea about what art might be. So, for an accurate grasp of the relative nature of the multiple modernities, Smith suggests applying “modern art at x, y, or z place and time,” and not modernist art or artist. In fact, this is to prevent any artistic exclusion or to treat modernism above all as a style, or a look, that configured at certain center, and then, like a perfume, diluted as it dissipated itself elsewhere, until it finally became historical.<sup>44</sup>

Now, the conclusion with Smith’s argument on a terminological rethinking would be an emphasis by him on an opening of the aperture to take in expanded notions of what kinds of art might have been modern (as distinct from modernist) and this is to focus on the options available to artists in particular terms and places.

41 Ibid., 292.

42 Ibid., 295.

43 Ibid., 294.

44 Ibid., 299–300.

It is upon all such discussions that he considers in parallel Soviet Realism in Russia, Naturalism in French and German academies and salons and even the Realisms that questioned it, as dominant modern styles for Asian countries. This Eurocentric formalism obviously disregarded art of other regions of any interest; albeit, Smith's discussion with regards to Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, is that one should consider modernity being always unfolded within a specific culture or civilizational context and every distinctive manifestation of it is connected through cross-cultural linkages to other modernities. So modernity is a matter of long-term historical process that, quoting Sanjay Subrahmanyam, brings relatively isolated societies into contact.<sup>45</sup> Or, referencing Susan Stanford Friedman with regards to modernity's expressive dimensions, it leads to polycentric modernities and modernisms; those that are simultaneously distinctive and yet produce through indigenization of travelling modernities that take place within frequently extreme differences of power. The periods of modernism are multiple and alive and thriving, whenever the historical convergence of radical rupture takes place.<sup>46</sup>

Smith asserts that all overshadowing of modern art, and modernism in particular, should be considered as narrowing and winnowing attempts within Europe since the 19th century, and in the name of art's autonomy and under the banner of national culture which took on abstraction or formal reflexivity.<sup>47</sup> In effect, for non-Western contexts, in which the traditional craft practices remained vital, modern artists continually used to refine processes of adopting, adapting and transforming the artistic elements (imagery, subject matter, technique, and styles). This process took on different forms such as for some artists it was mere stylistic adoption and exploring its implications, whereas others adapted elements to existing local motifs and styles, including in some cases critical, interrogatory ones. For some other artists, it consisted of a fusion of both transformations. These are precisely the artistic strategies for which Smith utilizes the term "transcultural iconomorphism." When volatile adaptations and intense transformations have taken place and, above all, when imagery is fused and the ethical imperatives are tackled, they originate in two or more settings of cultures, all of which are sites of experience for the artist involved who effectuates a transposition of aesthetic and ethical values in his or her work.<sup>48</sup> So these interactions are artistic realization of conjunctive difference and act as a convergence, while at the same time maintaining distinctiveness within the new unity it has affected. These artistic strategies are observable in

45 Ibid., 300-1.

46 Ibid.

47 Bernard Smith provides an ample discussion about effect of the national discourse on formation of the artistic modern styles in Europe and the world. [Bernard Smith, *Modernism's History: A Study in Twentieth-Century Art and Idea* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).]

48 Smith, *Rethinking Modernism*, 304. ("Iconomorphism" is coined by Smith's teacher, Bernard Smith, and refers to whenever an image or object has a double identity or shown ready to change into another by fusion, figure-ground reversal and extruded adjacency. [Ibid., 302.]

particular for modern art from indigenous regions notably in the Middle East, East, South-East Asia and Africa: "But this lateness is not a 'belatedness' according to a modernist clock set in Paris, Moscow or New York, rather, it is a recognition that these strategies were taken up by exceptional artists from these places [...]"<sup>49</sup> The strategies developed upon viability for a critical mass of artists who could travel to art hubs since World War II and their attempt was as part of broader anti-colonial struggle, independence and decolonization.

Smith explains his main argument, thus, as those who have chronicled the history of art since the 16th century must ground their interpretations in a historical unfolding of relationships between indigenous, traditional and modernizing practices. They need to see each of them and shifting relationship not between variant expressions of autochthonous ethnic essences, but rather as social constructions by individuals working cooperatively or in contestation to variety of things that art does: picture, celebrate, confirm, question, expose fragilities, or imagine things otherwise.<sup>50</sup> So clearly they are the contextual elements that lead artists to create what they create and help understanding modern art from these regions. As a result, there is no cue in attributing certain themes to identify modern artists from these regions, but their recognition is matter of recurrent concerns peculiar to the role that art has played for them in those places. Interestingly, these concerns counteract the colonizers' artistic agenda and rather appear as redeployment of those models in acts of times in each of these regions. Clearly, there is much more at stake than deciding whether indigenous art is *traditional*, *modern* or *contemporary* and such decision is like haggling over words or a petty debate about the correct art critical term to apply to the case.<sup>51</sup> What Smith finally concludes is that instead of seeking to fulfill an ideological program for a totally *inclusive* global art history, one should pay attention to individual artists and the institutional contexts in which their ideas and works were forged. And this is what he calls "the art of modern world."<sup>52</sup> So acknowledgement of modern art from each of these places passes through understanding of their interactions with other local, regional and international centers and attention to the significance that they were not *modernist* but multiple in characters.

A core concept about non-Western modern art, therefore, comes from the emphasis for review within the context of the agreed-upon definitions on modern art. In other words, it means to put emphasis on more nuanced narratives of development of art during modern times and within specific regions, thus broadening the definitions and finding solutions through comparison to the modern art of each location on its own. So, in re-thinking the term modern art, the central attention

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid., 305.

51 Ibid., 310.

52 Ibid., 314.

must be paid to the functions of the certain geography and historical attributes of each of these regions. In order to perceive the influence of geography and its inherent history from other perspectives, the “exhausted geography” by Irit Rogoff is also noteworthy. The idea of exhausted geography is important for its rejection of *geography* as another dichotomy, and instead, pays attention to cultural dimensions of each place. Rogoff emphasizes the deconstruction of the spatial dichotomies of *regional* and *universal*.<sup>53</sup> As she argues, when geography as an all-covering term is exhausted, our knowledge will not be grounded on or delimited by what can be inhabited, then what remains will be a formless state of connectedness within which one is not supposed to decide on things which are utilitarian or prudent or acceptable, rather within cultural realm of exhaustion. This formless state is a state of relatedness to what once was and what might once still be again.<sup>54</sup> Study of modern art from Iran and the region, thus, begins with the recognition of modern art practices in a parallel position to the intellectual history in these countries. This task, discussed by Iftikhar Dadi in his studies around the modern art in the region, is undertaken with attention to the art and writings by the local artists and critics during the 20th century. This is because these countries possess rich intellectual and discursive legacies of non-Western modern artistic practices that should not be underestimated as mere *hybrid* and migrant figures drawing only on lived traditions or mimicry of Western art.<sup>55</sup> This means that Dadi is supporting theoretical, conceptual and discursive manipulations by local artists for their own practices in modern art. Like Smith, he approves of a fresh interpretation of initially developed concepts—such as *nationalism*, *modernism* and *tradition*—with regard to their postcolonial contexts and by inflecting, stretching, estranging and translating them within a new context and to consider them rather as inherently transnational than national or international: “[...] it is cross-national cultural forms that emerge from the negotiation of the modern with the indigenous, the colonial and the postcolonial in the ‘non-Western’ world.”<sup>56</sup> So his suggestion is to avoid general and imprecise terminologies such as “hybridity,” “mimicry” and “in-betweenness,” which are beyond articulation and fail to distinguish between lived traditions and discursively articulated ones. From the Eurocentric approaches, as he argues, rise those criticisms against the problem of *tradition* and *modernity* for non-Western modern art; i.e. this canon that European modernity is in continuation of Western tradition whereas for other modernities it happens as a result of separation from

53 Irit Rogoff, “Oblique Points of Entry,” in *Contemporary Art from the Middle East: Regional Interactions with Global Art Discourses*, ed. Hamid Keshmirshakan (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 44.

54 Ibid.

55 Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim*, 3.

56 Ibid., 2.

tradition.<sup>57</sup> He sees this as problematic due to the idea which takes non-Western modernity as something traced to another space and time—either Europe or the effects of European colonization. Quoting from Geeta Kapur, he explains that modernism in non-Western regions is along with critical and affirmative potentials and it is its conjunction with a national or revolutionary culture that makes it reflexive. For this claim he refers to existing features as being experimental, inhabiting new patronage arrangements, seeking new audience and venues, and drawing on a ruined tradition that nevertheless persists as an imaginative force.<sup>58</sup> For Dadi, canonical notions about modernism neglected political, social, and aesthetic developments during the 20th century which led to the rise of anticolonial movements and increasing presence of migrant intellectuals in metropolitan centers. Therefore, agreeing with Andreas Huyssen and his studies in modernism and cultural memory, he emphasizes the expiration of traditional approaches, which still consider national cultures as units to be compared without adequate attention to the uneven flow of translation, transmission and appropriation. For Huyssen, it is this modernism that can provide a more nuanced way to understand the salience of modernism beyond the metropole than simply prevailing technical advancement and attack on tradition by avant-gardism.<sup>59</sup>

For understanding the discursive qualities of non-Western modern works, Dadi points to their visual features. The most obvious features such as denial of pure decoration or traditional slogans as stereotypical characteristics occur through various strategies and their idiosyncratic styles; artists do this via a subjective process of recoding and reterritorialization of painting, miniature, calligraphy and ornament. These articulations are due to a longing to understand their past, and thus, simultaneously bring new values to their works that derive from a mixture of both transnational modernism and avant-gardist practices, and also recordings of their past. He sees these effects took shape within a networking with intellectual and literary circles and sought to create a discursive framework in which their art and their *selves* might be fashioned.<sup>60</sup> These effects emerged from extrapolations artists used to receive from coming in contact with Western teachers whereas they were asked to conform to their Orientalism's traditional codes.<sup>61</sup> So, this sense of mod-

57 Aryasp Dadbeh is among those Iranian thinkers who discuss "tradition" in both terms of terminology and definition. For both, he rejects any equality of Western and Persian applications of tradition. Continuity of this concept and its rupture from its past usage into the modern era are the core areas of the arguments to answer what *traditional art* might in fact mean. [Dadbeh, Nistengâri-ye nâbeheradâna [An Irrational Nihilism], 119–40.]

58 Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim*, 14.

59 *Ibid.*, 18.

60 *Ibid.*, 46.

61 This encouragement of non-Western avant-garde artists for a self-orientalism by European teachers, also argued by Simone Wille, was the artistic air prevailing in most cutting-edge private academies of Europe. In this space, both European and foreign painters were allowed to work more abstractly with maintaining a balance with their traditions, and this opposed what was in practice at official academic workshops of

ernism never fits when mirroring liberalism and the Western value framework, and should never be reduced to mere fidelity to the past by imprecisely conforming to or resisting aesthetical, ethical or political effects, but rather with deeper significance lying in mediation upon the dislocations of self and society and fostering new imaginations for inhabiting the present and the future.<sup>62</sup>

There exists, yet, a complex dialectic quality in contrast to mere colonial mimicry and imitation. This dialectical relationship is well argued by Keith David Watenpaugh in his studies of modernity and modernism in non-Western contexts. Defining this relationship, he refers to Albert Habib Hourani and Bernard Lewis where they see it as to reach a level of material and institutional equivalence with Europe, but at the same time holding a conservative reaction against modernity.<sup>63</sup> For Watenpaugh, this burden was on an emerging middle class who took on the role of changing their society the way they understood the concept modern. The active role of this middle class is what one should consider as the dynamism for which he or she values non-Western modernity. They posed reflective questions in response to Western civilization, liberalism, technology and aesthetics: “[...] the emerging middle class had come face to face with the reality of being and becoming.”<sup>64</sup> From this point he agrees with Lewis when he concludes that it is not necessarily modernization in these regions that should be committed to modernity or flow from an ideological engagement with modernity. He also agrees with Hourani approving of these developments being based on local-European interactions that culminated to intellectual, social and cultural changes.<sup>65</sup>

For Watenpaugh, modernity in these regions evades an entity of *objectivistic Oriental* and still not losing identity. To describe such conditions, he refers to what Marshall G. S. Hodgson calls as crucially distinctive about modernity. Hodgson, similar to Smith, criticizes historicizing of modernity because it will be restricted to the region and subjective. In contrast, he defines that modernity possesses dimensionality due to its contingency with time and space that obtains intrinsic limit and fragmentary nature: “Modernity has not been simply rational emancipation from custom, nor has it been simply the further unfolding of a bent for progress peculiar to the Western tradition; it has been a cultural transformation *sui generis*.”<sup>66</sup> Watenpaugh also cites a critique from Harry Harootunian that concepts such as *time lag* can produce the scandal of imagining modernities that are alternative and not quite modern because they are differentiated from temporality of the modern

the time. This emerged from a refusal of the pure conception of Western modern styles, and instead, attention to an intelligibility that had to be achieved via incorporation of localized colours, forms and distinctive characteristics. [Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan*, 20–25.]

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 218.

<sup>63</sup> Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East*, 5.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 12.

West in a historical trajectory. Therefore, Harootunian suggests the term “coeval modernities” as a preferred alternative that accentuates the real-time nature of the non-West’s encounter with modernity: “To extend the linguistic metaphor further, modernity is a language that can acquire local dialects.”<sup>67</sup> This is also inferred from such arguments that agree on variability of modernity: “[...] if there is any universally acceptable definition of modernity, it is this: that by teaching us to employ the methods of reason, universal modernity enables us to identify the forms of our own particular modernity.”<sup>68</sup> Iranian thinkers like Kamran Matin have also defended this plurality of modernity in Iran with a mutual integrity that defies a prognostic approach to modernity and modernism and their associated institutions and practices as universal. For Matin as well, these mutual integrities are to supplant Eurocentrism through kinds of social theories, which support international relations at its intellectual core—i.e. interactive co-existence of all historical forms of social coherence in mutually recognized integrities.<sup>69</sup> So he, in fact, goes along with other already-discussed authors by adoption of a plural ontology that posits relationships and processes between and within intellectual heart of the societies as mutually constitutive and multilinear.

In addition to the emphasis on multiple modernities, the major perspective toward studies on the non-Western modernity and modernism is postcolonialism. An understanding of modernities being formed from within a postcolonial condition is made in Sanjay Joshi’s studies and his argument considering it as “contradictory modernity.”<sup>70</sup> For such a definition, he sees comparative exercises for both Western and non-Western modernities based on efforts of a small privileged group named as “middle-class.” Nevertheless, for the non-Western modernity, these efforts were based both on reason and sentiment and a combination of tradition and radical change. For him, this comparative quality does not mean as similar identity, rather it should be attributed to a deviation from what is known to be a “hyper-real-Europe”; i.e. it does not live up to the real-typical model of modernity. So borrowing from the political theorist Marshall Berman and his contradictions of modernity, Joshi sees contradictions, fractions and anomalies as main common features of all modernities.<sup>71</sup> To him, in the very process of becoming modern in the non-West, even in the acceptance of modernity, exists a certain skepticism about its values and consequences and what he apprehends as colonial effect: “[...] the same historical process that has taught us the value of modernity, has also made us victims of modernity. [...] But this ambiguity [about modernity] does not stem from any uncertainty about whether to be for or against modernity. The uncertainty,

67 Ibid., 14.

68 Joshi, “Thinking about Modernity from the Margins,” 36.

69 Matin, *Recasting Iranian Modernity*, 3.

70 Joshi, “Thinking about Modernity from the Margins,” 36.

71 Ibid., 42.

rather, stems from knowing that to fashion the form of our modernity, we need to have the courage at times to reject the modernities established by others.”<sup>72</sup> With reference to postcolonial theory, therefore, one can investigate the complicity of the encounter of the non-West with the Western culture. In fact, postcolonialism has altered the dominant methods for analysis of such encounter since 1945. The significant attribute for which postcolonialism will be a good match with the case study of the present work is its capability for undermining the traditional conception of disciplinary boundaries, or exactly for what Bart Moore-Gilbert explains: “[...] postcolonial criticism has challenged hitherto dominant notions of the autonomy of the aesthetic sphere, helping to gain acceptance for the argument, advanced on a number of fronts since the 1960s specially, that ‘culture’ mediates relations of power as effectively, albeit in more indirect and subtle ways, as more public and visible forms of oppression.”<sup>73</sup> As an earlier marker of colonial studies, one would recall Edward Said’s rejection of the traditional liberal understanding of the humanities as organized around the pursuit of pure or disinterested knowledge in order to prevent a politico-ideological dominance for the societies in question.<sup>74</sup> In contrast to his *Orientalism*,<sup>75</sup> in *Culture and Imperialism* Said argues for influence of a more integrated historical, economic and cultural condition in both the dominant and the subalterns and emphasizes on aspects of interconnection and cross-fertilization. He considers this influence rather on those intellectuals who experienced the dominant culture as migrants and attributes the term or state of the *voyage in* to it. The *voyage in*, is a trajectory for which these intellectuals *reject* the dominance: “[...] they appropriate the dominant metropolitan discourses and turn them back against the West to deconstruct its attempts at mastery over regions from which these critics come from.”<sup>76</sup> In fact, the postcolonial critique considers identity as taking place in counter-hegemonic discourse and by emphasis on the role of the investigating subjects.<sup>77</sup> This is what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the renowned postcolonial theorist, similar to Said, discusses and points to the self or subject not as innate or given, rather as being constructed discursively and therefore being inevitably *decentered*:<sup>78</sup> “[...] subject may be part of an immense discontinuous network of

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>73</sup> Moore-Gilbert, *Postcolonial Theory*, 8.

<sup>74</sup> For this, Said sides with Michel Foucault for his concern with “the process of exclusion,” by which cultures designate and isolate their opposites, and its obverse—the process cultures designate and valorize their own incorporative authority. [Ibid., 82.]

<sup>75</sup> With a fundamental shift to *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), Said’s *Orientalism* (1978) was rather stressing a dichotomy of the West and non-West, with all the Western culture and imperialism contaminated with politics and strategies of power and their affiliation to the world outside. [Ibid., 34.]

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>78</sup> Spivak is indebted to Jacques Derrida for the conception of the “decentered subject” to prevent postcolonial struggle from lapsing into a fundamentalist politics, since it criticizes the traditional ways of understanding *identity*, *belonging* and *origin*. [Ibid.]



strands [...] different knottings and configurations of these strands, determined by heterogeneous determinations which are themselves dependent upon myriad circumstance [...].”<sup>79</sup> This complicity of the encounter between the non-West with the Western culture becomes more credible in Homi K. Bhabha’s postcolonial critique in forms of an unconscious opposition.<sup>80</sup> He also rejects those binary oppositions such as the colonizer and the colonized that he had defended earlier. Instead, he pays attention to possible nuanced mutualities and negotiations that happen across the colonial divide.<sup>81</sup> For Bhabha, the oppositionary reaction by the colonized should be interpreted as an unexpected and contradictory reply from the colonized to the colonizer’s authority. For its fractured and destabilized identity, that he names it as a “lack” in the colonizer’s psyche, the colonizer requires a relationship with confrontations of the colonized to constitute it. Therefore the colonial discourse for him: “[...] is never as consistent, confident and monologic as Said [in *Orientalism*] implies but, instead, is riven by contradictions and anxieties [...].”<sup>82</sup> Referring to Bhabha, the crucial concept of “mimicry” is to show how he defies the binary of modern or non-modern as a mistaken understanding. For him, mimicry should be considered as a form of colonial control. The colonizer requires that the colonized (the Other) to adopt and internalize the occupying values and norms, but as Bhabha defines this mimicry, it occurs differently. First of all, he provides us with a concept of mimicry from the colonizer’s eyes: “[...] mimicry expresses the epic project of the civilizing mission to transform the colonized culture by making it copy or ‘repeat’ the colonizer’s culture.”<sup>83</sup> Nevertheless, mimicry for him occurs as a process with contrary result as colonizer will expect. In this process, Bhabha points to what he calls as “blind-spot.” The blind-spot is precisely where non-Western modern art can be defended and valued for its dynamic process of formation. For him, the blind-spot is the very moment that the gaze of the colonizer is destabilized; i.e. the moment that mimicry as a strategy differentiates between being that colonizing culture and the colonized culture becoming it. It is this moment that the consequence of mimicry becomes a destabilizing ironic compromise: “The consequence of this, however, is quite contrary to the ‘intention’ of the colonizer, in that mimicry produces subjects whose ‘not-quite-sameness’ act like a distorting mirror which fractures the identity of the colonizing subject and ‘rearticulates’ [its] presence in terms of its ‘otherness’, that which it disavows.”<sup>84</sup>

79 Ibid., 85–86.

80 Bhabha’s emphasis on operations of the unconscious and psychic effect in formation of the identity is derived from Sigmund Freud and more particularly Jacques Lacan and, thereupon, he studies the colonial relations grounded on unstable psychic spheres. [Ibid., 116–17.]

81 Ibid., 116.

82 Ibid., 118.

83 Ibid., 120.

84 Ibid., 120–21.

## 2.2 Cultural Privatization and Domination of the Dominated

As first theoretical axis, it was explained why a refreshed approach is required to terminologies that are utilized for studying issues of modernity and modernism in other contexts than the West. Moving on to the second theoretical axis, the practices for institutionalization of modern art in general and, in particular, in the non-West will be investigated. Agreeing on this presumption that the earliest measures in promotion of modern art in Iran were taken by modern artists and mainly through their cultural contributions and private spaces; therefore, the theories will be discussed which consider the role of modern artists in challenging the established powers and their condition within the field of artistic production and, as a result, the procedures for attaining legitimacy and self-control over the artistic domain as new entrants.

Pierre Bourdieu should be noted for his discussions about modern artists or the intention for institutionalization of modern art. Bourdieu's theory emphatically argues modern artistic developments with attention to the role played by established powers in the artistic field. Although both Bourdieu and Michel Foucault have made innovative studies regarding the influence of the established powers in modern societies, as Ciaran Cronin compares them, Foucault's critique is so radical that makes it impossible to identify any determinate location of exercise of power or of resistance to its operation. But this problem is solved with Bourdieu's theory of practice due to its symbolically mediated interactions and identifiable social relations of domination.<sup>85</sup> Besides this comment by Cronin, the decision in the present study to work with Bourdieu's theory is due to two facts: First, he considers avant-gardism as a reactionary and revolutionary movement within and against the field of power, and he finds artists imposing themselves as the model of access to existence in the field;<sup>86</sup> and second, he has an emphatic attention to the significance of education and reception in modern art's context of developments.

For Bourdieu, the formation of modern art was concurrent with certain changes. The central point about his theory is that he considers the modern art revolution as a result of essential changes in artists' idiosyncratic *per se*. He mentions both the role of artists as *intellectuals*, and at the same time, their entrance to the field of *politics* as the main factors that aided their artistic autonomy. In fact, an entanglement with politics is what he draws as the distinguishing line between modern artists and those in the past. But the significant point about this change is that, by using the term "politics" artists should not be thought of as political artists, rather it refers to an awareness and ability by artists to locate them against all political structures. This type of politicization of artists appears when encountering "bour-

<sup>85</sup> Cronin, "Bourdieu and Foucault," 55.

<sup>86</sup> Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 125.

geois art” supported by the state, “social art” by the political parties and “commercial art” by the people. Bourdieu refers to this with admiration as a *double-refusal*, or as rejection of both the academic art of the establishment and also the social populism.<sup>87</sup> So clearly, he sees a relationship between the autonomy of artists and the “biggest box”;<sup>88</sup> i.e., the space or field of power in which artists and their works are inserted. These artists, that he names as “pure artists,” share qualities of *institutions of freedom* with intellectuals in resisting the bourgeoisie, market and state bureaucracies such as academies, salons, etc.<sup>89</sup> He argues that the status of artists should always be studied with regard to their dominated position within the dominant field of power. But at the same time, he agrees with their ability to attain autonomy through artistic education and perception, or in other words, via construction of a properly aesthetic mode of perception.<sup>90</sup> In fact, the behavior of the modern artists has been along with a completely different perception of art when compared to the academy. The art of the academy, he explains, was a “state-sanctioned art,”<sup>91</sup> whereas the modern artists sought a kind of change in the eyes of the audience or critic; a “pure gaze” that was in relation with “pure intention” by the artist. Bourdieu believed this new condition grew from necessity, due to the formation of new education or exhibition spaces as features of artistic autonomy and to formulate and impose this new gaze against external demands.<sup>92</sup> The significance of the academies in his discussion is similar to that of Bridget Fowler in *Pierre Bourdieu and Cultural Theory* and indicates the institution of the academies with an official art against what the avant-gardes protested.<sup>93</sup> These artists launched their opposition, in the first place, against the academic system that was promoted within academies and salons. This reaction, as Bourdieu describes, was against “symbolic violence” or “symbolic power” and he argues this in modern societies as states’ means of defining the legitimate ideas and tastes: “Schools impose the cultural standards of the dominant class on all, [...] force them to recognize the superiority of the standards of the dominant class, thus legitimating their failure to succeed as a personal failure, not a social injustice,”<sup>94</sup> or he describes it as: “[...] every power which manages to impose meanings as legitimate but through concealing the power relations which are basis

87 Michael Grenfell and Cheryl Hardy, *Art Rules: Pierre Bourdieu and the Visual Arts* (Oxford: Berg, 2007), 112.

88 Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 172.

89 Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 257.

90 Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 239.

91 *Ibid.*, 243.

92 *Ibid.*, 256.

93 Persistence of a monarchy or imperial power of an autocratic type and adoption of socialism by the working class are other discussed causes. [Bridget Fowler, *Pierre Bourdieu and Cultural Theory* (London: Sage Publications, 1997), 73.]

94 David Gartman, *Culture, Class and Critical Theory: Between Bourdieu and the Frankfurt School* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 8.

of the force [...].”<sup>95</sup> This opposition took place by establishment of new associations, galleries and institutions. As Bourdieu asserts, the history of artistic movements owes to the field of galleries in synchrony.<sup>96</sup> He defends a necessity for avant-garde (versus commercial) galleries, institutions and such, due to their role in institutionalizing the new definition which artists took on as intellectuals and, as a result, becoming able to distinguish strategies on which their artistic survival depended.<sup>97</sup> For him, the main reason for this definitional change is the transformation of artistic field; i.e. constitution of an array of unprecedented institutions for recording, preserving and analyzing works, exhibitions, galleries, etc.: “[...] all [these institutions] combine to favor the establishment of an unprecedented relationship between the body of interpreters and the work of art [...] that discourse about a work of art is not a mere accompaniment, intended to assist its perception and appreciation, but a stage in the production of the work, of its meaning and value.”<sup>98</sup>

Obviously, Bourdieu’s annoyance is with the structuralist and formalistic approaches that overlook the important role of institutions and agents involved in cultural phenomena. Instead, in his theory, he chooses an eclectic interpretation that considers the modernist revolution as insertion of changes in structure of fields and sub-fields, which eventually leads to challenge of the legitimacy of the established power—this challenge and revolution are events of the middle class, require cultural competence for the artists, and result in the formation of a new *anomie*.<sup>99</sup> In fact, all theoretical discussions by Bourdieu against following the rules, as for structuralism and formalism, and their replacement with a rather dynamic strategy is to be understood by his definitions of “field” and “habitus,” and of course “positions,” “dispositions” and “position-takings” that happen in such a dynamically mediated system. With all these definitions, he attempts to answer the critical question regarding how modern artists could challenge and revolt against the orthodoxy of the academy and the official style of the salons. To explain his two key definitions in simple terms, field is an area where all positions, dispositions and position-takings exist. In a field, positions govern position-takings according to the special *interest* of one position. Therefore, initiative for change is traced back to newer or younger entrants.<sup>100</sup> The other important point about the field, such as field of cultural production, is that it should be studied within fields of society and power. [Fig. 2-1] In other words, the field of power is the principal field and dominates artists and writers in the social space—so the new entrants must struggle

95 David Swartz, *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 89.

96 Bourdieu, *Field of Cultural Production*, 107.

97 *Ibid.*, 109.

98 *Ibid.*, 110.

99 For Bourdieu *anomie* occurs when there is no artistic monopoly observed and the universe of artworks slowly becomes a field of competition for the monopoly of the artistic legitimation. [*Ibid.*, 252.]

100 Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 239.

for distinction against those already recognized.<sup>101</sup> For habitus, this term is applied intentionally against the structural views that reduce a subject to mere bearer or unconscious expression.<sup>102</sup> On the contrary, for Bourdieu, habitus accounts for the creative, active and inventive capacities of human agents and includes durable dispositions which generate and organize practices. So based on habitus, actions and reactions of the agents are not always calculated and not simply a question of conscious obedience to the rules.<sup>103</sup>

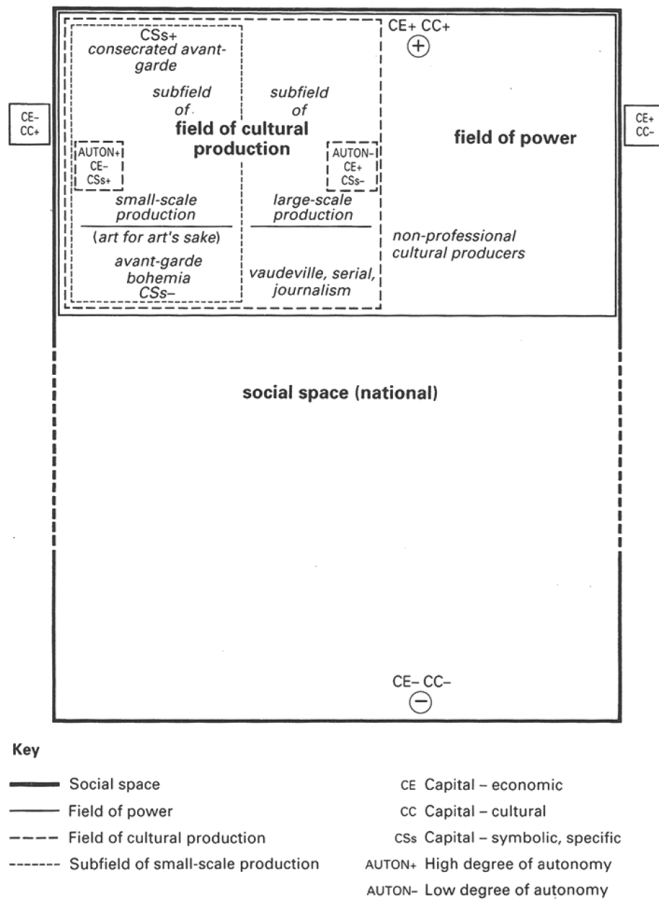


Fig. 2-1 “The field of cultural production in the field of power and in social space,” in *The Rules of Art: Genesis of the Literary Field*, by Pierre Bourdieu (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 124

101 Gartman, *Culture, Class and Critical Theory*, 108.

102 Pierre Bourdieu, “The Genesis of the Concepts of Habitus and Field,” *Sociocriticism*, no. 2 (1985): 13.

103 Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 5.

By these definitions, cultural practices are then strong ways for the expression of domination. In fact, Bourdieu defines a “symbolic system,”<sup>104</sup> in which art is able to *structure the structures*<sup>105</sup> and, as a result, to become an instrument of domination. So, the principal theoretical proposition by him is that powers apply symbolic forces for legitimizing and concealing their power relations; here is where artists are capable of using their own “symbolic weapon”<sup>106</sup> against it—against symbolic actions exerted through patronage and sponsorship. In fact, modern artists, as intellectuals, possessed a “cultural competence” which they lacked before the modern art movement and, as a result, they could not compete with their patrons. This is due to the fact that pre-modern art could not provide them such cultural competence and cultural capital. Two factors that Bourdieu offers in this assertion are: first, a financial preparedness that was due to the middle class these artists originated from, and second, a specialized knowledge, or the pure gaze, they possessed toward art. So, what occurred, as the main step, was formation of a new field of criticism by which they became able for their own autonomous position-taking. As Martha Rosler approves: “The expectation that ‘advanced’ or vanguard art would be autonomous— independent of direct ideological ties to patrons— created a predisposition toward the privileging of its formal qualities,” and this was why more experimental, personal and universal subjects versus ideological dogmas became central. So Rosler argues that autonomy in art was parallel with arts adopting critical attributes: “[...] advancing the claims of art to speak of higher things than decorations, leading into extreme aestheticism known as ‘art for art’s sake’ [...]”<sup>107</sup>

Another significant point in the study of the artistic autonomy of the artists is that this autonomy came along with limited independence from fields of power, due to artists’ need for an audience and market. Therefore, Bourdieu sees some possible areas of cooperation between artists and official patrons but for him such cooperation was no more than a Trojan horse. As a matter of fact, artists’ autonomy was not supposed to be achieved based on a difficult choice between being at service of the dominant or remaining an independent petty producer in the ivory

**104** The “symbolic systems” (art, religion and language) are instruments to construct reality while at the same time ignoring the question of the social functions of these symbols. These systems are instruments of knowledge which exert a structuring power insofar as they are structured. [Bourdieu, “Symbolic Power,” 77–79.] This symbolic power is closely intertwined with economic and political power and thus serves as legitimating function. [Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 2.] It is a power which derives from “symbolic capital” referring to degree of accumulated prestige, celebrity, consecration or honor. In contrast to symbolic capital, Bourdieu defines “cultural capital” which concerns forms of cultural knowledge as a cognitive acquisition that can equip social agents with empathy toward deciphering cultural relations and artifacts: “A work of art has meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, that is, the code, into which it is encoded.” [Ibid., 7.]

**105** Bourdieu, “Symbolic Power,” 77.

**106** Grenfell and Hardy, *Art Rules*, 178.

**107** Rosler, Martha. “Take the Money and Run? Can Political and Socio-critical Art ‘Survive?’” *e-flux*, no. 12 (2010). <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/12/61338/take-the-money-and-run-can-political-and-socio-critical-art-survive/> (accessed February 11, 2017).

tower, rather, it was executed by escaping this choice and instead creating a new form of intervention known as the “collective intellectual,” which allows influencing politics by asserting independence as a group.<sup>108</sup> These groups emerged in forms of not officially institutionalized but small literary and critical circles, salons, artists or writers groups, art journals, publishers, galleries, societies, etc. As he asserts, the essentiality of the institutions such as galleries, publishers and so forth was in their role in institutionalizing the newly defined term which artists adopted, the collective intellectuals.<sup>109</sup> In fact, he sees artists as intellectuals in a contradictory position that is both dominant and dominated.<sup>110</sup> This means although they are a dominated fraction of the dominant class, and the cultural capital they possess is subordinate to the economic capital, they are able to question the legitimacy of the social world through their *acts of research*<sup>111</sup> as a symbolic capital. Therefore, although Bourdieu considers the field of cultural production with partial autonomy, he defines how modern artists move toward breaking with dependence. The state, that possesses all different species of capital, i.e. “meta capital,” is capable of exercising a power over other species of power. The constitution of such a field of power provides the space of play in which holders of other forms of capital struggle for power over the state.<sup>112</sup> Now, what causes power relations to break down are specific revolutions that import new dispositions and impose new positions such as emergence of certain artists and art schools: “A party or a movement as a position within a field is marked by the fact that its existence ‘poses problems’ for the occupier of the other positions, that the theses it puts forward become an object of struggles [...]”<sup>113</sup>

Discussion of self-reliance of the modern artists and their self-patronization of modern art also demands clarifications on the financial aspects of these developments. The significant point in study of the financial basis of such change, as Bourdieu describes, is to approve of the fact that movements by modern artists were basically shaped upon a state of an interest in *disinterestedness*: “Intellectuals and artists are so situated in social space that they have a particular interest in disinterestedness and in all values that are universal and universally recognized as highest (the more they show such interest, the closer they are to the dominated pole of the

**108** Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, 58.

**109** Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 107.

**110** Although the field of power exercises its domination within a totality of fields, Bourdieu grants a “relative autonomy” to art and literary fields. This means, notwithstanding the fact that cultural production occupies a dominated position in field of power and although artists and writers (generally intellectuals) are considered as dominated fraction of the dominant class, they hold the power and privilege conferred by their possession of cultural capital. [Pierre Bourdieu, *In Other Words: Essays Towards a Reflexive Sociology*, trans. Matthew Lawson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 144.]

**111** Swartz, *Culture and Power*, 261.

**112** Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, 114–15.

**113** Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociology in Question* (London: Sage Publications, 1993), 101.

field of production).<sup>114</sup> This is in a way that, essentially, acquisition of the autonomy and a higher position in field of art relies on an independence of artists from external political and economic powers. In fact, it is via this “symbolic revolution”<sup>115</sup> that artists can free themselves from bourgeois demands by refusing to recognize any master except for their art and this in effect culminates to disappearance of the market. The market, which is in the hands of the bourgeoisie and patronized by the field of power, is a field of struggle for control of the meaning and function of artistic activity and modern artists should triumph over the bourgeoisie at the same time by eliminating it as a potential customer.<sup>116</sup> So, Bourdieu defines a paradoxical economy for the field of artistic production observed within a hierarchy that financial success and criteria for judgment are converse with economically-successful bourgeois art at the top, and with avant-garde art at the bottom. Therefore, he pays much attention to the inherited economic properties or the personal or private financial resources of the artists to help them carry on in a void of successful market. But this hierarchy is revertible and market will change in favor of the modern artists based on two factors: first, increase in the number of modern artists and their earnings via small cultural jobs and, second, formation of a growing audience with more potential for modern art.<sup>117</sup>

It is upon this paradoxical economy that Bourdieu mentions two types of art galleries: “sales or commercial galleries” and “movement or avant-garde galleries.”<sup>118</sup> The sales or commercial galleries follow the bourgeois strategies with higher economic success due to their eclectic approach to the arts. By contrast, movement or avant-garde galleries are those that represent important dates in the history of art because they follow the logic of artistic development and introduce artistic schools and styles. The strategies adopted by the second group are very much linked to the autonomous sites of the field of culture with lower economic capital and higher symbolic capital and are executed through holding of art exhibitions, publications, etc. Thus, the crucial conclusion to which Bourdieu arrives is not only his denial of any necessity for economic success for the cultural production, but also its understanding as a “winner loses” logic; that is, to consider the field of cultural production as an ‘economic world reversed.’<sup>119</sup>

**114** Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), 317.

**115** In this “symbolic revolution” the artist becomes its own market, the one which welcomes the most audacities and transgressions that artist introduces. The reward of such market, if not cash, assures at least a form of social recognition for those who otherwise appear as a challenge to common sense. Bourdieu sees this as effect of a cultural revolution. [Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 58.]

**116** *Ibid.*, 81.

**117** *Ibid.*, 127.

**118** *Ibid.*, 145.

**119** This is to the extent that for Bourdieu the professions of author or artist should be considered as the least professionalized jobs. This is because only those authors and artists that have a secondary occupation can continue such professions. They are these secondary jobs that provide authors and artists their main income. [Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 8 & 43.]



As was discussed in both theoretical sections above, the departure point for artistic autonomy and privatization in cultural field is observed in a kind of opposition to the prototype of state patronage as a result of an emerging middle class. For the conceptual roots of this change, Cas Smithuijsen argues an alteration occurring in an acknowledgement of the role of the state in societies that sought freedom from the paternalistic role of the state—taking most radical forms in totalitarian countries: “[...] so privatization has been stimulated to reduce the overdose of immediate state intervention in social, economic and cultural.”<sup>120</sup> This is essentially what Rosler explains as effect of the *avant-garde*; i.e., a military term for the status of artistic autonomy, framed as a form of insurgency, that at times of revanchism and repression caused artists assert independence from political ideologies and political masters through critique by indirection and via reception of extreme aestheticism of art for art’s sake.<sup>121</sup> In fact, the challenging situation for modern artists is the attraction and repulsion exercised over them by the field of power.<sup>122</sup> For instance, the aristocratic society of the 18th century created direct dependence on financial backers or patrons for the artists or today the patronage takes veritable structural subordination forms, mainly via two principal mediations; the sanctions and constraints of the market or value systems operating through the intermediary of the salons which unite a portion of artists to certain sections of high society and help to determine the direction of the generousities of state patronage. “In the absence of true specific apparatus of consecration, political authorities and members of the imperial families exercise a direct hold on the literary and artistic field, not only by the sanctions [...] but also through the material and symbolic profits they are in a position to distribute.”<sup>123</sup> Still Bourdieu refers to complex routes for attaining autonomy at the heart of the political field that may indirectly serve the interests of the artists most concerned about their artistic independence.<sup>124</sup> This occurs at the same time as when artists become their own market through challenging the other artistic institutes and organizations such as the academies and salons, and by imposing their own norms on existing market and forces. John Clark also describes a certain state patronage that is exercised through the academy and institutionalizes special art styles among students, but this space becomes problematic for those who return from Europe and this leads to formation of two different types of artists: first, those who produce decorative works; i.e. to help a nationalist or modernizing self-image; second, those who form critical artists’ groups and act as the antithesis

120 Cas Smithuijsen, “De-monopolizing Culture: Privatization and Culture in 23 European Countries,” in *Privatization and Culture: Experience in the Arts, Heritage and Cultural Industries in Europe*, ed. Peter B. Boorsma, Annemoon van Hemel and Niki van der Wielen (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1998), 82.

121 Rosler, “Take the Money and Run?” n.p.

122 Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 14.

123 Ibid., 49–50.

124 Ibid., 52.

of the first type and criticize their approach. In fact, the second type of artists is linked to the intelligentsia class who questions and criticizes the state patronage of the first type of artists by means of its practical knowledge.<sup>125</sup>

As Clark discusses the patronage and the ways it is exercised, one might draw conclusions about its non-cultural nature. Such non-cultural patronage is regarded as the main reason against which avant-gardism reacted or sought independence from it. For Clark, state patronage supports the phenomenon of *neo-traditional* art as a claim made by the state to seek legitimacy for its control around a fictitiously arrayed set of national values: “Often one might say nearly always this claim about tradition has come at times of crisis when that control has been challenged from without or below.”<sup>126</sup> The opposing artists, in contrast, discuss art more technically and, as was earlier quoted from Rosler, create a predisposition toward the privileging of formal qualities in arts.<sup>127</sup> Bernard Smith sees this move, toward institutionalization of modern art as parallel to institutionalization of “Formalesque” and in revolt from state patronage and the academic style that was officially supported by the Salon.<sup>128</sup> Similar to Clark’s argument of neo-traditional art as a state demand, Smith also agrees with states’ belated patronage of modern art compared to the initiative of the modern artists. He explains this as a result of the cultural policies of the states since World War I and their competition for institutionalization of a national unity—a cultural support by states that became expanded since the 1920s and 1930s across Europe:<sup>129</sup> “[...] as the institutionalization of the Formalesque advanced, nationalism became the most powerful item on modernity’s cultural agenda.”<sup>130</sup> Regarding this, Smith explains how modern art adopted certain national attributes for different countries due to official patronage. In effect, he defends that the modern aesthetic reform was always straying between formalism and nationalism as its primary inspirations. That is, modern artists incorporated modern art, rather formalistic than naturalistic, in a context of national traditions of their own. As for the case of Russia, this was aimed to propagate Russian Art beyond country of its birth by seeking to combine Russian and French Formalesque—i.e. the cosmopolitan with national interests—as a dialectical interchange between them. So, in such situations Smith sees a *conflation* of styles occurring in an originating home

125 Clark, *Modern Asian Art*, 171.

126 *Ibid.*, 72.

127 Rosler, “Take the Money and Run?” n.p.

128 For Smith, modernism should be considered as an inclination toward Formalism in a course between c. 1890–1960 that was along with suppression of the Realist or Naturalist tradition and the dialectical interactions between architecture, painting and sculpture. Due to this emphasis on Formalism, he names the period as Formalesque. [Smith, *Modernism’s History*, 5 & 151.]

129 As Smith describes, together with institutionalization of Formalesque, it began to spread mostly by young artists from beyond Europe and US who received training there and on their return home considered themselves as agents of modernization by over-dependence upon traditional values. [*Ibid.*, 305.]

130 *Ibid.*, 154.

ground and this permits national factors such as deep investment in symbolism and a national affection for folk art give a distinct character to these generic styles as a modern national art.<sup>131</sup> All these developments, he argues, are opposed to centers with official patronage—Petrograd Academy of Arts, Salon des artistes Français and the like. Also, it should be noted that the delayed tolerance of the states about attempts by modern artists via providing them cooperative opportunities and other supports was not an enthusiasm for modern art, but means of education propaganda—as in case of Russia in favor of male works and monumental statuary.<sup>132</sup> In Germany, although the school of Bauhaus was central to institutionalization of the Formalesque, efforts of the avant-gardes were against the political sphere with the seminal steps returning to private artists' groups<sup>133</sup> following independence of national and regional policies from state authorities. In America, as well, pioneers had independent sources and, in reaction to the state, created their own salons and galleries<sup>134</sup> where they held cultural activities such as publishing magazines and running educational sessions. The American state's patronage was rather to reflect "American scene" creating a competition space between the aesthetic high art and state patronized projects.<sup>135</sup> For England, too, formation of the Formalesque was against academic Classicism and the Royal Academy. This gradual process of institutionalization that had begun since 1920 was threatened by states' preference to express their own sense of ethnic and aesthetic identity and the political power that promoted national and imperial sentiment in the arts.<sup>136</sup> So Smith, in agreement with Bourdieu, finds a restricted area for high art due to the dominance of the political powers who marshal popular cultural sentiments against the avant-garde on the grounds that it threatens the unity of the nation.

Notwithstanding the fact that a major mission of modern artists was in their resistance to publicization of the official art encouraged by the state, Mark J. Schuster argues that one still needs to review the concept of privatization versus publicization, as it is yet an uncharted area and little is known about the cultural institutions and their influence on cultural policies and their development.<sup>137</sup> In fact, the misunderstandings arise when state patronage approaches modern artists or provides them with contexts of activity. The main misunderstanding is whether state and private patronage have common borders with each other or not? The solution that Schuster offers is to see privatization as a *process* of restructuring,

131 Ibid., 155.

132 Ibid., 166.

133 Arbeitsrat für Kunst (1918) as an avant-garde and highly political organization. [Ibid., 177.]

134 The photographic journal *Camera Work* (1903) and the Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession or 291 (1905) by Alfred Stieglitz were significant components of modern art in US. [Ibid., 184–85.]

135 National projects such as PWAP (Public Works of Art Project) or TRAP (Treasury Relief Art Project). [Ibid., 218–19.]

136 Ibid., 198.

137 Ibid., 305.

rather than *the end state* of restructuring.<sup>138</sup> Also it is crucial not to consider privatization as merely going along with *more market*, but the possibility of extending more autonomy of state (public) sector's autonomization through transferring the implementation of some activities to private sectors. In such a process of restructuring of autonomy, the issue of privatization should be considered by adding to the notions of hybrids; i.e. with a varying degree of publicness and privateness.<sup>139</sup> To figure out this interaction between the public and private spheres, one might apply a status where culture and politics create "Siamese twins," and privatization as an effort to get rid of state control.<sup>140</sup> The significance of privatization as a development-in-process, thus Schuster argues, is that the neat division between the public and private institutions becomes less useful as a principle, and instead, the concept leads us beyond binary thinking: "The important character of this terminology of privatization is because of its focus on process, emphasizes on what one is moving away from and not what one is moving toward [...] the desire to move away from the state in one way or another."<sup>141</sup> In Bourdieu's theory, one also understands this concept of process and hybridity where he emphasizes dependence of the field of cultural production on field of power. In fact, possibility of resistance to symbolic domination does not mean emancipation from this domination. The scope of practice of agents is limited to their sufficient economic and cultural capital and the only option left is the accumulation of this capital to attain a position of dominance.<sup>142</sup> In other words, "relative heteronomy" and "relative autonomy," both terms that Bourdieu introduces, result from the dominant class imposing its particular culture and the dominated being deprived of the resources necessary to appropriate high culture.<sup>143</sup> So if the dominant class tends to monopolize high art due to its superior resources, the dominated can achieve autonomous cultural subfield of high art only if it is isolated from the demand of large-scale or mass production to make money.<sup>144</sup>

## 2.3 Iranian Modern Art and Domination of Modern Artists

In this section, there will be a discussion on how the two theoretical axes outlined above, i.e. the new definitions for the concepts of modernity and modernism as well as the methods of institutionalization of modern art, converge on each other in the study of modern art in Iran. The theoretical context for modern art in Iran is argu-

138 Peter B. Boorsma et al., introduction to *Privatization and Culture*, 9.

139 *Ibid.*, 8.

140 *Ibid.*, 10.

141 Mark J. Schuster, "Beyond Privatization," in *Privatization and Culture*, 60–62.

142 Cronin, "Bourdieu and Foucault," 78.

143 Gartman, *Culture, Class and Critical Theory*, 149.

144 *Ibid.*, 156.

ably based on two major features: first, the transnational quality of modern art, and second, the revolutionary nature of modern art versus state patronage. Going back to Dadi and his studies on modern art from the non-West and also Iran, transnationality means to accept stretched, estranged and translated concepts for “nationalism,” “cosmopolitanism” and “modernism.” Rather than national or international, the new artistic movements from the non-Western regions are result of cross-national cultural forms that emerge from negotiation of the modern with the indigenous, the colonial and the postcolonial. In such definition, modern art is not bound to have cleavage within historical movements or should not be considered unoriginal due to its lost connections with tradition (in contrast to what critics of Iranian modern art discuss).<sup>145</sup> Instead, transnational modern art has no duty toward *tradition* as opposed to the *modern* and artists might strategically apply and rework fragments of tradition into modern formulations.<sup>146</sup> In fact, it is this active and critical nature of the modern practices that makes artists draw upon their traditions. Thus, transnational modern art is at the same time both subjective and authentic or, quoted from Kapur, is it reflexive: “Yet, modernism evolves in conjunction with a national or, on the other hand, revolutionary culture it becomes reflexive.”<sup>147</sup> In a geographical spread of transnational modernism, artists from non-Western regions translate, appropriate and creatively mimic the metropolitan culture, nevertheless this is supported by a desire for liberation from colonial forces or independence from this conception that their modernism is simply based on prevailing technical advancement and an attack on tradition by avant-gardism.<sup>148</sup> This status is different from a belated state-patronized modern art. In Iran, cultural policies for cultural nationalization were in contrast with the steps taken by the first modern artists, and with the intervention of the state, artists had to adopt a studied distance from direct nationalism. According to Dadi, the reverse effect of state patronage was that artists rather gravitated toward reflexivity and articulation of an alternative universe offered by a transnational modernism, and their direct addressee was hardly ever the nation itself, specifically.<sup>149</sup> Such transnational modern art was no longer adhered to the ornamental functions as pure decoration and was replaced by strategies for developing idiosyncratic styles. These practices searched for understanding in their relationship to the past through discursive articulations and their value owed to being derived from both a transnational avant-gardism and their own past recordings: “[...] artists recode and re-territorialize the traditional ‘slogans’ that

**145** In addition to discussed thinkers like Tabatabai and Farhadpour who argue a lack of rupture in the course of development or lack of cleavage in Iranian history, the Iranian authors like Pakbaz also attribute a state of “plagiarism” for Iranian modern styles affected by this loss. [Pakbaz, *Contemporary Iranian Painting and Sculpture*, 2.]

**146** Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim*, 1–2.

**147** *Ibid.*, 13.

**148** *Ibid.*, 18.

**149** *Ibid.*, 13.

stereotypically characterize Islamic art, such as miniature painting, calligraphy and ornament.”<sup>150</sup> “Self-orientalism” is the term that Dadi suggests for the ambivalent status of these artists and as a response to the ceaseless transformations enacted by modernity and also the colonial air that dominated the region. This self-orientalism appeared in reworking of their past by incorporation of subjective and discursive frameworks to fashion their own selves.<sup>151</sup> For Georg Simmel, this is the unreliability and instability of forms which he names as the “crisis of modernity” and he points to it as the shared cost of modernity’s cultural transformations in the West and non-West: “[...] we encounter slippage of the stable cultural and aesthetic forms of the past into the instability of modernity’s present echoes.”<sup>152</sup> In fact, the behavior of this slippage, borrowing the term from Karim Emami (1930–2005, Iranian art critic and translator) was a “pendulum swing” between the past and present and occurred within a network of intellectual circles that shared the same ideals for this change.<sup>153</sup>

Although Iran was not directly influenced by colonialism, the colonial effect was significant in its artistic developments.<sup>154</sup> This was largely due to the long political presence of foreign countries, most importantly the USSR and America, who fiercely competed for promotion of their communist and imperial cultural policies in Iran post World War II. In other words, the period of military occupation of Iran by the Anglo-Russian and US armies (1941–1946) that became involved in running the country, carried also the markers of a colonial era for Iran.<sup>155</sup> Even for some Iranian authors, the post-occupation era, along with the intellectual and cultural colonization of Iran and countries of the region, should be regarded as the period of “new colonization.”<sup>156</sup> Other sources of colonial effect were travels that young artists made to Europe. In fact, cities like London or Paris that drew many Eastern postcolonial artists and intellectuals to them during 1950s–1960s had become meeting hubs of these avant-garde artists and affected many non-Western modern artists amid a general atmosphere of decolonization.<sup>157</sup> Therefore, transnational modern art is a mixture of modernism, nationalism and tradition, and regarding

150 Ibid., 39.

151 Ibid., 46.

152 Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East*, 15.

153 Emami, “Modern Persian Artists,” 349.

154 Iran was never a colony for imperial powers but it remained a constant battlefield for colonizing powers. The 19th to first half of 20th century included years of competitions between Britain and Russia for their politico-cultural interests in Iran. [See: Kazemzadeh, Firouz. *Russia and Britain in Persia 1864–1914: A Study in Imperialism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968.]

155 Saeed Talajooy, “The Impact of Soviet Contact on Iranian Theater: Abdolhosein Nushin and Tudeh Party,” in *Iranian-Russian Encounters: Empires and Revolutions since 1800*, ed. Stephanie Cronin (London: Routledge, 2013), 340.

156 Kheizaran Esmailzadeh, “Saqqa-ḳāna dar taṣwir-e tāriḳ: bāzḳāni-ye jaryān-e saqqa-ḳāna dar bestar-e modernism-e farhangī [Saqqa-khaneh in a Picture of History: A Review of Saqqa-khaneh School in Context of Cultural Modernism],” in *Dar jostojū-ye zamān-e now [In Search of the New Time]*, ed. Iman Afsarian (Tehran: Ḥerfa-honarmand, 2016), 288.

157 Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim*, 161.

Hamid Dabashi's discussion on modern art from Iran and colonially constituted *the Middle East*, as a collection of fragments, ruins and thus allegories that implicate traumatic memories of the region.<sup>158</sup> This condition is also explained by "regional imagining" as a parallel to non-identitarian practice: "A practice that does not feel like an obligation to root oneself exclusively in either material histories or purely fantastical projections, but instead represents a means of piecing together a location from fragments of what was and what might be."<sup>159</sup> In fact, it is this quality that the notion of location should even simultaneously be activated and actualized away from being *located* by an authority of knowledge or a political authority and toward a notion of "self-regioning": "[Self-regioning] focuses on trying [not] to figure out what once identity might be as a given, but on trying to produce a set of relations in the world that might locate one."<sup>160</sup> Studies in transnational modernities and modernisms also reject application of such terms as "cultural transfer" instead of "cultural encounter." In cultural encounter, one observes the exchange of cultures ("cultural exchange") where reception is an active process of being adapted to the new cultural environment. The ideas, information, artifacts and practices are first decontextualized and then re-contextualized, domesticated or localized by using the word "translated." But, cultural transfer denotes the same Eurocentrism with emphasis on the "process of production of difference in world of culturally, socially and economically interconnected and interdependent spaces."<sup>161</sup> It is also in response to the colonial theories and in accordance with such concepts as "histoire croisée" that one must care for interactions of many actors on different levels and in different directions. Therefore, the process of cultural exchange includes multi-lateral entanglements with synchronic tangles of political, economic, intellectual, artistic and human dynamics.<sup>162</sup>

The crucial role of a middle class with certain social, intellectual and economic properties that enabled the modern art revolution is also noteworthy regarding the changes in Iran. One point issued by critics of Iranian modern art is that they refuse to agree on economic preparedness and, as a result, the presence of a middle class that could act as a prerequisite for this change in Iran. In response to this criticism, M. A. Homayoun Katouzian, Iranian historian and economist, argues that since Iran's Constitutional Revolution an Iranian middle class is distinguished from what was previously known as nobles and aristocrats. As he explains, until that time,

**158** Keshmirshakan, introduction to *Contemporary Art from the Middle East*, 3.

**159** Rogoff, "Oblique Points of Entry," 47.

**160** Ibid.

**161** This rejection has been discussed by Peter Burke against Michael Espagne and Michael Werner suggesting the term "cultural encounter." [Kaufmann and North, introduction to *Artistic and Cultural Exchanges*, 1-2.]

**162** The concept "histoire croisée" examines multilateral entanglements where different actors interact together, a synchronic tangle of political, economic, intellectual, artistic and human dynamics involving in process of cultural exchange. [Ibid., 2-3.]

Iranian society was a short-term society with lack of stability in property and, as a result of that, all classes used to be short-term classes.<sup>163</sup> The formation of Iranian middle class did not happen upon the Marxist concepts of the bourgeoisie, rather, one should observe it affected by a growth in the awareness of a social class who was educated in Europe and was later inspired by the domination of the Left and presence of the foreign Allied powers (1941–1953) in Iran.<sup>164</sup> Ervand Abrahamian, the Iranian historian, refers to this middle class as the “intelligentsia” who had a significant participation in these developments. Beside the upper class, which was comprised of a narrow circle of the court and courtiers, and the urban working class, he points to a traditional-modern middle class. The traditional middle class were the petite bourgeoisie of the bazaar who kept relations with the clerics and were patrons of crafts and religious constructions, but the modern middle class were the educated professionals and white collar workers who were known as the intelligentsia or the earning middle class. It was with the expansion of this earning middle class that also the intelligentsia transformed into the “intellectuals,” i.e. writers, artists, teachers and such.<sup>165</sup> In general, the formation of the middle class in the non-West cannot be interpreted the same as its formation in the West. According to Watenpaugh, although becoming modern in these countries was rooted in the creation of a middle class and owed its formation to the intellectual, educational, economic and social changes, nevertheless, this middle class understood modernity in its own way: “[...] by posing reflective questions about civilization and the West, adjusting to rapid technological change, responding to the draw of European aesthetics and fashions, and balancing the revolution and liberalism [...] the emerging middle class had come face to face with the reality of ‘being and becoming;’ or, quoted from Harry Harootunian, had come to face “[being] overcome by modernity.”<sup>166</sup> So modernity from these countries was not purely the result of education, profession and wealth, but rather, it was based on how this middle class presented their own modernity and claimed their role in producing science and culture and to become the main subject in challenging Western modernity. Formation of the middle class and being modern were correlative facts which could occur only within a context of historical and material collection. Put simply, this middle class was responsible for the emergence of artistic modernism, and its significance was in its concern for subjectivity and its tradition into the present: “[...] this is an inseparable aspect of their personae to contribute to national life by forming new institutional

163 Arghandehpour, *Dar jostoju-ye jāme'a-ye nātamām [In Search of an Unfinished Society]*, 50.

164 Tudeh Party of Iran or Party of the Masses of Iran (1941), as the major Iranian communist party, could attract many artists and intellectuals. It was with the suppression of the Left Party in Iran in the late 1940s and early 1950s that the way was paved for others like the national and religious parties. [Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 113.]

165 *Ibid.*, 110.

166 Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East*, 4.



frameworks for the patronage, exhibition and reception of modern art [...].”<sup>167</sup> It is such responsibility that also brought this middle class into “[...] inauguration of a new paradigm of artistic subjectivity, making an important break from the roles the makers of art and crafts had occupied earlier.”<sup>168</sup> Therefore, due to the complex historical quality of these developments, modern art and the role of the middle class in its institutionalization might not be easily addressed in the non-Western countries.

The second theoretical context for modern art in Iran will discuss the grounds for revolution against state patronage. This context will be argued in general and particular to understand what elements could have affected modern artists against the long domination of the state patronage over the field of art in Iran. In addition to Bourdieu’s “cultural competence” and “pure gaze” (as cultural capital for modern artists that provided them the ability to compete with their past patrons), other factors aided this change as well. Ricardo A. Lopez argues that one major context for radicalization of the middle class in the non-West was the formation of a new geopolitical order created by the US and the Soviet Union as well as European colonial rule during the late 1940s and early 1950s. In fact, he discusses a historical process since World War II that was pushing a capitalist modernity on *the Third World* by the US by making them a stable prosperous middle class against Communism promoted by the USSR. As he argues, these policies were executed in forms of establishment of several international institutions in different parts of the world with programs to create a *new mentality* and to: “[...] promote ‘bottom-up social approaches’ to create truly participatory and ‘democratic spaces’ where the people would be able to develop their own ideas and cultures [...] programs would transform passive subjects into active ones—indeed programs would alter ‘submissive socially constrained’ subjects into ‘fully self-determined’ people capable of acting according to their own self-interest [...]”—in other words, this context oriented people of these countries to exercise their power of decision and autonomy.<sup>169</sup> In Iran, this role was also played by the cultural relations societies of different countries (most importantly France, USSR and US), and much earlier than government’s turn to the modern artists, these institutions provided Iranian artists the space and opportunities for exhibiting their works. These institutions were active in different cultural fields, and had a primary goal of cultural exchange through a process of conducting, schooling, guidance and encouraging the targeted people’s talent.<sup>170</sup> Many countries of the region, as Dadi puts it, had turned into a veritable Cold War proxy for America to repress domestic Communism and the Left, so leftist artists and intellectuals were either driven underground or hired and co-opted by the state through ideological interpellation and patronage.<sup>171</sup> Iranian modern artists,

167 Dadi, *Modernism and the art of Muslim*, 1.

168 *Ibid.*, 59.

169 Lopez, “Conscripts of Democracy,” 169.

170 *Ibid.*, 170.

171 Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim*, 95.

who had also come from this emerging middle class, were affiliated with the leftist and communist causes much earlier than to the US. Such affiliation oriented them to migration toward modernism and they even worked to establish their institutions for pedagogy and exhibition of their works.<sup>172</sup> This inspired middle class could have either sided with the state legitimacy and the hegemonic rule or questioned it by their own structured new forms; they could either be celebrated as representatives of the state or categorized as enemies of the state.<sup>173</sup> Within this space and overshadowed by the left's legacies, the first generation of Iranian modern artists resisted politicization of arts both by the state and leftists.<sup>174</sup> According to Abrahamian, Tudeh (the Iranian Communist Party) reinforced the national identity of Iran as an ancient civilization by mocking the former regime or stressing the pre-Islamic importance and as an inspiration, many modern artists tried to make use of epics for denouncing the monarchy and praising folk rebels instead.<sup>175</sup> This influence was simultaneous with artists identifying the Pahlavi regime with Western powers due to the regime's Western modernization plans or the alignments that it had with the West. In contrast to this situation, artists as intellectuals became inclined to a sort of *localism* or a more conservative treatment of their local history. This is exactly the point Abrahamian sees an opposition between the intellectuals and the state, because they did not consider the monarchy as their national identity. As a result, one observes an anti-foreign and nationalistic move in the fields of art and culture by the middle class that turned into a lasting enmity with the regime.<sup>176</sup> Proof of this was the establishment of Iran's first Faculty of Fine Arts by the state. Although this was an optimistic measure by the regime on the surface, in reality it was aimed at absorbing public opinion and to prevent politicization of the artists. In other words, not only did the state not support works of this faculty, but also it additionally called these artists rebels and participated only the traditional artworks at the international exhibitions.<sup>177</sup>

Iain Robertson, who in *A New Art from Emerging Markets* studies modern art in Asia and the Middle East from two fundamental economic and political aspects, defends similar experiences by artists on their return from Europe. These artists

172 Although Tudeh Party was the major and most influential communist party in Iran since its foundation in 1941, its establishment was by members and upon experiences of the suppressed Communist Party of Iran which was formed much earlier in 1920.

173 Ibid., 188.

174 It should be noted that, resistance to politicization of the arts was also the legacy of different modern movements across Europe. For instance, formation of the group and periodical *Circle et Carré* (1929) by Michel Suppor and Torres-Garcia and *Abstraction-Création* (1931) and its annual publication *Art Non-Figurative* were in favour of advocating autonomy of art versus Social Realism promoted by the USSR, the Neo-Classicism of National Socialism and the revolutionary innovations, aesthetic and political, of Surrealism. [Smith, *Modernism's History*, 226.]

175 Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 113.

176 Ibid., 36 & 127.

177 Mojabi, *Pišgāmān-e naqāši-ye mo'āšer-e irān* [*Pioneers of Contemporary Persian Painting*], 12.

either promoted pure Western modern styles and revived local traditions by mixing them with modern techniques, or they received institutional state patronage via biennials, exhibitions and financial support for perfecting two of states' cultural policies of transforming into an international model in arts and reaching to a market for their cultural productions.<sup>178</sup> In *Modern Asian Art*, Clark investigates a similar condition. He observes the formation of the art markets as a result of participation of both private and state sectors in forms of salons, commissions, private artists' groups, exhibitions, galleries and direct sales; nevertheless, most Asian art institutes were an initiative of the private sector and artists on their own and the states' support came later.<sup>179</sup> Clark explains reasons for this delay following from his discussion about neo-traditional art invented by the state patronage and sees an essentialism for it. To him, art as a potentially open discourse with pictorial expression had been considered a means of visual propaganda and imbricated in processes by which the "nation" defined itself.<sup>180</sup> "The reason why national identity has been so contested all over Asia in the representation of the 'national' art was because this hegemony was above all a political one, whether in founding the state against Euramerica or in wresting the state from local contestants for its control."<sup>181</sup> For Clark, therefore, the official cultural policies in patronizing modern art was as means of control and he applies this to his discussion on neo-traditional art as an state project: "[...] advent of a field being marked out with its own disciplinary codes as the means for the formulization of various degrees of practice."<sup>182</sup> Observing this, Dadi explains, one needs in a larger sense, to undertake a deconstructive study of nationalism that brings new narratives of transnational modernism from within a national art history. He elucidates through his studies on modern art from the region the similarities in the role that modern artists undertook for organizing artists' groups and societies and their cultural contributes as important vehicles for the promotion of modern art. He sees artists' rise: "[...] associated with the emergence of a lively intellectual environment and debate on arts and aesthetics [...]."<sup>183</sup> Also in Iran the main engine for transformations during the 20th century was the central government, nevertheless, the state was inherently a part of the problem rather than solution of dilemmas.<sup>184</sup> This is due to the pressure exerted on the soci-

**178** Iain Robertson, *A New Art from Emerging Markets* (Surrey: Lund Humphries, 2011), 44.

**179** To mention some of these private modern associations and artists' groups around the same time: the Young Vietnamese Artists Association (Vietnam; 1966–1975), Art and Liberty Group (Egypt; 1938–1965), Contemporary Art Group (Egypt; 1946–1965), Baghdad Modern Art Group (Iraq; 1951–c.1971), Futurist Art Association (Japan; 1920–1922), Mavo (Japan; 1923–1925), Progressive Artists Group (India; 1947–1956) and Union of Indonesian Artists/PERSAGI (Indonesia; 1938–1942).

**180** Clark, *Modern Asian Art*, 239.

**181** Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 127.

**182** Clark, *Modern Asian Art*, 166.

**183** Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 51.

**184** *Ibid.*, 1.

ety below by the formation of a centralized state and in response to that society's pressure from below that altered the state.<sup>185</sup> In fact, there was an intimate and complex relation between social and cultural and between cultural and political change that both the official ideology of the state and society reflected it.

For modern art in Iran, as for many Asian regimes, production of art objects provided rewards at local exhibitions or even at Euramerican salons. Clark emphasizes that this had turned into an internalized compliance with dominant structures that became a type of orthodoxy and pressured many artists to follow. These disciplinary codes were survival of a pre-modern discourse but as traces within the articulations of neo-traditionality.<sup>186</sup> This goal was achieved through the educational process and a system of reward and punishment was added to the newly established government art societies and salons.<sup>187</sup> As a result, artists had to choose whether to become neo-traditionalists, or to question it and place oppositions against these codes—the majority though was with the former. This majority finds its own reasons for following the neo-traditional art: first, to identify their nationality as a subject and make their works recognizable for the audience; second, the conspicuous consumption of this style by rich individuals, i.e. for their large-scale financial support, exhibit and purchase; third, a good tourist market due to its decorative qualities and, fourth, the political crisis criticizing the leftist “art for life” movement for its lack of sincerity.<sup>188</sup> Clark's discussion of disciplinary codes as a means of control is similar to Said rejecting the traditional liberal understanding of the humanities as *pure* or *disinterested* knowledge. He argues a deep implication in the operations and technologies of power through exposing the scholars to particular historical, cultural and institutional affiliations and, therefore, exerting its dominant ideology and political imperatives on society: “[...] ideas, cultures and histories cannot seriously be studied without their force, or more precisely their configurations of power [...]”<sup>189</sup> In pre-modern Iran, if the main patrons of the artists were among the courtiers or aristocrats and if artists were not entirely at their service, they were still not in a position against these patrons. It was with the event of modernity that art took on the role for a revolution. Also, the Iranian intellectual and rebellious artist became a role model at the time and, in effect, having an anti-official stance transformed to a leading behavior by the avant-garde artists: “An artist who has no clear stance [about government] is considered as a dependent [on government] artist. An artist who himself and his art are not significant.”<sup>190</sup>

185 Ibid., 6.

186 Clark, *Modern Asian Art*, 166–67.

187 In addition to the academy's curriculum, bringing access to foreign teachers and references and facilitating foreign travels for the students were among the methods exercised by the regimes. [Ibid., 1.]

188 Ibid., 81.

189 Ibid.

190 [Kowsari, «هنرمندی که موضعی نداشته باشد، هنرمندی وابسته تلقی می‌شود. هنرمندی که خودش و هنرش چندان قابل‌اعتنا نیست.» “Modernite, jāme‘a wa honar [Modernity, Society and Art],” 153.]



## 3 Artistic Autonomy and Privacy: Contexts of a Change

### 3.1 State Patronage, Modernization and Arts

The socio-economic and politico-intellectual space of Iran underwent considerable changes during the 1940s–1970s and, as a result, investigations about artistic and cultural modernism in this period is inextricably intertwined with the study of these changes. This study considers the most influential contexts in two forms: first, the state’s cultural policies that were exercised through a modernization project since the 1920s and, second, the politicized climate of Iranian society during this period. For the first context, it discusses the government’s role in the academization of art and how its conservatism led to an anti-institutional mood in young modern artists. For the second context, it will argue how the socio-political grounds directed artists toward an intellectual status to purify art from the ideological demands of the dominant powers.<sup>1</sup> The effect of a politicized climate on artists will, thus, be investigated: first, through the artists’ adoption of the role of intellectuals and, second, through the concept of “art for art’s sake” and the promotion of an uncommitted, apolitical and independent art.

#### 3.1.1 Academization of Art: Tehran’s Faculty of Fine Arts

Being argued in the theoretical chapter, national modernism was a global discourse that gradually spread beginning in the 1920s, yet there were specific concerns within the movement that differed from country to country. The development of national modernism in Iran was the adopted policy of both the first and second eras of Pahlavi dynasty; i.e. Reza Shah’s reign (1925–1941) and his son, Mohammad Reza Shah (1941–1979), until the onset of the Islamic Revolution. Although both eras were distinctive in their types and strategies of modernization, national modernism made up the most dominant paradigm of the whole dynasty. Both of the Pahlavi rulers applied modernization as a reformist policy to discredit the previous rulers, the Qajar dynasty, as “nothing but a corrupt state oppressing people” and as a link to modernity and recuperation of antiquity.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, during the second Pahlavi reign, modernization was implemented in a less destructive fashion, with more emphasis on preservation. During the first Pahlavi reign, modernization was executed radically and endorsed the creation of many cultural institutions to disseminate the nationalization agenda, re-construct the ancient period and to for-

<sup>1</sup> The major powers in force since the 1940s were three political parties of the left, nationalists and religious groups, and their inter-/counteractions with the structure of the power in the government.

<sup>2</sup> Grigor, *Building Iran*, 11–12.

mulate a conception of secular modern Iran. During this period, to be considered a modern Iranian was to become an extension of the “European persona”<sup>3</sup> and to uncover, select and aggrandize the elements of tradition that were compatible with the culture of modernity. Additionally, the new sought-after Iranian identity had no compliance with religion in the first Pahlavi era, whereas the barrier between tradition and modernization in Iran was largely the same barrier between religious social relations and a governmental system with modern and non-religious nationalistic values.<sup>4</sup> Comparing the two Pahlavi rulers against each other, the progressive modernization of the first Pahlavi period, for some critics, ended in a “pseudo-modernism”<sup>5</sup> that remained at aimless imitation of the more superficial aspects of Western civilization. Therefore, the state’s support of the cultural reforms was in accordance with the policy of cultural restriction, as it expanded control and promulgated a multitude of *Nizām-nāma* [regulations] for the cultural activities: “This ‘*Nizām-nāma*-ization policy’ can be seen as emblematic of the Pahlavi state’s ambition to control the life of its subjects in nearly every respect.”<sup>6</sup>

The pillars of Reza Shah’s approach to modernization were twofold: they consisted of the *formal* and *substantive* aspects. The formal aspect included a centralized bureaucratic modernization, whereas the substantive aspect sought to convey nationalism as a concept. Modern bureaucracy was employed as a tool to achieve a national identity in Iran: “The question was no longer ‘who is the Iranian,’ but rather ‘who is the modern Iranian?’”<sup>7</sup> Nationalism as a conscious ideology and political culture became, along with the purpose of gaining power, a solution to the government’s legitimacy and identity crisis after the dethronement of the Qajars. In fact, it was a conscious approach to an unprecedented nationalism which Yann Richard refers to it as “National Modernism”: “The fundamental assumption of an inclination which was formed in the socio-political thought of this period was that modernism could only be possible in a State-Nation framework similar to Western Europe since the 18th century. Perhaps it can be specified as modernist, civilizing, [...] or ‘National Modernism.’ [...] old religious, tribal, ethnic and local attachments had to be replaced by the national identity and faith.”<sup>8</sup> For the creation of a modern bureaucracy and the establishment of a national identity, the education and employment of the scholars and technocrats from Western graduates and foreign Orientalists appeared indispensable. A major part of the figures who contrib-

3 Kashani-Sabet, “Culture of Iranianness,” 176.

4 Reza Zariri, “Modernism wa tajadodgerāi dar aṣr-e pahlavi [Modernism in the Pahlavi Era],” *Zamāna*, no. 40 (2005), 27.

5 Katouzian, *The Persians*, 216.

6 Bianca Devos and Christoph Werner, introduction to *Culture and Cultural Politics under Reza Shah: The Pahlavi State, New Bourgeoisie and the Creation of a Modern Society in Iran*, by Bianca Devos and Christoph Werner (London: Routledge, 2014), 7.

7 Kashani-Sabet, “Culture of Iranianness,” 170.

8 Richard, “Du nationalism a l’islamisme,” 274.

uted to the state modernization projects came from nationalist generation of Iranian enlightened thinkers—known as *Rošanfekr* (adopted from Arabic “Monavar al-fekr”)<sup>9</sup>—as members of a new middle class with modern ideas of reform that had been formed through contacts with the West and modern education in the late Qajar period. Mostly they were teachers or graduates of *Dār al-fonun* [Dar al-Fonoun], Iran’s first state university (1851), or advocates of Iran’s Constitutional Revolution who perceived the world through the lens of the French Enlightenment and talked of the need for radical change, fundamental transformation and progress, thus promulgating concepts such as liberalism, nationalism and even socialism. [Fig. 3-1] These intellectuals, together with a series of high-ranking aristocrats,<sup>10</sup> promoted ideas and individual initiatives that were the creative sparks for governmental programs, and should be considered as important Iranian factors in the process of cultural modernization in this period. In fact, as Bianca Devos and Christoph Werner allude to, the similarities of the ideals between these groups and the official policies resulted the reform process turning into a significant *symbiosis* between them.<sup>11</sup> The new academic forces decided to carry out artistic and cultural policies that were based on the revival of the cultural heritage of Iran and, due to this goal, a rapid academization and bureaucratization had to occur in the fields of art and culture: “Cultural heritage was one of the most powerful forces behind Iran’s modern political will. It could represent a relationship between modern Iran and its patronage [...]. The enlightened thinkers [...] became confident that a better future for Iran was possible in Aryanist and nationalist theories. Because in these theories the feelings of inferiority caused by military and economic humiliations were replaced with a sense of cultural and racial superiority [...]”<sup>12</sup>

The academization plan in the fields of art and culture began through the establishment of new institutions and organizations. In the arts, this academic modernization was to implement a comprehensive system of education and it was applied to centers of art education. To understand the shift that these modernization plans brought to the art education system, a review over art centers in the late Qajar era is necessary. Two important centers of the late Qajar era; i.e., Dar al-Fonoun as Iran’s

9 The term “Monavar al-fekr” was used instead of “intellectual” in the late Qajar period and it was associated to the terms “intellectuel” in French or “intelligentsia” in Russian. This term in Iran mostly referred to the young and modernist proponents of the Constitutional Revolution. Later under Reza Shah’s rule, the term rather became associated with the Left Party members and sympathizers. [Sadeghi, *Nowsāzi-ye nātāmām [Unfinished Modernization]*, 23 & 30.]

10 Prior to the formation of the Iranian middle class during first decades of the 20th century and still afterward, the main group who advanced reforms in Iran included (usually high-ranking) aristocrats within the system of the bureaucracy. This group of aristocrats made cultural assignments for the state to be implemented and the government, according to lack of the necessary knowledge, was highly reliant on this group for its cultural policies. [Shahrnazdar, Mohsen (anthropologist), in discussion with the author, January 1, 2017.]

11 Devos and Werner, introduction to *Culture and Cultural Politics*, 2.

12 Grigor, *Building Iran*, 10.



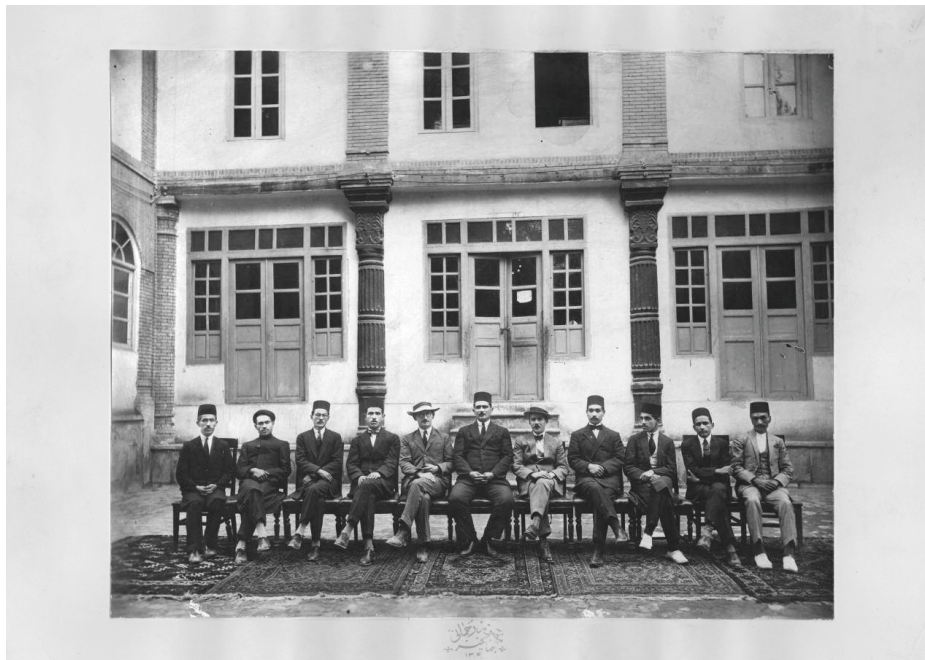


Fig. 3-1 (Top) "Entrance of Dar al-Fonoun in the early first Pahlavi era," 10979-3ع. Archives of Institute for Iranian Contemporary Historical Studies  
 (Bottom) "A group of Iranian and foreign teachers, personnel and students of Dar al-Fonoun in the late Qajar period," 2761-124ط. [Ibid.]

first university and *Majmā al-dār al-šanāye'* [Arts and Crafts Center] were both founded in about 1852. It should be noted that although at both schools the same teacher, Sani al-Molk (1814–1866),<sup>13</sup> was in charge of painting classes, it was at Dar al-Fonoun that he could put his knowledge of European painting into practice. In contrast to Dar al-Fonoun, the Arts and Crafts Center was dedicated to the national arts and handicrafts with education based on the old method of master-apprentice; the primary purpose was not education, but rather the center was a place for art commissions by the court.<sup>14</sup> The foundation of Dar al-Fonoun, in contrast, was aimed principally at spreading European arts and sciences as a necessity for adoption of Western civilization and the formation of a new Perso-European style.<sup>15</sup> This turning to the West also appeared in other forms during the Qajar era, such as state support in student dispatches to Europe, translation of Western books and the employment of foreign instructors. It was this emphasis on the adaptation to the European academic system that led to an assessment criterion for the employment of instructors at Dar al-Fonoun requiring them to be among Western-educated Iranians with the knowledge of academic painting and expertise in operating Western technological equipment. As a result, many graduates of Dar al-Fonoun became court painters for their mastery of European academic painting.<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, the new Perso-European style, which appeared mainly in forms of Qajar Court Style of painting with more emphasis on royal iconography, did not last long. [Fig. 3-2] Among graduates of Dar al-Fonoun, there were eminent painters<sup>17</sup> who contributed to putting an end to this style and instead concentrated on a more liberated academic Naturalism and Realism—the main art styles that later in the 1940s were also criticized by the young modern artists. [Fig. 3-3]

13 Abu al-Hasan Khan Qaffari—better known as Sani al-Molk—is considered of the first Iranian painters who studied painting (and lithography) in Europe (1846–1850). In contrast to the flashy Court Style painting and insincere court iconography, he promoted a Naturalistic logic in the application of colour in his paintings with more emphasis on characteristic nuances of his subjects. The significance of Sani al-Molk's work is in a combination of European Naturalism and Iranian miniature painting. [Mohammad Hadi, "Noḡostin mo'allem-e naqāši-ye nowin-e irān [First Instructor of Iranian Modern Art]," *Honar*, no. 13 (1987–1988): 106 & 115.]

14 "Sabza meydān wa majmā al-dār al-šanāye' [Sabza Meydan and the Arts and Crafts Center]," *Yādegār*, no. 39–40 (1948): 66.

15 Abbas Amanat, "Qajar Iran: A Historical Review," in *Royal Persian Paintings*, ed. Layla S. Diba (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 26.

16 Such as Esmāiel Jalayer, Abu Torab Qaffari, Mohammad Qaffari and Jafar Khan Zanjani. [Aydin Aghdashlou, "Moqadama-i bar naqāši-ye qājāri [An Introduction to Qajar Painting]," in *Dar jostojū-ye zamān-e now [In Search of the New Time]*, ed. Iman Afsarian (Tehran: Ĥerfa-honarmand, 2016), 34.]

17 Painters such as Esmāiel Jalayer, Abu Torab Qaffari, Mohammad Qaffari and Ali Akbar Mosavar (also a sculptor).



Fig. 3-2 Ahmad, *Moḥammad šāh* [Mohammad Shah (Abbas Mirza's Son)], 1884. 90 × 76 cm, Golestan Palace



Fig. 3-3 Esmāiel Jalayer, *Darviš nur 'ali šāh* [Dervish Nur Ali Shah], 19th century. Oil on canvas, 69 × 49 cm, Golestan Palace

The development catalyzed by Dar al-Fonoun was in both the method of art education and a shift in artistic styles. As an educational reform, Dar al-Fonoun came under the jurisdiction of *Veẓārat-e āmuzeš-e 'āli* [Ministry of Higher Education] and incorporated painting into the academic curriculum. For the first time, painting was explicitly perceived as an *academic discipline* rather than *handicraft*<sup>18</sup> and the terminologies of “art” and “crafts” became distinguished from each other. In painting, the traditional master-apprentice method of copying, repeating and producing replicas was replaced with European academic Naturalism that emphasized perspective and chiaroscuro. This current was also fed by other events such as the importation of photography into Iran by the state in 1842 and the establishment of *Čāpkāna-ye dowlati* [Public Printing Press Center] with Sani al-Molk as the Chief Editor, as well as the establishment of the *Naqāškhāna wa kārkhāna-ye bāsma* [Public School of Painting and Print] by him in 1861. Both photographs and prints played important roles in this academic education system and allowed painters to depict their subjects more objectively and correctly. As a “superior style,” painters applied photographs as models and transformed the idealistic iconography of the early Qajar period into paintings that were less descriptive and more realistic with

18 Ekhtiar, “From Workshop and Bazaar to Academy,” 54.

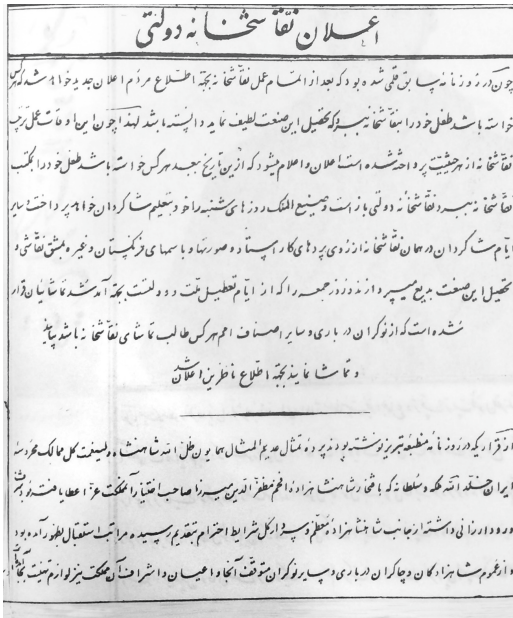


Fig. 3-4 "E'lān-e naqāshkāna-ye dowlati [Announcement of the Public School of Painting]," in *Ruznāma-ye dowlat-e 'elliya-ye irān*, April 27, 1862. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran. [In the text of the announcement it is read painting classes of the school will be open to everyone and Sani al-Molk will in person teach painting on Saturdays. The school will be open to exhibit the students' works on Fridays.]

a *photographic* objectivity.<sup>19</sup> It was the availability of this media, in particular the printed models, that the Public School of Painting and Print turned into Iran's first art academy for education of painting with new methods.<sup>20</sup> [Fig. 3-4] The role of Sani al-Molk as the director of the Public School of Painting and Print was instrumental in these developments. The curriculum of the painting classes, both at this school and Dar al-Fonoun, was decided based on his experience in European academic methods in applying Western materials as paintings, prints, engravings and sculptures. The curriculum, however, was not a replica of the European type, and instead, was devised by Sani al-Molk and he excluded courses such as anatomy, geometry and art history in order to avoid conflicts with the traditional system,<sup>21</sup> whereas copy and repetition of models played a large role in the training.

Parallel with the cultural policies for adoption of the European system of education, the *Veẓārat-e āmuzeš wa oqāf* [Ministry of Education and Endowments] transformed into *Veẓārat-e āmuzeš, oqāf wa honar-hā-ye zibā* [Ministry of Education, Endowments and Fine Arts] in 1910 with the fine arts under the directorship

19 Keshmirshakan, *Honar-e mo'āser-e irān [Iranian Contemporary Art]*, 31.

20 Homayoun Mousavi, "Negāhi be āmuzeš-e motewaseṭa-ye naqāši dar irān [A Review of Secondary Education of Art in Iran]," *Ayena-ye kiāl*, no. 5 (2007), 71–72.

21 Ekhtiar, "From Workshop and Bazaar," 59.

of Kamal al-Molk (1859–1940)<sup>22</sup>—an eminent painter from Dar al-Fonoun. Based on this opportunity in the final years of the Qajar dynasty, Kamal al-Molk established his own school, *Madrasa-ye šanāye<sup>2</sup>-e mostazrafa* [Kamal al-Molk School of Fine Arts], in 1911. [Fig. 3-5] Kamal al-Molk School of Fine Arts, compared to previous centers, was the first modernized Iranian academy that concentrated only on the visual arts and referred to painting as a *science*.<sup>23</sup> Although at Kamal al-Molk School the education remained a mixture of master-apprentice and European academic methods; it was at this school that the sporadic steps toward promotion of Naturalistic and Realistic painting finally reached their summit.<sup>24</sup> In fact, after his visit to Europe as a court painter, Kamal al-Molk became enamored with Renaissance painting and the notion that: “Art and painting only existed during the Renaissance and not afterwards.”<sup>25</sup> This was in spite of the fact that around the same time (1898), Europe was experiencing modern styles such as Impressionism and Post-Impressionism. This captivation with the Renaissance (and not modern) paintings by artists like Kamal al-Molk is what Aydin Aghdashlou (1949–, painter and critic) interprets as efforts by Iranian artists of that time to challenge their own abilities regarding the objective and Realistic art of the Europe.<sup>26</sup> Robertson argues that this captivism was prevalent in colonial or pseudo-colonial countries in the early 19th century and it was common to ignore the impressionists in favor of the Old Masters and the art of the Salon.<sup>27</sup> The import of Western art and European paintings to Iran, Aghdashlou explains, was also random and not along with adequate knowledge and, as a result, did not have the necessary compatibility with simultaneous artistic developments in Europe. In such condition, the real value of Western modern art remained concealed for Iranian artists and what Kamal al-Molk School had picked up could not supplant the

22 Mohammad Qaffari—better known as Kamal al-Molk—was born in Kashan to the renowned artist family of Qaffaris. During the reign of Naser al-Din, king of Qajar (1848–1896), while a student at Dar al-Fonoun, he was selected to become a court painter by the king in 1880 and was granted the honorary title of “Kamal al-Molk” in 1884. Being also granted a three-year trip to Europe in 1898 by Mozaffar al-Din, king of the Qajar dynasty (1896–1907), on his return he established his own painting school Kamal al-Molk School of Fine Arts in 1911 and promoted the academic school of painting.

23 According to statutes of the school, the majors of painting, sculpture, architecture, literature and music had separate branches and the painting course included drawing from nature and antique, perspective, coloration, anatomy, history of world and Iran. [Mohammad Hasan Hamedī, “Vaziri wa andiša-ye taraqi dar šanāye<sup>2</sup>-e mostazrafa [Vaziri and Progressive Attitude at School of Fine Arts],” *Tandis*, no. 305 (2015), 29.]

24 Iranian painting can be respectively divided into two general stylistic periods before and after Kamal al-Molk School: Zand and Qajar Schools of painting which were declined with return of the Dar al-Fonoun students from Europe (e.g. Sani al-Molk, Mozayen al-Doleh, etc.), and Kamal al-Molk and his school until turn of the 20th century and the formation of Iranian modern art movements. [Aghdashlou, “Moqadama-i bar naqāšī-ye qājāri [An Introduction to Qajar Painting],” 18.]

25 «هنر و نقاشی تنها در دوره رنسانس وجود داشت و از آن پس از بین رفت.» [Margāb Garabekyan, “Kamāl al-molk: honarmand wa naqāš-e bozorg [Kamal al-Molk: The Eminent Artist and Painter],” in *Yādnama-ye kamāl al-molk [Kamal al-Molk’s Memorial]*, ed. Darab Behnam Shabahang and Ali Dehbashi (Tehran: Čakāma, 1985), 202.]

26 Aydin Aghdashlou, *Az košī-hā wa ḥasrat-hā: bargozida-ye goftār-hā wa goftogu-hā [Of Joys and Yearnings: Selected Essays and Dialogues (1974–1991)]* (Tehran: Farhang-e mo’āṣer, 1992), 74.

27 Robertson, *A New Art from Emerging Markets*, 119.

Realism and Naturalism that was promoted at Dar al-Fonoun.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the lasting impact from this period was a new approach to oil painting, with more realistic subjects from everyday life and greater attention to the significance of the paint and brush in painting. This was precisely the more liberated academic Naturalism and Realism that differed from the Qajar Court Style. In this period, especially in portraiture, artists displayed a meticulous sensitivity for depiction of the personality, behavior of the models and the routine environment in their works. [Fig. 3-6] Considering these shifts in Iranian painting, one might conclude that the product of the academic Realism in the Qajar period was a displacement in submission to the patron versus self-confidence and self-examination of the artists,<sup>29</sup> or in what Kamal al-Molk stated as: “In craft, there has been much dictated to my artistic taste, for instance, the painting of *Tālār-e āyena* [*Hall of Mirror*] is a great painting, but still it has been imposed and has not derived from my natural imagination.”<sup>30</sup>

The bureaucratization with central attention to the national heritage distinguished the art and cultural policies of the first Pahlavi king from the late Qajar period. *Anjoman-e ātār-e melli* [Society for National Heritage (SNH)] (1922) was established as the main cultural arm of the regime for the execution of these policies. [Fig. 3-7] This center had an architectural focus on mausoleums of Iranian historical figures as symbols of a modern nation, calling for their destruction and a modernized re-construction. Another major task by the SNH was a sort of deference to European opinion.<sup>31</sup> This policy was achieved through holding international congresses and commemorative activities by inviting archaeologists and Orientalists to the country. In the margins of these congresses relevant art and cultural exhibitions were also held such as *Jašnhā-ye hezāra-ye ferdowsi* [*Ferdowsi Millenary Celebrations*] (1934). These events were part of a foreign policy to be admired by foreign scholars and to bring extraordinary political opportunities for the colonial competitors in Iran.<sup>32</sup> Similar to SNH, *Farhangestān-e irān* [Academy of Iran] (1935)<sup>33</sup> became of significant concern to promote a Persian language purged of foreign terms.

28 Aghdashlou, *Az koši-hā wa ḥasrat-hā* [*Of Joys and Yearnings*], 80–83.

29 Layla S. Diba, “Images of Power and Power of Images: Intention and Response in Early Qajar Painting (1785–1834),” in *Royal Persian Paintings*, ed. Layla S. Diba (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 45.

30 «در صنعت به ذوق صنعتی من زیاد تمحیل شده است، مثلاً پرده تالار آینه خیلی خوب شده ولی بالاخره تمحیل است و از ذوق فطری من» [“Šarḥ-e ḥāl-e kamāl al-molk az zabān-e kodaš [Kamal al-Molk’s Memoir in His Own Words],” in *Yādnama-ye kamāl al-molk* [*Kamal al-Molk’s Memorial*], ed. Darab Behnam Shabahang and Ali Dehbashi (Tehran: Čakāma, 1985), 19.]

31 Katouzian, *The Persians*, 217.

32 Grigor, *Building Iran*, 72.

33 The initial foundation of the Academy of Iran goes back to 1935–1954 with the main task of issuing Persian equivalents for foreign words. With the increase of foreign words in the Persian language, the role of the academy was once again highlighted and it was re-established in 1963. [“Tāriḫča [History],” *Farhangestān-e zabān wa adab-e fārsi* [*Persian Academy*], accessed October 8, 2017, <http://www.persianacademy.ir/fa/history.aspx>.]

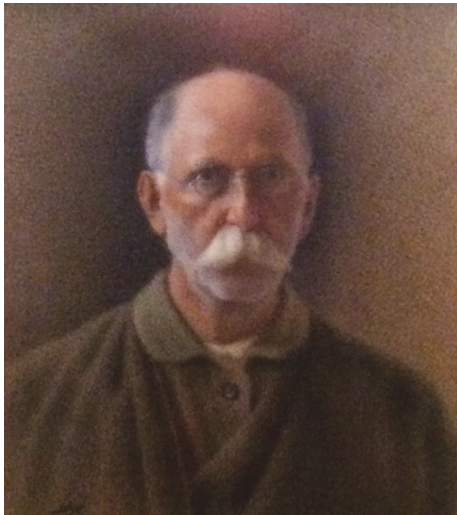


Fig. 3-5 (Top) "Kamal al-Molk and his students at Kamal al-Molk School (Kamal al-Molk standing the sixth figure from left)," n.d., Tehran Beautification Organization (Negarestan Museum)

(Middle) "Interior of Kamal al-Molk School." [Ibid.]

(Bottom) Kamal al-Molk, *Self-Portrait of Artist*, 1918. Watercolour on paper, 28.2 × 22.2 cm, Malek Museum



Fig. 3-6 (Top) Ali Akbar Yasemi, *Doḡtar wa ṭabi'at-e bijān* [Girl and Still Life], 1954. Oil on canvas, 48 × 43 cm, Tehran Beautification Organization (Negarestan Museum)

(Bottom) Hasan Ali Vaziri, *Oṭāq-e kār-e ostād kamāl al-molk* [Kamal al-Molk's Room], n.d. Oil on wood, 20 × 22.5 cm, [Ibid.]

This center, as Saeed Nafisi (1895–1966)—a renowned member of the academy—described, emphasized on language for boosting a national spirit: “There can be no uncertainty that language is a major manifestation of the nationality of each tribe and it should represent the national spirit of its people and provoke it.”<sup>34</sup> Two other significant centers that shared the same cultural policies were *Sāzmān-e parvareš-e afkār* [Thought Training Organization] (1938), which had a focus on activities by art and cultural institutes, and University of Tehran (1934), which was the heart of modernization plans and the birthplace of Tehran’s Faculty of Fine Arts (1940). [Fig. 3-8] In fact, promotion of a scientific and cultural modernism was an official project for which educational programs and university curricula made their core.<sup>35</sup> Both institutes, particularly the University of Tehran, aroused archaism, patriotism and the history of Iran with certain academic policies. Meanwhile, *Irān-e emruz*, the state sponsored magazine of the Thought Training Organization promoted debates on subjects such as ancient glory, modern progress, artifacts in national museum; an international distribution of this magazine multiplied its propagandizing role. The University of Tehran and other cultural organizations were, in fact, supposed to disseminate their own orthodoxy and disciplinary codes by means of employment of the most compliant scholars. According to the operators of the Thought Training Organization, university and all cultural institutes were supposed to fulfill cultural plans of the government—a condition that resulted in the reduction of the academic and scientific functions of the University of Tehran to a state cultural organization, rather than that of an independent scientific complex.<sup>36</sup>

In the field of art and artistic production, the policy for national modernization left little support for new inclinations that were taking shape among young artists, and instead, the state’s support included the revival of national life via restoration of the national and traditional arts and crafts.<sup>37</sup> Upon this policy, centralized academies of traditional arts were founded during the first Pahlavi era. They were a series of art academies whose curricula were comprised exclusively of traditional arts: *Honarestān-e honar-hā-ye zibā-ye irāni* [Academy of Fine Arts of Iran] (1930) in Tehran under the directorship of Hossein Taherzadeh Behzad (1887–1962, miniature painter) and *Madrasa-ye šanāye‘-e qadima-ye ešfahān* [School of Art and Crafts of Isfahan] (1935) under the directorship of Isa Bahadori (1905–1986, carpet designer). Concurrent with these institutes, education of painting and sculpture was continued at Kamal al-Molk School after his resignation, under the supervision of his

34 Grigor, *Building Iran*, 72.

35 Keshmirshekan, *Honar-e mo‘āser-e irān [Iranian Contemporary Art]*, 2.

36 Mahmoud Delfani, “Sāzmān-e parvareš-e afkār: jostāri bar sāzmān-hā wa siāsat-hā-ye farhangi-ye irān dar dora-ye rezā šāh pahlavi [Thought Training Organization: An Inquiry into Iran’s Cultural Organizations and Policies under Reza Shah Pahlavi],” *Ganjina-ye asnād*, no. 21 & 22 (1996): 79.

37 Such as miniature painting, illumination, inlay, woodcarving, brocade weaving and carpet design. [Ebrahim Safaei, *Tāriḵča-ye honarestān-hā-ye honar-hā-ye zibā-ye doḵtarān wa pesarān [An Introduction to Academies of Fine Arts for Girls and Boys]* (Tehran: Našr-e vezārat-e farhang wa honar [The Ministry of Culture and Art Publications], 1962), 15.]



student, Abu al-Hasan Khan Sadiqi (1897–1995).<sup>38</sup> Another significant institute was *Edāra-ye honar-hā-ye melli* [National Arts Administration] (1930) under the supervision of Mohammad Ali Forouqi (1877–1942, an ultimate scholar and statesman) with the aim of further centralization of the affairs relating to the national and fine arts. This centralization meant a merger of art academies and comprehensive supervision of them.<sup>39</sup> The National Arts Administration began monitoring activities at the Academy of Fine Arts of Iran and Kamal al-Molk School and reorganized them in the same year into two schools of *Madrasa-ye šanāye‘-e qadima* [School of Traditional Arts] and *Madrasa-ye šanāye‘-e jadida* [School of New Arts], which were eventually merged in 1939 as *Honarestān-e ‘āli-ye honar-hā-ye zibā* [Iran’s Secondary School of Fine Arts]. [Fig. 3-9] The School of Traditional Arts was in opposite direction to the School of New Arts and its aim was the revival of the old styles of Iranian miniature painting known as the Tehran School. In such a climate, establishment of the first state museums should also be considered in association with the policy of centralization of both new and national arts. For instance, the *Muza-ye honar-e melli* [Iran’s Museum of National Art] was founded in 1940 and was the location of workshops for painting and sculpture at Kamal al-Molk School, displaying the works of the masters and students of this school and miniature paintings of the Tehran School.

Although the art and cultural policies of the first Pahlavi reign attended more to the traditional arts as a national identity, construction of the art academies and the centralized academization in arts set the ground to institutionalization of modern art in Iran. Tehran’s Faculty of Fine Arts was founded at University of Tehran in the final years of Reza Shah’s reign and became the epicenter for students who would lead the Iranian modern art movement. [Fig. 3-10] In fact, the foundation of the Faculty of Fine Arts on the initiative of Esmail Merat—the minister of education in office 1935–1941—was based on a socio-cultural expediency for completion of the project of cultural modernization in Iran. This measure was a functionary of the same climate in which the University of Tehran was established or a space affected by the colonial and national power policies within which most political sentiments were enacted. The idea of creating a separate faculty for the fine arts had two additional reasons: first, to establish a comprehensive school similar to European art schools based on Merat’s observation of the educational system at *École des Beaux-arts* in Paris,<sup>40</sup> and second, Reza Shah’s lack of belief in Kamal

38 Abu al-Hasan Khan Sadiqi studied sculpture and painting at Kamal al-Molk School of Fine Arts. His education at *École des Beaux-arts* in Paris (1928–1931) enriched his knowledge of academic Realism by Kamal al-Molk’s trainings with a figurative anatomy. Although he was influenced in a less sophisticated approach to his sculptural subjects, he did not surpass the academic Realism and was faithful to Kamal al-Molk’s teachings.

39 *Ibid.*, 24.

40 This devotion of Merat to *École des Beaux-arts* came from a familiarity he made with French education system while he was in charge of the dispatch of Iranian students to France for their higher education. [Mojabi, *Pišgāmān-e naqāši-ye mo‘āser-e irān* [*Pioneers of Contemporary Persian Painting*], 4.]

al-Molk School in final years of Shah's rule, which influenced his decision to replace this school with a new institution.<sup>41</sup> The lack of belief was due to the fanatical air of Kamal al-Molk School that restricted all trainings to his singular approach. For Reza Shah, education was a means of carrying out the state's doctrinal plan, and he preferred to patronize technical and industrial functions of art which were possible through the removal of the traditional trainings of Kamal al-Molk School.<sup>42</sup> In fact, Shah observed a doctrinal method at the Kamal al-Molk School that created disciples and could be a latent threat to his own rule and, therefore, it had to be immediately suppressed and replaced with other methods of practice.<sup>43</sup> As a result, the Faculty of Fine Arts (in its early days known as *Honarkada-ye honar-hā-ye zibā* [Academy of Fine Arts]) was founded by the merger of Kamal al-Molk School with *Madrasa-ye āli-ye me'māri* [College of Architecture].<sup>44</sup>

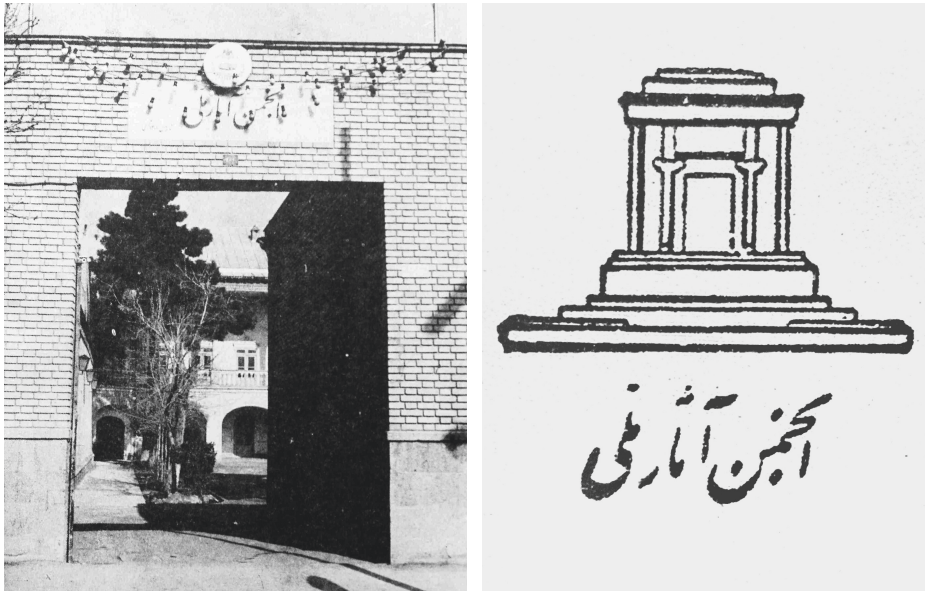


Fig. 3-7 (Left) "SNH building in 1956," in Hossein Bahrololumi, *Kārnāma-ye anjoman-e ātār-e melli* [A Report on the Society of National Heritage] (Tehran: Anjoman-e ātār-e melli [Society of National Heritage], 1956): 2. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

(Right) "The logo for SNH adopted from the modern reconstructed mausoleum of Ferdowsi (Persian epic poet of the 10th–11th century)," in Talinn Grigor, *Building Iran: Modernism, Architecture, and National Heritage under the Pahlavi Monarchs* (New York: Pariscope, 2009): 25

41 Morteza Momayez, "Dāneškada-ye honar-hā-ye zibā dar nim qarn [Faculty of Fine Arts in Half a Century]," *Kelk*, no.11 & 12 (1990): 60.

42 Dariush Kiaras, *Pič-e šemirān 1332: tāričča-ye honarestān-e honar-hā-ye zibā-ye tehrān* [Piche Shemiran 1953: An Introduction to the Academy of Fine Arts of Tehran] (Tehran: Peykara, 2014), 20.

43 Pakbaz, *Naqāšī-ye irān* [Iranian Painting], 14.

44 The School of Architecture was established in 1939 by Abu al-Hasan Khan Sadiqi, Mohsen Forouqi and Rolland Dubrulle.



بخطار نداشتن «اونیورسیتیه» است که دست ما  
بطرف خارجیان برای جلب مستخدمین خارجی  
دراز است.



Fig. 3-8 (Right) "The entrance of University of Tehran," in "Dānešgāh-e tehrān čehel wa čāhār sālā šod [University of Tehran Turned Forty-Four]," *Talāš*, no. 77 (1978): 9. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

(Left) "Reza Shah installing the bronze plate with an inscription for the inauguration of the University of Tehran in 1935," [Ibid., 10]. [In the margin of the photo we read the parliament's vote for necessity of constructing the university: "It is because of not having a university that we are required to employ foreigners." ] [Ibid.]



Fig. 3-9 "School of Traditional Arts (Teachers and students, standing L-R: Hossein Safavi, Akhondi, Ali Esfarjani, Ali Karimi, Abutaleb Moqimi, Mohammad Ali Zavieh, Nosratollah Yousefi, Seyyed Mahmoud Tabatabai, Ali Moti, Anonym, Hirbad (Naqashzadeh)), in Amir Rezaie Nabard, "Taṭīr wa taṭarāt-e madrasa-ye šānāye'-e qadima wa muza-ye honar-hā-ye melli dar negārgari-ye mo'āšer [Influences of School of Traditional Arts and Museum of National Arts on the Contemporary Miniature]," *Negārīna*, no. 7 & 8 (2015): 112



Fig. 3-10 (Top) "Faculty of Fine Arts in 1941 (Teachers and students, standing in front L-R: Mohsen Forouqi, Mohsen Moqaddam and André Godard)," Courtesy of Newsha Djavadipour

(Bottom) "Faculty of Fine Arts c. 1951 (A group of modern artists standing L-R: Sadeq Barirani, Meymanat Vaziri Moqaddam, Manouchehr Sheibani, Mehry Rakhsha and Behjat Sadr)," in Manouchehr Sheibani, "Šā'er dar čārdīvāri-ye 'ozlatgāhaš [Poet in the Room of His Solitude]," *Zendarud*, no. 32 (2004): 22

One significant role of the Faculty of Fine Arts was with respect to the artistic developments this center catalyzed. As the first higher educational school of art in Iran, the faculty was the first state academy that officially offered European modern styles to students. Nevertheless, its role in the promotion of modern art or its influence on first modern artists needs to be discussed. Although the educational method of the faculty, in projects and syllabi, was adopted from *École des Beaux-arts*, it was still very conservative. This was due to Merat's decision for appointing André Godard (1881–1965)<sup>45</sup>—French architect and archeologist—and Mohsen Forouqi (1907–1983)—the Iranian architect and graduate of *École des Beaux-arts*—in charge of the academic cadre and curriculum. [Fig. 3-11] Despite their acquaintance with the French academic system, Godard and his colleagues notably Forouqi and Maxime Siroux (1907–1975)—a French architect—were much more concerned with the historical and traditional heritage of Iran and were profoundly attached to traditional Persian forms of architecture,<sup>46</sup> or to quote Mina Marefat: “What distinguished them from the generations that followed them was their awareness of the Persian building heritage.”<sup>47</sup> In fact, with the merger of Kamal al-Molk School and College of Architecture, the faculty began its work, located at Marvi School,<sup>48</sup> with a conservative cadre of modern-traditional teachers who were selected from students of Kamal al-Molk and foreign or Iranian architects with three courses of architecture, painting and sculpture. A review of the appointed teachers highlights the conservative modern-traditional air of the faculty.<sup>49</sup> Beside foreign teachers who emphasized preservation of Iranian heritage, the rest were profoundly faithful to Kamal al-Molk's legacy and did not deviate from the academic Realism in their teachings. This condition was exacerbated based on the selection of the courses by faculty's presidents. According to their educational backgrounds, they also shared a common interest for an academic system that was based on the French model and yet preserved Iranian traditions.<sup>50</sup> This academic fundamentalism in education proved restrictive to the artists; works by those students who had

45 André Godard was employed in 1929 by the Iranian government, similar to his German rival Ernst Herzfeld (1879–1948), as an honorary member of the SNH.

46 Morteza Momayez. “Faculties of the University of Tehran ii. Faculty of Fine Arts,” in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, IX/2 (London, U.K: Encyclopedia Iranica Foundation), 142.

47 Marefat, “The Protagonists,” 104.

48 Marvi School and Mosque was in fact an old seminary on Marvi Avenue of Tehran that was founded under the reign of Fath Ali Shah Qajar in 1816. The Marvi Seminary was transformed into Marvi High School at the reign of Reza Shah.

49 Among the main tutors of the faculty, for the workshops of painting were Gholamreza Sheikh, Hossein Taherzadeh Behzad, Gholamreza Ebadi, Ali Mohammad Heydarian and Celestine Amini (Madame Amini). Rafi Halati and Abu al-Hasan Khan Sadiqi taught the workshops of sculpture and in architecture classes were André Godard, Mohsen Forouqi, Mohsen Moqadam, Roland Dubrulle, Maxime Siroux, Khachik Pablouyan and Alexander Moser.

50 Abu al-Hasan Khan Sadiqi, Hossein Taherzadeh Behzad, André Godard and Mohsen Forouqi respectively occupied this position and had graduated mainly from Kamal al-Molk School or *École des Beaux-arts* in Paris.

shown new inclinations were rejected or these artists deliberately dropped out of the faculty to study at foreign academies.<sup>51</sup>

There were exceptions, however, such as Madame Celestine Amini (birth unknown), a French painter that familiarized students with the theoretical issues of painting or a pseudo-Impressionism, which was disparagingly referred to as *Qalam-e āzād* ["Free Brush"]<sup>52</sup> by opponents of modern artists at the time. According to the first graduates of the faculty,<sup>53</sup> the course was similar to other teachings by French teachers of the faculty and consisted largely of Madame Amini commenting on students' mistakes with respect to visual elements such as form, colour, composition, harmony, etc.: "They [French teachers] had left the task of becoming modern to ourselves to search it in books and by team works outdoors or at ateliers."<sup>54</sup> For the students, the translation of French lessons from *École des Beaux-arts* into Farsi was difficult and they were expected to complete their works largely without the assistance of the teachers: "As we painted, we realized about what our French teachers expected us to do only by comparing our paintings with other students [in the class]. There was no one to teach us something. Students could not easily understand their [French teachers'] views."<sup>55</sup> According to Javad Hamidi (1918–2002), one of the first graduates of the faculty (1945), the courses imitated the teaching methods of *École des Beaux-arts*, but the faculty lacked the essential textbooks and the teachers lacked the proper training for the new education system: "There [in Paris], I noticed that things were very different from what we had learned [at the faculty]. They had left Naturalism to photographers and painting was advancing in another direction."<sup>56</sup>

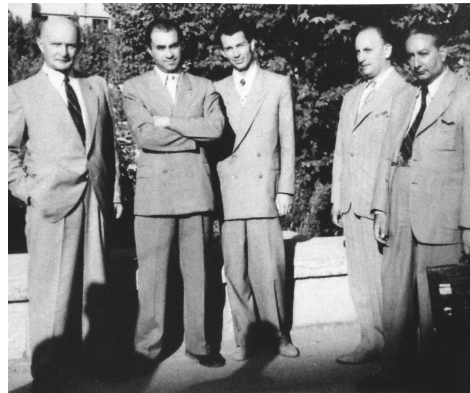


Fig. 3-11 "André Godard, Mohsen Forouqi and other teachers at Faculty of Fine Arts in 1941 (L-R: André Godard, Mohsen Forouqi, Asadollah Mirzaie, Eugene Aftandilian and Mohsen Moqaddam," Courtesy of Newsha Djavadipour

51 Parviz Kalantari, "Pardāktan be šiva-i šā'erāna dar naqāši [Proceeding to a Lyrical Method in Painting]," *Tandis*, no. 175 (2010): 50.

52 "Free Brush" was applied to Impressionism due to the technical and stylistic contrast that Impressionism had with limitations of the Classicism. [Mojabi, *Sarāmadān-e honar-e now [Masters of Modern Art]*, 94.]

53 Javad Hamidi, Hossein Kazemi and Jalil Ziapour were the first artists who graduated in painting in 1945. [Momayez, "Dāneškada-ye honar-hā-ye zibā [Faculty of Fine Arts]," 63.]

54 «مدرن شدن را به اختیار خود ما نهاده بودند تا از لابه لای کتاب های موجود در کتابخانه یا اتودهای فردی و جمعی خود در آتلیه یا طبیعت» [Mojabi, *Sarāmadān-e honar-e now [Masters of Modern Art]*, 104.]

55 «ما وقتی کار می کردیم از طریق کار خود یا دیگران می فهمیدیم این ها چه می خواهند بگویند. کسی نبود مثل حالا به آدم چیزی یاد بدهد.» [Mojabi, *Piṣgāmān-e naqāši-ye mo'āṣer-e irān [Pioneers of Contemporary Persian Painting]*, 158.]

56 «آن جا دیدم اوضاع با آن چه ما یادگرفته ایم خیلی تفاوت دارد، طبیعت سازی را گذاشته اند برای عکاسان و نقاشی راه دیگری را طی می کند.» [Ibid., 64–65.]

Nevertheless, foundation of the Faculty of Fine Arts created notable changes in Iranian art when compared to the academic Naturalism and Realism promoted by the previous schools. Programs like sketching and decorative arts, which were adopted from *École des Beaux-arts*, allowed students to use their imagination with greater freedom than the classical methods of lyrical or imitative approach to their subjects.<sup>57</sup> Due to its Naturalistic manifestations, the Impressionist style in painting was soon adopted both by the artists and their audience and this was notwithstanding artists' attempt to remain more detached from their subjects. A more thorough examination of the subject and an emphasis on the speed of its transfer became the important criteria for evaluating paintings.<sup>58</sup> [Fig. 3-12] Although this unsystematic education of modern art resulted in the promotion of a pseudo-Impressionism, it provided the students a new artistic direction that was later pursued by them privately and outside of the faculty.

### 3.1.2 Modern Artists and Formation of an Anti-Institutional Mood

But how did the anti-academic inclinations grow gradually from within the academy and among the young modern artists? Due to the discussed conservative policies, the education system of the Faculty of Fine Arts created a status of indecision and doubtfulness<sup>59</sup> for the artists regarding selection between three main art trends to follow: first, the established traditional arts that emphasized on the national heritage; second, the academic Realism as the legacy of Kamal al-Molk School; and third, the European modern art which was practiced at the faculty in an unsystematic manner. From the first two decades of the second Pahlavi period and continuing until at least the late 1950s (that was concurrent with the decisive turning of the official support to the modern artists), the artistic space transformed into a battlefield for artists from these three trends and led to an anti-institutional mood in those who sought to experiment with European modern art.<sup>60</sup> Until the late 1950s, both the state and the academic system pursued the same cultural policies of the first Pahlavi in emphasizing the traditional arts; inside the faculty, students from Kamal al-Molk School were treated preferentially and occupied the majority

57 Hoda Amini, "Dora-ye eskis ziāpur rā moteḥavel kard: hoda amini dar goftogu bā maḥmud javādipur [The Sketch Program Changed Ziapour: An Interview by Hoda Amini with Mahmoud Javadipour]," *Tehrān-e emruz*, November 17, 2009. (Sketch program trained students to create their own works quickly and without imitation and copy. They were supposed to apply only their own imagination. [Jalal Sattari, "Didār bā ḥossein kāzemi [Visiting Hossein Kazemi]," *Kelk*, no. 61–64 (1995): 111.)

58 Hasan Morizinejad, "Ṭarāḥi dar irān: daha-ye 1320 [Drawing in Iran: In the 1940s]," *Tandis*, no. 26 (2004): 10.

59 Keshmirshakan, *Honar-e mo'āṣer-e irān [Iranian Contemporary Art]*, 56.

60 Added to traditional artists who defended the Iranian miniature and the students of Kamal al-Molk School as advocates of the academic Realism, modern artists had to fight against a third obstacle and it was the conventional taste of the masses being shaped in favor of these two art trends.

of the teaching positions. It was in such a competitive space that the avant-garde artists, as a minority, had to establish both the concept of Iranian modern art and themselves as modern artists. The authorization of the self worked, thus, in combination with an anti-institutional mood; the term “institution” refers to the academy and the official spaces that were supported by the state. This study will describe two main causes that provoked confrontations between the young modern artists and the official institutions and art. For the first cause, it will discuss the crucial role of the education system practiced at the faculty and the cultural policies of the second Pahlavi period for patronizing the institutionalization of an official art. For the second cause, it will argue how society’s kind of politicization since the 1940s and the social networkings of modern artists with the literary and intellectual circles could inspire them in promoting modern art that contrasted to the official art.

In general, the cultural policies of the second Pahlavi period were similar to the first and continued to emphasize archaism and authenticity of the identity. Nevertheless, the idiosyncrasies of the second Pahlavi era resulted in equal concern for both tradition and modernism as it sought to achieve two important goals: first, to resolve the identity crisis which had emerged upon the massive, sometimes reckless, cultural modernization under the first Pahlavi regime and, second, the necessity of building a stronger base of legitimacy for Mohammad Reza Shah after the abdication of his father. Although there was a general continuance in the policy of modern academization in the arts, the modern nationalization of the second Pahlavi was a specific type of nationalism known as “Anti-Colonialist Nationalism.”<sup>61</sup> After Reza Shah’s abdi-



Fig. 3-12 Mahmoud Javadi-pour, *Untitled*, 1948. Oil on wood, 55 × 40 cm, Newsha Djavadi-pour’s Collection

cation and an abrupt reduction of suppressions on politico-intellectual trends—of which the most conspicuous result was the premiership of Iran’s National Front leader Mohammad Mosaddeq (1882–1967) and the nationalization of oil in Iran—the cultural reforms assisted institutions and other social structures to visualize what

61 Zariri, “Modernism wa tajadodgerāi dar aṣr-e pahlavi [Modernism in the Pahlavi Era],” 28.



was known as the “magic of nationalism.”<sup>62</sup> The anti-colonialist nationalism that was the focus of cultural policies from the 1940s to 1970s was, nonetheless, altered due to politico-historical events of this period and thus caused divergences or even convergences between the officially promoted art and the modern artists. In fact, the significance of these modifications is to the extent that, according to some critics, the study of modern art in Iran should pay special attention to these changes.

Beginning in the 1940s, with the transfer of power and simultaneous with the establishment of the Faculty of Fine Arts, there was considerable removal of restrictions on political and intellectual activities. Outside the faculty, there was an open political space in which artistic tastes were being shaped more naturally. Two dominant politico-intellectual parties that provided inspirations for artists at this time were Tudeh, the Iranian Communist Party, and the Nationalist Party. It should be noted that obtaining certain political alignments was not essential for the majority of artists in this decade, since both parties had no hostility to the arts and even competed against each other with respect to new developments; their clubs would hold exhibitions and talks by artists, as well as publish of the art news in their magazines. The reason of this was twofold: It was not until the publication of the *Zhdanov Soviet Cultural Doctrine* (1946)<sup>63</sup> that explicit political orientations in the arts became mandatory; after the doctrine, however, one had to either side with the committed art or art for art’s sake: “[...] before 1948 that *Zhdanov Doctrine* came into force among Iranian communists, it was largely only the personal tastes of Tudeh that influenced artists in their works.”<sup>64</sup> The predominant currents of the Nationalist Party at this time were also primarily concerned with modernization, secularism and Western civilization and, thus, they had no objection to new manifestations in arts.<sup>65</sup> In regards to the regime’s cultural policies, there was no impact in terms of patronage of the new movements or in coverage of their news. In other words,

62 Marashi, *Nationalizing Iran*, 4.

63 “Zhdanovschina” meaning “the Zhdanov Thing” or “the Zhdanov Period,” was a label given to the ideological offensive of 1946 to 1948, when Andrei Zhdanov [the leader and cultural ideologist of Soviet Communist Party (1896–1948)] engaged in a public attack on those in the arts whose work had supposedly shown too little Communist spirit. [Kees Boterbloem, *The Life and Times of Andrei Zhdanov, 1896–1948* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2004), xix.] During the Zhdanovschina the crudest expression was exerted by the Soviet regime against individual works and artists, excoriating the least suspicion of veracity, artistic independence (“Formalism”) and apoliticism (“ideological emptiness”). Instead artists were demanded to create militant, ideologically pure and edifying art. [Josephine Woll, “The Politics of Culture, 1945–2000,” in *The Cambridge History of Russia*, ed. Ronald Grigor Suny (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), vol. III, 606.]

64 Shahrnazdar, Mohsen (anthropologist), in discussion with the author, January 18, 2017.

65 With the failure of the Constitutional Revolution, nationalism was mainly adapted into two forms: first, a secular nationalism known as archaic or monarchist nationalism receptive to Western thought, archaism and monarchy with opposition to religion. Second, a liberal nationalism that except for the years of nationalization of oil industry in Iran had fewer chances to enjoy political ascendancy. [Zia Mesbah, “Melligerāi dar tāriḡ-e siāsi-ye mo’āṣer: negāhi digar be tāriḡča-ye jebha-ye melli [Nationalism in Contemporary Political History: Another Review of the History of National Party],” *Hāfez*, no. 53 (2008): 56.]

although the cultural policies of this period pursued both cultural nationalization and education modernization, the government remained conservative about the new developments. In fact, this conservatism was rooted in government's fear of public opinion and the usefulness of not provoking people. Therefore, not only did the state not patronize modern artists at the faculty and showed a deliberate indifference about them, it also promoted works by students of Kamal al-Molk School and miniaturists who had a better local and international market.<sup>66</sup> It should be remembered that foundation of the Faculty of Fine Arts by the state was in principle a part of the agenda for educational modernization and was aimed at responding to the fanatic Naturalism that was promoted by Kamal al-Molk School.<sup>67</sup> Nonetheless, the academic legacy of this school outweighed the unsystematic trainings in modern art at the faculty. The new art that came into view aroused both fear and indifference in the state due to its two main features: First, by virtue of its unfamiliar qualities, modern artists were considered rebels who could potentially threaten the national culture,<sup>68</sup> and second, since modern art did not imply any direct political message, it was ignored as a serious concern by the regime. According to Javad Mojabi (1939–, painter and writer), modern art in Iran was misunderstood by the state, and although from the very beginning artists defended a modern art that was adaptable with the traditions and the national identity of their own, their attempts were disregarded by the state for a long time.<sup>69</sup> The governmental aid that was mainly provided via random scholarships to artists for further trainings in Europe or their employment at state organizations should not be mistaken as the state's willingness to promote modern art. This point is discussed by some critics as a characteristic of the Iranian higher education system that lacked forward-looking planning and was based rather on a reactionary decision to fulfill concrete needs or acute problems: "This pragmatic mode of operation, which is a constituent element of the modernization process in Iran, commonly has to face a Western explanatory model that is not consistent with it."<sup>70</sup> Therefore, the programs of the faculty were mixtures of highly diverse approaches and traditions that were impossible to ascribe to one closed system alone and were not based on one single coherent model: "[These programs] did not follow a master plan [and were] rather a colourful puzzle of many simultaneous and sometimes contradictory actions by individuals completing this puzzle."<sup>71</sup>

66 Mojabi, *Pišgāmān-e naqāši-ye mo'āṣer-e irān* [*Pioneers of Contemporary Persian Painting*], 12.

67 *Ibid.*, 222.

68 *Ibid.*, 12.

69 *Ibid.*, 226.

70 Christl Catanzaro, "Policy or Puzzle? The Foundation of the University of Tehran between Ideal Conception and Pragmatic Realization," in *Culture and Cultural Politics under Reza Shah: The Pahlavi State, New Bourgeoisie and the Creation of a Modern Society in Iran*, ed. Bianca Devos and Christoph Werner (London: Routledge, 2014), 47.

71 *Ibid.*

It was according to the controlled atmosphere and inefficient educational programs of the faculty that artists gradually lost hopes in the academy and an anti-institutional mood took hold among them. Accordingly, many artists sought to either complement their trainings in Europe, set up their own private ateliers or established private artists' groups, associations and galleries after being exposed to one another's art. A review of the discussions and texts by artists at this time indicates the formation of a spirit of frustration and despair that led to displacement of the academic space with these private circles and the replacement of the state with other institutions that welcomed modern artists. In Europe, not only did these artists not identify themselves as modern artists, but they felt left behind from modern European developments. Society at large also played a role in disillusionment of the artists; not only did the state disregard them, but their works were also not understood by people and the newspapers were critical of their art.<sup>72</sup> As a result, the 1940s embodied a range of attempts by the modern artists who wished to rapidly overcome the lag between themselves and Western academies. Hamidi, who was dispatched to Paris to study at *École des Beaux-arts*<sup>73</sup> in order to teach painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Tehran (c. 1950), explained: "Because I was teaching at the faculty, I did my utmost to learn whatever was essential for this job [...]. I tried to transfer what I had experienced in France and, regarding this, my knowledge and method of teaching was different to the others. Younger students [...] became attracted and I worked to teach them the fundamentals of modern art."<sup>74</sup> The experience brought back into the academic space by the Europe-graduated artists was immediately appreciated by the students. Although imagination and manipulation of nature were elements of courses, an air of academism dominated the faculty and it was common to hear: "[...] at this place [faculty], you must imitate only me [the teacher] and nature [...]."<sup>75</sup> In a letter to Behjat Sadr (1924–2009), modern painter and the then head of Visual Arts Department of the faculty in 1969, Parviz Kalantari (1931–2016, a graduate in painting), wrote about the deficiencies of the education at the faculty.<sup>76</sup> He observed the nuances that led the young artists into opposition with the academic system; the same qualities that had led artists to prefer to deal in private circles. As Kalantari had complained, the curriculum that was adopted after *École des Beaux-arts* did not precisely correspond to the contemporary programs of the faculty and resulted in graduates lagging behind with modern art in Europe.

72 Mojabi, *Nawad sāl nowāwari [Ninety Years of Innovation]*, 96.

73 Javad Hamidi, Jalil Ziapour, Hossein Kazemi, Houshang Pezeshknia and Mohsen Vaziri Moqaddam were among the first Iranian modern artists who also studied at European art academies.

74 «من چون معلم دانشکده بودم سعی کردم هرچه برای این شغل لازم است بیاموزم. [...] سعی کردم آن چه را در فرانسه آموخته‌ام به شاگردانم بیاموزم و طبعاً دانسته‌ها و شیوه تعلیم من با دیگران متفاوت بود. شاگردان جوان دانشکده [...] به من گرویدند، من سعی کردم زیربنای هنر مدرن را به آنان بیاموزم.» [Mojabi, *Pišgāmān-e naqāšī-ye mo'āṣer-e irān [Pioneers of Contemporary Persian Painting]*, 65.]

75 «[...] این جا باید از من تبعیت کنی و از طبیعت [...]» [Ibid., 70.]

76 Morizinejad, "Ṭarāhi dar irān [Drawing in Iran]," 10.

Also, the practical courses outweighed the theoretical lessons; the teaching methods taught students proper painting techniques, but did not develop the critical and analytical perspectives necessary to implement them effectively. Nevertheless, one significant point about the early interactions between modern artists and the faculty was the formation of a distinctive understanding of art that differed from the conservative academism, with more concern for nationalization of the arts. Emphasis on the subjectivity of the artist and freedom of self-expression were among the most important qualities that modern art necessitated and that provided artists with a specialized competence in their field releasing them from obligations by the academy to a state of self-reliance.

Outside the academy and prior to formation of the first private art association (1948) and gallery (1949), the only refuges for the modern artists were mainly the cultural relations societies of foreign embassies, the most supportive ones during the 1940s being the Iranian-Soviet Cultural Relations Society (VOKS)<sup>77</sup> and the Institute of Iran-France Cultural Relations in Tehran. [Fig. 3-13] It was based on the initiative of these two societies that Iranian modern artists could exhibit their works for the first time publicly and side-by-side with the opposing groups of academic painters and miniaturists.<sup>78</sup> *Namāyeshgāh-e honar-hā-ye zibā-ye irān [Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts]* (1946)<sup>79</sup> received considerable participation from the modern artists and took place on initiative of the Fine Arts Commission of VOKS in rooms at the *Kāk-e šāhpur qolāmrezā pahlavi* [Shahpour Qolamreza Pahlavi Palace] and was inaugurated in the presence of many statesmen, diplomats and artists. [Fig. 3-14] This exhibition not only opened up the scene for the modern artists, but it also became a topic for artists to criticize government in its negligence toward artistic developments: “This time, our neighbour the USSR has uncovered the Iranian artists’ precious art by its patronizing hands and, even, it has proved us that the Iranians possess such rich and skilled taste but this is despite the fact that with so many artworks and artists around us, we have not seen and do not notice them ourselves [...]”<sup>80</sup> Although in their Articles of Constitution, the societies explicitly included all types of collaboration between Iran and their countries in fields of science, culture and arts,<sup>81</sup> they were in reality the propagandizing arms of foreign cultural policies

77 Russian abbreviation for Vsesoiuznoe Obshchestvo Kul'turnoi Sviazi s Zagranitsei (Soviet All-Union Society for Cultural Ties Abroad).

78 Four important exhibitions were held by VOKS between 1946 and 1953 and two by Institute of Iran-France in 1945 and 1949.

79 The exhibition was dated from February 5 to April 1, 1946.

80 «این بار همسایه هنرمند ما شوروی با دست هنرپرور خود پرده از روی هنرها و آثار جاویدان هنرمندان ایرانی برداشت و به همه و حتی به ما که این همه هنر و هنرمند در پیرامون خود داشته ولی ندیده و نمی بینیم نشان داد که ایرانی دارای چه ذوق سرشار و خدادادی است [...]» [“*Namāyeshgāh-e honar-hā-ye zibā-ye irān [Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts]*,” *Website of Ali Asqar Petgar*, accessed April 28, 2018, [http://www.a-petgar.com/fa\\_IR/Pages/Page/مکتوبات/](http://www.a-petgar.com/fa_IR/Pages/Page/مکتوبات/)]

81 Amin Taryan, “*Tarvij-e taraqiāt-e šorawi: baresi-ye fa‘āliat-hā-ye anjomān-e ravābeṭ-e farhangī-ye irān bā etehād-e jamāhir-e šorawi (1321–1332)* [Promotion of the Soviet Developments: A Study of Activities by Iranian-Soviet Cultural Relations Society],” *Šarq*, March 2, 2013.

of their countries. In fact, beginning of the second Pahlavi era was simultaneous with the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran. The geopolitical significance of Iran and the British concern about Iran's oil in the region attracted US interests too and, relying on its peaceful relations with Iran during the first Pahlavi period, the presence of US was more welcome than the other two political competitors. Yet, regarding less diplomatic precedents compared to Britain and the USSR, the US diplomacy was much more centered around intensification of cultural relations with Iran—a policy which continued until the CIA-Britain coup d'état against premiership of Mohammad Mosaddeq on August 19, 1953 and restricted the political penetration of the Left Party in the Iranian state.

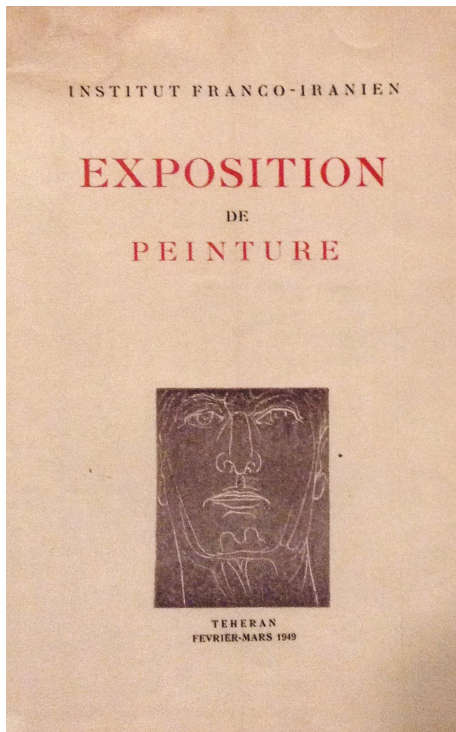


Fig. 3-13 "Catalogue of the group exhibition of Iranian artists *Exposition De Peinture* by Iran-France Cultural Relations Society in 1949," Courtesy of Newsha Djavadipour



Fig. 3-14 "Entrance of the building for *Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts*," in Reza Jorjani, "Namāyeshgāh-e honar-hā-ye zibā-ye irān [Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts]," *Sokan*, no. 1 (1946): 24. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

During these years, Iran had become the battlefield of Britain, the USSR and America fed by both the Iranian state's internal fragility and US doubts about the intentions of its allies.<sup>82</sup> The US policy in approaching Iran, in addition to a reaction to the threat of growing Communism in the Middle East, signaled American companies' burgeoning interest in the exploitation of Iran's oil reserves—a condition affected by Britain coming to an oil crisis with Iran in 1944.<sup>83</sup> Even with the exit of the Anglo-Soviet forces and US army from Iran after World War II (1946), these countries further continued their colonial policies via the strengthening of their cultural ties with Iran. This could also be considered as the Cold War effect in the form of cultural role of Western Imperialism for repressing Communism and leftist intellectuals.<sup>84</sup> In fact, with the downfall of the first Pahlavi regime and release of suppressions on intellectual oppositions, the only solution for colonial West was to attract the revolutionaries under a progressive pretense through tolerance, penetration and destruction, all which was to be achieved via their cultural societies in the East.<sup>85</sup> Accordingly, *Jahān-e now*, an apolitical and conservative magazine (1946) of this decade, commented on the role of foreign cultural societies as: "[...] today apparently foreign armies have left the country [...]. Today the time for military occupation is over, and instead, we speak of cultural occupation which is more harmful."<sup>86</sup> [Fig. 3-15] These societies were welcomed in order to build a progressive and democratic appearance and to strengthen their footholds among students and young intellectuals. The Tudeh Party followed this policy until the late 1940s when enactment of the *Zhdanov Cultural Doctrine* defending Social Realism became binding for all leftist parties in the world. Until this date, VOKS and the Left Party in general were not considered serious dangers to politicize the artistic and cultural space and were regarded with a controlled tolerance by the Iranian state. Meanwhile, the USSR had Ahmad Qavam, the Iranian prime minister (1946–1947), on its side negotiating their interests. In a better position than the USSR, the Iran-America Society (1942)<sup>87</sup> enjoyed supports from the Iranian state. This was due to the common antipathy of both countries against the Soviet occupation of Iran in the north. On the one hand, according to the US, this occupation put at stake not merely Iran, but possibly Greece, Turkey and the entire network of its interests in the Middle East.<sup>88</sup>

82 Louise L'Estrange Fawcett, *Iran and the Cold War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 112.

83 Ibid., 119.

84 Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim*, 95.

85 Shams Langeroudi, *Tāriḵ-e taḥlīli-ye še'r-e now [Analytical History of Modern Poetry]*, vol.1 (Tehran: Markaz, 1991), 240.

86 «امروز بنا بر ظاهر ایران از ارتش بیگانه تخلیه شده [...] اکنون که دوره نظامی سرآمده، از اشغال فرهنگی که اثری زبان‌آورتر از [...]» «[Military Occupation-Cultural Occupation]» [Ešgāl-e nezāmi-ešgāl-e farhangi [Military Occupation-Cultural Occupation], *Jahān-e now*, no. 3 (1946): 75.]

87 Iran-America Society was first founded in Tehran in 1927 but it remained inactive until 1942—the 1940s and 1950s comprised of high activity by the society.

88 L'Estrange Fawcett, *Iran and the Cold War*, 125.

# جهان نو

مجله  
اجتماعی و علمی

سال اول

مرداد ماه ۱۳۲۵

شماره سوم

## اشغال نظامی - اشغال فرهنگی

چیزی گذشته بود که نمایندگان انجمن فرهنگی بریتانیا از راه جنوب وارد تهران شده، انجمن فرهنگی بریتانیا را در تهران دایر کردند. این اداره که همه ای از انجمن فرهنگی بریتانیا و یکی از مؤسسات بزرگ نیررسی کشور نامبرده است برای شناساندن فرهنگ و تمدن انگلیسی، نخست کلاس هایی برای تدریس زبان انگلیسی باز کرد. طولی نکشید که يك کلاس، دو کلاس، دو کلاس به سه کلاس و بیشتر کشید. بعد از آن به رادیو دست انداختند و برای جاب دوست و نفوذ در جامعه ایرانی در شهرهایی مانند اصفهان و شیراز که سر راهشان تا تهران بود شعباتی دایر نموده و اگر دستشان باز بود در «مآکو» و «علمدار» هم شعبات خود را تأسیس میکردند.

روسهای شوروی که در امور ایران گاه انکار را در دست دارند و گاه از روش حریف بدترین پیروی میکنند، چون دارای چنین مؤسسه ای نبوده که افلا شمع مرکزی آن بیست سال از عرش گذشته باشد، عکس العملی از خود نشان داده و انجمنی بوجود آوردند که نام آنرا «انجمن روابط فرهنگی ایران و شوروی» گذاشتند و متناقب آن خبراتی در تمام شهرهای شمالی حتی در آن شهرها که از معروفترین روزنامه های پایتخت ۵۰ نسخه بیشتر فروش نیرو در دست دارند و همانطور که در دوره جنگ از حدود خود خارج شده در مناطق انگلیسی آمدوشد میکنند، بنواهی جنوب یعنی اصفهان و شیراز راه یافته يك نمونه کوچک از انجمن فرهنگی ایران و شوروی در آنجاها دایر کردند.

طرز کار و مداخلات این انجمنها در امور فرهنگی ایران که از وظائف دولت ایران است بی تماشای نیست. مثلا در شمال از عناصر طرفدار با مؤمن به انکار سوسیالیستی و در جنوب و تهران از افرادی که دوستان باسیاست انگلیسی مجرتر است برای برگردن سندلیهای هیئت مدیره استفاده میشود. انجمن فرهنگی ایران و شوروی بعلمت آنکه تاجنوب هم رخنه کرده ناچار از اشخاصی یاری مطالبی که



( این انجمن ها موقتا تعطیل است )

ارتش دوهمسایه جنوبی و شمالی و بس از آن تشون آمریکا که بایران وارد شدند از ایران رفته اند. امروز بنابر ظاهر، ایران از ارتش بیگانه تخلیه شده و اگر هنوز دولت مرکزی نتوانسته است در یکی از بهترین و حاصلخیز ترین استان های خود که در راه حفظ استقلال و آزادی ایران جانفشانیها کرده کاملا رفته امور را بدست گیرد مریوط بسائلی است که هر چند با این گفتار رابطه کامل دارد ولی چون خود مبحث جداگانه است آنرا کنار میکذاریم، اکنون که دور اشغال نظامی سر آمده از اشغال فرهنگی که انری زبان آورتر از اشغال نظامی دارد سخن میگوئیم. نیروهای بیگانه اگر بنا بظاهر از کشور ما رفته و دوره اشغال نظامی سر آمده است، ایران دستخوش يك سیاست و جریان کاملا تازه شده که اگر برای حفظ ظاهر اسم آن اشغال نظامی نباشد ولی جانشین چنین اشغالی میتواند باشد.

هنگامیکه تشون های بیگانه در خاک ما بودند، دولت و افراد حق نداشتند از آنها پرسشی بکنند. بهر جا که میرفتند و هر قسمی که برمیداشتند آزاد بودند و جزه اسرار مگوی نظامی بود. البته نیرو و افراد شوروی در کمال آزادی به مناطق اشغال شده آمریکایی ها و انگلیسی ها میآمدند و میرفتند، اما این دو باسانی از مناطقی که در دست روسها بود نمیتوانستند بگذرند، حتی خبرنگارهای آمریکایی و انگلیسی برای رسیدن بنقاط شمالی محتاج تصویل اجازه بودند.

**اعروز ایران در حال اشغال نظامی نیست ولی در شرف اشغال فرهنگی است و اگر خوب دقت کنیم ببینیم که این اشغال کم و بیش از روی همان اشغال نظامی عمل میشود و سیاست هر دو یکی است.**

برای روشن شدن مطلب اندکی بتاریخچه این سیاست و طرز عملی که پیش گرفته اند میردازیم.

از جنگ جهانیگیر که دنیا را بصیبت و بدبختی مبتلا کرد

Fig. 3-15 "The writing published by *Jahān-e now* in 1946 against cultural societies of foreign countries in Iran," in "Ešgāl-e nezāmī-ešgāl-e farhangī [Military Occupation-Cultural Occupation], *Jahān-e now*, no. 3 (1946): 75. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran. [The writing concludes that cultural societies have to be closed and re-opened under Iran's regulations. The illustration in the text apparently shows one official authority crossing out the cultural relations societies.]

On the other hand, the Shah required US financial or political supports for building up an army to tackle Qavam lobbying with the USSR and raising the standard of living to resist Soviet propaganda.<sup>89</sup> As a result, the beginning of Iran's Economic Plans<sup>90</sup> in 1946 and the increase in oil revenues with two Emergency Plans in the mid-1950s and 1960s (with American aid) were signals of this collaboration between the Iranian state and the US. Still another important motivation by US, argued by Lopez, was to push other societies toward a liberal, democratic and capitalist modernity. This modernity, which was shaped based on promotion of a stable, prosperous middle class, inoculated against Communism and had to be exported to the rest of the Western Hemisphere as the "American way of life." The cultural imperialism as a plan was to alter submissive, socially constrained subjects into fully self-determined people capable of acting according to their own self-interest, as they should in a democratic environment.<sup>91</sup> From a report (1964) on US aims of cultural diplomacy in Iran, one reads the mentality-oriented objectives that had to be achieved by the American embassy in Iran: "[...] achieving this aim to show that Iran with US assistance is taking fast progressive steps toward modernization."<sup>92</sup>

This policy by US started by "constructing the Shah"<sup>93</sup> as a pro-Western person with progressive ideas and, with the Cold War as a pretext, it waged war not only against the Iranian Left Party, but also the liberal nationalists. This policy by the US, which concealed everything below peaceful plans, was even criticized by Americans themselves. *The Nation* magazine wrote in June 12, 1961: "America must concern the people but not the the governments; it must aid the masses, it should effort to donate them freedom and hope but not to exploit the oil reserves."<sup>94</sup> But the tolerance of the Iranian state toward the cultural relations societies of the foreign countries, particularly before the coup d'état of 1953, was fed by other conditions too. One condition was that the Iranian state saw these societies as a means

89 This need, even much earlier than CIA-Britain coup d'état against premiership of Mosaddeq in 1953, had persuaded Shah to seek US supports for a coup d'état in 1946 to overthrow Qavam and set up a new government free of Soviet influence. [Ibid., 135 & 137.]

90 The Economic Plans were a series of measures by the state in various fields of economy, education, human resources, health, agriculture, etc., as national development programs. The program was designed by Committee of Plans in 1946 and included five periods until 1978. [Arianmehr, Omid Ali. "Barnāma-hā-ye tose'a-ye irān tā qabl az enqelāb-e sāl-e 1357 [Economic Plans of Iran until Revolution of 1979]," *Bešārnews*, (August 5, 2014). Accessed February 20, 2018, <http://www.besharnews.ir/Pages/News-1357> - برنامه های توسعه ایران قبل انقلاب سال 1357. 3419.aspx.]

91 Lopez, "Conscripts of Democracy," 162 & 169.

92 [...] برای رسیدن به این هدف که نشان دهد ایران با کمک آمریکا در حال برداشتن گام‌های سریعی به سوی نوسازی است.» [Hesamodin Ashena, "Diplomāsi-ye farhangi-ye āmrīkā dar irān: anjoman-e irān wa āmrīkā [The Cultural Diplomacy of America in Iran: The Iran and America Society]," *Moṭāle'āt-e irāni*, no. 9 (2005): 14.]

93 John Foran, "Discursive Subversions: Time Magazine, the CIA Overthrow of Musaddiq, and the Installation of the Shah," in *Cold War Constructions: The Political Culture of United States Imperialism, 1945-1966*, ed. Christian G. Appy (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 168.]

94 «آمریکا باید به مردم توجه کند نه به حاکمان؛ باید به توده‌های وسیع کمک کند، باید در جهات بخشیدن آزادی و امید به آن‌ها گام بردارد نه [...]» [Ashena, "Diplomāsi-ye farhangi-ye āmrīkā [The Cultural Diplomacy of America]," 12.]



of attaining its modernization plans. James Pickett explains that in the encounter between Iranian technocrats such as Saeed Nafisi—member of the Academy of Iran at the time—with the USSR social modernity, Iranians saw an overlap between the elements of socialist modernity with their project of cultural reform: “[Nafisi] personifies the convergence of a Soviet wartime initiative promoting a new vision of modernity and an Iranian intellectual class eagerly in search of a path toward modernization that resonated with their specific cultural circumstances.”<sup>95</sup> Another condition was the government’s attention to the discussion by the foreign embassies that it would be wise to allow public discontent through a visible outlet, or the calculation that free discussion would also encourage dissidents to challenge each other and indirectly strengthen the government.<sup>96</sup> Additionally, one should note the connection that the cultural societies held with their sympathizers inside the Iranian government being mutually beneficial for both sides. For instance, considering the role of Qavam, he sided with the policy of discourse and tolerance and facilitated the holding of *Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts* by VOKS at the palace. Also, the inaugural session of *Kānun-e nevisandegān-e irān* [Iranian Writers’ Association] on the initiative of VOKS and Tudeh Party in 1946 represented the political side behind these collaborations.<sup>97</sup> [Fig. 3-16] Tudeh Party had a deceitful role in supporting Qavam’s cabinet and he also favored this position beneath a democratic mask for showing himself as a patron of the arts and culture.<sup>98</sup> It was precisely this aim of building up connections with the authorities that *Jahān-e now* wrote: “If the task of these cultural societies is to display to us the valuable culture of their countries, so why they compete with each other in seizing our ministers, deceiving influential figures, promising young and old politicians and endorsing lawyers [...]”<sup>99</sup> Upon attempts by modern artists and their gradual public appearance at their private centers and big events like *Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts*,<sup>100</sup> a gentle

95 James Pickett, “Soviet Civilization through a Persian Lens: Iranian Intellectuals, Cultural Diplomacy and Socialist Modernity 1941–1955,” *Iranian Studies* 48, no. 5 (2015): 806.

96 Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 306.

97 As a consequence of the same policy by Qavam, the inauguration of Iranian Writers’ Association for the first time was held on the initiative of VOKS and Tudeh Party in 1946. The inaugural session was held at presence of hundreds of writers, poets, Qavam and the Soviet ambassador. In spite of the blunt support of its lecturers of issues such as socialization of art and literature and commitment to the masses: “[...] this gathering neither bothered anyone nor caused complaints. It was the period of free discussion and every body hoped that this retrieved freedom leads to the flourish of literature.” [Morad Saqafi, “Nim qarn talāsh: moruri bar ‘amalkard-e kānun-e nevisandegān-e irān [Half a Century Attempt: A Review of Activities by the Iranian Writers’ Association],” *Goftogu*, no. 7 (1995): 9.]

98 Mirabedini, *Šad sāl [One Hundred Years]*, 207.

99 «اگر کار انجمن‌های فرهنگی همسایگان ما این است که فرهنگ ذی‌قیمت خود را به ما نشان بدهند پس چرا در ربودن وزراء، فریفتن اشخاص منتقد، در باغ سبزه نشان‌دادن به سیاستمداران نو و کهنه و امتیازدادن به وکلاء قدیم و جدید با هم مسابقه می‌دهند [...]» [“Ešqāl-e nezāmi [Military Occupation],” 76.]

100 *Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts* included 730 paintings by 125 artists collected from individual artists, royal collections, National Consultative Assembly and the National Bank. [Bozorg Alavi, “Namāyešgāh-e honar-hā-ye zibā [Exhibition of Fine Arts],” *Payām-e now*, no. 10 (1946): 2.]

vigilance and attraction was shaped by the state toward modern art. With regards to the discussed functionalities that the cultural relations societies had, such attraction originated from a competitive position of the Iranian government to these societies too. The state was vigilant about the historical process after World War II and the battles between capitalist and communist modernities to be exported to the rest of the world. The battles which had resulted in the creation of a new geopolitical order by the Soviet Union and US (as well as European colonial rule during the 1940s and 1950s) were to promote policies of these countries via the establishment of their institutions around the world.<sup>101</sup> What contributed to local government's vigilance to these developments was that they concealed such aims under what Lopez refers to as the formation of a "new mentality" by foreign powers. The underdeveloped world was transformed from passive subjects into active ones: "[This aim to] promote 'bottom-up social approaches' to create truly participatory and 'democratic spaces' where the people would be able to develop their own ideas and cultures, enhance their own capabilities, become aware of their own problems, evaluate their own conditions, and above all, understand what they could reach."<sup>102</sup> Despite the vigilance of the regime, its behavior with these institutions was a half-hearted and cagey one. The Iranian government did not restrict modern artists and these societies were unfettered for their collaboration with artists, yet it remained hypocritical about the societies and it was not uncommon for the state to interrogate artists and members of the societies. Fighting Cock Art Association, for instance, that as the first private art association worked on promotion of modern art styles, namely Cubism, was officially interrogated for the similarity of the term Cubism with Communism and its founders were asked: "Who has ordered you to import Cubism to Iran?"<sup>103</sup> Or the National Consultative Assembly after interpellation of Manouchehr Eqbal, the minister of culture (1948), banned the publication of *Fighting Cock* magazine as they considered it a pamphlet distributed by Tudeh Party at schools and universities.<sup>104</sup> [Fig. 3-17] Also, the Soviet Ministry of Culture was reporting this duplicitous behavior from the Iranian officials as they, on the one hand, interrogated VOKS members and, on the other hand, the delegations of prominent Iranian cultural figures continued to give positive talks about Soviet culture at this institute.<sup>105</sup>

101 Lopez, "Conscripts of Democracy," 162–67.

102 Ibid., 169.

103 "Goftogu-i bā ostād jalil ziāpur: nehzat-e qorus jangi [An Interview with Master Jalil Ziapour: Fighting Cock Movement]," *Rastākiz*, May 28, 1977.

104 "Majles-e šorā-ye melli: matn-e estizāh-e doktor eqbāl vazir-e farhang [National Consultative Assembly: Interpellation Text for Dr. Eqbal Minister of Culture]," *Etelā'at*, April 24, 1949.

105 Soviet Memo, Concerning the Trip of Iranian Cultural Figures to the USSR, 17 December 1955, RGANI, f. op. 28, d. 347, Department for Relations with Foreign Communist Parties, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive.

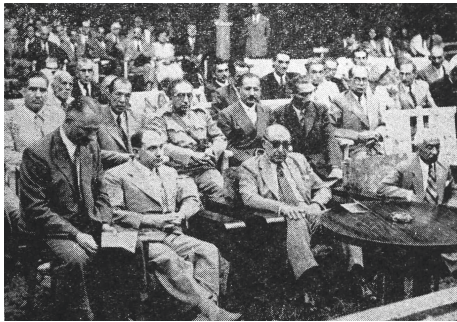


Fig. 3-16 "Inaugural session of *Kānun-e nevisandegān-e irān* [Iranian Writers' Association] on the initiative of VOKS and Tudeh Party in 1946 in the presence of the Iranian prime minister Ahmad Qavam, the ambassador of the Soviet Union and other Iranian ministers (Qavam seated in front, the second from right), in *Nokostin kongera-ye nevisandegān-e irān* [The First Congress of the Iranian Writers' Association] (Tehran: Rangin, 1347): 6. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

Fig. 3-17 "The text of interpellation of Manouchehr Eqbal, the minister of culture, published in two important newspapers in 1949," in (Left) "Dar majles-e šorā-ye melli diruz estizāh-e āqā-ye doktor baqāi dar atraf-e vezārat-e jang wa vezārat-e farhang dor mazid [In the National Consultative Assembly: The Interpellation of Dr. Baqai Was of the Ministry of War and Ministry of Culture Yesterday]," *Irān*, April 19, 1949 & (Right) "Majles-e šorā-ye melli: mat-n-e estizāh-e doktor eqbāl vazir-e farhang [National Consultative Assembly: Interpellation Text for Dr. Eqbal Minister of Culture]," *Etelā'āt*, April 24, 1949. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

The gentle attraction of the state to modern art was not a one-way attraction, though. In certain cases, artists also showed inclinations to the government's random supports appearing during the 1940s. These supports were mostly in forms of inviting artists to collaborate with state organizations and providing them scholarships for educational travels. It must be remembered that the attraction of the state to modern art, for the most part, was due to the general similarities that its

official cultural policies had with nationalistic concerns of the modern artists. But it would be imprecise to attribute these collaborations to artists' alignment with the official criteria.<sup>106</sup> The reasons for this remark are that, first of all, the government's position to modern art was not explicitly stated in the 1940s, due to the fact that the modern art was essentially an unknown concept for the state. Furthermore, one of the main complaints by the modern artists in this decade was the state's ignorance toward new artistic developments as it focused attention mainly on the national arts. The most plausible hypothesis about the regime's gentle attraction to modern artists, in addition to the intervening role of the foreign cultural relations societies, was a general nationalistic air that prevailed in the politico-intellectual developments in the world, with more attention being paid to national modernities and their indigenous and geographical peculiarities. At most of the cutting-edge European academies that local modern artists visited, there existed a metropolitan air in which artists were pushed toward to define themselves while maintaining a balance with their own traditions.<sup>107</sup> The significance of these visits, Dadi asserts, should be considered as formative experiences in making non-Western artists deeply conscious of the need to develop a local modernism that had to be achieved by focusing on the folk, rural and tribal culture of their region.<sup>108</sup> Although the decade of the 1940s dealt principally with the issue of acceptance of modernism by Iranian artists, it incorporated the mental and practical experimentation of modernism with the complexities of their local artistic identity. These experimentations, influenced by the prevailing political and intellectual contexts, took on the form of a quest for a "national school of art" in later decades. According to Hamid Keshmirshakan, it was in the 1950s–1970s that one observes the most thoughtful nationalist and nativist sentiments affected by the intellectual and political elite; nevertheless, the significance of the 1940s should be regarded in the formation of a *question of identity* among modern artists. The centrism of the national identity for these artists was based on a sensibility to reach a balanced stance toward a growing political preoccupation with identity that motivated young artists to refer to their roots for its understanding.<sup>109</sup> Of course, it should be borne in mind that from the beginning the modern artists formed two major "introverted" and minor "extroverted" types. The question of identity was mainly a concern for the introverted

**106** Some authors have defended this argument that the modern artists aligned themselves with the modernizational programs of the regime. [Mojabi, *Nawad sāl nowāwari [Ninety Years of Innovation]*, 160.] These authors presume that the official hegemony of the official nationalistic modernization in field of art and culture had influenced the modern artists in their concerns for modern art with local qualities. [Esmail-zadeh, "Saqqa-ḳāna dar taṣwir-e tāriḳ [Saqqa-khaneh in a Picture of History]," 283.]

**107** Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan*, 21.

**108** Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim*, 106.

**109** Hamid Keshmirshakan, "Modern and Contemporary Iranian Art: Developments and Challenges," in *Different Sames: New Perspectives in Contemporary Iranian Art*, ed. Hossein Amirsadeghi (London: Thames and Hudson, 2009), 15.

artists who considered their own cultural heritage. For the extroverted artists, who sought an international language for the arts, making a local perception of modern art could be restrictive.<sup>110</sup> [Fig. 3-18] The type of identity for this major introverted group was never comparable with the political national identity supported by the regime. This becomes understandable when one compares Marilyn Strathern and Stuart Hall's definitions of identity.



Fig. 3-18 (Left) Behjat Sadr, *Untitled*, 1967. Mixed-media (oil and aluminum on wood and louver), c. 130 × 85 cm, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (Right) Bahman Mohasses, *Untitled*, 1968. Oil on canvas, 70 × 100 cm, Administration of Cultural Heritage (Sa'adabad Palace and Museum)

Strathern discusses the concept of “identity” with the most successful condition of its study within modernist regimes that in pursuit of modernity negotiate values of tradition: “[...] a tension between what can be taken for traditional and what can be taken for modern.”<sup>111</sup> According to Hall, however, the concept of identity is increasingly fragmented and fractured in modern times; it is not issue of being *won* or *lost* or *sustained* or *abandoned*, but a strategic and positional one. As he illuminates, the concept of identity does *not* signal that stable core of the self, which remains always-already *the same*, but they are subject to radical historicization and

<sup>110</sup> Pakbaz, “Nim qarn naqāshi-ye now [Half a Century of Modern Painting],” 2.

<sup>111</sup> Marilyn Strathern, “Enabling Identity? Biology, Choice and the New Reproductive Technologies,” in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage, 1996), 42.

constantly in process of transformation.<sup>112</sup> This historicization is what Iranian modern artists applied to the identity of their modern works. In other words, although these historicized identities invoked an origin in a historical past, they were about questions of using the resources of history and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: “[Identity is] not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from,’ so much as what we might become, how we have been represented and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves.”<sup>113</sup> Therefore, according to Hall, identities are constructed within representations and with connection to individuals’ tradition: “They relate to the invention of tradition as much as tradition itself [...] not so-called return to roots but a coming-to-terms-with our ‘routes.’”<sup>114</sup> Based on Hall’s definition, the identity that Iranian modern artists sought in their works was not a mere selection of tradition for representing a modern identity, nor was it a result of a hurried modernization which disconnected them from their past traditions, as past political national identities. In contrast, traditional subjects and materials were not an inclination to *antiquity* or *reference to past conditions*, but to a much older history that included their folklore and indigenous productions.<sup>115</sup> Considering this, the government’s gentle turning toward modern artists could also be seen as a means to deal with an unruly situation that was gradually forming autonomy for the artists. The artists were employed at state institutions based on a “hire and co-opting”<sup>116</sup> policy. Modern artists were invited for collaboration due to their emphasis on the issue of identity and formation of a national school of art, and this was notwithstanding the fact that the identity represented in modern works was based on a survey of the indigenous history and was different to an objective ancient past that official authorities promoted.

Arguably the most important state institutes that employed modern artists in this decade were Faculty of Fine Arts and *Edāra-ye honar-hā-ye zibā* [Department of Fine Arts]—established in 1949 with the aim of preservation of national arts and encouragement of the artists for their revival and promotion. This Department was later merged with the National Arts Administration and *Honarestān-e ‘āli-ye musiqi* [Academy of Music] (1914), and worked toward its goal through institution of workshops for national and decorative arts, the foundation of *Honarestān-hā-ye honar-hā-ye zibā-ye dohtarān wa pesarān* [Academies of Fine Arts for Girls and Boys] (1953), *Dāneškada-ye honar-hā-ye tazini* [Faculty of Decorative Arts] (1961), Museums of Anthropology, etc.<sup>117</sup> Most of all, the collaboration of artists with the

112 Stuart Hall, “Introduction: Who Needs Identity?” in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay (London: Sage, 1996), 1–4.

113 *Ibid.*, 4.

114 *Ibid.*

115 Keshmirshakan, *Honar-e mo‘āser-e irān [Iranian Contemporary Art]*, 201.

116 Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim*, 95.

117 “Tāriḵča-ye panjāh sāl farhang wa honar-e irān [An Introduction to Fifty Years of Iranian Culture and Art],” *Kāva*, no. 37 (1970): 132–33.

state institutions in the 1940s had financial sources too. In other words, not until the late 1950s that government oriented an explicit cultural policy for the support and promotion of modern art, basically no real local and international market existed for what modern artists were producing in their ateliers, exhibiting in their galleries, and debating in their groups. As a result, another important reason behind these collaborations was “lack of an art economy and a healthy market”<sup>118</sup> in which modern works could be proposed as cultural products. However, such appeals for support from the state came along with relative superintendence of the official culture.<sup>119</sup> Obvious examples of such superintendence were workshops of traditional arts held at the Department of Fine Arts. [Fig. 3-19] Before the foundation of the Faculty of Decorative Arts, many artists who showed interests in decorative arts were employed at these workshops and among them were modern artists who later founded the neo-traditional art in the 1960s. As Sadeq Tabrizi (1938–), one of the later neo-traditional artists, explained his experience of these workshops,<sup>120</sup> artists were not allowed to be creative and this was because the Department was afraid of innovation and disliked creativity.<sup>121</sup> Considering this, the collaboration of modern artists with the government does not mean they lost their anti-institutional sentiment, nor does it prove an exact overlap of the official national modernization in arts with the national art discussed by these artists in their modern works. Rather they were types of *interactions* between the state and modern artists that were formed based on sharing this opinion that the idea of nationalism and conscience about the nation’s history and heritage had to be instructed among the people.<sup>122</sup> The significant point about these interactions is that for modern artists these educations took place outside of the framework of the state institutions; they had their own space for it and their dependence on the state institutions, in fact, allowed them to share their ideas more successfully or was a form of interaction between the state’s cultural policies and the artist’s cultural expression.<sup>123</sup>

118 Mojabi, *Nawad sāl nowāwari [Ninety Years of Innovation]*, 161.

119 Ibid.

120 Sadeq Tabrizi was among a group of neo-traditional painters and sculptors for whom, due to the religious-modern similarities of their works, Karim Emami coined the term “Saqqa-khaneh” in 1962.

121 Azadeh Salehi, “Honarmandān-e emruz tarsi az taqlid nadārand: azada salehi dar goftogu bā šādeq tabrizi [Artists of Today Have No Fear about Imitation: An Interview with Sadeq Tabrizi by Azadeh Salehi],” *Vaṭen-e emruz*, January 11, 2009.

122 Devos and Werner, introduction to *Culture and Cultural Politics*, 7.

123 Ibid., 10.



Fig. 3-19 “The art workshops held at the Department of Fine Arts,” in Kaveh Rastegar, “Tabalvori az deqat wa zerafat: didari az kargah-ha-ye honar-ha-ye dasti-ye farhang wa honar [A Manifestation of Precision and Beauty: A Visit to Handicrafts Workshops in the Department of Fine Arts],” *Rudaki*, no. 11 (1972): 15 & 23. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

## 3.2 Politicization of Society and Anti-Political Values of Arts

In addition to the state’s cultural policies as the first important context, the politico-intellectual space, in which young modern artists were adapted, influenced them to adopt the role of an intellectual in their works. The steps taken by modern artists in 1940s were, however more directly, affected by the artistic atmosphere of this decade than the political air. The leading reason for this was formation of an awareness in artists about the artistic developments in the world and their main concern to produce an impetus in the artistic stagnation of their time. A review of the writings in newspapers and magazines of 1940s—either by artists or their critics—about the exhibitions and debates that were held at first private spaces like Fighting Cock Association and Apadana Gallery, show the apolitical nature of their activities and how much these artists were concerned with technical issues of art and their transfer to the people. The negligence of the artists about politics was not acceptable to the political parties but, as discussed earlier, these parties avoided any direct action and their dislike was rather displayed in comments and side-taking with certain artists and artworks; an example would be the writings around *Exhibition of Iranian*



*Fine Arts in Payām-e now* (1944),<sup>124</sup> a magazine published by Tudeh Party. Many of these texts were written by the administrators of the exhibition,<sup>125</sup> who themselves represented cultural ideals of the party. For instance, Fatemeh Sayyah (1902–1947),<sup>126</sup> a VOKS member and of the editorial board of *Payām-e now*, whose emphases on criticism put her name among first Iranian writers and discussers of the critical approach to the arts, had a text about the exhibition in this magazine. [Fig. 3-20] Sayyah's text began with an appreciation of the new developments in method and technique of the young painters, but later on, in her comparison between Ali Asqar Petgar (1918–1992) and Hossein Kazemi (1924–1996), two painters of the exhibition with Impressionistic and Abstract inclinations, she sided with Petgar, whose paintings were less abstract and more naturalistic and commented that Petgar's works were closer to artistic maturity.<sup>127</sup> She went on to criticize works by students of the faculty: "The lack of diversity and presence of a kind of monotony in styles of the paintings—either in application of colour or form and expression of the subject—is surprising."<sup>128</sup> In a comparison between two portrait works by Kazemi and Petgar at this exhibition (or where Petgar depicts a landscape from a district in Tehran), one can observe the technical distinctions that caused Sayyah to attack Kazemi. It is doubted, or seems more an implicit effect, if she also had in view the different tastes of both painters for selection of their subjects. In contrast to city views, natural landscapes and still-lives that were common matters of more realistic or naturalistic paintings, the modern painters either presented the same sub-

124 *Payām-e now* was a monthly literary magazine related to VOKS that was published in 1944–1954 and in its second series it was published as *Payām-e nowin* in 1958–1979. Many Iranian cultural elites and intellectuals who were members or just sympathizers of Tudeh Party wrote in this magazine. Among them were literary figures and scholars such as Mohammad Taqi Bahar, Bozorg Alavi, Jalal Al-Ahmad, Sadeq Choubak, Sadeq Hedayat and others. Although the magazine had presented itself as an apolitical and cultural periodical, nevertheless it was deeply dependent on politics of the USSR and particularly *Payām-e nowin* supported discussions of nationality and commitment in Iranian arts. [*Encyclopedia of the World of Islam Online*, s.v. "Payām-e now/Payām-e nowin," accessed November 17, 2017, <http://rchi.ac.ir/article/Details/13272>.]

125 Maryam Firouz and Hamid Sayyah, two significant members of the party, were the president and vice-president of the exhibition, and the jury was a combination of Maryam Firouz, Makarov a Russian painter, Kamal al-Molk's students (Esmail Ashtiani, Hasan Ali Vaziri and Ali Karimi), Hossein Behzad a miniature painter and Mohsen Forouqi, Mohsen Moqadam and Abu al-Hasan Khan Sadiqi who decided for the architectural works of the exhibition. [Alavi, "Namāyešgāh-e honar-hā-ye zibā [Exhibition of Fine Arts]," 1.]

126 Fatemeh Rezazadeh Mahallati, known as Fatemeh Sayyah after her marriage to Hamid Sayyah an Iranian ambassador in the Soviet Union, had a PhD in Literature from the University of Moscow and her activities in Iran were mainly comprised of contributions in women's rights and, as a member, she performed cultural roles with VOKS and *Payām-e now*. She founded Iran's Women Party in 1943 and presented a significant talk on issue of criticism at the first *Congress of Iranian Writers' Association* (1946). [Omid Ghanbari, *Zendeginama wa kadamāt-e 'elmi wa farhangi-ye doktor faṭema sayyāh* [*Biography and Scientific and Cultural Works of Dr. Fatemeh Sayyah*] (Tehran: Anjoman-e āṭār wa mafāḵer-e farhangi [Society for the Appreciation of Cultural Works and Dignitaries], 2007), 19–38.]

127 Fatemeh Sayyah, "Naẓari be namāyešgāh-e honar-hā-ye zibā [A Review of Exhibition of Fine Arts]," *Payām-e now*, no. 10 (1946): 28.]

128 «فقدان تنوع و وجود یکنواختی در طرز نقاشی چه از حیث استعمال الوان و چه از لحاظ ترکیب و ادای موضوع تعجب آور است.» [ibid., 37.]

jects but in new techniques, or opted for unprecedented topics. These topics were rather less attractive and unexpected issues from their private life or surrounding, or highlighted features of the intellectual side of their life. Kazemi (in contrast to Petgar's portraiture of his wife) displayed a profile from Sadeq Hedayat (1903–1951), himself a pioneer of Surrealism in Persian literature and an avid advocate of modern artists at the faculty. Yet, the criticism by Sayyah obviously addressed Kazemi's technique. By pointing to the symbolic aspects of his work, she complained that Kazemi's paintings were artificial, confusing and abstract—for what she conversely valued Petgar's paintings. Interestingly she added, whenever Kazemi copied nature or evaded metaphors or abstractionism, he created important paintings.<sup>129</sup> In *Portrait of Sadeq Hedayat*, Kazemi had rendered an experience between Impressionism and Abstractionism—while Petgar had been working in Impressionism with more fidelity to Realism painting. The portrait of Hedayat was worked with fewer obsessions with lines and forms whereas the contours and colour planes, lacking any hard-edge, faded into the borders. Also, he had dealt with rough rendition of individual or spots of pure colours in contrast to Petgar who had mixed colours to create the shades. Kazemi's lines were less meticulous and in form of brush strokes were left unfinished in some parts. But for Sayyah, Kazemi's technique was an outdated version of European Impressionism, which itself was a weak artistic style in Europe since World War I and reflected its critical and sick zeitgeist.<sup>130</sup> Also the criticism by Nouredin Kianouri (1915–1999), the Executive Secretary of the party, is noteworthy as it had basically undermined the establishment of the Faculty of Fine Arts due to lack of relevance between its trainings and the social reality of Iran: “[...] the faculty has become a decorative institute which its trainings are rather suitable for the social space of France than Iran.”<sup>131</sup> Makarov, the Russian painter of the exhibition jury, in his comments on Kazemi's paintings criticized the modern paintings for their lack of realistic and ideological approach: “Subjects are far from reality and mostly alienated from realism. This condition makes us think. [...] The missing element in most of the works is the issue of missing the ideology.”<sup>132</sup> The subjectivity of these criticisms becomes more evident when they are compared with comments published in less political magazines. [Fig. 3-21] Reza Jorjani (1912–1950), an art historian and anti-Tudeh critic who later had collaboration with Fighting Cock Association and Apadana Gallery, appreciated new paintings of this exhibition in *Soğan* (1941)—a magazine with a conservative approach to modern art. Compared

129 [Ibid., 25–26.]

130 [Ibid.]

131 «[...] هنرکده به صورت یک مؤسسه فانتزی در کنار جریان واقعی مملکت در آمده و تعلیمات آن با محیط اجتماعی فرانسه بیشتر نزدیکی پیدا کرده تا با محیط اجتماعی ایران.» [Nouredin Kianouri, “Qesmat-e me'māri-ye namāyešgāh-e honar-hā-ye zibā [Architectural Part of Exhibition of Fine Arts],” *Payām-e now*, no. 10 (1946): 78.]

132 «موضوعها از حقیقت دور و اغلب به کلی از واقعیت بیگانه است. این وضع شخص را و او می‌دارد جدا بیندیشد. [...] چیزی که در اغلب آثار دیده می‌شود فقدان موضوع عقیدتی می‌باشد.» [Makarov, “Honar-e konuni-ye irān [Iran's Current Art],” *Payām-e now*, no. 10 (1946): 97.]

to discussions in *Payām-e now*, Jorjani's text on Kazemi's paintings was based on technical features than ideological inclinations. The main feature he appreciated in Kazemi's paintings was visualization of matter via vision as something new, and his audacity in applying new composition which proved artist's detachment from old restrictions.<sup>133</sup> Jorjani, on the contrary, criticized the naturalistic approach to subjects. He attributed visitors' wish for naturalistic works to their weak sense of visualization that in his opinion was a common habit among Eastern people. He commented that visitors have become used to realistic aestheticism, whereas realistic representation had long since been left to photography and was considered an industrial rather than artistic task.<sup>134</sup>

The same condition was observed regarding the activities of Fighting Cock Association and Apadana Gallery. In spite of the fact that these centers emphasized a technical approach to modern art, either in *Fighting Cock* magazine or by their debates at association's headquarters and Apadana Gallery, conservative artists and opponents of modern art promoted political narratives toward modern works and attacked modern artists for being unsympathetic about their society. For instance, a comparison of the critical reflection by Jalil Ziapour, a main member of Fighting Cock Association, on Kazemi's exhibition *Yādegār-e safar-e kurdestān [A Souvenir of Kurdistan]* (March 1950) at Apadana Gallery with comments by Jalal Al-Ahmad (1923–1969)<sup>135</sup> about the same exhibition is noteworthy. The exhibition, which included a series of paintings by Kazemi from his trip to Kurdistan, a Northwestern region of Iran, had an ethnographical view on life and folklore of this area. [Fig. 3-22] For Al-Ahmad these paintings were admirable due to their tribute to the people's life: "Kazemi has proved that he is a national artist. An artist who applies his art and ability for people and for doing so he has even obliged himself to forget his character as an artist."<sup>136</sup> Nonetheless, Ziapour's text poked criticisms on Kazemi's lack of technical maturity and cautioned him for not being lost by admirations of the "awkwards".<sup>137</sup> Probably by awkward Ziapour referred to Al-Ahmad's text or those published by other Tudeh magazines and newspapers such as *Peyk-e solḥ*

133 Reza Jorjani, "Namāyešgāh-e honar-hā-ye zibā-ye irān [Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts]," *Soḡan*, no.1 (1946): 27–28.

134 *Ibid.*, 30–31.

135 Jalal Al-Ahmad was a renowned writer and social critic who until 1947 remained a Tudeh member and by the turn of 1950s revealed nationalist inclinations and gave active support to Mohammad Mosaddeq and his policy of nationalizing the oil industry. ["Āl-e aḥmad, jalāl [Al-Ahmad, Jalal]," in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, I (London, U.K: 1985), 745–47.]

136 «کاظمی خود را در این نمایشگاه یک هنرمند ملی نشان داده است. هنرمندی که هنر خود را و توانایی هنری خود را در خدمت مردم گزاشته و نیز مجبور شده است برای همین کار شخصیت هنری خود را فراموش کند.» [Jalal Al-Ahmad, "Dar apadāna: bā qāb-hā-ye hizomi [At Apadana: With Wooden Frames]," *Irān-e mā*, March 19, 1950.]

137 Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāši-hā-ye kāzemi dar 'apadāna': enteqād az ziāpur [Kazemi's Paintings at Apadana: Criticism by Ziapour]," *Ādarpād*, April 15, 1950.

[*Peace Courier*].<sup>138</sup> Ziapour complained: "It is not the selection of interesting subject matters that makes one an artist [...], but rather if they [subject matters] are not executed skillfully enough, you have done merely the job of a journalist."<sup>139</sup> It should be noted that the ethnographic elements and study of the potentials of their folklore were the main features in the works of the first modern artists. In painting, they included geographical details of their homelands, climatological attributes, certain colours, forms, motifs and attention to their local customs and traditions. Meanwhile, these features made a brittle line between artistic tastes in advocates of social arts and modern artists (due to their concern for discussion of identity in their works). Therefore, it was common that works which were bold in such elements and had less technical obsession, were justified by nationalist or socialist intellectuals too. But interestingly, for modern artists like the fighting cocks, study of the artist's roots had to be done through the new techniques and this was the way for survival of their traditions. As a result, they relentlessly revealed any deviation from this goal by artists or their advocates. In another writing in *Peyk-e šolḥ* on a group exhibition at Apadana (March 1950), Ziapour and his association were criticized for promotion of the modern art and, in particular, Cubism. In Issue 34 of the newspaper, an article entitled *Enḥeṭāṭ dar honar-e naqāši* ["Decadence in Painting"] condemned the Cubist painters of this exhibition. The author, Robin Khalatian, had charged them as Formalist painters who attempted to penetrate people's life via demagoguery but if someone complained about their works, they replied: "[...] art is not comprehensible for the public."<sup>140</sup> Therefore, in Khalatian's text, one can see him siding with modern artists such as Mehdi Vishkaei (1920–2006) and Houshang Pezeshknia (1917–1972),<sup>141</sup> both of whom displayed more representational and less improvised paintings. In fact, the enmity of such writers and Tudeh's publications was that modern art lacked the spirit of life and promoted the decadent notion of art for art's sake—the notion that substituted fake coloration and artificial composition instead of the truthful picture of nature and human being.<sup>142</sup>

**138** *Peyk-e šolḥ* (1949) was a newspaper that covered news of Fighting Cock Association and exhibitions at Apadana Gallery mostly under anonymous authors and criticized new styles in Iranian painting. About Kazemi's exhibition this newspaper wrote: "As the duty of a real artist, Kazemi has stepped among the masses [...] the source of his works is in people and nothing highest and richest could be found except for this source." [ایشان همانطور که وظیفه یک هنرمند واقعی است به میان مردم رفته‌اند [...] منشأ آثار ایشان در میان مردم نهفته است و جز «ایشان همانطور که وظیفه یک هنرمند واقعی است به میان مردم رفته‌اند [...] منشأ آثار ایشان در میان مردم نهفته است و جز «Ahmad Sadeq, "Apadāna: namāyešgāh-e daemi-ye ātār-e āqāy-e kāzemi [Apadana: Permanent Exhibition of Artworks by Kazemi]," *Peyk-e šolḥ*, March 18, 1950.]

**139** «موضوع تنها حاز لحاظ تنوع جالب باشند» انتخاب کردن دلیل هنرمندی نمی‌شود بلکه [...] اگر از لحاظ فن تخصصی مراعات تجسم [Ziapour, "Naqāši-hā-ye kazemi [Kazemi's Painting]."]

**140** «[...] هنر قابل فهم عموم نیست.» [Robin Khalatian, "Enḥeṭāṭ dar honar-e naqāši [Decadence in Painting]," trans. Aziz Baqaei, *Peyk-e šolḥ*, July 29, 1950.]

**141** Mehdi Vishkaei graduated from Faculty of Fine Arts (c. 1946) as the first generation of Iranian modern artists. His paintings mostly include portraiture and still life executed with expressive application of bold strokes of paint. Houshang Pezeshknia graduated from Istanbul Academy of Fine Arts (1946) also as one of the first generation of Iranian modern artists. Expressive depiction of Iranian natives and folklore are significant features of his works.

**142** Ibid.

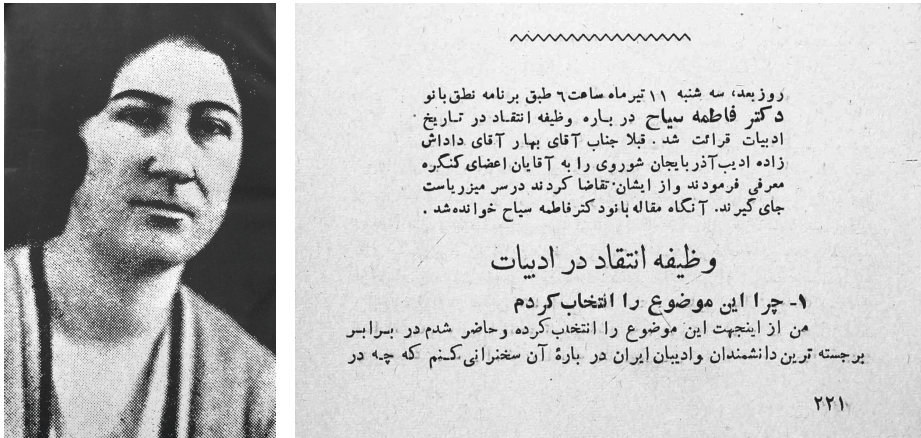


Fig. 3-20 (Left) "Fatemeh Sayyah," in *Naqd wa syāhat: majmu'a maqālāt wa taqīrāt-e doktor fāṭema sayyāh* [*Criticism and Exploration: A Collection of Articles and Writings by Dr. Fatemeh Sayyah*], ed. Mohammad Golbon (Tehran: Tus, 1975), n.p. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

(Right) "The title of Fatemeh Sayyah's lecture at first *Congress of Iranian Writers' Association* in 1946: *Vazīfa-ye enteḡād dar adabiāt* ["The Task of Criticism in Literature"]," in *Barnāma-ye noḡostin kongera-ye nevisandegān-e irān* [*The Program of the First Congress of the Iranian Writers' Association*] (Tehran: n.p., 1346): 221. [Ibid.]



Fig. 3-21 (Left) Hossein Kazemi, *Portrait of Sadegh Hedayat*, 1945. Oil on canvas, 50 × 35 cm, Collection [?]. In *Pioneers of Iranian Modern Painting*, by Roueen Pakbaz and Yaghoob Emdadian (Tehran: Nazar, 2000), 98

(Right) Ali Asqar Petgar, *Hamsar-e naqāš—Irāndoḡt sotuda* [*Portrait of Painter's Wife—Irandoḡht Sotudeh*], 1944. Oil on canvas, 70 × 60 cm, Didar Petgar's collection, Courtesy of artist's family



Ali Asqar Petgar, *Kiābān-e sarčešma [Sarcheshmeh Avenue]*, 1943. Oil on canvas, 110 × 82 cm, Amir Nadilouee's collection, Courtesy of artist's family

حسن رسمی خود عیناً چنین اظهار میدارند: «من با سرمایه داری و ثروت مخالف نیستم ولی باینکه سرمایه دردست عده محدودی بدون استفاده دیگران متمرکز اند. و میدانند که خطر استعمار اقتصادی برای ایران کمتر از تصرف خاک وطن مانده باشد و روسیه شوروی نیز با روسیه تزاری تفاوت دارد.»

آبادانا  
گالری هنرهای زیبا نمایش آثار تازه  
کاظمی - ح  
یادگار سفر کردستان  
از روز دوشنبه ۲۳ اسفند ماه آغاز میگردد  
آبادانا همه روزه در ساعت ۱۲ تا ۴ و ۱۵ تا ۲۱ باز است  
نشانی - شرق خیابان شاهرضا - بعد از دروازه دولت  
اول خیابان بهار

چندین چهارشنبه صبحی گانوف ملی فیلم  
سه شنبه ۲۳ اسفند ساعت هشت و نیم بعد از ظهر خانهها

Fig. 3-22 "Notice of Hossein Kazemi's exhibition *Yādegār-e safar-e kurdestān [A Souvenir of Kurdistan]* announcing the artist's name, exhibition's date, hours and address of the gallery," in *Irān-e mā*, March 12, 1950. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

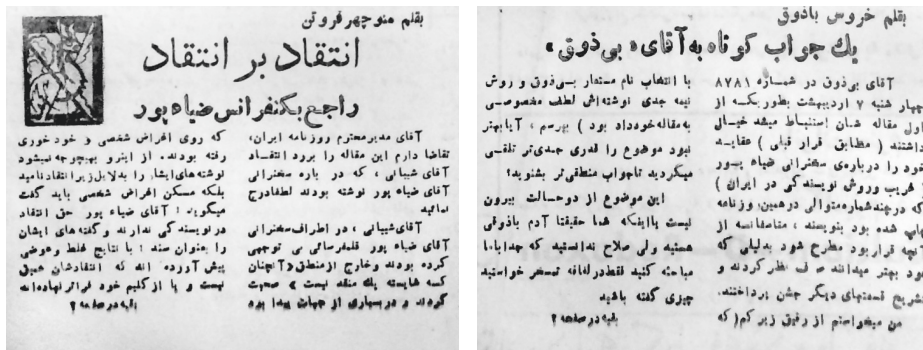


Fig. 3-23 “Samples of some *Javābyya* [replications] by fighting cocks to their critics in 1949 (Left: *Enteqād bar enteḡād-e konferāns-e zīāpur* [“Criticizing a Critique on Ziapour’s Conference”]. Right: *Yek javāb-e kutāh be āqā-ye bīdūq* [“A Short Replication to the Tasteless Man”]), in (Left) Manouchehr Foroutan, “Enteqād bar enteḡād-e konferāns-e zīāpur [Criticizing a Critique on Ziapour’s Conference],” *Irān*, May 4, 1949 & (Right) “Yek javāb-e kutāh be āqā-ye bīdūq be qalam-e ḡorus-e bāḡoq [A Short Replication to the Tasteless Man by the Tasteful Cock],” *Irān*, April 22, 1949. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

One major front against which modern artists had to fight was the delusive and provocative effect that these writings left on the state and people and, as a result, restricted their activities. These restrictions happened in forms of closing down the exhibitions, arrest of artists, quarrels of visitors with painters and destruction of their paintings. Accordingly, a common activity by Fighting Cock and other modern artists was to defend their objectives in their publications or to send *Javābyya* [replications]<sup>143</sup> to their critics. [Fig. 3-23] For instance, *Irān-e mā* (1943) was a newspaper that, similar to *Irān* newspaper (1941), announced Apadana’s exhibitions or published arguments by Ziapour or other anonymous authors since the mid-1940s.<sup>144</sup> In Issue 4 of *Irān-e mā*, Ziapour had obviously explained that modern art is a technical and scientific art and yet has not been accepted by all Iranian artists except for a limited group of avant-gardes who believe becoming modern takes hard work and study.<sup>145</sup> Here Ziapour directly refers to conspiracies by the opponents: “[These avant-gardes] should no way go for the conspiracies by the regressive artists [...] who attempt to agitate their mind by creating division among them and neutralizing their efforts.”<sup>146</sup> In another writing, he basically mocked those who without sufficient knowledge ventured into writing about modern art. Ziapour mentioned the supportive media of such writings, e.g. *Peyk-e ṣolḡ*, as “haut monde” and “ordered”:

<sup>143</sup> The most significant of these replications are found in *Irān* and *Mehr-e Irān* newspapers in 1940s.

<sup>144</sup> Publication of texts with anonymous authors was common in first decades of development of modern art in Iran. The main reason for this was due to the bitter criticisms or fun that opponents poked at modern artists.

<sup>145</sup> Jalil Ziapour, “Apadāna wa naqāšihā-ye jadid [Apadana and New Paintings],” *Irān-e mā*, March 12, 1950.

<sup>146</sup> “[...] به هیچ وجه گوش به توطئه‌های هنرمندان عقب‌مانده [...] که می‌کوشند ذهن اولیاء امور را با تفرقه‌انداختن و عقبتگذاران مجاهدت [...]» [Ibid.] نقاشان مترقی مشوب کنند، ندهند [...]».

“Indeed, why those who are not qualified for analysis and rationalization of issues venture into the task of critique? What do they presume? That commenting and criticizing are simple acts?”<sup>147</sup> The following section will discuss how this politicized air during the 1940s led to the new role of artists as intellectuals and will define what “intellectual” means and how it could aid artists in demarcating an autonomous territory free from issues of politics.

### 3.2.1 Invention of Artists as Intellectuals

One of the main changes resulting from modern artists’ anti-political inclinations was that they gradually took up the role of intellectuals in their field. This is exactly the very prerequisite discussed by Bourdieu in his theory for attaining artistic autonomy. The intellectual dimension of artists is understood according to their relation to the system of power and other intellectuals, and significantly with attention to an emphasis on their own institutions as footholds that enabled them to act in a collective manner. Artists as intellectuals are “bi-dimensional beings.” It means that at the same time that they belong to an intellectually autonomous field from the field of power, they can deploy their specific expertise and authority in a political activity outside and Bourdieu calls this as “anti-political politics.”<sup>148</sup> But the prerequisite for such paradoxical quality is rejection of the primacy of money, politics or any other honor that might predominate their field.<sup>149</sup> In other words, artists must have an indifference or disinterestedness toward all such primacies. The necessity of this feature lies in artists being constantly subjected to an ensemble of forces of *attraction* or *repulsion* exercised over them by the field of political and economic powers.<sup>150</sup> Another feature of the artists as intellectuals is to challenge the institutional hierarchy or the bureaucracies of culture to denounce the monopoly of cultural legitimation by the education system and to devalue the academic institution.<sup>151</sup> Artists can adopt the role of an intellectual as soon as they obtain a post as a “pure” artist with institutions of freedom which are constructed against the market and state bureaucracies such as academies and salons.<sup>152</sup> Another important front against which these artists fight is against competitors from their own field, who identify their interests with the dominant principles of the field of power and

147 «به راستی چرا کسانی که زمینه‌های لازم را برای تحلیل و توجیه مطالبی ندارند مبادرت به انتقاد می‌کنند؟ چه تصور می‌کنند؟ که اظهار  
«به راستی چرا کسانی که زمینه‌های لازم را برای تحلیل و توجیه مطالبی ندارند مبادرت به انتقاد می‌کنند؟ چه تصور می‌کنند؟ که اظهار  
[Jalili Ziapour, “Dorost enteqaad konim [Let Us Criticize Correctly],” *Šahsavār*, September 25, 1950.]

148 Pierre Bourdieu, “The Corporatism of the Universal: The Role of Intellectual in the Modern World,” *Telos*, no. 81 (1989): 99.

149 *Ibid.*, 101.

150 Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 14.

151 Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, trans. Peter Collier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 177.

152 Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 257.



seek to impose them within the field with support of those powers.<sup>153</sup> The artists and their competitors are surrounded by mass-oriented or large-scale productions, and it is upon this restricted production that the intellectual artists can act based on their own logic.<sup>154</sup> By doing so, artists are able to liberate themselves from court aesthetic values and from the patronage provided by the aristocracy as external legitimizing authorities.<sup>155</sup> Therefore, the main role of the intellectual artists is to transform the relations between the intellectual field and the field of power, and this happens when artists in collective forms and groups impose themselves on the field and transform the whole space of positions “downgraded to the status of an outmoded or classical product.”<sup>156</sup>

Attaining the status of an artist as an intellectual, who is capable of intervening in politics under his own specific authority and struggling toward mastery over means of cultural production and intellectual legitimation, is a status to be reached collectively. The collective manner (appearing in forms of private institutions, galleries and associations) fulfills two fundamental requirements for the artists: first, it reinforces the positions of the most autonomous cultural products from the temptation of the academic ivory tower and, second, it guarantees their economic and social conditions of autonomy in forms of publications and other products of intellectual activity.<sup>157</sup> Thus, working collectively should be considered as the first objective for artists toward the defense of their own interests and toward the means necessary for protecting their autonomy. The collective nature refers to an open assembly of young artists, writers, journalists and students at daily reunions in cafes that favor an ambience of the intellectual exaltation contrasting with the reserved and exclusive atmosphere of the salons and academy.<sup>158</sup> The autonomy of artists is very much dependent on the existence of institutionalized sites of regulated dialogue as a collective instrument and a space in which artists can debate according to their own norms.<sup>159</sup> For instance, as Bourdieu sees the field of galleries, the major galleries that produce the history of artistic movements are avant-garde galleries (in contrast to the commercial galleries) and their essentiality lies in their role in institutionalizing the new definition of intellectuals for artists. Therefore, the new definition of the artists and their works of art should be studied together with emergence of those institutions that helped transformation of the artistic field.<sup>160</sup>

153 Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 41.

154 Simon Susen, “Bourdieu and Adorno on the Cultural Production,” in *The Legacy of Pierre Bourdieu: Critical Essays*, ed. Simon Susen and Bryan S. Turner (London: Anthem, 2011), 177.

155 Pierre Bourdieu, “Intellectual Field and Creative Project,” *Social Science Information* VIII, no. 2 (1969): 90.

156 Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 234.

157 Bourdieu, “The Corporatism of the Universal,” 103.

158 Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 73.

159 Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, 56.

160 Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production*, 107–10.

In studying the intellectual role of artists, relations that artists also develop with intellectuals from other fields should be noted. This is because certain intellectuals also participated in the revolution of ways of thinking about art and defended modern artists.<sup>161</sup> In other words, artists and intellectuals practice the intellectual effect via links and cooperation between themselves. The alliance between fields of intellectuals and artists occur due to their homologies.<sup>162</sup> One important homology is that they both find themselves in subordinate positions to the principal field of power and therefore they approach each other during their struggle for legitimation.<sup>163</sup> It is, in fact: “[...] a willingness of many intellectuals to support dominated groups due to their own dominated status within the field of power.”<sup>164</sup> The modern artists in Iran came from *modernists* who considered themselves as avant-gardes of a new society, and thus, intended to be role models for the mass ordinary Iranians. These middle-class modernists observed the modernization process by the government and took active initiative for the spread of *correct* modernity through instructing and guiding the common people.<sup>165</sup> The significant feature about these middle-class modernists was that they assumed an oppositional role of an intellectual and excluded advocates of the status quo—academics and official modernists.<sup>166</sup> It is upon this aversion to the field of power that Tudeh Party increasingly influenced the intellectuals of Iran in the 1940s and 1950s. In fact, until the 1960s, due to the highly politicized society, a detached quality from authorities and progressiveness characterized an Iranian modernist as an intellectual with the main task of *criticism*.<sup>167</sup> Formation of an intellectual dimension for Iranian artists, therefore, occurred based on convergence to the intellectuals from other fields and this convergence had various reasons. Above all, the rebellious spirit of the intellectuals was similar to the modern artists’ as they both considered themselves social and intellectual rebels vis-à-vis the cultural establishment of their time.<sup>168</sup> For instance, Rasheed Araeen—Pakistani modern artist—referred the question of cultural identity in works of modern artists corresponding to the intellectual disputes of their time that equipped artists with the rebellion and uprising which

161 Grenfell and Hardy, *Art Rules*, 191.

162 Swartz, *Culture and Power*, 132.

163 *Ibid.*, 142.

164 *Ibid.*, 235.

165 Bianca Devos, “Engineering a Modern Society: Adoptions of New Technologies in Early Pahlavi Iran,” in *Culture and Cultural Politics under Reza Shah: The Pahlavi State, New Bourgeoisie and the Creation of a Modern Society in Iran*, ed. Bianca Devos and Christoph Werner (London: Routledge, 2014), 271.

166 Mohammad Ali Homayoun Katouzian et al., “Khalil maleki: rad-e teñori-ye toñei wa pišbord-e jãme‘a-ye madani [Khalil Maleki: Debunking of Conspiracy Theory and Advancement of a Civil Society],” in *Jostãr-hã-i darbãra-ye teñori-ye toñei dar irãn [Inquiries about Conspiracy Theory in Iran]*, trans. Mohammad Ebrahim Fattahi (Tehran: Ney, 2003), 125.

167 Ahmadi, “Havã-ye tãza [Fresh Air],” 118–19.

168 Roja Dehdarian, “Newly Hatched Chickens: Bozorg Alavi on the Young Literary Scene of the 1930s,” in *Culture and Cultural Politics under Reza Shah: The Pahlavi State, New Bourgeoisie and the Creation of a Modern Society in Iran*, ed. Bianca Devos and Christoph Werner (London: Routledge, 2014), 235.

Avant-gardism demanded.<sup>169</sup> Another channel that brought intellectuals and modern artists together was the type of jobs that intellectuals occupied and allowed them to comment on arts. These professions, on the one hand, dealt rather with the literary fields such as poetry, writing, journalism and translation<sup>170</sup> and, on the other hand, granted intellectuals the confidence to see themselves as custodians of critique on arts. This confidence was also rooted in a historical significance of literature among Iranians compared to arts (in particular painting). The public notion constantly underestimated painters' knowledge of social problems and for this the literary intellectuals had always the upper hand.<sup>171</sup>

With the turn of the 1940s to 1950s, the Iranian society began to undergo significant changes, most considerably in economic and political grounds. These developments transformed the tolerant modern art of the 1940s into an abrupt radicalism that questioned everything but (or even) art for art's sake. It was mainly the coup d'état against the premiership of Mosaddeq and his nationalization of the oil industry having benefited escorts of the Iranian regime, Britain, US and the Left Party that affected the politico-intellectual developments in 1950s. [Fig. 3-24] This event created a deep cynicism in modern artists and intellectuals as it led to discredit of the regime, the West and social ideology of the Left. The disenchantment was a reaction first to the regime for hiding its affiliation with CIA from the people who had experienced years of nationalism.<sup>172</sup> Second, it was distrust in Iranian modern artists and intellectuals against Tudeh Party for its passive role in facing the coup d'état.<sup>173</sup> It should be noted that, prior to coup d'état and except for Tudeh and Mosaddeq supporters and parliamentary liberals, the majority of the Iranian parliament were satisfied about the tight ties with the US. The main difficulties aroused when the USSR denied withdrawing troops from Northern Iran by March 2, 1946—this time marked a transition from a passive to an active US policy.<sup>174</sup> In fact, this was a signal for Britain and US about the strengthening position of the USSR and could be considered as a ground to coup d'état of 1953—this implication that the US public should tolerate undemocratic rulers in the interest of the political order needed to counter Communist insurgencies or subversion: "If we wish to start real reform in the Middle East, while maintaining order, we will soon find

169 Keshmirshakan, *Honar-e mo'āser-e irān [Iranian Contemporary Art]*, 12.

170 Katouzian et al., "Khalil maleki: rad-e teiōri-ye toṭeī [Khalil Maleki: Debunking of Conspiracy Theory]," 128.

171 Keshmirshakan, *Honar-e mo'āser-e irān [Iranian Contemporary Art]*, 17.

172 Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 426.

173 Iranmehr, Omid, and Pooya Qolipour. "Goftogu bā doktor anvar kāmei darbāra-ye naqš-e ḥezb-e tuda dar kudetā-ye bistohašt-e mordād [An Interview with Dr. Anvar Khomei on the Role of Tudeh Party in August 19 Coup d'état]," *Pooyaelche*, (September 5, 2007). Accessed March 29, 2018, <http://pooyaelche.blogfa.com/post/23>.

174 Upon Tripartite Agreement between Moscow, London and Tehran in January 1942, the Allied powers were bound to evacuate their troops from Iranian soil within six months after termination of the World War II. [L'Estrange Fawcett, *Iran and the Cold War*, 122.]

that our best allies are kings and ‘strong men.’”<sup>175</sup> On the one hand, the Britain and US were aware that Tudeh infiltration of Mosaddeq’s government did not give way to the National Liberalism supported by him. On the other hand, similar to many anti-imperialism leaders of the world, Mosaddeq was a non-Communist advocate of democracy inside Iran leading a movement against colonial powers.<sup>176</sup> It was such air that in July 13, 1953 (only one month before the coup d’état), *New York Post* predicted Mosaddeq’s fall to an army-led coup with close ties to US: “Any Iranian government, other than a Communist one, would be better for us than the present government. We have found it impossible to deal with Mosaddeq.”<sup>177</sup> Although, the American foreign policy was successful to win a better cultural reputation and to form a respected American image in Iranian public opinion (Iran-America Society and Voice of America Radio were among main arms of this goal), it lost all of this cultural reputation after the downfall of Mosaddeq: “Together with Britain, we conspired to break him [Mosaddeq]. We did this successfully, yet thereafter ‘American’ was no more attributed honourably.”<sup>178</sup> Thus, the diplomacy of the US and Iran from 1950s onward was significantly to secure their survival. In fact, this was a mutual relation in which US supported Shah and his army to attain an absolute power in the region, whereas Iran had to respond to this by safeguarding US interests in oil market.<sup>179</sup> What was not hidden from the Iranian people was that, after the coup d’état and without concern for any social preparedness, the US capitalism overflowed its logics in an unprecedented way via education and human resources. This became along with the foundation of many new American institutions and investment companies into Iranian market during the 1950s. The hypocrisy about these measures was in attending to economic plans without observing their human aspects, social reforms or any political growth—Iranian people found themselves overcome and belittled by America to the extent that from the coup d’état onward they saw the regime and US as one entity.<sup>180</sup>

175 Foran, “Discursive Subversions,” 174.

176 Ibid., 176 & 182.

177 Ibid., 177.

178 This was quoted from William O. Douglas US Supreme Court Justice. [«ما با انگلیس‌ها هم‌دست شدیم تا او را خرد.» Koroush Fathi and Ahmad Rashidpour, “Ravābeṭ-e farhangi-ye irān wa iyālāt-e mottaḥeda-ye āmrikā: az šahrivar-e 1320 tā 28 mordād-e 1332 [The Cultural Relations of Iran and the United States of America: From September 1941 to July 13, 1953],” *Tāriḫ-e ravābeṭ-e kāreji*, no. 29 (2006): 207.]

179 Ashena, “Diplomāsi-ye farhangi-ye āmrikā [The Cultural Diplomacy of America],” 11.

180 Fathi and Rashidpour, “Ravābeṭ-e farhangi-ye irān wa iyālāt-e mottaḥeda-ye āmrikā [The Cultural Relations of Iran and the United States of America],” 208–9.



Fig. 3-24 (Top) "People's demonstration in support of Mohammad Mosaddeq in front of parliament in Tehran on July 21, 1952." Archives of Institute for Iranian Contemporary Historical Studies

In the field of art, this condition was responded to by anti-political inclinations with more concern for formalism and abstractionism. In fact, artists emphasized freedom from all boundaries. Considering themselves cheated, they sought means of revenge by returning to their *self*, an Iranian self who was historically defeated and now had become obsessed and protestor.<sup>181</sup> This disillusionment in artists was exacerbated by increasing censors known as an "iron curtain"<sup>182</sup> by the regime on all cultural and intellectual fields, which resulted in greater seclusion of artists from the state. In such seclusions, Bourdieu argues, the artists' aim became detachment from politics and official patronage, and was carried out collectively in forms of establishment of artistic groups and institutes. Two series of Iranian artists waded into modern art in an intellectual manner from the 1950s. First, a minority of independent avant-garde artists who merely paid to art for art's sake (or *art* in its technical terms)



(Bottom) "Mohammad Mosaddeq, a few months after the coup d'état was sentenced to 3 years in prison by the military court on November 8, 1953." [Ibid.]

<sup>181</sup> Langeroudi, *Tārīḫ-e taḥlīli-ye še'r-e now [Analytical History of Modern Poetry]*, vol.1 (Tehran: Markaz, 1991), 19.

<sup>182</sup> Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 450.

and was pioneered by Fighting Cock Association. Second, a majority of modern artists who rather considered the concept of the “Grand Other” in their works and emphasized subjects of “localism” or later “Islamic philosophy.”<sup>183</sup> Simultaneously, both artists promoted their understanding of modern art at their galleries and artists’ groups. Fighting Cock Association, from the first Issue of the second series of its magazine (April 22, 1951),<sup>184</sup> published its highly radical statement *Sallāk-e bolbol* [*Nightingale’s Butcher*] as the first manifesto in Iranian art. A review over the contents of different series of this magazine during the 1950s reveals how members and sympathizers of the association concentrated particularly on art. [Fig. 3-25] For instance, beside *Panja korus* [*Cock’s Claw*]’s logo—one of *Fighting Cock* magazine’s issues (1953)—one reads: “In this magazine only artistic subjects are argued.” [Fig. 3-26] Or the articles of *Nightingale’s Butcher Manifesto* even surpassed art for art’s sake and emphasized art without any pretension: “The modern art is in contrast with all claims made by advocates of the art for art’s sake, the art for the masses and the art for ...”<sup>185</sup> At the same time, the other major series of artists applied local materials to emphasize authenticity of their modern works. This emphasis on the authenticity, as Negin Nabavi argues, was adopted to voice opposition against all that the regime represented in their eyes as cultural modernism.<sup>186</sup> On the one hand, Nabavi discusses this approach by the modern artists and intellectuals as a less direct avenue to express their opposition against restrictions imposed on their freedom of expression, and on the other hand, as a result of a more global change.<sup>187</sup> This global change was a triumph of third-world movement in defying the Western powers.<sup>188</sup> All these events in the 1950s were what made the 1960s and 1970s the heyday of nativism and anti-Orientalism with the intellectual role to: “[...] serve as crucial intermediaries and interpreters between their own culture and of that of the West.”<sup>189</sup> [Fig. 3-27]

**183** Mehdi Paknahad, “Magas-hā-ye mozāḥem: tamoli dar voh-e sāktāri-ye jaryān-e rošanfekri dar irān [Annoying Flies: A Thought on Structural Aspects of Intellectual Currents in Iran],” *Ķeradnāma-ye hamšahri*, no. 15 (2007): 32–33.

**184** The Association published its magazine in three series. The first series was published under *Ķorus jangi* [*Fighting Cock*] with five issues (1948–1949) and after being banned by the state was published under *Kavir* [*Desert*] with two issues (1950). The second series was published again under *Fighting Cock* with four issues (1951) and its publication continued under different names as *Moj* [*Wave*] with one issue (1952) and *Panja korus* [*Cock’s Claw*] with two issues (1953). After the ban on *Cock’s Claw*, the members did not publish their magazine and instead collaborated with two other magazines *Apadāna* [*Apadana*] (1956) and *Honar-e now* [*Modern Art*] (1956) together with three issues. The third series was published post-Islamic Revolution again under *Fighting Cock* with five issues (1979).

**185** «هنر نو با تمام ادعاهای جانبدار آن هنر برای اجتماع، هنر برای هنر، هنر برای... تکلیف داری.» [Gholamhossein Gharib, Hasan Shirvani and Houshang Irani, “Sallāk-e bolbol [Nightingale’s Butcher],” *Panja korus*, no.1 (1953): n.p.]

**186** Nabavi, “The Discourse of Authentic Culture,” 104.

**187** This change was affected by simultaneous events such as wars in Vietnam and Cuba, hippies’ movement, postmodern issue and critique of modernity, formation of an optimism to underdeveloped cultures, attention to culture of the masses and inclination to spirituality. [Sirous Alinejad, “Goftogu bā moḥammad šan’ati darbāra-ye rošanfekri-ye daha-ye 1340 [An Interview with Mohammad Sanati about Enlightenment of 1960s],” *Boḳārā*, no. 227 (2009): 238.]

**188** Nabavi, “The Discourse of Authentic Culture,” 92.

**189** Boroujerdi, *Iranian Intellectuals and the West*, 21.



Fig. 3-25 (Left) "Cover of *Fighting Cock* magazine in 1951," in *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1951): n.p. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

Fig. 3-26 (Bottom) "Logo and cover of *Cock's Claw* magazine," in *Panja korus*, no.1 (1953): 1. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

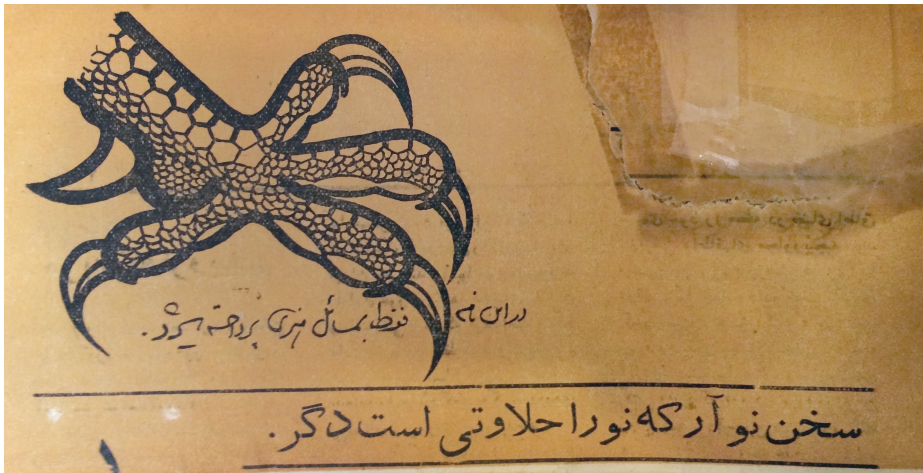


Fig. 3-27 (Left) Marcos Grigorian, *Mayādin-e čāhārgāna* [*Quartet Fields*], 1964. Mixed-media, framed: 147 × 137 cm, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

(Right) Marcos Grigorian, *Zamin-e koškōda* [*The Dried Earth*], 1974. Mixed-media compound on canvas, 180 × 160 cm, [Ibid.]

The significant point about these two series of modern artists was that both remained detached from the economic and political systems of power and their main issue was art in itself. Nevertheless, art-for-art's-sake seekers always remained a minority compared to the other series for two contextual reasons. First, the intellectual space of the country during the 1950–1970s was inflated with the anti-Western notions that sought an Iranian-Islamic identity via conciliation of modern rationality with religion. Therefore, influential thinkers promoted critical concepts such as Jalal Al-Ahmad's *Ġarbzadegi* [*Westoxication*], the "religious revival" which emphasized Islamic identity by Ali Shariati, or Dariush Shayegan, who similar to Al-Ahmad and Shariati, turned to religion for an Iranian identity.<sup>190</sup> [Fig. 3-28] The second reason that isolated art-for-art's-sake artists was due to a decisive orientation of the state in the late 1950s toward a form of modern art that emphasized local identity. The regime's attraction to modern art and the intellectual discourse of nativism, nonetheless, could not satisfy many of the artists and intellectuals. This is because artists and intellectuals applied this discourse as a degree of anti-Westernism and manifestation of their third-Worldism, whereas for the regime, promoting authentic culture did not necessarily equate with opposition to the West.<sup>191</sup> As a matter of fact, the local and religious orientations by the artists and intellectuals were intended to bring a new definition of "authenticity" in their modern art and culture and had as much to do with spirituality, humanity and responsibility, and contrasted to the state's archaic and material nationalization that manifested itself rather a "melancholy of pride in ancient past."<sup>192</sup> Shariati's definition of "return to self" in his book *Art Awaiting the Survivor* (1979) reveals a clear attack by intellectuals on the regime's method of developing a modern Iranian-ness:

Returning to self has now become equivalent to the revival of superstitious, frozen traditions, fanaticism and return to the uncivilized, indigenous traditions [...] it means to breathe with the spirit [...] it never means to explore meanings, feelings, emotions, ideas and philosophies from the beginning and to exhibit them in our modern museums [...] we should return to ourselves, [...] not by an attitude of racism or because of being attached to blood or land, but only because of our relationship to humanity [...] to fight against superstitious, archaic values and all the elements which blind and weaken a nation and its insight and keep it from creativity, modernization, progress and continuous change [...] the new art is no longer controlled by the aristocracy, as was the case in the past, but it is the sympathetic, conscious and sensitive intellectual who leads it.<sup>193</sup>

190 Keshmirshakan, *Honar-e mo'āsher-e irān* [*Iranian Contemporary Art*], 18.

191 Nabavi, "The Discourse of Authentic Culture," 97.

192 Jalal Al-Ahmad, *Ġarbzadegi* [*Westoxication*] (Tehran: Naql wa tarjoma-ye āzād, 1962), 112.

193 Ali Shariati, *Art Awaiting the Survivor*, trans. Homa Fardjadi (Tehran: The Shariati Foundation, 1979), 7–8.



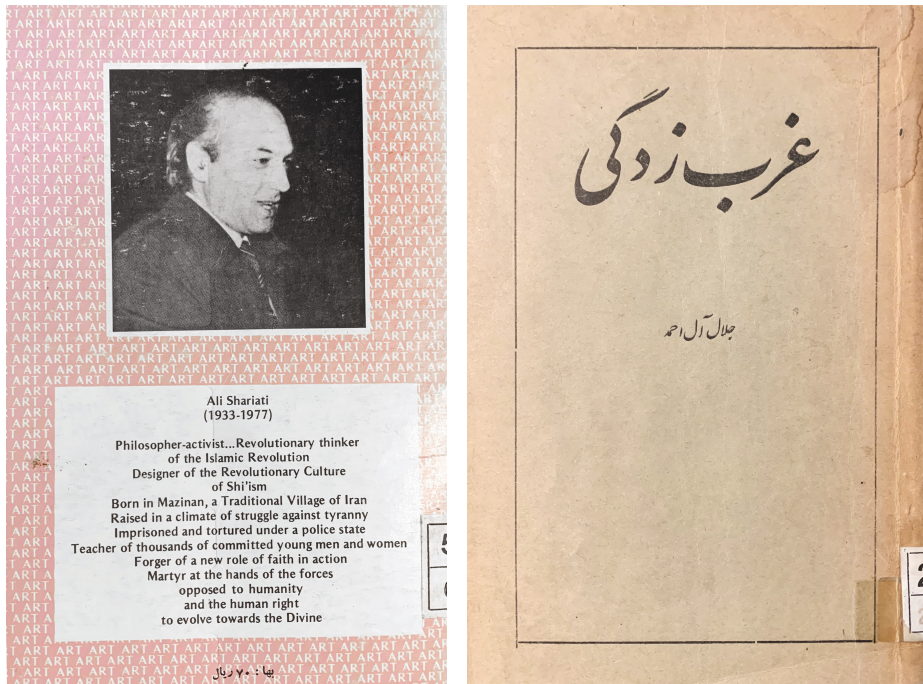


Fig. 3-28 (Left) "Art Awaiting the Saviour" by Ali Shariati in 1979." Library of the Institute of Near and Middle Eastern Studies at LMU Munich

(Right) "Garbzadegi [Westoxication]" by Jalal Al-Ahmad in 1962." [Ibid.]

### 3.2.2 Separation from Function: Arts Toward Art's Sake

The orientation of the government to the modern art since the late 1950s should be considered as an amplifying factor in the transformation of the mild-mannered art for art's sake that began in the mid-1940s. In addition to the intervening role of the foreign cultural relations societies and the general nationalistic air that could gently arouse attention in the official authorities to the modern art since the middle of the 1940s, there were also other factors that amplified this attention in the late 1950s. First of all, the regime became aware about formation of a new opposition which required different methods of control, rather than suppression. According to Abrahamian, if the iron curtain by the regime was successful to hide the social tensions, it did not eliminate them; on the contrary, they survived to develop new ideas and new routes even more radical than Tudeh and National Front. What concerned the regime was that parallel to the government-controlled media, which praised the monarchy and mindless imitation of the West, there was a young underground scene and lively generation of intellectuals that thrived on new ideas and

adopted them into their own culture.<sup>194</sup> Despite all the suppressions in 1950s, the decade was not a period of nihilism and it was a period of rethinking and inventing new methods via critical inquiry in cultural issues. This generation of young artists and writers, whose main resort for exhibition and publication of their works were the political parties, now had devised their own methods and could spread their own publications independently.<sup>195</sup> Another factor influencing the attraction of the state to modern art was that, although both art-for-art's-sake artists and those who reflected native qualities in their works were critical about the regime's new orientation and found it pseudo-modernistic and rootless, the regime was willing to support their art due to its anti-Western and anti-Communist tendencies. The same policy was observed about the intellectual space with which artists came into contact. Although many of these figures, such as Al-Ahmad, used to be members or sympathizers of Tudeh Party, after the coup d'état they criticized the bourgeois culture by returning to their traditional and religious roots.<sup>196</sup>

The economic development in Iran, together with the above-mentioned factors, worked as another major driving force. The state began its Economic Plans (1946) and continued to increase oil revenues with its both Emergency Plans in collaboration with America (1950s and 1960s). In 1967, however, there was a sharp rise in Iranian crude oil production and its export greater than any other OPEC member.<sup>197</sup> It was simultaneous with this economic growth that the regime invested particular attention from Third Economic Plan (1962–1967) in art and cultural programs and transformed Department of Fine Arts into a separate *Vezārat-e farhang wa honar* [Ministry of Art and Culture] (1964) with emphasis on national solidarity. With Fourth Economic Plan (1968–1977), Iran had already succeeded to define an official cultural policy in 1969 with a centrality for “strengthening foundations of the national solidarity.” A review of articles concerning this cultural policy indicates regime's attraction to the cultural consciousness which was formed among intellectual circles: “Attention to cultural authenticity is a key to national solidarity [...] and if national solidarity is founded on conscience about the cultural heritage, it will be more secure.”<sup>198</sup> According to this policy, one can observe a series of new measures being taken by the state from the late 1950s and early 1960s in favor of

194 Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 451.

195 Shams Langeroudi, *Tārīk-e taḥlīli-ye še'r-e now* [Analytical History of Modern Poetry], vol. 2 (Tehran: Markaz, 1991), 465.

196 Jalal Al-Ahmad, as an influential representative of this intellectual space, was an old Tudeh member with religious interests in his past. After the coup d'état, Al-Ahmad's confrontations with Western modernistic manifestations took on more attention for tradition and Shi'ite religion. [Shams Langeroudi, *Tārīk-e taḥlīli-ye še'r-e now* [Analytical History of Modern Poetry], vol. 3 (Tehran: Markaz, 1991), 13.]

197 Saikal, *The Rise and Fall of the Shah*, 106.

198 «توجه به اصالت فرهنگی عامل مهم تقویت مبانی وحدت ملی است [...] و وحدت ملی اگر بر مبنای خودآگاهی از میراث فرهنگی «توجه به اصالت فرهنگی عامل مهم تقویت مبانی وحدت ملی است [...] و وحدت ملی اگر بر مبنای خودآگاهی از میراث فرهنگی خواهد یافت.» [Changiz Pahlavan, “Barnāmarizi-ye farhangi dar irān [Cultural Planning in Iran],” *Farhang wa zendegi*, no. 15 (1974): 53–54.]

modern art. These actions included the establishment of new art institutions and public galleries, financial support for private galleries and artists, the holding of biennials and art festivals and the participating of the modern artists in international exhibitions, to name a few. [Fig. 3-29] The significant point about these new measures, Bourdieu argues, was that they occurred within a system of orthodoxy defined and controlled by the state through “consecration and rejection.”<sup>199</sup> The new system effectively unsettled the borders between the official art and that of modern artists—either art-for-art’s-sake seekers or those with local attributes in their works. This destabilization occurred through mixture at the borders or by simply removing them. One argument is that the financial supports provided by the state, through putting artists’ works at local or international markets, was not an easy situation for every artist to resist. So obviously, the artists paying attention to the system of consecration and rejection (particularly being exerted via public and foreign exhibitions) tried to keep proximity between their works and the official art. Another argument returns rather to the nature of the official art that for its emphasis on national identity shared more similarities, at least in appearance, with works of modern artists with local attributes. These similarities caused a better reception of their works to the state’s support and people perceived them as official art. It was precisely in response to this condition that modern artists began to react and pushed more for art for art’s sake. In other words, although intellectuals were not necessarily detached from the modernization policies of the state during first Pahlavi era, the emergence of art for art’s sake during the second Pahlavi period was not an intellectual aim that could survive within the politico-economic collaboration with the regime. This was rooted in the indifference to money for which Bourdieu distinguishes the frontier between what *is* art and what *is not*, between *intellectual* and *bourgeois* art, between *avant-garde* and *traditional* art, and between *movement* and *commercial* institutions.<sup>200</sup>

The difference between the official art and the art for art’s sake, as well as the resistance by modern artists to the political functionality of arts, becomes more obvious wherever state’s measures were about to disarrange this duality. The best instances to be investigated are five series of *Tehran Biennial of Painting* (1958–1966) by Department of Fine Arts, formation of Saqqa-khaneh painting school, the role of the Empress Farah Diba and her *Daftar-e maq̄ṣus* [Special Office] (1959) in supporting the modern art, and eventually foundation of the first public art galleries in 1970 and the issue of an official statement by state in 1967 for supervision over art galleries and associations. The sudden catalyst for the regime’s support

199 Grenfell and Hardy, *Art Rules*, 111.

200 Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art*, 162.

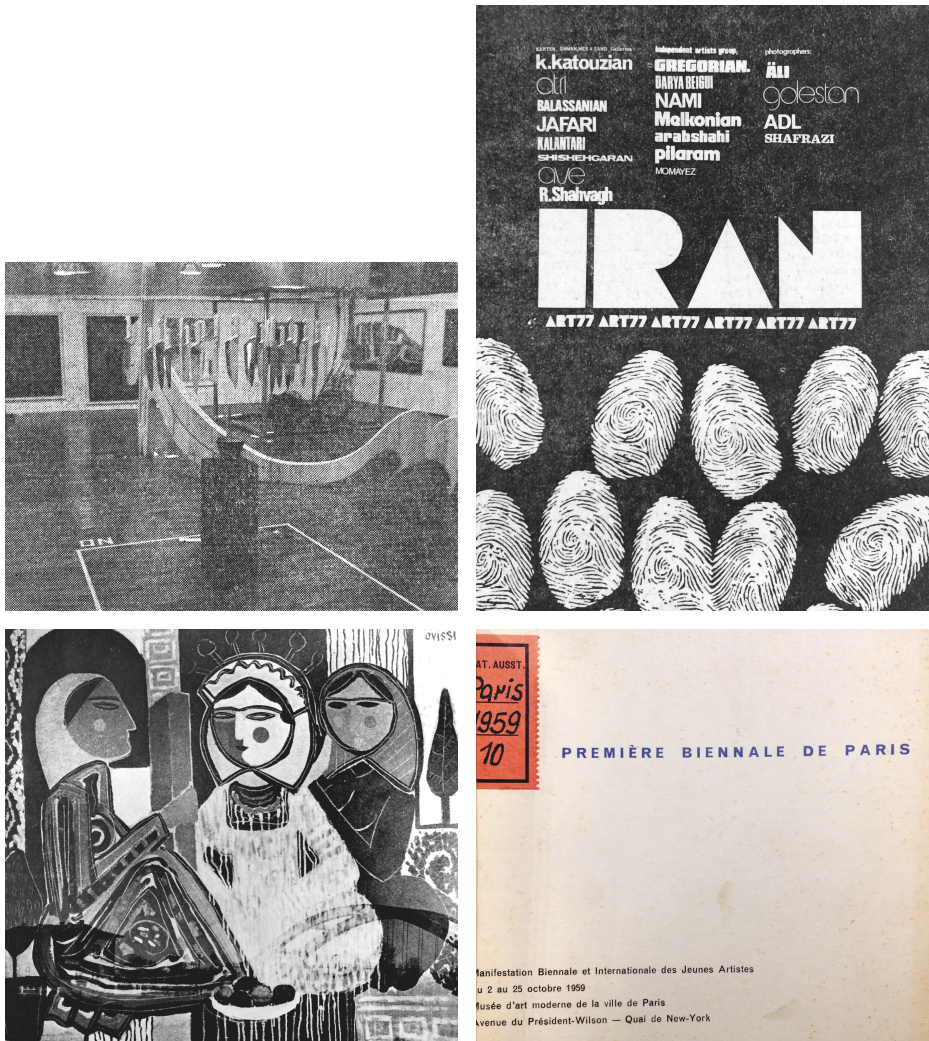


Fig. 3-29 (Top Right) “Announcement designed by Iranian graphic artist Morteza Momayez, “Hefdah ruz hamräh-e šanzdah nafar [Seventeen Days with Sixteen Persons],” *Rastâkiz*, May 29, 1977. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

(Top Left) “Iran’s podium at *Washington Art* in 1977.” [Ibid.]

(Bottom) “Participation of Iranian modern artists in first *Biennial of Paris* in October 2–25, 1959 (Right: Cover of exhibition catalogue. Left: *Se zan (arus) [Three Women (The Bride)]* by Nasser Ovissi in the exhibition’s catalogue).” Central Institute of Art History in Munich

of modern art in the late 1950s was an urgent solution to prevent politicization of the society and to create an international legitimacy that was supposed to happen by means of a national school of art. As Talinn Grigor explains, the main task of institutes such as *Šowrā-ye hedāyat-e melli* [National Guidance Council] (1954) was to broadcast supports of the regime: “[...] the mass media which was under control of the state coupled the royal household with institutions of high arts. For instance, *Eṭelā‘āt* newspaper published articles with photos of royal family and members as leading patrons while visiting museums and exhibitions. Increasingly the Shah and his court presented themselves as the foremost benefactors of the arts and the monarchy as the sole institution that set the stand of Iran’s high culture.”<sup>201</sup> [Fig. 3-30] *Tehran Biennial of Painting*, therefore, launched in 1958 at the suggestion of artists themselves and support of the Department of Fine Arts.<sup>202</sup> The paradox about this measure was that this Department had no intention of supporting the new artistic movements, and its main concern involved traditional arts and works by Kamal al-Molk students. This indifference even continued after transformation of the Department into the Ministry of Art and Culture; and the Minister Mehrdad Pahlbod (in office 1964–1975) was, in fact, a major advocate of ancient arts.<sup>203</sup> As a result, the main institutions of the 1950s that dealt with modern art were still private galleries, artists’ groups, cultural relations societies such as VOKS and Iran-America, and new centers like *Bāšgāh-e mehragān* [Mehragan Club] (1952).<sup>204</sup> [Fig. 3-31] The biennial of painting clearly represented the functionality that modern art had for the state in the international sphere. In fact, Tehran’s biennial was supposed to pave the way for participation of Iranian artists in significant international exhibitions such as *Venice Biennial* and it was obvious to the official administrators that a big local exhibition with regular repetitions was a key to it.<sup>205</sup> Furthermore, the biennial could indoctrinate the idea that modern art would fail without state’s sup-

201 Grigor, *Building Iran*, 137.

202 Similar to Iran’s first *Art Expo* on the initiative of Manouchehr Niazi (modern painter and owner of the private Niazi Gallery) in 1979 or the first *Art Auction* by *Rašt 29* [Rasht 29] (a private artists’ group) in 1967, *Tehran Biennial of Painting* was also held on the initiative of the young modern artist, Marcos Grigorian (modern painter and owner of the private Aesthetic Gallery).

203 Ezatollah Minbashian (1917–2018), better known as Mehrdad Pahlbod, played a pivotal role, particularly after emergence of the Empress Farah Diba’s patronage, for independence of Department of Fine Arts of Ministry of Art and Culture and generally for support of the artists via a social struggle for enhancement of artists’ social level through educational and exhibition programs [Mahnaz Afkhami, *Barnāma-ye tāriḳ-e šafāhi: mošāheba bā mehrdād pahlbod* [Oral History Program: An Interview with Mehrdad Pahlbod] (California: Foundation for Iranian Studies, 25 & 30 May 1984), 9.]

204 Mehragan Club (1952) was an organization founded by the *Jāme‘a-ye mo‘allemān-e irān* [Iran Teachers Association] for teachers, students, and other intellectuals sponsoring literary seminars and events. This Club, under directorship of Mohammad Derakhshesh, held annuals for visual arts. [*Encyclopedia Iranica Online*, s.v. “Bāšgāh-e mehragān [Mehragan Club],” accessed December 10, 2017, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/basgah-e-mehragan-mehragan-club-an-organization-founded-in-1952-in-tehran-by-the-executive-committee-of-the-iran-teac>.]

205 Pakbaz, *Naqāšī-ye irān* [Iranian Painting], 206.

port. The statement of the biennial, manifestly pointed to the role of the state: "If our national modern art has remained unknown and people do not enthusiastically follow it, that is merely due to artists' inability in introducing the significance and value of today's art. So far our people had no chance to come closely in contact with 'modern' art and there must be public assistance for this reconciliation [...] and this task is possible when many national exhibitions of 'modern' art are held."<sup>206</sup> The criticism against the state's intervention in holding the biennial was centered on the regime's functional application of arts. Parviz Tanavoli (1937–), a modern sculptor whose private atelier-gallery Kabud and artists' group *Goruh-e honarmandān-e mo'āšer* [Contemporary Artists Group]<sup>207</sup> were founded shortly after first biennial in 1960, saw the biennial as an ordered exhibition controlled by certain policies such as dictating the winners to the jury or awarding prizes to only the obedient artists.<sup>208</sup> This was exactly the quality that the critics, like Emami, named it as the "implicit ruling"<sup>209</sup> for which many modern artists shunned sending their works to this exhibition.<sup>210</sup> Simultaneous with the first biennial, correspondences between Bahman Mohasses (1931–2010) and Sohrab Sepehri (1928–1980), two modern painters with art-for-art's-sake inclination who also collaborated with Fighting Cock Association, reveal that they viewed the biennial with ridicule. The skepticism in Mohasses derives from the suspicious nature of such an exhibition: "A country who behaves its artists as 'Untouchables' in India, now is willing to pave the way for advancement of a national art (!) [...]. These new claimants of modern art understand nothing, neither from 'modern' nor from the past, and are not expected to understand either. I believe it is better for us the 'Untouchables' to avoid them."<sup>211</sup> [Fig. 3-32]

«اگر هنر معاصر ملی ما گمنام مانده و مردم با علاقه و شوق لازم به آن نمی‌نگرند تنها از آن جاست که هنرمندان این کشور نتوانسته‌اند ارزش و اهمیت هنر امروز را به مردم بشناسانند. تاکنون مردم کشور ما فرصت‌های مناسبی برای تماس نزدیک با «هنر مدرن» نداشته‌اند و اکنون باید با کوشش همگانی مردم را به هنر نزدیک نمود [...] و این کار تنها وقتی امکان‌پذیر است که نمایشگاه‌های ملی بسیاری از هنر [مدرن] ترتیب داده شود.» [Marcos Grigorian, in *Avalin namāyeshgāh-e dosālāna-ye tehrān* [*The First Exhibition of Tehran Biennial of Painting*] (Tehran: Edāra-ye honar-hā-ye zibā [General Administration of Fine Arts], 1958), exhibition catalogue, Tehran, April 14, 1958, 5.]

<sup>207</sup> Members of the group were modern painters and sculptors Parviz Tanavoli, Marcos Grigorian, Bijan Saffari, Sohrab Sepehri, Sirak Melkonian and Manouchehr Sheibani. [Tanavoli, *Ātolia kabud* [*Atelier Kabud*], 22.]

<sup>208</sup> Jalal Sattari, "Komak be āfarinandegān [Aiding the Creators]," *Rūdaki*, 1972, 3.

<sup>209</sup> Regarding biennial's qualities of being ordered or having implicit ruling, Ahmad Esfandiari—a modern contributor of the exhibition—quotes complaints by the foreign jury to Department of Fine Arts that this Department has already selected works, so why did they invite us as the jury? [Mojabi, *Pišgāmān-e naqāši-ye mo'āšer-e irān* [*Pioneers of Contemporary Persian Painting*], 160.]

<sup>210</sup> Karim Emami, "Not by Invitation Alone," in *Karim Emami on Modern Iranian Culture, Literature and Art*, ed. Houra Yavari (New York: Persian Heritage Foundation, 2014), 217.

<sup>211</sup> «کشوری که با طبقه هنرمندش مانند طبقه «حجس‌ها» که در هندوستان وجود داشته رفتار می‌کند حالا می‌خواهد [...] راه توسعه هنر ملی (!) [...] را هموارتر کند. [...] کسانی از هنر مدرن دم می‌زنند که تا کنون نه از «مدرن» و نه از قدیم چیزی فهمیده و انتظار نمی‌رود که [...] گمان می‌کنم که برای ما «حجس‌ها» همین طرف‌ها بهتر باشد.» [Paridokht Sepehri, ed., *Jāy-e pāy-e dust (nama-hā-ye dustān-e sohrāb sepehri)* [*Footprints of the Friend (Letters by Friends to Sohrab Sepehri)*] (Tehran: Dehnāviz, 2008), 17.]

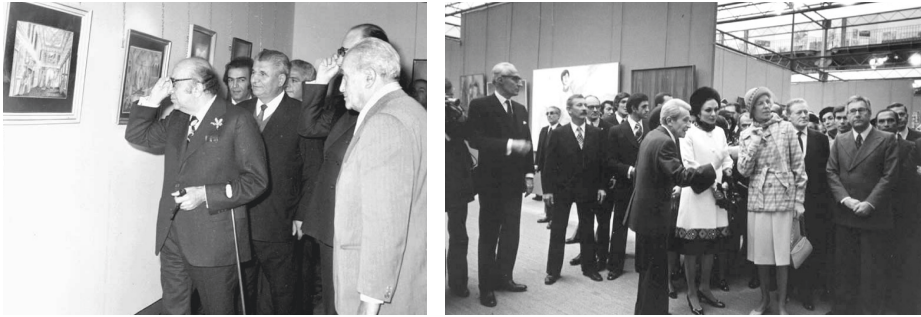


Fig. 3-30 (Left) "Prime minister Amir Abbas Hoveyda visiting an exhibition in 1974," IRAN 25-8278. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

(Right) "Empress Farah Diba visiting the Iranian podium at *Grand Palais Paris* in 1973," IRAN25-9228. [Ibid.]

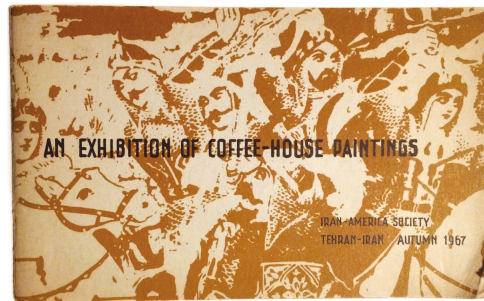
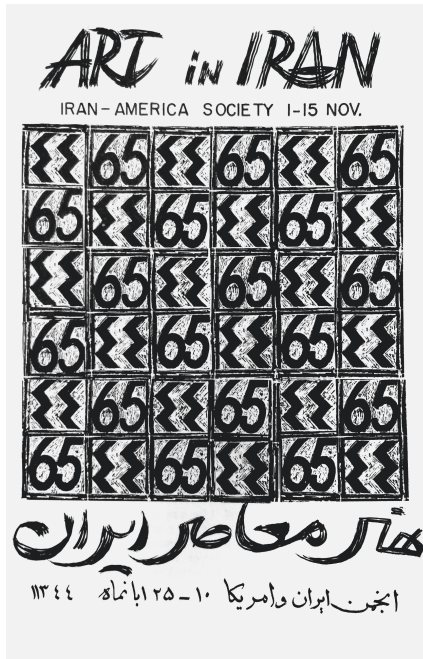


Fig. 3-31 (Left) "Catalogue of an exhibition (*Honar-e mo'āser-e irān* [*Contemporary Art in Iran*]) in Iran-America Society in 1965," Courtesy of Newsha Djavadipour

(Top Right) "Mehrdad Pahlbod, minister of art and culture (first from the right) visiting a photography exhibition," IRAN 25-7808. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

(Bottom Right) "Catalogue of an exhibition (*Namāyešgāh-e naqāši-hā-ye qahvaḵāna* [*An Exhibition of Coffee-House Paintings*]) in Iran-America Society in 1967," Author's collection



Fig. 3-32 (Top Left) "Empress Farah Diba visiting *Tehran Biennial of Painting* in n.d.," IRAN 25-28318. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran  
(Bottom Left) "Catalogue of first *Tehran Biennial of Painting* in 1958." [Ibid.]

(Top Right) "Empress Farah Diba (behind her Mehrdad Pahlbod minister of art and culture) awarding prizes in fourth *Tehran Biennial of Painting* in 1964," IRAN 25-1352. [Ibid.]

(Bottom Right) "L-R: Sohrab Sepehri and Bahman Mohasses," in Paridokht Sepehri, ed., *Jāy-e pāy-e dust (name-hā-ye dustān-e sohrāb sepehri)* [Footprints of the Friend (Letters by Friends to Sohrab Sepehri)] (Tehran: Dehnāviz, 2008), 16

In addition to the intention of the state, many criticisms to *Tehran Biennial of Painting* derived from the destructive role of the exhibition. The main complaint was that the criteria for selection of the works by the jury had become standard of competition among artists and they copied winners' works. As Moheesen Vaziri Moqaddam (1924–2018)—of contributors—complained, biennials were criticized because they violated the slow but creative attempts initiated by the modern artists on their



own.<sup>212</sup> Simin Daneshvar (1921–2012), whose writings about Iranian modern art are considered among the first criticisms, cautioned the conflicting impact that the foreign jury<sup>213</sup> had on artists of the biennial. Daneshvar's point was that a hasty competition for appeasing to the jury's taste had distanced artists from a thoughtful procedure, and instead, what remained was nothing but a sheer imitation of Western modern styles.<sup>214</sup> For others, such as Bahman Mohasses, the imitative quality had much to do with an artistic atmosphere of flattery and stagnancy and the biennial was a good example of a situation where all contributors, notwithstanding their personal styles, had turned to Abstractionism because they knew it was of interest to the jury.<sup>215</sup> This was exactly the point that Emami mentioned about the fourth biennial (1964): "[...] we come to scores of contributors who have evidently been converted to Abstractionism overnight [...] I am against abrupt changes of style and jumping on the bandwagon. Our young artists will arrive at Abstractionism only through personal development."<sup>216</sup> The pessimism about the biennial among art-for-art's-sake seekers was further fed by the role of this exhibition in promoting a false understanding of modern art. For instance, in discussing the second biennial (1960), Akbar Tajvidi (1927–2017, a renowned miniature painter) defined modern art as: "A modern painter is someone who for expression of himself applies all old painting styles and, at the same time, he does not restrict himself to them. Upon this definition, thus, in evaluating a painting today, it is not important if it has been done in academic style or Impressionism, Cubism and Abstractionism [...]"<sup>217</sup> Due to the centrality of Abstractionism at the biennial, it had created a false impression that modern art is abstract and not formalistic: "The importance of the second biennial was that young artists who [before the biennial] aimed at creating new forms, broken lines and mixed motifs, [...] surpassed this level and rather dealt with the [abstract] essence of their thought and feeling."<sup>218</sup>

212 "Dar noḡostin biyenāl-e tehrān če goḡašt? [What Happened at the First Tehran Biennial?]," *Rastāḡiz*, October 11, 1977.

213 The jury of each biennial was made of both Iranian and foreign members, nevertheless the Iranian members were also mainly selected from foreign educated artists. [Jalal Moqaddam, "Naqāši-ye jadid-e irāni wa harf-hā-ye digar [Iranian Modern Painting and Other Words]," *Ketāb-e māh*, no.1 (1962): 134.]

214 Simin Daneshvar, "Sevomin namāyešgāh-e dosālāna-ye naqāši dar kāk-e abyaz [The Third Biennial of Painting in the Abyaz Palace]," *Ketāb-e māh*, no.1 (1962): 143–44.

215 Mojabi, *Sarāmadān-e honar-e now [Masters of Modern Art]*, 82–85.

216 Karim Emami, "Saḡqa-khaneh Dominant," *Keyhan International*, April 14, 1964.

217 «نقاش مدرنیست و پیشرو کسی است که برای توجیه مافی‌الضمیر خود از تمام مکاتب نقاشی کهن استفاده کرده ضمناً مقیدبودن به هیچ یک از مکاتب قدیمی را الزام‌آور نداند. با این تعریف دیگر این که آیا نقاشی به سبک آکادمیک صحیح‌تر است یا به سبک امپرسیونیسم و کوبیسم [...]» [Akbar Tajvidi, "Moqaddamāt-e ijād-e yek biyenāl-e bozorg-e āsiāi dar tehrān farāham migardad [Preparations for a Grand Asian Biennial in Tehran Are Undertaken]," *Aḡbār-e honar wa honarmandān*, no. 7 (1961): 6.]

218 «چینیال ۱۳۳۹ تهران» از این نقطه نظر درخور توجهی شایان است، زیرا به آسانی می‌توان دید که هنرمندان جوان ایران و همان کسانی که تا چندی پیش، همت خود را مصروف به یافتن اشکال تازه و خطوط شکسته و نقوش دره‌ریخته کرده بودند، [...] از این مرحله «Goftogu-i darbāra-ye dovomin biyenāl-e tehrān [A Discussion about Second Tehran Biennial]," *Aḡbār-e honar wa honarmandān*, no. 8 (1961): 2.]

The core opposition by art-for-art's-sake artists to *Tehran Biennial of Painting* was even with its emphasis on national aspects in the modern art and an "authentic school of visual arts" which explicitly were mentioned in introduction and text of the first biennial's catalogue respectively by Ehsan Yarshater (1920–2018, historian and writer) and Marcos Grigorian (1925–2007, modern painter).<sup>219</sup> Additionally, different writings about the biennial emphasized the leadership of the Department of Fine Arts in establishing a "new Iranian movement"<sup>220</sup> or an "Iranian contemporary school of painting and sculpture"<sup>221</sup> and its introduction to the world. In fact, this national school was what Emami referred to the works of a number of painters and sculptors, coining the term "Saqqā-khaneh"<sup>222</sup> in 1962. These artists who were inspired by votive Shi'ite art, applied religious pictorial elements such as talismanic seals, religious and folk visual elements in a modern context of their works that reminded the viewer of Shi'ite shrines and religious gatherings and conveyed the air of familiarity and intimacy associated with Saqqā-khaneh.<sup>223</sup> [Fig. 3-33] It was exactly based on their neo-traditional qualities that Saqqā-khaneh could appeal to patronage of the government as a formal art and the basis of a sort of national school of art. In fact, the general perception of these artists was that they could achieve a modern-traditional synthesis which included an Iranian identity and character<sup>224</sup> and precisely aligned with the cultural policies of the state. Therefore, with the third biennial, Saqqā-khaneh was entirely acknowledged and promoted as a national school by the regime via a system of awarding, consecration and rejection.<sup>225</sup> It was connected to this policy that Kamran Diba (1937–), the architect and first director of Tehran's Museum of Contemporary Art (1977), in his introduction to the catalogue of an exhibition of the Saqqā-khaneh School (1977) explicitly pointed that without biennials and official patronage such a movement could not be possible.<sup>226</sup> Nonetheless, the criticisms by art-for-art's-sake seekers against the regime's

219 Grigorian, *Avalin namāyeshgāh-e dosālāna [The First Exhibition of Biennial]*, 3 & 6.

220 Akbar Tajvidi, "Biyenāl-e bozorg-e honari-ye tehrān [Grand Art Biennial of Tehran]," *Akbār-e honar wa honarmandān*, no. 5 (1959): 4.

221 Tajvidi, *Moqaddamāt-e ijād-e yek biyenāl [Preparations for a Grand Asian Biennial]*, 6.

222 *Saqqā-kāna* [Saqqā-khaneh] was a public water dispenser typically as part of mosques, shrines and bazaars in Iran with votive functions. [*Encyclopedia Iranica Online*, "Saqqā-kāna History," accessed December 21, 2017, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/saqqā-kāna-i-history>.]

223 Karim Emami, "Saqqā-kāna: negāhi dobāra be maktab-e saqqā-kāna [Saqqā-khaneh: Saqqā-khaneh School Revisited]," in *Saqqā-kāna [Saqqākhaneh]* (Tehran: Muza-ye honar-hā-ye mo'āser-e tehrān vābasta be bonyād-e šahbānu farah [Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art in Affiliation with the Empress Farah Foundation], 1977), exhibition catalogue, Tehran, October 22, 1977, n.p.

224 Hamid Keshmirshakan, "Neo-Traditionalism and Modern Iranian Painting: The Saqqā-khaneh School in the 1960s," *Iranian Studies* 38, no. 4 (2005): 613.

225 At the third biennial members of Saqqā-khaneh were awarded prizes and their works were selected to be displayed at *Venice Biennial*—some were also purchased for the first time for Museum of Modern Art in New York. [Azin Faezi, "Man ādam-e sāda wa bolandparvāzi hastam: goftogu bā farāmarz pilārām [I Am a Simple and Ambitious Person: An Interview with Faramarz Pilaram]," *Talāš*, no. 56 (1975): 26.]

226 Kamran Diba, Introduction to *Saqqā-kāna [Saqqākhaneh]* (Tehran: Muza-ye honar-hā-ye mo'āser-e tehrān vābasta be bonyād-e šahbānu farah [Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art in Affiliation with the Empress Farah Foundation], 1977), exhibition catalogue, Tehran, October 22, 1977, n.p.

aim to reach a national school of art, as Grigor argues, returned to its hasty manner: “[...] traditionalism was used by modernists and traditionalists alike to dictate politics and taste [...] from being seen as the representative of backwardness, the traditional artist was raised to a sacred position as the link between man and truth.”<sup>227</sup> This approach by the biennial and the official patronage was resisted by more independent artists and artists’ groups that became active during the 1960s and 1970s. Significantly one can refer to *Tālār-e irān* [Hall of Iran] (1964)—later renamed *Tālār-e qandriz* [Hall of Qandriz]—and *Gruh-e honarmandān-e āzād* [Independent Artists Group] (1974). [Fig. 3-34 & 3-35] In manifestos from both groups, which were published in April 1969 and October 1976, respectively, one observes the different artistic intentions than those supported by the regime. In Hall’s manifesto, it is clear that the members obviously regarded “Classicism” as a hindrance to progress toward future. The manifesto sought out an outlet from the compulsory Western heritage of the modern art that had dominated Iranian artists and, therefore, sought after a savior. This savior, according to members, had to be achieved via a national art with more precise respect for local traditions, and this was different from the superficial neo-traditionalism supported by the state: “[...] an art that even if it were not compatible with any of global artistic criteria, it did possess its independent feature. We also believe Iranian painter’s concerns should be solved within borders of his own country and realities. Therefore, we consider it an unnecessary act to partake in international festivals, biennials and art scenes. And we consider the attempts for globalization of [art] issues nothing but evasion [from the solution].”<sup>228</sup> For the manifesto of Independent Artists Group, which was in fact the catalogue statement of group’s fifth exhibition, *Gonj wa gostara II* [Volume and Environment II], one observes the members explicitly attack on the commercial art and its prevalent imitation and superficiality. The main aim of the Independent Artists Group’s manifesto was to tackle the market-driven style of art which accused independent modern works of being imitative, simplistic and therefore irrelevant.<sup>229</sup> In response to these accusations, in their manifesto text they reacted that not everyone, but only the professional critics can distinguish an imitative art from the original one: “Yet, all artists have been waiting for years for illuminating words of professional critics, since all that is said in the name of criticism is not critic’s words, but rather the superficial understanding of enunciators who accuse of imitation [...]”<sup>230</sup> The manifesto of Independent Artists

227 Grigor, *Building Iran*, 164.

228 « [...] هنری که حتی اگر با هیچ یک از الگوهای جهانی قابل انطباق نباشد، خصوصیت مستقل خود را حفظ کند همچنین معتقدیم که مسئله نقاش ایرانی باید در همین جا و در محدوده واقعیات این ملک حل شود. به این دلیل شرکت در فستیوال‌ها، بی‌نیال‌ها و مجامع هنری جهانی [Pakbaz and Morizinejad, *Tālār-e qandriz* [Hall of Qandriz], 149.] را کاری بیهوده می‌دانیم. و سعی در جهانی جلوه‌دادن مسئله را به نوعی گریز تعبیر می‌کنیم.»

229 Jessica Lack, *Why Art We Artists? 100 World Art Manifestos* (London: Penguin, 2017), 287.

230 Ibid.

Group rejected the idea of Iranian modern art imitating Western modern works and condemned that advocates of such an idea confused imitation with influence: “We must not dismiss a new movement and ridicule its simplicity as a result of fearing the appearance of imitators. Yet being influenced is not a voluntary action that can be avoided. Those who are sensitive are influenced by their living environment, and the living environment in its turn is under the influence of communication and economic systems [...]. A need has brought together the members of Independent Artists Group [...]. The environmental influence has created this need in us. The need for an intellectual play. [...] being born anew in the same main path. The need for self-destruction [...]”<sup>231</sup>

Simultaneously the *Roundtable of Painters* (1962) was held at headquarters of *Ketāb-e māh* or *Keyhān-e māh* [*Book of the Month*] magazine.<sup>232</sup> [Fig. 3-36] In the sessions, representatives of academic, conservative and modern artists took part and discussed mainly the necessity for such a national school of art. The art-for-art’s-sake approach by these artists is distinguished, for instance, in their definition of “identity,” “national art” or, more broadly, the responsibilities of the artist in society. These artists were critical of the neo-traditional solution of Saqqa-khaneh School that constricted identity to a formalistic modernism merely with attention to the local motifs. The alternative definition for identity offered by the independent artists, as Mohammadreza Jodat (1939–, a founding member of Hall of Iran) explained, was completely opposed to the hegemonic definition of Islamic-Iranian identity that was propagandized by the regime and, therefore, it took high audacity to receive support: “[...] I could not resist and say that seeking identity is nonsense. Our identity is what we observe now and nothing else. Do not search for something new, because there is no new thing.”<sup>233</sup> It was upon such definition of identity that these artists rejected national art as a school seeking identity in the past, yet remaining international. In an introduction to Hall of Iran’s magazine, *Faṣḥ-i dar honar* [*A Chapter in Art*] (four issues in 1970–1971), Roueen Pakbaz (1939–), another founder of Hall of Iran, objected the hegemonic national art as representative of the ethnics, ethics or traditions of a nation because it violated the dynamic definition of “art”:

231 Ibid., 288.

232 According to the magazine, the objective of the *Roundtable of Painters* was “[...] discussion on search for a conceivable and logical route to future of Iranian painting.” [« [...] جستن راه و رسم معقولی برای آینده نقاشی ایران. »] [Simin Daneshvar, “Miz-e gerd-e naqāshān [Roundtable of Painters],” *Ketāb-e māh*, no. 1 (1962): 147.] *Ketāb-e māh* was one of *Keyhān-e māh*’s publications with Mostafa Mesbahzadeh as the license-owner and the editorial board of Jalal Al-Ahmad, Simin Daneshvar and Parviz Dariush. This magazine in its *Gozāreš-e māh* [“Report of the Month”] covered the news on new artistic developments in Iran, artists, exhibitions, etc.

233 [« [...] نمی‌توانستم مخالفت کنم و نمی‌توانستم بگویم که دنبال هویت رفتن معنی ندارد. هویت ما، همین است که هست. غیر از این نیست. »] [Pakbaz and Morizinejad, *Tālār-e qandriz* [*Hall of Qandriz*], 101.]

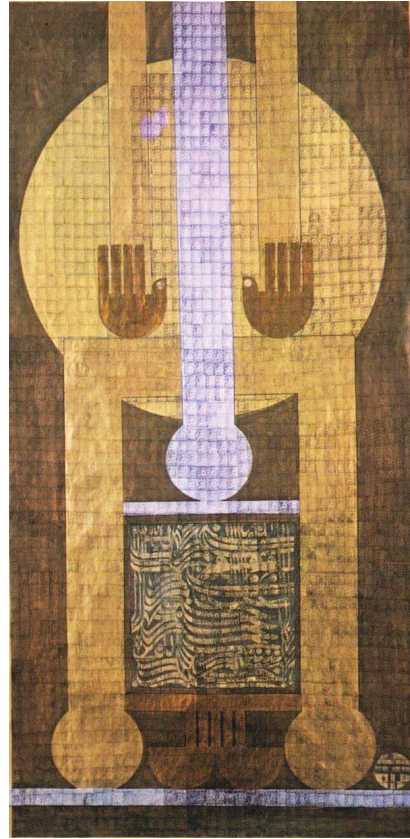
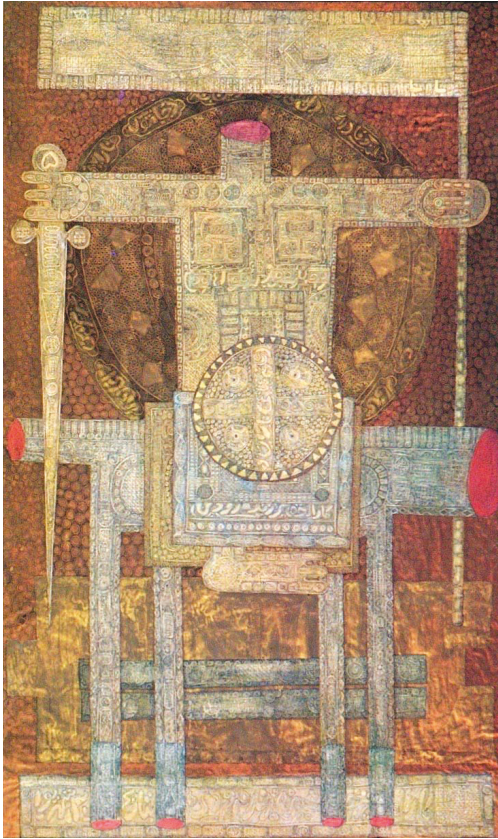


Fig. 3-33 (Left) Hossein Zenderoudi, *Untitled*, 13 Shahrivar, Year [?]. Tempera on paper, 200 × 120 cm. In *Saqqā-kāna* [*Saqqā-khaneh*] (Tehran: Muza-ye honar-hā-ye moāsher-e tehrān vābasta be bonyād-e šahbānu farah [Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art in Affiliation with the Empress Farah Foundation], 1977), exhibition catalogue, Tehran, October 22, 1977, n.p. Institute for Art History at LMU Munich

(Top Right) Faramarz Pilaram, *Untitled*, 1962. Tempera on paper, 200 × 100 cm. [Ibid.]

(Bottom Right) "Shi'ite symbol of *Panja-ye panj tan* [The Hand]." [Ibid.]





Fig. 3-34 (Top) “Logo of Hall of Iran’s publications in 1965 (on front and back cover of *Ketāb-e sāl-e irān* [*Hall of Iran’s Yearbook*]—a book published by the group at the end of each year),” in *Ketāb-e sāl-e irān* [*Hall of Iran’s Yearbook*] (Tehran: Entešārāt-e tālār-e irān, 1965). National Library and Archives Organization of Iran (Bottom Left) “Some members of Hall of Iran (from right: Roueen Pakbaz, Mansour Qandriz, Qobad Shiva, Sirous Malek and Faramarz Pilaram),” Courtesy of Mansour Qandriz (Bottom Right) “Invitation Card for the first group exhibition of Hall of Iran’s members in June 25, 1964,” in *Tālār-e qandriz: tajroba-i dar ‘arza-ye ejtemā’i-ye honar* [*Hall of Qandriz: An Experience in Social Presentation of Art*], ed. Roueen Pakbaz and Hasan Morizinejad (Tehran: Herfa-honarmand, 2016), 28



Fig. 3-35 (Left) "Poster for the exhibition *Gonj wa gostara II [Volume and Environment II]*," in October 12, 1975 by Morteza Momayez, Courtesy of Anoushiravan Momayez

(Top Right) "Members of Independent Artists Group (L-R: Marcos Grigorian, Morteza Momayez, Masoud Arabshahi, Sirak Melkonian and Gholamhossein Nami)," in Mohammad Shamkhani, "Āvāngārdism-e ahlišoda-ye goruh-e āzād: negāhi be kānsepčūāl ārt dar se epizod [Tamed Avant-gardism of Independent Artists Group: A Review of Conceptual Art in Three Episodes]," *Irān*, May 7, 2002

(Bottom Right) "Morteza Momayez's installation in *Gonj wa gostara II [Volume and Environment II]* in 1975," in Behzad Hatam, "Agar rāhi hast, ke hast, hamin ast! [If There Is a Way, That There Is, Is This Way!]," *Rūdaki*, no. 50 (1975): 19. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

"The art which is not able to surpass the dictated criteria, i.e. the art that cannot create new criteria, not only is it not dynamic but is soon buried with old social manifestations. The national art is in no way placed in the past culture and not merely in the future, but it reflects the contradiction of both."<sup>234</sup> [Fig. 3-37] So clearly, these artists defended the concerned artist and his relation with the surroundings. The national art should be adopted from the facts of artist's own life and at the same time should be in dialogue with global inventions to retain its own nationality.<sup>235</sup> The "return to authenticity" for these artists, according to Aghdashlou, was not something attempted to be referred to, but it was something to be sought within

«هنری که از حوزه معیارهای حاکم فراتر نرود، یعنی نتواند معیارهای تازه‌ای بیافریند، نه تنها پوینده نیست، بلکه همراه با سایر نمودهای کهنه اجتماعی، به زودی مدفون خواهد شد. هنر ملی نه مطلقاً در فرهنگ گذشته جای می‌گیرد و نه صرفاً در فرهنگ آینده، بلکه بازتابی از تناقض این دوست.» [Pakbaz, *Negārkhāna-ye irān [Hall of Iran]*, 62.]

235 Ibid., 64.

each artist.<sup>236</sup> As Ebrahim Golestan (1922–, filmmaker and advocate of modern artists) discussed Sohrab Sepehri's paintings with regards for their Iranian identity, it was the independence and loyalty of artist to himself.<sup>237</sup> This emphasis on the artist was the main point that differentiated the art-for-art's-sake seekers from the official art. Therefore, the art-for-art's-sake artists were constantly criticized for their works to be replicas of Western art. Marcos Grigorian—one of the founders of Independent Artists Group—in a reply to the critique that outlawed this group for not producing national works, commented: "Many label us as non-Iranians and copy-makers, but when a work of art is created by an Iranian nationality, so obviously that work is Iranian. We [Independent Artists Group] as collective artists are motivated not to be erratic and commercial artists [...]."<sup>238</sup>



Fig. 3-36 "The front cover of *Ketāb-e mäh* [Book of the Month] magazine (1962)," in *Ketāb-e mäh*, no. 1 (1962). National Library and Archives Organization of Iran



Fig. 3-37 "The front cover of Hall of Iran's magazine *Faṣḥ-i dar honar* [A Chapter in Art] (1970)," in *Faṣḥ-i dar honar*, no. 1 (1970). National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

236 Aghdashlou, *Az koṣhī-hā wa ḥasrat-hā* [Of Joys and Yearnings], 118.

237 Dariush Kiaras, "Tārīkča-ye gāleri-hā-ye tehrān: gāleri borgez [History of the Galleries of Tehran: Borghese Gallery]," *Tandis*, no. 223 (2012): 21.

238 «خیلی‌ها رنگ غیرایرانی بودن و مقلد روی گروه ما زده‌اند، اما وقتی یک کاری به دست یک آدم با ملیت ایرانی ساخته شود، خوب آن [Mohammad Shamkhani, "Avāngārdism-e ahlišoda-ye goruh-e āzād: negāhi be kānsepčūāl ārt dar se epizod [Tamed Avant-gardism of Independent Artists Group: A Review of Conceptual Art in Three Episodes], *Irān*, May 7, 2002.]



Following the heritage left by the fighting cocks, the avant-garde artists' groups of 1960s and 1970s also respected the position of artist as an intellectual whose avant-gardism *should not be castigated* by the society. Instead, these artists took on the collective role of educators in order to decrease the gap between them and society and, at the same time, to prevent lowering art to the public level. This collective role was undertaken through dialogue and debates with students or formulating a new school in painting that itself could make a change in cultural condition of the society.<sup>239</sup> In fact, the avant-gardism that was promoted by these artists' groups was neglected and restricted by the state because of their discordance with the official art or its cultural or non-commercial approach. Firouz Shirvanlou (1938–1989, activist writer and art critic) in describing works by Gholamhossein Nami (1936–), a member of Independent Artists Group, pointed to a major discordance: "They are but kind of rebellions against aesthetic criteria of the market [...] they cannot be adapted with aesthetic criteria of the customer or Iranian 'bourgeois' collector who seeks eye-catching works."<sup>240</sup> Or Behzad Hatam (1949–), art critic and graphic designer, in his text on Independent Artists Group defended these discordances as: "This is a healthful, accurate and logical art. It is this iconoclasm, sneering of self and others, or even radicalism that glosses the essence of art, cracks the wrinkled skin of the art of a time and makes it flourish."<sup>241</sup>

Simultaneous with the second biennial (1960), the scenery of art and cultural field adopted considerable changes affected by the presence of the Empress Farah Diba and her interest for the support of modern art. The patronage by the Empress together with measures by her Special Office and their comparison to the supports that Department of Fine Arts earlier provided artists are significant in distinguishing borders between modern artists and the state. A principal point about the Empress's cultural policies is that her Special Office shared the same emphasis on national art but in a more democratic manner that made artists' cooperation with her office possible. This democratic approach was rooted in the Empress's personal background.<sup>242</sup> At the same time, regarding the managing and material needs

239 Saqafi, "Šahr wa 'arza-ye ejtemā'i-ye honar [City and Social Presentation of Art], 46.

240 «[...] جز نوعی عصبانیت به ضد قراردادهای زیباییشناختی بازار نیست. [...] نمی‌توانند با معیارهای زیباییشناختی خریدار یا مجموعه‌مدار [Dariush Kiaras, "Tārīḫča-ye gāleri-hā-ye tehrān: gāleri sāmān [History of the Galleries of Tehran: Saman Gallery]," *Tandis*, no. 222 (2012): 20.]

241 «این یک جریان سالم و درست و منطقی هنری است. همین سنت‌شکنی‌ها، به خود و دیگران دهن‌کجی کردن‌ها، حتی بگوئیم تب جریان تند و گذرا را گرفتن‌ها و دیوانه‌بازی‌هاست که جوهر هنر را جلا می‌دهد، پوست چروکیده و سترون هنر دوره‌ای را می‌ترکاند و باروری و زایش و رشد و گسترش را به دنبال می‌آورد.» [Behzad Hatam, "Agar rāhi hast, ke hast, hamin ast! [If There Is a Way, That There Is, Is This Way!]," *Rūdaki*, no. 50 (1975): 18.]

242 More liberal and moderate standpoints of Farah Diba can be attributed to her education in architecture in France and the familiarity she formed with the left and nationalist activists in years of her studies via Abdolreza Qotbi. Qotbi, cousin and companion of Farah Diba in Paris, was an activist of Pan-Iranist Party and his nationalist ties later made him an opponent of the Shah's policies. [Abbas Milani, *Eminent Persians: The Men and Women Who Made Modern Iran: 1941–1979* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 165.] Also, in her memoirs, Farah Diba reveals her interest for Russian art and culture based on a special connection that she formed with Russian art, literature and music. This connection was grounded on her father's

of a growing middle class and emergence of new skills, the pacifist policies of the Special Office were tolerated by the Department of Fine Arts that only represented court's conservative programs.<sup>243</sup> The presence of the Empress apparently divided the state patronage into two: Empress and her Special Office with a more moderate policy toward modern artists and the Shah and his court that through Department of Fine Arts supported an *ordered art* with more national and traditional identity.<sup>244</sup> Within such an environment, one observes that modern artists, who saw no accordance between their works and cultural policies of the regime, became attracted to Special Office. This attraction by artists was due to the different deployment of the Empress and court to modern art. Although both centers emphasized localization of modern art, for Special Office it was a participatory and interactive process and opposed to the conservative and monolithic methods. Grigor explains this difference in terms of the contrasting perceptions that they had about functions of art. According to the Empress, art was a means to reform and a type of elitist evolution exerted from above to acculturate people and; in contrast to the phallic and destructive modernization of the court, the Empress followed a feminine and constructive manner, particularly in retrospection to the past.<sup>245</sup> Another role played by the Special Office was the policy to create a social conciliation for art and removal of its isolation by encouraging a dialogue between artists and the government.<sup>246</sup> This aim was supposed to be implemented by bringing it among people and providing a climate in which all arts could be presented.<sup>247</sup>

Nonetheless, it should be noted that similar to Department of Fine Arts that sought localization of modern art as a cultural policy, Special Office also promoted a pseudo-localism in art and culture by means of contribution of the artists and intellectuals. As Pakbaz discusses, emergence of the Empress in the field of art even amplified the support for Saqqa-khaneh School with the aim of achieving an Iranian

education in Saint Petersburg and her grandfather, an archaeologist and advocate of art, who also was dispatched as consulate to Georgia and for research purposes stayed in Leningrad. [Farah Diba-Pahlavi, *Erinnerungen* (Bergisch-gladbach: Gustav Lübe, 2004), 218.]

**243** Ahmadi, "Havā-ye tāza [Fresh Air]," 113.

**244** According to Abbas Milani—Iranian historian—this discordance between the Empress's stances and the court caused a period of nearly fifteen years of tug of wars between them that despite the supremacy of the court paradigm, they were only the last six years of the 1970s during which due to the Shah's paranoia and inaction, the Empress took advantage to visualize the prevalence of her ideals in art and culture. [Milani, *Eminent Persians*, 168.]

**245** Grigor, *Building Iran*, 183–84.

**246** *Ibid.*, 184.

**247** *Jašn-e honar-e širāz [Shiraz Festival of Arts]* (inaugurated in 1967) was crystallization of such a goal. This annual festival under patronage of Farah Diba's Special Office followed the aim of increasing public awareness on both national and international arts. It might be said that this festival was a counterpart to the known international festivals such as *Baalbeck*, *Spoleto* or *Orange* with a focus on a wider range of arts and cultures. The event included a series of religious dramas, mystic transports of *Ta'zia*, tragedy of the Karbala martyrs and also included concerts, recitals, and music ranging from contemporary to folklore. [Lesley Blanch, *Farah Shahbanou of Iran, Queen of Persia* (London: Collins, 1978), 116–17.]

-ism in arts.<sup>248</sup> Also employment of independent artists and literary figures (from oppositions and the Left Party) was an optimism to resolve the crisis of legitimacy and to absorb the approval of certain social groups. Lesley Blanch saw this measure as an act of practising democracy in terms of patronage of local artists and creation of an art market for the international artworks.<sup>249</sup> Aghdashlou, who was assigned as art and cultural manager of the Special Office (1978–1979), explains that Department of Fine Arts, particularly from the mid-1960s when the Empress's office had become active, adopted merely a ritualistic role by attending only to traditional arts and coverage of court's news, and Special Office complemented the task by attending to the new arts. The policy behind absorption of the modern artists, Aghdashlou argues, was due to the fact that the main artistic-intellectual body of this time came from a leftist background and any cooperation with the artists inevitably led to the involvement of the oppositions. At the same time, artists' acceptance to employments at the institutes of Special Office was a mutual policy by them as an opportunity to arrive at their own artistic goals. Nonetheless, he approves of the art-for-art's-sake seekers who remained steadfast in their opposition to the state organizations; those who consented and compromised found themselves on the losing end.<sup>250</sup>

The most important institutes that engaged artists and intellectuals were *Kānun-e parvareš-e fekri-ye kudakān wa nowjavānān* [Institute for the Intellectual Development of the Children and Young Adults] (1964) and *Sāzmān-e televiziun-e melli-ye irān* [Iranian National Television Organization] (1967). As a testament to the importance of these institutes, when compared to the Department of Fine Arts, the art and cultural director of the Institute for the Intellectual Development (Firouz Shirvanlou) was selected from the highly influential and independent figures. According to Aghdashlou, the massive Department of Fine Arts not only took no proper step in prediction and advancement of the arts but also with a bunch of nonsense works proceeded to destroy arts, in particular the national art.<sup>251</sup> Aghdashlou, also aware of the attention to the contradictory social climate of Iran in those years, considers the significance of Institute for the Intellectual Development in its quest for reconciliation of all politico-intellectual types.<sup>252</sup> The Iranian National Television Organization established by Abdolreza Qotbi (1940–)<sup>253</sup>—

248 Shahrouz Mohajer, "Az tālār-e irān tā dāeirat al-ma'āref-e honar: mošāheba bā ruin pākbaz [From the Hall of Iran to the Encyclopedia of Art: An Interview with Roueen Pakbaz]," *Tandis*, no. 14 (2003): 6.

249 Blanch, *Farah Shahbanou of Iran*, 116–17.

250 Aghdashlou, Aydin (painter and author), in discussion with the author, April 8, 2016.

251 Ibid.

252 Ibid.

253 Abdolreza Qotbi was of the Empress's closest circles of fellows. This circle was selected as a result of two distinguished aims: to profit a high-level human force for managing the tasks and to prove people a change in the conditions with their demands being noticed by the government. The circle was mainly consisted of members such as Abdolreza Qotbi, Lili Jahanara (Amirarjomand), Leili Matin Daftari, Kamran Diba and secretaries and consultants of her Special Office such as Hossein Nasr, Houshang Nahavandi and others. [Ahmad Ali Mansour, *Man wa kândān-e pahlavi [Me and the Pahlavis]* (California: Tukā, 1992), 98.]

the Emperor's theorist of liberal plans for absorption of dissident artists and intellectuals—was the main institute that came in conflict with court's cultural policies due to its dedication to high arts: "[...] Qotbi used his considerable political capital to hire many dissidents who had either come out of prison or were banned from their jobs by SAVAK (*Sāzmān-e eṭelā'āt wa amniat-e melli-ye irān* [Organization of Intelligence and National Security]). The political cognoscenti knew that the only governmental office that would employ them was Qotbi's rapidly expanding organization."<sup>254</sup> About centrality of this organization, Pahlbod, the then minister of art and culture and head of the Department of Fine Arts, later in an interview said: "[...] it could easily be understood that all writers, artists and extraordinary officials, truthfully, had gathered together in this center [the fact that to the Shah was nothing but another political opposition]. I saw the television as an educational organization which could be an important national base for public education and in national orientations [...]"<sup>255</sup>

It should be noted that even democratic plans of Special Office for attracting the modern artists did not end in an entire satisfaction of artists and its cultural policies were still criticized by more independent art-for-art's-sake artists. According to Pakbaz, this resistance to the Special Office by some artists, such as members of Hall of Iran, was rooted in the fact that they made a generation of artists who was brought up in a leftist context and the pseudo-localism that was supported by the Special Office was not in line with their idealism: "At that time we never sympathized with the 'right current.' We could not ensue the right wing [...]. Special Office was suspicious. It posed issues which were none of our serious concerns."<sup>256</sup> In fact, this generation of the artists was not old enough to be affected by the despotism of the regime that ended in the coup d'état of 1953, yet it was not young enough to be enamored by the supports provided by the Special Office.<sup>257</sup> For these artists, the patronage exerted by Special Office was an intrusive act having unsettled the rational progression of modern art that artists wisely pursued on their own with passion and scrutiny. In fact, artists witnessed that *subjectivity of art*, instead of attaining art's actual role in life, had turned to a mere simple topic of talk.<sup>258</sup> The financial support by Special Office, which occurred in various forms of holding art and cultural festivals, participating artists in local and international exhibitions, purchase of their works, monetary aids and so forth, were also matter of criticism due to their uncouth and pretentious nature. In an interview that *Rūdaki* maga-

254 Milani, *Eminent Persians*, 166.

255 «[...] خیلی راحت می‌شد درک کرد که تمام نویسندگان و تمام هنرمندان و تمام شخصیت‌های فوق‌العاده مملکتی این‌ها دور این دستگاه جمع‌اند [...] من تلویزیون را به صورت یک سازمان آموزشی می‌دیدم، سازمانی که یک پایگاه ملی فوق‌العاده مهم می‌توانست باشد از نظر جمع‌اند [...] من تلویزیون را به صورت یک سازمان آموزشی می‌دیدم، سازمانی که یک پایگاه ملی فوق‌العاده مهم می‌توانست باشد از نظر جمع‌اند [...]» [Afkhami, *Barnāma-ye tārik-e šafāhi [Oral History Program]*, 44.]

256 «آن زمان اصلاً چیزی‌ان را نمی‌شناختیم. ما دنبال راست نمی‌توانستیم برویم [...]. دفتر فرح از جنبه روشنگری پرسش‌برانگیز بود. [...]» [Pakbaz and Morizinejad, *Tālār-e qandriz [Hall of Qandriz]*, 106.]

257 Saqafi, "Šahr wa 'arza-ye ejtemā'i-ye honar [City and Social Presentation of Art]," 38.

258 *Ibid.*, 48.

zine made with the gallery owners in 1972, Tanavoli pointed to the inefficiency of the Special Office for allocating the budget to certain arts or inviting of certain foreign artists for local festivals.<sup>259</sup> As he criticized: "We should notice what other works could be done for people with such budgets [...]. They invite foreign artists who have not been able to communicate their art to their own people and are popular only within a certain limited class. Why should our people need these artists?"<sup>260</sup>

As a result of the sharp rise in Iranian oil revenues since 1967 and the economic Emergency Plans beginning since the mid-1950s, liberal reforms were enacted and great sums were channeled into the economy via loans and annual budget to private entrepreneurs.<sup>261</sup> This decision by the regime was also influenced by the dissatisfaction that modern artists reflected in their statements against state's negligence. In the statement of the first exhibition of Hall of Iran in 1944 (a group exhibition of 12 members) written by a main member, Mansour Qandriz (1935–1965), one reads an overt complaint about this situation: "States in many developed countries have facilitated the foundation of artistic organizations. Unfortunately in our country, in spite of an urgent need and mutilated efforts, no measure has been taken to help artists exhibiting their works [...]."<sup>262</sup> At the same time, biennials and financial supports by the Special Office — in forms of purchases and orders — had successfully established Saqqa-khaneh as the official art school by the end of the 1960s and the decade of 1970s was the sovereignty time of the state in arts: "In the 1970s all kinds of sociopolitical agitations were hidden beneath the surface of high art and it was promoted and financed by the Pahlavi court. This trend continued in this decade to define cultural norms."<sup>263</sup> By the beginning of 1970s, the official art was so well accepted that resistance to its enchantment was not simple and even influenced the radicalism of those like Hall of Iran. This financial dominance of the state over the field of art caused more intrusive measures by government such as issuing

259 A series of state-sponsored exhibitions started since the second half of the 1960s. These exhibitions were held on historical occasions in the Iranian calendar such as the exhibition held at National Museum parallel with the Shah's coronation ceremony in 1967 that reviewed Iranian national arts in the past 25 years under the second Pahlavi regime, or serial festivals such as *Jašn-e farhang wa honar [Festival of Culture and Art]* in 1968 and *Shiraz Festival of Art* in 1967. The central policy of these programs was to venerate Iran's national and traditional art.

260 «باید ببینیم با این پول برای این مردم چه کارها که نمی‌توان کرد [...] هنرمندانی را دعوت می‌کنیم که حتی در کشور خودشان نتوانسته‌اند با توده‌ها ارتباطی برقرار کنند و تنها در یک سطح خاص و بین یک طبقه محدود محبوبیت دارند. مردم ما چه نیازی به این آدم‌ها دارند؟» ["Goftogu-i bā modirān-e gāleri-hā [An Interview with Gallery Owners]," *Rūdaki*, no.13 (1972): 22.]

261 In 1960–1963, there was an acute economic crisis laying on ambitious plans by the state that obliged Iran to seek emergency aid from both the International Monetary Fund and the US government. The Kennedy Administration acted but on condition that Shah brought liberals into the cabinet, based on the belief that liberal reforms were the best guarantee against communist revolutions. [Abrahamian, *Iran between Two Revolutions*, 421–22.]

262 «امکانات ایجاد سازمان‌های هنری در بیشتر کشورهای مترقی جهان مسأله‌ای حل‌شده است. متأسفانه در محیط ما با وجود نیاز کامل و کوشش‌های ناقصی که وجود دارد، هنوز صورت تحقق به خود نگرفته در حالی که احتیاج به ایجاد امکانات بیشتر و کافی که هنرمندان بتوانند آثار خود را به راحتی عرضه کنند همچنان باقی است [...]» [Pakbaz, *Negār-kāna-ye irān [Hall of Iran]*, 13.]

263 Grigor, *Building Iran*, 175.

Establishment and Activity Permit Statute for private art associations and artists' groups (1967) and private art galleries (1974) by which activities of these centers had to come under supervision of the Department of Fine Arts. The Statutes defined tasks of these institutions and obliged them to report their goals and programs to the Department biannually. According to the texts of the Statutes, one notices their restrictive effect on the private institutions to bring them in line with the cultural policies of the state: "An association's program should accord to advancement of country's cultural plans."<sup>264</sup> Defining the gallery, it reads: "A gallery is a place for exhibition of works of art, in particular, visual and national arts [...]."<sup>265</sup> These Statutes also delimited governmental aid to institutions that promoted national arts. Around the same time, the first public art galleries were established in the 1970s. These public galleries and exhibition salons—*Kāk-e javānān* [Palace of the Youths] (1966), *Kāna-ye āftāb* [Khaneh Aftab] (1970), *Mehr-e šāh* [Mehr Shah Gallery] (1974) and *Takht-e jamšid* [Takht Jamshid Gallery] (1974)—were in fact halls of Department of Fine Arts and were supposed to substitute old public halls such as *Tālār-e rezā 'abbāsi* [Reza Abbasi Hall] (1959) or *Tālār-e farhang* [Farhang Hall] (1941), which had been mainly a place for governmental speeches and not suitable for exhibiting artworks.<sup>266</sup> [Fig. 3-38] These galleries, due to the state-fed budget, could afford free display of works by less financially able and provincial artists, exhibition of foreign artists or publication of artists' books. [Fig. 3-39] It should be noted that another major plan behind public galleries was to exhibit handicrafts and traditional arts (miniature and Coffee-House painting) or works by students of Kamal al-Molk School and Academies of Fine Arts for Girls and Boys. Other activities of the public galleries were organizing collaborative group exhibitions with private galleries and participating in serial public cultural festivals such as *Jašnvāra-ye tūs* [Festival of Tus] (1974), *Jašn-e honar-e širāz* [Shiraz Festival of Art] (1967) and *Jašn-e farhang wa honar* [Festival of Culture and Art] (1968).<sup>267</sup> [Fig. 3-40] Obviously, the

264 «برنامه انجمن باید در جهت پیشبرد برنامه‌های فرهنگی کشور باشد.» [Āeīn-nāma-ye ejāza-ye ta'sis-e anjoman-hā wa gruh-hā-ye honari [Establishment Permit Statute of Art Associations and Artists' Groups], Concerning establishment and activities of private art associations and artists' groups, 19 May 1975, 293/4156, National Archives of Iran.]

265 «مراد از نگارخانه محلی است برای نمایش آثار هنری به ویژه هنرهای تجسمی و آثار هنری ملی [...]» [Āeīn-nāma-ye ejāza-ye ta'sis-e gāleri-hā-ye honari [Establishment Permit Statute of Art Galleries], Concerning establishment and activities of private art galleries, 22 October 1974, 293/4156, National Archives of Iran.]

266 Farhang Hall was established by Mohammad Derakhshesh, the later minister of culture (1961–1962) of Iran. Prior to establishment of the first private art galleries, artists exhibited their works also at Farhang Hall. For the first time, visitors to this place had to pay entrance fees to see the works. This place was active for a few years in 1940s and again continued holding exhibitions under Mohammad Mosaddeq's state in the early 1950s. [Kiaras, Dariush (writer and art critic), in discussion with the author, January 5, 2016.]

267 For instance, *Simā-ye honar-e emruz* [Manifestation of Today's Art] was a collaborative exhibition between the public gallery of Khaneh Aftab and about 10 other private art galleries in 1976. A reason for holding such participatory exhibitions with private art galleries or group exhibitions at public galleries was due to their spacious rooms and, in fact, this was another reason for establishment of public galleries. [Mojabi, *Nawad sāl nowāwari* [Ninety Years of Innovation], 187.]

public galleries were to showcase the government's share in artistic developments whereas their exhibition openings took place in the presence of the Shah, Empress and courtiers, and their news were reflected by state magazines such as *Tamāšā* or *Javānān-e rastākiz*.<sup>268</sup> This behavior by the state was not hidden from the eyes of the most independent galleries or artists' groups and they rather resisted the financial aids that Special Office or Department of Fine Arts offered them—mainly in forms of paying monthly costs and purchase of works. In an official statement by Contemporary Artists Group, written and directed to Pahlbod in 1960, the state's aim was explicitly cautioned and the group requested that artist's affairs be left to the artists themselves, so that no artist transformed into a bureaucrat and no bureaucrat claimed to be an artist or art critic.<sup>269</sup>

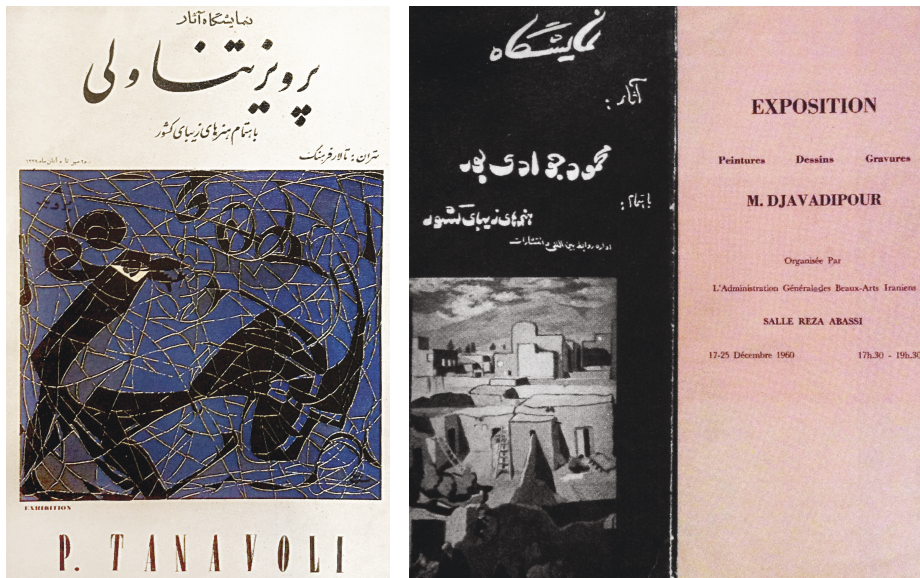


Fig. 3-38 (Left) “[Catalogue] *Namāyešgāh-e ātār-e parviz tanāvoli* [Exhibition of Parviz Tanavoli's Works] at Farhang Hall in October 18–27, 1960,” in *Parviz Tanavoli Sculptor, Writer and Collector*, by Parviz Tanavoli and David Galloway (Tehran: Iranian Art Publishing, 2000): 29

(Right) “Catalogue of *Namāyešgāh-e ātār-e mahmud javādi-pūr* [Exhibition of Mahmoud Javadipour's Works] at Reza Abbasi Hall, December 17–25, 1960,” Courtesy of Newsha Djavadi-pour

<sup>268</sup> *Javānān-e rastākiz* was a publication by the regime's political party known as *Rastākiz* [Resurgence]. This party became mandatory as the one thorough party in the country in March 2, 1975.

<sup>269</sup> Mojabi, *Nawad sāl nowāwari* [Ninety Years of Innovation], 173.



Fig. 3-39 (Top Left) "Interior of Khaneh Aftab in 1970 in "Kāna-ye āftāb [Khaneh Aftab]," *Farhang wa zendagi*, no. 3 (1970): 76. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

(Top Right) "Invitation Card for the Exhibition of *Persian Miniatures* at Khaneh Aftab, n.d." [Ibid.]

(Bottom Left) "Catalogue for the Exhibition *Naqāshān wa mojasamasāzān-e romāni* [*Contemporary Romanian Painting and Sculpture*] at Mehr Shah Gallery in 1978." [Ibid.]

(Bottom Right) "Artists' Book of *Panjāh sāl gerāfik-e irān* [*Fifty Years of Iranian Graphic Design*] by Mehr Shah Gallery in 1976." [Ibid.]



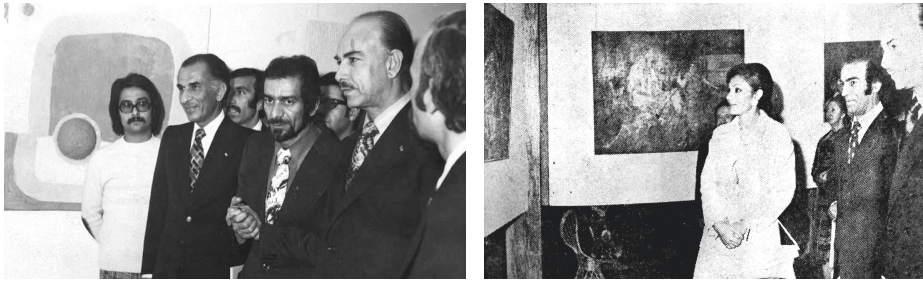


Fig. 3-40 (Left) "R-L: Mehrdad Pahlbod (minister of art and culture) and Jamshid Amouzegar (interior minister) visiting an exhibition at Takht Jamshid Gallery on the event of seventh *Festival of Culture and Art* in 1974," IRAN 25-25386. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

(Right) "Empress Farah Diba inaugurating Mehr Shah Gallery on the event of the seventh *Festival of Culture and Art* with an exhibition of Kamal al-Molk and his students in 1974," in "Hadaf-e jašn-e farhang wa honar [The Goal of the Festival of Culture and Art]," *Kāva*, no. 55-56 (1975): 60. [Ibid.]

Complaints by artists against intervention of the state derived from three main points of contention. First of all, the commercial aspect of Iranian private associations and galleries was not an issue until the mid-1960s and, as Mojabi explains, commercial aims and promotion of a market were considered beyond their cultural role.<sup>270</sup> With the turning of the state's financial budget toward private institutions, the splits became apparent among these centers in acceptance or rejection of the aid. In fact, debates were around becoming sales and commercial or remaining movement and avant-garde institutions with an emphasis on art for art's sake and filling the social gaps via education and cultural activities. The main critique was that in a relation between art and its sale, art had turned into business and artistic values were victimized by bureaucracies.<sup>271</sup> Therefore, this resistance by the artists was not necessarily a political opposition, but it rather stemmed from the determination of a new generation of artists who saw no foothold for arts than art per se.<sup>272</sup> It was due to the occurred splits that associations and galleries distinctively took up either the commercial or the avant-garde role since the 1960s. The first Iranian commercial galleries were Borghese (1964)—later known as *Negār* [Negar] (1969)—and Seyhoun (1967).<sup>273</sup> These galleries considered artworks as cultural products and based on their connections to the court, aristocrats and foreign dip-

270 Ibid.

271 Behrouz Souresrafil, "Warṭa-i miān-e honar wa mardom [An Abyss between Art and People]," *Rūdaki*, no.18 (1973): 22.

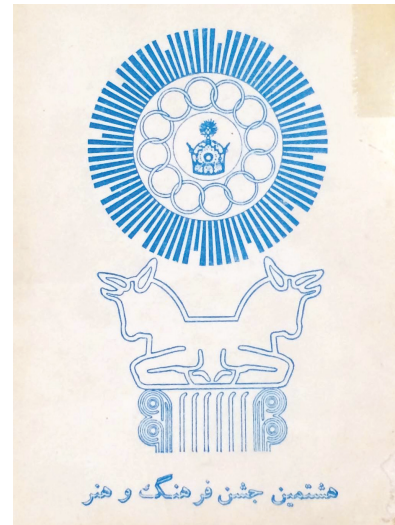
272 Saqafi, "Šahr wa 'arṣa-ye ejtemā'i-ye honar [City and Social Presentation of Art]," 39.

273 Mojabi considers Seyhoun as a gallery with a position between commercial and avant-garde based on the good connections that its owner (Masoumeh Seyhoun) had with the court, the mighty customers and also the press for promotion of her artists. [Mojabi, Javad (painter and writer), in discussion with the author, April 10, 2016]

lomats, they could create a good market or a new prestige and impetus<sup>274</sup> for the Iranian modern art movement. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the special support that the state provided to the commercial galleries was essentially based on the international reputation that these galleries had given to Iranian modern art and specially Saqqa-khaneh School that was enthusiastically supported by similar galleries.<sup>275</sup> In contrast, avant-garde associations and galleries — particularly Hall of Iran and Independent Artists Group — deliberately had no sales activity and were established in response to the commercialization of other institutions. Similar to the cultural role that Fighting Cock had initiated in the 1940s, these institutions, particularly Hall of Iran, also focused on familiarization of the audience with modern art through their educational exhibitions, debates and publications.



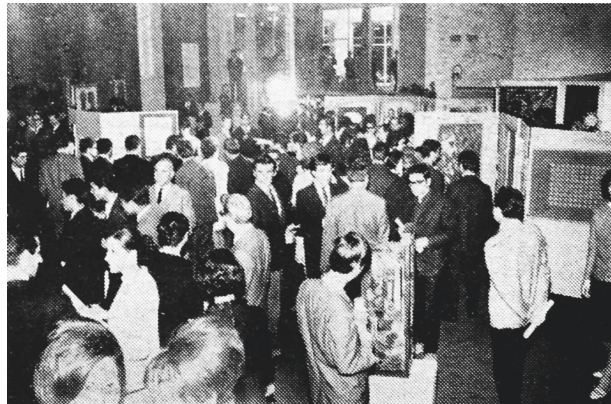
"Catalogue of tenth *Jašn-e honar-e širāz* [Shiraz Festival of Art], August 19–September 2, 1976." [Ibid.]



"Catalogue of eighth *Jašn-e farhang wa honar* [Festival of Culture and Art], October 25–November 21, 1977." [Ibid.]

274 Karim Emami, "Gal ... Gall ... Gallery!" in *Karim Emami on Modern Iranian Culture, Literature and Art*, ed. Houra Yavari (New York: Persian Heritage Foundation, 2014), 209.

275 In an exhibition at Borghese on the occasion of Mothers' Day in 1964, the Empress ordered the prime minister to allocate 2 percent of the budget for the state organizations to the purchase of works by Iranian artists. This budget had to be distributed among galleries, artists' groups and associations for their monthly fees. ["Goftogu-i bā modirān-e gāleri-hā [An Interview with Gallery Owners]," 22.]



(Left) "Card for *Şadomin namāyešgāh-e tālār-e qandriz [The 100th Exhibition of Qandriz Gallery]* held by a collaboration between Hall of Qandriz, Seyhoun and Mes galleries and with financial assistance from the General Department for Literary and Artistic Creation in 1974." [Ibid.]

(Right) "An exhibition at Palace of the Youths with contributions from three private art galleries Seyhoun, Borghese and Honar-e jadid [Modern Art] in 1967," in "Namāyešgāh [Exhibition]," *Ferdowsi*, no. 812 (1967): n.p. [Ibid.]

The second condition, which concerned movement or avant-garde associations and galleries, was that commercialization of art institutes affected the definition of modern art and they exhibited anything masquerading as modern or national modern art. Tanavoli criticized this as a deceitful behavior threatening both artists and their audience: "They [audience] consider anything distorted and clumsy as modern sculpture while modern art has its own criteria upon which it is understood."<sup>276</sup> In fact, formation of the artists' groups such as Independent Artists Group was also in reaction to this destructive behavior. Nami explained: "All of us were critical of the condition of modern art because it was deviated. Gallery owners behaved art like business and sold any kitsch work as modern art. They were deflected."<sup>277</sup> In contrast to Saqqa-khaneh and the national modern art that was promoted by the commercial galleries, the avant-garde institutes challenged this definition of the national art as being non-national causing frustration in visitors. Pakbaz commented: "[...] what has been done, is not national or Iranian. By national or Iranian I do not mean motifs and patterns, but rather fundamental attributes. Most of the works have been replicas of Western art and are lost due to lack of stable roots and foundations. We are [this way] gradually wasting ourselves in modern art."<sup>278</sup>

<sup>276</sup> «آن‌ها هر شیء کج و بی‌قواره‌ای را مجسمه مدرن می‌دانند درحالی که هنر مدرن دارای معیارها و ملاک‌های مشخصی است که باید با 276 [An Interview with Gallery Owners], "22." [Goftogu-i bā modirān-e gāleri-hā]

«همه مدت بدون استثناء از شرایط و وضعیت هنر مدرن در ایران گله داشتیم چون داشت به بیراهه می‌رفت. گالری‌دارها با هنر کاسبکارانه 277 برخورد می‌کردند و هر کار بنجولی را به عنوان هنر مدرن غالب می‌کردند و می‌فروختند. نوعی بدمآموزی در جامعه به وجود آمده بود.» [Parviz Barati, "Hama-ye riša-ye man injāst: goftogu-i bā gōlāmhossein nāmi [All My Roots Are Here: An Interview with Gholamhossein Nami]," *Šarq*, June 18, 2011.]

«[...] آن چه انجام شده ملی و ایرانی نبوده است. منظوم از ملی و ایرانی نقش و نگارها نیست بلکه خصوصیات اساسی است، 278 بیشتر آثار تقلیدی از غرب بوده است و چون ریشه و پایه محکمی نداشته از بین رفته است و ما در زمینه هنر نو رفته‌رفته خراب می‌شویم.» [Goftogu-i bā modirān-e gāleri-hā]

The devastation of modern art by commercial galleries created gaps for its social perception and this directly influenced artists. Many modern artists stored their works in their ateliers and refused to exhibit them at galleries, or as in the case of *Gruh-e honari-ye panj* [Five Art Group] (1968),<sup>279</sup> the social repulsion that was created around modern art finally ended in a total failure of this artists' group. Tanavoli, a member of the group, explained that a lack of social acceptance was the main reason to dissolution of Five Art Group: "Society, at that time, was not prepared for this group."<sup>280</sup> This is despite the fact that Bahman Mohasses, another member of this group, described the principal aim by Five Art Group to educate people about their art and to defend artists' right against those state organizations that claimed they were established to aid artists and art.<sup>281</sup>

Finally, the third source of criticisms against intervention by the state was that it brought a "lord and vassal" system to the field of visual arts. As Tanavoli argued, financial support from art galleries and artists' groups had decreased the cultural role of these centers and had subjugated them to a quantitative status only to provide Department of Fine Arts a good report of their annual exhibitions. This official system was without necessary competence for the distribution of the financial aids and it had created a bureaucratic class of artists who were monthly salaried for doing nothing. It was this low quality that made avant-garde artists and galleries reject financial aids by the state: "[...] for people who have no sufficient knowledge about art, the most dangerous act is to dictate them anything as art."<sup>282</sup> Such dishonesty by the state in its supportive policies about the galleries became more obvious, for instance, in the first *International Biennial of Tehran* (1974). The exhibition, which was held on the initiative of the Special Office, was an invitation from French and Iranian galleries to represent their artists' works and it was supposed to be a practice for Iranian galleries to learn about the Western systems of European galleries in promotion of their artists. Nonetheless, the main criticisms of this biennial, as one issued by *Negin* magazine, was that the appointment of a jury for selection of Iranian works proved that Iranian galleries were not free to present their own artists and their presence at the exhibition was nothing but a formality. This procedure had also led to the prevalence of certain artistic tastes among Iranian painters. For instance, many artists had displayed compositions of Persian

279 As it stands for its name, Five Art Group was made of five modern painters and sculptors: Parviz Tanavoli, Sohrab Sepehri, Bahman Mohasses, Abolghasem Saidi and Hossein Zenderoudi. Formation of this group, more than aesthetic similarities, was based on collective work by the group to overcome financial impediments. [Mojabi, *Sarāmadān-e honar-e now [Masters of Modern Art]*, 78.]

280 «...] برای مردمی که هنوز شناخت محکمی از هنر ندارند خطرناکترین چیز این است که هر چیزی را به عنوان هنر به آن‌ها تحمیل کنیم.» [Goftogu-i bā modirān-e gāleri-hā [An Interview with Gallery Owners], 23.]

281 Mojabi, *Sarāmadān-e honar-e now [Masters of Modern Art]*, 78.

282 «...] برای مردمی که هنوز شناخت محکمی از هنر ندارند خطرناکترین چیز این است که هر چیزی را به عنوان هنر به آن‌ها تحمیل کنیم.» [Goftogu-i bā modirān-e gāleri-hā [An Interview with Gallery Owners], 22.]

calligraphy with modern abstract techniques.<sup>283</sup> Behzad Hatam, a famous critic of *Rūdaki* magazine, in a text had ridiculed the cessation of *Tehran Biennial of Painting* after the fifth series in 1966 despite its all propaganda. He had criticized that the interval between fifth *Tehran Biennial of Painting* and the first *International Biennial of Tehran* (8 years) had annihilated the gradual familiarity of the Iranian audience with modern works and now they could not communicate with the works any more.<sup>284</sup> In a panel held with some of the contributors of the *International Biennial of Tehran* — mainly members of Hall of Iran and Independent Artists Group — one observes similar criticisms. The central complaint was directed at the hastiness in collection of the Iranian works. As Tanavoli, Grigorian and Morteza Momayez (1935–2005, graphic designer and another member of Independent Artists Group) argued, such hastiness had resulted in the presence of works with low quality without an expert process of selection. Such hastiness had turned the exhibition from a cultural event for artists and audience into a commercial market for dealers. Or another negative influence, Nami defended, was that the Iranian society was not culturally prepared for such quick developments and, as a result, it was not unexpected that the visitors to the exhibition complained about the works.<sup>285</sup> [Fig. 3-41]

Being argued, the intervention of the government, which mainly took on the form of financial supports and encouragement, had antagonistic effects on more independent artists. The modern artists, who had come up with the intellectual idea of taking an autonomous position in their field since the mid-1940s, could no longer survive domination of the politico-economic forces. This resistance by the artists appeared best in their support of art for art's sake. In other words, artists' emphasis on art for art's sake (as a cultural competence) turned into a tool (symbolic capital) to paralyze the regime's efforts for institutionalization of a modern and so-called "authentic" school of visual arts or a "neo-traditional" art as the localized version of the modern art.

283 "Ḥarf-hā-i pirāmun-e yek namāyeshgāh-e beynalmelali [Words on an International Exhibition]," *Negin*, no. 117 (1975): 15–16.

284 Behzad Hatam, "Barḡord bā šokuh-e rang-hā [Encountering the Glory of Colours]," *Rūdaki*, no. 37 & 38 (1974): 60.

285 "Moruri bar avalin namāyeshgāh-e beynalmelali-ye tehrān [A Review of the First International Biennial of Tehran]," *Honar wa me'māri*, no. 27 (1975): 68, 70 & 77.



Fig. 3-41 (Top) "Catalogue of fifth Tehran's Biennial of Painting in 1966." National Library and Archives Organization of Iran (Bottom) "Catalogue of the first International Biennial of Tehran in 1974." [Ibid.]







their salons to display and debate the artworks. *Ārārāt* [Armenians' Club] (1918), Guity (c. 1950) and later Mehragan (1952) were among the most active clubs. For instance, Guity was a cultural association primarily as a library and publishing house founded by two brothers<sup>4</sup> who had close connections with artists. This association ordered foreign journals<sup>4</sup> and rather acted as a cultural relations agent.<sup>5</sup> [Fig. 4-1] Armenians' Club also was a center for entertainment of the Armenian residents with focus on Armenian art and culture. Contrary to the clubs, private studios and Dokans worth more attention as they represented the first private places in which painting was trained, exhibited and purchased exclusively.

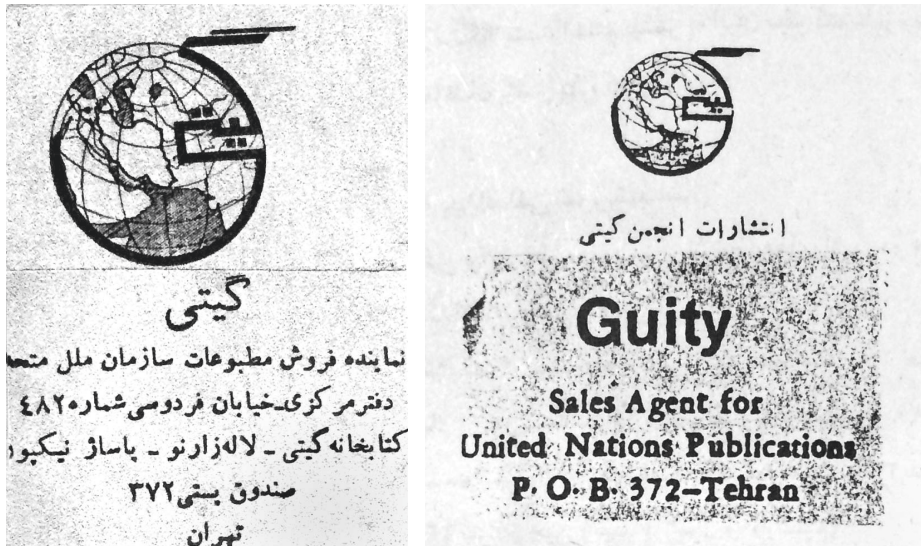


Fig. 4-1 “Logo of Guity Association,” in (left) Ata Behmanesh, “Nāṣer mofaḳam šam’i ke ḳāmuš šod [Naser Mofakham: A Candle Gone Out],” *Boḳārā*, no. 36 (2004): 356 & (right) Iraj Afshar, “Irānšenāsi: tāza-hā wa pāra-hā-ye irānšenāsi [Iranian Studies: The Latest Writings in Iranian Studies],” *Boḳārā*, no. 36 (2004): 119

The studios emerged in Tehran by Iranian artists from Tabriz (a city in North-West Iran) or mainly by Iranian-Armenian artists. This occurred simultaneously with Kamal al-Molk’s students working and selling their works at Dokans and also having regular exhibitions from their works at Kamal al-Molk School. The artists from Tabriz had mainly been educated in Social Realism and Russian Impressionism from academies of Russia or Georgia and, accordingly, many were leftist sympathizers. Studios and Dokans were mostly clustered around *’Alā al-doleh* [Ala al-Dole] and *Lālazar* [Lalehzar], which were historic areas of the city. These streets were considered as

4 Naser and Mohsen Mofakham who also motivated artists for establishment of a Syndicate of Artists in 1964.

5 Ata Behmanesh, “Nāṣer mofaḳam šam’i ke ḳāmuš šod! [Naser Mofakham a Candle that Went Out!],” *Boḳārā*, no. 36 (2004): 354.

“gallery districts”<sup>6</sup> for their antique shops, tourist attractions and foreign embassies, where foreigners made the majority of art customers. [Fig. 4-2] According to this market around the studios and Dokans, common subject matters of the paintings were from the local culture and folklore (e.g. native figures, historical buildings, etc.), and were selected to best attract the tourist customers. The first two studios were opened by two brothers, Hossein (1881–1963, known as Mir Mosavar) and Abbas (1892–1975, known as Rassam) Arzhangī. Mir Mosavar’s studio in c. 1913 was known as *Honarkada* [Art House] and Rassam’s studio that was known as *Negārestān* (Persian equivalent for “Art Gallery”) was opened in c. 1925.<sup>7</sup> The Art House and Art Gallery were both artist ateliers in which, in addition to production of the artworks (painting and sculpture), art was publically educated, exhibited and purchased.

The significance of the Art House and Art Gallery, as the first studios, is understood in opposition of Arzhangī brothers to the academic Realism of Kamal al-Molk School and their distinctive approach to art that became known as the Tabriz painting school. For instance, the establishment of the Art Gallery, which was decided by Rassam as a reaction to Kamal al-Molk School,<sup>8</sup> was considered a cutting-edge decision and therefore, similar to the first private association and gallery in the 1940s, his studio became a refuge for more liberal, nationalist and leftist intellectuals from the literary and political fields at the time.<sup>9</sup> Because of their educa-



Fig. 4-2 “Lalehzar Avenue in 1946,” in Mahmoud Pakzad, *Tehrān-e qadīm [Old Tehran]* (Tehran: Ābān, 2003), 36

6 Terry Smith argues that the primary mechanism for selling art in Asia evolved from forms of studios, shops, salons, commercial galleries, etc. These places clustered in historic city centers close to shops where he names them as “gallery districts.” [Terry Smith, *What Is Contemporary Art?* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2006), 120.]

7 The appellation of *Negārestān* as an equivalent term for “art gallery” has been described both by Rassam Arzhangī and addressed in a letter by Nima Youshij to Rassam.” [See: Esmail Jamshidi, “Dar negārestān-e rassām arzhangī wa kâṭera-ye ’āref, ’ešqi wa nimā [At Arzhangī’s Gallery and Memories of Aref, Eshqi and Nima],” *Boḡārā*, no. 87 & 88 (2012): 346 & Youshij, “Arzhangī-ye azizam [My Dear Arzhangī],” 115.]

8 As Rassam Arzhangī himself explained, Kamal al-Molk resisted against the decision of the minister of culture who had invited Arzhangī from Tabriz to Tehran to teach at Kamal al-Molk School of Fine Arts. In response to this behavior, Rassam established his own studio and named it Arzhangī’s Art Gallery. [Jamshidi, “Dar negārestān-e rassām arzhangī [At Arzhangī’s Gallery],” 345–46.]

9 Among them were political writers and poets such as Nima Youshij, Aref Qazvini, Mirzadeh Eshqi, Mohammad Taqi Bahar, Rashid Yasemi and Saeed Nafisi. Many of these figures also wrote articles about Arzhangī brothers in different newspapers, such as Nafisi’s texts in *Safaq-e sork* (1921–1935)—a literary-intellectual newspaper.

tion at foreign academies, both Kamal al-Molk and the Arzhangis were proposing new ideas in Iranian painting; for the Arzhangis, however, Kamal al-Molk's obsession with the European Renaissance and his attempt to substitute the Iranian Qajar and miniature painting by an academic Realism was an error. Arzhangis' main criticism of academic Realism was that it reduced the role of painters to mere copy-makers or their paintings to photographs.<sup>10</sup> In contrast, the Arzhangis adapted Iranian painting with their experience of Russian Impressionism and Social Realism. This new approach was promoted at Tabriz School of Fine Arts founded by Mir Mosavar in 1920. At this school, both brothers concentrated on combination of the traditional arts and miniature painting with anatomy and European Realism as a solution to preserve national qualities of their artworks. Regarding this adaptive approach, Arzhangis arrived at an intimate Realism while at the same time warded off imaginary scenes in miniature and it was also less meticulous with subjects in comparison to the clear-cut academic Realism. [Fig. 4-3] These qualities were largely rooted in Russian influences of the Impressionism on the Tabriz painting school, which itself lingered between Classicism and a range of other styles. Also, the influence of Russian Social Realism distinguished subject matters of this School from Kamal al-Molk's in terms of its more attention to poverty, the masses, nationalism and Iranian history.<sup>11</sup> The socialist spirit of Tabriz School of Fine Arts was in opposition with Kamal al-Molk School; Kamal al-Molk's students were under special patronage of the court and the artistic doctrine of Kamal al-Molk regarded no commercial value for non-applied arts.<sup>12</sup> As a result, social subject matters were of no concern at Kamal al-Molk School and the academic Realism was mainly at the service of court or topics of contemporary life.

The studios of Iranian-Armenian artists were opened almost two decades later than Arzhangis' studios and were rather commercialized in form. They were store-like places where artists worked collectively and people could watch artists and their works from the windows of the studio. The artists who worked with these centers either made paintings at their personal ateliers and put them on display for sale at studios or created their paintings at the studio.<sup>13</sup> In fact, application of the English term "gallery" was used for these studios and this might be according to their store-like qualities and public visits (commercial aspects). *Décor* or Arsen Gallery by Arsen Harutyunian (birth unknown) and *Gāleri-ye māni* [Mani Gallery] by Margar Garabekyan (1901–1976) were two studios that adopted the name of a gallery in 1958. [Fig. 4-4] Although pioneers of the studios were graduated from Russian art schools, they shared cordial relations with Kamal al-Molk's students

10 Jamshidi, "Dar negārestān-e rassām aržangi [At Arzhangis' Gallery]," 345.

11 Ali Shahab, "Yādi az ostād 'ali ašğar petgar [A Reflection on Master Asqar Petgar]," *kelk*, no. 27 (1992): 266.

12 Mohammad Hasan Hamedī, "Kārestān-e mir mošavar [Academy of Mir Mosavar]," in *Barg-hā-ye pažuheš (4)* [Research Papers (4)], ed. Mohammad Hasan Hamedī (Tehran: Peykara, 2014), 64.

13 Yahyaie, Sheis (painter and gallery owner), in discussion with the author, January 5, 2016.



Fig. 4-3 (Left) Hossein (Mir Mosavar) Arzhangi, *Mard-e qājāri [The Qajar Man]*, 1947/1948. Oil on canvas, 98 × 56 cm, Tehran Beautification Organization (Negarestan Museum)

(Right) Abbas (Rassam) Arzhangi, *Manzara-ye biābān-e vanak [View of Vanak Desert]*, 1942/1943. Oil on canvas, 64.5 × 51 cm, [Ibid.]

at Dokans and collaborated with them in their studios.<sup>14</sup> One reason for this was the commercial significance of both studios and Dokans as important places supplying art products expected by the tourists or foreign customers. Therefore, the central subject matters of these paintings were realistic copies of Kamal al-Molk's paintings, national and traditional landmarks of Iran or the Qajar era.<sup>15</sup> When comparing these studios against the Art House and Art Gallery by the Arzhangi brothers, it was mainly Tabriz painting school that threatened Kamal al-Molk's teachings. Nonetheless, in spite of all contrasting guidelines of Kamal al-Molk and Tabriz Schools of Fine Arts, both schools were affected by cultural policies of the first Pahlavi regime for centralization of the education system and foundation of the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran. With the emergence of radical modern artists at the faculty, students of both schools were condemned as traditionalists and conservatives by the young rivals.

<sup>14</sup> At Arsen Gallery, these two groups of artists included such names as Ali Ashraf Vali, Ali Akbar Sanati, Ardavan Takestani, Albert Vartanian, Jabbar Bek, Andrew Babomian and others.

<sup>15</sup> Harutyunian, Varteks. "Arsen Harutyunian," *Negārkhāna*, no. 1 (2004): 24.



Fig. 4-4 (Left) "Exterior of Décor or Arsen Gallery by Arsen Harutyunian (L-R: Ebrahim Jabbarbek and Robert Ghazaryan two painters working with Décor)," in Vartges Harutyunian, "Arsen Harutyunian," *Negārkhāna*, no. 1 (2004): 24

(Right) "Workshops and interior space of Décor or Arsen Gallery (Arsen Harutyunian standing in center)," [ibid., 25.]

## 4.1 Faculty of Fine Arts and Modern Radicals

The written histories on Iranian modern art, with the exception of those who principally veto the application of the term modern to Iranian art, share a consensus about the periods of its development in Iran. They consider the period of Kamal al-Molk and Tabriz Schools of Fine Arts until the 1940s as a preliminary stage during which Iranian art became more extroverted from its imaginary qualities toward a more naturalistic and realistic status. Yet, none of these schools could completely surpass an objective obsession with the subject matters as the modern artists did at the Faculty of Fine Arts. Therefore, the date of the establishment of the Faculty of Fine Arts (1940) is considered to coincide with the initial period of Iranian modern art. As discussed, the faculty began its work in a space that, from within, suffered the dominance of Kamal al-Molk's students as teachers of the faculty and the conservative syllabi and curricula assigned by a conservative board of directors. From outside of the faculty, both Schools of Kamal al-Molk and Tabriz, with their roots in Realism, threatened new experiences of the faculty. Around the same time, two brothers and prominent students of Tabriz School, Ali Asqar and Jafar Petgar (1921–2005), established *Petgar naqāshkhāna* [Petgar Academy] in 1940, where they continued training and exhibiting works following their education in the Tabriz painting school. [Fig. 4-5] In fact, the Russian Impressionism and Social Realism of this school simultaneously opposed the academic Realism of Kamal al-Molk and the modern art of the faculty. This was a midpoint in the development of Ira-

nian modern art and an intermediary ring that adjoined academic Realism to the modernism.<sup>16</sup> It was according to this intermediary position of the Tabriz painting school that Petgar Academy also became a refuge for debates between young modern artists and those veterans of Kamal al-Molk School who seemed more flexible with the new notions.<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, it should be borne in mind Tabriz School that criticized Kamal al-Molk School, itself was rejected as “art of dead bodies”<sup>18</sup> by modern artists and proponents of art for art’s sake. Jalil Ziapour, as the main founder of Fighting Cock Association, explained how the cultural role of the modern artists for promotion of the new artistic views influenced these opponents, as by the early 1950s they had begun to adapt themselves with more freedom in their drawings, application of buoyant palettes, new brushes and subject matters to reach a more acceptable Impressionistic or Expressionistic quality.<sup>19</sup> Not until the late 1950s, when the state included modern art in the agenda of its cultural policies and launched *Tehran Biennial of Painting*, did adversaries of modern art push to challenge modern artists. Advocates of Realism basically tried to draw the public’s attention to the decadence of Persian painting by publishing articles that threatened modern art or held simultaneous exhibitions so that people could compare the differences.<sup>20</sup> Parallel with the second biennial (1960), for instance, Ali Asqar Petgar held a revisiting exhibition of different periods of his works that made many journalists write comparative texts on his exhibition and the biennial: “[...] such exhibition [Petgar’s], parallel with the clamor of the biennial in our city and the silence of the classical artists at their studios who are unaware of attraction of our contemporary artists to the West, is a valued opportunity.”<sup>21</sup>

16 Aydin Aghdashlou, “Ḥalqa-ye nādidā-ye naqāši-ye mo’āṣer-e irān [The Unseen Ring of Iranian Contemporary Painting],” *Šarg*, May 11, 2011.

17 From Kamal al-Molk School were artists such as Ali Akbar Sanati (painter and sculptor), Esmāiel Ash-tiāni (painter), Hossein Sheikh (painter) and from modern painters were first faculty students such as Jalil Ziapour, Hossein Kazemi, Mehdi Vishkaei and Manouchehr Sheibani. [Shahab, “Yādi az ostād [A Reflection on Master],” 266.]

18 This term is inferred from the first article of *Fighting Cock Manifesto* and, in contrast to its opponents, introduced the art of fighting cocks as the “art of alive bodies.” [Gharib, Irani and Shirvani, “Sallāḡ-e bolbol [Nightingale’s Butcher],” n.p.]

19 Jalil Ziapour, “Az rangmāya-hā-ye kākestari tā sabz-hā, ābi-hā wa banāfš-hā [From Gray Tonalities to Greens, Blues and Purples],” *Honar*, no. 22 (1992): 253.

20 For instance, Rassam Arzhangī’s writings in *Soḡan* magazine at the time of the first biennial (1958). [Arzhangī, Rassam. “Honar-e naqāši rā daryābid [Save the Art of Painting].” *Soḡan*, no. 4 (1958): 385–86.]

21 [...] این نمایشگاه در زمانی که غوغای بی‌ینال‌ها شهر ما را فرا گرفته است و کلاسیک‌سازها در سکوت کارگاه‌های خود خاموش مانده‌اند «[Saremi, Pوران. “Naqāši [Painting].” *Website of Ali Asqar Petgar*, accessed February 16, 2018, [http://www.a-petgar.com/fa\\_IR/Pages/Page/مکتوبات/](http://www.a-petgar.com/fa_IR/Pages/Page/مکتوبات/)]



Fig. 4-5 (Left) Ali Asqar Petgar, *Guša-ye hayāt* [*Corner of the Yard*], 1946. Oil on canvas, 45 × 36 cm, Tehran Beautification Organization (Negarestan Museum)

(Right) "Ali Asqar Petgar at *Naqāshkāna* [Petgar Academy] in 1940," Courtesy of artist's family

A significant point about Faculty of Fine Arts is that it opened the space for an artistic change with new features of freedom from previously imposed boundaries. The role played by modern radicals at the faculty was similar to the role of a minority who wished to yield progress to a disabled majority: "But the majority is scared. The majority is conservative and constantly sides with the field of power. [...] the minority becomes fed up with the masses, ends up with them and takes action on its own as a 'small engine' and lever."<sup>22</sup> The young students of the faculty rapidly aligned themselves with the Impressionism being taught by Iranian and French teachers at the faculty. This alignment occurred for different reasons. First of all, the style of Impressionism had technical contrasts with the conservative Realism at the faculty or the classical miniature outside of the faculty. Impressionism, as Pakbaz explains, was an unencumbered technique with a colourful atmosphere that gave young artists free reign to follow their progressive impulses.<sup>23</sup> The centrality of instant capture of the subjects obliged artists to use their own views without an obsession to copycat or to produce a photographic replica of them. Ahmad Esfandiari (1922–2012), one of the young modern artists, described: "I remember that I was just so excited. I took the brush and paint wandering into the streets [...] searching for landscapes. Sometimes I did this with imagination. That is, I created it in my imag-

« [...] ولی اکثریت می‌ترسد. اکثریت محافظه‌کار است و همواره طرف قدرت را می‌گیرد. [...] از توده‌ها خسته و عصبانی می‌شود، از 22 [Shams Langeroudi, *Tāriḳ-e taḥlīli-ye še'r-e now* [*Analytical History of Modern Poetry*], vol.1 (Tehran: Markaz, 1991), 599–600.] آنان می‌برد و خود به‌عنوان «موتور کوچک» و اهرم، دست‌به‌کار می‌شود.»

23 Pakbaz, *Contemporary Iranian Painting and Sculpture*, 10.

ination. Through this, I found out about the technique.”<sup>24</sup> [Fig. 4-6] Second, Impressionism could bring a change in the habitual taste of people that were used to ask for objective similarities between paintings (as photographs) and nature. The main critique by the modern radicals was that fulfilling this demand in people could kill their creativity in connecting to the works. A common joke among modern artists about meticulously executed Realistic paintings was wondering what would happen if these artists displayed their unfinished works so that visitors could reflect more on them.<sup>25</sup> The third reason was that Impressionism, as a new knowledge, equipped artists with a competence to challenge the field of power and to claim their rights in their field of artistic production. A lack of adequate support by the state—or basically state’s exclusive patronage of Kamal al-Molk School and traditional arts—had left new artistic developments in the shadows, resulting in many people regarding modern artists as anti-cultural frauds. This was a common behavior by the official administrators during the 1940s, even as artists of Tabriz School showed deviations from academic Realism in their works. For instance, at the same *Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts* (1946), works by modern artists were displayed under the title of “European Modern Style”<sup>26</sup> and works by artists of Tabriz School were installed in improper places that provoked criticisms by certain magazines.<sup>27</sup> [Fig. 4-7] Accordingly, the very first complaints by modern artists addressed this irresponsibility of the state to create appropriate spaces for artists to exhibit their works.

Before establishment of the first private art association and gallery in the second half of the 1940s and even much later into the 1950s, modern artists were dependent on non-artistic institutions. That means they either had to exhibit their works in cultural relations societies of the foreign embassies who followed their own political goals via cultural activities, or at clubs and salons of other different institutions. It must be noted that, before radicalization of the modern artists, the regime’s irresponsibility in providing exhibition spaces was not an issue tackled by the artists. This new intention was, in fact, the result of artistic competence that necessitated autonomy of art and artists. *Ālam-e honar* (1951)—a nationalist magazine with the aim of reviving the rights of artists for which Ziapour and other modern radicals also collaborated with it—discussed this negligence by the state as: “Often you read in the newspapers and hear from the radio that in Cultural [Relations] Societies of Iran-America, Iran-Britain or Iran-Soviet works of one or more Iranian artists are

«فقط یادم هست که خیلی شوق داشتم. شخصاً قلم و رنگ را برمی‌داشتم و راه می‌افتادم توی خیابان‌ها [...] دنبال منظره می‌گشتم. گاهی نیز این کار را ذهنی انجام می‌دادم. یعنی در ذهنم خلق می‌کردم و به وجود می‌آوردم. از توی این‌ها تکنیک را به دست می‌آوردم.» [Hasan Morizinejad, “Naqāshān-e mo’āṣer-e irān: aḥmad esfandiāri [Iranian Contemporary Painters: Ahmad Esfandiari],” *Tandis*, no. 64 (2005): 5.]

25 Abdolhamid Eshraq, “Nowgarāi dar naqāshi-ye irān az honarkada tā dāneškada-ye honar-hā-ye zibā [Modernism in Iranian Painting from Academy to Faculty of Fine Arts],” *Sārestān*, no. 9 & 10 (2005): 36.

26 Alavi, “Namāyeṣgāh-e honar-hā-ye zibā [Exhibition of Fine Arts],” 8.]

27 Molavi, Mohammad. “Sā’ati dar kārgāh-e yek honarmand [An Hour at Studio of an Artist],” *Website of Ali Asqar Petgar*, accessed December 26, 2017, [http://www.a-petgar.com/fa\\_IR/Pages/Page/مکتوبات](http://www.a-petgar.com/fa_IR/Pages/Page/مکتوبات).



exhibited. [...] Have you searched to find if any positive measure has been taken by the state or municipal for exhibiting artworks of Iranian artists or their introduction, encouragement and support? Unfortunately, the answer to these questions is negative.”<sup>28</sup> Driven into isolation by the negligence, antipathy and rivalry of the state or other artists and uneducated audience, the modern artists applied Impressionism to exit this seclusion. From the early years of the faculty, according to their limited circle, the young artists gathered together in forms of unofficial and short-term artists’ groups to discuss modern art and relevant issues. The modern artists’ spirit for collective work was to overcome their individual inabilities for setting back limitations and upsetting the artistic stagnancy.



Fig. 4-6 (Top) Ahmad Esfandiari, *Naqš-e ašyā* [*The Sketch of Objects*], Year [?]. Oil on canvas, 48 × 57 cm, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art



Fig. 4-7 (Bottom) “Installation of paintings at Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts in 1946,” in Bozorg Alavi, “Namāyeshgāh-e honar-hā-ye zibā [Exhibition of Fine Arts],” *Payām-e now*, no. 10 (1946): 4. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

«گاهی از اوقات، در روزنامه‌ها می‌خوانید و از رادیو می‌شنوید که در انجمن فرهنگی ایران و آمریکا، یا انجمن فرهنگی ایران و انگلیس 28 یا ایران و شوروی از آثار یک یا چند نقاش ایرانی نمایشگاهی ترتیب داده شده [...] آیا تحقیق کرده‌اید و فهمیده‌اید از طرف دولت یا شهرداری محل برای نمایش آثار هنری هنرمندان ایران نمایشگاهی ترتیب داده شده، و به منظور معرفی و تشویق و پشتیبانی ایشان و آثارشان اقداماتی مثبت صورت گرفته است یا نه؟ با کمال تأسف و سرافکنندگی باید اذعان کرد که جواب این پرسش‌ها منفی است.» «*Āyā dar irān barāye residegi be omur-e honarmandān wa tašvīq wa poštibāni-ye išān marja'-i vojūd dārad?* [Is There an Authority for Artists’ Affairs and Their Encouragement and Support in Iran?],” *Ālam-e honar*, no. 15 (1952): 2.]

### 4.1.1 Activators and Activation Terms

Although the young modern artists had become engaged due to the spur of the Impressionistic teachings of the faculty, they considered themselves as anti-institutional rebels. The artists' combat was against the conservative system of education attached to the state's nationalization policies in fields of art and culture. Upon these policies modern art was outlawed in favor of the national and traditional arts representing the official art. The anti-institutional position of the modern artists was clearly articulated in their writings. In a few years after the faculty's foundation, Ziapour cautioned in 1946: "Alas, people! Save the faculty. In this ruined country there is no body to see what is happening to these lonely youths!"<sup>29</sup>

The first students who turned to modern art in their works studied painting at Faculty of Fine Arts during the years 1940–1946 with Jalil Ziapour, Javad Hamidi and Hossein Kazemi, who were the first graduates in 1945, as well as other artists such as Mahmoud Javadipour (1920–2012), Ahmad Esfandiari, Abdollah Ameri (1922–2017), Leili Taqipour (1920–2001), Shokouh Riazzi (1921–1962), Mehdi Vishkaei and Manouchehr Sheibani (1924–1991). All of these artists belonged to a generation having grown up during oppressive years of first Pahlavi regime (1920s–1930s) and experienced a relief in restrictions beginning with the second. The dissatisfaction of the artists about state's policies became simultaneous with *Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts* on the initiative of the Iran-Soviet Cultural Relations Society in 1946. The complaints led to the creation of an artists' group called *Anjoman-e javānān* [Association of the Youths] in the same year. [Fig. 4-8] This group was based on unofficial gatherings of the artists that in a short time transformed into the first private art association of *Anjoman-e honari-ye korus jangi* [Fighting Cock Art Association] (1948) and the first private art gallery known as *Apadāna* [Apadana] (1949) in Tehran. [Fig. 4-9] The Association of the Youths represented the collective will amongst young modern artists of the faculty, and even after founding of Fighting Cock Association and Apadana Gallery, the name of Association of the Youths was attributed to the members of both centers.<sup>30</sup> The main intention behind Association of the Youths was to create a space specific for artistic activities in reaction to ignorance of the state. Mahmoud Javadipour, a member of the association and a founder of

29 «آه، مردم! هنرکده را دریابید. در این خراب‌شده هیچ کس نیست تا ببیند که چه بر سر این جوانان بی‌صاحب‌شده می‌آید!» [Jalil Ziapour, "Faryād-hā [The Screams]," in *Majmu'a soḵanrāni-hā-ye honari-taḥqīqi-ye zenda yād ostād jalil žiāpur* [A Collection of Master Jalil Ziapour's Art and Research Lectures], ed. Shahin Saber Tehrani (Tehran: Jahād-e dānešgāhi, 2003), 14.]

30 For instance, Jalil Ziapour in his talks about modern art at Apadana Gallery was introduced as a representative of Association of the Youths. [Iraj Afshar, "Enteqād az goftār-e žiāpur dar kāk-e honari-ye apadāna [Criticizing Ziapour's Talk at Apadana Art Palace]," *Jahān-e now*, no. 21 (1949): 565.] Or, Manouchehr Sheibani, an affiliate member of Fighting Cock Association, referred to Apadana Gallery in its third exhibition (December 1949) as salon of Association of the Youths. [Manouchehr Sheibani, "Šā'er dar čāhārdivāri-ye 'ozlatgāhāš [Poet in the Room of His Solitude]," *Zendarud*, no. 32 (2004): 23.]

Apadana Gallery, in describing their intention said: “The main problem was lack of a proper place for exhibiting the works [...]. The Town Council and the then Department of Fine Arts had taken no measure in this regard. No body was willing to hear our request to help the young artists.”<sup>31</sup> The place of Association of the Youths, due to financial reasons, was the private house of Habibollah Sepahsalari —the Iranian musician and composer known as Moshir Homayoun Shahrdar (1885–1969). The members met at his house regularly and restricted their activities not only to the visual arts, but also included literature, music, small concerts, and theater. Nevertheless, a reason why Association of the Youths soon transformed into Fighting Cock and Apadana, according to Javadipour, was that it still could not provide artists the independence they needed for promotion of their art: “None-theless, the necessity to possess an independent space for meeting and displaying works by painters was left unfulfilled.”<sup>32</sup>

At this time and before the travels of the first group of students to Europe, modern art was delimited to a mixture of Realism with Impressionist and Post-Impressionist experienced from the faculty or what they read and found in materials (books, magazines, films, etc.) in libraries of the faculty or cultural relations societies. Until their educational travels, the artistic modernism for faculty students was essentially Impressionism,<sup>33</sup> which itself was understood as less Realistic sophistication, more freedom in brush strokes and the adding of pure and bright colours to their palette. The most common feature of the paintings during this period was a figurative to Post-Impressionistic application of the subjects concerning their native culture, such as, traditional motifs, local costumes, still life, and most importantly, close attention to life of the common people. *Nešāṭ dar kānevāda [Joy in the Family]*, a painting by Javadipour in 1944, represents both of these qualities. In this painting the artist has attempted to apply his learnings from Impressionism and Abstract painting to observations of daily life. What parallel to its technique attracts attention in *Joy in the Family* is that it adequately displays the juxtaposition of “modern” and “tradition” in its subject matter too; i.e., the older couple, who are seated on the ground (sitting on the ground as a common custom) are shown beside the younger members of the family. The young figures are dressed in a modern manner —the boy is seated on a chair and has suit with a tie on (a tie was at the time considered as sign of intellectuality and modernity for educated people) and four girls in open dresses with no scarf (in contrast to perhaps the older woman who is in the

31 «مشکل بزرگ نداشتن محلی مناسب برای تشکیل نمایشگاه بود [...] شهرداری و هنرهای زیبای وقت هم اقدامی در این زمینه نکرده بودند. 31 Mojabi, *Pišgāmān-e naqāši-ye mo‘āšer-e irān [Pioneers of Contemporary Persian Painting]*, 119.

32 «با این وجود، این احساس نیاز به داشتن فضایی مستقل برای گردهمایی و به نمایش درآوردن آثار هنرمندان نقاش کماکان به جای خود. 32 [Ibid., 120.] باقی بود.»

33 Dariush Kiaras, “Dāstān-e jalil ziāpur wa korus jangi [The Story of Jalil Ziapour and Fighting Cock],” *Tandis*, no. 162 (2009): 6.

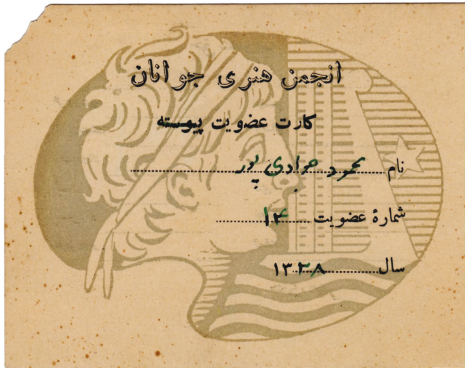


Fig. 4-8 “Membership card for *Anjoman-e javānān* [Association of the Youths] in 1949,” Courtesy of Newsha Djavadi-pour. [On the card from up to down: Association of the Youths, Permanent Membership Card, Name, Membership Number, and Year.]



Fig. 4-9 (Top Right) “Mahmoud Javadipour (a founding member of Apadana Gallery, first figure from left) at Academy of Fine Arts of Girls in 1961 (From R-L: Mahmoud Farshchian (miniature artist) and Mehrdad Pahlbod (minister of art and culture),” Courtesy of Newsha Djavadi-pour

(Bottom Right) “Hossein Kazemi (a founding member of Apadana Gallery, second figure from left) at Apadana’s group exhibition in 1950.” [Ibid.]

(Left) “Jalil Ziapour, a founding member of Fighting Cock Association, seated among younger modern students of the faculty in 1956 (L-R: Parviz Tanavoli, Jamshid Tanavoli and Sohrab Sepehri),” in *Ātolia kabud: kāterāt-e parviz tanāvoli* [*Atelier Kabud: Memories of Parviz Tanavoli*], by Parviz Tanavoli (Tehran: Bongāh, 2004), 23

traditional veil). It is not definite if Javadiour intended to show this cultural divergence between the two generations in his painting or not, yet such emphases on the surroundings make modern artists’ paintings good sources for these inquiries. Returning to the title of the work, *Joy in the Family*, Javadipour attempts to capture a moment of delight and exultance in the family shown through the application of

intimate and light colours. The figures are abstract in their facial details and the objects in the room are also worked with less precision. This indifference about the details interestingly proves the artist's intention to display the general impression of the moment. [Fig. 4-10] As argued for the contexts of modern art in Iran, the main reasons for such artistic manifestations were, first, the artists' understanding of the modernism that had to be pursued within their local cultures: "At that time, Faculty of Fine Arts did not provide students like Ziapour, Esfandiari, Kazemi and Hamidi any definition for modernism. All these artists confessed that their teachers provided no explanation for modernism or how to become modern at the time but they advised them that attaining modernism is possible through acknowledgement of their visual tradition and artistic heritage."<sup>34</sup> Second, according to the reduction of pressures on politico-intellectual parties since 1940, artists were highly influenced by the nationalist ideals and in particular the Iranian Communist Tudeh Party. This was exactly the effect for which some critics characterized this group of artists from the faculty with two important attributes in their early phase of work: they obtained not only *modernist views*, but also a *commitment* that emerged in their emphasis on national and anthropological attention to the culture of the masses and small cities.<sup>35</sup>



Fig. 4-10 Mahmoud Javadipour, *Nešāt dar kānevāda* [Joy in the Family], 1944. Oil on cardboard, 42 × 56 cm, Mahmoud Javadipour's collection

«آن زمان دانشکده هنرهای زیبا تعبیری از نوآوری و نوگرایی به هنرجویانی چون ضیاءپور، اسفندیاری، کاظمی و حمیدی نمی‌داد، و همه اینان اذعان داشتند که آن موقع استادان ما در دانشکده تعریفی از نوگرایی و نوشتن نداشتند ولی به ما توصیه می‌کردند با شناخت سنت « Javad Mojabi, "Pišgām-e honar-e modern-e irān [Pioneer of Iranian Modern Art]" in *Barg-hā-ye pažūheš (4)* [Research Papers (4)], ed. Mohammad Hasan Hamedī (Tehran: Peykara, 2014), 200.

<sup>35</sup> Reza Barahani, "Došnāmguy wa 'arbadaju rāh miravand [They Walk Cursing and Screaming]," *Goharān*, no. 23 & 24 (2010): 83.

In 1945, following the faculty's education system adapting to *École des Beaux-arts* in Paris, government financed travels for the first graduates to France via scholarships. Jalil Ziapour and Javad Hamidi were the first two artists dispatched to Paris in 1945 and 1946. Many of the first modern artists, either with or without governmental support, had made their travels mainly to France, Italy and Germany until the mid-1950s. The tendency for travelling abroad, in particular to Paris, was partially due to the educational policy and partially due to the artists' frustration with the conservative space of the faculty; students were not allowed to trespass on the academic style and they chose to study at *École des Beaux-arts* on the advice of their French or Iranian (France-educated) teachers at the faculty. Also, it should be noted that, around the same time, Paris was considered as a hub for modern art and many artists from around the world were attracted to this city for its most cutting-edge academies and free circles of art schools. According to reports by Iranian modern artists, these travels resulted in two important effects on them. On the negative side, the first effect was formation of a desperation regarding their own position as modern artists in their own country. They witnessed that not only academic Realism, but also Impressionism and Post-Impressionism had given way to other schools of art such as Expressionism, Cubism, Dada and Surrealism. Also, they observed what a meaningful place European modern artists occupied for their states and societies, which contrasted sharply to their own position. Houshang Pezeshknia, one of the modern painters, described his experience in Paris as such: "The [Iranian] artist who used to be an avant-garde and pioneer [at home], felt like being left behind from the caravan of modernism [in Paris]. Our artists were in no way to blame for such desperation whereas at the same time both state and people ignored them; they were not able to understand artists and also the newspapers wrote about their works malevolently [...]. [Modern artists were considered] as charlatans, as laggards and as artists who knew no painting."<sup>36</sup> On the positive side, these travels created additional motivation in artists for promotion of modern art in Iran. Ziapour explained this motivation as: "[...] after much learning and survey [in Paris], I became aware of the superficial knowledge in me and my country. I was determined to return to my country to beat this archaic space and the traditional style of copy-making miniaturists and faceless Realists and to begin a new movement in Iranian modern art."<sup>37</sup>

«هنرمند احساس کرد کسی که پیشرو و قافله‌سالار بوده، از کاروان نوآوری جامانده. هیچ تصویری هم هنرمندان ما نداشتند که دستخوش این یأس و ناامیدی می‌شدند؛ برای این که هم دولت به آن‌ها بی‌توجه بود، هم مردم، برایشان قابل‌درک نبودند، روزنامه‌ها با دشمنی به آثارشان «[Mojabi, "Pišgām-e honar-e modern-e irān] می‌پرداختند [...]. به عنوان شارلاتان، به عنوان عقب‌مانده، به عنوان کسی که نقاشی نمی‌داند.» [Pioneer of Iranian Modern Art], 206.

«[...] پس از آموخته‌ها و کاوش‌های فراوان، به بی‌مایگی خود و کشورم آگاه شدم. عزم را بر آن داشتم تا به میهن برگشته و این فضای [Christa Nacy, "Ostād jalil žiāpur, pedar-e naqāši-ye now-e irān [Master Jalil Ziapour, Father of Iranian Modern Art]" *Honar-nāma*, no. 4 & 5 (1999): 8–9.]

As the first dispatched faculty students, Ziapour (1945–1948) and Hamidi (1946–1950) continued painting at École des Beaux-arts and were trained by André Lhote (1885–1962)—French Cubist painter, sculptor and art critic—at school of Académie de la Grande Chaumière (1904) and Lhote’s own school l’académie André Lhote (1921) in Paris. [Fig. 4-11] During these years Paris hosted foreign artists who either teamed up in academies known as “les académies libres de Paris” or famous institutions founded in the 19th century, but the most front-line education was provided by freer art schools run by reputed modern artists where the teaching was based on studies of Cubism.<sup>38</sup> The important point about the teachings at these academies was that they were brought by their foreign students back into their home countries and they pioneered a local modern art based on these teachings.<sup>39</sup> Regarding Lhote’s academy, his teachings came from his own theories in modern art.<sup>40</sup> [Fig. 4-12] Lhote, as a Post-Cubist painter, was a critic of the orthodoxy of classic Cubism and its mechanical features. Instead, he emphasized a mixture of angular forms in Cubism with lively, Post-Impressionistic attributes taken from nature. This emphasis on nature was much more a theoretical emphasis by Lhote on primitive and aboriginal traditions as the principal of becoming a modern artist. Accordingly, Lhote’s theories on modern art were to maintain a balance with tradition and fed the wave of young artists to redefine themselves.<sup>41</sup> All discussions by him become more noteworthy with attention to this point that the general atmosphere of Paris in the 1950s–1960s attracted advocates of decolonization and Postcolonial artists who found synthesis between European modern art with the local Eastern elements having taken place in forms of Cubism, Surrealism, etc.<sup>42</sup>

An important pedagogical feature of Lhote’s academy, which presumably could have played a role in attraction of many non-European students to this academy, was his position to the struggles between academism and avant-gardism in the beginning of the 20th century. Although Lhote had participated in these struggles, he had difficulty integrating in the circle of Parisian avant-gardes. This reluctance resulted from involvement with pedagogy for the masses and reconciliation of the public with modern art, which was considered a devaluation by his avant-garde friends.<sup>43</sup> It was precisely Lhote’s combat against avant-gardism for which he began to establish his theoretical position by writing articles and reviews in *La NRF* (*La Nouvelle Revue française*) since 1919. In one of his first articles, he criticized the

38 Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan*, 20.

39 Tarsila do Amaral (Brazil), Shakir Ali (Pakistan), Jalil Ziapour and Javad Hamidi (Iran), and Akbar Padamsee and Jehangir Sabavala (India) studied at Lhote’s academy around the same time and pioneered modern art with almost similar attributes in their own countries. [Ibid., 21.]

40 André Lhote’s theories are discussed, for instance, in his important *Treatise on Landscape Painting* (1939) and *Figure Painting* (1950).

41 Wille, *Modern Art in Pakistan*, 21.

42 Dadi, *Modernism and the Art of Muslim*, 161.

43 Klaus Beekman and Jan de Vries, ed., *Avant-Garde and Criticism* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 18.



Fig. 4-11 (Right) "André Lhote at Academy Montparnasse in 1945," in *André Lhote Retrospective 1907–1962* (Paris: Artcurial, 1981), exhibition catalogue, Paris, October–November, 1981, 25. Central Institute of Art History in Munich

(Left) "André Lhote at his atelier in 1930," [*Ibid.*, 2–3.]



"Jalil Ziapour at École des Beaux-arts in Paris in c. 1947 (standing in front, second figure from left)," Courtesy of Mahsha Ziapour

avant-garde for preferring theory to the work of art whereas according to him, artists should resort to theories only to improve their art.<sup>44</sup> As he explained, the avant-garde created an artistic snobbery and did not result in an increased understanding by the public. The main position of Lhote against avant-garde ideas, thus, were in his admiration for art from the past, his defense of restoration of the monumental

<sup>44</sup> Lhote, André. "De la nécessité des théories." NRF, no. 75 (1919): 1002–13.



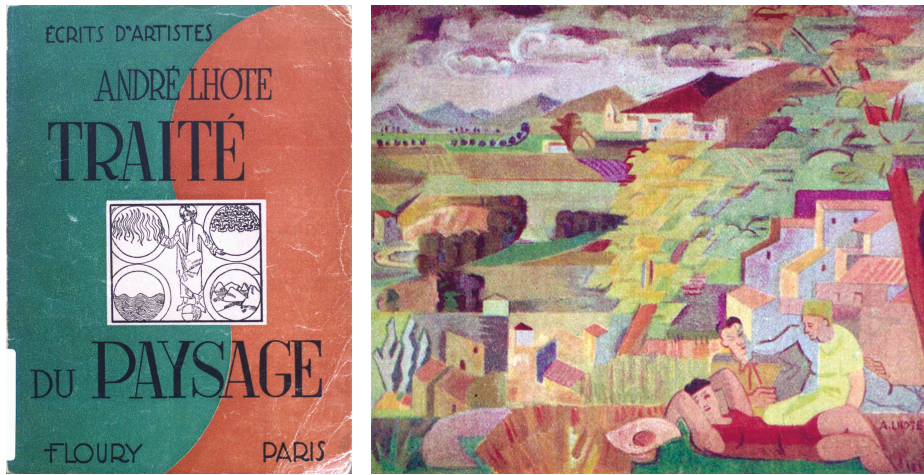


Fig. 4-12 “André Lhote’s *Treatise on the Landscape* [*Traité Du Paysage*] in 1946 (Left: The cover of the treatise. Right: *Mirmande* By André Lhote published in the treatise).” Library of Regensburg University

heritage to which avant-gardes had a destructive position and emphasis on a synthesis between tradition and modernity. In other words, Lhote confirmed the existence of a third method (a personal one) between academism and avant-gardism that at the same time referred to tradition, reality and the autonomy of art.<sup>45</sup> Both in his theory and painting, he remained conservative and was against any radicalism, whereas for him, Cubism was similar to Neo-Classicism. Simultaneously, and likely inspired by a kind of nationalist conception, this conservatism was preached as a theoretical edifice by French critics and historians of the early 20th century (e.g., Jean Cassou and Bernard Dorival) known as “French Cubism” as a balanced and harmonious extension of the French traditions (Nicholas Poussin and Paul Cézanne).<sup>46</sup> Between 1900 to 1940, modernist classicist artists in France identified not only with tradition, but they continually *recreated* tradition and spawned new notions of it alongside critics and art historians. This emphasis on tradition appeared in painting through balance in forms, rhythm and colour based on a negotiation between Fauvism and Cubism or a classicist revision of Impressionism and Cubism that repudiated abstraction as well as brutal distortions and exaggerated emotions of Expressionism.<sup>47</sup>

45 Beekman and de Vries, ed., *Avant-Garde and Criticism*, 22–25.

46 Daniel Robbins, Introduction to *André Lhote. 1885–1962. Cubism* (New York: Leonard Hutton Galleries, 1976), exhibition catalogue, New York, October 16–December 18, 1976, 5.

47 Natalie Adamson, “To Regenerate Painting: Letters, 1934–1948, between Jean Bazaine and André Lhote,” *The Burlington Magazine*, no. 1262 (2008): 313 & 315.

It was Lhote's emphasis on tradition that contrasted him from avant-gardes and purist Cubists. His conception of tradition was also transmitted to his international students at his academy and was spread around the world. Therefore, an understanding of the definition provided by Lhote in his theories on tradition is essential. As he discussed in one of his articles "*De la nécessité des théories*" (1919) in *La NRF*: "All we can do is to detach ourselves little by little from the magma in which we are caught and by means of our first partial evasion, see the matter from a slightly higher point of view."<sup>48</sup> In other words, Lhote's idea of tradition was not about radical reform but salvation and gradual progress, and this opinion was very much influenced by the scholastic attack at the positivism and materialism that pervaded at the time.<sup>49</sup> The scholastic attitude to the historical problem of continuity rooted in its inherent conservatism for emphasis on synthesis than throwing things away. This conservatism provided Lhote with his definition of tradition, which rather than a call for the return to something from the past demanded progress and echoed the essential elements of Cubism by overriding both the materialism of the Impressionists and the mystic realism of the Symbolists.<sup>50</sup> This atmosphere reflected itself obviously in the words and works of artists who had studied with Lhote. Ziapour, after his return from Paris, argued that: "When I was back [from Paris], I was rebellious why we do not make use of all these things we possess. I had seen how Europeans responded to their past, what reaction they had to their present, what forms they sought for their rebellion and how they went through progress. [...] My task and message, with regard to our own cultural potentials, was to see what still was alive here [in our country] and was readable with language of the contemporary world; to develop it together with the visual culture of our own country."<sup>51</sup>

Upon their return from these travels, modern artists had two possible courses of the action at home. First, as a common practice, the government provided them with workshops at the faculty or Department of Fine Arts for teaching. Many of these artists chose to teach for a while at the workshops and, in fact, they brought up the second generation of Iranian modern artists at the faculty. Nonetheless, both centers were still overshadowed by traditional artists or Kamal al-Molk's students—the most known of whom was Ali Mohammad Heydariyan (1896–1990)—with whom

48 Jane Lee, "André Lhote, Art Critic for La Nouvelle Revue française," in *Art Criticism since 1900*, ed. Malcolm Gee (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 87.

49 The scholasticism that made the basis of the modern art aesthetics and metaphysics, itself was replete with teachings of Henri Bergson (1850–1941) during the first half of the 20th century.

50 Lhote's core idea of gradual progress in tradition was in his defense of artistic "sensation" with analysis and reason instead of "inspiration" with its classical sense and Platonic realism. [Ibid., 88, 90 & 91.]

51 « [...] من وقتی برگشتم عصبانی داشتم که چرا از این همه چیز که داریم استفاده نمی‌کنیم، دیده بودم که فرهنگی‌ها در برابر گذشته خود چگونه عکس‌العمل نشان می‌دهند، در برابر امروز چه واکنشی دارند، چه قالب‌هایی برای عصبان خود می‌جویند و تحول خود را چگونه طی می‌کنند [...] کار و پیام من این بود که با تکیه بر ظرفیت فرهنگ بومی خود، ببینم چه چیزی در این جا هنوز زنده است و با زبان نقاشی می‌کنم [...] جهان سازگاری دارد، آن را رشد بدهم و نهایتاً فرهنگ هنری کشور خودم را تعالی ببخشم.» [Mojabi, *Sarāmadān-e honar-e now [Masters of Modern Art]*, 8.]

modern artists came into conflict. Therefore, the second term of action was to continue their private collective behavior (as they did before their travels) with other fellow artists. Parallel with the return of artists, the field of Iranian literature was also undergoing literary combats between modern and traditional writers or poets. The modern artists soon connected themselves to the modern campaign. The reason for consolidation of the artists and the literary avant-gardes, as they asserted, was due to lack of an organic relation between society and the fields of modern art and literature. Artists claimed that this gap had to be compensated on their own. In fact, they presumed that this organic relation was shaped in Europe since the revolution of modern art and, as a result, the exclusion of arts to the higher hierarchies was replaced with people's support.<sup>52</sup> Another reason for the coming together of the fields of art and literature was that, the terms of *Zhdanov Cultural Doctrine* came into force for the Iranian Left Party in 1948, for which artists and the literati had to choose between "art for art's sake" and the "committed social art." According to the influence of Tudeh Party among intellectuals and their defense of Social Realism in art and literature, seekers of art for art's sake grouped together as an opposition against the committed art. The chief antagonism of Tudeh Party toward modern art was that Tudeh discussed art to be comprehensible for the people whereas modern radicals did not believe in following people but increasing people's culture by attracting them to new developments.<sup>53</sup> As Ziapour explained this difference: "Our goal was to make the national modern art our model based on national inspirations in the three majors of visual arts, literature and theater. I wanted that we, inspired by our own heritage, insert our national identity to the new world. [...] Tudeh sympathizers sought to introduce and advocate the art which could be understood by fish sellers, mouse-trap sellers and orange sellers."<sup>54</sup> Another important point about the alliance of modern artists and literary figures was that many of these artists were themselves poets and writers as well, and this could be regarded as a reason for the diversity of cultural activities they had at their artists' groups. For instance, Fighting Cock Association was better known as an art and literary association, whose members came at least from fields of visual arts, poetry, literature and dramatic arts, or *Fighting Cock* magazine was the first private and non-left publication that, beside arts, introduced modern poems, scripts and stories.<sup>55</sup> The

52 *Jalili ziāpur* [*Jalil Ziapour*], directed by Houshang Azadivar (Tehran: Goruh-e farhang, adab wa honar-e šabaka-ye dow-ye sedā wa simā [Department of Culture, Literature and Art of IRIB2], 1989), DVD.

53 Dariush Kiaras, "Mardi ke hamačiz, hamačiz, hamačiz: goftogu bā paridokht-e šobhi (šeybāni) [A Man of Everything, Everything, Everything: An Interview with Paridokht Sobhi (Sheibani)]," *Tandis*, no. 175 (2010): 49.]

54 «هدف ما بر این بود که با الهامات ملی، هنر نو ملی را وجهه برداشت‌هایمان در سه رشته هنرهای تجسمی، ادبیات و تئاتر قرار دهیم. من می‌خواستم هویت ملی‌مان را با الهام‌گیری از مواریت خود، به دنیای نو وارد کنیم. [...] توده‌ای‌ها سعی در عرضه آثاری داشتند و [Naser Hariri, *Darbāra-ye honar wa adabiāt: goftošonudi bā jalil ziāpur wa nošratollāh moslemiān* [About Art and Literature: An Interview with Jalil Ziapour and Nosratollah Moslemian] (Babol: Āvišan, 2001), 55.] جانبدار آن شیوه‌ای بودند که قابل‌فهم برای ماهی‌فروشان، تلفروشان و پرتقال‌فروشان باشد.»

55 Kiaras, "Dāstān-e jalil ziāpur [The Story of Jalil Ziapour]," 6.

major means of connectivity of avant-garde artists with writers and poets in the 1940s were cafes and literary circles, where gatherings led to cooperations between these two fields. These cafes that were mainly located in central Tehran and around the gallery districts, were the places of evening meetings for literary and artistic discussions. The most important cafe was Ferdowsi, but cafes such as Bistrot, *Nāderi* [Naderi], Firuz, and Marmar were also important meeting points which considerably fed journalists for their cultural columns in the newspapers.<sup>56</sup> [Fig. 4-13]



Fig. 4-13 “Interior of cafes in central Tehran as hubs for literary and artistic circles. Image of a cafe (probably *Zāla* [Jaleh/Rose Noir]) with Sadeq Hedayat seated in center left [1940s],” Collection [?]

It was in such an atmosphere that the first faculty students returned from Europe, upon which time the first steps toward the establishment of Fighting Cock Association and Apadana Gallery were taken. Fighting Cock Association was founded in 1948 by Jalil Ziapour (1920–1999), a painter, Gholamhossein Gharib (1923–2004), a writer, and Hasan Shirvani (birth unknown), a playwright. [Fig. 4-14] After a couple of months, Apadana Gallery was established by Mahmoud Javadipour and Hossein Kazemi, both painters, and Amirhoushang Ajoudani (1924–2010), an architect.<sup>57</sup> It

<sup>56</sup> *Encyclopedia Iranica Online*, “*Qānlari*, parviz [Khanlari, Parviz],” accessed February 23, 2017, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/khanlari-parviz>.

<sup>57</sup> Regarding the founding date of Fighting Cock Association compared to Apadana Gallery there are discords. In some references, foundation of Apadana has been dated prior to Fighting Cock. These resources point to the first exhibition of Apadana on September 24, 1949 as its foundation date. But for Fighting Cock there is not such precision on its month of establishment. Therefore, many consider an approximate date to be in 1948/1949. This study considers the founding date of Fighting Cock prior to Apadana according to two main documents: first of all, in all texts and talks by the members of the association, they have mentioned the year 1948 as the founding date. Second, in *Irān* newspaper Issues 8772 (April 17, 1949) and 8778 (April 24, 1949) were texts of speeches by Ziapour and Shirvani being held on the event of association’s first anniversary at Farhang Theater in April 15, 1949. The talk by Shirvani was particularly on association’s one-year achievements. Therefore, the founding date of Fighting Cock should be earlier than Apadana’s first exhibition. [See: Ziapour, Jalil. “Matn-e konferāns-e ziāpur darbāra-ye ġarib wa raveš-e nevisandegi dar irān [Ziapour’s

is noteworthy that foundation of the first association and gallery resulted from the cooperation of members of both centers. In fact, the foothold of Fighting Cock Association that was Ziapour's personal atelier, on *Takht-e jamšid* [Takht Jamshid Avenue] in Tehran, was not spacious enough for exhibiting works and it was a place only for publication of their magazine, holding talks and debates on arts.<sup>58</sup> Instead, Apadana Gallery exhibited works and Ziapour, along with other fighting cocks, participated in exhibitions both for display of their own works and to talk about the displayed modern paintings for visitors.<sup>59</sup> [Fig. 4-15] Apadana Gallery in its early days was better known as *Kāk-e honari-ye apadāna* [Apadana Art Palace]. This likely came from its founders responding to *Exhibition of Fine Arts* that was held at Shahpour Qolamreza Pahlavi Palace. In fact, the name Apadana and the relief signboard of the gallery that was made by Javadipour were both adopted from an ancient audience hall in *Takht-e jamšid* [Persepolis] in Iran in first half of the 6th century BCE. [Fig. 4-16] The cooperative behavior of Fighting Cock and Apadana transformed these two centers into what Bourdieu refers to it as “movement” or “avant-garde” institutes versus “commercial” or “sales” institutes.<sup>60</sup> Fighting Cock and Apadana were carrying together two complementary roles of “publicization of modern artworks,” i.e. exhibition of modern art for the general audience by Apadana, and “specialization of art,” i.e. adoption of a scientific approach to the art by discharging it from state and non-artistic fields by Fighting Cock. Regarding the role of publicization of modern artworks, as Javadipour himself explained, their main model for creating a show-space was based on the few options that they had; i.e. the cultural relations societies of the foreign embassies.<sup>61</sup> Opposed to the basic experience of these cultural societies (as simple places for the exhibition of artworks), Apadana concentrated exclusively on modern art; in exhibition posters of the gallery, it was written “Apadana, Gallery of Modern Painting,” and provided the opportunity for modern artists to argue and illuminate their points of view with their visitors. [Fig. 4-17] About significance of Apadana in paying to this new task, Ziapour wrote: “I am sure that Apadana will be the only place that can develop gradually the taste of the art lovers, because artists always gather together at this place and most of the time are discussing art issues. One influential factor that can be useful in advancement of our men and women’s

Text of the Conference about Gharib and the Writing Method in Iran].” *Irān*, April 17, 1949 & Shirvani, Hasan. “Anjoman-e honari-ye korus jangi če karda ast? če miķāhad bekonad? [What Has the Fighting Cock Art Association Done? What Will It Do?]” *Irān*, April 24, 1949.]

58 Ziapour, Mahsha. “Korus jangi [Fighting Cock],” *Website of Jalil Ziapour*, accessed June 10, 2018, <http://www.ziapour.com/khoroos-jangi/>.

59 Apadana Gallery, on the northeast corner of *Bahār* [Bahar Avenue] in Tehran, started its work by renting five shops next to each other and adjoining them to create two exhibition rooms and an office. [Mojabi, *Pišgāmān-e naqāši-ye mo’āser-e irān [Pioneers of Contemporary Persian Painting]*, 120.]

60 See Chapter 2 for the discussion on “movement or avant-garde” versus “sales or commercial” institutes.

61 Parviz Barati, “Mā honarmandān-e farāmuš šoda hastim: goftogu bā maḥmud javādidpur [We Are Forgotten Artists: An Interview with Mahmoud Javadipour],” *E’temād-e melli*, June 27, 2007.

artistic taste is to watch many paintings. Tehran lacked a place like Apadana for promotion of the painting and creation of a broader art atmosphere.<sup>62</sup> Accordingly, one observes that the apolitical and conservative magazine *Jahān-e now* (1946) parallel with the first exhibition of Apadana (September 1949) commented: "Discussion about the importance of this exhibition and the necessity of such exhibitions is useful since it is obvious that in a society with people who are this much uninformed about their art and consider Iranian painting not beyond miniature, it is only via holding exhibitions and displaying artworks that we can increase people's understanding of art. It is only this way [...] to omit the growing gap between art and people [...]."<sup>63</sup> [Fig. 4-18] Apadana, as a private space, could also provide the necessary self-sufficiency from the state and other institutes that modern artists needed for the institutionalization of modern art. The main argument of artists was that the Ministry of Culture was negligent about creating proper places for exhibition of the artworks and had made artists dependent on the cultural relations societies—the issue for which places like Apadana had served as a solution.<sup>64</sup> With regards to the cultural aim of Apadana Gallery, its members did not charge artists for displaying their works, but in order to meet the gallery's costs, they had membership fees for those who took part in their debates. [Fig. 4-19] In addition to personal sources of financing, the secondary jobs, commissions and painting classes held by members of the gallery were also used to cover the costs.<sup>65</sup> The exhibitions at Apadana were all from first modern artists at faculty. For each exhibition, members invited artists to describe the works and to answer questions of the visitors: "All day, a group of artist friends talked to people at Apadana and answered their questions. [...] By doing so, we expected no sale or profit for the works. Our main aim was to help young artists and to familiarize people with new art styles."<sup>66</sup>

62 «من یقین دارم آپادانا تنها جایی خواهد بود که می‌تواند سلیقه اهل ذوق را به تدریج بهبوداند، زیرا در این خانه هنری، هنرمندان همیشه جمع‌اند و غالباً در جریان مباحث هنری هستند. یک اصل بزرگ که می‌تواند برای پیشرفت ذوق هنری زنان و مردان ما مفید واقع شود، دیدن [Ziapour, Apadāna] نقاشی‌های فراوان است. تهران محلی مانند آپادانا را برای ترویج نقاشی و به‌وجود آوردن محیط وسیع هنری لازم داشت.» [Apadana and New Paintings].

63 «گفت‌وگو درباره‌ی اهمیت این نمایشگاه و لزوم ایجاد چنین نمایشگاه‌هایی بی‌مورد به نظر نمی‌رسد زیرا بدیهی است در جامعه‌ای که مردم آن تا این حد از جریان هنر خود بی‌اطلاع‌اند که مثلاً خیال می‌کنند نقاشی ایران از حدود مینیاتور پا فراتر ننهاده، بالا بردن سطح درک هنری مردم جز با ترتیب‌دادن نمایشگاه و نشان‌دادن آثار هنرمندان میسر نیست. تنها از این راه است که می‌توان [...] فاصله‌ی میان مردم و هنرمندان [Apadāna (kāšāna-ye honar-hā-ye zibā)] ["Apadana (House of the Fine Arts)"] *Jahān-e now*, no. 14 (1949): 376.]»

64 Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāshi-hā-ye pezeškniā dar apadāna [Paintings of Pezeshknia at Apadana]," *Mehr-e irān*, December 26, 1949.

65 The major expenses included rents, preparation of invitation cards, posters and receptions. As Javadipour explained about their financial sources, at that time he worked at the print-house of a bank, Ajoudani worked as a mathematics teacher in schools, and Kazemi taught painting. [Vida Nasehi, "Yād-e raftegān: ḥossein kāzemi [Remembering the Gones: Hossein Kazemi]," *Irān nāma*, no. 56 (1996): 703.] Also, Apadana accepted different commissions such as making portraits, murals, reliefs, book illustrations, posters, stock designs and the interior design of buildings. [Newsha Djavadipour, ed., *Dar setāyēš-e ruz: gozida-ye ātār-e maḥmud javāḍipūr [In Appreciation of the Day: A Selection of Mahmoud Javadipour's Works]* (Tehran: Nazar, 2018), 28.]

66 «در تمام روز عده‌ای از دوستان هنرمند در آپادانا با مردم گفت‌وگو می‌کردند و به پرسش‌های آنان پاسخ می‌دادند. [...] ما هیچ‌گونه چشم‌داشت و انتظاری در مورد فروش کارها یا سودی از این رهگذر نداشتیم. هدف اصلی ما کمک به هنرمندان جوان و آشنا کردن مردم با شیوه‌های تازه و هنر بود.» [Mojabi, *Pišgāmān-e naqāshi-ye mo'āṣer-e irān [Pioneers of Contemporary Persian Painting]*, 120.]



Fig. 4-14 "Founders of Fighting Cock Association (L-R: Gholamhossein Gharib, Jalil Ziapour and Hasan Shirvani)," Courtesy of Kereshmeh Gharib



Fig. 4-15 "Junction of Bahar and Takht Jamshid in 1946," in Mahmoud Pakzad, *Tehrān-e qadim [Old Tehran]* (Tehran: Ābān, 2003), 118



Fig. 4-16 Mahmoud Javadipour, *Signboard of Apadana Gallery*, 1949. Plaster, 67 D × 6 W cm, Mahmoud Javadipour's collection

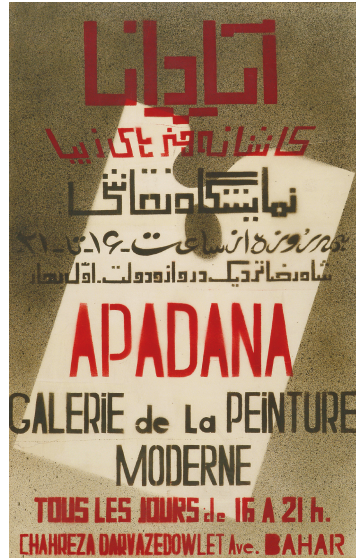


Fig. 4-17 Mahmoud Javadipour, *Poster of first exhibition at Apadana Gallery*, 1948. Oil on paper, 83 × 57 cm, Courtesy of Newsha Djavadipour

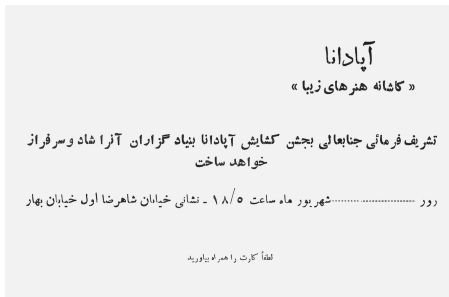


Fig. 4-18 (Left) "Invitation card to first exhibition at Apadana Gallery in September 1949," Courtesy of Newsha Djavadipour

Fig. 4-19 (Right) "Membership Card of Apadana Gallery," Courtesy of Newsha Djavadipour. [On the card from up to down: Apadana House of the Fine Arts, Membership Number, Membership Card, Mr. [name] is registered as a member of Apadana in [date], Apadana's director; This card is valid for one year.]

The role of the specialization of art that was undertaken by Fighting Cock Association was scientification of art with emphasis on art for art's sake through debates and criticisms, displaying of movies, publication of a magazine and manifesto and writing in newspapers. This form of activation maintained connections between modern artists and the literary or intellectual fields. Contributions from other fields to this role had much to do with subjects of the debates; i.e. modern art with attention to national identity and local attributes that as well concerned other fields than visual arts.<sup>67</sup> Ziapour, in addressing his association's role in specialization of art, explained in *Irān-e mā* newspaper in 1949: "When we look carefully at present condition of Iranian painting, we observe that the technique of painting is not prevalent as a scientific and technical art among painters. There is only a seven-to-eight-person group [Fighting Cock members and affiliates] together with many art lovers and well-informed advocates who pay attention to the scientific and technical method of painting and intend to promote and advance Iranian painting thereupon."<sup>68</sup> Many intellectuals supported cultural activation of the artists to increase the ability of people for understanding modern works. They emphasized that in a society without adequate knowledge about modern art, the solution should not be censorship of the artists but: "[...] people should be trained and sent to schools of taste, sense and appreciation. They should begin from the first rung of the ladder and arrive at the top step-by-step and gradually."<sup>69</sup> Accordingly, one can read fig-

67 Among these figures we can refer to Amirhossein Aryanpour (sociologist), Mostafa Kamal Pourtorab (musician), Kazem Tina Tehrani (writer), Jalal Al-Ahmad (writer), Mohammad Moqaddam (linguist), Parviz Dariush (translator), Serkis Djanbazian (ballet pioneer) and others.

68 «وقتی درست به موقعیت کنونی نقاشی ایرانی توجه کنیم می بینیم که فن نقاشی مانند یک هنر علمی و فنی در میان همه نقاشان رواج ندارد. تنها یک عده هفت هشت نفری با یک عده بی شماری از طرفداران بانوق و هواخواهان مطلع هستند که به روش علمی و فنی در نقاشی [Ziapour, Apadāna wa naqāshi-hā-ye jadid [Apadana and New Paintings].] توجه دارند و درصدد ترویج و پیشرفت نقاشی ایران از این راه هستند.»

69 «[...] چنین مردمی را باید تربیت کرد و به مدرسه ی ذوق، فهم و ادراک فرستاد. از پله اول نردبان گرفته، رفته رفته و قدم به قدم به پله های [Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh, "Kamāl al-molk [Kamal al-Molk]," in *Yādname-ye kamāl al-molk [Kamal al-Molk's Memorial]*, ed. Darab Behnam Shabahang and Ali Dehbashi (Tehran: Čakāma, 1985), 89.] بالاتر برسند.»



ures like Al-Ahmad, with nationalist and left sympathies, defining this technical approach by Fighting Cock as a fight against a local upheaval—a victorious one—to attain artistic autonomy via debating the technical complexities of modern art.<sup>70</sup> Or, Bahman Mohasses, of Fighting Cock affiliates, simultaneous with Ziapour's efforts in Cubism, described the complexity of Cubism as a modern style as follows: "What is painting? This is the question whose answer can only be seen in modern art [...]. The miracle of modern art is that it presents contemporaneous facts of life with their all extremities [...]. An avant-garde artist [Cubist] breaks the nature into pieces to show its content [...]. If an artist merely represents the surface of nature, would he be able to display [modern life's] agitation?"<sup>71</sup> The cultural role by Fighting Cock members not only provided art with a technical justification, but was also a fight against amateur artists who imitated Western modern art awkwardly and introduced their works as modern. For instance, the term "Cubism" in those years, as a common mistake, was applied for anything bad-looking and grotesque.<sup>72</sup>

Debates of artists on modern paintings were no longer restricted to Impressionism as the highest achievement from the faculty. After their return from Europe, these artists adopted a selective approach to a range of modern styles such as Neo-Impressionism, Fauvism, Expressionism and Cubism. These styles were adopted and applied to a localism with attention to their geographical elements such as provincial landscapes, literary subjects, traditional forms and motifs, as well as ethnographic and anthropologic features such as colours, costumes, and thoughts. Many of these paintings were displayed at exhibitions of Apadana during its short-lived six months of activity.<sup>73</sup> The exhibitions were accompanied by debates and became highly controversial due to the innovative features of the works. The resistance of the visitors—in particular the conservative opponents and traditionalists—sometimes led to fights and destruction of the works; in order to defend their paintings at the shows, it became a common practice for some artists to remain anonymous and not to sign their paintings.<sup>74</sup> A review of the paintings at these exhibitions and the reactions by their opponents proves three groups of

70 Jalal Al-Ahmad, *Arzyābi-ye šetābzada [A Rash Evaluation]* (Tehran: Amir kabir, 1978), 151.

71 «نقاشی چیست؟ این سوالی است که جواب آن فقط در هنر مدرن [...] دیده می‌شود [...] معجزه هنر مدرن در این است که واقعیت قابل‌ذکری از این زندگی را با تمام شدت‌ش نشان می‌دهد [...] هنرمند پیشرو طبیعت را می‌شکند برای آن که محتوی آن را بنماید [...] اگر هنرمندی جز [Bahman Mohasses, "Honar-e jadid dar naqāši wa jorj] berāk [New Art in Painting and George Braque]," *Andiša wa honar*, no. 1 (1954): 51-54.]

72 "Goftošonudi darbāra-ye naqāši bā šādeq tabrizi naqāš-e mo'āšer [An Interview with Contemporary Painter Sadeq Tabrizi about Painting]," *Talāš*, no. 5 (1967): 33.

73 Apadana Gallery's close-down after six months activity (September 1949 to April 1950) was affected by the unexpected death of Reza Jorjani—art historian and teacher at Faculty of Literature in the University of Tehran—at his talk on the gallery's premises. During this six-month period, Apadana held 4 exhibitions (2 solo- and 2 group shows) from Hossein Kazemi and Mahmoud Javadipour (September 1949), Houshang Pezeshknia (December 1949), Jalil Ziapour, Javad Hamidi, Ahmad Esfandiari, Mehdi Vishkaei and Houshang Pezeshknia (March 1950) and Hossein Kazemi (March 1950).

74 Abdolzaki, Mirza, "Honarmand bayad be kallāqiat-e kod imān dāšta bāšad [Artist Should Believe in His Creativity]," accessed March 1, 2018, <http://esfandiari.honar.ac.ir/index.aspx?fkeyid=&siteid=18&pageid=706&newsview=4160>.

opponents against attempts toward art for art's sake. Amongst these groups, there were the traditionalists and miniature painters, who were annoyed with the eclectic approach of these paintings adapting modern styles with traditional painting; the left sympathizers and Realist painters, who mocked the complexities of modern art for being beyond the grasp of the masses; finally the common people, who found these paintings slandering their sense of artistic understanding.

Inspected generally, the subject matters of these paintings were mainly selected from provincial landscapes, still life, portraiture and folklore, and were executed in mixing the styles of Impressionism with Abstract-Cubism and Expressionism. In almost all of these paintings, one observes two common features. First, regarding their technical aspects, and in contrast to a fidelity to nature, artists preferred an unfettered expression of their own interpretation into the subject matters, which was revealed via application of expressive lines, brush strokes, pure colours, abstract forms and simplified figures. The second feature appeared in the conceptual aspect of the works that rather emphasized the artists' personal, psychological and sometimes unconventional conception of the subjects. It should be noted that the artists who began experimenting in modern painting varied regarding these both technical and conceptual aspects. This means some continued applying their learnings at the faculty in Impressionism and Post-Impressionism to the subjects selected from their local surroundings. Many of these subjects in the 1940s were influenced under the ideologized space by the left intellectuals, but this remained mostly as an inspiration and did not transform the artists to ideologues in the fields of art or literature.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, it was common that they thematized topics such as revival and rebellion against injustice, the public claims and everyday life with less decorative concerns in their works. [Fig. 4-20] But for those artists who were more radical in their approach (e.g., the fighting cocks), this thematization was either depicted more technically or lost luster in favor of the personal and individual world of the artist. Nevertheless the exhibition visitors attacked, both the technical and conceptual innovations of the paintings. These attacks were largely rooted in visitors encountering concepts that were not customary and explicit for their eyes. This ambiguous quality, for instance, formed the central criticism at Ziapour's paintings in one of Apadana's group exhibitions (1950). Ziapour had displayed three Cubist paintings at this exhibition—*Ḥamām-e 'omumi* [*Bathroom*] (1949), *Masjed-e sepahsālār* [*Sepahsalar Mosque*] (1950) and *Ṭanāb* [*The Rope*] (1949). These paintings at that time were considered against the established norms. In *Bathroom*, for instance, he had tried to give a Cubist appearance to the painting by blending the interior and exterior sights of the bathroom and combining nude women and men with exposing overly visible female and male parts of their bodies; this act was

75 Sahar Karimimehr, "Didār wa goftogu bā māziār behruz [A Visit and Interview with Maziar Behrouz]," *Boḳārā*, no. 75 (2010): 522.

denounced as pornographic by visitors of the exhibition at the time. [Fig. 4-21] The painting of *Bathroom* was obviously a critical review of the norms. Not only had Ziapour entirely deconstructed the concept of a public bathhouse, but he had also unsettled the social expectancies of a painting. The public bathhouses in Iran went along with certain customs and, most importantly, separate rooms were allocated to women and men. Ziapour in his painting had purposely mixed the allocated spaces for women and men and had painted them together at one place in a public space outside the interior space of the bathhouse. The nude figures of men and women were washing each other's bodies, too. He had applied straight, angular and curved lines in order to persuade an intermixture of the interior and exterior spaces and to give his work a Cubist effect. Also, he had applied a geometric, grid-like ground to his painting, which was later repeated in many of his other works. In fact, this square-gridded ground, as he described, was supposed to convey the decorative art of tile-work in Iranian architecture.<sup>76</sup> In 1950, he published an article on painting with the picture of *Bathroom* in Issue 1 of *Kavir [Desert]*—one series of *Fighting Cock* magazine. This article, according to some critics, should be considered as Ziapour's own explanation of *Bathroom* and also the first theoretical discussion of modern art in Iran.<sup>77</sup> In this article, he argued a series of issues that defended modern artists' innovation in their works against attacks by the common audience. In fact, the publication of such text together with a reproduction of his modern paintings was essential to inform the audience about how to communicate with these works. The article drew attention to the point that realities are always ephemeral and are not fixed facts for ever. The realities change in the course of time and with regard to the necessities of each era. Therefore, sticking to old facts—as expected by the common audience—is to remain in the zone of superstitions or banal and mummified customs. But this zone, as he argued, confronted precisely the productive zones of the mind and imagination of the artist. The common audiences were not aware about this difference in them and the artists, so understanding the modern works was difficult for them and they, therefore, attacked modern artists for their creations.<sup>78</sup> According to the importance of detachment from the fixed facts, Ziapour praised the Surrealists' method of imaginary force that repelled all types of restrictions. In fact, he put Surrealism in his text versus Realism to explain how it helped the artists to reach wider views. Upon this ability was that the modern art-

76 Ziapour discussed three reasons for application of a grid ground in his paintings. First, as a manifestation of the constant social boundaries on the individuals. Second, as manipulation in traditional coloration (by their separation in each grid) to make them adapted to the contemporary time. Third, since each grid or tile contained a certain colour, therefore, this method simplified adding or omitting colours from the picture plane. [Jalili Ziāpur [Jalil Ziapour], directed by Houshang Azadivar (Tehran: Goruh-e farhang, adab wa honar-e šabaka-ye dow-ye šedā wa simā [Department of Culture, Literature and Art of IRIB2], 1989), DVD.]

77 Ziapour, Mahsha. "Korus jangi [The Fighting Cock]," *Website of Jalil Ziapour*, accessed September 20, 2018, <http://www.ziapour.com/khoroos-jangi/>.

78 Jalil, Ziapour, "Naqāši [Painting]," *Kavir*, no. 1 (1950): 8–9.

ists could create wonder (as a value) in their works and it was exactly this wonder that stimulated the audience's mind.<sup>79</sup> So, Ziapour's article was a response to this common criticism by people that the modern artists are not capable of expressing their intentions (what do they want and what do they say?) and introduced their works as methods of promoting public taste in art.<sup>80</sup>

In *Sepahsalar Mosque*, also Ziapour's attempt for representing the mosque with a Cubist dome and two minarets enraged his traditional audience. [Fig. 4-22] The Cubist deconstruction of *Sepahsalar Mosque* was achieved by the deformation of shapes of the dome and minaret towers, the disassembly and re-arrangement of its architectural elements such as the main entrance, facades and the porch. By repetition of the contour lines of the main building, he had given different planes to the painting and had adopted this method, apparently, to dissolve the space of the mosque and to add more to it for revealing both the interior and exterior of the mosque. Furthermore, he had dissolved colours of the mosque construction into mainly dull but warm ochres, blues and greens. The displacement of colours within the different planes of the painting had assisted his aim for intermixture of the spaces. The *Sepahsalar Mosque* could also be considered as a purposeful intention by Ziapour, on the one hand, to signify symbolically his criticism of the education of art in Iran. This is because earlier, during the establishment of an independent faculty for the fine arts at University of Tehran, the classes were held at rooms of the old Marvi Seminary and Mosque. Javadipour in his manuscripts about the condition of students at Marvi School refers to the minarets of the school calling to prayer and people coming to pray at its yard.<sup>81</sup> He complained: "The faculty was located on *Nāšer kōsro* [Naser Khosrow Avenue] and in Marvi Bazaar and Mosque. The dormitory of the mosque made the main workshop of the painting and most of the chambers where the theologues used to live had turned to private workshops for architecture students [...]. Girls and boys working next to each other was against religious doctrines and caused dissatisfactions [...]."<sup>82</sup> On the other hand, this painting was considered an outrage to the religious norms and Ziapour was criticized for overstepping them. The calligraphic and abstract tile works of the mosque were replaced with artist's own handwriting resembling rather a floral decoration. The holy interior of the mosque was mixed with the public exterior, while in Islamic architecture there were several gradations for the visitors or prayers to enter the prayer hall and arriving at the holy niche (*Mihrāb*) or the pulpit (*Minbar*) at the central building.

79 Ibid., 9.

80 Ibid., 11.

81 Mahmoud Javadipour, *Zendegināma-am be-ezāfa-ye nevešta-hām* [My Biography and Writings], Original manuscript, n.d., Collection of Mahmoud Javadipour; 5.

82 «دانشکده در خیابان ناصرخسرو، بازارچه مروی و داخل مسجد مروی بود. شبستان مسجد، کارگاه اصلی نقاشی بود و بیشتر حفره‌هایی که طلاب در آن زندگی می‌کردند، به صورت کارگاه خصوصی شاگردان معماری درآمد بود [...] نقاشی‌کردن دانشجویان دختر و پسر کنار هم مغایر انجام فرایض دینی و موجب نارضایی بود [...]» [Mojabi, *Pišgāmān-e naqāšti-ye mo'āšer-e irān* [Pioneers of Contemporary Persian Painting], 116.]



Fig. 4-20 (Top Left) “Notice of Apadana’s group exhibition (1950) announcing artists’ names, exhibition’s date, hours and address of the gallery,” in *Irān-e mā*, March 12, 1950. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

(Bottom Left) “A photograph from Apadana’s group exhibition (1950) with Mahmoud Javadipour’s painting *Entezār [Waiting]* (1946) in the background,” Mahmoud Javadipour Collection

(Right) Mahmoud Javadipour, *Entezār [Waiting]*, 1946. Oil on canvas, 154 × 132 cm, [Ibid.]

This gradual order of entry, which was to pass through arcades and the fountain yard, emphasized the grandeur and sanctity of the mosque’s construction. In reaction to this exhibition, Iraj Afshar (1925–2011)—a renowned scholar in Iranian studies—had blamed Ziapour that his paintings lacked any accordance to the principles of painting and aesthetics: “[...] comprehension of his works is not possible for everybody, I understand nothing from this art either, it does not exalt or cheer my spirit, my eyes do not realize its beauty; in my opinion, its colours lack the necessary harmony with nature and its crooked lines do not convey any virtue [...]”<sup>83</sup> Many of these criticisms also considered a kind of blasphemy by these artists. Basically, these paintings were tolerated neither by people nor the state authorities; at the reception

83 «[...] درک کردن کارهای او برای همه کس امکان ندارد، من هم چیزی از این هنر دریافت نمی‌کنم، به روح شادی و طرب نمی‌دهد، چشم حسن و زیبایی در آن نمی‌یابد؛ به نظر من رنگ‌های نقش او تناسب طبیعی و لازم را ندارد، خط‌های کج و معوجی به طور درهم بر چشم از آن‌ها کرد [...]» [Afshar, “Enteqād az goftār-e ziāpur [Criticizing Ziapour’s Talk],” 565.]

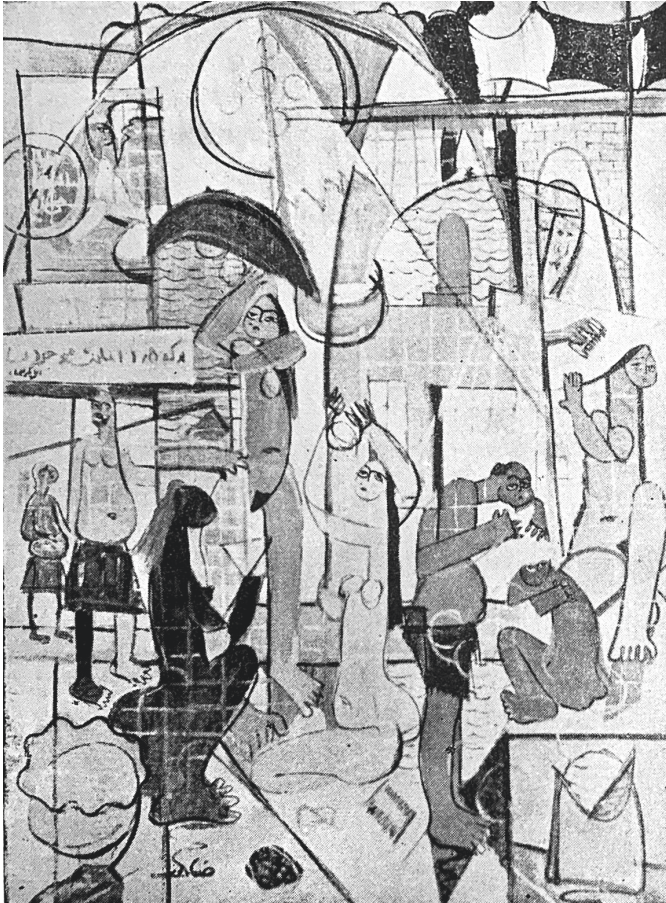


Fig. 4-21\* Jalil Ziapour, *Hamām-e 'omumi [Bathhouse]*, 1949. Oil on canvas, 120 × 80 cm, Collection [?]. In Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāshi [Painting]," *Kavir*, no. 1 (1950): n.p. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

\*A reproduction has been used where the original work was not accessible in public or private collections

of the same group exhibition, Ziapour was slapped by a police officer.<sup>84</sup> It was at the same exhibition that two of his paintings were sabotaged by a renowned group of traditional painters as he was giving a talk on the history of Iranian painting.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>84</sup> Nemat Laleli, "Avalin gāleri dar irān: mošāheba bā maḥmud javādipur [First Gallery in Iran: Interview with Mahmoud Javadipour]," *Tandis*, no. 130 (2008): 8.

<sup>85</sup> Houshang Peimani (1935–), was a renowned Realist painter and of Kamal al-Molk's students. Peimani and his studio on *Šāhābād* [Shahabad Avenue], near Tehran's gallery district, made the main opposition against Ziapour and Fighting Cock Association. Peimani also published *Rad-e 'qāyed-e maktab-e kubism [Rejection of the Theories of Cubist School]* (1955) which was a controversial book from his long interview with Ziapour on Cubism on June 10, 1954.



Fig. 4-22 Jalil Ziapour, *Masjed-e sepahsālār* [*Sepahsalar Mosque*], 1950. Oil on canvas, 120 × 80 cm, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

The significant point about these attacks and criticisms was that, in the same group exhibition, those modern paintings that showed more national attributes or social agreement were supported by the left or nationalist sympathizers. For instance, Al-Ahmad who poked fun at Ziapour's *Bathroom*, took side with Houshang Pezeshnia and Hossein Kazemi's paintings.<sup>86</sup> Works by Pezeshknia were anthropological depictions of Iranian society and had social inclinations. Al-Ahmad had earlier held a talk at Pezeshknia's solo exhibition in Apadana (1949), and although this artist had participated with both Cubist and Impressionistic works in the group exhibition, Al-Ahmad admired only his Impressionistic paintings with provincial titles such as *Zan wa kāši [The Woman and the Tile]* (1949) or paintings with peasant themes for their adherence to the simple taste of life. For instance, *The Woman and the Tile* was a portrait of the painter's wife framed in a tile with Kufic calligraphy in its margins. Pezeshknia had attempted in this painting to bridge Persian miniature to modern portraiture by mixing the classical face of the women in Persian miniature (long black curly hair, black eyes, arched eyebrows and small lips) with simple composition of lines and colours. The portraiture of the artist's wife was also very close to the women in miniature paintings with the same enchantment and allure in the way of their look and semi-veiled hairstyle.<sup>87</sup> It is not clear if Pezeshknia sought any certain message by choosing to work his model with an eclectic Persian-European style or not. But one supposition to be made is that the simultaneity of his marriage with his return from Turkey and the experience he had collected at Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul is important. That is, similar to Ziapour and Hamidi, who in Paris were encouraged by their French teachers to return to their own roots in modern creation, Pezeshknia could have also benefited from the same source, or at least be influenced by that atmosphere.<sup>88</sup> This supposition becomes noteworthy when *The Woman and the Tile* also drew attention of art historians due to its calligraphic elements arguing it as the first modern Iranian painting with application of calligraphy as a visual element in it.<sup>89</sup> [Fig. 4-23]

Al-Ahmad paid a similar tribute to Kazemi's solo exhibition in Apadana, *A Souvenir of Kurdistan* (1950), as an ethnographic study around people of an area in Northwestern Iran. In his exhibition, Kazemi had painted portraits of Kurdish men and women (5 pieces) and their local costumes, dance and everyday life (21

<sup>86</sup> Houshang Pezeshknia studied painting at Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul (1945) with the French teacher, Leopold Levy (1882–1966).

<sup>87</sup> *The Woman and the Tile* was produced in the same year of Pezeshknia's marriage with his wife (Soraya Daftari) and it was considered an entirely romantic and inspiring chapter in the artist's life.

<sup>88</sup> The period that Houshang Pezeshnia studied painting in Istanbul (1942–1946) was simultaneous with World War II. During these years, Turkey after France and Italy was another, yet cheaper and closer, destination to study art. Due to the war, exiled teachers and students from Europe had made Istanbul a similar hub for modern art as in Europe.

<sup>89</sup> "Pezeškniâ noğostin honarmand-e modernist-e irâni ast [Pezeshknia Is the First Iranian Modernist Artist]," *E'temād*, November 15, 2012.



pieces) against a plain monochromic background. Despite a few paintings in which he had tried his hand at Cubism, the major part of his exhibition did not employ many Impressionistic elements beyond the use of lines and colours in figures' customs and portraits. All the paintings were framed in manually built panels with rough wood and this was deliberately done to add to the intimate and modest quality of the works. In fact, efforts by Kazemi to create modern paintings (e.g., pure colours, less detail and simple forms) was mistaken and admired by his critics as a simplicity pertaining to their subject matter.<sup>90</sup> In those paintings of this series that he had attempted to give a Cubist feature to the works, Kazemi did this by creating angular forms in the figures and objects. The forms were displayed in their



Fig. 4-23 Houshang Pezeshknia, *Zan wa kâši* [*The Woman and the Tile*], 1949. Technique [?], 48 × 43 cm, Collection [?]

almost abstract shapes with heavy contour lines separating them clearly from one another and the same method was applied to the faces of the figures as well. Nonetheless, this attempt gave rather a Fauvist or Expressionist view to these works and it was done by flat coloured areas, painted radically and being put together by bold brush strokes. [Fig. 4-24] Al-Ahmad's attention to Kazemi's exhibition was precisely due to the way he had worked with colours and figures. For him these qualities were rather reminiscent of Iranian mystical literature: "People of a corner in this country [the Kurds] who despite their all historical precedence and repute in culture and tradition are seldom recognized in politics, art and literature [...]. Kazemi has proved to be a national artist in this exhibition."<sup>91</sup> Interestingly, one can observe that Ziapour, simultaneous with Al-Ahmad, criticized this series of paintings by Kazemi for their lack of technical maturity and awkward application of line, colour and form, and cautioned him not to be lost by admiring comments which were merely chauvinistic and propagandistic.<sup>92</sup> It is true that some paintings by the first modern artists, when reviewed today, might not seem too awkward (or vice versa) as they were criticized by their contemporary critics—a reason why art historians today try to study and

90 Sattari, "Didār bā ḥossein kāzemi [Visiting Hossein Kazemi]," 111.

91 «مردم یک گوشه از این سرزمین را که با همه‌ی قدمت تاریخی و معروفیت آداب و سنتشان، در سیاست، هنر و ادبیات کمتر جایابی از کاظمی خود را در این نمایشگاه یک هنرمند ملی نشان داده است.» [Al-Ahmad, "Dar apadāna [At Apadana]," 1.]

92 Ziapour, "Naqāṣi-hā-ye kāzemi [Kazemi's Paintings]."

analyse them based on their contexts of production. The importance of the exhibitions like *A Souvenir of Kurdistan*, yet lies in their ability to reflect the context in which these paintings were criticized. That is, how these paintings were seen by ordinary people as non-experts and artists and critics as experts. Although Kazemi, for instance, was praised for his solo exhibition about Kurdistan by leftist figures like Al-Ahmad, he had been harshly criticized by *Peyk-e şolh* (a magazine by the leftist Tudeh Party) for his other paintings in the first exhibition of Apadana (1949). The exhibition showed works by him and Javadipour as the founders of the gallery. Both Kazemi and Javadipour had displayed their experiments in Impressionism with local subject matters. Javadipour had worked landscapes of provincial people spending their leisure time in nature. Although his paintings noticeably rendered an unprecedented attention for the impression of light, their intimate subjects such as *Picnic*<sup>93</sup> made them communicable to the common visitors. [Fig. 4-25] Kazemi had applied Impressionism to the Persian miniature paintings and had created Impressionistic portraits of typical lovers or women in Persian miniatures (known as *Delbar [Sweatheart]* or *Yār [Lover]*). [Fig. 4-26] This was obviously an outrageous measure by him at the time. Therefore, *Peyk-e şolh* newspaper condemned Kazemi for the unconventional combination of colours he had chosen for his modern miniature paintings, and instead, had valued Javadipour's Impressionistic landscapes for their less whimsical coloration and more Iranian authenticity: "Most of our artists have a notable deficiency and that is their alienation from those people for whom or by whose language they write or create. Iranian quality is seldom seen in most of our country's artworks and its reason perhaps is their more engagement with foreign artworks [...]. Apadana house of the fine arts is not an exception either."<sup>94</sup> This attitude shows that, the atmosphere in which modern artists displayed their works, rather than the technique, was much influenced by ideology (left or right), and detachment from the norms could create fear. It was this condition that similar works by Kazemi, for instance, when exhibited in a solo exhibition, a leftist like Al-Ahmad admired them and when shown next to the less complicated works by Javadipour, they were harassed by *Peyk-e şolh*. In contrast to Javadipour's *Picnic* that was an experience merely in Impressionism with no strange play with the figures and forms, Kazemi had worked a miniature girl in a common position as seen in old miniatures: sitting under a willow tree, playing a cithern and drinking red wine. The lines, colours and forms were painted minimally and the main intention of the

93 Javadipour had probably been inspired for the subject of people spending their free time in the nature or for the title of *Picnic* by major Impressionist painters; e.g., Claude Monet, Edouard Manet, Pierre Auguste Renoir and others.

94 «اغلب هنرمندان ما یک نقص بزرگ دارند و آن دوری از کسانی است که به زبان آن‌ها و شاید برای آن‌ها می‌نویسند، می‌سرایند یا می‌سازند. در اکثر کارهای هنری کشور ما کمتر رنگ ایرانی یافت می‌شود و علت این امر شاید بیشتر به خاطر مطالعه‌ی آثار ملل دیگر است [...]» [«Apadāna kāšāna-ye honar-hā-ye zibā [Apadana House of the Fine Arts],» *Peyk-e şolh*, December 10, 1949.]

artist, which was to capture the moment of ecstasy in the girl, was addressed via sketchy and expressive lines. It was precisely Kazemi's modern technique of painting that, according to the critics like *Peyk-e şolh*, alienated his subjects from the local language and made them not communicable to them.

The collective collaboration between Fighting Cock Association and Apadana Gallery could gradually push back the restrictions in the final years of the 1940s, whereas in 1950, *Jām-e jam* (1949)—a magazine with a nationalist approach—approved the victory of modern art over its academic and Social Realist contestants and wrote: “[...] Modernism has rapidly reached its perfection, has strongly slapped the languid, uncreative, steady and worn-out art of Realism.”<sup>95</sup> It should be noted that such acknowledgement to the modern art's victory by the magazines of the early 1950s was clearly a confession about the victory of the modern artists within and against the academic space and the official policies in the field of art.



Fig. 4-24 Hossein Kazemi, *Raqs-e kurdi* [Kurdish Dance], 1949 (also 1954). Oil on burlap, 92.5 × 63.5 cm, Courtesy of Fata Kazemi

95 [...] مدرنیسم، به سرعت رو به کمال رفته، تودهنی محکمی به هنر وارفته و خالی از ابتکار و دور از تازگی رئالیست زده است. « [Shams Langeroudi, *Tāriḵ-e taḥlīli-ye še'r-e now* [Analytical History of Modern Poetry], vol.1 (Tehran: Markaz, 1991), 509.]

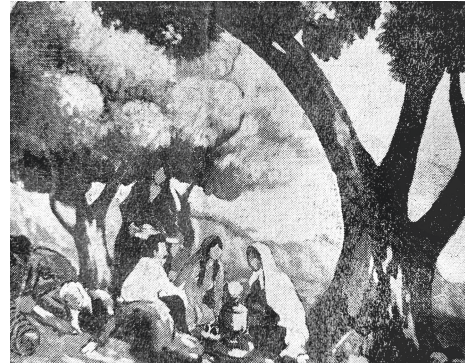
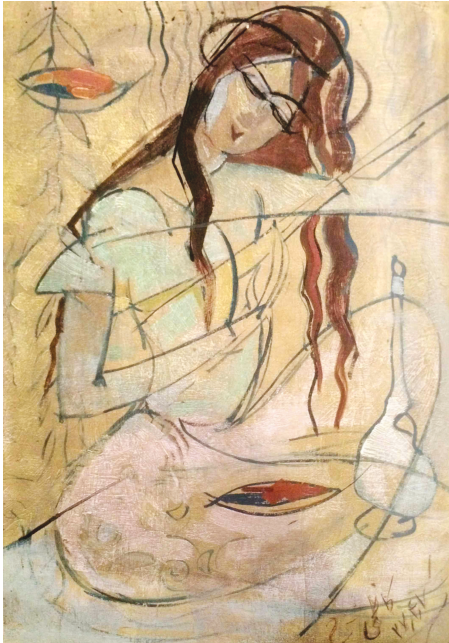


Fig. 4-25\* (Right) Mahmoud Javadipour, *Picnic*, c. 1949. Oil on canvas, Dimensions [?], Collection [?]. In "Apadāna kāšāna-ye honar-hā-ye zibā [Apadana House of the Fine Arts]," *Peyk-e šolh*, December 10, 1949. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

Fig. 4-26 (Left) Hossein Kazemi, *Doktar-e setār navāz [The Girl Playing Cithern]*, 1948. Oil on plywood, 60 × 45 cm, in *Pioneers of Iranian Modern Painting*, by Roueen Pakbaz and Yaghoob Emdadian (Tehran: Nažar, 2000), 33

#### 4.1.2 A Rebellious Painting: *The Uprising of Kaveh*

After graduation from the faculty and prior to his travel to Paris, Ziapour painted *Qiām-e kāva [The Uprising of Kaveh]* in 1945. This painting, together with Impressionistic works by other faculty students, was shown in *Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts* simultaneous with the first *Congress of Iranian Writers' Association* and both on the initiative of Iran-Soviet Cultural Relations Society in 1946. *The Uprising of Kaveh*, which was a study in Expressionism and Romanticism on the Iranian legendary hero, "Kaveh the Blacksmith," was the first entry by Ziapour in a public exhibition before his trip to Paris.<sup>96</sup> [Fig. 4-27]

In the painting of *The Uprising of Kaveh*, Ziapour has painted Kaveh as an ordinary and simple person, similar to the working class to which Kaveh belonged. Kaveh is seen with the crowd of oppressed people who are painted equivalently humble, on their feet, with their spears in the air, their look to the front, yelling out, moving forward and passing through the defeated troops of the king. Kaveh as the leader is depicted in front of the crowd, half naked with his apron as a banner waving in the air, with a mediocre body but muscular and mighty hands, his head faced back to the crowd, in one hand holding the banner of the kingdom and with the other hand encouraging the crowd to proceed. In this painting, lines and bold

<sup>96</sup> Pakbaz, *Contemporary Iranian Painting and Sculpture*, 13.

strokes applied by the artist are central elements to represent a forward-moving revolution or an uprising. Ziapour has attempted to display the running storm of the crowd with the repetition of oblique lines, by overlapping and fusing the figures in the crowd, and by counter-lines to give an expressive effect of movement to his painting. In an interview with Houshang Azadivar, Ziapour's comment on the symbolic significance of this painting also includes the stylistic feature of the painting: "[*The Uprising of Kaveh*] has a particular quality. I created it similar to a wave and I intended symbolically a revolutionary goal which had to happen in our art."<sup>97</sup>

The legend of "Kaveh the Blacksmith" is also noteworthy for understanding Ziapour's selection of this subject for his painting and his rebellious intention in art. The legend, itself adopted from a Persian epic poem in *Šāhnāma* [*The Book of Kings*] by Abu al-Qasem Ferdowsi in the 10th–11th century, is about the rebellion of a blacksmith called Kaveh against the tyrant king Zahhak, who had killed the young men of the country to use their brains for feeding the two snakes on his shoulders. Since this behavior by Zahhak had caused distrust and wrath amongst the people, the king sought a solution to fake legitimacy and justice. The solution was a written testimony on the king's truthfulness that he forced the courtiers and other reputed individuals into sign when Kaveh appeared at court to free his son from imprisonment by Zahhak, he was also asked to collaborate with



Fig. 4-27\* Jalil Ziapour, *Qiām-e kāva* [*The Uprising of Kaveh*], 1945. Technique [?], Dimensions [?], Collection [?]. In Reza Jorjani, "Namāyešgāh-e honar-hā-ye zibā-ye irān [Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts]," *Soḡan*, no.1 (1946): 26. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

the king in the signing of the testimony to rescue his son from death. Kaveh was enraged by this conspiracy, however, and returned to the city with a rallying cry against Zahhak. He united the victimized and oppressed people against the king's tyranny and created a banner by draping his wooden spear with his leather apron on its top.<sup>98</sup> Kaveh's revolt assisted Fereydun, a prince of the ancient royal house,

97 «[کاوۀ آهنگر] خاصیتی ویژه دارد. چون موج آن را ساختم و به صورت سمبولیستی هدف انقلابی را در نظر داشتم که باید در وضع هنری «[کاوۀ آهنگر]» [Jalili ziāpur [Jalil Ziapour], directed by Houshang Azadivar (Tehran: Goruh-e farhang, adab wa honar-e šabaka-ye dow-ye šedā wa simā [Department of Culture, Literature and Art of IRIB2], 1989), DVD.]

98 Ehsan Yarshater, *Dāstān-hā-ye šāhnāma* [*Stories of the Book of the Kings*] (Tehran: Bongāh-e tarjome wa našr-e ketāb, 1958): 15–43.

to win the throne, and because Kaveh's apron was adorned with gold and gems, it was acknowledged as a standard called *Derafš-e kāviān* [The Flag of the Kings]; each successive king added jewels to the flag so that it shone like the sun, even at night.<sup>99</sup>

It should be noted that the reference to Persian classical literature, particularly to *The Book of Kings*, was a common topic among the Iranian modern artists and writers in the 1940s. One year earlier than Ziapour's *The Uprising of Kaveh*, Mahmoud Javadipour had painted a similar subject entitled *Kāva-ye āhangar* [Kaveh the Blacksmith] in 1944 depicting the uprising of Kaveh. [Fig. 4-28] The reasons to this concern about the past, on the one hand, was that beginning with the Iranian Constitutional Revolution during first decade of the 20th century, the revolutionaries had promoted a nationalist spirit as an intellectual approach. This approach that included attention to ancient Iran, became bolder fueled by the national modernization plans of the first Pahlavi regime. On the other hand, the open political space, which was made in the early 1940s due to the overthrow of the first Pahlavi monarch, released suppressions on Tudeh Party. As a result, the Party emphasized the same national concerns in order to establish its own position among the Iranian intellectuals.<sup>100</sup> At the same time, Tudeh influenced artists and writers to move toward serious realist manifestations in positioning wealth against poverty—whereby workers, farmers, prostitutes, etc., became commonplace in the works.<sup>101</sup> Also, spotlighting the pre-Islamic civilization of Iran was a means of opposition to the regime and, therefore, the frequent attention to the epic figures such as Kaveh (as a folk rebel) by some artists in art and literary works could possibly be understood as a result of it.<sup>102</sup>

Returning back to the story of “Kaveh the Blacksmith,” Ziapour was attracted to the rebellious theme of *The Uprising of Kaveh* and there are different points to answer why he introduced this painting as his *artistic goal* before travelling to Paris.<sup>103</sup> Above all, *The Uprising of Kaveh* had to reveal an unsatisfactory condition for the modern artists versus the fields of power that dominated the field of artistic production. The conservative and negligent authorities disregarded the new artistic movements by young artists in favor of the traditional arts. At the same time, a crowd of established traditionalist and academic Realist artists (who occupied the academy and were afraid of losing their own established positions) conspired against new-comers into the field of art. According to Ziapour, these two

99 Jalal Khaleghi-Motlagh, “Derafš-e kāviān [Flag of the Kings],” in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, III/3 (London, U.K: Encyclopedia Iranica Foundation, 1994), 315.

100 Jahandar Amiri, “Bestar-hā-ye tāriki wa fekri-ye barāmadan-e rošanfekri-ye dini [Historical and Ideological Grounds for Rise of Religious Intellectuals],” *Din wa ertebātāt*, no. 18 & 19 (2003): 42.

101 Barahani, “Došnāmguy wa ‘arbadaju [Cursing and Screaming],” 82.

102 Abrahamian, *A History of Modern Iran*, 113.

103 Jalil Ziapour, “Soḡan-e now ār ke now rā ḡalāvati ast degar: goftogu bā ostād jalil ziāpur montaqed wa naqāš-e nāmāšenā-ye irān [Bring New Word that the New Word Has Other Value: An Interview with Jalil Ziapour Renowned Iranian Critic and Painter],” *Honar*, no. 17 (1989): 90.

dominant poles had brought society into an indolent artistic taste (i.e. artworks that demanded no hard work to be understood): “Teachers repeatedly have forced students into copying the past masters and have made conservative copy-makers out of them who are conventionally welcomed by people, are far from complaint and are adorable. [Copy-makers who] have constantly shown one side of the coin to please people and, thus, have left no chance for our people to see another way. Now, it will be strange for our people to [...] be suddenly awakened [...] wasn't it as a bitter medicine for them to see the other side of the coin?”<sup>104</sup>



Fig. 4-28 Mahmoud Javadipour, *Kāva-ye āhangar* [*Kaveh the Blacksmith*], 1944. Oil on cardboard, 70 × 100 cm, Mahmoud Javadipour's collection

«استاد پی استاد، که شاگردان را به گرتبرداری از روی کار استادان گذشته واداشته و از هر یک مقلدی بااحتیاط ساخته که همچنان مردم‌پذیر، و برحسب سنت معمول، به دور از اعتراض و قابل‌تحسین باشد، و همیشه یک سوی سکه را برای رضامندی خاطر به مردم نشان داده‌اند، دیگر جایی برای نوعی دیگر دیدن برای مردم ما باقی نگذاشته‌اند. حتماً برای مردم ما غریب خواهد بود که [...] ناگهان از خواب بیدارشان کنند [...] دیدن آن روی سکه برایشان چون خوردن داروی تلخ کراهت‌آور نبود؟» [Ibid., 80.]

The other point about *The Uprising of Kaveh* was the centrality of Kaveh's banner as it turned into the "Flag of the Kings" and a standard of kingdom and victory. The leather apron, although a common tool in a blacksmith's profession, could also signify his fields of knowledge and expertise; for Kaveh, it was merely a means by which he could plead for justice. For modern artists, it was their knowledge of modern art that provided them with the necessary competence to contest the norms. In other words, modern art played two critical roles for the artists simultaneously: first, similar to Kaveh's leather apron, it protected them from the harms inherent in their profession as artists and, second, it was the only means of waving the flag of their kingdom and victory. Reza Abduli, in his interview with Ziapour, described what Kaveh's apron could have signified in this painting for the artist: "[Ziapour] observes that with illiteracy is impossible to carry a flag like Kaveh the Blacksmith, so like Kaveh who hung his apron on top of his spear and stepped forward, 'my apron had to be my knowledge.'<sup>105</sup> Emphasis on the artist's knowledge of his art was an understanding that inspired Ziapour for his travel to France and for his earlier trips to different cities of Iran to collect both international and local knowledge of the present and his past.

The most important point about *The Uprising of Kaveh* was that it represented a rebellious spirit in the artist and displayed his aim to change the artistic field of Iran at the time. As Ziapour himself explained his intention for this painting, in addition to his learnings at the faculty, it had become obvious to him that art alters depending on cultural necessities. Both Iranian traditional and Realistic-Naturalistic paintings, however, had remained intact and, thus, required a revolution: "[*The Uprising of Kaveh*] was a schema of my longing for putting an end to the artistic decadence of my surroundings that had to begin with revolt (revolt from negligence of the surroundings about necessities; revolt from repeated norms which kill the innovation and cause stagnation)."<sup>106</sup> It should be noted that the same rebellious spirit was also seen in the literary field; outlines of the first *Congress of Iranian Writers' Association* concerned similar subjects such as theoretic criticism, definition of art, aesthetics, and artistic creation, but since the Congress was held on behalf of Tudeh Party, most of the discussions were directed to the committed art and art for the masses.<sup>107</sup>

105 [...] می‌بیند که با بی‌سوادی نمی‌شود مثل کاوه آهنگر پرچم برداشت؛ پس مثل کاوه که پیش‌دامنش را به نیزه کشید و جلو رفت، پیش‌دامن 105 «... می‌بیند که با بی‌سوادی نمی‌شود مثل کاوه آهنگر پرچم برداشت؛ پس مثل کاوه که پیش‌دامنش را به نیزه کشید و جلو رفت، پیش‌دامن 105 [Ziapour, Jalil, in discussion with Reza Abduli, Summer, 1999.] من باید سواد من می‌بود.»

106 [...] این شمای آرزوی من خاتمه‌دادن به افت‌های هنری محیط زندگی‌ام بود که می‌بایست با اعتراض آغاز شود (اعتراض به بی‌مبالاتی‌های [Ziapour, "Soğan-e now ār محیط نسبت به اقتضاها؛ اعتراض به قالب‌های تکراری که کشنده خلاقیت‌ها و موجب انحطاط هنری شده‌اند).» [Bring New Word], 77.]

107 For a detailed program and scripts of the speeches at the first *Congress of Iranian Writers' Association* see: *Barnāma-ye noḡostin kongera-ye nevisandegān-e irān [The Program of the First Congress of the Iranian Writers' Association]*. Tehran: n.p, 1346.



## 4.2 Fighting Cock Art Association

Fighting Cock Art Association was established in 1948 by Ziapour immediately after his return from Paris in the same year. The objective behind this decision, as repeatedly mentioned in texts and talks by the members, was to start a *nehzat* [movement] as *nehzatsāzān* [movement-makers] in the field of art, which could be more contemporaneous with the world and compatible with their own country.<sup>108</sup> Furthermore, the association was supposed to pursue the program for *rošangari* [enlightenment] of the artists and people about the rationale of art per se.<sup>109</sup> The movement and the enlightenment that Fighting Cock was about to bring to Iranian art was an effort to institutionalize “innovation” and “new art” in Iran. The way the association defined these two subjects is helpful in understanding their attitude to modern art. To be innovative, in Ziapour’s perspective, was to be aware of one’s own past traditions and to step forward without rejection of these traditions: not to follow them, nor to move in the same direction; so the crucial point about innovation was: “[...] that artist is vigilant in directing them [traditions].”<sup>110</sup> The definition provided by members of the association for new art was the art which was not bounded by any rule but artist’s own, and represented more sophisticated concepts; this new art deconstructed the visual habits of the people and progressed their taste in arts.<sup>111</sup> Considering this, the way Fighting Cock described a modern artist was necessarily connected with both of these two definitions; i.e., someone who was aware of the meaning of art, the responsibilities of an artist, and the technical features of its medium of work; someone who kept updated about the traditional position of these elements at home and also their international position in the world: “[...] it was necessary that a movement was made that considered both new patterns (for the expression of new attitudes) and be aided by Iranian authentic art of the past.”<sup>112</sup>

The appellation of “Fighting Cock” for the association and its logo were also intended to convey the same definitions by its members. The name selected by the writer Gharib and the logo drawn by Ziapour were supposed to characterize the association with attributes for a cock in Iranian classic literature: robust and aggressive in physical appearance, expressive in coloration and in concept symbolizing Bahman (Vohu manah) the *protector* holy divine in the Zoroastrian holy book in Iran. Bahman is portrayed as a cock and with its crow awakens people and

**108** Manouchehr Sheibani, “Enteqād bar konferāns-e zīāpur: tanhā rāhnāmā-ye mellat adabiāt ast [Criticizing Ziapour’s Conference: Literature Is the Only Guide of the People],” *Irān*, April 28, 1949.

**109** Mojabi, *Pišgāmān-e naqāši-ye mo’āšer-e irān* [Pioneers of Contemporary Persian Painting], 20.

**110** « [...] هنرمند در سمت‌گیری‌اش اشراف دارد. » [Mojabi, *Sarāmadān-e honar-e now* [Masters of Modern Art], 50.]

**111** Jalil Ziapour, “Barresi-ye enteqād bar enteqād dar naqāši [Study of a Criticism on a Critique in Painting],” *Post-e tehrān*, March 26, 1955.

**112** « [...] لازم آمد که با توجه به قالب‌های نو (برای بیان اندیشه‌های نو) و نگاهی به اصالت هنر گذشته‌ی ایران و یاری‌جستن از آن (...) » [Jalil Ziapour, “Negareši dar honar-e jadid-e irān [An Outlook on Iranian New Art],” *Honar wa me’māri*, no. 27 (1975): 35.]

cautions them for the sunrise, activation and good thought.<sup>113</sup> In addition, Shirvani mentioned a second reason for selection of the name “Fighting Cock.” When the association began its work, according to him, the artistic terminologies had lost their meaning and aesthetic aspect in Iran. Therefore, the association selected a name that instead of an artistic meaning could emphasize on the rebellious quality of their work: “We chose ‘cock’ instead of ‘art.’ But why did we attribute the ‘fighting’ feature to it? This was because we were and we are pioneers of [a new] thought, because a new thought cannot be established without fighting and diligence. Thus, our art; i.e. our cock, had to be a fighter to win.”<sup>114</sup> Ziapour’s design for the logo also displayed a rooster with wide-open eyes and resolute look to the front, an open beak as if it is crowing some news, flapping wings, raised comb and feathers, walking with open claws and displaying the bold front like a soldier. The contour lines of the rooster’s body are delineated with distinct sharp and curved lines that displace the white and shaded areas of the drawing and give a dimensional and dynamic feature, similar to Cubist drawings.<sup>115</sup> [Fig. 4-29] Gharib in his story *Korus-e ġarib* [“Strange Cock”] (published later in *Apadāna* magazine in 1956) portrayed the assumed characteristics of a cock as such:

Shortly before the sunrise that I flapped wings strongly on the roof of a cottage in the woods and echoed my cock crow into the dark corners, a cold and shivering voice always replied to me from the tense woods: ‘You are a fool if you still crow with the hope to awaken this forgotten woodland’; but I [...] still kept my head up proudly every morning on the roofs of the cottage in the woods, flapped wings and sang a wild song that I had memorized by heart from my wandering breed throughout the dark woods [...]. My wild song had a peculiar passion. It contained the cure for the mania of the past generations. Its cry summoned people and snakes to a horrid fight for a jewel lost in the water springs [...]: Cut down this root, this eternal injustice/ Cut down this root, that’s why lovers are enraged/ Break down this golden temple of idols, that it’s made by Zahhak with snakes on his shoulders.<sup>116</sup>

**113** For a study of the mythological and mystical roots of the “fighting cock” in Iranian tradition see: Foroutan, Aida. “Why the Fighting Cock? The Significance of the Khorus Jangi and Its Manifesto ‘the Slaughterer of the Nightingale.’” *Irān nāma*, no. 1 (2016): 28–49.

**114** «ما خروس را به جای هنر انتخاب کردیم ولی چرا به خروس جنگی صفت دادیم؟ این هم برای آن بود که در تثبیت عقاید خود پیش قدم بوده و هستیم و چون یک فکر تازه بدون مجاهدت و کوشش نمی‌تواند مقام خود را تثبیت کند بدین جهت هنر ما یعنی خروس ما لازم بود که سر جنگ داشته باشد تا بتواند پیروز شود.» [Shirvani, “Anjoman-e honari-ye korus jangi če karda ast? [What Has the Fighting Cock Art Association Done?]

**115** Aida Foroutan makes a comparative study on the logo of Fighting Cock drawn by Ziapour and sketches of *Le coq* (A Rooster) by Picasso in 1938. Foroutan suggests a possibility for Ziapour’s inspiration by Picasso’s fascination with image of the rooster during occupation of France by the Germans in World War II. [Foroutan, “Why the Fighting Cock?,” 36–37.]

**116** «هنگام سحر که روی بام کلبه جنگلی بال می‌کوفتم و صدای خود را به گوشه‌های تاریک می‌فرستادم، همیشه از تنگنای جنگل صدایی لرزان و سرد در پاسخم می‌گفت: آگه باز به امید بیداری این بیشه‌ی فراموش‌شده بانگ می‌زنی، خروس احمقی هستی؛ اما من [...] باز هم مغرور و متکبر، بر بام کلبه جنگلی، هر سحر سرم را بالا نگاه می‌داشتم، بال می‌کوفتم و آواز وحشی‌ای را که از نژاد سرگردان خود در سینه حفظ کرده بودم، در پهنای جنگل تاریک سر می‌دادم. آواز وحشی من شوری عجیب داشت. داروی دیوانگی نسل‌های از دست‌رفته در آن ریخته شده

Although the association invented the name “fighting cock” for its members and affiliates to identify each other for their modernist thoughts and consensus, it happened that their opponents also called themselves as cocks to show their radicalism against this association. Therefore, it was common that in published arguments between association and its opponents—as they called it *Javābyya* [“replication”]—these two groups identified themselves as “proponent cocks” (advocates of the association) and “opponent cocks” (adversaries of the association).<sup>117</sup>

Fighting Cock Association began its work based on a motto taken from a renowned poem by the Iranian poet Abu al-Hasan Ali Farrokhi Sistani in the 10th–11th century: “The story of Alexander became old and fiction/ Bring new word that the new word has other value.”<sup>118</sup> The poem itself represented a paradigmatic shift in Islamic world, particularly in Iran since the rule of Ghaznavid dynasty (977–1163), which attacked the way poets admired their past during Samanid Empire (819–999). This new paradigm was against intermixture of the reality of the present time with pride in mythic histories and replaced it by a more realistic understanding of the past.<sup>119</sup> The poem was used by the association to show that the fighting cocks opposed any romanticism about the past: “Upon our motto [...] we reacted against every regression or stagnation and, as far as our knowledge enabled us, we dismissed and unmasked any hindering and profiteering element.”<sup>120</sup> A shortlist of the outlines of association’s agenda, later stated by



Fig. 4-29 “Logo of Fighting Cock Association and its magazine by Jalil Ziapour,” in *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1949): n.p. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

بود. [...] آدمها و مارها را به یک جنگ هولناک بر سر نگیینی که در چشمه‌ها گم شده است، وا میداشت [...] بز نیشه بر این ریشه، بر این بنیاد ظلم جاودان پیشه/ بز نیشه بر این ریشه، که خون عاشقان بی‌خود نمی‌جوشه/ بز نیشه بر این بت‌خونه‌ی زرین، که معمارش ضحاک ماری‌دوشه.» [Gholamhossein Gharib, “Korus-e ġarib [Strange Cock],” *Apadāna*, no. 2 (1956): 1.]

<sup>117</sup> Ziapour, Mahsha. “Enteqād bar enteqād-e konferāns-e ziāpur [A Criticism on Criticizing Ziapour’s Conference],” *Website of Jalil Ziapour*, accessed March 12, 2018, <http://www.ziapour.com/critics/>

<sup>118</sup> فسانه گشت و کهن شد حدیث اسکندر/ سخن نو آر که نو را حلاوتیست دگر

<sup>119</sup> Nasim Asef, “Šā‘erān-e ‘aṣr-e ġaznavi [Poets of Ghaznavids],” *Šarq*, September 20, 2017.

<sup>120</sup> «ما بر مبنای شعر خود [...] هیچ عقبنگرایی یا درجایی را بی‌پاسخ نمی‌گذاشتیم و تا جایی که آگاهی‌های ما اجازه می‌داد، عوامل بازماندگی [Ziapour, “Sokan-e now ār [Bring New Word],” 84.] و سودجویی را به طور قاطع برکنار می‌زدیم و افشاگری می‌کردیم.»

Ziapour in an interview,<sup>121</sup> was to be understood in 6 clauses: 1. The Naturalism promoted by Kamal al-Molk's students had to be abandoned (because Naturalism was long abandoned in the world); 2. Miniature painting should not be continued in its repeated quality (miniature had to be updated); 3. Artists had to be contemporaneous with their own time (tradition was for inspiration and not regression); 4. Iranian art had to adapt itself with respect to the global culture (attention to means of communication and representation of the modern condition); 5. Iranian art had to advance itself with a concentration on the modern visual elements which had a basis in Iranian visual culture (geometric motifs had a long history in Iranian visual culture); 6. Cubism was a suitable match with Iranian cultural heritage (as angularity and geometry of Cubist forms were comprehensible for Iranians).

The association remained highly committed to its artistic agenda and respected its articles fully in recruiting members. Those who conformed to the agenda were approved as members and if they were inexperienced or sympathized with the left could only remain as affiliates and were only allowed to collaborate with Fighting Cock. Examples are Sohrab Sepehri, a poet and painter with modern features in his works who was young and thus was rejected as a main member, or Manouchehr Sheibani whose Tudeh membership kept him as an affiliate cock.<sup>122</sup> The association's apolitical stance prevented those with political views to decide instead of the main members. This resolution by the association was openly mentioned in their talks and writings. For instance, Ziapour discussed that Nima Youshij (1897–1960) who was the pioneer of *Še'r-e now* or *nimāi* [Persian modern poetry], was welcomed by Fighting Cock only due to his experience in modern poetry, but the association never deferred to his comments since they were conservative and sided with the people: "[...] we had no conservatism and did not side with people. We considered moderation a failure and understood social siding as fooling people. We said, people should only become informed about art and we had nothing to do with political groups."<sup>123</sup> In fact, the definition of "committed art" for the association differed from Tudeh's definition, which put it against "art for art's sake." For fighting cocks, the social role of the modern art was when it reflected the artist's contemporary time; so, although a modern work could be a personal work based on the artist's understanding of his own time, it was representative of the artist's attitudes and therefore was a social work of art.<sup>124</sup> Therefore, Fighting Cock stood entirely against the Left Party; those affiliates who sympathized with the Party sooner or later

121 Alireza Rezai, "Nehzat-e korus jangi wa taḥavol dar honar: goftogu bā jalil ziāpur darbāra-ye naqāši wa nehzat-e korus jangi [Fighting Cock Movement and Development in Art: An Interview with Jalil Ziapour on Painting and Fighting Cock Movement]," *Rastākiz*, May 24, 1977.

122 Mojabi, *Sarāmadān-e honar-e now* [Masters of Modern Art], 42.

123 [...] ما هیچ نوع مردم‌داری و محافظه‌کاری نداشتیم. محافظه‌کاری را خطا می‌دانستیم و مردم‌داری را گول‌زدن تشخیص می‌دادیم. ما [Rezai, "Goftogu-i bā ostad jalil ziāpur [An Interview with Master Jalil Ziapour]."] می‌گفتیم مردم را فقط در هنر باید روشن کرد و هیچ وقت با گروه‌های سیاسی سروکار نداشتیم.

124 Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāši [Painting]," *Kavir*, no. 2 (1950): 15.

came into conflict with the members and were dismissed from the association. A good example was Sheibani who shortly after foundation of Fighting Cock criticized the association for its art-for-art's-sake approach and emphasis on technique without considering social contributions of the artworks. Sheibani's criticism was published as *Enteqād bar konferāns-e zīāpur: tanhā rāhnamā-ye mellat adabiāt ast* ["A Criticism on Ziapour's Conference: Literature Is the only Guide of the People"] and was directed to Gharib and Ziapour's defense of Gharib's innovations in his writing method. The criticism by Sheibani was that the technical attention by association and its application to traditional elements and folklore separated Persian literature from meaning and transformed it into a puzzle for people, whereas literature was the only guide for people's souls.<sup>125</sup> Sheibani's criticism received many replications by association members and other affiliates as they condemned him for his left views. The association considered Sheibani's criticism as a weak point in him resulting from his contacts with the left circles and the members however regarded it as a tolerable fault that allowed his future collaboration with the association.

The main members of Fighting Cock Association were Jalil Ziapour (painter), Gholamhossein Gharib (writer), Hasan Shirvani (playwright) and temporarily Mor-teza Hannaneh (1923–1989, musician). Among the most renowned affiliate cocks were Manouchehr Sheibani (painter and poet), Nima Youshij (poet) and later Bahman Mohasses (painter) and Sohrab Sepehri (poet and painter). The association continued its work until 1951 when Houshang Irani (1925–1973), an avant-garde poet and painter, joined as a new member and due to his radical attitudes in art and literature, Ziapour left the association but still affiliated with the members. In fact, the departures were never final and those who left the association like Ziapour, Sheibani or Hannaneh, still continued their collaboration with the members.<sup>126</sup> The association had multiple facets in its modern approach; it was not just limited to visual arts, but also included music, theater and most importantly literature. The major elements in convergence of the members with each other were their concern for modernism in each field and, at the same time, concern for a revival of their national identity in their modern works. Therefore, prior to scrutiny of the association, it is necessary to understand the formative sources of the similarities shared by members. A major source was their educational background. The schools and academies these artists attended provided a space in which the students could experience the significance of both traditional arts and Western techniques. The Academy of Music (1914) was a school to which members attended almost simulta-

125 Sheibani, "Enteqād bar konferāns-e zīāpur [Criticizing Ziapour's Conference]," 2.

126 Evidence of this was re-joining of the members after the association's official deactivation in the late 1950s and re-establishment of *Fighting Cock* magazine by Ziapour, Gharib and Shirvani in May 1979 shortly after the Islamic Revolution (February 1979).

neously. Ziapour, Gharib and Hannaneh studied music at this academy.<sup>127</sup> The reason for the attraction of the young students to the Academy of Music was mainly due to the presence of Czech teachers, who taught Western classical instruments and courses like musical harmony at the academy.<sup>128</sup> Ziapour began painting while studying at this academy in 1939.<sup>129</sup> Being inspired by Czech teachers, he became attracted to reinvention of Iranian folk music via composition—an aim that was left unfulfilled by the government's decision to expel the Czech teachers and their substitution with Iranian teachers. Based on this event, Ziapour attended the School of Traditional Arts in 1940 where traditional arts (i.e., carpet design, illumination, miniature painting and ceramic) were the core majors of the school. It was at this school that he noticed the capacities of the traditional arts and he realized that motifs of Iranian carpets and ceramics were much richer than Realistic paintings of Kamal al-Molk School.<sup>130</sup> With the state's cultural policy for education centralization and merger of the School of Traditional Arts into Faculty of Fine Arts in 1941, Ziapour attended the faculty in the same year.

In addition to their common fields of study, the members also collaborated together prior to formation of Fighting Cock Association. For instance, Hannaneh and Gharib, based on their education in music, held free concerts in salons of cultural relations societies or Farhang Theater together with Hasan Shirvani. [Fig. 4-30] Farhang Theater as Tehran's first modern theater-house was founded by Abdol Hossein Noushin (1906–1971) in 1944. Noushin was a leftist intellectual who had studied theater in France and afterward focused on promoting modern theater in Iran. In Farhang Theater, Noushin collaborated as a stage director with other modern artists. The artists met at this place for the preparation of the stage decors, concerts, scripts, etc. It was upon these friendships that shortly before the official formation of the association members held meetings at the house of Mohammad

**127** In 1939 when Ziapour joined Academy of Music, Gharib also registered at the academy and Hannaneh had already been studying there since 1936. Morteza Hannaneh, born in Tehran, was a musician member of Fighting Cock Association and Gholamhossein Gharib, also born in Terhan, collaborated with the association as a writer. According to an interview with Gharib's family in 2005, it was said that he and Hannaneh had inclinations to Tudeh Party in 1943 but since the Party did not meet their nationalist expectations, they parted with it. [Mehdi Avrand, "Konda-i nimsuḳta nazdik-e yek mäh jaraḳa mizanad: goftogu-ye eḳtešāši-ye goharān bā kānevāda-ye ḡolāmhosein-e ḡarib [A Half-Burned Log Is Smoldering about One Month: An Exclusive Interview with the Family of Gholamhossein Gharib]," *Goharān*, no. 7 & 8 (2005): 34.] But, in another interview made by the author with Kereshmeh Gharib (Gharib's daughter) in 2019, she disapproved of such a statement and asserted that there have been mistakes made by her family in that interview about their inclination to Tudeh Party. [Gharib, Kereshmeh (Gholamhossein Gharib's daughter), in discussion with the author, January 2, 2019.]

**128** The Czech teachers had attended the Academy of Music in Tehran at the invitation of its Director, Gholamhossein Minbashian (1907–1980).

**129** Jalil Ziapour was born and grew up in Bandar-e Anzali (a harbor town in the north of Iran) and after finishing his basic education his family moved to Tehran in 1938.

**130** Ziapour, Jalil, in discussion with Reza Abduli, Summer, 1999.

Hannaneh—Morteza Hannaneh's father.<sup>131</sup> Gharib explained in *Yādnāma-ye ḥanāna* [*Memoir of Hannaneh*] that their plans for art and music were made at this house as a meeting point, and it was at this place that they decided to establish Fighting Cock Association and its magazine.<sup>132</sup>

A considerable part of the members' taste in modern art was also shaped by their foreign educations either before or after the establishment of the association. This was not only due to the conservative curriculum of the newly established Faculty of Fine Arts, but also students criticized the space due to a lack of theoretical and historical approach to traditional arts and, as a result, the formation of a highly binary academic atmosphere at the faculty that was divided between academic

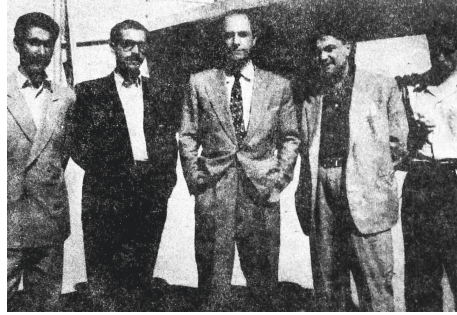


Fig. 4-30 “(L-R): Hassan Shirvani, Gholamhossein Gharib, Rouben Gregorian (musician), Parviz Mahmoud (musician) and Morteza Hannaneh,” Courtesy of Amir Ali Hannaneh

Realism of Kamal al-Molk's students and those who copied Western modern styles.<sup>133</sup> Accordingly, in one of his talks in 1953 Ziapour cautioned this condition at the faculty under *Āh mardom! Honarkada rā daryābid!* [“Alas, people! Save the Faculty”]. By criticizing appointment of a French architect as the dean of the faculty (André Godard), he argued: “The course of art history at the faculty is so that our students learn about all old and new countries (but not Iranian arts). So where is it? [...] Why is the art history of Iranians not taught at the faculty? Is the faculty founded so that Iranian students have no information about their own arts and they learn only about Egypt and France?”<sup>134</sup> In Paris, Ziapour studied sculpture at the atelier of Paul Niclausse (1879–1958) and Painting at École des Beaux-arts under supervision of Jean Souverbie (1891–1981) whose teachings on Cubism at his atelier in this school were rather a combination of Cubism with a more traditional Naturalism. At the

131 Morteza Hannaneh's father founded *Tervat* [Servat School] in 1921. This school was the second important school after Dar al-Fonoun and many prominent politico-cultural figures studied there.

132 Gholamhossein Gharib, “Digar čē fāyeda dārad az ḥanāna goftan [What Is the Use in Talking about Hannaneh Now],” in *Yādnāma-ye ḥanāna* [*Memoir of Hannaneh*], ed. Shahin Hannaneh (Tehran: Qatrah, 1990), 39.

133 The unsatisfactory air at the faculty made Ziapour simultaneously a student to spend about four years (before his educational visit to France in 1945) travelling to various cities in Iran familiarizing himself with the folk culture, motifs and colorations of traditional artifacts—*Sepahsalar Mosque* was a painting by him based on the experience from these trips. [Ziapour, Jalil, in discussion with Reza Abduli, Summer, 1999.]

134 «برنامه تاریخ هنر در هنرکده، چنین تنظیم شده است که هنرجویان ما از همه کشورهای قدیم و جدید، آگاهی می‌یابند (جز از هنرهای ایران). پس کو؟ [...] چرا در هنرکده از تاریخ هنر ایرانیان تدریس نمی‌شود؟ آیا این هنرکده برای این تأسیس شده است که فرزندان ایرانی از هنرهای خود اطلاعی نداشته باشند و فقط از یونان و فرانسه اطلاع حاصل کنند؟» [Jalil Ziapour, “Āh mardom! Honarkada rā daryābid! [Alas, people! Save the Faculty!” in *Majmu'a soḵanrāni-hā-ye honari-taḥqīqi-ye zenda yād ostād jalil ziāpur* [*A Collection of Master Jalil Ziapour's Art and Research Lectures*], ed. Shahin Saber Tehrani (Tehran: Jahād-e dānešgāhi, 2003), 17–18.]

same time, he attended Académie de la Grande Chaumière and l'académie André Lhote where, in addition to composition and coloration, he studied Cubism under the supervision of Lhote and his Post-Cubist theory in painting that concerned nature and aboriginal traditions of cultures as balancing factors of the orthodox Cubism. Similarly, Hannaneh travelled to Rome (1952–1960) and continued his education in musical composition at Institute of Music in the Vatican. This education familiarized him with Gregorian chants, modes and Egyptian musical forms and made him more determined to work on Persian music and its adaptation to international developments. At that time, those musicians who concerned themselves with making a change in Iranian traditional music were two types: those who believed that creating change in traditional instruments would coordinate them with Western orchestral music, and the other opposing type (from which Hannaneh was coming from) was comprised of mainly foreign educated musicians who believed in adaptation of Iranian traditional music to Western harmony, but based it on local Iranian repertoire. According to these musicians, mere emphasis on traditional or Western music distracted them from a third method, which they called the “national music.” For Hannaneh, this third method was a moderate solution that simultaneously cared for preserving the traditions, yet made them in line with new developments, therefore was more compatible with its zeitgeist.<sup>135</sup>

The members of Fighting Cock Association had two common ideals. The first ideal was to put emphasis on formation of a “national school” of art in which they reviewed local traditions, while at the same time, concerning themselves with Western modern art techniques. The second was an avant-garde spirit to rebel against those boundaries that had become established in the art and literary fields—this ideal became bolder among those members, like Irani, who did not consider the national school binding in their work. These common ideals were obviously mentioned by members in their texts and debates, and also pursued them in their works. For Ziapour, for instance, promotion of modern art in Iran via Cubism was due to the capability of this art regarding both of these ideals. According to him, Cubism was centered around two functionalities. This modern style was not a mere painting style, but it also reflected dissatisfaction of artists in their field and the necessity for demonstrating it through their artistic production. Therefore, Cubist works were compatible with a revolutionary attitude and represented a spirit for movement: “What as a priority makes a Cubist artist is not [acquisition of] Cubism as a peculiar painting style, but to have a revolutionary spirit which longs for progression and making free from suppressions, apathies, deprivations and specially the conven-

135 Shahrnazdar, Mohsen. “Be yād-e morteżā ḥanāna: andiša-ye tajadod dar musiqi-ye irān [In Memory of Morteza Hannaneh: The Idea of Modernism in Iranian Music],” *Ensānšenāsi wa farhang*, accessed March 15, 2018, <http://anthropology.ir/article/17947.html>.



tions.”<sup>136</sup> This rebellious quality, as he discussed, was developed in Cubist artist in three steps: First, the artist became suspicious about his surrounding; second, he possessed a frustration with the oppressing class who interfered modern artists in their work; and third, this frustration created a hostility and an aversion that made a strong crusader out of modern artist upon which hope, instead of doubt and frustration, was built.<sup>137</sup> The second functionality of Cubism for Ziapour was that it contained *adaptable* patterns with Iranian society. This adaptability, according to him, had much to do with the type of visual relation between Iranian traditional paintings and Western modern works; thus, application of Cubism in Iran was only to justify how tradition should be joined to contemporary demands.<sup>138</sup> But what made this visual relation between Cubism and Iranian traditional painting? For Ziapour, Persian miniature principally included features that made it comparable to such European modern styles as Impressionism, Fauvism, Expressionism, Cubism and Surrealism. These features were strong expressiveness, sensational manifestations and freedom in expression of the subjects, decorative and inventive coloration, and composition of forms. He classified these innovative features in Persian miniature under seven general attributes: 1. Display of moving figures (movement), 2. Timelessness, 3. Freedom in coloration and attention to the harmony of colours, 4. Flat coloration and application of lines for shadow effects, 5. General composition of space in the form of frames, 6. Lack of perspective, 7. Depiction of slight anatomy of figures via drapery.<sup>139</sup> [Fig. 4-31] For this particular attention to Cubism, he defended that Cubism could be the most communicable modern style for Iranians since there was an affinity between its cubist forms and geometric motifs of traditional artifacts such as Persian carpets, ceramics, and textiles, and at the same time, Cubism was relatively faithful to nature in its forms (although still not entirely).<sup>140</sup>

So, Ziapour considered the Iranian cultural background making them more receptive to Cubism and modern art: “Upon my studies in visual and decorative arts of Iran, I had realized that people were more exposed to geometric art [...]. Therefore, I thought [...] if I begin with a style with geometric forms, it will be easier to promote it in Iran, that is, to begin from the point which is not uncommon for

136 «آن چه به عنوان شرط اساسی یک کوبیست را به وجود می‌آورد یک روش خاص نقاشی نبوده بلکه در مرحله اول دارا بودن یک روحیه [Jalil Ziapour] انقلابی است که میل به ترقی دارد و بخواهد از زیر بار فشارها، سستی‌ها، محرومیت‌ها و بخصوص قراردادها [...] به در آید.» Ziapour, “Naqāshi [Painting],” *Korus jangi*, no. 5 (1951): 31.

137 *Ibid.*, 32-35.

138 *Jalili ziāpur [Jalil Ziapour]*, directed by Houshang Azadivar (Tehran: Goruh-e farhang, adab wa honar-e šabaka-ye dow-ye sedā wa simā [Department of Culture, Literature and Art of IRIB2], 1989), DVD.

139 Ziapour, Jalil. “*Naqāšān-e qadīm-e irān dar miān-e ketāb-hā če mikardand wa bāzmāndegānešān če mikonand?* [“What Did the Iranian Traditional Painters Do in Books and What Do Their Survivors Do?”], *Website of Jalil Ziapour*, accessed January 4, 2018, <http://www.ziapour.com/lectures/>-نقاشان-قدیم-ایران-در-میان-کتاب-ها-چه-میکردند-و-بازمانده‌گانه‌شان-چه-میکردند?/.

140 Ziapour, “Negareši dar honar-e jadid-e irān [A Review on Iranian Modern Art],” 35.

our people.”<sup>141</sup> In response to the question of why Ziapour emphasized traditional elements for the introduction of modern art in Iran, he explained that attention to traditional motifs and elements was not to exaggerate the local qualities in modern works, but rather these elements were indispensable part of the modern art per se.<sup>142</sup> Accordingly, he made an important argument about attention to tradition for Iranian modern art. He distinguished *re-creation* of traditional elements from *making an unethical profit* from them. In other words, by re-creation artist was reconsidering the traditional elements in his work but by making a profit artist was only trapped in an imitative cycle of copying the past. This reconsideration of traditions in an artist’s work was imperative since they consisted of the grounds and contexts of the artist and, for Ziapour, they were these grounds and contexts that formed the artworks: “[...] we should understand that aesthetics of no culture is created without its endemic grounds and by itself. These aesthetics are the result of inspiration, it is with the support of traditional inspirations as reminders and adaptors that aesthetics is created in a new way.”<sup>143</sup>



Fig. 4-31 *Razm-e miān-e do laškar-e key kosro wa afrāsiāb* [The Battle between the Armies of Key Khosrow and Afrasiab], 1430. Watercolour on paper, 340 × 220 mm, Administration of Cultural Heritage (Golestan Palace)

### 4.2.1 Arts and Literature: A National School

An overview of Ziapour’s works indicates that he started his cultural role primarily as an art critic and researcher, and less as a painter. His most known paintings in the 1940s and 1950s (20 pieces) and in the 1960s and 1970s (5 pieces) are seen as attempts to combine local motifs and Iranian folklore with Abstract-Cubism, which

«روی سابقه مطالعات خود در هنر تصویری و تزئینی ایران، به این نکته پی بردم که مردم ما به خاطر عوامل زیادی با هنر هندسی بیشتر سروکار داشتند [...] با توجه به این سوابق تاریخی فکر کردم [...] اگر با شیوه‌ای که شکل هندسی در آن باشد شروع کنم، برای پیش‌بردن هنری در ایران آسان‌تر خواهد بود، یعنی از جایی شروع بکنم که برای مردم ما بیگانه نباشد.» [Alireza Rezaei, “Poštawāna-ye farhang-i-ye mardom az naqāši čē bud? (goftogu-i bā ostād jalil žiāpur) [What Was the People’s Cultural Background about Painting? (An Interview with Master Jalil Ziapour)],” *Rastāqiz*, May 25, 1977.]

142 Mojabi, *Pišgāmān-e naqāši-ye mo‘āṣer-e irān* [Pioneers of Contemporary Persian Painting], 22.

143 [...] باید دانست که زیبایی و فریبایی هیچ فرهنگی، بی داشتن زمینه لازم به خودی خود به وجود نمی‌آید. مگر دارای مایه القانات باشد، [Ibid., 23.] و القانات با پشتوانه الهام از سنت، به مانند رابطی یادآور، زیبایی و فریبایی‌ها را به وجود می‌آورند و بار نوآوری دارند.»

he named as his personal “National School of Painting.” In many of these paintings subjects were adopted from Iranian folkloric fables, mythologies and traditional costumes of different cities as ethnographical studies of each region. *Āqām hanā mibanda* [*My Husband Paints Me with Henna*], for instance, is one of those paintings that Ziapour introduced in his National School of Painting.<sup>144</sup> In this painting, one sees the figure of a provincial girl in regional costume, seated in center with dark-brownish hands and her feet painted with henna, playing a *Dāyera* [Dayereh], a traditional small-sized drum, with her hands. An ancient Iranian ceremony known as *Hanā-bandān* [Henna Party] was to paint the back of the hands, palms and fingers of young brides with henna to signify happiness and luck. Above the girl’s figure, one reads parts of a folk song about this ceremony: “My husband paints me with henna/ He paints me on my hands and feet.” One major feature of Ziapour’s National School of Painting, as is also apparent in this painting, was the application of a grid-like ground to his works. In fact, the idea of grids came from the decorative tile-works of Iranian architecture and assisted the artist for displaying each colour in separate units. Ziapour applied this technique to emphasize live and primitive colours peculiar to traditional pictorial and geographical features. He also drew from the tile-works to inspire colours in his paintings. The major colours he applied in his National School (ultramarine, turquoise, red, yellow, fawn, black and white) comprise colours of the traditional seven-colour tiles in Iranian architecture.<sup>145</sup> [Fig. 4-32] As it can be seen, the Cubism which Ziapour was promoting in his National School, was quite different from the European Cubism—a fact that he himself repeatedly referred to it in his writings and talks.<sup>146</sup> The European Cubism for him was rather a reminder of the abstract geometry in decorative motifs of Iranian traditional arts and, as later will be discussed in his *New Theory*, these two resembled in their avoidance from “natural” or “familiar” shapes, but instead shared a closeness to the “unnatural” or “semi-familiar” states. The application of geometrical forms in Ziapour’s national paintings, as he defended, was thus not an attempt to create Cubist works (as geometrical forms had already a thousand-year existence in Iran). So, his National School was only inspired by European Cubism with the objective to revive the history of his country too.<sup>147</sup> Therefore, no single reference is made to Cubism in the paintings that he has created in his National School.

144 Other paintings that he introduced in this school were *Zan-e kurd* [*Kurdish Woman*] (1953), *Doftar-e turkman* [*Turkman Girl*] (1956) and *Zeynab kātun* [*Lady Zeinab*] (1962). [“Goftogu bā korus jangi [An Interview with Fighting Cock],” in *Majmu’a soḡanrāni-hā-ye honari-taḡiqi-ye zenda yād ostād jalil zīāpur* [*A Collection of Master Jalil Ziapour’s Art and Research Lectures*], ed. Shahin Saber Tehrani (Tehran: Jahād-e dānešgāhi, 2003), 277.]

145 *Jalili zīāpur* [*Jalil Ziapour*], directed by Houshang Azadivar (Tehran: Goruh-e farhang, adab wa honar-e šabaka-ye dow-ye šedā wa simā [Department of Culture, Literature and Art of IRIB2], 1989), DVD.

146 See: *Ibid.*

147 Hariri, *Darbāra-ye honar wa adabiāt* [*About Art and Literature*], 44–46.

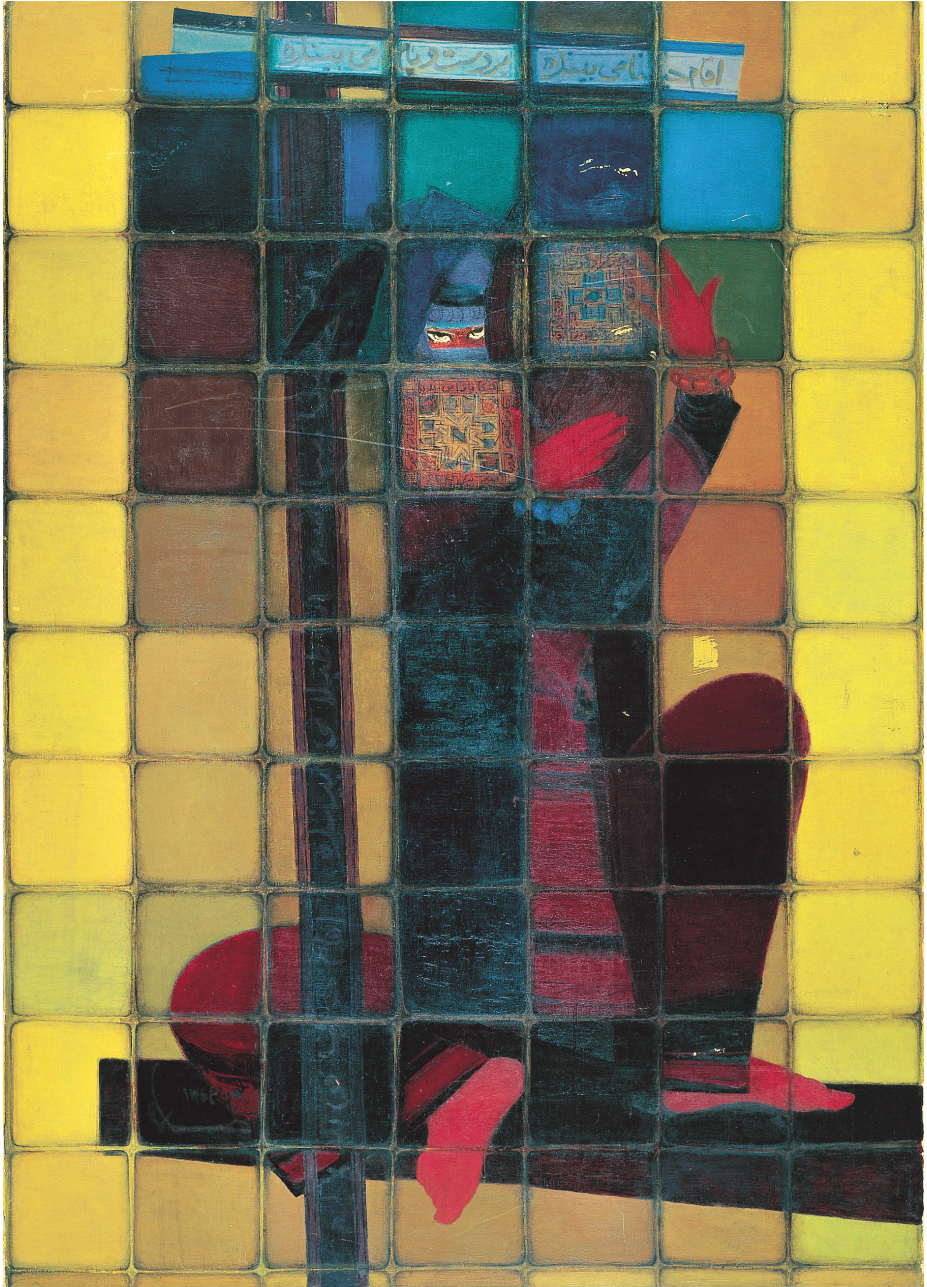


Fig. 4-32 Jalil Ziapour, *Āqām ḥanā mibanda* [My Husband Paints Me with Henna], 1963. Oil on canvas, 170 × 120 cm, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

A review of the books written by Ziapour in the 1940s–1970s (about 30 titles) confirms how much of the idea of modern art relied for him on recognition of Iranians' cultural background. Almost all of these books were studies on aspects of Iranian ancient traditions—except for two art-historical researches *Tāriḳ-e honar-e ʿomu-mi-ye šarq, kāvarmiāna wa orupā* [*A General Art History of the East, Middle East and Europe*] (1954) and *Tāriḳ-e moḳtašar-e honar-e irān wa jahān* [*A Brief History of Art in Iran and the World*] (1974). A considerable number of his books were studies on the ancient garments, the clothing of Iranian tribes, jewelries, decorative motifs, colorations and so forth.<sup>148</sup> In these books, he surveyed the historical development of the motifs and elements via various art forms like those in ancient engravings, reliefs, sculptures, textiles and paintings. Regarding his concern for promotion of a National School in painting, Ziapour also collaborated for some of his books with the Ministry of Culture and Art. The major topics of these books surveyed colours, motifs and decorative elements in the folkloric costumes, jewelry, etc., in tribes or provinces of Iran and he particularly applied these findings to his paintings.<sup>149</sup> The books published by the Ministry of Culture and Art were usually research projects for which the ministry invited artists with national inclination to collaborate. A series of twenty pieces of embroidery that were made by Shahin Saber Tehrani (Ziapour's wife) in his drawings of the 1980s and 1990s (over a fourteen-year period) were based on his findings in these books. [Fig. 4-33]

Beginning in the early 1950s with the turning of state's cultural policies toward arts (based on a bureaucratic and national modernization), Ziapour was also employed by the Department of Fine Arts. This Department, which had begun its work in 1929 and was known as the National Arts Administration, attended mainly to the national and traditional arts; therefore, inviting him to join the Department should be considered in accordance with the attention to the national and cultural heritage in his works. The most important cooperation of Ziapour with this Department was in his role in founding the Academies of Fine Arts for Girls and Boys (1953) and his assistance in the establishment of the Faculty of Decorative Arts (1961). [Fig. 4-34] The importance of the Academies of Fine Arts was that, for the first time, national arts (miniature paintings, illumination, carpet design and ceramic) were added to curriculum of one institute together with painting and sculpture; students could learn about all artworks, artifacts and motifs of Iranian traditional arts and practiced their designs and colorations.<sup>150</sup> Also, the foundation of a Faculty of Decorative Arts was part of the Department's policy for higher education of graduates of Academies of Fine Arts. This was because the Faculty of Fine Arts at

**148** For a list of titles see: Christa Nacy, "Ostād jalil ziāpur, pedar-e naqāši-ye now-e irān [Master Jalil Ziapour, Father of Iranian Modern Art]," *Honar-nāma*, no. 4 & 5 (1999): 5–19.

**149** For a list of these publications see: Ibid.

**150** "Bā honarestān-e honar-hā-ye zibā āšnā šavim [Familiarizing Ourselves with Academy of Fine Arts]," *Honar wa mardom*, no. 7 (1963): 38.



Fig. 4-33 “Samples of embroideries by Shahin Saber Tehrani [(Top Middle) *Zan wa mard-e qashqāi* [A Qashqai Couple], 1989, 29.7 × 21 cm (Top Right) *Zan wa mard-e tāleš* [A Couple from Taleš], 1996, 21 × 29.7 cm],” Jalil Ziapour’s collection

(Top Left & Bottom) “Jalil Ziapour’s study of Iranian ancient clothing of women,” in *Pušāk-e zanān-e irān* [Iranian Women’s Clothing] (Tehran: Vezārat-e farhang wa honar [Ministry of Culture and Art], 1968): 77–79

the University of Tehran did not provide any major in national and decorative arts and, as a result, before foundation of the Faculty of Decorative Arts, the Department had to dispatch graduates of the academy to other countries for their higher education.<sup>151</sup> In fact, the state’s decision for the establishment of such institutions could be understood as a measure influenced by artists’ complaints about the curricula of the faculty copied from *École des Beaux-arts* in Paris. Similar to Ziapour’s text *Faryād-hā* [“The Screams”] in 1946 that cautioned people about such conditions at

151 Japan, India, Italy and France were some of these destinations. [Kiaras, *Pič-e šemirān 1332* [*Piche Shemiran 1953*], 28.]

the faculty,<sup>152</sup> Javadipour also discouraged a program like in Faculty of Fine Arts in his curriculum proposal for the newly founded Faculty of Decorative Arts: “The current curriculum of the Faculty of Fine Arts which is a close imitation of École des Beaux-arts in Paris can be appropriate for a country like France or other similar countries. But unfortunately, this plan has not been successful in our country, therefore, it is better to consider another curriculum for the Faculty of Decorative Arts that better suits the spirit and intellectual level of our young people [...] now that we are creating a new faculty, we should avoid repeating past mistakes.”<sup>153</sup> [Fig. 4-35]

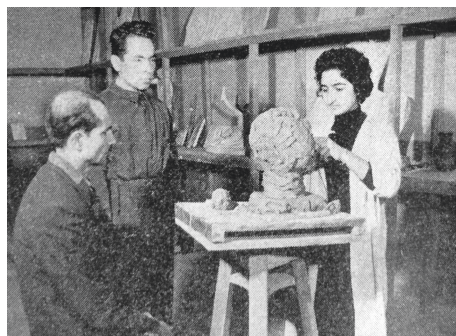
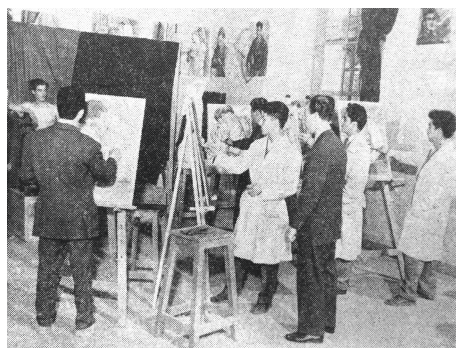


Fig. 4-34 (Left) “*Honarestān-hā-ye honar-hā-ye zibā* [Academies of Fine Arts] in 1953 (Top: Workshop of painting for boys (first year). (Bottom) Workshop of Sculpture for girls (first year).”)” in “*Honarestān-e honar-hā-ye zibā-ye kešvar dar tehrān* [Academy of Fine Arts of the Country in Tehran],” *Naqš wa negār*, no. 1 (1955): 41–42. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

Fig. 4-35 (Right) “Curriculum Proposal for Faculty of Decorative Arts by Mahmoud Javadipour in 1960,” Courtesy of Newsha Djavadipour

<sup>152</sup> Ziapour, Jalil. “Faryād-hā [The Screams].” In *Majmu‘a soḡanrāni-hā-ye honari-taḥqiqi-ye zenda yād ostād jalil zīāpur* [A Collection of Master Jalil Ziapour’s Art and Research Lectures], edited by Shahin Saber Tehrani, 14–15. Tehran: Jahād-e dānešgāhi, 2003.]

<sup>153</sup> «برنامه فعلی دانشکده هنرهای زیبا که تقریباً تقلیدی از برنامه هنرهای زیبای پاریس می‌باشد ممکن است برای کشوری مانند فرانسه و یا کشور دیگری نظیر آن بسیار خوب و بجا باشند. ولی متأسفانه برای کشور ما این برنامه نتیجه خوبی نداده و به این جهت بهتر است برنامه‌ای برای اجرا در دانشکده هنرهای تزئینی در نظر گرفته شود که متناسب با روحیه و سطح فکر جوانان ما باشد [...] حالا که به ایجاد دانشکده «Mahmoud Javadipour, Original letter, June 24, 1960, Collection of Mahmoud Javadipour, n.p.] دست دیگری دست می‌زنیم باید سعی کنیم حتی‌المقدور اشتباهات گذشته تکرار نشود.»

It is considerable that collaboration with the cultural plans of the state was no more than a Trojan horse but in a non-political manner. The artistic autonomy that these artists pursued was not based on a “deadly choice”<sup>154</sup> between being at service or remaining independent but, rather, they aimed at a collective work that allowed influencing the cultural policies too. In 1945, for instance, after Czech teachers left the Academy of Music, Gharib and Hannaneh joined other renowned musicians to re-establish Iran’s first Symphony Orchestra.<sup>155</sup> The state’s idea behind the first foundation of Tehran Symphony Orchestra in 1933 was to promote Western orchestral music based on a cultural policy that sought modernization via the adoption of Western art and cultural elements. But the national school that Gharib and his fellow friend Hannaneh promoted allowed attraction to Western music only with respect to its alignment with Iranian folk and local music. An invitation by the Department of Fine Arts in 1946 from Gharib and a group of Iranian musicians<sup>156</sup> to make research trips to different regions in Iran for collection of the folk songs for the first time is an example of artists influencing the state’s policies. The new national-Western school that members discussed in music was supposed to form what Hannaneh called “Iranian National Music.” The emphasis on the formation of a national music, according to him, was the result of the condition from which Iranian music suffered at the time and of which the national school of music was supposed to be a solution to. Beginning with Hannaneh’s work, there arose an occupation of Iranian field of music by two major tastes in music that not only contrasted each other, but also neglected the socio-cultural dynamism of music. The musicians of these tastes that were both patronized by the cultural policies of the state, promoted either the traditional music with no more effort than repetition as a national reputation, or the adoption of imported Western musical techniques, which provoked a hurried adjustment to them. Foundation of Tehran Symphony Orchestra exemplified precisely a measure in line with the cultural Westernization plans of the state and promoted harmony and an orchestral music that did not fit into the traditional and modal music of Iran. It was within such a space that Hannaneh surpassed even his learnings in composition from foreign-educated teachers at the Academy of Music. In contrast to the academy teachers, like Parviz Mahmoud (1910–1996), who took no scientific value in Persian *Radif* [Order] or melodic figures and the oral tradition of Iranian music, he searched for a solution to bridge the local musical elements to Western harmonic and polyphonic music.

**154** “Deadly choice” is adopted from Bourdieu where he studies an intellectual encountering the dilemma for being at service of the dominant as an expert or remaining an independent petty producer in his ivory tower. [Bourdieu and Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, 58.]

**155** The most important members of this group were Parviz Mahmoud, Iranian composer, conductor and director of the Academy of Music during 1946–1949 and Rouben Gregorian, Iranian-Armenian composer and conductor.

**156** Other members of this group were famous musicians such as Samin Baghcheban, Hossein Nasehi, Fereydoun Farzaneh and Aminollah Rashidi.



The book *Gām-hā-ye gomšoda* [*The Lost Scales*] by Hannaneh that was first published in 1988, was a theoretical study on harmony and Iranian modal music that sought this third moderate method. [Fig. 4-36] It should be noted that Hannaneh's discussion of national music, similar to the general approach of Fighting Cock to a national school of art, also issued the significance of technical subjects in art for the first time. As he argued, beauty had to be reflected in forms of technical expression, and this meant not necessarily to overlook the past, but to make use of the past through technique.<sup>157</sup> Therefore, the national school of music proposed by Hannaneh was influential in the advancement of Iranian traditional music into Western orchestral techniques. This aim was fulfilled by Hannaneh's new discussion of what he called as *Hārmoni-ye zoj* [Even Harmony] which was peculiar to Iranian music and still different to Western tonal and odd harmony. According to him, the Even Harmony was a national harmony that brought together the polyphonies in a melody differently. Therefore, polyphony was not peculiar to Western music and he investigated this technique in Iranian local and folkloric music as well. A concise and inclusive understanding of Hannaneh's goal as a fighting cock was later asserted by Gharib in reviewing their attempts for attaining a national school of music in Iran: "We were about to set the foundations of an Iranian-international music [...] we worked so hard [...] so where is now that Iranian-global music? [...] What mistakes we made during those years [...] we did not need any scientific and global music at all [...] we did not need to promote Western techniques of music [...] it is our very authentic and traditional music that, according to scholars, should become international."<sup>158</sup>

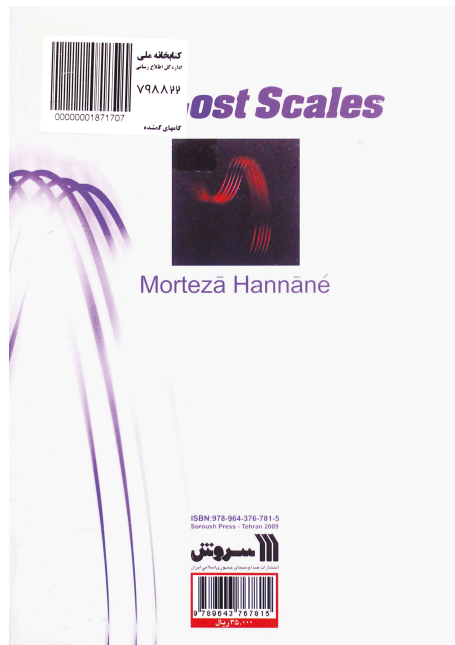


Fig. 4-36 "Gām-hā-ye gomšoda [*The Lost Scales*] by Morteza Hannaneh in 1988." National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

<sup>157</sup> Mohammad Nouri, "Ĥanāna, musiqi wa film [Hannaneh, Music and Film]," in *Yād-nāma-ye ĥanāna* [*Memoir of Hannaneh*], ed. Shahin Hannaneh (Tehran: Qatṛa, 1990), 112.

<sup>158</sup> «ما می‌خواستیم موسیقی ایرانی جهانی را پایه‌ریزی کنیم [...] آن همه تلاش کردیم [...] پس کو آن موسیقی ایرانی جهانی؟ [...] چه 158 اشتباهاتی کردیم ما در طول این سال‌ها [...] ما اصلاً موسیقی علمی و جهانی لازم نداشتیم [...] همین موسیقی اصیل و سنتی ماست که به گفته دکتراهای موسیقی باید جهانی بشود.» [Khoshnam, Mahmoud. "Negāhi be nāma-hā-ye morteza ĥanāna [A Review of Letters by Mortza Hannaneh]." (October 17, 2009). Accessed March 29, 2018, [http://www.bbc.com/persian/arts/2009/10/091016\\_ag\\_mk\\_hannaneh\\_letters](http://www.bbc.com/persian/arts/2009/10/091016_ag_mk_hannaneh_letters).]

In the fields of story writing and dramaturgy, the association also emphasized formation of a national school. This aim was pursued in story writing by Gharib, and Shirvani promoted a national school in writing plays and new forms of dramatic arts. In addition to his contribution with Hannaneh to the introduction of a national school of music, Gharib was also an influential member who discussed the national school in poetry and story writing. It was in fact his new inclinations toward literature and friendship with avant-garde figures like Nima Youshij (pioneer of Persian modern poetry) that introduced him to the literary circles from the early 1940s and also to Fighting Cock Association as a founding member.<sup>159</sup> Gharib suited the association due to both his nationalistic and avant-garde ideals. The name “Fighting Cock” that was selected by him as a symbol of combat with the old-minded establishments of arts in Iran, in his words was an intention for a heroic movement that entailed scientific and logical dimensions and also surpassed earlier modern movements that were started by those like Nima Youshij in literature. According to Gharib, the modern movement of Nima for his belief that “I write for society,” lent itself to social ends and this was precisely the point that Nima deviated from Fighting Cock’s art-for-art’s-sake approach.<sup>160</sup> Also Ziapour, similar to his own National School in painting, credited Gharib for a similar national style in writing. This national style, at the same time remained vigilant of the evolutions of global artistic styles and behaved adaptively regarding the regional and local features of Iranian folk and traditional culture. Such national style, therefore, left no space for imitation or deception of the people by those artists who simply attached traditional elements to their works in pretence of a national identity. Instead, it was a sophisticated representation of the historical spirit, dreams and fantasies of a nation whose people were able to sympathize with them and was only achieved through artists’ persistence and hard work.<sup>161</sup> Ziapour, with reference to *Qalamzan* [“Engraver”], one of Gharib’s stories being published in Issue 3 of *Fighting Cock* magazine (1949), explained this persistence as: “In his story ‘Engraver’ you find about the persistence of the Iranian artists. You perceive Iranian artists’ strength and insistence against ups and downs and their courage and defiance against eternal scarecrows for attaining their goals.”<sup>162</sup> The story “Engraver” was a Magic Realistic narration of two men, one a traditional engraver and the other a *Kamānča* (an ancient Persian musical instru-

159 Friendship and circles of artists and literary figures were major means of recruitment of members to the association. For instance, also introduction of Houshang Irani who was a solitary avant-garde poet and painter happened in 1950 and through his friendship with Gharib. [Mohsen Shahrnazdar, “Darbāra-ye ḡolāmhossein ḡarib: nogarā wa ḡoruš [About Gholamhossein Gharib: Modernist and Roaring],” *Goharān*, no. 7 & 8 (2005): 21.]

160 Avrand, “Konda-i nimsuḡta [A Half-Burned Log],” 34.

161 “Matn-e konferāns-e zīāpur darbāra-ye ḡarib wa raveš-e nevisandegī dar irān [Ziapour’s Text of the Conference about Gharib and the Writing Method in Iran],” *Irān*, April 17, 1949.

162 «در اثرش قلمزن شما پشتکار هنرمندان ایرانی را درک می‌کنید. استقامت و سماجت هنرمندان ایرانی را در برابر ناملایمات، تهور و بی‌اعتنایی‌های آن‌ها را در برابر مترسک‌های لایزال، پایداری این اشخاص را در رسیدن به مقصود درک می‌کنید.» [Ibid.]

ment) player who, due to their noncompliance with the social norms, were rejected by society as insane.<sup>163</sup> All the stories in *Fighting Cock* magazine, especially in its first series (1948–1949), were written by Gharib. These stories were a mixture of music, poetry and prose with Iranian epic, mythic and folkloric subjects and were magical narrations within Symbolic and Surrealistic contexts.

The rebellious mixture of poetry, music and illusion as a method by Gharib was better observed in his poems, for which some critics consider him as the innovator of *Še'r-e sepid* [Persian prose poetry].<sup>164</sup> Regarding his important book of poems, *Šekast-e ḥamāsa* [*Failure of Epic*] (1953), Gharib found himself inspired by European Symbolism and Surrealism to arrive at what he called “freedom in expression of feeling.” He credited this unfettered status in expression of emotion as artistic authenticity that was only possible in Surrealism. In his introduction to *Failure of Epic*, one reads about his definition of authenticity that is not necessarily bound to technical knowledge of an artist, but his sensational expression that leads to creation of something new and different from other artists.<sup>165</sup> [Fig. 4-37] It should be noted that although there were other successful writers who also applied Iranian

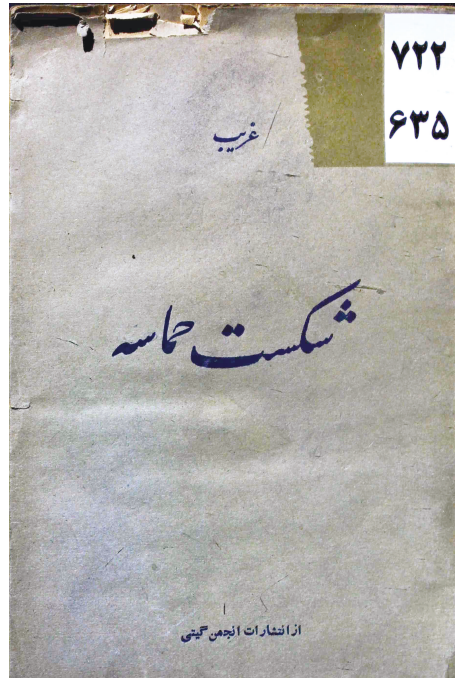


Fig. 4-37 “*Šekast-e ḥamāsa* [*Failure of Epic*] by Gholamhossein Gharib in 1953.” National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

folklore into their stories, such as Bozorg Alavi (1904–1997) and Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh (1892–1997), they rather had a Realistic approach and not illusive as in Gharib’s style to folklore. The national style in Gharib’s stories and poems were accredited by his contemporary prominent modern writers and poets. Hedayat, the pioneer of Surrealism in Persian literature, had evaluated Gharib’s stories as complementing his own works, or Nima Youshij, in his edition of Gharib’s first

163 Gholamhossein Gharib, “Qalamzan [Engraver],” *Korus jangi*, no. 3 (1949): 3–10.

164 Hiva Masih, “Ġarib ġuli dar joġrāfiā-ye še’r wa honar-e irān [Gharib a Titan in the Territory of Iranian Poetry and Art],” *Goharān*, no. 7 & 8 (2005): 43 & 46.

165 Gholamhossein Gharib, *Šekast-e ḥamāsa* [*Failure of Epic*] (Tehran: Anjoman-e gیتی, 1953), 11–12.

collected stories *Sārebān [Cameleer]* (1948), wrote: “[...] the fact is that Gharib has both lived in his stories and has tunneled from his surrounding world to the origin of his poems and stories.”<sup>166</sup>

The most common and avant-garde ideal of the members was in their attacks at the committed art versus art-for-art’s-sake debate. Similar to Gharib, who criticized Nima for his socially committed poetry, the same approach is observed when Hannaneh emphasized the role of the artist as a critic who contributes to cultural promotion of a new artistic movement. The main argument by Hannaneh was that people could not understand art without the help of art experts. If experts shunned from the task of familiarizing society with new movements, vulgar art would substitute the authentic art via dominant fields of control.<sup>167</sup> Also, Shirvani was critical of committed art due to its *ordered* quality and discussed that society’s judgments could not be a criterion for the accuracy or inaccuracy of artistic productions and theories and, thus, the principal issue for an artist had to be only the aesthetics.<sup>168</sup> As a result of this attitude, Shirvani considered a pedagogical role for artists to create their audience. According to Ziapour, Shirvani was not only important for the scripts he wrote as a playwright, but also for the education he provided in field of theater—what Ziapour considered being in line with the cultural role of the association.<sup>169</sup> Basically, the less oppressed political air from the early 1940s onwards prepared more freedom for the emergence of new ideas in all arts. In theater, the presence of Allied forces combined with the display of more foreign films and plays, and the recently established clubs, cultural societies and salons opened the space for more innovation in theater. For Shirvani, the innovation in theater meant to break free from two prevailing theatrical styles of 1940s in Iran; i.e., the Realistic theater and national theater. Similar to Ziapour, Gharib and Hannaneh, who had also pursued a national school, Shirvani emphasized a national style in his drama. But this national style had to be achieved by combination of dramaturgy as a new technique and attention to new relevant arts (such as opera, dance, ballet, etc.) mixed together with Iranian cultural elements.

The main footholds for Shirvani to promote his ideas were magazines *Fighting Cock* and *Namāyesh [Drama]* (1957), as well as his own books. He continued collaboration with *Fighting Cock* magazine in all its series, publishing scripts and articles with topics around modern and dramatic arts, as well as writing articles against censorship of the arts in the final series of *Fighting Cock* magazine after the Islamic Revolution of 1979. An important article by Shirvani, which explained his attitudes

166 « [...] حقیقت این است که غریب هم در میان داستان هایش زیسته و از جهان پیرامونش نقیبی به خاستگاه شعرها و داستان هایش زده است. » [Shahrmazdar, “Darbāra-ye gōlāmhosein-e ġarib [About Gholamhossein Gharib],” 21.]

167 Nouri, “Ĥanāna, musiqi wa film [Hannaneh, Music and Film],” 110.

168 Shams Langeroudi, *Tārīḡ-e taḥlīli-ye še’r-e now [Analytical History of Modern Poetry]*, vol.1 (Tehran: Markaz, 1991), 455.

169 Rezai, “Goftogu-i bā ostad jalil ziāpur [An Interview with Master Jalil Ziapour].”

about modern art, was published in Issue 1 of *Fighting Cock* (1951) in a column named *Šenākt-e nowi* ["Identifying the Modern"]. In this article, he completely rejected social approval as a concern for modern artists, and instead advised artists to concentrate on new theories and to describe them for people with strong argumentation and logic. This was due to the fact that the modern art done by these artists was at the same time a combination of the past and present and, therefore, it was unacceptable to society. The main discussion by Shirvani in his article was to accredit the role of fighting cocks in demystifying the real identity of committed and social artists: "Modern art is repeatedly introduced by Fighting Cock artists to the advocates of Iranian art [...]. There is no doubt that these opportunist artists [the socialists] are popular among people since they have constantly made copies [of past]. [...] But Fighting Cock artists will do their utmost to unmask their real identity as advocates of Iranian art."<sup>170</sup>

But the most important platform for Shirvani's ideas was the state-published magazine *Drama*. This magazine was in fact a publication by the Department of Dramatic Arts (1957) which was founded four years after coup d'état of 1953. The main aim of the Department, in an atmosphere of politico-intellectual disenchantment, was to promote a controlled "national theater" that accorded with the cultural policies of the state and to respond to the identity discussion, which had become dominant in fields of art and culture of the time. Again, one can observe how *Drama* magazine could turn into an opportunity at this time for Shirvani to influence his own stances on a national style. As the editor of the magazine, Shirvani wrote emphatic articles about significance of the dramatic art as a national art in Iran and Ziapour also collaborated with the magazine and created drawings for his articles.<sup>171</sup> [Fig. 4-38] The editorial of Issue 1 of *Drama* (January 1957) by Shirvani was like a statement for his national style. In this text, he emphasized the relevance of dramaturgy as a new art in Iran, while at the same time pointing out that Iranians had not been successful at creating a national school in drama. Furthermore, he pointed to the opulence of Persian classical poetry and Iranian folklore for being applied to dramatic arts. But, the crucial point was that, a Realistic or traditional usage of these poems and traditional elements could only lead to a national style in Iranian drama if they were employed by artists who were familiar with writing plays and possessed the literary and imaginary abilities to create national scripts out of them: "[There are] so many beautiful Iranian fables; why they should not be inspiring sources of our artists? So, how come world's great artists have made

«[...] هنر نو را کرارا هنرمندان خروس جنگی به هنردوستان هنر ایران معرفی کرده [...] بدون شک این قبیل هنرمندان این‌الوقت که 170 همیشه مقلد بوده‌اند محبوب اجتماع خواهند بود [...] ولی [...] هنرمندان خروس جنگی تا آن جا که مقدر باشند ماهیت اصلی هنر آن‌ها را به [...] هنردوستان ایران معرفی خواهند کرد.» [Hasan Shirvani, "Šenākt-e nowi [Identifying the Modern]," *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1951): 8.]

171 Many of Shirvani's articles in *Drama* magazine were accompanied with drawings by Ziapour.

their masterpieces from their own national folklores? [...] Our national arts that still are in their infancy require guidance, if they deviate from the right way, they will be destroyed. Hence, it is artists' responsibility [...] to set the first great footstone of Iran's national dramatic arts."<sup>172</sup> Shirvani argued this in another article in *Drama* magazine as *Teātr-e irān wa rāhi ke barāy-e kāmēl sākṭan-e ān bāyad donbāl kard* ["Iranian Theater and the Solution to Its Perfection"]. He had a review over the history of drama in Iran and its contrast to the West and explained that Iranian drama lacked continuity in its religious forms known as *T'azia* [Passion Play] and instead was replaced by imitating Western dramatic literature.<sup>173</sup> A good example of what Shirvani aimed at by national art or adaptation of the traditional past to new dramatic arts is seen in his book *Yāddāšt-hā-i darbāra-ye honar-e operā* [*Notes on the Art of Opera*] (n.d.). [Fig. 4-39] In the introduction to the book, he discussed the possibility and quality of opera as a national art in Iran under *Honar-e melli-ye irān wa namāyeš-e ḡanāi* ["Iranian National Art and Lyrical Drama"]. The first point mentioned by him was that the promotion of new artistic forms in a society was only possible if there was a preparation for those artistic changes among people of that society. Regarding the art of opera, or as Shirvani called it, a lyrical drama, he discussed how it was an appropriate new dramatic art which had roots in Persian classical poetry and had also impacted other fields of painting, music and dance in Iran. The best sources of this influence were Persian mythical verses and their stories that mostly had dramatic themes. He concluded that the national dramatic arts were the primitive musical plays which were sometimes acted by Persian poets playing their harps as they sang their poems or sometimes rituals and religious plays that were accompanied by music and chansons. Upon such understanding, therefore he noted that the receptivity of Iranian audience to the art of opera was not something out of expectation due to this historical knowledge.<sup>174</sup>

«این همه افسانه‌های زیبایی ایرانی با فانتزی‌هایش، چرا نباید منشأ الهام هنرمندان ما قرار بگیرد؟ مگر نه این است که هنرمندان بزرگ جهان با ارزش‌ترین آثار خود را از روی فولکلور ملت خود خلق کرده‌اند؟ [...] هنرهای ملی ما که درحقیقت دوران کودکی خود را می‌گذرانند احتیاج به راهنمایی دارد، اگر از امور بیراهه برود محکوم به زوال خواهد بود بدین جهت بر عهده هنرمندان است [...] که اولین سنگ‌بنای عظیم هنرهای نمایشی ملی ایران را پایه‌گذاری نمایند.» [Hasan Shirvani, "Honar-hā-ye melli-ye namāyeši-ye irān [Iranian National Dramatic Arts]," *Namāyeš*, no. 1 (1957): 2.]

173 Hasan Shirvani, "Teātr-e irān wa rāhi ke barāy-e kāmēl sākṭan-e ān bāyad donbāl kard [Iranian Theater and the Solution to Its Perfection]," *Namāyeš*, no. 1 (1957): 65.

174 Hasan Shirvani, *Yāddāšt-hā-i darbāra-ye honar-e operā* [*Notes on the Art of Opera*] (Tehran: Moasesa-ye maṭbu'āti-ye šahr-e mā, 1961): 3.



Fig. 4-38 (Top Left) "The front cover of *Namāyesh [Drama]* magazine in 1957," in *Namāyesh [Drama]*, no. 1 (1957). National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

(Bottom Left) Jalil Ziapour, *Peykara-ye barjesta-ye gereftārān dar sarpol-e dahāb [Relief of Captives in Sarpol Zahab]*, in Hasan Shirvani, "Teātr-e irān wa rāhi ke barāye kāmel sāktan-e ān bāyad donbāl gardad [Iranian Theater and the Solution to Its Perfection]," *Namāyesh*, no. 1 (1957): 62. [Ibid.]

Fig. 4-39 (Right) "*Yāddāšt-hā-i darbāra-ye honar-e operā [Notes on the Art of Opera]*" by Hasan Shirvani in 1961." National Library and Archives Organization of Iran



### 4.2.2 A New Theory: *Rejection of Past and Contemporary Schools*

On October 6 in 1948, Jalil Ziapour published his new theory in painting shortly after establishment of Fighting Cock Association. The theory was published in a simple fourteen-page pamphlet and on its front cover was written: *Naqāshi wa maktab-e kāmel. teori-ye jadid-e ziāpur. laḡv-e nazaryā-hā-ye makāteb-e goḏašta wa mo'āšer az pirimitiv tā sureālism [Painting and a Comprehensive School. New Theory by Jalil Ziapour. Rejection of Past and Contemporary Schools from Primitive to Surrealism].* [Fig. 4-40] The opening paragraph of the theory, which was distinctively separated from rest of the page and perhaps implied the whole message of Ziapour's new theory, was a criticism against artistic establishments that in the course of time had become mandatory but since they had lost their functionalities in the contemporary period, therefore, they were ineffective. The paragraph reads:

It should not be forgotten that most of a human being's behaviors and conceptions are based on mandatory conventions and it is the habit that turns life's wheel. If these conventions and experiences and habits are complained, it is definitely because: they do not accord to their contemporary demand—satisfaction of intentions. It is also known that each person has a peculiar way of expression and each person attempts to be more adroit and stronger and an expert of his own art. If an art style is not able—as it should—to express its intention, that is an obvious reason for its insufficiency.<sup>175</sup>

Ziapour's theory, at that time, was considered a highly technical text that could not be easily communicated to its readers; *Mehr-e irān* newspaper, which published this theory in its Issue 2140 (October 4, 1948), had asked Gholamhossein Gharib to write his own interpretation of it, but he had insisted that the theory had to be published without any simplification. In a general view, Ziapour's theory intended to break free from any obligation for the association of painting with nature. These obligations were called by him as "important parasites of the painting" and he believed that although all artistic styles had attempted to deviate from these parasites via expression, deformation and abstraction of lines, colours and forms, they still could not surpass the parasites. Therefore, he was discussing a new theory named by

«نباید فراموش کرد که غالب اعمال و دریافت‌های آدمی روی قراردادهای الزامیست و سپس عادتست که چرخ زندگی را می‌گرداند. 175 اگر اعتراضی از این قراردادها و تجربیات و با عادات به میان می‌آید، مطمئناً برای آنست که: این‌ها موافق خواست روز برای ارضای منویات لازم نیستند. این هم دانسته است که هرکس یک‌گونه طرز بیان دارد و هرکس می‌کوشد تا در کار خود واردتر و قوی‌تر و در هر حال متخصص فن خود باشد. اگر فنی در بیان منظوری آن چنان که باید عاجز باشد، دلیل واضحی بر نقص خود آن فن خواهد بود.» [Jalil Ziapour, *Naqāshi wa maktab-e kāmel. teori-ye jadid-e ziāpur. laḡv-e nazaryā-hā-ye makāteb-e goḏašta wa mo'āšer az pirimitiv tā sureālism [Painting and a Comprehensive School. New Theory by Jalil Ziapour. Rejection of Past and Contemporary Schools from Primitive to Surrealism]* (n.p., 1948), 1.]



himself as *Maktab-e kāmel* [*Comprehensive School*] to solve this problem. The Comprehensive School emphasized on a style or method of painting that, instead of any association with natural shapes, reflected the artist's individual association of ideas. The "natural shapes," "close unnatural shapes" and "far unnatural shapes" were the terminologies devised by Ziapour for explaining his purpose. According to him, natural and close unnatural shapes that were familiar shapes and had close similarity to shapes in nature had to be replaced with far unnatural shapes that had no similarity to familiar shapes in nature. In fact, it was by means of far unnatural shapes that artists could display their personal associations and mentalities.

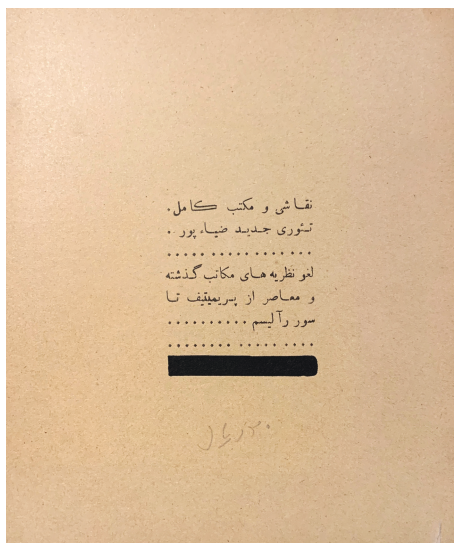


Fig. 4-40 "Pamphlet of Jalil Ziapour's *New Theory* in 1948," Courtesy of Mahsha Ziapour

Ziapour explained that, in the course of history, the more painting deviated in subject from our collective memory, the more it entered the individual domain of the artist and, as a result, the social duty of painting was replaced by more personal intentions of the artist. But the weak point about this progress, according to him, was that there had been a historical emphasis on "correct painting" which had to be achieved by means of acquisition of *technical expertise*. This technical expertise revealed itself in terms of various artistic *styles* based on different applications of drawing and colour. Although each style attempted to pay more to the artist's intentions, the subject matters in even the most avant-garde styles conveyed *something* and did not go beyond close unnatural shapes and, therefore, none of them was capable of displaying an artist's *self* or his ideas: "[...] all [styles], even the most avant-garde ones, shared a common point: that is, display of the subject matters in terms of shapes [...]; and later we observed that since natural shapes were not able to convey the artist's intentions precisely, artists therefore had to manipulate the shapes for more comprehensive concepts. From this manipulation and appearance of close unnatural shapes, we realize that the artist seeks other things than shapes and these shapes are weak and inexpressive tools for display of artist's self."<sup>176</sup>

«[...] همگی، حتی پیشروترین آن‌ها، با یک وجه اشتراک: یعنی مضامین را تصویری نشان‌دادن به منویات خود پرداخته‌اند [...]؛ و 176 بعدها هم دیدیم که صور طبیعی چون قادر به ترجمان دقیق ادراکات هنرمندان نبوده‌اند و آن گونه که باید حق مطلب را ادا نمی‌کردند، نقاشان به علت احتیاج، دست‌به‌دامان جر و تعدیل و کم و زیادکردن صور شدند تا جامع‌تر بیان منظور کرده باشند. از این جر و تعدیل این صور طبیعی و تبدیلاتش به تصاویر غیرطبیعی نزدیک، پی برده می‌شود که نقاش پی نمایش چیزهای دیگری جز صور می‌گردد، و می‌نماید که این صور «[...] برای نمایش نفسانبات او بهانه ضعیف و نارسایی بیش نیستند.» [Ziapour, *Naqāshī wa maktab-e kāmel* [*Painting and a Comprehensive School*], 4.]

So clearly, one observes that Ziapour was emphasizing a school of painting that was capable of addressing an artist's mentality but did not necessarily deal with shapes existing in the artist's surroundings. The mentality of the artist was formed aside from what he witnessed in the nature; i.e., it was based on the artist's own imagination or a personal interpretation of his experience in life. Ziapour explained that an artist could transfer this imagination or experience on his canvas upon concepts that associated with personal meanings or subjects. In his theory he discussed the method by which an artist could reflect the mentality—away from natural or close unnatural shapes. This method, as for other artistic styles, applied colour and drawing but to far unnatural shapes and for attaining an association of meanings that were implicit in subjects.<sup>177</sup>

Ziapour's theory of *Comprehensive School* was founded on the same elements that, in the course of time, took on variations; i.e., colour and drawing. According to this School, colour and drawing (line and form) possessed their own characters beyond the common function of defining any subject matter. Colours, independent from shapes, could awaken meanings without any natural correspondence and were based on one's own memories and association of ideas. For instance, the association of sadness and happiness that for long had been represented by cold and warm colours could also be conceived differently based on certain experiences by each person.<sup>178</sup> In order to understand the individual character of colour and line, he concentrated on Impressionism and Cubism as two schools that, according to him, were respectively more comprehensive in their behavior with colour and drawing. Impressionism was a significant step toward attention to colour and emphasis on the character of colour as an artistic element that had relation with sense of vision: "Impressionism began this task and uncovered an accurate and comprehensive method for the painters: it behaved in a way that colours could be noticed before subject matters and thereby, it strengthened the character of artistic elements that related to the sense of vision."<sup>179</sup> This behavior was also seen in Surrealism but depended on provocation of the mind in order to extract more intuitive ideas and subject matters. Nevertheless, he argued that the deficiency of Surrealism was that it still could not free itself from natural and close unnatural shapes.<sup>180</sup>

Regarding the element of drawing, Ziapour appreciated Cubism as the most comprehensive school of painting. The main reason for this claim, as he argued, was that, except for Cubism, none of the artistic schools had been successful in abandoning natural and close unnatural shapes. In other words, the key achievement of Cubism was in its inexpressive display of common shapes. In Cubist drawings, forms had

177 Ibid., 8.

178 Ibid., 7.

179 «امپرسیونیسم این کار را شروع کرد و راه صحیح و وسیعی را به نقاشان نمود: نوعی کار کرد که رنگ‌ها قبل از مضمون دیده شوند [Ibid., 9.] و با این عمل، شخصیت عوامل هنری مربوط به حس باصره را قوی‌تر کرد.»

180 Ibid.

almost reached the quality of far unnatural shapes and were deliberately selected “to create certain concepts in accordance with artist’s own intentions.”<sup>181</sup> Nonetheless, it should be noted that Ziapour considered neither Impressionism nor Cubism as his *Comprehensive School* of painting. Despite both schools’ attention to colour and drawing as independent elements, neither of them was completely detached in its association from natural and close unnatural shapes. Ziapour’s argument concerning the deficiency of Cubism had two main points: First, Cubism still applied common forms rather than far unnatural shapes and, as a result, was unable to depict the artist’s more comprehensive and precise intentions. Second, since Cubism made deformations in natural shapes, and by doing so, aroused more curiosity in the viewer for decoding the shapes, it therefore deviated from painting’s principal aim; i.e., a means of expression peculiar only to painting and not the external world.<sup>182</sup> In the last three pages of his pamphlet, Ziapour summarized his theory in 9 articles as outlined below:

1. Painting should concern far unnatural colours, drawings, forms and compositions.
2. The more the subject of a painting is unnatural in its organization, the more that painting will be comprehensive and precious regarding its technique.
3. Each line, colour, form and composition possesses its own end, therefore, one should not seek an end or subject for the painting; i.e., any form, shape and subject which is inclined to nature violates painting as a technique.
4. The more natural and close unnatural shapes are replaced by composition of colours, lines and other technical elements, the more that painting will be comprehensive.
5. An artist should deliberately destroy natural and close unnatural shapes in his painting to avoid similarities between his work and nature.
6. In a painting with far unnatural shapes, the artist is aware that for creation of technical beauty he should focus on artistic elements. Therefore viewers, who had long been accustomed to common and natural subjects, also become aware that for understanding the beauty in a painting they should directly refer to its artistic elements.
7. Painting had long not reached its peculiar technical domain and had shared close borders with other fine arts and especially literature in terms of its “descriptive facts.” But the *Comprehensive School* will make a distinctive line between painting and other domains.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 10.

8. The aesthetics of painting are different from the aesthetics of the other arts, it should therefore be studied independently.
9. It should be noted that no new method is created without its contextual necessities; and no demand goes beyond its contemporary demands because every demand has its own reason within society. Therefore, my theory also is not beyond my contemporary time and cannot be.<sup>183</sup>

Basically, publication of a text with a title entailing such terms as “new theory” and “rejection of all artistic schools” was considered as a daring measure in Iranian art of the time—a measure to be only taken by a *fighting cock*—and its combat was against the established groups of academic Realism of Kamal al-Molk, the Social Realism of the left-inclined artists and the traditionalists and miniature copyists. Also, it should be noted that Ziapour’s theory and its defense of a *Comprehensive School* was distinguished as a thoughtful measure in support of art for art’s sake. This is because his text put special emphasis on the significance of artistic elements per se; it gave peculiar attention to the discussion of *form* and *concept* and their relation in painting; it discharged any utilitarian intention or social commitment in painting; in general, it insisted on the independence of painting and its technical dimension. Although Ziapour seems very radical in his theory—as he should have shown in order to be a real fighting cock—a review of his paintings in different periods makes apparent that they were not precisely compatible with this theory. In none of his Expressionist or Abstract-Cubist works of the 1940s did he completely abandon natural or close unnatural shapes. Nor did he respect his own theory entirely in the National School of Painting that he devised in the early 1950s. In his National School of Painting, in fact, more inclination for a figurative style based on natural (also deformed) shapes was observed. The major works Ziapour made in his National School were portraits of regional men and women in traditional costumes and the mere adjustment of these paintings with his theory was in their detachment from Realism by the application of primitive colours, geometric compositions and combination of folkloric motifs with an Abstract Cubism. As it can be inferred, Ziapour’s National School of Painting was a common result of his trips in the mid-1940s to different cities in Iran whilst a student at Faculty of Fine Arts (1941–1945), the publication of his *New Theory* after his return from Paris in 1948 and the impact of his studies with Lhote. It should be noted that the first ethnographic inclinations for attention to Iranian folklore and classical literature yet returned to his investigations during trips he made inside Iran—the experience which was further pursued by him in the 1950s.<sup>184</sup> All of these grounds are evident in his national paintings; i.e., on the

**183** Ibid., 12–14.

**184** In one of his interviews, Ziapour confirms that his painting *Sepahsalar Mosque* in 1950 was result of these investigatory trips as a young student. [Ziapour, Jalil, in discussion with Reza Abdul, Summer, 1999.]

one hand, he tried to escape from imitating reality the way it was seen in nature and, on the other hand, to reflect his command of cultural traditions in his paintings. For instance, in *Doktar-e lur [The Lur Girl]* (1982), one painting in his National School, Ziapour attempted to display the traditional costume and jewelries of a Lur girl. Although he remains faithful to a figurative approach, the painting avoids realistic details and, by applying certain colours peculiar to the climatology of that region and the common grid ground on top of the picture plane, he adds more abstract qualities to this work. [Fig. 4-41] The only phase in which Ziapour approximated his theory was in the 1990s via a Personal Method when he created lyrical Abstract and Surrealistic paintings with the omission of figures and using geometric shapes, curved lines and variations of colours for expression of the inner self. In a comparison to his National School, this Personal Method has been considered more significant and as the best manifestation of his *New Theory*. This view is to the extent that seems to undervalue Ziapour's National School as an intermediary phase in which both his *New Theory* and national inclinations infused each other. A review of titles of some paintings by him in his Personal Method reveals a cognitive approach in this phase: *Panjera-i be donyā-ye darun [A Window to the World Inside]* (1994), *Zendegi-ye man [My Life]* (1991), *Man wa parvāz [Me and Flight]* (1997), etc. In none of these paintings did he act figuratively and, although he applied the same colours, each colour was complemented with a diluted gradation of its own. This means that Ziapour did not even apply colours in his Personal Method to be representative precisely the same way as in his National School. This behavior created a more harmonious colour composition that better represented Ziapour's return to a metaphysical stage of work. The Personal Method should have also been fed by the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution as the restrictions and censorships being exerted on the fields of art and literature brought many modern artists either into a selected isolation and exile from the art scene or involved them with a more personal world. In Ziapour's Personal Method, it is difficult to decode the visual elements of his paintings since each denotes very abstractly the artist's understanding of the subjects. For instance, one supposition about the white colour behind the square-gridded ground in *A Window to the World Inside*, is to represent hope and peace behind restrictions. Ziapour himself described that the grid ground became bolder as if he wanted to insist on its function as representing the constant boundaries on human beings in life.<sup>185</sup> Yet, another supposition about this painting is that the white colour as a focal point is acting in place of artist's inner world arriving at peace after all: the forms and figures, which made the main topics in his National School, look as if they surrender to this condition in his Personal Method and they dissolve into the space in forms of lines and curves. [Fig. 4-42]

<sup>185</sup> *Jalili ziāpur [Jalil Ziapour]*, directed by Houshang Azadivar (Tehran: Goruh-e farhang, adab wa honar-e šabaka-ye dow-ye sedā wa simā [Department of Culture, Literature and Art of IRIB2], 1989), DVD.



Fig. 4-41 Jalil Ziapour, *Doktar-e lur* [The Lur Girl], 1982. Oil on canvas, 180 × 92 cm, Jalil Ziapour's collection



Fig. 4-42 Jalil Ziapour, *Panjera-i be donyā-ye darun* [A Window to the World Inside], 1994. Oil on canvas, 150 × 120 cm, Jalil Ziapour's collection

Coming to the question “Why did Ziapour’s paintings not correspond to his own theory?”, this reply by himself is to be considered: “My goal was to destroy tools of decadence and to call artists’ attention to the exigencies; I did not mean to present any particular style. That is because none of us can impose and insert any particular style. They are the necessities that inspire [styles]. For me it was just enough to give a warning and say: Let’s be ourselves, not to repeat and not to be copy-makers.”<sup>186</sup> This statement by Ziapour shows that for all his efforts to introduce Cubism to Iran, his theory of *Comprehensive School*, *National School* or *Personal Method*, he aimed at an awareness in artists about their individual and internal world that had to be implemented in their works of art via acquisition of the technical science of painting.<sup>187</sup> In fact, it is through remembering this aim by Ziapour that one might identify aspects of his theory in his paintings. In his early works of the 1940s,

«هدف من از هم‌پاشیدن وسایل انحطاط بود و توجه‌دادن دست‌اندرکاران به ایجاب‌ها، ارائه شیوه خاصی را در نظر نداشتم. چون شیوه 186 خاص را من یا من‌ها نمی‌توانند تحمیل و تزریق کنند. اقتضاها هستند که القاء‌گری و الهام‌بخشی می‌کنند. برای من فقط همان کافی بود که بیدارباش [Ziapour; “Soḡan-e now ār [Bring New Word],” 77.] بدهم و بگویم: خودمان باشیم و تکرار نکنیم و مقلد نباشیم.»

187 Hariri, *Darbāra-ye honar wa adabiāt* [About Art and Literature], 37.

for instance, this adaptability is observed in terms of refusing a fidelity to the real world. This refusal appeared in earlier steps in deformation of the natural shapes via Impressionistic colours and expressive lines. This was precisely a notable measure as a consequence of his theory due to its emphasis on attention to the capabilities of colour, line and composition and considering each as an end in their own. In the National School of Painting, although it still dealt with a figurative painting, he deliberately avoided incorporation of natural shapes and deformed them via uncustomary colour compositions. The exhibition of local subjects and their coloration with primitive colours based on square units was a method to attain this aim.

### 4.2.3 Houshang Irani and the Affiliate Cocks

The balance between nationalistic and avant-garde ideals of the association transformed into a radical support of avant-gardism from 1951 onwards. This was mainly due to Houshang Irani's presence as a new member in the association.<sup>188</sup> It was with Irani that Persian poetry took on an aggressive position against any conservatism and commitment in literature as of those propagandized in publications by political parties, mainly *Kabutar-e šolh* [*Dove of Peace*] magazine (1951), which belonged to the Left Party and promoted Social Realism with the motto of "Peace and Modern Art." According to the critics, this new aggressive position of the association was a status that better represented features of a *fighting* cock. The radicalism of Fighting Cock at this phase was to the extent that these critics restrict the previous phase of the association assimilating a real fighting cock (as violent, adverse and controversial) only to the fields of painting, dramaturgy and music but not poetry.<sup>189</sup> The second series of *Fighting Cock* magazine (four issues in 1951) was published after Irani's settlement in the association and he printed his anarchic manifesto of the association, *Nightingale's Butcher*, in this magazine. On the back cover of all issues were the names of Irani, Gharib and Shirvani at the bottom of the manifesto. Although the anarchism that was brought to the association made Ziapour leave the group, the acceptance of Irani as a main member was upon basic similarities that Irani and Ziapour shared. Their major feature was an anti-rationalism and aggressiveness toward the accepted establishments that, for Ziapour, appeared in his Cubist paintings, and for Irani, in his Dadaist and Surrealist poems and drawings. In fact, Ziapour and Irani were art-for-art's-sake seekers who emphasized authenticity of artistic

**188** Houshang Irani was a poet, painter and writer. He graduated in mathematics from University of Tehran in 1946 and joined the navy after graduation. Irani was dispatched to England to undertake an apprenticeship in the navy but he could not align his mentality with the restrictive military regulations. Based on this experience, he travelled to France in order to experience a cultural life and shortly after this trip he returned to Iran in 1947. On his return, he decided to continue mathematics and travelled to Spain where he completed a PhD on "Space and Time in Indian Philosophy" during 1948–1950 and right after he joined Fighting Cock Association in 1951.

**189** Shams Langeroudi, *Tāriḫ-e taḥlilī-ye še'r-e now* [*Analytical History of Modern Poetry*], vol.1 (Tehran: Markaz, 1991), 452.

form and tolerated no boundaries on it. Irani in his article, *Formālism* ["Formalism"], which was published in Issue 3 of *Fighting Cock* (1951) (as well as his discussion on *Ḥayāt-e form* ["Existence of Form"] in his book *Šenākt-e honar [Identification of Art]* (1951)) explained that form as elixir of the life was altered and reflected the concepts and necessities of its time and, therefore, counteracted with stability of traditional mannerism and Realistic representations: "Formalism today is an expression of the dynamism of inside [...]. Today, mannerism equals the old and traditional concept of 'fabrication' [...]. Understanding of the inside and its authentic expression which motivates form as elixir of the life has no relation with today's stagnancy of traditional form and absurdity of mannerism."<sup>190</sup> Both Irani's poems and drawings—mainly black and white sketches that he called *Desan* ["Design"]—shared a similar space influenced by his interest in Iranian and Indian mysticism. In his introduction to the only book of his designs called *Čand desan [Some Designs]* (1952) one reads: "Here my dreams of life are manifested [...]. Every external conception is dependent on an internal element: the creator of emotion [...]. It is the overflow of the dreams that presents the huge space and enchanting beauty of the life. Reality has various names. I chose the name of dream."<sup>191</sup> According to many critics, Irani's attention to modern art and in particular Dada and Surrealism was much rooted in his mystical inclinations and his attempt to reflect Buddhism, Iranian and Christian mysticism in his poems, designs, articles and translations of poems. The feature in modern art that equally made it as attractive as mysticism for him was its allusive content that depended on artist's illusion. In fact, Irani tried to bridge between the essence of his subjects and their cognition with the help of the freedom that modern art provided and by applying minimal visual elements in his designs (colour and line) and irrational interjections (vague words and letters) in his poetry. Irani's approach to illusion was a modern strategy to deform reality and review it afresh: "Basically, whenever in the art world a work of art is inclined to sanctity, it will lose a part of reality. As if reality is not sacred. Therefore, for understanding the truth, art has to reject reality."<sup>192</sup> In his designs, he applied monochrome lines and defamiliarized forms on a plain background. This minimalistic approach to the elements of his work (colour and line) seems to be a conscious decision by him in order to better transfer illusion via formalism. The minimal coloration and drawing complemented each other whereas the void of coloration assisted the smooth

«فرمالیسم امروز بیان زنده و جوشنده درون است [...] مفهوم گذشته و سنتی «یافتن» اکنون در روش جای گزیده است [...] دریافت 190 درون و بیان اصیل آن که نخستین انگیزه و اکسیر حیات فرم است با سکون فرم سنتی و پوچی روش‌گری امروز کوچک‌ترین نسبت و بستگی ندارد.» [Sirous Tahbaz, *Ķorus jangi-ye bimānand: zendeġi wa honar-e huřang irāni [The Unique Fighting Cock: Life and Art of Houshang Irani]* (Tehran: Farzān-e ruz, 2001), 190–91.]

«این جا رویاهای حیات من متجلی شده‌اند [...] هر دریافت بیرونی بر نقشی درونی: آفریننده احساس، استوار است [...] سیلان 191 رویاهاست که فضای ژرف و زیبایی جادوکننده حیات را به جلوه می‌آورد. واقعیت نام‌های بسیار بر خود می‌گیرد. من نام رویا را برگزیدم.» [Houshang Irani, *Čand desan [Some Designs]* (Tehran: n.p., 1952), n.p.]

«اصولاً در عالم هنر هرگاه اثری به سمت تقدس تمایل یافت، چیزی از واقعیت را جا خواهد گذاشت. گویی که واقعیت، مقدس نیست. 192 [Dariush Kiaras, "Tandis-e huřang-e irāni [Figure of Houshang Irani]," *Tandis*, no. 133 (2008): 10.]



and curved lines to convey a mystic tranquility. This feature becomes more obvious wherever Irani uses figures of Buddha, a yogi or mystic in his designs: The tranquility is frequently, and in a deliberate way, disturbed against application of angular and intersecting lines—sometimes appearing as a subversive masculinity versus a docile femininity too. [Fig. 4-43]

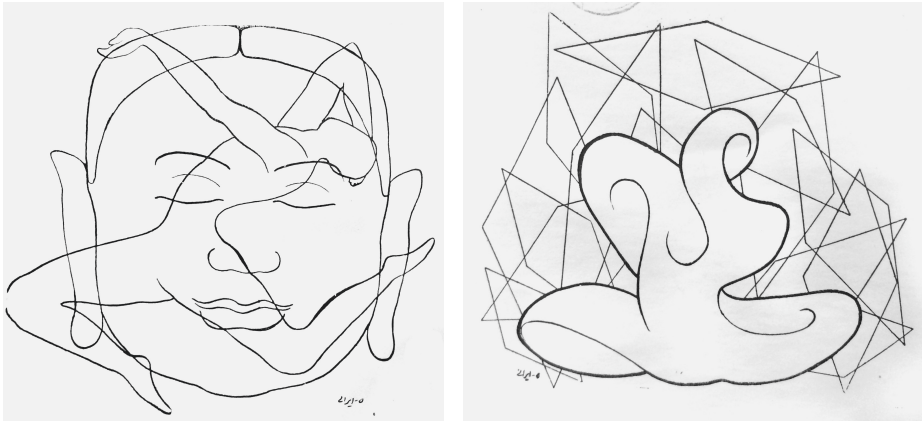


Fig. 4-43 (Left and Right) Houshang Irani, *Untitled*, in *Čand desan [Some Designs]*, by Houshang Irani (Tehran: n.p., 1952), n.p. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

After finishing his dissertation on “Space and Time in Indian Philosophy” in Spain in 1950, Irani joined Fighting Cock Association to promote his Dadaistic and Surrealistic understanding in painting and poetry. It should be noted that although Ziapour had chosen to promote a national style via Cubism, he also discussed Surrealism with the intention of its principles in many of his writings and debates. For instance, in all five issues of the first series of the magazine (1948–1949), Ziapour published serial articles in the column of *Naqāši* [“Painting”] explaining modern art via the schools of Cubism and Surrealism and appreciated Surrealism’s combat for breaking with all boundaries and its antagonism with Realism. But at the same time, he found the Dadaistic approach of Irani too radical and argued that Irani had fully overlooked the relevancies of his works not only with social expectancies but also according to the artist’s self-expectancy from what he created. Irani believed: “Art is never inclined to prove anything or to create something useful. Art is only created for the artist’s pleasure and at the same time [the artist] rejects his work and seeks another newer work to satisfy his varying internal desire for pleasure. For the artist everything is a means to display his work of art.”<sup>193</sup> This extremely aggressive

«هنر هرگز خواست اثبات چیزی و باوجود آوردن پدیده‌ای مفید را ندارد. هنر تنها برای لذت هنرمند آفریده می‌شود و در همان هنگام [هنرمند] آن را کنار می‌زند و در جستجوی تازه‌تر می‌رود تا خواهش لذت‌خواهی درون را که هر آن در تغییر و جنبش است برآورد.» [Houshang Irani, “Honar-e now [Modern Art],” *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1351): 2.]

and (to some critics even) sadistic approach<sup>194</sup> of Irani soon became evident in the association's manifesto *Nightingale's Butcher* and his first poems that were published from Issue 1 of *Fighting Cock* magazine. Although before his return he had published translations of works by European writers,<sup>195</sup> it was during 1951 to 1956 that he extensively published his works such as four important collections of poems, the only book of his designs *Some Designs*, a critical book as an artistic worldview entitled *Identification of Art* and his articles on poetry, Indian and Iranian mysticism, and Surrealism in *Fighting Cock* and other magazines. The reason for the limited years of Irani's activities; i.e. until 1956 after which he isolated himself forever from the artistic scene (about the same date of official deactivation of Fighting Cock Association), was mainly due to pressures by detractors for his subversive approach to the literary and artistic conventions. The effect of these pressures was obvious in his four collections of poetry. The first collection was *Banaḡṣ-e tond bar kākestari* [*Deep Purple on Grey*]. It was published in September 1951 (after the regime placed a ban on publication of the association's magazine) and included Irani's first poems in *Fighting Cock* magazine and harshest criticisms as a Dadaistic revolution against all previous establishments. The book contained thirteen prose poems by him, some of his designs and a text *Dar šenākt-e nahofta-hā* ["On Understanding of the Hidden"]. The main feature of *Deep Purple on Grey* was an antagonism with not only the classical metric poetry as a tradition, but its ridicule at newer measures by those like Nima Youshij and his modern poetry that still concerned general structures, rhythm, verse and naturalism. Irani's purpose for a combat against the past is evidently conceivable from the first poem of the book *Sohāngarān* ["The Raspers"] (perhaps decided intentionally by Irani as his statement): "Rasps.../ The chain of traditions/ Decays.../ The old chain/ The raspers suffer pain and still they rasp/ They tear down boundaries of tradition in combat against time and space/ [They] rasp files/ The old chain roars and groans and breaks apart."<sup>196</sup>

The most notorious poem of this book, which for a long time became the subject of poking fun at Irani's attitudes by his adversaries, was *Kabud* ["Dark Blue"]—this poem was also published shortly before in Issue 2 of *Fighting Cock* magazine. "Dark Blue" became the center of attention for its unusual expression of *jiḡ-e banaḡṣ* ["purple scream"] and proved that Irani's emphasis on freedom from traditional chains also extended to language itself. In his prose poetry, for the first time, he applies

194 Mashiat Alaie, "Huṣang-e irāni wa surreālism-e irāni [Houshang Irani and Iranian Surrealism]," *Goharān*, no. 7 & 8 (2005): 94.

195 Beginning with 1948, Irani published translations of poems, plays and stories by names such as Oscar Wilde, Henri Michaux, Thomas Mann, T. S. Eliot, Rabindranath Tagore and others, or his translations of more theoretical subjects from figures such as Bertrund Russel, Stefan George, Goethe and others were published in magazines such as *Dāneš* between 1949–1955.

196 «می‌سایند... / زنجیر سنن / می‌خاید... / رشته کهن / سوهان‌گران ز درد بیجان به خود می‌خمنند و باز می‌سایند / در نبرد با زمان و مکان [Houshang Irani, *Banaḡṣ-e tond bar kākestari* [*Deep Purple on Grey*] (Tehran: n.p., 1951): 2.]

the terms that have no meaningful collocation, indefinable sounds similar to primitive languages, single letters and an unconventional grammatical combination of words. In "Dark Blue" one reads: "Nibun... Nibun! / The dark-blue cave is running / With hands on ears and tightly-closed eyelids and bowed / Constantly screaming / A purple scream / [...] / Hum bum / Hum bum / wi yu hu hi yi yi / Hi ya ya hi ya i ya aaaa."<sup>197</sup> The expression of "purple scream" turned into a good tool for conservative and classical poets to castigate not only Irani and his thoughts, but in a broader scale the whole modern movement, whereas for a long time "purple-scream poets"<sup>198</sup> was sarcastically used by rivals of modern poetry in Iran. Although Irani had set the foundations for the most frontline poetry in Iran, the main criticisms at him were due to his inclinations toward Buddhism and mysticism. These criticisms considered a void of tradition in Irani's discussions that made them entirely disconnected with innovations by other Iranian artists and poets. According to this lack of social preparedness, he encountered a scornful behavior to his poems and, as a result, he was forced to withdraw gradually from this method. Irani's surrender to failure of his method became evident in his next three collections of prose poetry. The second collection of his poems *Kākestari* [Grey] in 1952 lacked the prefix of the "deep purple" in its title, which was undoubtedly symptomatic of a less revolutionary spirit of its poetry. The social pressures influenced other members too. For instance, Hannaneh had also left the association shortly after his membership and only continued collaboration with the group by publishing articles on Western and Iranian music in *Fighting Cock* magazine. Hannaneh's exit from the association, pointed out by Gharib, was because of his vulnerabilities as a musician in encountering the biased reactions that society showed against the association's innovations.<sup>199</sup> But Irani's Surrealism and mysticism in poetry later inspired works by young innovative poets.<sup>200</sup> This generation of poets emphasized simplicity, intimacy, fluidity and attention to the role of language in their poems and this was an important moment for Persian modern poetry in the early 1950s to begin deviating from its only role model Nima Youshij toward Houshang Irani.<sup>201</sup>

197 «نیبون... نیبون! / غار کیود می‌دود / دست به گوش و فشرده پلک و خمیده / یکسره جیغی بنفش / می‌کشد / [...] / هوم بوم / هوم بوم / وی  
« [Irani, *Banafš-e ton* [Deep Purple], 16.]

198 Ghahreman Shiri, "Az jīg-e banafš tā moj-e now [From Purple Scream to the New Wave Poetry]," *Ketāb-e māh*, no. 10 (2007): 33.

199 Gharib, "Digar če fāyeda [What Is the Use]," 40.

200 Sohrab Sepehri, Bijan Jalali, Ahmadrza Ahmadi, Yadollah Royaee and some other poets who later pioneered important waves in Persian poetry were influenced by Irani's discussions on mystical detachment, deviation from rhyme, automation and illusion. The *Še'r-e sepīd* [Blank Verse], *Moj-e now* [New Wave], Formalistic *Še'r-e ḥajm* [Spacentalism] were among these modern waves in Persian poetry.

201 Shiri, "Az jīg-e banafš [From Purple Scream]," 32.

A significant point about Irani that likely aligned him with the general attitude of Fighting Cock Association was that he, either in his poems or his designs, emphasized the artist's past memory that, when detached from stylistic restrictions, was visualized in what he called as the "authentic form." By this, he considered form more authentic than style and this authenticity could not be adopted, but was rather created based on an artist's own world. It was this attitude that in the introduction of his third collection of poems *So'la-i parda rā bargereft wa eblis be darun āmad* [*A Flame Took away the Curtain and the Devil Entered*] (1952) he wrote: "Poetry represents periods of a human's development, it is the very development."<sup>202</sup> Accordingly, one can observe that Irani himself was much influenced by an Eastern culture for his attention to the sensational elements. Many of these elements can be discussed in his poems and designs. For instance, he approached mystical phrases and sounds in poetry or, in his designs, the presence of a Buddha figure or application of only black and white (to create a positive-negative space) were inspired by the Yin-Yang symbol of duality and balance, and were much adopted from the classical philosophy of the East. Irani's attention to duality was maintained not only by colour but also in contrasting abstract forms signifying concepts of stability versus movement, anarchy versus order, masculinity versus femininity and freedom versus captivity. Also, the mystical approach was evident in his behavior with contours and lines in his designs whereas soft, thin and curved lines that were to characterize the Yang side and more heavy, thick and angular lines reflected the Yin side. [Fig. 4-44] The Surrealistic features added to these elements were achieved by creation of optical illusion through lines, forms and black and white colours; emphasis on imaginary elements that particularly in his poems were much fed by the poet's subconscious and automatism;<sup>203</sup> de-familiarization and estrangement via unusual terminologies and figures; a subversive, rebellious and pessimistic spirit that revealed itself in the ridicule and poignant language in his poetry and expressive lines and contrasts in his designs; and manipulation of the formalistic features of the language in the typography of his poems that arose from his attention to artistic form (this method that was also applied in religious and Islamic traditions of calligraphy became known as Pattern, Concrete or Shape Poetry and the poets of Dada and Surrealism used it to create distinctive meanings in their works too). [Fig. 4-45]

«شعر سرگذشت حیات بشری است. شعر نمایاننده دوران‌های دگرگونی‌های بشریت، نهاد دگرگونی‌های وجود اوست. شعر آشکارکننده 202 [Houshang Irani, *So'la-i parda rā bargereft wa eblis be darun āmad* [*A Flame Took away the Curtain and the Devil Entered*] (Tehran: n.p., 1951): n.p.] مرز آگاهی و ناخودآگاهی بشر است.»

203 Irani was much enchanted by ecstasy and dream in his designs and was constantly seen drunk. Nevertheless, this state in Irani had rather to do with his mystical distrust in rationalism and was not a pretentious act to introduce him as a Surrealist. [Kiaras, "Tandis-e hušang-e irāni [Figure of Houshang Irani]," 10.]

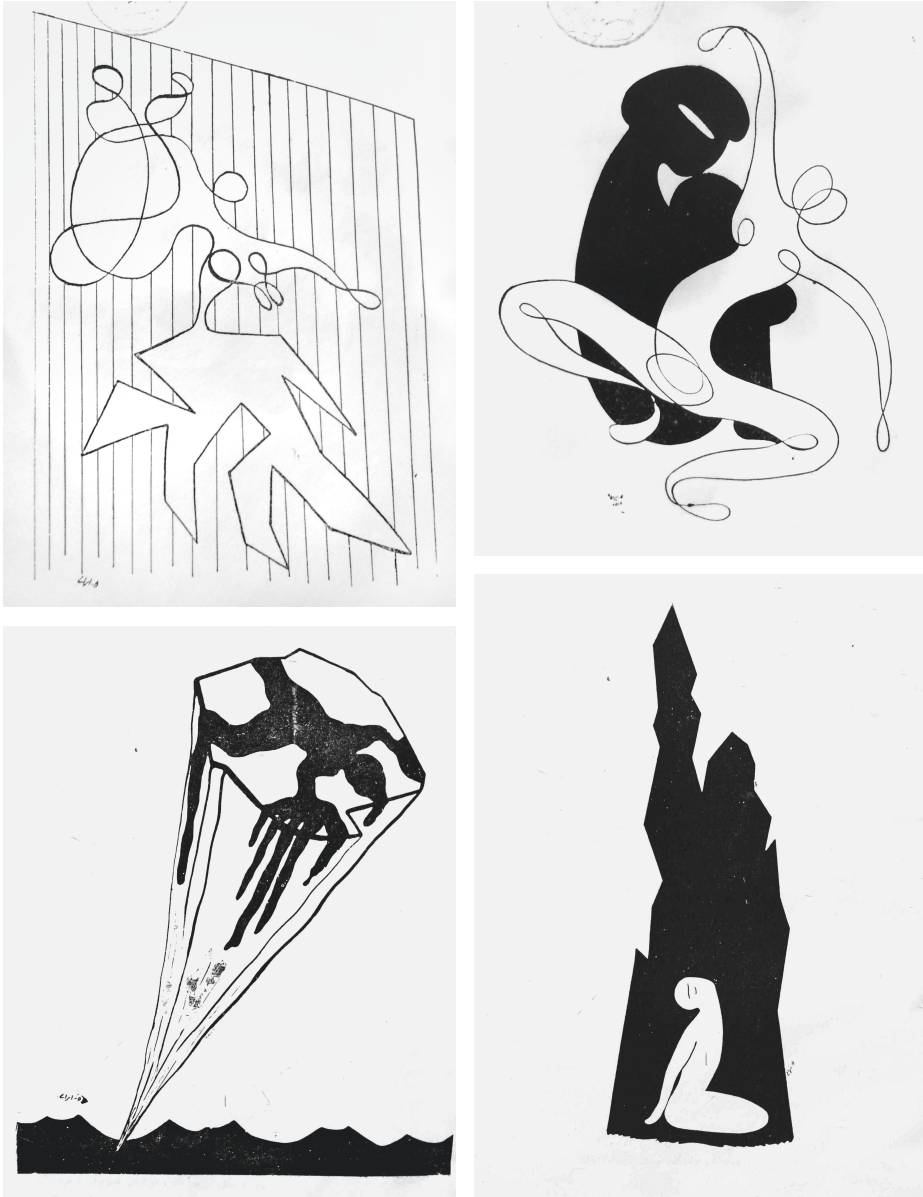


Fig. 4-44 (Top Left and Right) Houshang Irani, *Untitled*, in *Čand desan [Some Designs]*, by Houshang Irani (Tehran: n.p., 1952), n.p. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran  
 (Bottom Left and Right) Houshang Irani, *Untitled*, in *Banaš-e tond bar kâkestari [Deep Purple on Grey]*, by Houshang Irani (Tehran: n.p., 1951): n.p. [Ibid.]

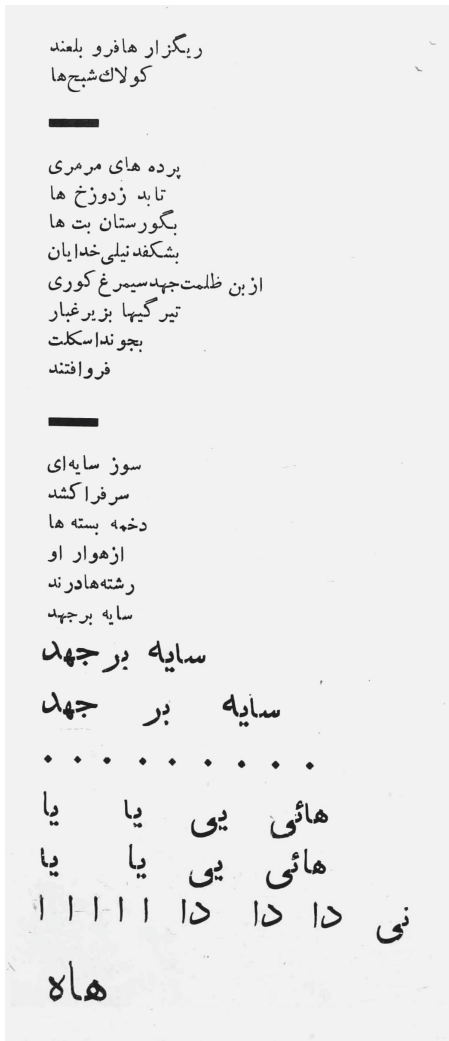


Fig. 4-45 (Left) "A poem by Houshang Irani (*Hā* ["Ha"]) with new typography," in *Banaḡṡ-e tond bar kākestari* [Deep Purple on Grey], by Houshang Irani (Tehran: n.p., 1951): n.p. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran (Right) "Cover of *Banaḡṡ-e tond bar kākestari* [Deep Purple on Grey]." [Ibid.]

In order to better understand the association's ideals (i.e., a national school and avant-gardism), one must further study its criteria for recruiting artists as affiliate fighting cocks. Regarding the affiliation of other modern artists with the main members, two points should basically be considered: First, the association was so prudent with recruiting new members that those who showed modern inclinations in their works but still were young and lacked experience or had leftist sympathies were admitted to collaborate with the association mainly as affiliate cocks, but not as official members.<sup>204</sup> Second, Fighting Cock Association began its work at the time

204 Rezai, "Goftogu-i bā ostād jalil ziāpur [An Interview with Master Jalil Ziapour]."

when partisans of modernism in both the fields of art and literature were a small circle and, therefore, artists with new inclinations could quickly find their way to the association through a closed network. According to this limited number of modern artists, the association had to behave compromising with possible left inclinations. The main reason for these left sympathizers to join Fighting Cock was that they also cared for art for art's sake and did not want to delimit themselves to the Social Realism promoted by the Communist theorists.<sup>205</sup> But this inclination put them in a constant argument with the Party to convince it that modern art could also be understandable for the masses.<sup>206</sup> As a sample of the above-mentioned recruitment criteria, Manouchehr Sheibani as an affiliate cock will be discussed.<sup>207</sup>

Similar to the main members, Sheibani's educational background converged him to the other members of Fighting Cock Association. Having studied textile manufacturing under the supervision of foreign teachers in 1939, he became acquainted with new textile design and colour composition.<sup>208</sup> Before 1943, when he attended Tehran's Performing Art School, he had already developed a leftist inclination having applied it to his poetry.<sup>209</sup> Both his left-leaning tendencies and his studies in art and stage design connected him to the circle of other fighting cocks such as Hananeh, Gharib and Shirvani at Farhang Theater to collaborate with Noushin in the creation of stage decors, concerts and scripts. This networking with modern artists made him decided to study painting at Faculty of Fine Arts in 1945.<sup>210</sup> Entrance to the faculty and publication of the first collection of poems *Jaraqqa [Spark]* in the same year brought him into a broader network of modern literary figures. In fact, *Spark* was the first published collection of *Še'r-e now* or *Nimāi* [Persian modern poetry] that its publication strengthened ties between Sheibani and Nima (another affiliate cock) and Nima wrote an introduction to the book.<sup>211</sup> Sheibani's acquaintance with Ziapour occurred within this space and he finally joined the association through friendship with Sepehri (an affiliate cock) in 1948.

Sheibani's leftist inclinations (for which he came soon into conflict with the other members) did not characterize his works as pertaining entirely to the Left

**205** Sheibani, "Šā'er dar čāhārdīvāri [Poet in the Room]," 13.

**206** Kiaras, "Mardi ke hamačiz [A Man of Everything]," 49.

**207** Manouchehr Sheibani was born in Kashan (a city in the center of Iran). He collaborated with Fighting Cock Association as a poet and painter.

**208** Sheibani studied textile manufacturing at Textile Academy of Mazandaran in Qaemshahr (a city in north of Iran).

**209** After receiving his diploma in textile manufacturing, Sheibani began his work at a textile factory where he became acquainted with the working class and, having developed interests in the Left Party, he was attracted to the Labor Union too. At the same time, he applied his leftist interests to poetry, inherited from his grandfather, Fath Allah Khan Sheibani (1825–1890) a renowned Persian poet.

**210** Sheibani was also advised for this decision by his teacher Rafi Halati (1899–1981) at Performing Art School.

**211** Although Sheibani and Nima had never met until they both participated in first *Congress of Iranian Writers' Association* in 1946, they kept corresponding with each other and Nima identified Sheibani as the "crown prince" of Persian modern poetry and entitled himself as the "conquering king of Persian modern poetry." [Sheibani, "Šā'er dar čāhārdīvāri [Poet in the Room]," 24.]

Party, though. Considering that the most obvious feature of works by leftist artists was their simple and Realistic expression, he gradually deviated toward a language that was more symbolic, yet with one foot in reality.<sup>212</sup> The innovations that he showed in his work could not be tolerated by the Party, whereas critics of the leftist magazines such as *Payām-e now* or *Payām-e nowin* condemned his works for their lack of socio-political value: "Although such works contain artistic value, one expects a young and talented poet like Sheibani to consider the truthful meaning of literature for applying his aptitude in service of the society and to create not only artistic pleasure but also social benefit."<sup>213</sup> In his poems, Sheibani was entirely a Realist, but not precisely the Realism promoted by the Party. The Realism that he depicted—beginning with *Spark* and *Ātaškada-ye kāmūš [The Dark Fire-Temple]* (1945) and more evident in his later collection *Sarāb-hā-ye kaviri [Desert Mirages]* (1976)—gradually became more inclined to the rupturing of traditional boundaries in poetry and their replacement with illusion.

Two major features of Sheibani's works should be noted, as they contrasted him from contemporary leftist artists or poets and brought him inside the circle of the fighting cocks. First, he was heavily influenced by modern painting in his poems, whereas his poems mirrored his paintings and vice-versa. It is important that Sheibani began his career as a painter at Faculty of Fine Arts based on an experience both in modern poetry and a familiarity with new composition, form and coloration at Textile Academy—the experience that could also have attracted him to modern rather than academic painting. At the faculty, his experience as an iconoclast poet against the boundaries on imagination was well suited to the Impressionistic teachings that emphasized artist's subjectivity and free impression of the objective world around. According to his conformity with Impressionism, he explained: "When I stand in front of nature to paint a watercolour painting, I first entangle myself with it; I feel it and then I enter it purposefully. [...] then I paint its impression into my painting fast and briskly."<sup>214</sup> As a poet, he inserted his texts into the paintings and similarly into his poems, yet remained true to the principles of Realism. The Realist tendencies in Sheibani were different than the Kamal al-Molk academic Realism being taught at the faculty. Although he was principally a figurative painter with nature and landscapes as his main subject matters, he had freed himself from academic fidelities to Realism and with his knowledge of form and coloration, he

212 Barahani, "Došnāmguy wa 'arbadaju [Cursing and Screaming]," 88.

213 «با این که این قبیل قطعه‌ها دارای ارزش هنری است ولی ما از شاعر جوان و سرشار از استعدادی مانند شیبانی انتظار داریم با در نظر گرفتن مفهوم درست ادبیات، استعداد خود را در خدمت جامعه بگذارد تا از آن‌ها نه فقط لذت هنری بلکه سود اجتماعی نیز حاصل شود.» [Abdulali Dastgheib, "Negāhi be aš'ār-e manučehr šeybāni [A Review on Poems by Manouchehr Sheibani]," *Keyhān farhangi*, no. 284 & 285 (2010): 66.]

214 «وقتی برای کشیدن یک آبرنگ در برابر طبیعت قرار می‌گیرم، نخست خودم را با آن در می‌آمیزم؛ آن را حس می‌کنم و بعد به خواست» [Ali Babachahi, "Šeybāni az šāna-ye ġuli be nām-e nimā gardan mikešād [Sheibani Rises from the Shoulder of a Titan Called Nima]," *Goharān*, no. 23 & 24 (2010): 90.]



approached subjects based on a personal mentality. In many of his figurative paintings, nature adopted a climatological aspect of certain places and was displayed via deformation of forms, application of straight, bold and contrasting lines and contours to create new spaces. In fact, Sheibani's poetical influences gave an experimental behavior to him as a painter; his paintings ranged from Impressionism and a geometric Expressionism to Cubism and even later on Surrealism. A good example for the interaction of poetry and painting in his works was a series of paintings in which he tried to make a modern narration of lyrical concepts of Persian miniatures and to exhibit them with modern figures and techniques. In a painting from this series, e.g., *'Ošāq [Lovers]*, in contrast to the elaborate work in Persian miniatures, he applied simplified figures of a young couple against a plain background. In the background, abstract colours and forms give way to more expressive contour lines of the figures as if he has done so to accentuate only the lyrical moment between



Fig. 4-46\* Manouchehr Sheibani, *'Ošāq [Lovers]*, Year [?]. Technique [?], Dimensions [?]. Collection [?]. In *Catalogue of first Tehran Biennial of Painting* (Tehran: Edāra-ye honar-hā-ye zibā [General Administration of Fine Arts], 1958), 35. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

two lovers. The young couple, although very similar in their facial features to those in Persian miniatures (joint and arc eyebrows, soft eyes, narrow lips, brittle smile and curls of hair covering the cheeks), are dissolved in their bodies and clothes, and instead, are linked together via their looks and an abstract stroke of the brush as if they are one body. [Fig. 4-46]

Sheibani, as a Realist poet, was meticulously descriptive with the subjects and, as a modern painter, pursued a more indirect state of expressiveness that caused his paintings both Symbolic and Abstract qualities. Basically, he considered no distinctive border between different artistic media and literature. In fact, his will to unleash the feelings from restriction of the medium is well-understood from his attraction to poetry and painting and his educational travel to Rome (1949) for experimenting in painting and scenography and his visit to Paris (1973) for cinema

and dramatic arts: "Why not write a poem with light! [...] No other art has such an absolute space than cinema. [...] From now on, I will say my poems through cinema and my paintings will resemble cinema."<sup>215</sup> The admixing influence of painting and poetry on Sheibani's works was a common feature in works by other members of the association such as Irani and Sepehri, who were also both poet and painter. This common feature revealed itself in a visual atmosphere in their poems by emphasis on imagination that allowed colours, uncommon structures or daily phrases into their poems. The increasing interest to cinema, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, also provided Sheibani's paintings a dramatic composition and perspective that gave a kinetic feature to them. The intersection of the borders of poetry and visual arts, specially painting, gave his descriptive poems a visual quality with an utmost attempt of expression. In Issue 2 of *Fighting Cock* magazine (1948) in his poem *Sokut* ["Silence"], one reads: "The demon of silence/ was laughing./ People's faces, were grim./ Mouths were insane and loud open with laughter-/ They wandered./ Or eyes in faces with rain of tears,/ Falling down./ Since then;/ World and everything in it became a painting/ A painting whose forms,/ Attach each other vainly,/ And detach each other vainly."<sup>216</sup>

The second feature that distinguished Sheibani's works from leftist artists and made them closer to the ideals of Fighting Cock Association was his attention to Iranian folklore as the roots of modernity. In his article *Tārīkča-ye ejmāli-ye tamāyolāt-e tajadodgerāyāna dar š'er* ["A Summary on Modernistic Inclinations in Poetry"] that was published in *Jām-e jam* magazine in 1949, he called attention to the modern features of the Persian folkloric poems which had developed parallel with Iranian classical poetry. He argued that folkloric poems were modern due to their freedom from the pressure of poetical rules and coming from subconscious of their poets. The peculiarity of these poems was in their natural expression and lack of technical boundaries that normally obliged poetry to a decorative than intuitive quality.<sup>217</sup> As a matter of fact, the most important feature in both Sheibani's paintings and poetry was an attention to the past with a concern for national features. In *The Dark Fire-Temple*, he clearly stated his interest in Iran's legendary myths and Persian classical epic poetry and tried to convey his message by application of a similar language, epic fables and historical elements. Most poems of this book are a hopeful dialogue between the poet and his historical past for a discharge of the demon and revival of peace in Iran. [Fig. 4-47] In a poem from the book *Sorudi*

«چرا با نور شعر ننویسم! [...] فضا بیان کاملتری در هیچ هنری به اندازه سینما ندارد. [...] می‌خواهم همه چیز را در آن بریزم. در 215 [Javad Mojabi, "Honarmand-e čand sāhati [A Multi-Faceted Artist]", in *Barg-hā-ye pažuheš* (2) [*Research Papers* (2)], ed. Mohammad Hasan Hamedei (Tehran: Peykara 2010), 76.]

«اهریمن سکوت، می‌خندید./ رخساره‌های مردم، در هم فشرده بود./ دیوانه‌وار و تند دهان‌ها به خنده باز /- می‌گشتند./ با چشم‌ها به چهره 216 چو باران سرشک‌ها، میریختند./ دیگر از آن به بعد/ دنیا و هر چه بود در آن گشت همچو نقش/ نقشی که شکل‌هاش، بی‌خود به یکدیگر، [Manouchehr Sheibani, "Sokut [Silence]," *Korus jangi*, no. 2 (1948): 2.]

217 Manouchehr Sheibani, "Tārīkča-ye ejmāli-ye tamāyolāt-e tajadodgerāyāna dar š'er [A Summary on Modernistic Inclinations in Poetry]," *Jām-e jam*, no. 5 & 6 (1949): 139.

*barā-ye mitrā* ["A Song for Mithra"], he refers to Mithra, the Avestan goddess of light and truth, as the savior: "Mithra comes! Mithra comes with her golden cart/ With a smiling face/ Her light shining/ Her fire of anger burning/ Her arrow comes to the heart of evildoers/ Her fire of anger makes a storm of scare/ There will be blood/ blood."<sup>218</sup> It should be noted that similar to other fighting cocks, this reference to the historical past by him was beyond an emotional retrospection to antiquity, instead, it was an analytical exploration of their roots that manifested itself, for instance, in Sheibani's paintings through the use of descriptive popular language. In a dialogue between Sheibani and Ziapour in their research trips to the deserts and Southern cities of Iran in 1956 (for collection of Iranian folkloric motifs and patterns),<sup>219</sup> one notices the obsession that these artists obtained for their popular and historic culture. In this conversation, Ziapour emphasized that modern artists had to have a close understanding of both ancient and contemporary culture of their society to be able to achieve peculiar coloration and visual patterns in their works: "If we believe that an artist is brought up by his own social space, so he must be aware of his society's ways of living and must display the culture of his own society in an artistic way."<sup>220</sup> The centrality of the artist's local surrounding for the fighting cocks was to the extent that they considered the idea of national art a combination of the historical past, race, geography, etc., which affected the artists in their works. This was the notion discussed by Sheibani as a necessity for artistic production in his article *Melliāt dar honar* ["Nationality in Art"] (1963), where he paid attention to the influence of their habitat, geography, ethics and religion on artists and their works of art.<sup>221</sup>

The most important stage in Sheibani's artistic development was affected by the same trips he made with Ziapour to the deserts of Iran for an ethno-anthropological research of these areas and their folklore. In a series of paintings inspired by these trips, one observes a technical maturity applied to the local figures of women and a climatological attention to the area. In fact, these paintings displayed a deep understanding of the artist about the interaction of light and pure colours in Impressionism and the intuitive use of colour in Expressionism. The warm, desert climate of these cities and women's traditional costumes (a long veil or full-body cloak worn to cover the body) are executed with such strong and coarse lines and industrial

«میترا آید! میترا آید با گردونه زربینش/ چهرش خندان/ مهرش تابان/ آتش خشمش سوزان/ تیرش دوزخ، دل بیکاران را برهم/ آتش 218 [Manouchehr Sheibani, *Ātaškada-ye kāmūš* [*The Dark Fire-Temple*] (n.p., 1945), 21.]

219 According to Sheibani, the desert was one of the most authentic subjects for an Iranian artist and he commented if artists know their deserts, they will know a considerable part of their culture. [Mojabi, "Honarmand-e čand sāhātī [A Multi-Faceted Artist]," 79.]

220 «اگر معتقد باشیم که هنرمند پرورده فضای زندگی جامعه خود می‌باشد، پس باید که از چگونگی زندگی جامعه خود آگاه باشد و باید که 220 [Jalil Ziapour, "Kuhī bā rang-e ābi [A Mountain with Blue Colour]," *Ādina*, no. 65 & 66 (1991): 15.]

221 Manouchehr Sheibani, "Melliāt dar honar [Nationality in Art]," *Musiqi*, no. 37 (1963): 17.

colours that his paintings rather took on decorative and graphic-like qualities.<sup>222</sup> [Fig. 4-48] In describing the influence of these trips on Sheibani's technical paintings, Ziapour said: "Sheibani's paintings from Southern cities, regarding their composition and integrity, have a notable technical coherence and since he has also been a poet, his paintings represent his point of view in poetry and painting in a symbolic way [...]."<sup>223</sup> Clearly for Sheibani, and similar to the other members of Fighting Cock Association, application of their own local elements to modern techniques in arts and literature was not a dilemma or an issue to be selected, but it was rather an indispensable part of their identity as an Iranian artist with which, according to Sheibani, they deliberately came along: "I feel I have been thrown into an alien space. I have not arrived where I wish [but] I have been removed from where I used to be [...] I have carried all my past with me, but now I have to make a compact and precious resource out of it [...]. My identity which is my Eastern knowledge and Iranian education always remains with me, but here for this [identity] I will find a fitting clothing [...]."<sup>224</sup> These words by an affiliate cock were, in fact, the common concerns one infers from the texts and artworks of each member. Their experiments with modern art had resulted from an alien space in which artists dangled between their ancient heritage and modern experimentations. But it should be noted that the pendulum swing between past and present was a *deliberate* choice by artists to retain their past as a precious identity of their works while articulating it for a newer appearance.



Fig. 4-47 "Ātaškada-ye kāmūš [The Dark Fire-Temple] by Monouchehr Sheibani in 1945." National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

222 Ali Nasir, "Hampui-ye š'er wa naqāši [Confluence of Poetry and Painting]," in *Barg-hā-ye pažuheš (2) [Research Papers (2)]*, ed. Mohammad Hasan Hamedī (Tehran: Peykara, 2010), 70.

223 «نقاشی‌هایی که شبیبانی از نواحی جنوب تهیه کرده، از لحاظ ترکیب و انسجام از استحکام فنی چشمگیری برخوردارند و به‌علاوه چون [Sheibani, "Šā'er dar čāhār-divāri [Poet in the Room]," 35.]»

224 «حس می‌کنم در فضایی ناشناس پرتاب شده‌ام. هنوز به آن جا که می‌خواهم نرسیده‌ام و از آن جایی که بوده‌ام کنده شده‌ام [...] من همه گذشته‌ام را با خود به امروز حمل کرده‌ام، اما دیگر باید از همه گذشته‌ام یک فشرده اندوخته‌ای که حجم و پر ظرفیت حفظ کنم [...] محتوی من [Mojabi, دانش شرقی و تربیت ایرانی، همیشه با من است، اما در این جا برای آن عصاره‌ها، لباس‌های فراخور آن‌ها را خواهم یافت [...]» "Honarmand-e čand sāḩati [A Multi-Faceted Artist]," 2.)»



Fig. 4-48 Manouchehr Sheibani, *Zanān-e dukris [The Spindle-Spinning Women]*, 1956–1958. Oil on canvas, 70 × 100 cm, Manouchehr Sheibani's collection

#### 4.2.4 *Nightingale's Butcher Manifesto*

From April 22 to June 6, 1951, the second series of *Fighting Cock* magazine was published in four issues, by which time the magazine had made a considerable change. On the back cover of all four issues of the magazine there was a 13-article text with the name of association and its main members at the bottom. This text was Fighting Cock Association's manifesto entitled as *Sallāk-e bolbol [Nightingale's Butcher]* and, in fact, it was the first artistic manifesto in Iran. [Fig. 4-49] Publication of *Nightingale's Butcher* was a plan by Houshang Irani—the main writer of the manifesto—and was executed right after his return from Europe to Iran and his membership of the association in 1950. The rhetoric of the manifesto, similar to Irani's general attitudes to arts and literature and, despite all his logical argumentations, was so radically defamatory of any conservatism that, according to Ziapour, it made the manifesto socially unwelcome: an unpleasant bitterness which paralyzed reasonability of his discussions.<sup>225</sup> Therefore, Ziapour, who about the same time was establishing his own National School of Painting, consciously avoided this radicalism and left the association. The title of *Nightingale's Butcher* for the manifesto obviously conveyed a sadistic intonation that was directed at artistic and literary establishments of its time. Application of the term “nightingale” in the manifesto's title justifies this supposition in two ways: first, this term was implicative of a historical collocation of the term and figure of the nightingale with flower known as *Gol-o morġ* [“Flower and

225 Ziapour, “Soġan-e now ār [Bring New Word],” 86.

Bird”] or *Gol-o bolbol* [“Flower and Nightingale”] in Persian miniatures, handicrafts and classical literature.<sup>226</sup> Here the term nightingale was adopted as emblematic of the traditional artistic and literary establishments against which the association had begun a slaughter. Second, it should be noted that in the same year of publication of the manifesto, the Left Party published a new magazine known as *Dove of Peace* with the motto of “Peace and Modern Art,” which in reality sought to support USSR cultural policies in promoting Social Realism. [Fig. 4-50] Conversely, the apolitical nature of the manifesto was evident in its different articles. The butcher of the nightingale, in fact, had to slaughter the dove of peace as the sign of its opposition to politicization in the arts. The outlines of the manifesto in 13 articles were as below:

1. The art promoted by Fighting Cock belongs to alive bodies and that this uproar demolishes all voices that advocate art of the past.
2. Our fight in promotion of a new artistic period is relentlessly directed at all past rules and traditions.
3. Modern artists are born to the time and only the avant-gardes are rightful for artistic activity.
4. The first step to be taken by each modern movement is to break down old idols.
5. We condemn to death worshipers of the past in all artistic fields of theater, painting, writing, poetry, music and sculpture. We destroy old idols and buzzard imitators.
6. The modern art, which is based on an intimacy with the internal world of the artist, contains life’s vivacity and spirit.
7. The modern art is against idols and their copy-makers and destroys chains of traditions and replaces them with freedom in expression of the feeling.
8. The modern art tears down all old regulations and replaces the beauty with newness.
9. The survival of art is in movement and progression. Only those artists are alive that their mindset is based on modern knowledge.
10. Modern art is distinctive from all acclamations such as the art for society, the art for art’s sake, the art for....
11. For promotion of modern art in Iran all groups which are supportive of traditional art must be destroyed.
12. Art producers must be aware that the Fighting Cock artists will fight in its most brutal way against old and vulgar works.
13. Down with the fools.<sup>227</sup>

<sup>226</sup> For more information on the pictorial adoption of Flower and Nightingale in Iranian history of art see: Diba, Layla S. “The Rose and the Nightingale in Persian Art,” *Arts of Asia*, no. 6 (1996): 100–12.

<sup>227</sup> Gharib, Irani and Shirvani, “Sallāk-e bolbol [Nightingale’s Butcher],” n.p.

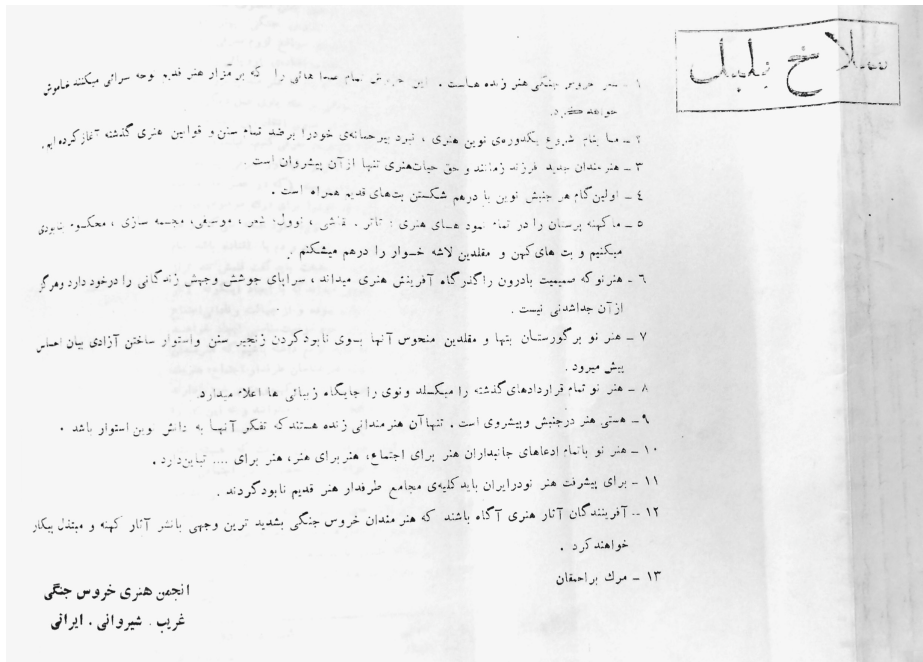


Fig. 4-49 “Manifesto of *Sallah-e bolbol* [Nightingale’s Butcher],” in *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1951): n.p. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

The following paragraphs will study *Nightingale’s Butcher* with attention to two inspiring contexts: first, a general context which provides archetypal standards and criteria of similar manifestos written prior to or around the same time by Western modern artists; second, a more specific context which can peculiarly provide definitions and functionalities of manifestos written at that time by non-Western modern artists. In arguing *Nightingale’s Butcher* based on the Western standards of manifestoing, above all, one should notice its adherence to what Renato Poggioli, mentions as “divorce of the avant-gardes.”<sup>228</sup> The notion of divorce, as Arta Khakpour has studied the term precisely in the Iranian literary and artistic avant-garde, refers to a split between aesthetic and social radicalism which signals transformation from a *priori* relation between avant-garde art and politics into what Poggioli puts as “revolutionaries in politics and revolutionaries in art.”<sup>229</sup> According to Khakpour, this discussion by Poggioli is particularly useful in studying Iranian modernism and its manifesto moments. He argues that prior to emergence of Fighting Cock Association in 1948, the Iranian avant-garde, which initially appeared in prose and poetry, was an

<sup>228</sup> Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), 12.

<sup>229</sup> A. Khakpour, “Each into a World of His Own: Mimesis, Modernist Fiction, and the Iranian Avant-Garde” (PhD diss., New York University, 2014), 75.

avant-garde of Poggioli's first type—i.e., spreading a radical political ideology (in particular the Left). It was in such a climate that the founding of Fighting Cock with its iconoclastic magazine and manifesto immediately challenged the primacy of political commitment for arts. This moment, as Khakpour defends, should be considered as the beginning of a divorce of the avant-gardes in Iranian avant-gardism too.<sup>230</sup>

Based upon the universal archetypes of manifestoing, it is indubitable that composers of *Nightingale's Butcher* (Gharib, Shirvani and Irani) were inspired by the manifestos which set the foundations of Western modern art. This influence, although never directly mentioned in the texts or talks of the members, is obviously inferred from articles of their manifesto. The main points in *Nightingale's Butcher* can be discussed in the following 7 features described by Alex Danchev over one hundred manifestos since the Futurists:<sup>231</sup> 1. Being political: In his introduction, Danchev considers two manifestos as the archetypes of all later artistic and literary manifestos; i.e., the *Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in 1848, and *Futurist Manifesto* by Filippo T. Marinetti in 1909. This political dimension, when interpreted as artistic freedom and autonomy, as Danchev argues for André Breton's *Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924), is precisely observed in *Nightingale's Butcher*. Breton equated the revolutionary role of modern artists with their independence and liberation: "Our aims: The independence of art—for revolution. The revolution—for the complete liberation!"<sup>232</sup> This role is inferred from Article 7 of *Nightingale's Butcher* where it emphasizes on the destruction of chains of tradition and their replacement with freedom of expression, or Article 8 demanding to tear down all regulations and creating newness. 2. The rhetoric strategy: The rhetoric of the *Communist Manifesto* is poetical—the forms and phrases that would make them sing. This quality

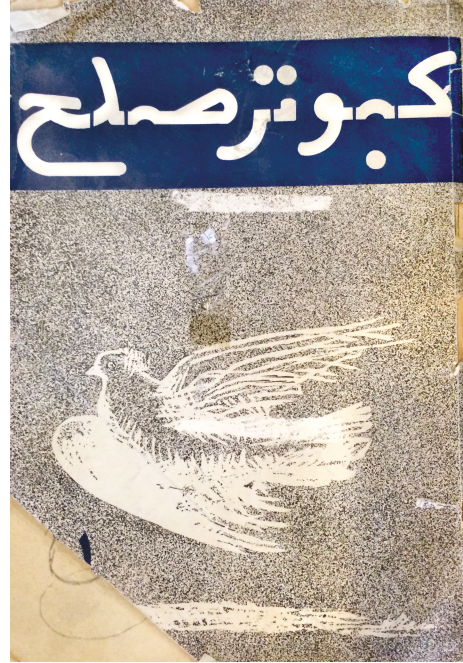


Fig. 4-50 "Front cover of *Kabutar-e šolḥ* [Dove of Peace] magazine," in *Kabutar-e šolḥ* [Dove of Peace], no. 1 (1951). National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

230 Ibid., 85–86.

231 Alex Danchev, ed., *100 Artists' Manifestos: From the Futurists to the Stuckists* (London: Penguin, 2011): xix–xxix.

232 Ibid., xxvii.



has been underlined by Marshall Berman for an imaginative power, expression and grasp of the luminous and dreadful possibilities that pervade modern life.<sup>233</sup> Such rhetoric is recast and recycled in later manifestos such as the *Futurist Manifesto* with a boisterous, inflammatory and acidic pen. These lines as “The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!” is mimicked by Marinetti as “WORKERS OF THE MIND, UNITE!”<sup>234</sup> This poetical and magniloquent rhetoric is best respected by *Nightingale’s Butcher* where it attributes modern art to alive bodies (Article 1) or condemns traditional artists as buzzards who imitate the past idols (Article 5) and explains the role of modern art as demolisher of the traditional chains stepping over the graves of the imitators (Article 7). 3. Violence and precision: According to Marinetti, the secret of a successful manifesto is laid in its violence and its precision (to which Danchev adds its bombast and wit).<sup>235</sup> The Marinetti model of the *Futurist Manifesto* as the template for all manifestos of the century was recognized as Marinettian principles with certain features whereas Tristan Tzara, the capo of Dadaism, and André Breton, the pope of Surrealism, deliberately followed. The obvious feature of *Nightingale’s Butcher*, for which its opponents adamantly criticized it, was its violent condemnations. In many articles of the manifesto, such as Article 2 that they announced a savage behavior, the authors threatened their rivals with death (Articles 1, 3, 5 and 11). 4. Self-differentiating: Artists’ manifestos typically define themselves against—usually against their rivals and predecessors. For instance, the Futurists were against the past. But, contrarily, it is not simple to specify what they are for and resolving this question in many manifestos is a problem. The authors of *Nightingale’s Butcher* clearly defined themselves against all past rules and traditions (Article 2) or they distinguished themselves from claimers of all other arts such as the art for society, the art for art’s sake, the art for.... (Article 10). 5. Being a demand: The manifestos are a demand. They demand something from us, and they demand it now, with our full attention. The unavoidable preoccupation of the manifestos of the first half of the 20th century was revolution. This revolutionary quality was not only straightly pointed out by Ziapour in his talks and texts<sup>236</sup> but also inferred from different articles of *Nightingale’s Butcher*. A demand for extinguishing all past artistic forms (Article 1), beginning an entirely new artistic period (Article 2), tearing down all regulations and their replacement with a newness (Article 8) and movement and progression which salvages the arts (Article 9). 6. Remonstrative: The manifestos

233 Ibid., xx.

234 Ibid.

235 Ibid., xxiv.

236 For instance, where Ziapour described his painting *The Uprising of Kaveh* as a revolutionary goal which had to happen in Iranian art. [Jalili zīāpur [Jalil Ziapour], directed by Houshang Azadivar (Tehran: Goruh-e farhang, adab wa honar-e šabaka-ye dow-ye šedā wa simā [Department of Culture, Literature and Art of IRIB2], 1989), DVD.] Or where in explaining his decision for promoting Cubism in Iran, he referred to the revolutionary spirit of Cubism. [Jalil Ziapour, “Naqāši [Painting],” *Korus jangi*, no. 5 (1951): 31.]

are strong on remonstrance. Such expressions as “Long live–!” and “Down with–!” are frequently applied in the text of manifestos. In *Nightingale’s Butcher*, at the bottom of the page and as the last article, it reads: “Down with the fools!” (Article 13). 7. Words-in-freedom: This was a typographical revolution used by Marinetti to explode the harmony of the page. Words-in-freedom abandoned the old rules of spelling and syntax with the typeface flipping from one front to another and free repeats of the letters. This word play, although it is not seen in *Nightingale’s Butcher*, is prevalent in Irani’s poems. In fact, all articles of the manifesto emphasized animosity with past traditions and as one moves on through its text, its support of a neutral type of art is observed that guaranteed free expression of artist’s feelings. This freedom of expression that was explicitly mentioned in Articles 6 and 7 of the manifesto was rather understood by the members as automation in Surrealism. The automation as a technique in Surrealism was referred directly and indirectly in talks and texts of the members. For instance, Gharib’s introduction to his important collection of poems *Failure of Epic* that was called *Āzādi-ye bayān-e ehsās – āzādi-ye zendegi* [“Freedom of Expression – Freedom of Life”] revealed his inspiration by Surrealism’s freedom in expression of feelings.<sup>237</sup> Or more explicitly in his article *Žamir-e nābeḳod dar adabiāt* [“The Subconscious in Literature”] he described this technique in writing as: “The act of writing is above all to solace writer’s inner inclinations [...]. As we write, we should immerse by all means into our subconscious and keep aside from any rational and willful control and let our mind act in its mechanical manner freely and create its striking images.”<sup>238</sup> One can also observe the same defense from automation and free expression by Irani in his texts “Formalism” and “Existence of Form.” He considered form as the elixir of life and argued that an authentic expression of artist’s inner world is only possible via form—in his designs Irani considered this technique as an overflow of dreams.<sup>239</sup> Words-in-freedom was a technique for free expression or automation in writing or poetry. Irani applied this technique in his first collection of poems *Deep Purple on Grey* in 1951, simultaneous with the publication of *Nightingale’s Butcher*. In *Hā* [“Ha”], a poem from this book that was also published in Issue 1 of *Fighting Cock* magazine, one sees the repetition and play with words and their typeface: The grief of a shadow/ Rises/ Closed crypts/ Of its howl/ Tear down chains/ The shadow upswings/ The shadow upswings/ The shadow up swings/...../ Haaie iee yaa yaa/ Haaie iee yaa yaa/ Nee daa daa daa a a a a.<sup>240</sup>

237 Gharib, *Šekast-e ḥamāsa [Failure of Epic]*, 2–13.

238 «نوشتن قبل از هر چیز برای تسکین تمایلات درونی نویسنده است نه چیزهای دیگر [...] هنگام نوشتن باید به تمام معنی در درون خود فرو برویم و از هر گونه کنترل عقلی و ارادی برکنار بمانیم و بگذاریم ذهن از ادانه به فعالیت مکانیکی خود و بروز انواع تصاویر شگفت‌آورش ادامه دهد.» [Mirabedini, *Šad sāl [One Hundred Years]*, 192.]

239 Irani, *Čand desan [Some Designs]*, n.p.

240 «سوز سایه‌ای/ سر فرا کشد/ دخمه بسته‌ها/ از هوار او/ رشته‌ها درند/ سایه برجهد/ سایه برجهد/ سایه برجهد/...../ هائی یی یا 240  
«[Houshang Irani, “Hā [Ha],” *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1951): 8.]

*Nightingale's Butcher* was introduced as a Surrealist manifesto due to Irani's attempts pertaining to automation and a subconscious status in his designs or his attention to Naked Poetry with centrality for free expression and discharge of established technical rules. But it should be noted that the Surrealism of Irani was better understood from his writings, poems and designs than the text of the manifesto. A major Surrealistic feature of *Nightingale's Butcher* though, which is also seen in the French Surrealism, was its rejection of both Social Realism and art for art's sake (Article 10). Khakpour explained this feature of French Surrealism by drawing on Poggioli and noting that Surrealism's association with Communism was always tenuous at best, or by attention to Franklin Rosemont, commenting on Surrealism as an unrelenting revolt against market values and religious impostures. The total emancipation of the imagination in Surrealism, therefore, as Khakpour concludes, was to evoke an introspective individualism that was uneasy with Marxist collectivism.<sup>241</sup> But at the same time this introspection should not imply, as in art for art's sake, apathy of artists toward oppression and human conditions. Breton's objection to art for art's sake (asserted in *Manifesto for an Independent Revolutionary Art* in 1939) was precisely due to art as a vacuum which could indulge itself in an elitist indifference.<sup>242</sup> Also many of the association's emphases on topics such as "Formalism" and *Arzeš-e honari-ye ejtemā'* ["The Artistic Value of Society"] were precisely with attention to French Surrealism and were published in the newly added columns of second series of *Fighting Cock* magazine. As it will be discussed in Chapter 5, from the first Issue and with similar caustic rhetoric as in the manifesto, Irani described modern art by attacking the retrospective artists as cowards who should be condemned to death. In the second Issue of the magazine, he drew this fight against art for the society or Social Realism and defended Formalism. In an individual article on "Formalism" in Issue 3, which shortly after was published in his book *Identification of Art* under "Existence of Form," Irani continued his combat against socially committed art. His defense of modern art, in fact, was rooted in the defense of *form* as he considered an internal origin for form inside the artist that made it authentic. But this authenticity was not as comprehensible by the society as the Realistic works.<sup>243</sup> This conscious emphasis on Formalism by Surrealists, as Khakpour refers Mikhail Impolski, made precisely the major bogeyman of Soviet art authorities or, referring Poggioli, made Social Realist critics labeling "Formalist art" as deviant.<sup>244</sup>

Notwithstanding the above-mentioned similarities of *Nightingale's Butcher* with the European modern manifestos, there were noticeable differences between *Nightingale's Butcher* and the *Manifesto of Surrealism* (October 15, 1924) in Europe. In

241 Khakpour, "Each into a World of His Own," 103.

242 Ibid.

243 Houshang Irani, *Šenākt-e honar [Identification of Art]* (Tehran: n.p., 1951), 22.

244 Khakpour, "Each into a World of His Own," 108–9.

Breton's *Manifesto of Surrealism*,<sup>245</sup> one comprehends a fundamental negation of logical methods affected by the reign of logic. More significantly, Breton's manifesto, in contrast to *Nightingale's Butcher*, was along with a philosophical and psychic disapproval of the realistic attitude inspired by positivism and against any intellectual and moral advancement. Breton developed his text with theoretical discussion on Sigmund Freud's attention to the mental world and his emphasis on *dream* as a psychic activity instead of reality. In fact, he clearly defined *Surreality* as an absolute reality and as the only resolution for the inconsistency of reality with dream. In addition to the definition, he discussed means of attaining this absolute reality such as automation, thought writing and spoken thought. *Nightingale's Butcher* did not meet most of the characteristics in Breton's text, but shared close similarity in its rebellious and revolutionary aspects. The year of publication of Fighting Cock's manifesto was simultaneous with the beginning of Mohammad Mosaddeq's premiership (1951–1953) — Iran's National Front leader — and his nationalization of the oil industry that led to overthrow of his government by the CIA-Britain coup d'état. Until the formation of Mosaddeq's government, the 1940s had undergone the greatest political instabilities with frequent changes in prime ministers and the government's cabinet since beginning of the second Pahlavi era. This was precisely the social condition for which many critics argue the text of *Nightingale's Butcher* and Irani's first book *Deep Purple on Grey* as symptoms of a revolt against a social chaos and an invitation for peace.<sup>246</sup> This approach by Irani is best evident in his *Kāsāndrā* ["Kassandra"], one poem of *Deep Purple on Grey*: Be tranquil... you far away river/ Be tranquil/ You still have not lost/ The motionless and disturbed eyes of that bewildered fish/ [...] / Be tranquil ... you far away river/ [...] / That black fire will come/ And will crush/ Will demolish/ Will destroy/ The wavering reeds/ [...].<sup>247</sup>

The freedom in expression of the feeling in Article 7 of *Nightingale's Butcher* was inspired by the same freedom of boundaries for pure expression in Breton's manifesto,<sup>248</sup> but in most of the articles of *Nightingale's Butcher* one observes a more radical will for despising past roots, any retrospection, the public opinion and all social structures (Articles 1–5 and 9–12) in order to attain an absolute reality which Breton named it as *Surreality*.<sup>249</sup> In fact, this radical disconnection of the fighting cocks with the society was the most obstructive feature of their association that was obviously mentioned in their manifesto too (Articles 3, 7, 8 and 11). The emphasis on institutionalization of modern art in Iran, which in the mani-

245 André Breton, *Manifestos of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Michigan: University of Michigan, 1972), 3–47.

246 Saeed Soltani Tarami, "Nowāvari-ye irāni [Iranian Modernism]," *Goharān*, no. 7 & 8 (2005): 103.

247 «آرام باش... شط دور دست/ آرام باش/ تو هنوز چشمان بی حرکت و مضطرب آن ماهی سرگشته را/ از دست ندادهای/ [...] / آرام باش...» [Irani, *Banaḡ-e tond* [*Deep Purple*], n.p.] «... آن آتش سیاه خواهد آمد/ و نی‌های لرزان را/ خواهد خرد کرد/ خواهد کوبید/ خواهد نابود کرد/ [...]»

248 Breton, *Manifestos*, 26.

249 *Ibid.*, 14.

festos was assumed to be necessarily in contrast with all past conventions, above all butchered fighting cocks' own position among both the people and the intellectuals. This disconnection occurred in two ways, first, via an outright and scornful rejection of public opinion that was used to appreciating customary art with roots in a local and traditional culture and, second, the imprudence of the members in an abrupt reaction against the leftist artists who with support of Tudeh Party had succeeded to possess a considerable sympathy in society and among intellectual circles. In the second series of *Fighting Cock* magazine, one encounters many writings that distinctly mocked these two groups. For instance, Irani's text *Honar-e now* ["Modern Art"] in Issue 1 of the magazine, addressed the traditionalists and society like this: "They are narrow-minded and retrospective [...] who still believe that their teachers' trainings, which their latest one still belongs to a century ago, can be compatible with the contemporary time. One should select. The one who does not dare to select should die, should keep quiet, should cry over his dreams [...]"<sup>250</sup> Or in Issue 2 of the magazine, Irani criticizes Nima for his social side-takings in modern poetry: "[Nima] calls art a fruit created for a certain disease. He rejects free creation [...]. He does not talk of an artist's art but of how to govern a country or how to nurse the sick [...]. He seeks the artist's acknowledgement exactly where he should not, that is, among groups of people and, as a result, Nima attributes to the artist an ordered art which causes artistic death [...]"<sup>251</sup>

Therefore, the failure of Fighting Cock Association, with the membership of Irani and publication of *Nightingale's Butcher Manifesto*, was in losing its social and major intellectual footholds. An acceptable presumption discusses this failure based on the association disregarding the fact that new developments should occur in a gradual manner in order to be appreciated by society. In fact, cultural developments with a reasonable pace of occurrence do not detach themselves from native features due to the new changes and they should also respond to local demands.<sup>252</sup> It seems that Fighting Cock's aim for the formation of a National School in painting, writing, music and dramaturgy in its early days was an attempt by members to make new developments that were also in line with the local attributes. Ziapour's exit from the association in 1951—the time when he had devised his figurative "National School of Painting" with concern for both modern techniques and local attributes—should therefore be a consequence of the hurried modernism that Irani was about to promote in arts and literature. This hurriedness and disconnection of the association

«کوتهمفکران و پس‌ماندگان [...] بر این گمان‌اند که گفته‌های استادانشان، که بر نوتر از همه آن‌ها سده‌ای می‌گذرد، همچنان می‌تواند 250 شناساننده زمان باشد. باید انتخاب کرد. هر که جرأت انتخاب ندارد تن به نابودی دهد، دم فروبندد، و دیدگان سیلاب برداش را بر کویر آرزوها شناساننده زمان باشد. باید انتخاب کرد. هر که جرأت انتخاب ندارد تن به نابودی دهد، دم فروبندد، و دیدگان سیلاب برداش را بر کویر آرزوها [...]» [Irani, "Honar-e now [Modern Art]," 2.]

«[نیم] هنر را میوه‌ای می‌نامد که برای بیمار مخصوصی آفریده شده باشد. آفرینش آزاد را پس می‌زند [...] سخن از هنر هنرمند به میان نمی‌آورد، گفتگویش بر سر مملکت‌داری و پرستاری بیماران است. [...] پذیرش هنرمند را درست آن جا که نباید یعنی در میان صنف‌های [...]» [Houshang Irani, "Enteqād-e nimā yuṣhij: pišgoftār-e āḡarin nabard [Criticizing Nima Youshij: The Foreword on Last Fight]," *Korus jangi*, no. 2 (1951): 12.]

252 Soltani Tarami, "Nowāvāri-ye irāni [Iranian Modernism]," 107.

with the socio-intellectual footholds resulted in a skeptical reception from the people and critics and provided Irani's antagonists a good excuse to condemn the Iranian modern movement as nothing more than a mere translation or repetition of Western works: "At our time, Houshang Irani, only by reading modern manifestos of Western poets had learned vaguely that if a group of words were disorderly mixed together, a new type of innovation would be created by itself through language. He did not notice that in reality there was often no necessary adherence between newness and 'beauty' and not everything 'new' was beautiful."<sup>253</sup>

The second context in which *Nightingale's Butcher Manifesto* will be studied is more peculiarly restricted to its non-Western background. A recent ontology *Why Are We 'Artists'? 100 World Art Manifestos* has been made by Jessica Lack that totally excludes the European and North American manifestos. The most common features of the included manifestos (including *Nightingale's Butcher*), as Francesco Mazzaferro explained in an extensive review, are as follows: recognition of cultural and aesthetic independence of their artists, recovery of the autonomy of their artistic tradition; education regarding the public opinions in order to emancipate one from the aesthetic categories of Europe and North America; the affirmation of their own ethnic reality as the sole expression of their cultural individuality.<sup>254</sup> In the introduction to the book, Lack herself describes her ontology against a melancholic view that reads manifestos with one eye on the past and with the presupposition that art manifestos are Western phenomenon rather than a global one.<sup>255</sup> A correct argument by her draws attention to the climate of revivalism in which many of these non-Western manifestos were written. In most of these countries there was a revolutionary nationalist fervor against colonialism, not only in the economic and political dimensions but also the arts, which appeared in new forms of modernism built upon the foundations of traditional indigenous art forms, styles and motifs.<sup>256</sup>

A similar context argued correctly by Lack is the influence of Marxist ideology on artists whose countries were also oppressed by authoritarian rulers. The most inspiring role of Marxism for these artists was in provoking a rebellious spirit against the bourgeois world and to create an artform as the aesthetic expression of their dream for a classless utopian society.<sup>257</sup> It should be noted that Communism did not have a positive effect in the case of Iran. The Left Party and its cultural policies for promotion of Social Realism conversely made the fighting cocks revolt

«در عصر ما، هوشنگ ایرانی فقط از روی خواندن بیانیتهای شعری شاعران مدرن فرنگ، به طور مبهمی، پی به این نکته برده 253 بود که اگر خانواده کلمات در هم ریختگی پیدا کند، خودبهخود، نوعی نوآوری و بدعت (innovation) در زبان رخ می‌دهد و تازگی دارد. اما او توجه نکرده بود که بین تازگی و «جمال» به معنی راستین کلمه، غالباً ملازمه‌ای نیست و چنان نیست که هر «نو» زیبا و جمیل باشد.» [Teymour Aghamohammadi, *Marā bā daryā-hā-ye morda kāri nist: zendegi wa šer-e hušang-e irāni* [I Have Nothing to Do with the Dead Seas: Life and Poetry of Houshang Irani] (Tehran: Tāleṭ, 2011), 43.]

254 Mazzaferro, Francesco. "Review of Why Are We 'Artists'? 100 World Art Manifestos," *Letteratura Artistica*, accessed October 3, 2018, <http://letteraturaartistica.blogspot.com/2018/05/jessica-lack.html>.

255 Lack, *Why Art We Artists?*, xiii.

256 *Ibid.*, xiv-xv.

257 *Ibid.*, xvi.

against it. As was discussed, until the enforcement of *Zhdanov Cultural Doctrine* in 1948, it was only the idealistic taste of the Left and its cultural contributions that attracted artists, but after the obligation to Social Realism, artists reacted to it. Therefore, although Lack correctly attributes the *Nightingale's Butcher Manifesto* to a short-lived era of optimism in 1951 based on the new government's reforms (under Mosaddeq's premiership), these reforms had their roots in nationalism rather than Marxist ideologies. The case of Iran rather shared a similar atmosphere to what she describes as occurring in communist Eastern Europe. That is, the influence of Marxism was far more ambivalent whereas many artists found themselves facing a stark choice between forgoing a creative experimentation and self-expression or following the Socialist Realist art promoted by Tudeh the prominent Communist Party in Iran. Not only *Nightingale's Butcher* in its text obviously rejected art for society (Article 10), but also from the early days of establishing the association members harshly attacked Social Realism or the idea of social commitment in arts. It was precisely this decision by artists for a self-experiment that, as Lack defends, resulted in a prolific era of art ephemera with the emergence of the manifestos many of which had Dadaist forms or metaphysical themes.<sup>258</sup> While artists in communist Eastern Europe applied this method to state censorship or to ridicule the social regimes by a sense of alienation, in Iran the fighting cocks applied the Dadaistic and Surrealistic approach in their manifesto not only to undermine the dominance of Social Realism promoted by Tudeh (Article 10), but also against the artistic traditions and establishments (Articles 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11 and 12).

In a final analysis of the both above-discussed contexts, this study sides with Lack's argument in her ontology of non-Western manifestos. That is, it agrees with classifying Fighting Cock Association with other modern artists' groups of the region in the 1940s (such as Baghdad Modern Art Group). These modern groups also pursued a national style of art that incorporated concepts from Western modern art and traditional cultural and intellectual influences.<sup>259</sup> This was the approach of Fighting Cock Association until 1951, when Ziapour left the group. With the presence of Irani and publication of *Nightingale's Butcher*, nonetheless, a new transitional phase began that was quite distinctive. Not only the text of the manifesto had no reference to the national school of art promoted by the association earlier, but it also, right from the first Issue of *Fighting Cock* magazine in its second series, encouraged members to adopt more destructive strategies for the promotion of modern art and attacked the past traditions in the fields of both art and literature.<sup>260</sup>

<sup>258</sup> Ibid., xvii.

<sup>259</sup> Mazzaferro, Francesco. "Review of Why Are We 'Artists'? 100 World Art Manifestos," *Letteratura Artistica*, accessed October 3, 2018, <https://letteraturaartistica.blogspot.com/2018/05/jessica-lack18.html>.

<sup>260</sup> Most significant were three short stories by Gharib in Issue 1 in which he had let go of his earlier tolerance about past establishments and had ridiculed them ironically. One of the stories, *Čāhsār-e mašreqi* ["Eastern Pit"], was a dialogue between Gharib and a pit in the East as a metaphor of the old beliefs. [Gholamhossein Gharib, "Čāhsār-e mašreqi [Eastern Pit]," *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1951): 4.]

## 5 Cultural Role and Activity Modes

The cultural role and modes of activity undertaken by the young modern artists were results of an essential demand by artists for artistic autonomy and led to a call for the formation of a different kind of subjectivity in arts. It was based on these two new conditions that artists adopted a cultural, rather than commercial, role in their works. This chapter will argue, first, how these new conditions affected artists' role in terms of a critical, collective and avant-garde contribution in their field and, second, it will explain the cultural ways that the artists adopted to connect with their audience and to transfer a new subjectivity to them.

### 5.1 Autonomy and New Paradigm of Artistic Subjectivity

For studying the cultural role and activities of Fighting Cock Association, it is important to consider the new discussions that the association issued in order to prepare the ground for this change. The key elements to these discussions were attention to a new "artistic subjectivity" and the idea of "artist's autonomy." These two discussions were interdependent in such a way that the new subjectivity could only be executed by autonomous artists, and artists also required this new subjectivity to become autonomous. In other words, Fighting Cock defended the notion that modern art was art of the present time and, rather than copying nature, it was directed to the artist's *self* and his internal world and, therefore, was independent from any external rule, boundary and orderly quality. In an overall view, members discussed the new artistic subjectivity in terms of technical issues (rather than the subjects), emphasis on the form (rather than stylistic obsession), importance of self-existence of the art (rather than being imitative art) and temporal necessities that saw art as the product of its own time. Also, regarding artist's autonomy, the main discussions by the fighting cocks were promotion of a rebellious and revolutionary spirit in artists, resistance against a functional approach to the arts and defending artists' individual freedom.

The new artistic subjectivity was supposed to fight against people's preference to see into those artworks whose understanding did not necessarily require much analysis and thought.<sup>1</sup> This preference, as the fighting cocks argued, was developed in unskilled people by Realist artists and those who defended art for the masses. Ziapour, in a series of his articles in *Fighting Cock* magazine (1948–1949)<sup>2</sup>, attacked precisely this common reality that Realism had provided people, and instead,

<sup>1</sup> Ziapour, "Soğan-e now ār [Bring New Word]," 79.

<sup>2</sup> These articles had no title and were published in a column of the magazine called *Naqāshi [Painting]*. Ziapour published one article in each of the five issues of the magazine in its first series (1948–1949).



emphasized Cubism and Surrealism as a means to contrast with the objective Realism. Resistance against *simplification of artworks*, with the excuse that a *lack of skill* existed in the common audience, was the main issue of Ziapour's discussions in these articles. As he argued, the common audience only enjoyed the works of art which were comprehensible and, therefore, they called only these works masterpieces. But he gave notice that an avant-garde artist should never create popular works to please an unskilled audience. This was because the avant-garde artist displayed his internal reality and thus his concepts could not be executed via old conventional forms or be easily understood by the people. In such new works of art, there were new means of expressing the artist's internal world with more attention for the technical issues and with the aim being to call attention to the other realities which were not in focus.<sup>3</sup> The essentiality for adoption of such new subjectivity for the fighting cocks was since they believed that art, similar to other social factors, was developed gradually and represented the developments of life and societies.<sup>4</sup> The environmental effect, as Irani discussed in his book *Identification of Art*, influenced both artist's *self* and his creation of a work of art. According to him, each person's self was dependent on the conceptions that he made from his surrounding, life's instinctive or voluntary demands and the flux of the events around him: "[...] in such creation of the 'self' that is inspired almost automatically by the environment and its hidden and obvious events, there is nothing effective but life's flux and it is life that creates the 'selves'."<sup>5</sup>

So obviously, the new artistic subjectivity conveyed expression of artist's self, but with a concern for technical discussions; for the fighting cocks this subjectivity was in contrast to academic Naturalism and Realism that considered the concept of artistry in making meticulous replicas of the nature. The technical approach of the academic artists was different than the fighting cocks' approach to the technique. According to Ziapour, the academic artists had only learned laborious methods with no artistic knowledge and, as a result, the academic technique included merely application of the hands (without contemplation) and promoted a market for vulgar subjects.<sup>6</sup> The technique that was argued by the fighting cocks opposed the academic emphasis on stylistic precision, and instead, paid attention to Formalism and significance of the form. Irani in his article "Formalism" argued that Formalism was a means of creative representation of the internal world of the artist; he differentiated Formalism from academic method which captured the surrounding world as in

3 Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāshi [Painting]," *Kavir*, no. 2 (1950): 14-15.

4 Ziapour, "Naqš-e nehzat-e qorus jangi [The Role of Fighting Cock Movement]," 4.

«[...] خویشتن هر فرد از دریافت‌های جهان بیرون و کارکرد خواست‌های عادی و غریزی و ارادی هستی تحول می‌یابد و بر پایه امکان‌های رویدادهای گذرانی که بر گرداگرد او در جنبش‌اند رنگ می‌گیرد [...] در این خویشتن‌سازی که تقریباً خودبه‌خود پیرو وضع محیط و رویدادهای [Irani, *Senākt-e honar [Identification of Art]*, 15.] نیرومند ناپیدا و آشکار درونی شکل می‌گیرد چیزی جز سیلان زیست در کار نیست و این زندگی است که من‌ها را می‌سازد.»

6 Ziapour, "Naqš-e nehzat-e qorus jangi [The Role of Fighting Cock Movement]," 4.

photography. He even criticized application of the term “Realism” for the academic method applied by the Iranian artists, since their works had even not achieved the classical concept for Realism and they only fulfilled the commercial and political wishes of those who ordered and supported them: “This deceived group [artists] (no matter at service of which philosophy or political line, it suffices that they are ‘at service’) have no common point with Realism and their works are weak and shallow imitations or they apply anti-art orders to seize the market under the title of Realism [...]”<sup>7</sup> Bahman Mohasses, the affiliate cock, explained that the secret of modern art was in depicting the spirit of its chaotic age technically and its miracle was that it revealed the reality of life in its extremities. He argued that the truthfulness of Cubist artists, for instance, was in their surpassing the appearance and breaking into the objects in order to display their internal feelings with all their extremities: “The avant-garde artist disgusts surfing in external space [of objects]. This space cannot satisfy him. He intends to travel into another space which predominates us. To show the pains and anxieties. This second space is definitely not detached from us but we do not care and are not familiar with it.”<sup>8</sup> [Fig. 5-1] In Ziapour’s defense of Cubism, both temporal necessities and technical significance of modern art as the new artistic subjectivity were discussed. In Issue 5 of *Fighting Cock* magazine (1949), he described Cubism as the art of the period for rebellion and formation of new subjectivities. As he explained, Cubism arose from within a class of dissatisfied artists who showed their inner provocations via artistic manifestations and tried to adapt their artistic techniques with the revolutionary aims; i.e. being determined and incisive whilst at the same time logical. All of these features were translated by Cubist artists via rigid lines, surfaces and hefty colour areas.<sup>9</sup> Also Ziapour described various phases of Cubism based on different levels of internal feelings of artists. These phases were respectively “doubt,” “desperation” and “hope” that the Cubist artist applied certain techniques for each of them.<sup>10</sup> A Cubist artist began his work by being “doubtful” and questioning all regulations and superstitions. Therefore, the technical manifestations of his works were in terms of strong and rigid lines, and contrasting, vague, silhouette and both dull and brilliant colours that he applied with anger and wrath. In the second phase, the Cubist artist that had become aware of his unfavorable surrounding, entered “desperation,” but together with hatred and power it gave

7 «این گروه فریب‌خورندگان و ریاکاران را (در خدمت هر فلسفه و روش سیاسی که می‌خواهند باشند همین بس که <در خدمت> باشند) با رئالیسم کاری نیست و آثار آنان تقلیدی سست و بی‌مایه و یا به‌کار بستن دستورهای ناهنری است که برای به‌دست‌آوردن بازار تجارته به آن نام [Aghamohammadi, *Marā bā daryā-hā-ye morda kāri nist [I Have Nothing to Do with the Dead Seas]*, 190–91.]»

8 «هنرمند پیشرو از گردش در این فضای ظاهر بیزار است. این فضا نمی‌تواند او را راضی کند. او سعی دارد در فضای دیگری که بر ما حکومت دارد و ما را احاطه کرده است گردش کند. رنج‌ها و دلهره‌ها را نشان دهد. مسلماً این فضای دیگر از ما جدا نیست ولی بدان توجه [Mohasses, “Honar-e jadid [New Art],” 56.] نداریم و با آن آشنا نیستیم.»

9 Jalil Ziapour, “Naqāši [Painting],” *Korus Jangi*, no. 5 (1949): 31–32.

10 *Ibid.*, 32–35.

his work heavy, dull and sad colorations (here Ziapour refers to Pablo Picasso's brown and gray periods or works by George Braque and some Surrealist painters such as Felix Labisse). Nevertheless, "hope" was the last phase that some Cubist artists, after surviving the first two phases could attain. A hopeful Cubist had learned that via rebellion and resistance he could destroy boundaries and create his dreamed world. Works by a hopeful Cubist included vivacious, warm and loud colours.

Regarding the discussion of artist's autonomy, the association explained *autonomy* in terms of institutionalization of an individual freedom for artistic expression, a revolutionary spirit in artists, and rejection of any functional attitude toward art. The main argument made by fighting cocks in their texts and debates was that avant-gardism was characterized with the attribute of *self-dependence* and, as a result, autonomy was an indispensable feature for the new artistic subjectivity (i.e. modern art). In Issue 5 of *Fighting Cock* magazine (1949), Ziapour asserted this crucial autonomy in his definition of an avant-garde artist as a revolutionist. He explained that an avant-garde artist was someone who behaved as if he aimed at a rebellion for progress and technical advancement of his art, and this behavior was in contrast to those artists who promoted and propagandized other aims than art such as politics and social devotion: "Those who expect artist other tasks than artistry and creation of the artworks can be studied in one of these groups; either they are not familiarized with the definition of art and their information about it is incomplete, or they are well-informed but their benefit which is 'achievement of their own goal' makes them employ not real artists."<sup>11</sup> This necessary freedom for concentration on technical aspects by artist was also addressed in translated articles that were published in *Fighting Cock* magazine. In Issue 2 of the magazine (1948), for instance, in an article entitled *Honar-e jadid* ["Modern Art"], the author argued that modern

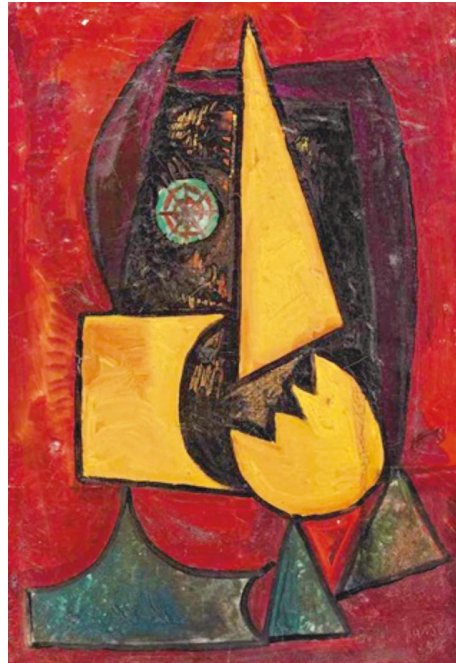


Fig. 5-1 Bahman Mohasses, *Untitled*, 1957. Mixed media on canvas, 50 × 35 cm, Collection [?]

«آن‌هایی که از هنرمند غیر از هنرمندی و ایجاد آثار هنری انتظار دیگری هم دارند، از چند حال بیرون نیستند؛ یا اصلاً از مفهوم هنر بی‌خبرند، و یا اطلاع ناقص دارند. یا این که خوب مطلع‌اند ولی چون صلاح کارشان «برای پیش‌بردن هدفشان» ایجاب می‌کند، از این رو کسانی که مزدورانی بیش نیستند به نام هنرمند به کار می‌گیرند.» [Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāshi [Painting]," *Korus jangi*, no. 5 (1949): 38.]

art could no more be limited to aesthetical features, but a modern artist had to be courageous enough to detach himself from social expectancies and to return to his own perspectives which were built in him affected by his surrounding world.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the academic Realism promoted by the Faculty of Fine Arts and the state cultural policies for support of the traditional arts, the emphasis on autonomy and freedom of expression by Fighting Cock Association, as earlier argued, was also much influenced by direct presence of the Left Party. The Party, particularly, since the second half of 1940s, promoted Social Realism as the cultural policy of the USSR in the region.<sup>13</sup> An important event of this decade was the first *Congress of Iranian Writers' Association* that played an important role in the encouragement of Socialist inclinations within the artistic and literary fields in Iran. In fact, the *Congress of Iranian Writers' Association* and, simultaneously, *Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts*, were both initiatives of the Iran-Soviet Cultural Relations Society in 1946—the fact that has credited the penetration of politics into field of culture and new assignments by the Party for artists.<sup>14</sup> In many of writings and debates of the fighting cocks, they outspokenly condemned Social Realism or social commitment in arts. An obvious example is an article from *Paris Fine Arts Weekly* in 1952 that was translated by an affiliate cock, Sohrab Sepehri, and published in one of *Fighting Cock's* new series of the magazine called *Cock's Claw* in 1953.<sup>15</sup> The article *Pikāso mored-e e'terāz qarār migirad* ["Picasso Is Complained"] had depicted splits among artists of the Communism Party since after obligation of the Social Realism by *Zhdanov Soviet Cultural Doctrine* in 1946. It had reflected André Breton's criticism assimilating Social Realist paintings rather to photography and propagandist art than painting.<sup>16</sup> Until 1952, the Party was still compromising with those like Picasso and Henri Matisse who were close to the Party but did not comply entirely with Social Realism. Nevertheless, for avant-garde artists of the Party, mandatory submission to Realism was not acceptable and they insisted to revolt and choose between freedom of expression and sheer obedience to a propagandist Realism. It was at the same time that Salvador Dali commented on Picasso: "Picasso should logically leave the Party and put an end to all doubts and clamors. Also he can do an important job by condemning the left inclinations among artists."<sup>17</sup> So for fighting cocks, modern art in general

12 Blas, "Honar-e jadid [Modern Art]," n. trans., *Korus jangi*, no. 2 (1948): 24.

13 This was a result of the Communist Party's assertion on Social Realism as Party's artistic *modus operandi* in 1946 which ought to be executed by all communist parties around the world.

14 Mirabedini, *Şad sāl [One Hundred Years]*, 207.

15 As it will be explained precisely under *Fighting Cock* magazine, there were a few times bans on the publication of *Fighting Cock* magazine. After each ban, the magazine had to continue its work with a new title as a new series.

16 Helen Turner, "Pikāso mored-e e'terāz qarār migirad [Picasso Is Complained]," trans. Sohrab Sepehri, *Panja korus*, no.1 (1953): 5–6.

17 «عقلاً پیکاسو باید حزب کمونیست را ترک کند و این عمل او هیا هو و تردید موجود را از میان برمی‌دارد. به علاوه با کوبیدن تمایلات» [Ibid., 6.] چپی میان هنرمندان می‌تواند کار مهمی انجام دهد.

(and Cubism in particular) was the most comprehensive school of art that represented the artists' spirit for revolution and uprising against discriminations, habits and orderly qualities which only exposed certain artists to growth. Accordingly, one can read Ziapour's appreciation of Cubism compared to other previous art schools that none of them like Cubism possessed the necessary power and radical spirit for creating an artistic movement: "It should be noted that Cubism 'is not merely a certain painting style,' but the essential condition for someone to be a Cubist, at the first step, is to have a revolutionary spirit for progress."<sup>18</sup>

All Fighting Cock members explicitly complained and repeatedly reflected their antipathy with the Left Party and, in fact, they challenged the committed art versus art for art's sake by their defense of artist's autonomy. These complaints were uttered in different ways. Either, being discussed for Ziapour, through emphasis on freedom from politics and social norms as a feature of avant-gardism, or, straightforwardly by paying attention to the subject of artistic autonomy. For instance, Shirvani did this in an article in the column "Identifying the Modern" in Issue 1 of *Fighting Cock* magazine (1951). He criticized conservative artists who insisted art to have social functionalities and to be comprehensible for the masses. According to him, these claims meant nothing but creating orderly works and to hold common people as the judge of their evaluation: "Because here our opinion is important and [Art] is not yoghurt or butter at the supermarket that the public opinion becomes its evaluation criterion, here [in art] the subject is taste and aesthetics."<sup>19</sup> Also the same blunt language was seen in Irani's article where he openly discouraged artists from any concern for ethics, society and tradition.<sup>20</sup> For the artist, he asserted, everything should only act as means of expression and nothing is allowed to restrict him; even if his artistic manifestations unconsciously appeared to be functional or were in line with social or traditional norms. It should be noted that this has never been decided by the artists themselves.<sup>21</sup> But the significant point about these complaints by the association members was that they defined social function or functionality of art for society in a different way. Ziapour saw it a mistake to divide art into two groups of "social art" and "anti-social art" when the origin of both was one thing. This origin, as he defended, was on the one hand due to the fact that every artist, even the most avant-garde one, could not be detached from his society and his work essentially reflected his social inspirations. On the other hand, he emphasized that the definition of art for art's sake should not be thought of as not being at service of the society but that artist cared for the artistic dimension more significantly as a *modus operandi*: "[...] since the artist is full with inspirations

18 Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāshi [Painting]," *Korus jangi*, no. 5 (1949): 31.

19 «زیرا این جا موضوع پسند ماست و کره دکان لبتیات فروش نیست که استقبال مردم عامی را بشود ملاک خوبی و بدی نوع جنس دانست،» [Shirvani, "Šenākt-e nowi [Identifying the Modern]," 1.]

20 See: Irani, Houshang. "Honar-e now [Modern Art]." *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1351): 2-3.

21 *Ibid.*, 2.

from his surroundings, therefore, the social service was spontaneously within it."<sup>22</sup> Basically, for the fighting cocks, the artists' accordance to the social understanding level was considered as a murderous act against society and, in contrast, the social role of the avant-garde artists was to increase this level via exerting themselves to the promotion of art among the people.<sup>23</sup>

As reviewed above, the central aspects of the association's cultural role should be considered in its emphasis on necessity of a new artistic subjectivity and artist's autonomy. In this chapter the "cultural role" will be discussed in two sections. The first section will argue artist's autonomy and the new artistic subjectivity more precisely, breaking them down into three modes of activity in association: first, attention to artists' critical approach (artists simultaneously adopting the role of critics); second, emphasis on the collective collaboration within and between fields of art and culture; and third, preference for cultural promotion of modern art versus formation of a commercial market. The second section will focus on association's main cultural activities in terms of publications, debates and exhibition contributes by the members.

### 5.1.1 Artists as Critics: A Critical Approach

One of the most significant aspects of the cultural role played by Fighting Cock Association was in efforts to promote a critical attitude in arts among artists. The emphasis exerted on criticism was to the extent that, although the second series of *Fighting Cock* magazine (8 to 12 pages in 1951) was reduced to one-third of pages of the first series (35 to 60 pages in 1948–1949), new columns of *Enteqād* ["Criticism"] and *Barrasi* ["Review"] were added to increase the critical approach of the magazine. For instance, in Issue 1 of the magazine, Shirvani explained that the aim of the "Criticism" column was to uncover malevolence of those artists who, despite lack of adequate knowledge, claimed artistry either via emphasis on tradition or by creating social works.<sup>24</sup> The major reason of association's attention to the issue of criticism was because the artistic space in Iran was a uniform and uncritical space. In fact, as Ziapour complained, the absence of avant-garde artists to challenge the artistic establishments in Iran had led to the absence of competitions and animosities that were necessary for creating a change in the artistic field.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, in many of his debates and texts, Ziapour encouraged uprising of the artists for creation of such a space: "I can never complain about the space. Every space has its peculiar capacities [...]. I expect those who are more passionate about art to enter

22 [...] برای این که هنرمند لبریز تأثرات شکل گرفته در زمینه‌های تأثراتی خود است، خدمت به اجتماع هم خودبه‌خود در این عمل مستتر است.» [Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāshi [Painting]," *Kavir*, no. 1 (1950): 16.]

23 Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāshi [Painting]," *Korus jangi*, no. 5 (1949): 39.

24 Shirvani, "Šenākt-e nowi [Identifying the Modern]," 1.

25 Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāshi [Painting]," *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1948): 14.

artistic discussions directly [...]”<sup>26</sup> The association’s role in awakening their artistic space came along with a rallying cry for a rebellion against such lethargy. In one of Ziapour’s talks at Fighting Cock Association in 1953, he distinctly announced Fighting Cock’s invitation of artists for such a fight:

There is nobody who does not know that our atmosphere is so cold and passive. Everybody knows it. [Nevertheless, this atmosphere] is not made of only those who possess old and decayed thoughts, they do not make the whole for us; the whole for us are those young and enlightened followers of us who move contemporaneous with their own time, those who represent benefits and characteristics of one society [...]. They are those who know that for attaining progress in their art and culture, they have to undertake efforts, be rebellious, beat the hindrances and [they are aware] that this task can never be possible without a persevere fight.<sup>27</sup>

Regarding the awakening role that the association had taken, the cultural activities of the members (in terms of display of works, publication of their own magazine, theory and manifesto or their debates at the place of the association or other exhibitions) were in line with their aim to create a resistant and critical art space against old establishments. In *Čegunegi-ye važ’yyat-e korus jangi az ebtedā-ye kār* [“The Status of Fighting Cock from Its Start”] by Gharib, which was published in *Cock’s Claw*, this very aim for publication of different series of *Fighting Cock* magazine becomes apparent. In his writing, Gharib pointed to the early days of Fighting Cock when members encountered a prevailing torpidity in the art space: “[...] a huge lack of knowledge and mental inanition that our artists were and still are suffering was to the extent that they could no way align themselves with [fighting cocks’] rallying cry [...]. Today, one more time, we will take on publishing a new series of the magazine and will continue our artistic debates for the society [...]”<sup>28</sup> Another important reason for initiative of the fighting cocks in issuing the discussion of criticism in arts was that the task of criticizing or writing critiques on art was left to the non-artists and unskilled groups of journalists, reporters and literary

«من هرگز از محیط گله‌مند نمی‌توانم باشم. هر محیطی استعدادی دارد [...]». من انتظار دارم آن‌هایی که در هنر سر پرشوری دارند 26 [Jalil Ziapour, “Baḥṭ wa enteḡād-e honari [Artistic Argument and Criticism],” *Mehr-e irān*, November 29, 1949.]

«کیست که نداند تا چه حد محیط هنری ما سرد و خموش است؟ همه می‌دانند. این همه آن‌هایی نیستند که افکار کهنه و پوسیده دارند، آن‌ها برای ما همگان را تشکیل نمی‌دهند؛ همگان آن جوانان و پیروان روشنی هستند که خود را با زمانه همراه می‌کنند، منافع و شخصیت یک جامعه را تشکیل می‌دهند [...]». این همگان می‌دانند که در راه ترقی فرهنگ و هنر خود باید تحمل رنج و زحمت کنند، مبارز باشند و خودروها 27 [Jalil Ziapour, “Har bār ke fru beyoftim bāz bā qodrat-e bištari barmikizim [Any Time That We Fall, We Will Stand Again More Strongly],” *Panja korus*, no.1 (1953): 1.]

«[...] ولی بی‌دانشی شگرف و جمودت فکری دامنه‌داری که گریبان‌گیر عموم دست‌اندرکاران هنر در این محیط بوده و هست آن‌ها را از 28 شور بیبران زیبایی و زیست چنان تهی می‌داشت که هیچ گونه هماهنگی با این صدا در آنان پدید نیامد [...]». امروز هم از نو به انتشار نشریه‌ای [Gholamhossein Gharib, “Čegunegi-ye važ’yyat-e korus jangi az ebtedā-ye kār [The Status of Fighting Cock from Its Start],” *Panja korus*, no.1 (1953): 5–6.]

figures who had no studies in field of arts. A review of the texts written by these figures in newspapers and magazines of 1940s, and even later, indicates a considerable lack of analytical depth and technical precision in these writings, as well as a prejudicial view that was protested by the modern artists. According to fighting cocks, the main reason for interference of the non-artists in the task of artistic criticism was because the artistic modernism was still in its early days in Iran and the modern artists lacked the necessary autonomy to challenge them. Under this condition, those who wrote about art from other fields could only reflect their literary or personal justifications about the works in a conservative way.<sup>29</sup> Mojabi considers two types of authors for the very few texts which were written on exhibitions of modern works at Apadana Gallery or salons of clubs and cultural relations societies; in the majority group were journalists who had no education in arts and, based on their job, updated readers with their personal and emotional coverage of art events, interviews with artists or biographies of them. But there were a minority of authors who were more familiar with artistic subjects, either published their own magazines (like Fighting Cock Association) or wrote in magazines with good circulation.<sup>30</sup> Regarding the fighting cocks' argument, many of the amateur writers created amateur critiques with specific intentions or specific people they wanted to please. In fact, a considerable part of these writings were by opponents of the modern art who themselves were either from the academic Realists and traditional artists or advocates of Social Realism of the Left Party. Therefore, the main accusation by the association was toward the social condition in which every one claimed to be doing the work of a critic: "In our society, every one writes for pleasing the people or due to a certain notion to pretend sympathy and, by doing so, they aim to restrict the [modern] artists."<sup>31</sup> In many cases one observes that members of the association unveiled the pretentious quality of such reports. Good examples of such attacks are found in very few texts that were published about exhibitions at Apadana Gallery during its short period of activity in some newspapers and magazines. For instance, in a caustic text by Ziapour titled *Dorost enteqād konim* ["Let Us Criticize Correctly"], which reviewed a report on an exhibition of Javad Hamidi's paintings (published by *Mehragān* newspaper in April 1950), Ziapour complained about silence of the press and social media about Apadana Gallery; he condemned the author of the report for her lack of artistic knowledge that had caused her write a conservative and ridiculous critique about one of Hamidi's works. [Fig. 5-2] Ziapour's protest, in his words, was due to repetition of such errors in commenting on the arts and it was association's task to inform people not to be deceived by these

29 Mojabi, *Sarāmadān-e honar-e now [Masters of Modern Art]*, 45.

30 Ibid., 115.

31 «در جامعه ما افراد برای خوش‌آیند مردم یا حتی بعضاً عقیده شخصی خود است که قلم‌فرسایی کرده و تظاهر به همدردی می‌کنند و از [Ziapour, "Tahavolāt-e honar-e naqāši dar orupā [The Developments of Painting in Europe], *Korus jangi*, no. 2 (1948): 10–11.] این طریق فکر می‌کنند می‌توانند هنرمندان را مقید کنند.»



fake statements: "It is really strange that some of our youngsters only for self-pretension and to show off their scant knowledge apply every kind of deceit and flatter! [...] Why should really those who do not possess necessary qualities for the analysis of subjects criticize at all? [...] Why those of you who are not an expert in technical (but general) issues intervene in subjects that do not relate you or why you enter the technical details of those subjects?"<sup>32</sup> The author had praised Hamidi's new experience in modern painting as a result of his pessimism to adopting any significant aim or subject matter for the painting. But, in contrast, Ziapour replied that any perspective a modern artist observes in his work should be understood as the subject matter of that work of art.<sup>33</sup> Or, the author had attempted to praise Hamidi's deformation of lines and forms and had concluded that Hamidi was proficient in Western art styles and his colour compositions were authentic copies of Picasso, Ziapour again condemned her: "I do not know what should I name such descriptions. On the one hand they praise an artist for his technical expertise and skill in art, but on the other hand, they introduce the same artist as an imitator of Picasso in coloration that itself is the most significant aspect of painting. Is such criticizing not because the author either is mocking Hamidi or because she unknowingly is displaying her lack of information about the art?"<sup>34</sup>

In addition to the role of uncovering the unskilled and prejudicial critiques in various magazines and newspapers, the members also tried to provide clarifications on the tasks of a critic. For instance, in another attack by Ziapour at authors of such newspapers as *Irān-e mā*, *Jahān-e now* and *Peyk-e solh* who had written critiques on the solo exhibition of Kazemi's paintings at Apadana (1950), he reprimanded them because of their propagandistic and tendentious critiques which praised Kazemi without pointing to his artistic mistakes. The exhibition, as earlier discussed, displayed a series of Kazemi's works from his trip to the city of Kurdistan in Iran.<sup>35</sup> [Fig. 5-3] Ziapour complained that these paintings were made in only 3 months and represented artist's hasty enthusiasm for creating Cubist paintings but they lacked the necessary understanding of values of the line, colour and form.<sup>36</sup> This criticism by Ziapour reflects the atmosphere in which the modern artists worked. In other words, working in Cubism at the time was a sign for being a modern artist; therefore, many young artists applied their learnings from the

«واقعاً عجیب است که عده‌ای از جوانان ما برای خودنمایی و بهرکشیدن اطلاعات ناقص خود متوسل به همه‌گونه نیرنگ و چاپلوسی می‌شوند! [...] به راستی چرا کسانی که زمینه‌های لازم برای تحلیل و توجیه مطالبی را ندارند مبادرت به انتقاد می‌کنند؟ [...] شماهایی که وارد امور تخصصی نیستید (نه امور کلی) چرا به اموری که به شما مربوط نیست دخالت اصولی می‌کنید و از لحاظ فنی وارد جزئیات می‌شوید؟» [Jalil Ziapour, "Dorost enteḡād konim [Let Us Criticize Correctly]" *Šahsavār*, September 25, 1950.]

33 Ibid.

«نمی‌دانم این گونه توضیحات را چگونه توضیحی باید نامید. کسی را که برای او آن همه شخصیت و مهارت و قدرت فنی و شعور هنری قائل‌اند، از لحاظ رنگ‌آمیزی که خود همه نقاشی است مقلد پیکاسو معرفی کنند؟ آیا این گونه انتقادنوشتن دلیل بر این نیست که یا نویسنده حمیدی را مسخره کرده یا بدون این که خود متوجه باشد عدم اطلاع خود را در چگونگی هنر نمایانده است.» [Ibid.]

35 See the argument for Fig. 4-25 in Chapter 4.

36 Ziapour, "Naqāši-hā-ye kāzemi [Kazemi's Paintings]."

faculty to this school.<sup>37</sup> By bringing in view Kazemi's paintings at his exhibition and considering Ziapour's complaint, this condition could also count for Kazemi's exhibition: except for a few paintings, the rest were figurative works depicting Kurdish men and women in their traditional costumes. In almost none of these paintings had Kazemi tried to distance himself from the natural forms, or the mere inno-



Fig. 5-2\* Javad Hamidi, *Be suye marg [Toward Death]*, Year [?]. Technique [?], Dimensions [?], Collection [?]. In F. N., "Namāyeshgāh-e naqāshi-ye jadid [Exhibition of New Painting]," *Mehragān*, June 13, 1950. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

vation was to respect simplicity in the forms and colours in order to convey the naivety of the figures. Ziapour's criticism, by emphasis on the value of line, colour and form, was derived from the discussion in his *New Theory* as a comprehensive school. That is attention to Impressionism, Cubism and Surrealism should be with regard to their avoidance from representation of the natural or close-un-natural forms. According to him, this task had to be done via understanding the potentials of line and colour, and this was missing in Kazemi's exhibition. Kazemi, who was one of the modern painters from the faculty, was condemned by Ziapour for not having been successful in applying even his knowledge of Impressionism: "The only thing understood from Kazemi's paintings is that he has simply put some colours next to another without realizing their relation and has painted straight, broken and sharp lines like metal bars around his portraits and figures. [...]."<sup>38</sup> In describing the role of a critic, Ziapour cautioned that criticism should not turn to means of propagandistic aims but it should provoke progress in artists' works: "It should be noted that if all wishes by a society are not fulfilled in a work, we are not allowed to reject it as a work of art or, contrarily, if a society's demands are found in a work, we should not necessarily consider it as an acceptable work of art."<sup>39</sup> This very condition was also observed in the association's discussions on literary topics. There were vehement reactions to critiques that were written by the members against classical poetry and literature. For instance, a considerable part of these

37 In the beginning of Iranian modern artists' work, Cubism was considered as modern art among the people and young artists. Therefore, many paintings were attributed as being worked in Cubist style to attract attention. ["Goftōshonudi darbāra-ye naqāshi bā šādeq tabrizi [An Interview with Contemporary Painter Sadeq Tabrizi]," 33.]

38 «فقط آن چه از کارهای کاظمی مشاهده می‌شود این است که یک مشت رنگ‌های آسان‌یافته را پهلوی هم بدون در نظر گرفتن ارزش آن‌ها نسبت به هم قرار داده است و به وسیله خطوطی یکنواخت و شکسته و تیز مانند میله‌های آهنی به دور تمام صورت‌ها و هیكل‌های تابلوهایش کشیده است [...]» [Ziapour, "Naqāshi-hā-ye kāzemi [Kazemi's Paintings]."]

39 «باید دانست که اگر آرزوهای اکثر یک اجتماع در اثر هنری برآورده نشده نمی‌توان رد یک اثر هنری کرد یا برعکس اگر منویات یک اجتماع در یک اثر برآورده شده نمی‌توان آن اثر را یک اثر هنری و قابل قبول شناخت.» [Ibid. 4.]

reactions addressed Nima Youshij who affiliated with the association as the pioneer of Persian modern poetry and his poems were published in almost all issues of *Fighting Cock* magazine. In response to one of these pungent attacks written in *Irān-e mā* newspaper (1950) by Abdolali Parto Alavi (1902–1980)—a poet and writer with social inclinations—Ziapour again called attention to the significance of criticism as a technical act. With reference to the point that understanding the modern poetry required more intelligibility and acuity, Ziapour argued that modern poetry is understood by its advocates due to “the essential expression of the feeling and conception of the poet without any limitation and regulation.”<sup>40</sup> Therefore, for those critics who did not possess the necessary mental preparation, it was only an alibi to expect poetry as the expression of simple issues via a comprehensible structure or to expect a poem to be merely made of old techniques of rhyme and versification: “For those who never take their time to contemplate in poetry and its correct definition (as in painting) [...] the new manifestation does not make any sense for them [...] they do not give way to new allegories and metaphors.”<sup>41</sup> All the heated reactions against modern artists, as the fighting cocks discussed, were therefore based on a wrong contextual development in which Iranian artists and the literary figures were used to giving or receiving obsequious comments instead of real critiques: “We are still not familiar with criticism [...] the major habit of us is shaped on flattering [...]. So, if somebody criticizes, there is no doubt that he will be cursed and mistreated. This is not only because we are not used to hearing the truth, but also we are not aware of the meaning and value of the critique.”<sup>42</sup>

It should be noted that although the fighting cocks never entered into promotion of artistic criticism in a professional manner, their basic arguments helped create a change in the artistic space of their time by putting emphasis on the subject of “criticism” and its relevant issues. Among the relevant issues influenced was, above all, success in promotion of an argumentative behavior. This behavior was in contrast to the traditional habits (which limited artistic discussions only to closed circles of artists) and entered it into a broader space of both educated and unskilled audiences. It was according to this behavior that *Irān* newspaper, in its Issue 8772 (April 16, 1949), commented on the initiative of the fighting cocks for suggesting artistic subjects and opening the ground for arguing them. *Irān* had considered this activity a positive method that created both opponents and proponents with debates that could be published in newspapers and magazines for a broader audience.<sup>43</sup>

40 «بیان لازم احساس و استنباط شاعر بدون هیچ گونه شرط و قید.» [Jalil Ziapour, “Nimā yušij wa še’r-e ū [Nima Youshij and His Poetry]” *Šahsavār*, October 9, 1950.]

41 «برای آنان که هرگز فرصت تعمق در چگونگی شعر و مفهوم درست را (همچنان که در نقاشی) ندارند [...] از این روست که بیان تازه [...] [Ibid.] برای آنان مفهوم ندارد [...] جایی برای نشست تشبیهات و استعارات تازه فتر باقی نمی‌گذارند.»

42 «ما هنوز با انتقاد آشنایی نداریم [...] قسمت اعظم عادات ما، روی تملق‌گویی پایه گرفته است [...] بنابراین اگر کسی انتقاد کند بی‌شک مورد [...] [Ibid.] دشنام و آزار قرار می‌گیرد. زیرا هنوز نه تنها عادت به شنیدن درستی‌ها نداریم بلکه معنی انتقاد را نفهمیده ارزش آن را دریافته‌ایم.»

43 “Matn-e konferāns-e žiāpur [Ziapour’s Text of the Conference].”



Fig. 5-3\* Hossein Kazemi, *Moḥammad ‘ali [Mohammad Ali]*, c. 1949. Technique [?], Dimensions [?], Collection [?]. In Jalal Al-Ahmad, “Dar apadāna: bā qāb-hā-ye hizomi [At Apadana: With Wooden Frames],” *Irān-e mā*, March 19, 1950. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

In fact, this argumentative and critical behavior was an inspiring issue to appeal writers and journalists to the new artistic developments. Ziapour, later in one of his interviews in 1989, clearly reminded this provocative role by association in attracting attentions. For instance, he mentioned *Eṭṭelā‘āt* as one of the newspapers that artistic topics were not of its concerns, but influenced by the clamor of the debates, it published a comprehensive article on modern painting on five pages of its Issue 3 (November 24, 1950) confirming that: “Modern painting, contrary to the classical painting, is rather about the impressions than the real forms [...] and these impressions depend more on the painter’s personal reactions than [fidelity] to the subject matters [...]. This is the reason why modern painting is not easily comprehended [...]. We could say that in the modern school, art has deviated from [normal] tastes, and beauty and ugliness are no more its aims.”<sup>44</sup>

Another feature of *Fighting Cock* for promotion of a critical approach was an audacity for consciously exposing their works to the public comments. This happened via exhibition of their works, publication of their theory, poems, stories, scripts, and not to mention the particularly important public debates that were held by the association. The audacity about this publicization lies in the fact that all their publications—either in *Fighting Cock* magazine or as separate books—occurred during their lifetime.<sup>45</sup> This openness of the association to public criticism was also observed within the association and among its members. That is, the critical approach of the members was not just a practice against their opponent but also against each other if necessary. The best instances of this behavior are seen where Sheibani wrote critiques against Gharib’s new method of story writing and criti-

«نقاشی جدید، برخلاف نقاشی کلاسیک بیشتر به حالت می‌پردازد تا به شکل و جسم و ... و این حالت بیشتر عکس‌العمل خود نقاش است 44 تا موضوع نقاشی [...] بدین علت است که نقاشی جدید را نمی‌توان درست فهمید [...] می‌توان گفت که هنر در مکتب جدید، تغییر ذوق و مسیر»

45 Helia Ghazi Mirsaid, “Ḥanāna yek nābeḡa-ye jasur bud: goftogu bā moḥammadreżā darviši [Hannaneh Was an Audacious Prodigy: An Interview with Mohammadreza Darvishi],” *Tajroba*, no. 16 (2012): 87.

cized Ziapour's appreciation of this method, or where Irani criticized Nima, despite his leading role in Persian modern poetry, for his social compromises and his lingering between new and old techniques. Irani's critique of Nima under *Enteqād-e nimā yušij* ["Criticizing Nima Youshij"] was published in Issue 2 of *Fighting Cock* magazine (1951) and mainly condemned Nima's functional orientations in poetry. According to Irani, Nima's concern for an ethical education of his readers was to reject freedom of artistic creation.<sup>46</sup> In fact, Nima emphasized a complete detachment of the artist from himself, and this was precisely in contrast to association's defense of modern art for its attention to artist's internal world and Irani warned Nima for "underestimating the authentic expression of [artist's] internal world and regarding it as something disposable."<sup>47</sup> But the most obvious debate within the association is seen where Sheibani, in his text *Enteqād bar konferāns-e ziāpur* ["Criticizing Ziapour's Conference"], attacked Ziapour for defending Gharib's method of story writing. In his conference that was held at the salon of Farhang Theater on the occasion of Fighting Cock's first anniversary in April 1949, Ziapour had criticized that story writing in Iran was heavily imitating Western writers and the ignorance of the local writers about their own morale and peculiarities had caused considerable lag in their works: "An Iranian writer, while reviewing foreign writers' works, has to do his best not to be dominated by their mindset (which is peculiar to their own context) [...]. Creating an Iranian work of art is along with certain features peculiar to the life-style, contextual phantasies and climate."<sup>48</sup> Accordingly, Ziapour appreciated Gharib's method of writing because, at the same time that he was aware of world's literary schools and weak points of Iranian story writing, he aimed at the formation of a new method that corresponded to his own national context: "They [Iranian writers] wanted to write national stories but they acted without knowing how. Our modern writers assumed that only by application of vulgar words they were national writers [...] it is to regret that they had sacrificed the reality for the appearance."<sup>49</sup> Clearly, Ziapour was emphasizing the *national* attributes of Iranian modern writing that Gharib was applying in his method. As he analyzed Gharib's stories, although they all flashed back to a distant past of the writer and displayed a kind of cleavage with the present, their mental coherence was so strong that this cleavage was not noticed and, in fact, this was the different language for which Ziapour used the term "national language": "[National language] is observed in those stories that include wishes and dreams, successes and failures of a nation. A national work of

46 Irani, "Enteqād-e nimā yušij [Criticizing Nima Youshij]," 12.

47 «[Ibid.] «بیان اصیل درون را بیهوده و در انداختنی می‌داند.»

48 «نویسنده ایرانی باید خیلی بکوشد تا در حین مطالعه ادبیات خارجی، زیر نفوذ طرز تفکر آنان (که ساخته محیط خود آنان است) قرار نگیرد [...] ایرانی‌بودن یک اثر خصوصیتی دارد و آن خصوصیات مربوط به نحوه زندگانی و وابسته محیط و آب و هوای ایرانی است.» ["Matn-e konferāns-e ziāpur [Ziapour's Text of the Conference]."]

49 «[...] می‌خواستند ملی‌نویسی کنند ولی معنی ملی‌نویسی را نفهمیده و شروع به کار کرده بودند. نویسندگان پیشرو ما گمان کردند که منظور [...] از ملی‌نویسی این است که تنها باید لغات و کلمات عامیانه را به کار برد [...] تأسف این جاست که اصل مطلب را فدای ظاهر کردند.» [Ibid.]

art is a work that the spirit of one nation's life is noticed in it... Gharib was aware of this negligence by our writers."<sup>50</sup> Although Ziapour had emphasized in his speech that Fighting Cock Association saw a necessity in circumspection of modern artists about both artistic and literary fields (for instance an artist's general comment on literature should not be considered as an intervention), Sheibani's complaint about this conference precisely condemned Ziapour for his interference into the field of writing. Sheibani had criticized Ziapour for his lack of competence to comment on literature and, more importantly, he had technically denounced Gharib for his method of story writing. The main criticism by Sheibani addressed the art for art's sake approach taken by Gharib—Sheibani for this comment was influenced by his leftist affiliations. He condemned Gharib's emphasis on technique, instead of subject matter, and his Formalistic method in utilizing uncommon words and their composition without any concern for the meaning.<sup>51</sup> In the text written by Sheibani, his references to commitment in art and the social functionalities of literature were obvious and his emphasis on artistic idea, subject and meaning was to point to the significance of communicability of a work of art to its audience. In the text of his critique one can read such statements as: "Why Gharib, who himself fights against backwardness, has chosen a method which in no way corresponds to the Iranian people's morale today and does not satisfy them? [...] A writer today should make social developments [...] should make us familiar with a deep philosophy of life that can be helpful for our living. A work of art, in addition to beauty, should guarantee to solve a problem. The [artistic] 'idea' in a work of art makes the main body of it, and technique and other things are the covering and decoration only to show that work of art."<sup>52</sup> After Sheibani's "Criticizing Ziapour's Conference," many members and affiliates published their critiques as replications to *Irān* newspaper. In one of these replications written by an affiliate cock, Sheibani's critique was attributed to his socialist interests that had finally put him in conflict with the association. The writer by quoting Sheibani saying "a writer today should make social developments," had concluded that despite all the enlightenments by the association, Sheibani still sympathized with such notions as art being at the service of the society, political manifestations, and the masses: "Our critic [Sheibani] does not know that art is not an instructor in ethics, a social leader and tutor of the masses [...]. An artist

«[...] آن داستان‌هایی است که آرزوها و رویاهای، کام‌ها یا ناکامی‌های یک ملت را دربردارد. اثر ملی آن اثری است که روح زندگی خود 50 [Ibid.] آن ملت در میان آن دیده شود... غریب به این عیب بزرگ نویسندگان معاصر ما توجه کرد.»

51 Sheibani, "Enteqād bar konferāns-e zīāpur [Criticizing Ziapour's Conference]," 2.

«آقای غریب که با کهنه‌پرستی مبارزه می‌کند چرا خود روشی را اتخاذ کرده است که به هیچ وجه با روحیات مردم امروز ایران نمی‌سازد 52 و آن‌ها را راضی نگاه نمی‌دارد؟ [...] نویسنده امروز باید خط سیر تحول اجتماع را معین کند [...] چیزی از یک فلسفه عمیقی که مربوط به زندگی و فایده برای زندگی روزمره ما داشته باشد آشنا کند. باید یک قطعه هنری امروز علاوه بر زیبایی متضمن یک نکته فلسفی باشد تا دردی را هم دوا کند. ایده در یک قطعه اصل پیکره هنری را تشکیل می‌دهد، تکنیک و چیزهای دیگر لباس‌ها و آرایش‌هایی برای نشان‌دادن آن [...] است.» [Ibid.]

only develops people's tastes but is not an indicator of social developments."<sup>53</sup> In other replications, another affiliate cock had appreciated the role of Fighting Cock in revealing the platitude of the artistic space in which artists used to act based on their personal fancies with no one to criticize this situation.<sup>54</sup> The main point of the writer was that the opponents of modern art in Iran applied such baseless critiques to eliminate modern artists as their competitors. Many of these fallacious objections, as in case of Sheibani's text, either questioned fighting cocks' competence for criticizing or their emphasis on technical issues in arts, but as the writer had replied: "If the artists of Fighting Cock Association were supposed to wait for such permissions, today they were creating those mournful and disabled works of Flower and Nightingale Age like your competent artists do."<sup>55</sup>

Another notable point about the critical approach promoted by the fighting cocks was in their emphasis on the investigation of the works of art regarding their technical attributes. In fact, all members of the association, whether from the fields of visual arts, literature or music criticized a lack of technical attention in studying works of art. In many of the comments and critiques by the members, this insistence on technical elements was obvious. According to Ziapour, modern art that manifested the internal world of the artist was visualized by the artist's technique: "Every stroke, line, colour and every word by the artist is representative of his knowledge and profundity. No matter how deep and precise one artist is, if he lacks the necessary technical skill, his value will amount for us only to the level of works he has created and nothing more."<sup>56</sup> Also when Irani, in describing the modern art emphasized its scientific nature, he insisted on the technique: "The modern art, similar to modern philosophy and science, is born to the time [...]. The art is created without any intermediary, in the same way and based on the same source as in science—the nature of art and science is one thing [...] art and science represent the intellectual abilities of human being in each period even if they are not understood at their own time."<sup>57</sup> This centrality of technique for the fighting cocks was also influenced by a social context in which proponents of Social Realism promoted meaning in arts and

«منتقد ما نمی‌داند که هنرمند، معلم اخلاق و رهبر اجتماع و لله توده‌های وسیع نیست [...]». هنرمند تنها پرورش‌دهنده سلیقه‌های مردم است 53 [Manouchehr Foroutan, "Enteqād bar enteqād-e konferāns-e ziāpur [Critiquing a Critique on Ziapour's Conference]," *Irān*, May 4, 1949.]

54 Mazandaranzadeh, "Yek korus jangi defā' mikonad [A Fighting Cock Defends]," *Irān*, May 10, 1949.

«هنرمندان انجمن هنری خروس جنگی اگر می‌خواستند منتظر این گونه اجازه‌ها باشند، اکنون می‌بایستی مانند همان اشخاص صلاحیت‌دار 55 [Ibid.] شما مشغول تشریح آه و ناله‌ها و اظهار عجز و ناامیدی‌های دوران گل‌وبلیب باشند.» [Flower and Nightingale] as discussed under *Nightingale's Butcher Manifesto*, was applied by fighting cocks to disdain past artistic habits. [See: Chapter 4, 60–61.]

«هر ضربه، هر خط، هر رنگ و هر جمله معرف مقدار دانایی و عمق هنرمند است. یک هنرمند هر قدر عمیق و حساس باشد ولی اگر 56 [Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāshi [Painting]," *Korus jangi*, no. 4 (1949): 14.] مهارت فنی لازم را نداشته باشد برای ما فقط به اندازه همان آثاری که در قالب‌های موجود خود ریخته است ارزش دارد نه بیشتر.»

«هنر نو همانند فلسفه و علم نوزاده روز است [...]». هنر بدون هیچ‌گونه واسطه‌ای به همان روش و از همان سرچشمه‌ای که علم به وجود 57 می‌آید آفریده می‌شود نوع هنر و علم یکی است [...] هنر و علم در هر دوره نماینده توانایی مغزی بشر آن دوره است هر چند که در آن دوره «[Irani, "Honar-e now [Modern Art]," 2.] آن چنان که هست دریافت نشود و پذیرش نیابد.»

combated technical preference of the modern artists. It was within such a context that Ziapour in an article published in Issue 5 of *Fighting Cock* magazine (1949) discussed two types of Iranian critic; i.e. those whose concern in criticism was only the mindset of artists and another those with attention for methods of expression. In this classification, it is observed that Ziapour equaled the first type of critics with advocates of committed art, but he found criticisms by the second type more precise and closer to aesthetics (art for art's sake): "[...] It is no problem that [the critics] act in a way to shape the mindsets [...] but this has nothing to do with artistry; i.e. how we think is different with the way we exhibit one thought [...] because how one thinks is the task of philosophers and how one exhibits a thought is the task of artists."<sup>58</sup> This centrality of the technique for members was also seen in the critiques they made about different exhibitions. In the same critique by Ziapour on the solo exhibition of Kazemi at Apadana, one can read his text entirely defending artistic modernism in terms of its attention to the technique than the subject and meaning. The ethnographical paintings by Kazemi from people of Kurdistan were well-suited with association's emphasis on modern art with respect for the local attributes. [Fig. 5-4] Nevertheless, as Ziapour had criticized, the paintings lacked the essential technical maturity and the exhibition was only a vulgar display of the folklore of the inhabitants and that region: "It is not only selection of the subject which makes one an artist. But after selection of one subject, it is the skillful and artistic rendering that makes one an artist [...]. If an artist does not respect the technical elements in visualization [of a subject], then he has done no more than the job of a journalist [...] shouldn't an artist be introduced based on his technical skill and his job be different from a reporter? Shouldn't an artist respect many of his contemporary techniques?"<sup>59</sup>

Together with Ziapour, other members of *Fighting Cock* such as Irani, Shirvani and Gharib also exerted a critical approach to their own fields. Similar to Ziapour whose main combat was directed to the academic traditions and the Social Realism in the visual arts, literary members also were in a battle with the literary figures from the academy. In Issue 4 of *Fighting Cock* magazine (1951), Irani wrote a critical review over an article *Adab dar jahān-e šan'at* ["Literature in the World of Industry"] by Saeed Nafisi from the Academy of Iran, in which he had cautioned the illiteracy and incompetence of the academy for commenting on arts. Nafisi's article had assimilated art to industry and artistic creation to industrial production without any differentiation between plastic and non-plastic arts. His discussion was

«[...] اشکالی ندارد که [منتقدین] طرز تفکر را تغییر دهند [...] ولی این اصلاً ربطی به هنرنمایی ندارد یعنی چگونه فکر کردن جز 58 چگونه فکری را نشان دادن است [...] زیرا چگونه فکر کردن مربوط به متفکرین است و چگونه فکری را نشان دادن مربوط به هنرمندان است.» [Ziapour, "Taḥavolāt-e honar-e naqāši [The Developments of Painting]," 9–10.]

«تنها انتخاب موضوع اسباب هنرمندی نمی‌شود. بلکه پس از انتخاب یک موضوع، آن را به نحو عالی و هنرمندانه پروراندن هنرمندی 59 است [...] اگر از لحاظ فن تخصصی مراعات تجسم آن نشود، کار یک روزنامه‌نگاری بیش انجام نشده است [...] آیا نباید معرفی نقاش [Ziapour] تخصصی باشد و کارش با یک گزارش‌گر فرق داشته باشد؟ آیا نباید قوانین بسیاری را که موافق تکامل فنی روز باشد بکند؟» [Ziapour, "Naqāši-hā-ye kāzemi [Kazemi's Paintings]."]



built upon classical aestheticism (Plato and Aristotle) and considered beauty as a separate fact that dominated the work of art from outside.<sup>60</sup> According to these statements, Irani argued: “Not only Nafisi, but also most of the teachers of our time had no acquaintance with the art and aesthetic discussions whereas a profound ignorance has always been revealed at any time they have commented on arts.”<sup>61</sup> In the field of story writing, critiques by the members were largely in the form of critical reviews of other writers’ works and they were mainly published in *Fighting Cock* magazine—especially in “Criticism,” the new column of the second series of the magazine (1951). The main reasons for such critical reviews were eulogistic texts that, under the guise of critical reviews of the literary works, were published in different newspapers and magazines. In the first Issue of *Fighting Cock*, Gharib attacked one of these eulogies in *Irān-e mā* newspaper that had attributed a cliché novel—*Hāyeda*



Fig. 5-4\* Hossein Kazemi, *Nāz* [*The Caress*], c. 1949. Technique [?], Dimensions [?], Collection [?]. In Jalal Al-Ahmad, “Dar apadāna: bā qāb-hā-ye hizomi [At Apadana: With Wooden Frames],” *Irān-e mā*, March 19, 1950. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

[*Hayedeh*] by Jahangir Tafazoli (1914–1990)—to the Western modern method of novel writing due to its vulgar plot. The writer of the review had admired complexity of the book in spite of the simplicity of its subject and its development via common expressions and structures of the sentence (the features which writer had attributed to Western modern writing). Gharib was critical of such praising reviews because either they were written by critics who were so uninformed about art and literature that deemed these novels as artistic works, or it was an uninformed atmosphere that allowed these critics to write such tendentious reviews. Also he added that such novels received high acclaim by society, as their popular story plot was one that people could empathize with.<sup>62</sup> Basically, many of the fighting cocks’

60 Aghamohammadi, *Marā bā daryā-hā-ye morda kāri nist* [*I Have Nothing to Do with the Dead Seas*], 227.

61 «اما نه تنها او [نقیسی]، بلکه تقریباً هیچ کدام از استادان ما بر میحث هنر و زیبایی‌شناسی هنری آگاهی ندارند و هر بار که موردی برای [Ibid., 226.] ابراز نظر پیش آمده است یک بی‌اطلاعی عمیق خودنمایی کرده است.»

62 Gholamhossein Gharib, “Hāyeda az jahāngir tafāzoli [Hayedeh by Jahangir Tafazoli],” *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1951): 3.

critiques were directed at the profiteering behavior of those artists or writers who, without the necessary qualifications, characterized their works as modern. In the same first Issue of the magazine, one sees Irani disclosing such intentions in poetry. In his critique against Fereydoun Tavalloli (1919–1985)—an Iranian romantic poet with leftist sympathies and from advocates of Nima Youshij in modern poetry—he attacked *Rahā* [*Free*] (1950) one of Tavalloli's first collections in new poetry. According to Irani, Tavalloli's poems were full of romantic landscapes and he was merely disguising under the displacement of the words and classical allegories to prove that he was a modern poet. Thus, Irani complained that the selection of the title *Free* by Tavalloli was a deceitful decision to pretend the freedom of expression in modern poetry: "Throughout his introduction [in *Free*], there is no reference to expression of feeling and display of the internal overflow of the artist and there should not either be because Tavalloli's poems are too imitative, artificial and old, and this proves that he is not able to create a modern work or even to understand the meaning of art in general. For Tavalloli exists no internal world or at least he has not been able to create it [...]."<sup>63</sup> Additionally, Irani worked as a translator and wrote serious critiques to hint that translation should also be accounted along with the translator's acceptable command of the field to which the given text belonged. In one critique by Irani that was published in format of a pamphlet (1955), he caustically criticized a translation of *Analects of Confucius* by Hossein Kazemzadeh and attacked the translator for his lack of knowledge about the book and, as a result, its distorting translation. [Fig. 5-5] Irani had described such unskilled translations as hasty acts by their translators who selected popular titles as a quick method for making more money. By doing so, in fact, it was the notion of the translator being imposed over the original text, and the social acceptance to such translations was merely due to the influence of the translators and their promoters in the field.<sup>64</sup>

«در سراسر مقدمه خود حتی لحظه‌ای سخن از بیان احساس و نمایش فوران درونی هنرمند به میان نیامده است و نباید هم که می‌آمده، زیرا 63 اشعار توللی تقلیدی‌تر و مصنوعی‌تر و کهنه‌تر از آن است که گوینده‌اش بتواند هنر نو و یا حتی هنر را به مفهوم کلی درک کند. برای توللی [Houshang Irani, "Rahā az tafāzoli [Free by Tavalloli]," *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1951): 7.] «...»

64 Houshang Irani, *Nāma be āqā-ye ḥossein-e kāzēnzada irānšahr* [A Letter to Mr. Hossein Kazemzadeh *Iranshahr*] (Tehran: n.p., 1955), 4–5.

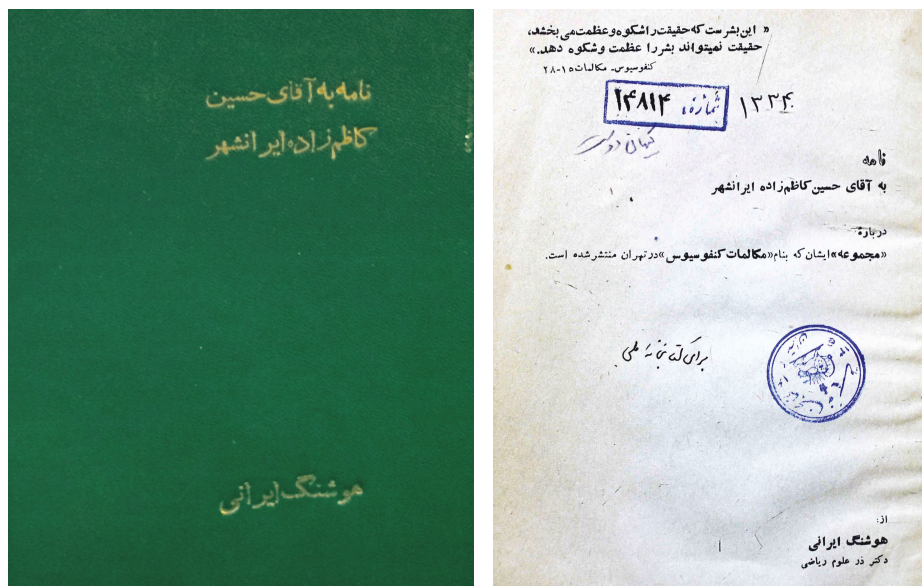


Fig. 5-5 “*Nāma be āqā-ye ḥossein-e kāzemzade irānšahr* [A Letter to Mr. Hossein Kazemzadeh Iranshahr] by Houshang Irani in 1955.” National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

### 5.1.2 A Collective Nature: Fighting Cock Association and Apadana Gallery

The institutionalization of modern art in Iran was, from its early days, based on the collaboration between artists from the field of either art or literature. These collaborations were along with two attributes of “necessity” and “consciousness.” That is, the collaboration was a result of artists’ conscious decision and a necessity for working collectively. As for the theoretical discussion,<sup>65</sup> artists felt a necessity for collective work according to their need for autonomy and independence from different fields of power and the dominant artistic establishments that were supported by these powers. Although this autonomy was a restricted and limited one (not an entire freedom from domination of the official patronage and the financial rules of the market), modern artists attempted to create a new intervention to influence the external dominance via asserting their independence as collective intellectuals or groups. Artists’ groups which emerged in forms of small critical circles, art galleries and societies, in fact, assisted modern artists in the exercise of their intellectual and cultural power, and to question the established rules versus the dominant politico-economic sources. In other words, it was the collective nature of the modern artists’ activities that could pose problems for competitors from their own field or the field of power who supported these competitors. The collective

65 See Chapter 2, p. 23–24.

collaboration also provided the financial possibilities for the symbolic movement that artists were about to make via modern art. This financial independence could almost be achieved since the modern movement, rather than the market, was based on cultural promotion of the new art and, as a result, the private or personal financial resources of the artists enabled them to carry on despite a void of a successful market for their works in the early days of their activities.

For the first generation of Iranian modern artists, the qualities both of consciousness and necessity of the collective work were observed in their texts and debates. In the third series of *Fighting Cock* magazine (1979) that was published with reunion of members after the Iranian Islamic Revolution, both Ziapour and Shirvani in their articles in Issues 1 and 5 discussed this collective nature as the key factor in success of the Fighting Cock movement. In his text *Naqš-e nehzat-e korus jangi* ["The Role of Fighting Cock Movement"], Ziapour made an overview of the association's foundation, its aims, opponents and the cultural contributions that members had for the promotion of modern art. In addition to two main opponents; i.e. the academic or Social Realists and the traditionalists, he explained that the majority of the Iranian people supported these opponents and, therefore, fighting cocks had almost the entire society in their way. With reference to such an enormous obstacle, he argued that the association, therefore, could not reach its objectives without the collective collaboration of the modernists from various fields: "But the pioneers of modern art, in any ways, with an alert and conscious quality and collaboration of their few advocates, enlightened publishers, authors, modernists and intellectuals, transformed the closed artistic space to an open field and provided the freedom in artistic creation via hard work (and by withstanding many discriminations, accusations and ridicules)."<sup>66</sup> Also in the editorial text of Issue 5, which was a review over the third series of *Fighting Cock* magazine by Shirvani, he obviously mentioned the significance of the collective attempts by the members. The third series of the magazine that was published in post-Islamic Revolution era was supposed to develop a unity between the fields of art and literature and to form *Jebha-ye demokrātik-e farhang wa āzādi* [Democratic Culture and Freedom Party] to support freedom in artistic expression. [Fig. 5-6] Accordingly, in his introduction, Shirvani was referring to the early days of the foundation of the association and he notified that the progress of Fighting Cock relied on the same spirit of collective work: "[In addition to the members and affiliates] many other cultural and artistic figures assisted us so that Fighting Cock Association and its magazine could be able to launch its role based on the motto of 'Bring new word that the new word has other value.'"<sup>67</sup>

«اما طلابداران هنر نو، به هر حال با آگاهی و بیداری و همراهی جانبداران و ناشران روشن و صاحب‌قلمان و نوگرایان و روشنفکران معنود، خود فضای بسته‌ی هنری را میل به فضای باز هنری کردند و آزادی کار هنری را در قبال مداومت در سخت‌کوشی (و تحمل محرومیت [Ziapour, "Naqš-e nehzat-e korus jangi [The Role of Fighting Cock Movement]"] 4.) و قبول تهمت و افترا و ریشخند و نیشخند فراهم ساختند.»

«[...] و ده‌ها شخصیت فرهنگی و هنری دیگر ما را یاری کردند تا مجله و انجمن خروس جنگی بتواند رسالت خود را با شعار «سخن 67 [Hasan Shirvani, "Editorial," *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1979): 2.] نو آر که نو را حلاوتی است دگر - آغاز کنند.»

It was based on a conscious need for collaboration that the first modern artists began their work in the form of the Association of the Youths as an unofficial artists' group in the early days. Although this association quickly transformed into the first private art association (Fighting Cock) and gallery (Apadana), activities of both centers were inter-reliant and collective. These collaborations, in fact, represented two significant cultural roles that Fighting

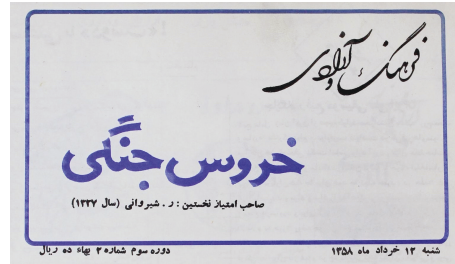


Fig. 5-6 "The title of Democratic Culture and Freedom Party above the title of *Fighting Cock* magazine (1979)," in *Korus jangi*, no. 2 (1979): 1. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

Cock and Apadana undertook separately but in a complementary manner; i.e., specialization of art by Fighting Cock via adoption of a scientific approach to art with critical debates, writings and reviews, and publicization of modern artworks by Apadana via their exhibition for the general audience. In other words, the exhibitions that were held in Apadana for the first modern artists of the Faculty of Fine Arts went along with the debates held by fighting cocks at the place of the gallery or association and the critical reviews written in *Fighting Cock* magazine or other newspapers. In an interview that *Ferdowsi* magazine made with Ziapour in 1967, he pointed to the important role that a gallery like Apadana could play for the promotion of modern art in Iran. He explained this role in making a familiarity with the modern works for the common people by putting them on display and, moreover, by creating an encouraging space for the young modern artist to exhibit their works.<sup>68</sup> It should be noted that the necessity of a place like Apadana Gallery for an association like Fighting Cock was much understood based on two conditions. First, according to the improper and limited space of the association for exhibiting works, Fighting Cock could only concentrate on activities such as holding debates and publication of the magazine.<sup>69</sup> Second, the few clubs and cultural relations societies of the foreign embassies that provided salons for art exhibitions did not entirely fulfill the artists' requirement of a space that was exclusively dedicated to art. Therefore, possession of a space like an art gallery, in particular, with a focus on modern art was of necessity to the artists. In his review of the second exhibition of Apadana (December 1949) on Pezeshknia's modern paintings, Ziapour obviously pointed to the significance of a space like Apadana. In reference to the state's lack of responsibility for providing an independent space for artists to exhibit their

<sup>68</sup> "Goftogu bā korus jangi [An Interview with Fighting Cock]," 277.

<sup>69</sup> Ziapour, Mahsha. "Korus jangi [Fighting Cock]," *Website of Jalil Ziapour*, accessed June 10, 2018, <http://www.ziapour.com/khoroos-jangi/>.

works, he had acknowledged foundation of Apadana Gallery as an important step for supporting the young artists:

Still and despite its many administrators of different branches of fine arts, the Ministry of Culture (that has to be protagonist of every cultural measure) has not been able to prepare a constant, proper or, at least, improper space for exhibition of artists' paintings so that these artists can become independent from the foreign social relations societies. Whenever these official administrators have been asked for a salon, state's authorities have made so many bureaucratic formalities that artists have taken back their request and have relinquished their claim. But, fortunately, Apadana Gallery has become a source of hope and from now on, perhaps, the young artists are no more having difficulty for displaying their works.<sup>70</sup>

Again, one observes that in another review of the third exhibition of Apadana (March 1950), which was a group exhibition of modern paintings including Ziapour's own paintings, he emphasized the significance of the collective work of modern artists; i.e. fighting cocks and the founders of Apadana in the cultural promotion of modern art. In his text, Ziapour referred to Apadana with the title of *Sālon-e namāyeš-e naqāši-hā* [The Salon for Exhibition of Paintings], and argued that the uncompetitive and barren artistic space in Iran had changed as a result of collaboration of their group of hardworking and unremitting artists.<sup>71</sup> Among the most important challenges of this artistic space, Ziapour complained about the baseless accusations and the malice of opponents to modern art and the absence of any external support for modern artists: "How much I wished that the official administrators considered this place [Apadana] and observed in person that how the modern artists of their country collaborated and assisted each other to improve Iranian art in spite of the strange ethical accusations (issued by their uneducated and malignant competitors) against modern artists and their advocates, and that they observed how much [these artists] attempted to save Iranian art from backwardness."<sup>72</sup> By directly pointing to the lack of official patronage for modern artists and their cultural activities, Ziapour was actually pointing out the role played by

«تا هنوز هم وزارت فرهنگ (که در هر اقدام فرهنگی باید پیش‌قدم باشد) نتوانسته است با داشتن وصف متصدیان امور در شعبه هنرهای زیبا محل دائم مناسب یا غیرمناسبی اقلاً برای نمایش نقاشی‌های هنرمندان فراهم کند تا هنرمندان جوان دست‌توسل به سوی انجمن‌های فرهنگی بیگانه دراز نکنند. اگر گاهی برای امور هنری از متصدیان امر تقاضای سالیانه شده است به قدری اشکال‌تراشی‌های اداری و رسمی پیش آورده‌اند که هنرمندان تقاضای خود را پس گرفته و از مقصود صرف‌نظر کرده‌اند. ولی خوشبختانه بودن سالن آپادانا عجالتاً مایه امید است و [Ziapour, "Naqāši-hā-ye pezeškniā [Paintings of Pezeshkniā]," 1.]

<sup>71</sup> Ziapour, *Apadāna wa naqāši-hā-ye jadid* [Apadana and New Paintings].

<sup>72</sup> «چقدر میل داشتم که اولیاء و مسئولین امور عطف توجهی به این مکان داشتند و از نزدیک می‌دیدند که هنرمندان مترقی کشورشان در برابر اشکالات عجیب و غریب غیراخلاقی (که رقبای بی‌مایه‌ی پرورش نیافته‌ی بدطبیت برایشان فراهم می‌کنند) چگونه پشت به پشت هم داده‌اند و علی‌رغم تبلیغات بدی که در اطراف طرفداران و خدمت‌گزاران و نقاشان جدید و حتی خود هنرمندان مترقی می‌کنند در ترویج نقاشی ایران می‌کوشند و [Ibid.] می‌کوشند و برای بیرون‌کشیدن آن از گرداب عقب‌ماندگی چگونه همت می‌گذارند.»

artists on their own and efforts by Apadana Gallery in providing people the opportunity to come into contact with modern works: "There was no one to take care of the artists and they had to ask theater houses and foreign cultural [relations] societies to exhibit their works! Fortunately the tactfulness and endeavor of a group of our active artists was effective and they could establish Apadana with an appreciable perseverance [...]. Only a group of seven to eight artists with a number of their informed and tasteful advocates are that care about technical and scientific method in painting and they are decided to promote Iranian painting thereupon."<sup>73</sup>

The consciousness of the modern artists about the necessity of obtaining a collective spirit was not a quality to be attributed to only the first generation of modern artists. A review of the movement or avant-garde associations (or artists' groups) and galleries into the later decades indicates that these institutions relied on internal cooperations as well. The continuation of collective work among artists and their refusal of official patronage depended on important factors. Abolghasem Saidi (1926-), a member of the Five Art Group, had discussed this autonomous spirit in their group being influenced more importantly by reasons other than aesthetical unanimities. As he explained, the most compelling factors were a lack of critics who could culturally promote modern art and an absence of the financial resources and access to only a few modern galleries to exhibit the works: "In developed societies the role of each group is clear; the gallery owner exhibits the works of art and creates a market, the critic familiarizes the people with them [modern works] and promotes the art but unfortunately in our country the painting is in preliminary stage. We should act these roles ourselves; the role of an artist, a gallery owner, a critic and often we have played the role of the audience for our artist friends too."<sup>74</sup> Or similar to Five Art Group, the same argument is observed by members of the art association and gallery Hall of Iran. In the catalogue of one of its first exhibitions (1964) by Mansour Qandriz, a principal member whose text was also considered as his testament,<sup>75</sup> he emphasized the importance of artists being self-reliant and supporting themselves. The main points discussed in his text were lack of institutional facilities and financial resources for exhibition and cultural promotion of modern art despite the increasing number of Iranian modern artists. According to him, these requirements had long not been fulfilled by the official patronage and it was a task to be undertaken by artists themselves: "[The fulfillment of these needs] is left to artists themselves and their enthusiasts to endeavor and pave the way of their

«هرگز کسی به فکر نقاشان نبود و برای نمایش آثارشان لازم بود که از تئاترها و یا انجمن‌های فرهنگی بیگانه کمک گرفته شود! خوشبختانه همت مردانه و حسن‌تدبیر عده‌ای از جوانان فعال مدد کار شد که با پشتکار قابل‌تقدیر خود بنای آپادانا را گذاشتند [...] تنها یک عده هفت هشت نفری با یک عده بی‌شماری از طرفداران بانوق و هواخواهان مطلع هستند که به روش علمی و فنی در نقاشی توجه دارند و درصدد ترویج و [Ibid.] پیشرفت نقاشی ایران از این راه هستند.»

«در محیط‌های پیشرفته نقش هر دسته‌ای مشخص شده؛ گالری‌دار بازار درست می‌کند و ارائه می‌دهد، منتقد آن را به مردم می‌شناساند و هنر را تعالی می‌بخشد، ولی متأسفانه در کشور ما نقاشی در مرحله ابتدایی است. ما باید این نقش‌ها را خود ایفا کنیم؛ نقش هنرمند، گالری‌دار و منتقد و گاه تماشاچی دستان را به عهده داشته باشیم.» [Mojabi, *Sarāmādān-e honar-e now [Masters of Modern Art]*, 78.]

75 "Qandriz mord [Qandriz Died]," *Talāsh*, no.1 (1966): 85.

progress and success at all costs. They have to get friends to each other and move shoulder to shoulder for their common goal. There are many difficulties on their way which have to be unraveled on their own and by efforts of their advocates."<sup>76</sup>

The collective nature of the cultural role by modern artists should be interpreted as the necessary means of attaining a state of autonomy. This autonomy was supposed to remove modern artists from the old establishments, as in the patronage granted by different fields of power such as the central government, political parties and the recently shaped middle class. These fields of power disregarded modern art due to either their personal interests, or a void of familiarity with it. The collective work that occurred in forms of financial provisions, exhibitions, debates and publications, was undertaken by artists, writers and intellectuals who most importantly made *modern art* as a common subject of argument. Although, many of these contributors did not possess the essential familiarity with modern art or art in general, they remained, as Ziapour called them, the "unbiased loudspeakers" of society,<sup>77</sup> they assisted artists by creating a space for discussion and criticism on art.

### 5.1.3 Avant-gardism vs. Commercialism: Financial Logics

Understanding of the financial logic of the cultural contributions of the first private art associations and galleries is dependent on understanding the relation between movement or avant-garde institutes with the commercial rules of the artistic market or economic success in general. As being argued,<sup>78</sup> the revolutionary spirit of the modern artists provided them the quality of a particular interest in disinterestedness. In other words, they had to become independent from external political and economic powers. These economic powers that were mainly state's patronage and the bourgeoisie's demands, exerted controlling influences over the production of art and its market; so, it was via refusal of the recognition of their influence that these powers could disappear. The market, in the hands of the bourgeoisie and patronized by the field of power, had to be triumphed over with its potential customers who either disregarded modern art or were willing to dominate it. Therefore, the financial logic of the artistic field should be studied according to a paradoxical economy in which economic success was in a converse relation with the new artistic developments. It was upon this paradoxical economy that the modern artists were rather reliant on their inherited economic properties, personal financial resources or second and small jobs in a void of a successful market.

«[...] باقی است تا خود هنرمندان و علاقمندان به هنر آستین‌ها را بالا بزنند و به هر قیمتی که شده راه پیشرفت و موفقیت خود را هموار کنند. دست دوستی به هم دهند و به خاطر هدف مشترک خود شان به‌شانه گام بردارند. برای ایجاد چنین محیطی دشواری‌های زیاد در پیش است» [Ibid., 76.] که باید به همت خود هنرمندان و هنردوستان از پیش پا برداشته شود.»

<sup>77</sup> Jalil Ziapour, "Nesbat-e bolandguyān [The Relation of the Loudspeakers]," *Website of Jalil Ziapour*, accessed June 5, 2018, <http://www.ziapour.com/critics/نسبت-بلندگویان/>.

<sup>78</sup> See Chapter 2, p. 24–25.



The establishment of Fighting Cock Association and Apadana Gallery had similar financial logics. That is, according to the cold shoulder that the official administrators showed to modern artists by not providing them exhibitional or financial supports, artists had to count on their own personal and private financial resources.<sup>79</sup> In an interview with Javadipour as a main founding member of Apadana, he argued this situation and described the collective efforts of artists in financing their own activities.<sup>80</sup> As he asserted, in a space where they had no other place for exhibition of their works than mainly salons of the cultural relations societies of the foreign embassies, modern artists had many times requested the Department of Fine Arts or Town Council to assist them for establishment of an independent art gallery: “They [official authorities] behaved indifferently and were unresponsive to our request. We had to, thus, execute this plan upon our own personal financial resources.”<sup>81</sup> Javadipour explained that the first expenses were supplied by Apadana’s founders—via secondary jobs, private tutoring and sale of their paintings.<sup>82</sup> Accordingly, he emphasized that Apadana was established to concentrate on the introduction of the young artists and to promote modern art via a cultural approach; thus, the members of the gallery had no expectation for monetary revenue. Nonetheless, and despite contributions of the newspapers, magazines and radio for announcement of Apadana’s programs and despite the popularity that the gallery had arrived at within a short time, there were no purchases from the gallery: “The paintings were visited but there was no purchase. We had arrived at a financial impasse.”<sup>83</sup> To go through the financial straits, he explained that the gallery, together with Fighting Cock’s members, adopted new strategies and expanded their cultural programs. None of the modern artists’ requests for financial aids, however, were taken into account by the Department of Fine Arts:

“Not only we heard no positive response, also none of them [official administrators] not even once visited the gallery.”<sup>84</sup> The new strategies adopted by the members were to hold small gatherings with artist talks, painting classes tutored by modern painters, entrance fees for the gatherings and also in case of any sale, to allocate 10 percent of the total price to the gallery: “[...] the works were hanging on the walls and painters were present to explain them [...] there was a kind

79 Sara Ommatali, “Tafāvot-e gāleridārī dar irān wa orupā: goftogu bā āydin aḡdāšlu [The Difference between Running a Gallery in Iran and Europe: An Interview with Aydin Aghdashlou],” *Šarq*, September 7, 2005.

80 Mojabi, *Nawad sāl nowāwari [Ninety Years of Innovation]*, 28–30.

81 «گوششمان بدهکار نبود. مجبور شدیم این طرح را به خرج جیب مبارک تأمین و اجرا کنیم.» [Ibid., 28.]

82 In this interview, Javadipour explained that the initial budget for foundation of the gallery was made available by Ajoudani teaching mathematics at school, Kazemi selling some of his paintings and himself working in the print-house of Melli Bank. [Ibid., 29.]

83 «[...] تابلوها دیده می‌شد، اما فروش نمی‌رفت. ما از نظر مالی به بن‌بست رسیده بودیم.» [Ibid., 29.]

84 «نه تنها جواب مثبتی نشنیدیم بلکه هیچ یک از آنان حتی برای یک بار هم شده به آیدانا پا نگذاشتند.» [Mahmoud Javadipour, “Sāl-hā-ye rang wa nur wa k̄āṭera [Years of Colour, Light and Memory],” *Honar-hā-ye tajasomi*, no.17 (2002): 26.]

of artistic criticism performed in artists' own presence [...] with their news being reflected in the press."<sup>85</sup> [Fig. 5-7]

It should be noted that, although modern artists' independence from the official patronage in the early days was heavily influenced by the state's indifference about the new artistic developments, even in the late 1950s when the state turned to modern art by holding the first exhibition of *Tehran Biennial of Painting*, the artists did not entirely approve of the official supports. The main reason for such disapproval was because artists considered the state's patronage a means of intervention and conduction of the field of art. It was this consciousness about their artistic autonomy that even led to criticisms by modern artists about the biennial and its policies. For instance, Ahmad Esfandiari, one of the first modern artists whose paintings were displayed at Apadana,

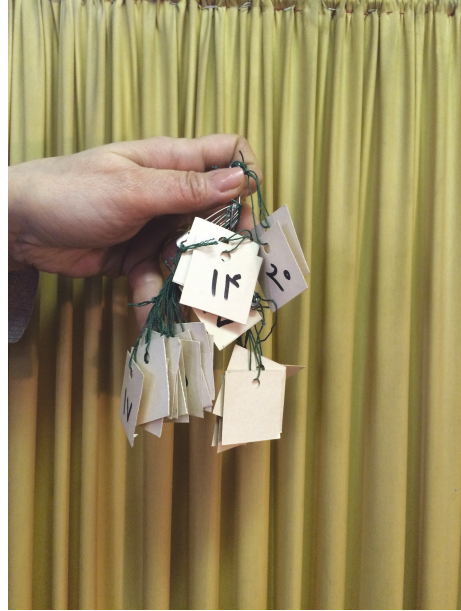


Fig. 5-7 "Entrance tokens for Apadana Gallery (1949)," Courtesy of Newsha Djavadipour

explained that the biennial was discriminatory and its official administrators were against those modern artists who persevered independently in the arts and promoted artistic debates.<sup>86</sup> In fact, the decision for *Tehran Biennial of Painting* was to promote the cultural policies of the regime in terms of creating a local and, more importantly, an international market for a modern art with an Iranian nationality.<sup>87</sup> This plan, that was officially followed via opening of the first biennial and concentrated on commercialization of modern art, could paralyze the cultural role of the modern artists and, as a result, provoked criticisms from many of them. Ziapour described the source of these oppositions as: "[The biennial] was held based on certain influences of connections and an artistic mafia. The biennials ought to be independent and not just because the government held them so its officials permitted themselves to exert their orientation and evaluation criteria. The government should only provide assistance, nonetheless, it intervened in the content, orienta-

85 «[...] کارها هم به دیوار بود و نقاشان برای توضیح حاضر بودند [...] نوعی نقد حضوری درباره هنر [...] که در مطبوعات انعکاس می‌یافت.» [Mojabi, *Nawad sāl nowāwari [Ninety Years of Innovation]*, 29.]

86 Mojabi, *Pišgāmān-e naqāši-ye mo'āṣer-e irān [Pioneers of Contemporary Persian Painting]*, 160.

87 The promotion of a modern art with national attributes was directly mentioned in the text of the catalogue of the first biennial and it precisely made the opposition of independent modern artists. [Grigorian, *Avalin namāyeshgāh-e dosālāna [The First Exhibition of Biennial]*, 3 & 6.]

tion, form and condition of the artistic and cultural production.”<sup>88</sup>

Another condition that resulted in the mismatch between the efforts of Iranian modern artists and their economic success was the lack of a market for modern art. This was despite all cultural efforts that artists had made and their success in creation of the audience (but not necessarily customers) for their works within the 1940s–1950s. The early forms of a market for Iranian modern art were developed from the 1960s onwards via biennials and state’s financial supports from the new sales or commercial galleries that were gradually established during 1960s and 1970s.<sup>89</sup> [Fig. 5-8] But this market was attacked by more independent modern artists for following the same policies as the biennial that restricted the artistic market to certain customers. As Emami argued (his articles in English-language daily *Keyhan International* during 1962–



Fig. 5-8 (Top) “The Interior of Seyhoun Gallery in 1973,” in Saeed Erfan, “Gođari wa nazari be gāleri-hā wa namāyešgāh-hā-ye šahr-e mā [A Review on Galleries and Exhibitions of Our City],” *Tamāšā*, no. 149 (1973): 27. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

(Bottom) “The Empress Farah Diba and courtiers visiting Seyhoun Gallery in April 18, 1973,” IRAN 25-73388. [Ibid.]

1968 included also reviews on developments of the artistic market in Iran), the main potential customers for Iranian modern art were foreigners and tourists who were attracted to modern works with more Iranian nationality.<sup>90</sup> But in terms of the art that the independent artists created, this type of customer was absent and was instead replaced by limited intellectuals from the fields of art or literature. This type of customer for independent artists, according to Emami, did not arise from the rich families or a prosperous social class but they were salaried intellectuals who had successfully settled down in their work.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, he argued that the support provided by the intellectuals for the movement or avant-garde associations

<sup>88</sup> «برگزاری آن زیر نفوذ ارتباطات خاص و باندهای هنری بوده. بی‌ینال‌ها باید مستقل می‌بودند نه این که چون دولت آن‌ها را برگزار می‌کرد خود را محق در ارزیابی و جهت‌دهی بدان بدانند. دولت فقط باید خدمات بدهد ولی در محتوا، سمت‌گیری و فرم و شرایط پدیدآمدن آثار هنری و «فرهنگی مداخله می‌کرد.» [Mojabi, *Sarāmadān-e honar-e now [Masters of Modern Art]*, 47.]

<sup>89</sup> Many of these sales or commercial galleries, due to their good connections with the Empress Farah Diba and her Special Office, thus absorbed the courtiers or authorities and they made ordered purchases from these galleries too. These galleries, in return, had no resistant to state’s plan for promotion of a national modern art.

<sup>90</sup> Karim Emami, *Gāl...gāl...gāleri! Moruri bar ruydād-hā-ye tajasomi-ye irān-e daha-ye 1340 [Gal...Gal... Gallery! A Review of Iranian Visual Arts Events in the 1960s]*, trans. Mehran Mohajer (Tehran: Nilufar, 2016), 46.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 89.

and galleries was rather a kind of ethical support and they also purchased works in a few cases, yet the lack of an established market put the continuation of their work in doubt.<sup>92</sup>

As can be inferred, there was a constant gap between the independent modern artists and the market. In the beginning of their activities, this gap was basically due to the absence of a market that resulted from the absence of an audience. Later on, when a market was formed upon official contributions, artists considered it a profiteering intervention by the state in the arts and distanced themselves from this market. In fact, it was preservation of their autonomy from any politico-economic field of power that made modern artists distant from the market created by those fields. In a quote from Javadipour, he directly referred to this preference by the modern artists: "There were profiteering or rich individuals approaching us and expressing their interest for collaboration and partnership. But all of them had rather aims of benefiting or interfering directly in our work which no way matched our goal and mindset, so we turned their request down."<sup>93</sup> Regarding the gap between modern artists and the market, it is necessary to understand how artists succeeded in their cultural promotion of modern art. Useful information for answering such a question is to consider that the founders of Fighting Cock and Apadana had no expectation for any financial revenue. They assumed their activities as a contribution to the advancement of the culture via connecting people to the artists and their works.<sup>94</sup> In other words, the collaboration of the members was done for free and with holding exhibitions they did not necessarily look ahead to any sale: "All these activities [collaboration] were done for free and without any expectation for any sale or to make any profit from any purchase [...]. Every one [members] assisted voluntarily because it [Apadana] was like their home."<sup>95</sup> Even later in the 1960s and parallel with the state's turn to modern artists, artists still expected their financial needs to be fulfilled on their own and by assistance of their advocates. In the same catalogue of Hall of Iran written by Qandriz, he obviously suggested this: "A widespread movement of Iranian young artists which is growing, bespeaks of a focused society of artists in a near future. And in order to solve the financial difficulties that are of their fundamental obstacles too, the young artists rely so much on the support of their real advocates."<sup>96</sup>

92 Ibid., 46 & 90.

93 «افراد سودجو و پولداری به ما نزدیک می‌شدند و علاقه به همکاری و شرکت با ما نشان می‌دادند، اما همه آن‌ها بیشتر سودای سود و دخالت [Mojabi, *Pišgāmān-e naqāši-ye mo'āšer-e irān [Pioneers of Contemporary Persian Painting]*, 120.] مستقیم در کار ما را در سر می‌پروانند که به هیچ وجه با هدف و تفکر ما جور در نمی‌آید و رذشان می‌کردیم.»

94 Javadipour, *Zendegināma-am [My Biography]*, 2.

95 «همه‌ی این کارها رایگان بود و بی چشمداشتی برای فروش آثار یا سودی احتمالی از این رهگذر. [...] همه کمک‌های رایگانی می‌کردند؛ [Mojabi, *Nawad sāl nowāwari [Ninety Years of Innovation]*, 29–30.] چون خانه‌ی خودشان بود.»

96 «نهضت پراکنده‌ای که از هنرمندان جوان ایران در حال رشد است نویددهنده اجتماع متشکلی از هنرمندان در آینده نزدیک است. و هنرمندان جوان برای از بین بردن مشکل مالی که یکی از مشکلات اساسی کار است امیدهای فراوانی به حمایت طرفداران واقعی هنر دارند.» [“Qandriz mord [Qandriz Died],” 76.]

Both Fighting Cock Association and Apadana Gallery clearly relied on their own personal resources. Ziapour, in discussing his association and publication of *Fighting Cock* magazine, mentioned that in the absence of official patronage, the main members of the editorial board—Ziapour, Shirvani and Gharib—had to provide the required budget from their personal resources.<sup>97</sup> Javadipour clarified that they had no other financial revenues other than their own personal resources and they received no aid from the state: “[...] we had solved monetary problems before the establishment of the gallery as such: Hossein [Kazemi] by his paintings, [Amirhoushang] Ajoudani with teaching mathematics at some high schools in Southern districts of the city and I shared my salary from the print-house in which I used to work. We had no other financial resources and we did not receive any aid from the government.”<sup>98</sup> The negligence of the state officials for providing financial help and people’s lack of interest in modern art caused artists to adopt new strategies to meet their financial needs and to draw the public attention to their exhibitions and debates. Although Apadana began its work with issuing membership cards for which visitors had to pay fees to participate in the cultural programs of the gallery, artists decided to hold weekly receptions with limited guests from artists and their advocates with a certain amount of entrance fees (5 to 10 Rials) too. These receptions, similar to the parties, included food, drinks and music by popular musicians, and at the end of the receptions, artists gathered guests around the exhibited works and had debates about them.<sup>99</sup>

The artistic avant-gardism in Iran, therefore, had the same conscious and essential converse relation with the commercialism of art and it was a pursuit of autonomy by artists in their field of activity. Such autonomy necessarily opposed the politico-economic fields of power and was a significant method for modern artists to challenge their established competitors (the academic or socially committed artists) and to triumph over them by the institutionalization of modern art as a new position in their field. Although this triumph occurred in the ending years of the 1950s with the turn of the state toward modern art, it should be noted that the borderline (though not clear-cut) between the cultural ideals of the artists and an officially structured market existed until the end of the 1970s.

97 Rezaei, “Goftogu-i bā ostād jalil ziāpur [An Interview with Jalil Ziapour].”

98 [...] مسأله تأمین هزینه‌های لازم را قبل از گشودن آپادانا به این ترتیب حل کرده بودیم: حسین از راه هنر نقاشی‌اش، آجودانی از حق‌التدریسی که با درس‌دادن ریاضی در چند دبیرستان جنوب شهر می‌گرفت و من از حقوقی که از چاپخانه دریافت می‌کردم. جز این منبع [Nasehi, “Yād-e raftegān [Remembering the Gones],” 703.] مالی دیگری نداشتیم و از دولت نیز کمکی دریافت نمی‌کردیم.»

99 Javadipour, “Sāl-hā-ye rang [Years of Colour],” 26.

## 5.2 Cultural Interventions and Constitution of the Audience

The significant feature of the modern artists' cultural contribution in constitution of modern art should be considered in their awareness about a lack of any audience and market for the works of art they produced. Although the necessity for an audience influenced artists' independence and made them have some cooperations with the official patrons, these cooperations, as Bourdieu argues, could perhaps be regarded no more than a Trojan horse.<sup>100</sup> In other words, it was obvious to the modern artists that creation of the audience was part of their own tasks and that they considered it the artists' new responsibility to form their milieu of work. In a considerable number of texts by the artists we encounter emphases as such: "It was still the beginning of the modern movement; no one had enough information about the style and concept of the modern work. We had to stand and explain so that the connection could be made."<sup>101</sup> The main argument by modern artists like fighting cocks, as Ziapour mentioned in one of his interviews, was that no one thought of the publicization of art or promotion of modern painting in Iranian society and, as a result, art was socially understood as a personal pastime of the artist rather than a medium. Ziapour claimed that they were the modern artists who brought art into society and made it a topic for discussion and proved the new values of art as a medium.<sup>102</sup> In fact, fighting cocks believed that preparation of the art space by artists on their own could elevate the artistic taste in people and could develop their understanding of different artistic productions. Nonetheless, since previous artists were negligent in this duty, it was natural that people could not communicate with modern art and attacked the modern artists: "I know that people are not to blame [...]. We really never had qualified artists who knew their responsibility about their art and their time to make effort for improvement of people's understanding and taste. The artists have not learned how to act in their positions and have not contributed [for such goal], as a result, people have neither become acquainted with artistic styles and the necessity of artistic change and development."<sup>103</sup>

In different series of Fighting Cock magazine, there are important articles from members in which they explicitly discuss the cultural intervention of artists to create an appropriate context for social communication of their works. In most of these articles, members have argued, first of all, their intervening role to help this situa-

100 Bourdieu, "The Corporatism of the Universal," 105.

101 «هنوز آغاز نهضت مدرنیسم بود؛ کسی اطلاع چندانی از شکل و محتوی کار نو نداشت. باید می‌ایستادیم، توضیح می‌دادیم تا رابطه [Mojabi, *Nawad sāl nowāwari [Ninety Years of Innovation]*, 26.] برقرار شود.»

102 Mojabi, *Sarāmādān-e honar-e now [Masters of Modern Art]*, 45-46.

103 «می‌دانم که مردم مقصر نیستند [...] در حقیقت هنرمندان واجد شرایطی نداشته‌ایم که مسئولیت خود را در قبال فن خود و زمانه خود بشناسند و در راه بالا بردن معرفت و سلیقه مردم محیط خود بکوشند. هنرمندان، موقعیت خود را که چگونه باید باشند در نیافته‌اند و تظاهرات هنری نکردند، در نتیجه مردم هم با شیوه‌های مختلف هنر و لزوم تغییر و تحول آشنا نشده‌اند.» [Jalil Ziapour, "Zamāna-ye now wa qāleb-e now [New Time and New Style]," *Niruya sevom*, November 28, 1952.]

tion and, second, they have tried to be responsive to the complaints issued by people about the distant and incommunicable language of modern art. In his article in the first Issue of *Fighting Cock* (1951) in column "Identifying the Modern," Shirvani argued both of the above-mentioned concerns. He defended that in every society some people might rise up against new manifestations of those artistic theories that aim to reject of the old notions and thoughts. This disagreement has rather to do with people being unaccustomed to those new theories, regardless of how much they are scientifically supportable: "We should not call them [those people] retrospective because their taking side with the past is not rooted in an insane prejudice but they are not used to something new and it is this very lack of habit that has made them avoid anything new."<sup>104</sup> It was according to such defense from people in their encounter with the modern works that Shirvani emphasized a new responsibility for artists as the solution to help people connect with these works. He explained this new responsibility as artists' cultural role to analyze their ideas for people and to make them understandable: "Those artists who have [their own] new theories or those who follow [others'] new theories should describe the subjects of their mind, which undoubtedly are not detached from the past and at the same are new, via correct and logical methods."<sup>105</sup> This is precisely the point that Ziapour discussed distinctively in two of his articles, one published in the column "Painting" in Issue 1 of *Fighting Cock* magazine (1949) and the other *Mafhum-e honar-e now* ["The Meaning of Modern Art"] in Issue 1 of *Apadana* magazine (1956).<sup>106</sup> In "Painting," he made a study over the roots of social repulsion of modern art. According to this study, he mentioned two factors affecting people's disinterest in modern works. In addition to the technical deficiencies of the works that derived from artists' lack of acquaintance with the reality of art, he criticized a failure of artists in preparation of their space.<sup>107</sup> With regard to the common complaint by modern artists about the barren artistic space and lack of any encouragement, he condemned it as baseless and cautioned artists to be aware of an important principle: "The appropriate artistic space should be created by artist himself and not by the people, yet artists are negligent that this is their own responsibility to form such space and it is not people's duty. The people who do not see the artistries and do not hear various debates and their eyes are not accustomed—as they should—with works of art, how can such

104 «این دسته را به صرف این که از گذشته طرفداری می‌کنند نمی‌شود کینه‌پرست نامید زیرا جانبداری آن‌ها از کهنه‌ها روی تعصب 104 [Shirvani, "Šenākt-e nowi [Identifying the Modern]," 1.]

هنرمندانی که صاحب نظریات جدید هستند و یا از نظریات جدید پیروی می‌کنند باید پدیده فکر خود را که بدون شک از گذشته جدا 105 [Ibid.] نیست و در عین حال چیز تازه‌ایست با روش منطقی و صحیحی تشریح نمایند.»

106 This article was published one year earlier in another magazine called *Post-e tehrān* (Jalil Ziapour, "Mafhum-e honar-e now [The Meaning of Modern Art]," *Post-e tehrān*, March 26, 1955).

107 Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāši [Painting]," *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1948): 12.

people encourage and support the artist?”<sup>108</sup> In “The Meaning of Modern Art,” he referred to the attempts of the fighting cocks and their affiliates in familiarization of people with the new works via exhibitions and debates. He argued that still there were people who became upset with modern art and ridiculed the works.<sup>109</sup> Here again Ziapour took side with the people and criticized lack of a responsive behavior in modern artists with their audience. Although Ziapour had earlier argued the ridicule as a habit for those who were not used to analysis and reason, he had also pointed to this fact that the ignorance of many artists and their lack of knowledge about modern art made them passive in facing questions by their audience:

I cannot say that visitors have no right because ridiculing is the natural method of those who do not think and reason the issues and also we cannot deny that most of our modernist painters make no precise and adequate study of the modern art and therefore they do not create acceptable works. It is taken for granted that [such artists] are unable to provide correct and tolerable answers when they encounter the curiosity and questions of people who study and scrutinize in art. Thus, it is necessary to have an inclusive attention to what modern art is, how it is expressed and how the public react to it.<sup>110</sup>

In addition to the complexity of the modern works for people, in some interviews with association members and affiliates, they emphasized on the intervening role of modern artists for creation of their own audience despite an absent cultural background. By cultural background, they actually referred to a possibility upon which artists could discuss their works or their works could be argued and even criticized—an opportunity that was neither provided by any patron nor created by artists themselves.<sup>111</sup> Ziapour compared this closed space for the visual arts (painting) with the field of literature (poetry) around the same time when the young artists began their movement. According to him, Iranian poetry possessed the necessary cultural background whereas it was reflected in the public space in any ways and could be discussed—whether appraised or criticized.<sup>112</sup> But artists,

«محیط مساعد و هنری را خود هنرمند است که باید فراهم کند نه مردم و غافلند که هنرمند خود مسئول این نامساعدی محیطش می‌باشد 108 نه مردم. مردمی که هنرمندی‌ها را نبینند و در مورد سلیقه‌های مختلف سخن‌هایی نشنوند، چشمان آن‌ها آن طور که باید به کارهای هنری آشنا [Ibid.] نشود، چگونه می‌توانند مروج هنر و مشوق هنرمند باشند؟»

109 Ziapour, “Maḥm-e honar-e now [The Meaning of Modern Art],” *Apadāna*, no. 1 (1956): 3.

«نمی‌توانم بگویم که بینندگان حق ندارند، چون مسخره‌کردن طبیعی و روش آن‌هاییست که عادت به تفکر و تعقل و چون‌وچرا ندارند 110 و بعد نمی‌توان انکار کرد که غالب نقاشان مدرنیست ما راجع به هنر نو مطالعه دقیق و کافی ندارند و از این روی آثار مشروطی به وجود نمی‌آورند و بدیهیست که در برابر کنجکاوی‌ها و پرسش‌های به‌جای صاحبان ذوق و اهل دقت و تحقیق از دادن پاسخ‌های متین و قابل‌قبول فرو می‌مانند. از این روی یک توجه کلی به چگونگی و برخورد عمومی به طرز فکر و بیان نقاشی نو لازم است.» [Ibid.]

111 F. Jodat, “Goftogu-i bā jalil ziāpur [An Interview with Jalil Ziapour],” *Donyā-ye jadid*, no. 376 (1967): 3.

112 It should be noted that, for instance, although the inauguration of the Iranian Writers' Association and *Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts* were held both in the same year (1946) and on initiative of Tudeh Party, the former provided a tribune for writers and poets to discuss their works and their guild affairs at presence of the state officials, whereas for the latter, it was the first chance for the young Impressionist painters from the Faculty of Fine Arts to exhibit their works together with Kamal al-Molk's students and miniature makers.



as he stressed, never enjoyed such an open space: “[...] that’s why whenever there was an exhibition, I went to the show voluntarily to be responsive for the visitors who rejected anything or had any questions. I stood on a stool, to be high enough to reach them all and I talked to them eye to eye. If anyone complained [about the works], I never blamed him and never attacked, but I explained it for him. Because I knew no one had explained for people before. So, I took it as my responsibility [...]”.<sup>113</sup> This lack of cultural background was what Javadipour described as a *void* from which they had to create something, to intervene and cultivate the people who knew nothing about the art.<sup>114</sup> Javadipour explained that the collaboration between Fighting Cock and Apadana had an important influence on shaping their audience: “Many problems popped up. Because the visitors were from different social backgrounds such as intellectuals, tradespeople of the neighbourhood and some who just wanted to make trouble. They came and picked on paintings. [...] Even there were people who tore down the works.”<sup>115</sup> Regardless of the cold and unreceptive atmosphere, the members insisted that lack of cultural background should not be regretted and people were only expected to welcome debates by artists.<sup>116</sup> In fact, the main argument by the members was that people had a taste for arts, but that they could not constantly follow artistic developments, and due to more serious concerns of their life, they could never align themselves with the avant-garde artists: “[...] therefore, there will appear a gap (either big or small) between modern works of art and people who despite artistic taste are left behind. If people do not come into the necessary contact with the arts and they are not updated about the fundamental artistic developments (that occur gradually), as a result, they cannot comprehend and appreciate the art.”<sup>117</sup>

The modern art introduced by the young modern artists was beyond the general taste and perception of non-expert people and its elitist nature was attacked by opponents. These attacks, nonetheless, were sometimes due to members’ self-declaration of such superiority of modern art. For instance, Irani’s radical statements attracted many of these attacks toward the association. In his article “Modern Art” in Issue 4 of *Fighting Cock* magazine, he wrote: “Society cannot and even should

«[...] این است که اگر نمایشگاهی ترتیب داده می‌شود، من بدون این که نظر خاصی داشته باشم می‌رفتم در آن نمایشگاه و برای این که 113 تماشاگر چیزی را انکار می‌کند و یا پرسشی دارد، گویا باشم. می‌رفتم بالای چهارپایه، که بالاتر از بقیه باشم، و به همه احاطه داشته باشم و چنددرچشمشان حرف می‌زدم. اگر کسی ایرادی می‌گرفت هیچ وقت مقصرش نمی‌دانستم و به او حمله نمی‌کردم بلکه برایش توضیح می‌دادم. [Ibid.] چرا که می‌دانستم که کسی برایشان توضیح نداده است. پس وظیفه خودم می‌دانستم [...]».

114 Amini, “Dora-ye eskis ziāpur rā moteḥavel kard [The Sketch Program Changed Ziapour].”

«خیلی مسائل پیش می‌آمد. چون آدم‌هایی که می‌آمدند هم از قشر روشنفکران بودند، هم از کسبه دورواطراف و هم کسانی که می‌خواستند 115 [Ibid.] در دسر درست کنند. می‌آمدند و در مورد یک مسأله‌ای پیله می‌کردند. [...] حتی کسانی بودند که کارها را پاره می‌کردند.»

116 Ziapour, “Zamāna-ye now [New Time].”

«[...] در همین جا یک فاصله (که ممکن است این فاصله کم و زیاد باشد) میان آثار هنری جدید و صاحبان ذوق عقب‌مانده ایجاد می‌شود. 117 در این حال نتیجه چنین می‌شود که ممکن است مردم اگر با هنرها تماس لازم را نگیرند و تغییرات اساسی آن‌ها را (که به تدریج پیش می‌آید) تشخیص ندهند و ندانند، بنابراین از فهم و لذت‌بردن از هنر لازم عقب بمانند.» Jalil Ziapour, “Honar-e naqāši dar goḏāšta wa ḥāl: dar donyā-ye emruz az naqāši čē byād kāst? [The Art of Painting in Past and Present Time: What Should We Expect Painting in Contemporary World?],” *Ādarpād*, April 1, 1950.]

not comprehend modern art and science. This disability has brought it into talking nonsense, slander and even accusing [modernists] idiotically [...]. This accusation has always existed and its absurdity has been also revealed to the same society in the course of time [...]. This is the very social knowledge which is unable of comprehending the modern art and science, and it condemns them [modern artists] of corruption, rebellion and stupidity!”<sup>118</sup> Or, one even observes the same idea where Ziapour distinguished between the elite and the ordinary people and attributed the modern art to the elite: “[Different modern styles] cannot be evaluated with each other or based on an even modern social perspective unless one is not equipped with adequate information. This is the only way that helps knowing an artist’s point of view and to interpret his works [...]. Therefore, only elites comprehend the modern art and as long as the ordinary people have not been educated in how to communicate with art, they cannot enjoy realizing the profound modern works. So, evaluation of a profound work of art is with the elite and they are of course a few.”<sup>119</sup> These statements by the modern artists, naturally, turned into points of criticism by their opponents. A number of these criticisms were directed at Fighting Cock and members of Apadana after the first group exhibition of Apadana (1950), in which Ziapour had displayed his three Cubist paintings and had held a talk about history of Iranian painting at its reception.<sup>120</sup> In the criticism published by *Jahān-e now* magazine (a magazine which reflected news of programs at Apadana in 1940s) about this exhibition, the Iranian scholar Iraj Afshar poked fun at the exhibition’s works and Ziapour’s talk. Afshar argued that the name Apadana that was supposed to denote an Iranian ancient palace and, thus, was expected to preserve Iranian national arts, conversely, exhibited works that were not comprehensible for any of its visitors: “When Ziapour is told that no correct and common concept is seen in your works or if someone complains that these paintings are not compatible with the technical principals of painting and the science of aesthetics, he answers simply that their understanding is not possible for everyone.”<sup>121</sup>

A study over the arguments by which modern artists justified themselves against these criticisms reveals that although these artists approved of the gap between

«اجتماع نمی‌تواند و نباید که بتواند هنر و علم نو را دریابد. این ناتوانی او را به یاهسرائی، به تهمت‌زدن، و حتی به وضع احمقانه‌ای 118 به محکوم‌کردن می‌کشاند [...] این سیلان اتهام همیشه جریان داشته است و بوجی آن نیز بر همان اجتماع پس از گذشت زمان آشکار شده است [...] این همان دانش اجتماعی است که ناتوان از دریافت هنر و علم نو است و هم اوست که آن‌ها را متهم به افسارگسیختگی و عصیان و نادانی می‌کند!» [Irani, “Honar-e now [Modern Art],” 2.]

«[...] بدون اطلاع و مطالعه‌ی قبلی نمی‌شود آن‌ها را نسبت به یکدیگر، و هم با طرز تفکر اجتماع مترقی سنجید. مگر به وسیله اطلاع 119 کافی که تنها از این راه پی‌بردن به طرز تفکر هر هنرمندی آسان می‌شود، و آثارش قابل تحلیل می‌گردد [...] پس تنها خواص هستند که هنر عمیق را درک می‌کنند. بنابراین دست وصال عوام، مادام که پرورش فهم هنری ندارند، از دامان لذات هنر عمیق کوتاه است. پس قضاوت هنر [Jalil Ziapour, “Naqāshi [Painting],” *Korus jangi*, no. 5 (1949): 40.] عمیق با خواص است و خواص هم طبیعتاً معنود هستند.» 120 These paintings were *Ḥamām-e ‘omumi [Bathroom] (1949)*, *Masjed-e sepahsālār [Sepahsalar Mosque] (1950)* and *Tanāb [The Rope] (1949)*.

«وقتی به ضیاءپور گفته شود که در کارهای تو مفهومی صحیح و مرسوم دیده نمی‌شود یا بحث بر این باشد که این نقاشی‌ها با اصول 121 «[Afshar, “Enteqād az Afshar, “Fni Naqāshi w Elm Zibāyi Shenasāsi Mṭābiqat Nārad, be Asāni Jwāb Mi‌dehd ke Drk An Brāi Hrks Miṣr Nīst.» goftār-e ziāpur [Criticizing Ziapour’s Talk],” 565.]

the ordinary people and the modern art, the comprehensibility of their works for the common people was also of their concerns and, in fact, their emphasis on cultural intervention was a method to fill this gap. Attention to the comprehensibility, or better adaptability, of their modern works within their local context was exactly what the fighting cocks offered in terms of a “national school” in each of their specific fields of work. At the turn of the 1950s, artists discussed various issues in forms of roundtables that were mainly held and reflected by magazines. [Fig. 5-9] The *Roundtable of Painters* by *Ketāb-e māh* magazine in 1962 extensively attended to the necessity for a national school of art. At this roundtable, Ziapour complained about the notion of art being comprehended by people belatedly: “What does it mean? [...] Does it mean that artist makes something now and people comprehend it later? Should we wait that a work of today is comprehended a hundred years later?”<sup>122</sup> The solution of cultural intervention offered by Fighting Cock was thus, on the one hand, to be achieved via the type of modern works that artists created and, on the other hand, via the cultural activities of the artists. Both of these aspects were highlighted by the association from the early days of its foundation. It was a common habit for the members to refer their opponents in their discussions to read in association’s published debates, writings and *Fighting Cock* magazine for further scrutiny.<sup>123</sup> Or, in spite of all logical argumentations, artists also found it persuasive to render their works of art together with debates and writings.<sup>124</sup> This form of cultural activation not only helped modern artists to constitute their audience, but also compensated the role that was long neglected by their competitors: “Before Fighting Cock movement there were no exhibitions except for few certain places, but we held exhibitions. There were no analyses made about the works of art but we analyzed these works. We stopped by and went to every exhibition, either we were invited or not.”<sup>125</sup>

The cultural intervention of the modern artists was appreciated by the literary and intellectual circles from the early days of the collective collaboration between Fighting Cock and Apadana. The central point of these appreciations was precisely the role of artists in introduction of the young modern artists and their works to the society. In a review by Al-Ahmad about the group exhibition of Apadana (1950) in *Mehragān* newspaper, he wrote: “[...] our young artists have chosen the right way;

122 «این موضوع یعنی چه؟ [...] آیا این به این معنی است که هنرمند الان کاری را می‌کند و مردم دیرتر می‌فهمند؟ بایست چشم‌پیره‌راه ماند که 122 [Simin Daneshvar, “Miz-e gerd-e naqāshān [Roundtable of Painters],” *Ketāb-e māh*, no. 2 (1962): 177.]

123 Hasan Shirvani, “Porseš wa e’terāz dar zamina-ye honar [The Question and Complaint in Art],” *Šah-savār*, October 9, 1950.

124 Jalil Ziapour, “Moqe’iyat-e naqāši dar ejtemā’-e konuni-ye mā [The Position of Painting in Our Current Society],” *Ādārpād*, April 27, 1950.

125 «پیش از نهضت خروس جنگی هیچ نمایشگاهی جز در یکی دو مکان خاص برگزار نمی‌شد اما ما نمایشگاه راه می‌انداختیم. هیچ تجزیه و تحلیلی از آثار هنری به عمل نمی‌آمد و ما این آثار را تجزیه و تحلیل می‌کردیم. به همه جا سر می‌زدیم، چه دعوت داشتیم و چه دعوت نداشتیم.» [Jalili Ziapour [Jalil Ziapour], directed by Houshang Azadivar (Tehran: Goruh-e farhang, adab wa honar-e šabaka-ye dow-ye sedā wa simā [Department of Culture, Literature and Art of IRIB2], 1989), DVD.]

they should be assisted. Their works should be introduced to the people. Apadana's way should be shown to people and works of the young painters should be explained for people [...]."<sup>126</sup> Basically, the path selected by the first modern artists—i.e., the cultural intervention—was continued by other avant-garde and movement associations and galleries in later decades. Many of these private institutions, having begun their work in the middle of the 1950s and mainly in the 1960s, adopted the same cultural (rather than commercial) role in the introduction of different modern styles and media, and had their own publications and manifesto with certain exhibition programs too. It was according to this role that the conservative magazine *Sokan* in its Issue 6 (1965) wrote: “[...] means of exhibition of artists' works are now better provided and people also pay more attention to the art. One reason of such attention is establishment of the permanent salons [private associations and galleries] [...].”<sup>127</sup>



Fig. 5-9 (Top) “A roundtable held by *Rastākiz-e javānān* magazine in 1979 (Artists: Ghasem Hajizadeh, Ramin Sadighian, Bijan Mohajer, Sharaf Ali and Bozorg Khazraei),” in “Naqāši: honari ke hanuz mardomi našoda ast [Painting: An Art which Has Yet Not Become Popular],” *Rastākiz-e javānān*, no. 126 (1979): 54. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

(Bottom) “A roundtable held by *Tamāšā* magazine in 1971,” in Atefeh Gorgin, “Honarmand wa ejtemā‘ pāsokgu-ye niāz-hā-ye moteqābel-e yekdigar nistand [Artist and Society Do Not Meet Mutual Demands],” *Tamāšā*, no. 7 (1971): 44. [Ibid.]

As it will be discussed in the following two sections, the major cultural interventions undertaken by Fighting Cock Association were the association's publications (in terms of a magazine and manifesto or writing reviews and criticisms in other magazines and newspapers) and artistic debates or exhibition contributions (including exhibiting their own works or participating in other exhibitions for holding analytical talks on particular works or more generally on modern art).

126 «[...] جوانان هنرمند ما راه درست را پیش گرفته‌اند؛ باید آن را کمک کرد. باید کار آن‌ها را به مردم معرفی کرد. راه آپادانا را به مردم [...]» نشان داد و کار هنرمندانه نقاشان جوان را برایشان توضیح داد [...]» [Jalal Al-Ahmad, “Namāyešgāh-e naqāši-ye apadāna [The Painting Exhibition at Apadana],” *Mehragān*, March 7, 1950.]

127 «[...] وسایل عرضه آثار هنرمندان بهتر فراهم می‌شود و مردم نیز به هنر توجه بیشتری نشان می‌دهند. یک دلیل این توجه تالارهای [...]» «[...]» [“Jahān-e dāneš wa honar: namāyešgāh-hā [The World of Science and Art: Exhibitions],” *Sokan*, no. 6 (1965): 637.]

### 5.2.1 *Fighting Cock* Magazine

*Those days that we used to go to school and we had a craving for artistic and literary schools, whenever someone talked about bizarre painting styles, all of a sudden, we remembered the face of a hairy man with penetrative look and mature behavior who embodied for us the 'Cubist' and modern painting for which he made efforts. Later on he published a magazine entitled 'Fighting Cock' in which he taught his notions about modern art and literature to the young enthusiasts.<sup>128</sup> [Fig. 5-10]*

—Commented by *Ferdowsi* magazine in an interview  
with Jalil Ziapour in 1967—

The decade of the 1940s when *Fighting Cock* magazine was published, was concurrent with the period of an open space for all political parties and their publications. It was according to such a politically unrestricted range of publications that Al-Ahmad named it the decade of “shrew press,” during which time publications reflected their political goals, undisturbed.<sup>129</sup> In spite of this open space, none of the magazines published by the left, right or conservative parties had the upper hand and their cultural activities until the second half of 1940s were not along with any specific political orientations.<sup>130</sup> It was within such politically uncompetitive space that various newspapers and magazines began to reflect news on new artistic developments by faculty’s young artists.<sup>131</sup> Until 1948, when the *Zhdanov Cultural Doctrine* of the USSR came into force for promotion of the Social Realism by the Left Party in Iran, even the political publications published articles about modern artists in their magazines freely. For instance, *Payām-e now* (1944), *Mardom* (1946) and *Andiša-ye now* (1948) were publications by Tudeh Party and covered events relating

128 «آن موقع‌ها که به مدرسه می‌رفتیم و سرمان برای مکاتب ادبی و هنری درد می‌کرد، هر وقت سخن از سبک‌های عجیب و غریب نقاشی می‌شد، ناگهان چهره مرد پرمویی دم‌نظرمان می‌آمد با نگاه نافذ و حرکات سنجیده که برابیمان مظهر (نقاشی کوبیسم) و نقاشی نو بود که آن سال‌ها او برای آن خون دل می‌خورد. بعدها او نشریه‌ای منتشر کرد با نام «خروس جنگی» که افکار خود را در زمینه هنر و ادبیات نو به جوانان مشتاق ابداعات تازه شناساند.» [An Interview with *Fighting Cock*], 274.]

129 Jalal Al-Ahmad had classified the press publications of the 1940s–1970s into three groups. The “shrew press” that benefited the open space since the overturn of the first Pahlavi era in 1941 until the mid-1940s and hurried to give out all the suppressed words, the “political parties’ prey” that in a short period of 1951–1953 assisted each party to maintain a conservative (than shrew) face in order to remain in the field of power, and finally the “colourful letters” from 1953 that with financial assistance from the state covered news in line with the official cultural plans. [Jalal Al-Ahmad, *Se maqāla-ye digar [The Other Three Articles]* (Tehran: Ravāq, 1963), 26–36.]

130 Shams Langeroudi, *Tārīḫ-e taḥlīli-ye še’r-e now [Analytical History of Modern Poetry]*, vol.1 (Tehran: Markaz, 1991), 388.

131 The most important press which prior to *Fighting Cock* magazine covered the artistic news were newspapers *Irān* (1916), *Mehr-e irān* (1941) and *Irān-e mā* (1943) and such magazines as *Soḡan* (1943), *Payām-e now* or later known as *Payām-e nowin* (1944), *Jahān-e now* (1946), *Mardom* (1946), *Andiša-ye now* (1948) and *Mehragān* (1948).

to the modern artists or had become footholds of modern poets and writers.<sup>132</sup> For instance, *Payām-e now*, together with *Soḵan* (1943) and *Jahān-e now* (1946) (two respectively right and conservative magazines), reflected more analytical reviews for the first time on *Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts* in 1946 or commented on exhibitions at Apadana Gallery.<sup>133</sup> [Fig. 5-11 & 5-12] Nonetheless, it should be noted that the modern artists not only did not approve of the left-inclined journals, but also rejected the conservative magazines, as they found these magazines representative of timid bourgeois points of view.<sup>134</sup>

The major role played by these publications and those which became active from the mid-1940s such as *Eṭṭelā'āt* and *Ādarpād* newspapers or *Jām-e jam* magazine in 1949 was to cover more journalistic or politically-oriented news with a less critical and technical approach to the arts. A range of news reflected by these publications included reports on events at Fighting Cock and Apadana, announcement of their programs (mostly on their front page), reporting their exhibition programs and reflecting their readers' opinion about modern artists. The only important writings in these newspapers and magazines were those that reflected the artists' own points of view; for instance, text of interviews with artists in radio, controversial replications that artists wrote to their critics, and debates and talks that were held by artists on different occasions or at the place of Fighting Cock or Apadana.

Although the publications of different parties welcomed modern artists and reflected their news, they still had a propagandistic intention behind their act.<sup>135</sup> In many of the reviews written on *Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts*, for instance, one observes how these magazines sided with art for society and evaluated works based



Fig. 5-10 Jalil Ziapour, *Self-Portrait of Artist*, 1949. Technique [?], 24 × 19 cm, Collection [?]. In Roueen Pakbaz, *Contemporary Iranian Painting and Sculpture* (Tehran: High Council of Culture and Art: Center for Research and Cultural Co-ordination, 1974): n.p

132 Shams Langeroudi, *Tārīḵ-e taḥlīli-ye še'r-e now [Analytical History of Modern Poetry]*, vol.1 (Tehran: Markaz, 1991), 333.

133 For articles on *Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts* see Issue 10 of *Payām-e now* (August 1946) and Issue 1 of *Soḵan* (March 1946).

134 Shams Langeroudi, *Tārīḵ-e taḥlīli-ye še'r-e now [Analytical History of Modern Poetry]*, vol.1 (Tehran: Markaz, 1991), 2.

135 Mojabi, *Piṣṡāmān-e naqāši-ye mo'āšer-e irān [Pioneers of Contemporary Persian Painting]*, 11.

on their level of comprehensibility to the masses.<sup>136</sup> Therefore, the publication of a magazine like *Fighting Cock* seemed essential, on the one hand, due to the need for a specialized magazine about the arts and, on the other hand, according to the enmity of the leftist publications with the modern art since issuance of the *Zhdanov Doctrine*. With *Zhdanov* becoming binding, the new strategy of the Left Party was executed in its new newspaper *Peyk-e šolḥ* [*Peace Courier*] in 1949 and *Kabutar-e šolḥ* [*Dove of Peace*] magazine in 1951. As both titles convey, they were supposed to transfer a message of peace articulated by committed art, and to reject modern styles in art and literature like Cubism and Surrealism which were promoted by Fighting Cock Association. [Fig. 5-13] Although these publications presented themselves as supporters of modern art, their definition of it was conservative and limited to a social level of understanding. On the contents page of *Dove of Peace* and next to the title of the magazine it read: "It is an artistic and literary magazine admiring modern and avant-garde artist. It is a letter supportive of the peace and peaceful coexistence of the nations."<sup>137</sup> [Fig. 5-14] More obviously, in the editorial of the same issue, the author had mentioned the magazine's definition of modern art and what was expected from a modern artist: "The correct meaning of artistic and literary modernism is not to neglect the past, but to criticize it appropriately [...]. [Those artists who neglect the past] are detached from people, will lose their sympathy and will fail."<sup>138</sup> Accordingly, the editorial concluded that artists had to apply art and literature as a weapon in the battlefield to save society: "In our opinion, art is not a decorative, unreal and abstract phenomenon from life. Art, in every period, represents the economic foundations of the society in a certain level of its development."<sup>139</sup> According to Fighting Cock Association, these publications, due to their lack of adequate knowledge of new arts, promoted profiteering artists who only by mixture of national motifs with Impressionistic or angular lines claimed to be modern and popular.<sup>140</sup> It was with regard to such a false context provided by these publications that Ziapour, on March 24, 1950, wrote in *Ādarpād* newspaper: "Our artists should be careful not to listen to such pretentious comments and to distinguish between propaganda and true criticism."<sup>141</sup>

136 Although *Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts* was held on initiative of VOKS (Iran-Soviet Cultural Relations Society), we observe this conservative approach in reviews written by members of the society or Tudeh Party in *Payām-e now* magazine (such names as Fatemeh Sayyah, Bozorg Alavi, Nouredin Kianouri, Makarov and others).

137 «نامه‌ایست ادبی، هنری، ستاینده هنر نو و هنرمند پیشرو. نامه‌ایست هوادار صلح و دوستدار همزیستی سعادت‌آمیز ملل.» [Kabutar-e šolḥ, no. 1 (1953): n.p.]

138 «مفهوم صحیح نوآوری ادبی و هنری نادیده‌انگاشتن موارث گذشته نیست، بلکه نقد صحیح آن‌هاست. [آن‌ها که تند می‌تازند] از توده‌ها جدا خواهند شد، مهر و دل‌بستگی توده‌ها را از دست خواهند داد، سرشان به سنگ خواهد خورد.» [Nowzar, "Peykār dar jebha-ye adabi wa honari [The Fight on the Literary and Artistic Front]," *Kabutar-e šolḥ*, no. 1 (1953): 6.]

139 «در نظر ما، هنر یک پدیده منتزع از زندگی، تفننی و تجملی نیست. هنر، در هر دوره مبین و منعکس‌کننده زیربنا، یعنی نظام اقتصادی [Ibid., 3.]

140 Ziapour, "Soḡan-e now ār [Bring New Word]," 84.

141 «هنرمندان ما متوجه این نکته باشند که گوش به نظریات متظاهران به هنرشناسی ندهند و تبلیغ را از نقد درست تشخیص بدهند.» [Ibid.]



Fig. 5-11 (Top Left) "An article about *Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts* published by *Payām-e now* in 1946," in Bozorg Alavi, "Namāyeshgāh-e honar-hā-ye zibā [Exhibition of Fine Arts]," *Payām-e now*, no. 10 (1946): 1. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

Fig. 5-12 (Top Right) "An article about first exhibition of Apadana Gallery published by *Jahān-e now* in 1949," in "Apadāna (kāšāna-ye honar-hā-ye zibā) [Apadana (House of the Fine Arts)]," *Jahān-e now*, no. 14 (1949): 376. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

(Bottom) "An article about *Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts* published by *Soğan* in 1946," in Reza Jorjani, "Namāyeshgāh-e honar-hā-ye zibā-ye irān [Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts]," *Soğan*, no. 1 (1946): 24. [Ibid.]



است، قابل تقدیر و درسی است که باید موجب تنبه دستگاه فرهنگی ما و عزم هنر دوستان بشود.





Fig. 5-13 "An article supporting Kazemi's solo-exhibition at Apadana in 1949," in Namāyeshgāh-e dāemi-ye ātār-e aqā-ye kāzemi [Permanent Exhibition of Kazemi's Works], "Peik-e sholh," no. 15 (1950): 1. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran



Fig. 5-14 "The notice on front cover of *Dove of Peace* magazine," in *Kabutar-e solh*, no. 1 (1953). National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

In response to the functional behavior of the political publications with arts and according to the cultural role that Fighting Cock had assumed, publication of a specialized magazine seemed essential. Based on this requirement, *Fighting Cock* magazine was published in 1948 as the first avant-garde, anti-left and apolitical publication in art and literature in Iran.<sup>142</sup> Another magazine that around the same time as an anti-left publication advocated new art was *Jām-e jam*; some of the fighting cocks like Sheibani and Sepehri were members of *Jām-e jam* as an art association and wrote for its magazine too.<sup>143</sup> [Fig. 5-15] Added to its anti-left position and similar to the fighting cocks, *Jām-e jam* Association attacked intervention of the state in arts. In different articles members uncovered this antagonism: "The obvious and all-encompassing influence of them [artworks] on the society is to the extent that the states have constantly tried to make use of them in any ways and sometimes have restricted them. Yet, this counteracts basically with what art means."<sup>144</sup> But the significant difference between *Jām-e jam* and *Fighting Cock* was that *Jām-e jam* as an association had political nationalist orientations. The contents of its magazine, in addition to the new arts, focused mainly on the national and classical arts, literature and history of Iran. In Issue 1 of the magazine, the editorial board asserted: "Our aim is to support the kind of art [...] which is able to express national intentions [of the artist] and by assistance of the Iranian young Nationalism can pave the way

142 Shams Langeroudi, *Tāriḫ-e taḥlīli-ye še'r-e now [Analytical History of Modern Poetry]*, vol.1 (Tehran: Markaz, 1991), 388.

143 The *Jām-e jam* Art Association was founded in 1948 mainly by Dariush Homayoun (a cultural representative of Iranian National-Social Party) and other affiliates as Amirshapour Zandnia, Zia Modarres, Siavash Kasraie, Sohrab Sepehri and Manouchehr Sheibani.

144 «تأثیر آشکار و وسیع این آثار، در روی افراد اجتماع به حدی است، که همیشه حکومت‌ها کوشیده‌اند تا از آن به نحوی استفاده کنند و حتی [Shapour Zandnia, "Darbāra-ye honar [About Art]," *Jām-e jam*, no. 1 (1949): 5.] گاهی آن را به زنجیر کشیده‌اند، حال آن که این امر اصولاً با هنر منافات دارد.»

to progression and grandeur of a modern Iran.<sup>145</sup> This nationalistic orientation of the association in modern art, the way considered to bring a revolution, was a point of criticism against it or among members. Even when Dariush Homayoun (1928–2011)—founder and a member of the board—attempted to make a clarification about the *national* orientation by defending the *freedom of art* in Issue 3–4 of the magazine, it turned out to be nothing but another failure: “Of course, the type of art we are looking for is a national art, and there is no doubt about this, yet we do not ‘doom’ those works lacking this feature; artists should create national works out of their own will and not by force. We respect all artistic works and call them art [...], yet the only works are more respectable for us that in addition to merely being works of art, they are national too.”<sup>146</sup> In fact, although *Jām-e jam* and *Fighting Cock* were in line in their combats against *Zhdanov’s* political promotion of Social Realism and the state’s interference, but for *Jām-e jam* the introduction of modern art within a national framework was another political means to this end. In contrast to the nationalist approach of *Jām-e jam* and left or conservative views of the other magazines, *Fighting Cock* concentrated only on the new artistic developments and pursued to deconstruct the approaches of the other magazines and to build a different view via modern language, structures and themes for its readers. In fact, this destructive method of the magazine was also a means of mocking the orderly and crowd-pleasing Social Realism or the strict conservatism of the academic art promoted by other magazines.<sup>147</sup> More importantly, the publication of a magazine peculiar to their own association undoubtedly could assist the members in the cultural preparation of their audience. This educative aspect of the magazine was clearly announced on the back cover of the five issues of the magazine’s first series in a bold font: “Our goal is to enhance the level of general knowledge” and also members constantly emphasized in their debates on this aspect and referred their opponents to seek their answers in *Fighting Cock* magazine.<sup>148</sup> [Fig. 5-16]

The magazine, with the editorial board of Ziapour, Shirvani, Gharib and Sheibani,<sup>149</sup> was officially published in three series under the title of *Fighting Cock* magazine in 1948 to 1979. Due to governmental bans on its publication, the magazine continued its work in some issues under other titles. A review of these titles shows that

«هدف ما فراهم کردن وسایل ایجاد هنری است [...] که قادر به ابراز تمایلات ملی باشند و به همراه ناسیونالیسم جوان ملت ایران، راه ترقی 145 [1949]: 3.] *Jām-e jam*, no. 1 (1949): 3.] “Ānča piš-e ru dārim [All We Have on Our Way],”

«هنری که ما می‌خواهیم، البته هنر ملی است و در این باره هیچ شک و تردید وجود ندارد، ولی در عین حال هنری را که واجد این جنبه نباشد 146 (مستوجب آتش) نمی‌دانیم و به علاوه میل داریم، هنرمندان نه در اثر زور و فشار، بلکه به میل خود، به ایجاد آثار ملی اقدام کنند. ما هر اثری را که شرایط ایجاد هنر در آن جمع باشد، [...] هنر می‌دانیم و به آن احترام می‌گذاریم، ولی تنها هنری علاوه بر محترم‌بودن، نزد ما عزیز و 147 [Dariush Homayoun, “Āzādi-ye honar [Freedom of Art],” *Jām-e jam*, no. 3–4 (1949): 75–76.] موردستایش است که ملی باشد.»

147 Shirvani, “Az jiḡ-e banafš [From Purple Scream],” 29.

148 Shirvani, “Porseš wa ‘eterāz [The Question and Complaint].”

149 The name of the editorial board of *Fighting Cock* magazine was written on the back cover in all five issues of its first series.



Fig. 5-15 (Left) "The logo of *Jām-e jam* magazine on its front cover (1948)," in *Jām-e jam*, no. 1 (1948). National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

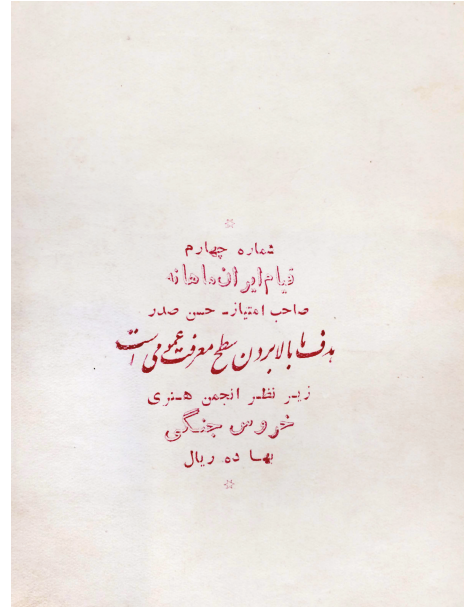


Fig. 5-16 (Right) "The notice on the back cover of *Fighting Cock* magazine," in *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1948). National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

publication of the magazine, beside an opposition against the established artistic norms, was also in revolt against the political interventions and pressures exerted on the association by the state. After the first ban on the first series of *Fighting Cock* with five issues in 1949, the magazine continued its work under the title of *Desert* with only two issues in 1950. With the closing down of *Desert* and publication of four issues of the second series of *Fighting Cock* in 1951, members published *Moj [Wave]* in March 1952 and *Cock's Claw* in April 1953 each respectively with one and two issues. Regarding the appellation of "*Desert*" one reads: "Its reason was because we were upset, we were fed-up, but we did not escape the situation and we said that here is a desert region in which there is apparently no growth."<sup>150</sup> In an interview with Ziapour by *Rastākiz* newspaper in 1978, he described the main reason for these bans as the instigative role of their opponents (in particular Kamal al-Molk's students): "They intrigued the state that 'we' were destroying the culture of the country, that we were instruments [of the Left Party], harmful, etc., and therefore the fear-fed officials put a ban on our magazines for no reason in order to satisfy them."<sup>151</sup> The sensitivity toward *Fighting Cock* magazine was to the extent that the National Consultative Assembly interpellated Manouchehr Eqbal, the minister of culture, in 1949 for publication of this magazine and its distribution as one of Tudeh's pamphlets

«به این سبب که دیگر ناراحت بودیم، رنجیده بودیم، اما از میدان در نرفته بودیم و گفتیم که اینجا منطقه کویری است که ظاهراً رشدی 150 [Rezai, "Goftogu-i bā ostad jalil ziāpour [An Interview with Master Jalil Ziapour]."] در آن نیست.»

«میرفتند و بدگویی می‌کردند که یعنی <ما> فرهنگ کشور را دارند از بین می‌برند. آن‌ها دست‌نشانده هستند، مخرب هستند، فلان هستند 151 [Ibid.] و یک عده هم دهن‌بین برای این که آن‌ها راضی باشند بدون هیچ زمینه‌ای مجله را توقیف می‌کردند.»

at schools and universities.<sup>152</sup> The dishonesty of such interpellation and the conspiracy of the opponents of Fighting Cock are better understood from Ziapour's trial. As he described the interrogation, he was asked about his intention for studying painting and if he was an agent of Communism to promote Cubism: "[...] I noticed that their questions were so irrelevant. It made no sense to answer such questions. I asked them: 'Do you want to know what Cubism is? [After hearing my explanations they said:] We thought Cubism is a part of Communism.'<sup>153</sup> They were these conspiracies by Fighting Cock's opponents in relating the magazine to the political parties that for *Cock's Claw* series, members decided for a notice on the front cover of the magazine and next to its title saying "In this magazine only artistic issues will be discussed," and by doing so they wanted to announce officially that their way was separate from the political parties.<sup>154</sup> [Fig. 5-17] With the final ban on *Cock's Claw* in 1953, the members did not officially publish any magazine until the third series of *Fighting Cock* in 1979. It should be noted that all publications of Fighting Cock Association were in direct opposition to those by Tudeh Party. The antagonism between *Fighting Cock* magazine and *Dove of Peace* during the second half of the 1940s was also continued into the first half of the 1950s and they competed each other with their last magazines (*Wave* and *Cock's Claw* published by the association and *Šiva [Style]* by Tudeh in 1952). With the final ban, and given the lack of adequate financial resources,<sup>155</sup> the members continued their work by publishing texts in other press. The most important magazines were *Apadāna [Apadana]* and *Honar-e now [Modern Art]* that altogether had only three issues in 1956. *Apadana* and *Modern Art*, compared to other magazines and newspapers, were close in their ways to *Wave* and *Cock's Claw*.<sup>156</sup> Although the administrators of *Apadana* and *Modern Art* had changed, they shared important similarities with the last publications of the association.<sup>157</sup> All fighting cocks and their affiliates were working with these two magazines and their logos and cover designs were close in typography to *Wave* magazine designed by Irani. [Fig. 5-18] Also, the same notice on the front cover of *Cock's Claw* (i.e., "In this magazine only artistic issues will be discussed") was written in *Apadana* and

152 "Majles-e šorā-ye melli [National Consultative Assembly]," 8.

153 « [...] دیدم که پرسش‌ها خیلی پرت است. چرا چرا مفهوم ندارد. گفتیم حدت‌تان می‌خواهد بدانید نقاشی کوبیسم چیست؟ » [پس از شرح] گفتند « [...] ما خیال می‌کردیم کوبیسم گوشه‌ای از کمونیسم است. » [Rezai, "Goftogu-i bā ostad jalil ziāpur [An Interview with Master Jalil Ziapour]."]

154 Ibid.

155 Shams Langeroudi, *Tāriḫ-e taḥlīli-ye še'r-e now [Analytical History of Modern Poetry]*, vol.1 (Tehran: Markaz, 1991), 52.

156 Other important press that members collaborated with in a period between the ban on *Cock's Claw* until republication of *Fighting Cock* magazine in 1979 were mainly such newspapers as *Eṭṭelā'āt* (1949), *Post-e tehrān* (1953) and *Rastāqiz* (1975) and such magazines as *Andīša wa honar* (1954), *Nabard-e zendegi* (1955), *Donyā-ye jadid* (1956), *Ketāb-e māh* (1963) and *Honar wa me'māri* (1969).

157 *Apadana* magazine was directed by Amirsoleiman Azima (also the license-owner) and had the editorship of Abolghasem Masoudi. The main reason for collaboration of the fighting cocks with these people was in their receptivity to new artistic ideas. [Rezai, "Goftogu-i bā ostad jalil ziāpur [An Interview with Master Jalil Ziapour]."]

*Modern Art*. [Fig. 5-19] The *Modern Art* was in fact the last collective effort of the fighting cocks in one magazine and right after the Islamic Revolution, on occasion of 31st anniversary of *Fighting Cock* magazine, the members again republished the third series of the magazine. It should be noted that the post-Islamic Revolution series of *Fighting Cock* magazine, in contrast to its previous series, had a political approach in defense of freedom of expression due to the execution of Islamic regulations on art and culture.



Fig. 5-17 "The notice next to the logo on the front cover of *Cock's Claw* magazine," in *Panja korus*, no.1 (1953): 1. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

The first series of the magazine began its work in 1948 with Shirvani as the license-owner. The magazine had a moderate tempo focusing on more informative articles about the modern styles in arts and had columns aiming at making dialogue with the readers, answering their questions or introducing the young talented artists. Accordingly, the most important columns of the magazine were "Painting" in which Ziapour wrote articles explaining modern art styles (Impressionism to Surrealism), *Nokta* ["Highlight"] by Nima, which reviewed works by young poets under *Ĥarf-hā-ye hamsāya* ["Words by a Neighbour"], and columns relating to other fields (story, music and drama). These columns adapted themselves in different series of the magazine according to the new memberships or the social reaction to their contents. The magazine in the first series played the role of a hopeful and promising cock than a *fighting cock*—an optimistic approach was inferred from the contents of the magazine. For instance, in the first Issue, Nima's poem *Ķorus miĳānad* ["The Cock Sings"]<sup>158</sup> explicitly pointed to this spirit: "Cock-a-doodle-doo! The cock sings/ From the hidden tranquil heart of the village/ From within an abyss, similar to a drained vein of a dead body/ It runs blood/ [...] / It brings good news/ [...] / It comes smoothly/ It sings warm-heartedly/ It flaps wings/ [...] / Cock-a-doodle-doo! The dominant dark night, escapes into the lost horizons."<sup>159</sup> The same concept of the hope and inspiration was repeated in other issues of *Fighting Cock's* first series. In Issue 4, again Nima in his poem *Āqā tuka* ["Mr. Ortolan"] (May 1948)

<sup>158</sup> This poem, from Nima's collection of *Šahr-e šobh* [*The City of Dawn*], was written in November 1946 and was published in Issue 1 of *Fighting Cock* magazine as a sign of Nima's collaboration with the magazine. [Jalil ziāpur [Jalil Ziapour], directed by Houshang Azadivar (Tehran: Goruh-e farhang, adab wa honar-e šabaka-ye dow-ye šedā wa simā [Department of Culture, Literature and Art of IRIB2], 1989), DVD.]

<sup>159</sup> «قوقولی قو! خروس می‌خواند/ از درون نهفت ده/ از نشیب رهی که چون رگ خشک/ در تن مردگان دواند خون/ [...] / مژده می‌آورد [...] / قوقولی قو! به گوش/ [...] / نرم می‌آید/ گرم می‌خواند/ بال می‌کوبد/ [...] / قوقولی قو! ز خطه‌ی پیدا/ می‌گریزد سوی نهبان شب کور.» [Nima Youshij, "Ķorus miĳānad [The Cock Sings]," *Ķorus jangi*, no. 1 (1948): 1-2.]

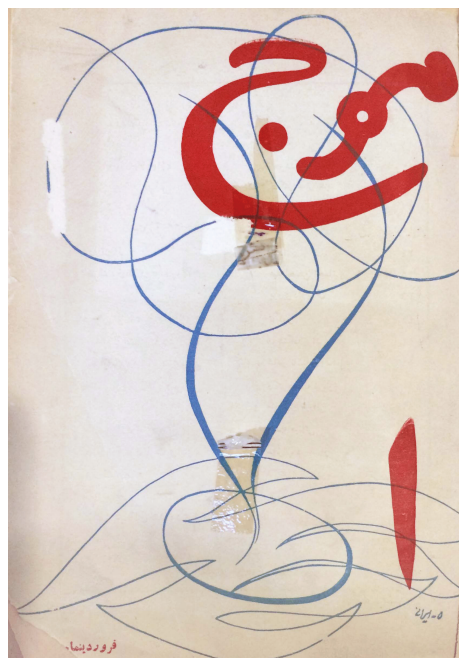
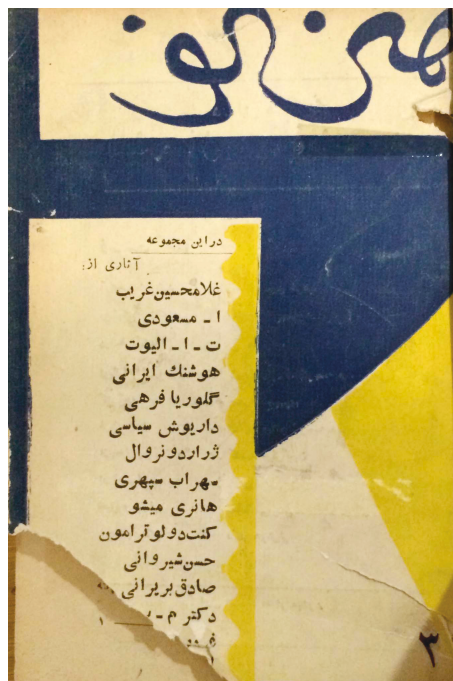
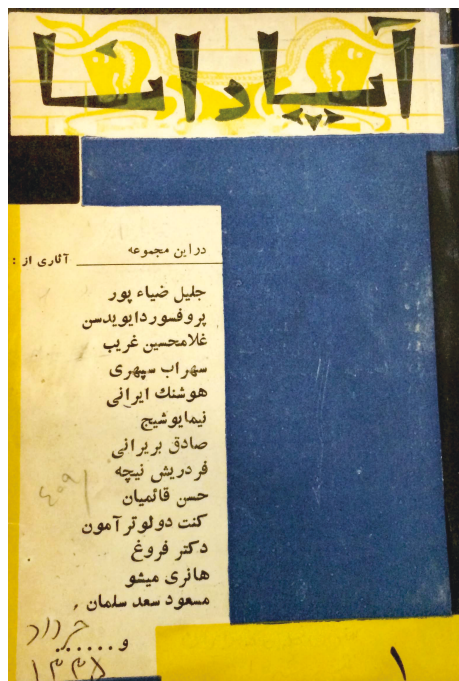


Fig. 5-18 (Top Left) "The front cover of *Apadana* magazine (1956)," in *Apadāna*, no. 1 (1956). National Library and Archives Organization of Iran (Right) "The front cover of *Modern Art* magazine (1956)," in *Honar-e now*, no. 3 (1956). [Ibid.] (Bottom) "The front cover of *Wave* magazine (1952)," in *Moj*, no.1 (1952). [Ibid.]

depicted a conversation between a man and an ortolan. To man's surprise, the ortolan insisted to sing despite all frustrating conditions: "Your broken heart/ Are you still eager to sing?/ But ortolan still sings."<sup>160</sup>

In addition to the optimistic approach of *Fighting Cock* magazine in its first series, another significant feature of the major articles in this series in different fields of painting, story, music and drama was their emphasis on attaining a "national school" in the arts. This national school, as can be inferred from their articles, pursued artistic modernism not merely based on adaption with the Western modern art, but also with a revisionary approach to their own past history and application of its capacities into their works. In the column "Music" in Issue 1, for instance, Hannaneh wrote an article about the national school of music in Iran.<sup>161</sup> According to his text, the national school of music had to be created upon a mixture of Western orchestral music with the Iranian traditional chansons and melodies. His main argument was that, due to the religious restrictions and prejudices that were

historically exerted on music in Iran, a social rejection had occurred among people toward Western symphonic music. This social rejection was what he considered as an "psychic evasion" and it delayed natural development of Iranian traditional music. As a matter of fact, Hannaneh's text emphasized that the natural evolution of Iranian music should have culminated in the composition of Iranian songs and melodies appropriate for orchestral rendition or what he named as a national school of music; nonetheless he regretted that: "Today there is nothing left but escaping the symphonic music and we name it psychic evasion."<sup>162</sup> Or in another article about the national school of music by Gharib in Issue 2, he also emphasized the significance of folkloric songs for the world's eminent musicians: "The attention paid by the world's modern artists to the 'folklore' (folk chansons) and the new way that such

| درا این مجله فقط بمسائل هنری پرداخته میشود |                                   |   |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| فهرست                                      |                                   |   |
| ۳  | ضیاء پور                          | مفهوم هنر نو  |
| ۶  | دیویدسن                           | درس اژاکرگردانی   |
| ۱۲   | هانری میشو (ترجمه داریوش سیاسی)   | باده ها و گردها   |
| ۱۷   | علامه حسین غرب                    | چرا بنوا بدفته ای، ای مشیر                                |
| ۲۲   | سهراب سپهری                       | مظنن  |
| ۲۴   | نیمایوشیج                         | منظری از قدمت نهمساله تجرید در عرفان ایران - هوشنگ ایرانی |
| ۳۲   | جلیل ضیاء پور                     | حرفهای همسایه   |
| ۳۵   | مسعود سعد سلمان                   | شخصیت پیکاسو  |
| ۴۳   | صادق پربرائی                      | مردی  |
| ۴۱   | فردریش نیچه (ترجمه دکتر مکرری)    | حسن و حساب  |
| ۴۷   | دکتر فروغ                         | از سود و زبان تاریخ                                       |
| ۶۱   | حسن قائمیان                       | درام جدید   |
| ۶۵   | کنت دولوترا آمون (اشاره از . ا .) | گفتگو درباره کنسرت اخیر ادکستر سنفلیک تهران - غرب         |
| ۷۶   | صفی                               | همدم  |
| ۷۸   | ادگار ارن بو (ترجمه : تاج بخش)    | دوقظه از سرودهای مالدورور                                 |
| ۷۹   | شارل بودار (ترجمه : د . س)        | آوازی در شب   |
| ۷۳   |                                   | سکوت  |
|  |                                   | شراب آدمکش  |

نشریه ماهانه  
اول خرداد ماه

شماره ۱

Fig. 5-19 "The contents-page of *Apadana* magazine with the notice of *Cock's Claw* on top," in *Apadana*, no. 1 (1956). National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

160 «به دل، ای خسته آیا هست/ هنوزت رغبت خواندن؟/ ولی تو کاست خوانا.» [Nima Youshij, "Āqā tuka [Mr. Ortolan]," *Korus jangi*, no. 4 (1949): 2.]

161 Morteza Hannaneh, "Musiqi [Music]," *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1948): 3-7.

162 [Ibid., 3.] «ولی امروز جز فرار از موسیقی سمفونیک که ما آن را گریز روحی می‌نامیم چیز دیگری نداریم.»



attention opened to the world's fine arts, make us clarify as much as possible the advantages of using our folklore in arts."<sup>163</sup> He explained that folk and tribal music had aided modern musicians of different countries in creating national and independent music via new compositions in music, and this was due to the simplicity, natural quality and spirit of locality of folk and tribal music: "When we hear a local chanson, so simple as it is, we enjoy it. It is the expressive language of a nation or a group of people that lively mirrors for us all attributes of the life of that nation or group of people [...]."<sup>164</sup> This attention to folklore was reflected in different issues in the first series of the magazine, as well as via articles focusing on different types of traditional arts and their importance in creating a national school of art. In many of these articles, there was an insistence on certain types of the folklore—for instance, folkloric dance—and their revival in new performative arts.<sup>165</sup> Basically, this essential reflection on the past for the fighting cocks was rooted in their emphasis on impossibility of disconnection with it. Gharib, in his story *Qāb-e 'aks-e zabāndār-e man* ["My Speaking Picture Frame"] in Issue 2, attempted to display the difficulty of neglecting the past in a dialogue between the story's protagonist and an antique picture frame. In many parts of this dialogue, he indirectly manifested the undeniable existence of the past and its persistent functionality in our life. The story begins with the narrator's (protagonist) description of an antique frame; an old, dusty, deformed tin frame that for years was sitting in the room's niche and only its old faded photos were changed from time to time: "I do not know how many years are now that I see it, I only remember that since the time my eyes have become familiar with the objects in this room, I have seen this deformed picture frame in the corner of room's niche [...]. As if it was built to fit this old house and specially that arch-shaped niche [...]."<sup>166</sup> Although the narrator found the frame a clumsy object that only watched the room mutely and absently, he sympathized with the intimate and lyrical taste of its creator, presumably an old man, who had decorated the frame with simple floral motifs: "From the very beginning I felt there was a familiarity between us, me and the picture frame. Many things and many people had come and left but it was still

<sup>163</sup> «توجه هنرمندان جدید دنیا به فولکلور (ترانه‌های عامیانه) و بازشدن راه تازه‌ای روی این توجه در هنرهای زیبای دنیای امروز، ما را وادار می‌کند که روی این موضوع دقت بیشتری به عمل آوریم و محسنات استفاده از فولکلور را در هنر تا حدی که مقدور است روشن کنیم.» [Gholamhossein Gharib, "Folklor dar musiqi [Folklore in Music]," *Korus jangi*, no. 2 (1948): 19.]

<sup>164</sup> «یک ترانه محلی را که ما در کمال سادگی می‌شنویم و از آن لذت می‌بریم، زبان گویای یک ملت یا یک دسته از مردم است که [...]» [ibid.] تمام مختصات زندگی آن ملت یا آن دسته از مردم [...] را با تجسمی جان‌دار و زنده در مقابل ما می‌گذارد.»

<sup>165</sup> In addition to the *Drama* magazine (1957) in which Shirvani, the main member of Fighting Cock, discussed application of Persian classical poetry and folkloric dance in dramatic arts to create a national school of dramatic arts in Iran, *Fighting Cock* magazine also published similar articles such as *Raqş* ["Dance"] by Serkis Djanbazian that emphasized on dance as an artistic field and its acknowledgement by other countries as a national source. Djanbazian argued that traditional dances of Iran had to be adapted into Iranian opera and ballet. [See: Djanbazian, Serkis. "Raşş [Dance]." *Korus jangi*, no. 3 (1949): 25–28.]

<sup>166</sup> «نمی‌دانم چند سال است که آن را می‌بینم، فقط همین قدر یادم هست که از موقعی که چشم‌هایم توانسته است اشیاء اتاق را بشناسد، این قاب‌عکس کج‌وکوله را در گوشه اطاقمان دیده‌ام [...] انگار این قاب‌عکس اصلاً برای این اتاق قدیم‌ساز، دخمه‌سازند، و به خصوص برای پرکردن [...] ساخته شده است.» [Gholamhossein Gharib, "Qāb-e 'aks-e zabāndār-e man [My Speaking Picture Frame]," *Korus jangi*, no. 2 (1949): 11.]

there stable and persisting, dusty and indifferent. [...] as if there was long acquaintance between my looks and this old solid object [...] sometimes I thought what if this persistent picture frame never existed [...] I wanted to destroy it but I could not or I was not able to do so [...]."<sup>167</sup>

In addition to this new approach to tradition, Ziapour's articles in the column "Painting"—on modern art and in particular Cubism—arose antagonism from many opponents and led to the first ban on the magazine by the state. Ziapour published one lengthy article in every issue of the magazine's first series, but from the very first article he had begun his combat against the academic Realists, Naturalists and Traditionalists. The language he had selected for this combat was blunt. He criticized them for creating banal and conventional copies by blind imitation of nature or the past that blocked any progression.<sup>168</sup> According to him, this failure of the Iranian artists emerged from a common belief that considered art as a natural flair and neglected it as a technique and science that could be acquired.<sup>169</sup> It should be noted that such statements by Ziapour, as he obviously mentioned in his first article, addressed the miniature makers, Kamal al-Molk and his students who emphasized on fidelity to the nature and past artistic regulations. Influenced by this imitative quality, he argued another important failure in Iranian artists; i.e., a lack of attention to the artist's own subjectivity and his internal world. This was the difficulty that he claimed modern art could solve through a range of art styles in particular Impressionism, Cubism and Surrealism due to their free expression of colour and form: "Different schools appeared after the artists realized that they had to render their own feelings and not to be slaves of others' tastes [...]."<sup>170</sup> Accordingly, one observes Ziapour's emphasis on Impressionism, Cubism and Surrealism in all his articles. In Issue 3, he discussed Impressionism as a reaction against blind imitations in the Western academic Realism and the emergence of Cubism thereafter as a better fit into the mechanized modern life. In addition to a detailed discussion on their stylistic features (colour and form), he emphasized the freedom of expression of the internal feelings in Cubism and introduced it as the true *reality*, in contrast to the reality displayed in Naturalism or Realism: "A Cubist obligates himself seriously to observe the reality of the nature, and he respects the personal nature [internal world of artist] in the way that he feels it and with attention to the technical principles [in art]. Cubism is more real, more rational and truer than deceptive realities and appearances. If there is an absolute reality in the nature, Cubism is

«از همان اوایل حس می‌کردم که بین ما، یعنی من و قاب‌عکس آشنایی مخصوصی وجود دارد، خیلی چیزها و بسیاری اشخاص آمده و رفته بودند، ولی او هنوز ثابت و پابرجا و همان طور خاکسگرفته و بی‌اعتنا به جای خودش باقی بود. [...] مثل این که بین نگاه‌های من و این شیء جامد پیرشده انس و الفتی قدیم وجود داشته است [...] گاهی اوقات پیش خودم فکر می‌کردم، چقدر خوب بود اگر این قاب‌عکس سمج اصلاً وجود نداشت [...] خواستم آن را سرینگیست کنم ولی موفق نشدم یعنی قدرتش را نداشتم [...]» [Ibid., 11 & 14.]

<sup>168</sup> Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāshi [Painting]," *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1948): 12.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>170</sup> «پس از آن که این فکر به مغز هنرمندان رسید که باید محسوسات خود را نشان بدهند نه که بندهی سلیقه‌ها و ذوق‌های دیگران باشند، [...]» [Ibid., 14.]

more faithful to it than any other school of art.”<sup>171</sup> In reply to the opponents of Cubist artists (who condemned its freedom of action or the changeable forms, colours and designs as a method by modern artists to escape the academic regulations), he explained that execution of the internal feelings was completely in accordance with the technical principles. In a discussion in Issue 4 of the magazine, he explained that modern art appeared according to the demands of its time; i.e., economic, political and educational contexts. Therefore, attention to freedom of expression together with its revelation in Impressionism, Cubism and Surrealism was result of these demands.<sup>172</sup> In Issue 5, he concentrated on the rebellious aspects of Cubism. He introduced Cubism as a school with a spirit for movement and as an art style for a discontented social class whereas none of the previous art schools could satisfy this demand: “Therefore, artists who possessed a certain mindset and came from this unsatisfied class, based on this logical demand and influenced by their internal challenge ‘that affected human being’s behavior,’ manifested their discontent spontaneously via artworks in their own field [...] in a sharp, decisive, logical and at the same time dignified and mighty manner.”<sup>173</sup>

The content of *Fighting Cock* magazine that explicitly attacked the established Kamal al-Molk School and the traditional artists was not tolerated by these opponents and spurred the government to exert the first ban on it in 1949.<sup>174</sup> The allegation, as being discussed, was that *Fighting Cock* was an agent of the Left Party and promoted the political aims of this Party. In such an air, the magazine continued its work renamed to *Desert* and with a new cover (designed by Ziapour in 1949) of three profiles referring to the association’s main members Ziapour, Gharib and Shirvani. [Fig. 5-20] Although the different sections of the magazine remained unchanged, from *Desert* onward the editorial members clearly declared their non-political stance by stressing on art for art’s sake versus art for the society. The first Issue of *Desert* (1950) included a critical article by Ziapour with the picture of his new Cubist painting *Bathroom* (1949) at the end of his text. In this article, he had discussed the relation of modern art with society for the first time. In the argument, he had defended the idea of a flexible reality or “reality per se” which was achieved not via rational thinking (as in Realism and Naturalism) but by artists’ faculty of imagination.<sup>175</sup> In fact, he

«کوبیست خود را جدا موظف می‌داند که حقیقت طبیعت، و طبیعت شخصی را هر آن گونه که حس می‌کند در هر حال با رعایت اصول 171 تخصصی مراعات کند. کوبیسم راست‌تر، گویاتر و باحقیقت‌تر از حقایق و ظواهر گول‌زننده پیش می‌آید. و اگر در طبیعت حقیقت مطلق وجود داشته باشد کوبیسم در مراعات آن نسبت به سایر مکاتب وفادارتر و امین‌تر می‌نماید.» [Jalil Ziapour, “Naqāshi [Painting],” *Korus jangi*, no. 3 (1949): 17.]

172 Jalil Ziapour, “Naqāshi [Painting],” *Korus jangi*, no. 4 (1949): 14.

«از این رو هنرمندانی که دارای طرز تفکر بخصوص این طبقه ناراضی <منتهی در پیشه خود> بودند، روی اصل مسلم احتیاج و هم 173 تأثیر کنکاش درونی حکم در ماهیت رفتار و کردار آدمی تغییراتی حادث می‌کند< بی‌اختیار مبارزات خود را به وسیله تظاهرات هنری علنی می‌کنند [...] یعنی قاطع و برنده، در عین حال منطقی و متین و سهمگین.» [Jalil Ziapour, “Naqāshi [Painting],” *Korus jangi*, no. 5 (1949): 31.]

174 Rezai, “Goftogu-i bā ostad jalil ziāpo ziāpur [An Interview with Master Jalil Ziapour].”

175 Jalil Ziapour, “Naqāshi [Painting],” *Kavir*, no. 1 (1950): 8.

argued that rational thinking created only conventional (and fixed) realities and it was the imagination that, along with rejection of the conventions, could create new realities. He supported his idea by emphasizing Surrealism and this quotation from André Breton that “for discovering a new reality, one should follow his imaginations [...]”.<sup>176</sup> At the same time, Ziapour explained that because an artist’s imagination was inspired by a series of social factors, it must be agreed upon that his imaginary creations also had social contributions and belonged to society too. So, this complaint about art for art’s sake by proponents of art for the society that condemned modern art for not being



Fig. 5-20 “The front cover of *Desert* magazine by Jalil Ziapour (1949),” in *Kavir*, no. 1 (1950). National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

made for the common people was a baseless claim, since they both derived from the same origin. As he argued, for the modern artists the definition of art for art’s sake was not necessarily to neglect the society but: “[...] art for art’s sake means that the artistic aspect weighs more than any other feature. Such art is created in painting because it forms artistic guidelines [...]. Serving society is naturally implicit in it; but not that it is created with the intention to serve the society.”<sup>177</sup> Nonetheless, if still there were people who could not communicate to modern styles like Cubism or Surrealism, Ziapour related its reason either to a lack of essential preparedness for this understanding, or a kind of prudence since modern art put their established and conservative art in trouble.<sup>178</sup>

Although Ziapour had argued in his article that the social functionality of art for art’s sake and art for the society in their origin was similar, from the same article or other texts that were published in two issues of *Desert* one realizes the magazine’s concentration on art for art’s sake. The second Issue of *Desert* published another article by Ziapour in which he had obviously sided with the Formalistic approach in arts. In this article, he had separated those artists who emphasized the subject of their works from those who showed more sensitive about the stylistic and Formalistic language of their works. The main discussion by him was based

176 [Ibid., 9.] «برای کشف یک حقیقت تازه، باید دنباله‌ی تصورات را گرفت [...]».

177 [...] هنر برای هنر یعنی جنبه هنرمندی را بیش از همه چیز دیگر دارا بودن. این چنین هنری در نقاشی به وجود می‌آید برای این که مثنی «هنری ایجاب می‌کند [...] خدمت به اجتماع هم خودبمخودانه در این عمل مستتر است؛ نه این که به عمد برای خدمت به اجتماع به وجود آید.» [Ibid., 15–16.]

178 Ibid. 11.

on the fact to differentiate *ways of thinking* from the *ways of rendering a thought* and he excluded an artist's thought from the artistic principles.<sup>179</sup> According to him, the significance of this idea was due to the fact that people evaluated the works of art according to their subjects and, as a result, they rejected modern art due to its complexities. Therefore, society expected modern artists to create works that reflected regular events, pleased people or guided them in their personal life. But since none of these intentions were fulfilled by modern art, people condemned the modern artists of being melancholic, decadent and extremists who did not respect social tastes.<sup>180</sup> In reply to these comments, Ziapour argued that such demands do not make artists' demands because the way of thinking is different from the way we render that thought: "Ways of thinking are of a philosopher's tasks and ways of rendering a thought are of an artist's tasks [...]. A good artist is someone who presents a thought 'whatever it might be' in its best technical way."<sup>181</sup> In other articles this emphasis on the form of expression is observed as well. In "Words by a Neighbour" (reviews on poetry) in Issue 2 of *Desert*, again Nima stressed that poets should have their own view and to express it with attention to stylistic and Formalistic features: "But if you seek to create a new work and you search for new words [...] the most important thing is to see by what means you want to express yourselves. This is the most critical issue in art and this is what distinguishes an old and modern work from each other [...]. To change an old work into modern, above all, you need to change stylistically into something new."<sup>182</sup>

Although members of the association asserted the apolitical stance of their magazine in *Dessert*, its publication was also banned. The next series of the magazine continued its work again under the title *Fighting Cock* with four issues in 1951. The second series of *Fighting Cock* magazine followed the same policy of *Dessert* in emphasis on art for art's sake, but this time the magazine had adopted a much more radical approach. The radicalism of the magazine was due to the new membership of Houshang Irani, the Surrealist poet and painter, who from the first Issue of the magazine published *Nightingale's Butcher Manifesto* and convicted all but modern artists to the death.<sup>183</sup> The radicalization of association with the presence of Irani left no chance for Ziapour's moderate notion of a national school of art. The national school of art that was promoted by members in painting, music, drama and writing was no more tolerated by the association and this was parallel to Ziapour having established his National School of Painting in the early 1950s (at which time

179 Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāši [Painting]," *Kavir*, no. 2 (1950): 9.

180 *Ibid.*, 13.

181 «[...] زیرا چگونه فکر کردن مربوط به متفکرین است و چگونه فکری را نشان دادن مربوط به هنرمند است [...] هنرمند خوب آن کسی [Ibid., 10 & 12.] است که به بهترین وجهی چنان که تکامل فنی ایجاب کند، یک فکر را هر چه می‌خواهد باشد معرفی کند.»

182 «اما اگر از پی کار تازه و کلمات تازه‌اید [...] عمده مسئله این هست که دید خود را با چه وسائل مناسب بیان کنید. جان هنر و کمال آن برای هنرمند این جا است و از این کاوش است که شیوه کار قدیم و جدید از هم تفکیک می‌یابند [...] در نوساختن و کهنه عوض کردن پیش از هر کاری کار لازم این است که شیوه کارتان را نو کنید.» [Ibid., 17.]

183 Gharib, Irani and Shirvani, "Sallāk-e bolbol [Nightingale's Butcher]," n.p.

he left the association as a main member).<sup>184</sup> With the exit of Ziapour, the column “Painting” was also omitted from the magazine and a polemic approach replaced his column with more emphasis on criticism and artistic Formalism.<sup>185</sup> “Identifying the Modern” was the column in which members provided informative articles. The most considerable texts in this column were written by Irani such as “The Artistic Value of Society,” “Formalism” and *Āfarineš-e honari* [“Artistic Creation”].<sup>186</sup> The rhetoric of these articles together with other texts of the magazine was similar to *Nightingale’s Butcher Manifesto*—i.e., direct and caustic. In the very first Issue, simultaneous with the first publication of the manifesto, Irani published “Modern Art” in the column “Review” as an ultimatum to the retrospective artists. In the text, he argued that those artists who returned to the past were not courageous enough to progress and, therefore, they had to be condemned to silence and death: “[...] those who are enchanted by the miracle of traditions are petrified [and therefore] they are condemned to the death [...]”<sup>187</sup> Irani reasoned his attack according to this argument; that life was dynamic and constantly in progress and because art was one of life’s manifestations, therefore, it was also in progress. According to him, although this progress included all the past historical moments, its result was something completely new and represented other realities.<sup>188</sup> Perhaps this rejection of an imitative retrospection to the past was also seen in the previous series of the magazine, but the radical treatment of Irani could be better understood by the way he introduced modern art. In his definition, modern art was an artistic reaction to the mechanical modern life, but the more this mechanization controlled the creative mind, the more the intellectual artists avoided it. In its place, artists sought to create something for their own pleasure and benefited everything such as tradition, society and ethics to render their art and to arrive at a self-pleasure.<sup>189</sup> As he argued, this mechanical life and established traditions stirred up a rebellious spirit in modern artists to break free from these boundaries and serve as a narrow outlet that provided them pleasure.<sup>190</sup>

The column “Identifying the Modern” was a part of the magazine in which Irani, from Issue 2, began his fight against art for the society and defended Formalism in the artistic creation. In Issue 2 and his article “The Artistic Value of the Society,” Irani clearly considered society as a hindrance to modern artists’ progress. This was because society expected modern art (similar to traditional and Realist art) to

184 Ziapour, “Soğan-e now ār [Bring New Word],” 86.

185 The new columns which were added to boost the critical approach of the magazine in its second series were “Criticism” and “Review” and specifically focused on artworks produced by other artists.

186 Houshang Irani’s articles in column “Identifying the Modern” were also published simultaneously in his book *Identification of Art* in 1951.

187 «[...] گروهی که به افسون جادوی سنتپرستی سنگ شدهاند، محکوم به نابودی هستند [...]» [Irani, “Honar-e now [Modern Art],” 2.]

188 *Ibid.*

189 *Ibid.*

190 *Ibid.*, 3.

be at its service and, therefore, restricted artists with its religious, traditional and ethical regulations.<sup>191</sup> As he criticized, the failure of society in such demands was its failure to understand the nature of art in general. The artistic creation, according to him, was a personal creation that occurred as artists attended to their internal world intellectually. This precisely was in contrast to society, because society was not able to think collectively and, as a result, was not able to create something: "The motivations of such flush [creativity], whatever they are, in result will be personal and entail secrets that no one but the artist can know them."<sup>192</sup> In fact, Irani saw a methodological difference between a work of art that was created for society and one that was created for art's sake. In his article "Formalism" that was published in Issue 3 of the magazine, he bluntly wrote that only modern artists had the right to live because they concentrated on the artistic *form*, whereas society replaced form with the *style*—in particular a style that was simple and comprehensible like Realism. Moreover, he argued that Iranian Realist artists had no correct understanding of Realism and they, intrigued by politico-commercial demands, mistook Realism with a kind of simplistic style and created an orderly art.<sup>193</sup> Irani continued this article in his book *Identification of Art* in the same year (1951) under "Existence of Form." [Fig. 5-21] In this book he defended that the privilege of modern art was laid in the fact that it reached the internal world of the artist and by doing so, it was more authentic. The authenticity of the form, according to him, was due to this internal origin: "Form that is originated from internal world [of the artist] and seeks to manifest the living and over-flowing aspects, makes artist tear down the stylistic boundaries and attempt to display artist's self in the way he is and to reveal the feeling without any change in it."<sup>194</sup> He also explained his emphasis on form in "Artistic Creation" published in Issue 4 of the magazine. He argued that the authenticity of form (arising from the internal world of the artist) was due to its enactment without any intermediary or shame and fear from the external traditions and regulations. He also explained that this freedom enabled the artist to combine and shape new and various forms and this was in contrast to the external world that sought integrity via style.<sup>195</sup> Therefore, he considered two internal and external worlds for an artistic creation and the degree of artistry of an artist depended on his distance from each of these worlds: "If attracted to the internal world, the artist will live the art entirely and will hate to display it via style since he finds the language of style inexpressive [...]. And if the external world is selected, art will be destroyed."<sup>196</sup>

191 Irani, *Šenākt-e honar [Identification of Art]*, 30.

192 [Ibid.] «انگیزه‌های این جوشش هر چه باشد نتیجه‌ی آن فردی است و در خود رمزهایی دارد که جز بر آفریننده بر دیگران روشن نیست.»

193 Ibid., 21.

194 «فرم که از درون سرچشمه می‌گیرد و می‌خواهد نمودهای جان‌دار را همچنان زنده و به نمایش آورد، هنرمند را به گسلاندن بندهای روش و می‌دارد و در کوشش است خویشتن او را آنچنان که هست بنمایاند و رشته احساس را بی اندک تغییری از درون به خارج آورد [...]» [Ibid., 22.]

195 Ibid., 15.

196 «در کشش به سوی جهان درون، هنرمند هنر را سرایا زندگی می‌کند و از نمایش آن بیزار می‌جوید و زبان روش را بر بیان خواست‌هایش [...] و آن گاه که جهان برون برگزیده شود، هنر نیستی می‌پذیرد.» [Ibid., 17–18.]

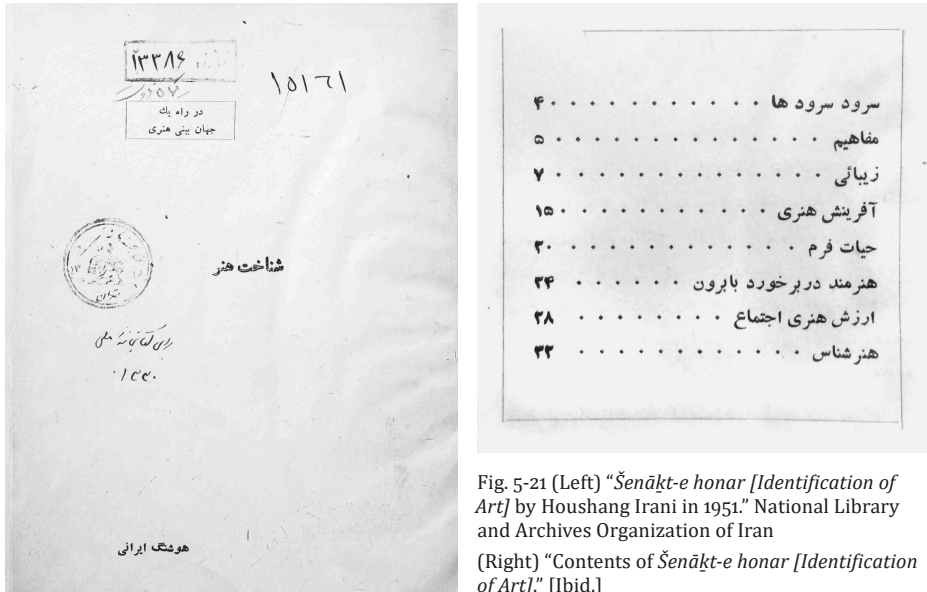


Fig. 5-21 (Left) “*Šenākt-e honar* [Identification of Art] by Houshang Irani in 1951.” National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

(Right) “Contents of *Šenākt-e honar* [Identification of Art].” [Ibid.]

The second series of *Fighting Cock* magazine, in addition to the articles that focused on Formalism, also published in each of its issues one poem by Irani that represented poetry with emphasis on the form. Irani began to introduce this type of poetry via *Fighting Cock* magazine and, after the state’s ban on the magazine he published these poems in his first book *Deep Purple on Grey* in September 1951. His poems seem to reject all aesthetical limitations of classical poetry, while at the same time they reveal new potentials within. In a review of his poems, in both the four issues of *Fighting Cock* magazine<sup>197</sup> and in his book (thirteen poems), one realizes that he has attempted to depict a frustration about his surrounding via resorting to dream and Surrealism. In poem *Jazira-ye gomšoda* [“Lost Island”] one reads: “Let every one knows that I/ Adore you, you the never-ending wandering/ Your painful beauties/ With their all fears/ And from the beat of your anxieties/ I seek my lost island (the fable of realities).”<sup>198</sup> According to many critics, Irani’s Formalistic poems were means of ridiculing the predominant art of his time and to fight against its rationalism to reach form as an authentic reality. Also, these critics consider a Dadaistic similarity in Irani’s poems in terms of his suspicion about art and literature that gradually took on a conscious, subversive role. The important similarities between Irani and the Dadaists was that his poems were at the same time destructive and constructive, serious and mocking and reduced poetry to its most pre-

197 In each issue respectively were published *Hā* [“Ha”], *Kabud* [“Dark Blue”], *Kavir* [“Desert”] and *Kafaqān* [“Asphyxia”].

198 «بگذار همه بدانند که من/ تو را، ای سرگردانی بی انتها،/ زیباییهای درآوردت را/ با همه دلهره هایشان، می پرستم/ و از تپش اضطراب هایت/ «*Jazira-ye gomšoda* [Irani, *Banafš-e tond* [Deep Purple], 34.] می جویم.»





importantly it was the effect of society's scornful behavior against Irani's views in the magazine. Many new literary forms that he had applied in his poems became means of mockery for the critics and they considered his ideas as a "song by an un-welcomed cock" in the Iranian society at the time.<sup>204</sup> *Wave* magazine took on its work with a logo designed by Irani in March 1952, and upon Irani's retreat from his radicalism, the magazine became a moderate phase in his work.<sup>205</sup> It was since *Wave* and *Cock's Claw* that, possibly due to their less destructive approach, Ziapour and Sheibani rejoined the association and wrote in the magazine.<sup>206</sup> In *Wave* one notices a certain inclination for introduction of the Western and Eastern philosophy, mysticism, poetry and literature in general whereas on the last page of the magazine was written: "*Wave* will only publish those articles that are in-line with its guidelines."<sup>207</sup> [Fig. 5-22] In the only issue of the magazine, members of the association concentrated more on the translation of works which rather exemplified the role of dream and imagination in representation of artist's internal world.<sup>208</sup> With the reunion of Ziapour in *Cock's Claw*, the magazine also increased its artistic discussions, whereas the famous motto of the association by which the fighting cocks began their work; i.e., "Bring new word that the new word has other value," was written below the logo of the magazine together with a notice of "In this magazine only artistic issues will be discussed." [Fig. 5-23] *Cock's Claw*, with only 8 pages included important texts criticizing the restrictive atmosphere and its influence on the modern artists retreating from their goals. The restrictive atmosphere was discussed according to both the state's cultural policies for a conservative national art and the Social Realism supported by the Left Party. For instance, Sepehri published his translation of the article ("Picasso Is Complained") that officially prohibited Social Realism and referred to Surrealist artists who rose against communist policies penetrating among artists and the literati.<sup>209</sup> Or, Mohasses, in a scornful text, had criticized artistic programs of the national radio in which old imitative arts predominated and, in the case of a few programs on modern art, they had included huge technical mistakes.<sup>210</sup> But the most noteworthy texts published in *Cock's Claw* were two long articles by Ziapour and Gharib. Ziapour in his text *Har bār ke fru bioftim bāz bā qodrat-e bištari bar miķizim* ["Every Time that We Fall, We Rise Stronger"]

204 Shiri, "Az jīg-e banafš [From Purple Scream]," 33.

205 Aghamohammadi, *Marā bā daryā-hā-ye morda kāri nist [I Have Nothing to Do with the Dead Seas]*, 37.

206 *Wave* was published with Abdollah Faryar (writer, translator and the license-owner) and the collaboration of other artists, poets and translators such as Parviz Dariush, Manouchehr Sheibani, Houshang Irani, Abdolhossein Ehsani and others. *Cock's Claw* also continued its work with collaboration of A. Vosouq (license-owner), Bahman Mohasses (chief editor), Jalil Ziapour, Gholamhossein Gharib and Sohrab Sepehri.

207 «موج آثاری که جیت درج در آن ارسال دارند، اگر با روش خود همگام یابد منتشر خواهد ساخت.» [Moj, no. 1 (1951): n.p.]

208 For instance, Irani's translations of works by Rabindranath Tagore, Goethe and Buddha.

209 Turner, "Pikāso mored-e e'terāz qarār migirad [Picasso Is Complained]," 1 & 6.

210 Bahman Mohasses, "Wa ammā rādio-ye mā wa honarnamāi-hā-ye ān! [And about Our Radio and Its Artistries!]," *Panja korus*, no.1 (1953): 7.

had argued that the Iranian art space was suffering an inertia that the only way to break free from it was through artists' hard work and an unyielding fight against it. Fighting Cock Association, as he further explained, accordingly took on this combat despite a majority of artists who remained indifferent about their art space. The aim of Fighting Cock was to create an atmosphere in which art could be both debated and criticized, but the majority in order not to lose their symbolic and financial benefits deferred this combat and obstructed the young modern artists by mockery, negative resistance against their activities and threatened them to silence.<sup>211</sup> Regarding such resistance by the majority against artistic debates and criticisms, Ziapour wrote: "Yes, [...] becoming modern is a heavy burden: it destroys the habit, it unsettles the laziness and lassitude or the peace of mind which shapes upon this lassitude!"<sup>212</sup> At the same time, he attacked the government for directly exacerbating this condition. With reference to his interrogation in 1949 for publishing *Fighting Cock* magazine, he denounced the regime for its illiteracy toward art and culture. Being intrigued by the opponents of modern art, the regime had interrogated Ziapour about whether he had any written permission from the state to promote Cubism and modern art: "Shame on this illiteracy and barbarity. These are the very [authorities] who want to educate the young generation but are affected by personal intrigues of their friends and circles [...]. They are promoters of a compulsory culture."<sup>213</sup> This article was in fact an ultimatum by Fighting Cock Association to the government and the opponents that their intrigues could not eliminate the modern artists. Notwithstanding all frame-ups attributing the fighting cocks to the Left or Right Parties, Ziapour emphasized on the opening of a space in which all groups could debate their views and criticize each other: "We will never keep quiet [...]. Every time that we fall, we will rise stronger and every time we keep quiet, we will attack with more pungent words [...]. We live in this society, thus we have the right to intervene as the experts in its artistic issues."<sup>214</sup> Accordingly the same behavior is seen in Gharib's article when he reviews the association's role since its foundation. From the very first paragraph of the text, he warned the readers that he would no more have respect for the moderation the association had applied to its opponents in the past years. This was a compromise by the members, he argued, and in the course of time it would prove that resistance of the opponents to modern art was rooted in a parasitic quality in them.<sup>215</sup> The opponents who were established in their field were afraid of breaking the traditions since these traditions gave them an

211 Ziapour, "Har bār ke fru bioftim [Every Time that We Fall]," 1-3.

212 «آری [...] تحصیل کردن و زحمت کشیدن همیشه مشکل است. ناز هیایی بار سنگینی است: عادت را به هم میزند، تنبلی و سستی یا آرامش [Ibid., 2.] خاطر را >آرامشی را که مبتنی بر سست عنصری است» از هم می‌پاشد!

213 «تف بر این بی‌سوادی و بی‌فرهنگی. این کسان هستند که می‌خواهند جوانان را بپرورانند. همین‌ها هستند که زیر نفوذ اغراض شخصی [Ibid.] دوستان و اطرافیان خود پاپوش می‌سازند [...] این‌ها پروردگان فرهنگ تحمیلی هستند.»

214 «ما آرام نخواهیم نشست [...] هر بار که فروافتیم باز با قدرت بیشتری بر می‌خیزیم و هر بار که سکوت کنیم باز با زبانی تیزتر و [Ibid., 3.] برنده‌تر می‌تازیم [...] ما که در این محیط زندگی می‌کنیم حق داریم که در چگونگی امور هنری که کار ماست دخالت کنیم.»

215 Gharib, "Čegunegi-ye važ'yyat-e korus jangi [The Status of Fighting Cock]," 5.

artistic privilege and kept the demand for their works. Furthermore, if these artists seemed to make new changes in their works, their conservatism did not let them surpass an imitative replica of the art, novels or poetry of Europeans or the Social Realism propagandized by the Left. It was this imitation and platitude that made Fighting Cock argue: “You imitators who are used to have constantly one owner and lord in front of you, stop this imitation and banal beggary [and] be under no condition frightened by the grandeur of the foreign art.”<sup>216</sup>

After the final ban in 1953, the association did not publish its magazine again until 1979, and instead, the members collaborated with other magazines and newspapers. The most important magazines in which all members collaborated at the same time were *Apadana* and *Modern Art* being published for limited issues in 1956. *Apadana* (two issues) and *Modern Art* (one issue) were in fact one magazine and the publications of the Nationalist Party.<sup>217</sup> In addition to the presence of all fighting cocks in *Apadana*, its cover design was close to *Wave* magazine (designed by

Irani) and it contained similar sections and guidelines to *Fighting Cock* magazine with emphasis on national modern art. In the first Issue of *Apadana* one reads an editorial by Abolghasem Masoudi (1930–2009, chief editor) with the same rhetoric of the fighting cocks: “The artistic magazine of *Apadana* announces beginning of a modern art movement from this issue [...]. Our work and art, is the creative and grand art of the living bodies: those who proudly write a poem, paint and also scream out their complaint against the platitude caused by the art dealers [...]. We

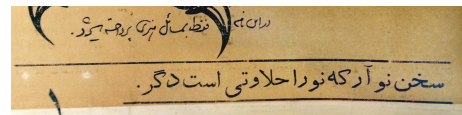
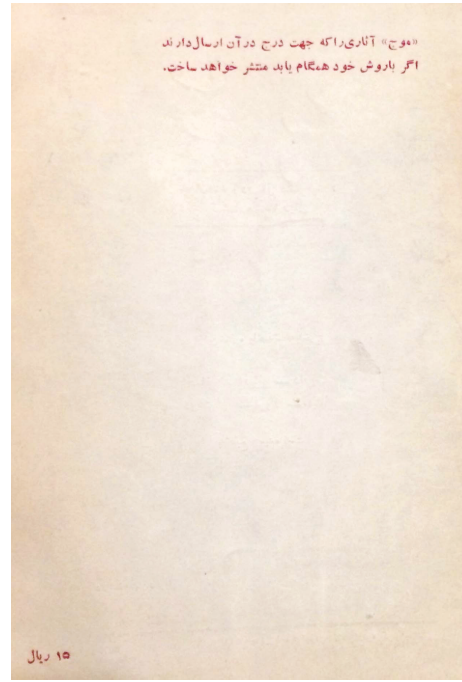


Fig. 5-22 (Top) “The announcement of *Wave* magazine on its last page,” in *Moj*, no.1 (1952). National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

Fig. 5-23 (Bottom) “The motto of Fighting Cock Association below the logo and notice of the magazine on the front cover,” in *Panja korus*, no.1 (1953): 1. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

<sup>216</sup> «ای مقلدینی که عادت کرده‌اید پیوسته یک صاحب و ارباب را در جلو خود داشته باشید، از این تقلید، این گدایی مبتذل دست بردارید، [Ibid.] بیهوده از عظمت هنر خارجی وحشت نکنید.»

<sup>217</sup> Amirsoleiman Azima, the chief director and license-owner of *Apadana*, was a member of Iran Nation Party (1951) belonging to the National Front in Iran.

have a strong connection to our 'selves' and upon our pride-arousing national art we move proudly toward the freedom of expression."<sup>218</sup> Although the editorial's rhetoric was similar to the fighting cocks in promising to defeat the idols of tradition,<sup>219</sup> *Apadana* and *Modern Art* continued in fact the same moderate approach having begun with *Wave* magazine. In addition to repeated bans and society's scornful reaction, one should note the political air of the mid-1950s as another significant factor influencing *Apadana* and *Modern Art's* moderate behavior. The first half of the 1950s that coincided with Mosaddeq's premiership and was the most flourishing time for the press in terms of freedom of expression and competition between the magazines. This condition even continued after the coup d'état of 1953 and the overthrow of Mosaddeq's Nationalist government. But, not long after, the regime established its supervisory institutes and systems of control over the press that enacted limits and restrictions on the magazines. A review of the articles in *Apadana* and *Modern Art* exemplifies this disillusionment among artists. Irani, who published his last poems and articles in these two magazines and resigned forever from the literary and artistic fields, published his translation of T. S. Eliot's *Ash Wednesday* (1930) in Issue 3 of *Modern Art*. In fact, the frustration caused by the failure of the National Party and the dark political shadow over the Iranian intellectuals during the second half of 1950s made poets like Eliot highly attractive for Iranian artists.<sup>220</sup> In the introduction to this translation, one observes how Irani referred to Eliot's application of Brahman and Buddhist concepts for the sake of their peaceful effects: "Eliot searches for the human being and mankind's poetry beyond the superficial manhood. He surpasses the titles and seeks an answer to human internal anxieties via nameless motifs which represent a deeper reality."<sup>221</sup> This disillusionment was also described [by Gharib in his story *Paranda-ye šegeft* ["The Wonder Bird"] in the same issue of *Modern Art* and pointed to the disenchantment of the modern artists. The story was about a bird (presumably a fighting cock) that described its frustration with the antagonism of his surroundings that had destroyed his hope to fly. In this story, Gharib compared the fighting cocks to the birds who were living in a world with habitants addicted to the norms and, therefore, they threatened the flight of these birds. In the words of the bird it reads: "How wonderful it is to live among so many enemies. Wherever one finds hope, the antagonism roots it out [...]. I wanted that they took away these great wings because they had no role but

«مجموعه هنری آپادانا با انتشار این شماره آغاز جنبش هنری نوینی را اعلام می‌دارد [...] کار ما، هنر ما، هنر خلاق و عظیم زنده‌هاست: 218 زنده‌هایی که مغرورانه می‌سرایند، رسم می‌کنند و از سوی دیگر، فریاد اعتراض خود را علیه ابتدال کارهای دلان بازار هنر بلند کرده‌اند [...] ما با خویشستن خویش، پیوند و صمیمیتی استوار و ورجاوند داریم و در این گذر است که بر پایه هنر پرفخر ملی با غرور به سوی آزادی می‌رویم.» [Abolghasem Masoudi, "Editorial," *Apadāna*, no. 1 (1956): 1–2.]

219 Ibid., 1.

220 Shams Langeroudi, *Tāriḩ-e taḩlilī-ye še'r-e now [Analytical History of Modern Poetry]*, vol. 2 (Tehran: Markaz, 1991), 285.

221 «الیوت بشر را و شعر بشریت را در آن سوی ظاهر آدمیت جستجو می‌کند. از نام‌ها فراتر می‌رود و در نقش‌های بی‌نام که واقعیت [...] «[Tahbaz, *Korus jangi-ye bimānand [The Unique Fighting Cock]*, 275.]

causing pain in me. What is the use of these wings? The wings that these people force me to hide them constantly in an alluring cover and they never let me any hope to fly with them."<sup>222</sup>

In the first Issue of *Apadana*, Ziapour also displayed his despair toward society in "The Meaning of Modern Art." He pointed to the uncomfortable and scornful reactions of the Iranian audience to modern art despite all efforts that artists had done since the second half of 1940s. Accordingly, he reviewed the definition of modern art and emphasized that both artists and society should consider their behavior and reactions.<sup>223</sup> As a matter of fact, "The Meaning of Modern Art," which was a short three-page text, was a quick review by Ziapour over his *New Theory* and articles he had published in *Fighting Cock* magazine. In many parts of this article one reads such central ideas as attention to the Formalistic features of the modern works as a value rather than their subject matters or conceptual dimensions. Or he argued his *New Theory's* core idea that considered natural and familiar shapes as obstacles for an artistic expression.<sup>224</sup> Additionally, he described other characteristics of modern art such as its adaptability over time. In other words, since new changes occurred in the thoughts and feelings of the artists in the course of time, therefore artists needed new forms for their expression too. The essentiality of the new forms (also new colours and compositions) were due to the fact that the new thoughts and feelings, as an artists' internal world, could no more be restricted by tradition, social expectation or any other regulation.<sup>225</sup>

Despite the fact that almost all fighting cocks were collaborating with *Apadana* and *Modern Art*, they could survive for no more than three issues and were closed down in 1956. In addition to all pressing grounds being discussed for *Fighting Cock's* publications, lack of comparable financial resources (as for the political parties particularly the Left Party)<sup>226</sup> should also be noted. The last series of the magazine, again with the title of *Fighting Cock*, began its work in 1979, a few months after the Islamic Revolution, with the reunion of the association's original members (Ziapour, Shirvani and Gharib). In this series, which was simultaneous with the association's 31st anniversary, they printed the logo of *Desert* magazine (three profiles of Ziapour, Gharib and Shirvani) with this text next to it: "The fighting cocks have again begun their artistic and cultural combat."<sup>227</sup> [Fig. 5-24] This series, including five issues within May 19 to July 21, was published by Democratic Culture and Freedom Party.

«چه زیباست در میان این همه دشمن زندگی کردن. هر جا امیدی پدیدار می‌شود، جز دشمن چیزی به کار نیست [...] می‌خواستم که این بال‌های عظیم را که جز دردی سنگین برآیم ندارند از من باز ستانند. این بال‌ها به چه کارم می‌خورند. بال‌هایی که ناگنبر پیوسته باید در روپوشی فریبنا پوشیده بماند و هرگز امید پرواز با آن‌ها در من نگذاشته‌اند.» [Gholamhossein Gharib, "Paranda-ye šeğeft [The Wonder Bird]," *Honar-e now*, no. 3 (1956): 20–21.]

<sup>223</sup> Ziapour, "Maḥmū-e honar-e now [The Meaning of Modern Art], 3."

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, 3–5.

<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, 4–5.

<sup>226</sup> Shams Langeroudi, *Tārīḫ-e taḥlīlī-ye še'r-e now [Analytical History of Modern Poetry]*, vol.1 (Tehran: Markaz, 1991), 523.

<sup>227</sup> «خروس جنگی‌ها نبرد مجدد فرهنگی و هنری خود را آغاز کرده‌اند.» [*Korus jangi*, no. 3 (1979): 6.]

In fact, this Party was an alliance between art and cultural institutes, associations and syndicates reflecting their news in *Fighting Cock* magazine.<sup>228</sup> The magazine in this series had adopted rather a politico-cultural approach in defense of *freedom of speech*, which was clearly in contrast to its previous series that officially declared itself to be only artistic and apolitical. Basically, by adding new columns such as *Moškel-e yārān* ["Fellows' Problem"] or *Arzyābi wa dāvāri* ["Evaluation and Judgment"], the magazine was rather reflecting the problems that the artists had been dealing with since the Revolution. This goal was seriously pursued by publishing different letters of protest against the Islamic regime's bills of censorship on arts, violent texts by Ziapour attacking Shiite Islam's positions on the visual arts and music, statements by Syndicate of Artists against the state's interventions and news relating to *Andiša wa āzādi* [*Thought and Freedom*], a publication by Iranian Writers' Association. This political activation of *Fighting Cock* was influenced by the restrictions that the new government was exerting on the fields of art and culture, in particular, the national culture that formed the core of attention for *Fighting Cock*. In the editorial of the first Issue, Shirvani—chief editor and director of the magazine—wrote: "Is it possible at all to sit comfortably and watch the death of Iranian national culture? [...] As a servant of Iranian culture, I suggest to the country's cultural societies that all art and cultural associations, centers, groups, syndicates and unions unite for founding the 'Democratic Culture and Freedom Party' [...] and to safeguard Iran's national art and culture and to remind the state [...] that only the Democratic Culture and Freedom Party has the right to protect Iran's national art and culture."<sup>229</sup> The most critical measure by the state that aroused artists' reaction was the closing down of the important art and cultural organizations in which modern artists had invested efforts. This was precisely the great failure that Shirvani argued in his article *Ānča az dast midahim* ["What We Lose"] in Issue 2 of the magazine. In this text, he referred to bans on National Organization of Iranian Folklore, National Organization of Ballet, Tehran Symphony Orchestra, Opera House and Roudaki Hall (for ballet, opera and music) and attacked the state: "I do not know if they [authorities] ever consider the history of foundation behind any of these artistic organizations when they decide to close them down, have they ever evaluated all the difficulties that artists have gone through to establish these organizations [...]"<sup>230</sup>

228 Among the centers making the Democratic Culture and Freedom Party, in addition to *Fighting Cock*, were *Anjoman-e košnevisān* [Society of Iranian Calligraphers], Iranian Writers' Association, *Kānun-e honarmandān wa pažuhešgarān* [Association of Artists and Researchers] and *Sāzmān-e namāyesh-e irān* [Iran's Department of Drama].

229 «مگر می‌شود نشست، آسوده بود و مرگ فرهنگ ملی ایران را نظاره کرد [...] به عنوان یک خدمتگزار به فرهنگ ایران، به جوامع فرهنگی کشور پیشنهاد می‌کنم، کلبه انجمن‌ها، کانون‌ها، گروه‌ها، سندیکاها و اتحادیه‌های فرهنگی و هنری با پایه‌گذاری جبهه‌ی دموکراتیک فرهنگ و آزادی» [...] متحد گردند [...] و هنر ملی ایران را حراست نمایند، و به دولت [...] یادآور شوند که تنها جبهه‌ی دموکراتیک فرهنگ و آزادی» [...] است که حق دارد نگهبان و حارس فرهنگ و هنر ملی ایران باشد [...]» [Hasan Shirvani, "Zendān-e kalām [The Prison of the Word]," *Korus jangi*, no. 1 (1979): 1.]

230 «من نمی‌دانم آن‌گاه که برای تعطیل هر یک از این سازمان‌های هنری تصمیم گرفته می‌شود، به تاریخچه تأسیس آن توجه شده، مشکلاتی [...] را احتمال شده‌اند تا به آن سازمان سر و صورت داده‌اند ارزیابی گردیده [...]» [Hasan Shirvani, "Ānča az dast midahim [What We Lose]," *Korus jangi*, no. 2 (1979): 2.]



Fig. 5-24 "The logo of *Desert* magazine published in *Fighting Cock* magazine (1979) on the 31st anniversary of Fighting Cock Association," in *Korus jangi*, no. 3 (1979): 6. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

In almost every issue of the third series of *Fighting Cock*, poetry comprised an important part. In accordance with the antagonistic guidelines of the magazine, the new poems were this time selected based on their message, rather than formal features. Many of these poems obviously pointed to the post-Islamic Revolution and the conditions of the artists not as a romanticized image but as an invitation to resistance and hope.<sup>231</sup> In its third Issue, the magazine published a short section from a long poem by Ahmad Shamlou (1925–2000), *Še’ri ke zendegist* ["The Poem that Is Life"]. This poem was written during year of the poet’s imprisonment in 1954.<sup>232</sup> In his poem, Shamlou criticized Persian classical poetry for its mere romanticism and lack of any potentiality for protest and rebellion. According to Shamlou, it was the new poetry that, with its roots in life, could influence and make a change. The section of the poem being published in *Fighting Cock* magazine read: "Today poetry is the weapon of people./ Since poems/ Themselves are a tree-branch of a jungle/ [...] / The poet of today is not unfamiliar with/ The common pains of the masses;/ With their lips/ He smiles./ With his own bone/ He grafts/ The pain and hope of the people/ [...]."<sup>233</sup>

It was after the last collaboration of the members in *Apadana* and *Modern Art* that no collective work was seen among them. Irani’s despair caused by society’s reaction to his poems and ideas drew him into isolation and other members involved themselves with cultural projects and educational posts that the state had offered or they published their writings in various newspapers and magazines. It should

231 Poets who collaborated with the third series of *Fighting Cock* magazine or those whose poems were reflected Sohrab Sepehri, Ahmad Shamlou, Mahmoud Khoshnam and Mohammad Nehzati.

232 Ahmad Shamlou was a poet and writer who in periods before and after Islamic Revolution was recognized as a politically oppositionary. Shamlou is renowned for inventing *Še’r-e sepid* or *šāmlu-i* [Persian Blank Poetry].

233 «امروز شعر، حربه خلق است./ زیرا که شاعران/ خود شاخه‌ای از جنگل خلق‌اند/ [...] / بیگانه نیست شاعر امروز/ با دردهای مشترک [...] / «[Ahmad Shamlou, "Še’r-i ke zendegist [The Poem That Is Life]," *Korus jangi*, no. 3 (1979): 2.]



be noted that the turning of the state's cultural policies toward national modern art from the second half of the 1950s could prepare a context of collaboration between artists and the Department of Fine Arts. But appearance of the artists in this atmosphere, as it was discussed, was not a contribution to the cultural policies and rather followed educational aims. Many of these collaborations, regarding modern artists' concern for the traditional arts, covered a range of positions such as directorship or teaching at art academies and participation in research projects around Iranian folklores offered by the Ministry of Art and Culture.<sup>234</sup> [Fig. 5-25] Although the fighting cocks never gathered together under an official association again, their cultural role was continued by the next private art associations and galleries being established from the mid-1950s.<sup>235</sup>



Fig. 5-25 "Jalil Ziapour explaining an artwork to the Empress Farah Diba on her visit to Department of Museums and Folkloric Art," in "Bāzdid-e 'oliā ḥazrat malaka farah dibā pahlavi az edāra-ye kol-e muza-hā wa farhang-e 'amma [The Visit of the Empress Farah Diba Pahlavi to the Department of Museums and Folkloric Art]," *Akbār-e honar-mandān*, no. 7 (1959): 23. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran

## 5.2.2 Debates and Exhibition Contributions

In addition to the publication of *Fighting Cock* magazine, other means of cultural intervention by the members to build their own audience were debates and exhibitions. In order to study these two activities, one should consider the following points. First, *Fighting Cock's* foothold (Ziapour's atelier) only concentrated on the magazine and debates by the members and it did not exhibit any work of art due to lack of enough space at the atelier.<sup>236</sup> Second, as a main member, Ziapour was the only painter in the association and his research preferences limited his painting.<sup>237</sup>

<sup>234</sup> For instance, Ziapour, who at the Department's invitation had participated in the foundation of the Academy of Fine Arts in 1953, continued teaching based at this academy and took on consultative posts at the Ministry of Education for programming the courses relating the visual arts and traditional crafts in 1965. Also, he was responsible for organizing exhibitions on research projects he made about Iranian folklore. For detailed information about Ziapour's collaboration with the Department of Fine Arts see: M. Haghmohammadi, "Ostād jalil ziāpur, pedar-e honar-e naqāši-ye now-e irān [Master] Jalil Ziapour, Father of Iranian Modern Painting]," (MA. Thesis, Soore University, 2007), 39–41.

<sup>235</sup> Such galleries as Aesthetic by Marcos Grogorian in 1954 and *Honar-e jadid* [Modern Art] by Jazeh Tabatabai in 1955 as well as the artists' group of Hall of Iran had similar activities such as separately introducing new modern art styles, holding debates and exhibitions and publishing pamphlets, magazine, manifesto, etc.

<sup>236</sup> Mojabi, *Sarāmadān-e honar-e now* [Masters of Modern Art], 44.

<sup>237</sup> The best-known paintings by Ziapour during the official years of association's activity (until mid-1950s) were 15 pieces.

Regarding these two conditions and notwithstanding the earlier-discussed exhibitions at which Ziapour displayed a few of his paintings,<sup>238</sup> the exhibition contributions of the association should rather be considered as members' participation in different exhibitions to debate on the displayed works for the visitors or to hold talks on relevant topics. [Fig. 5-26] The debates and talks were held either at the place of the exhibitions such as Apadana Gallery, Mehragan, Guity and other clubs or at the place of Fighting Cock Association. Members were either invited for exhibition receptions to hold talks or they deliberately went to the shows to explain the artworks to the visitors.<sup>239</sup> The sessions at Ziapour's atelier were held every Friday afternoon for three hours by one of the fighting cocks as people sat on the atelier's stools outdoors in the yard to listen to the talks. Ziapour described this ambiance as such: "The enthusiastic audience, from young to old, from bureaucratic to cultural, sat on the stools and listened to us. They asked questions during the talks and, thus, the debates were formed. They were spirited talks. [...] Sooner or later they found their answer (either they found it themselves or we explained for them)."<sup>240</sup> Of course these talks also took on other forms such as interviews made by the radio and magazines with the association, or members talked at schools, congresses and festivals.<sup>241</sup> The debates held at exhibitions of Apadana Gallery by the association became more controversial. In addition to the talks at the inaugural receptions and regular speeches by the artists, there were weekly gatherings and parties in which people surrounded the paintings as artists explained the works hanging on the walls. Javadipour, in reference to the significant role of the fighting cocks' talks at the gallery said: "[Ziapour] similar to other fellow artists stood next to the paintings and a group of people gathered around him and he discussed the differences of modern art with classical art and its goals. This activity was very helpful in shaping a familiarity with modern art—familiarity of the people who not until then even cared for art."<sup>242</sup>

**238** Among the limited exhibitions with Ziapour's participation after his first show-up at *Exhibition of Iranian Fine Arts* by VOKS in 1946 were a solo show at Ferdowsi Theater (1950), a group show at Apadana Gallery (1950), the first and second exhibitions of *Tehran Biennial of Painting* (1958 and 1960) and the first *International Biennial of Tehran* (1974).

**239** *Jalili ziāpur [Jalil Ziapour]*, directed by Houshang Azadivar (Tehran: Goruh-e farhang, adab wa honar-e šabaka-ye dow-ye šedā wa simā [Department of Culture, Literature and Art of IRIB2], 1989), DVD.

**240** «شوندگان مشتاق از پیر تا جوان، از آدم اداری تا فرهنگی بر چهارپایه‌ها می‌نشستند و به سخنانمان گوش می‌دادند و در فاصله بین سخنرانی پرسش‌هایی می‌کردند و به بحث می‌پرداختند. بحث پرشوری بود. [...] دیر یا زود جواب خود را دریافت می‌کردند (با خود پیدا می‌کردیم)». [Jalil Ziapour, "Lozum-e hamrāhi bā taḥāvol wa masuliat-e honarmand [The Essential Accompany with Development and Artist's Responsibility]," *Mehr-e irān*, October 20, 1949.]

**241** Such as first *Festival of Culture and People* (1977), *Congress of Iranian History and Culture* (1970–1979) and *Congress of Iranian Studies* (1970–1979). In these festivals and congresses, Ziapour, for instance talked about Iranian folklore (costume, motifs, etc.), art and ancient civilizations.

**242** «[ضیاءپور] مثل بقیه دوستان در آن مجموعه پای تابلوها می‌ایستاد و گروهی را دور خودش جمع می‌کرد و توضیح می‌داد که هنر جدید چه تفاوتی با هنر کلاسیک دارد و دنبال چه اهدافی است و این قضیه خیلی به شناخت مردمی کمک کرد که تا آن زمان اصلاً به هنر توجهی نداشتند.» [Amini, "Dora-ye eskis ziāpur rā moteḥavel kard [The Sketch Program Changed Ziapour]."]

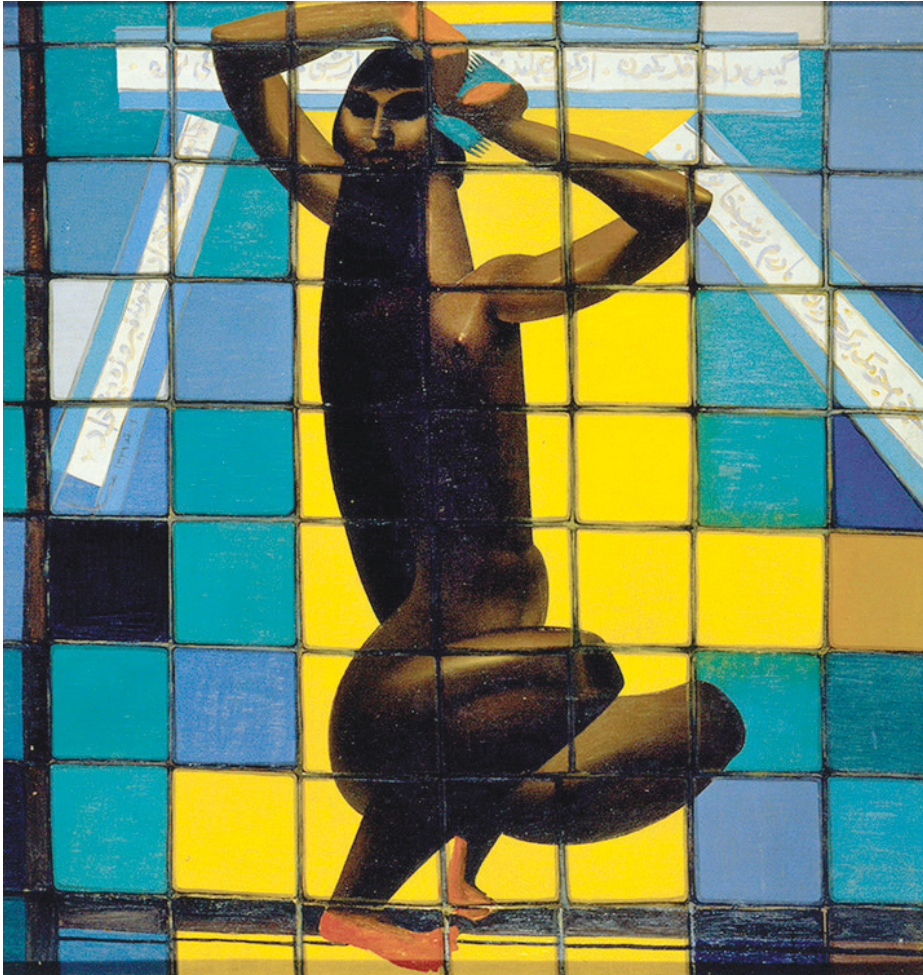


Fig. 5-26 Jalil Ziapour, *Zeynab kätun* [*Lady Zeinab*], 1962. Oil on fiberboard, 120 × 95 cm, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art

It should be noted that it was Fighting Cock Association who initiated the habit of holding exhibitions (in collaboration with Apadana Gallery) and debating the displayed works by artists for the first time. The fighting cocks themselves approved this habit of displaying works and their analysis for the visitors being first taken by them and as a significant step toward the creation of a “spirit for scrutiny in arts.”<sup>243</sup> The members, in their talks and texts, highlighted this initiative role repeat-

243 Jalil Ziapour, “Nowjui wa nowgarāi: goftogu bā jalil ziāpur [Innovation and Modernism: An Interview with Jalil Ziapour],” in *Majmu’a soḡanrāni-hā-ye honari-tahqīqi-ye zendayād ostād jalil ziāpur* [*A Collection of Master Jalil Ziapour’s Art and Research Lectures*], ed. Shahin Saber Tehrani (Tehran: Jahād-e dānešgāhi, 2003), 298.

edly.<sup>244</sup> In fact, they considered their collaboration with Apadana or other exhibition spaces in terms of debates on exhibited works a gentle step toward a change in old ways of approaching works of art by people.<sup>245</sup> Also the newspapers and magazines that reflected the texts of these debates and talks, acknowledged the significance of this role by the artists. For instance, *Irān* newspaper in appreciation of this role wrote in 1949: “[...] in our opinion, Ziapour’s talk is very noteworthy as he begins a discussion and prepares the ground for further dialogues between proponents and opponents.”<sup>246</sup> [Fig. 5-27] As it can be inferred from the words of the members, such debates and exhibition contributions had both essential and compulsive reasons. Above all, according to a lack of knowledge about modern art in society, it was compulsive for the artists to update people about it. In fact, in one of the talks held at Fighting Cock Association, Ziapour argued this as: “I often had to hold talks or write articles in the press out of an expediency or necessity in order to inform the public and curious audience about various [art] styles, their features and grounds and reasons of their formation so that people became updated about world’s art developments.”<sup>247</sup> The other reason arose out of a necessity for modern artists to combat their opponents. These opponents applied every kind of conspiracy to undermine modern art. They accused modern artists of insulting their idols of tradition and that they intended to destroy the national culture or accused them of having political dependencies. For the fighting cocks, therefore, debates and exhibition contributions acted as a means of illumination on their apolitical intentions and their position in relation to the tradition and national culture. It was this situation that the fighting cocks asserted their intention clearly in one of their talks: “So, we referred to this [intention] in our debates on suitable occasions and informed the opponents, who aimed to debar our advancement by intriguing and instigating the people, about our measures.”<sup>248</sup> After rejoining *Cock’s Claw* magazine, Ziapour defended the notation that the debates should continue despite all frauds by their opponents: “We will discuss the art issues with any group and institute. We will be open to criticisms and will also argue them. Our combat is only for the promotion

244 In later texts and interviews by fighting cocks, they acknowledged their debates and exhibition contributions as a new measure undertaken by their association. [See Ziapour’s review over Fighting Cock Association in third series of *Fighting Cock* magazine (Ziapour, “Naqš-e nehžat-e korus jangi [The Role of Fighting Cock Movement],” 4) or in Ziapour’s interview with Houshang Azadivar (*Jalili ziāpur [Jalil Ziapour]*, directed by Houshang Azadivar [Tehran: Goruh-e farhang, adab wa honar-e šabaka-ye dow-ye sedā wa simā [Department of Culture, Literature and Art of IRIB2], 1989), DVD.)

245 “Goftogu bā korus jangi [An Interview with Fighting Cock],” 277.

246 [...] به عقیده ما سخنرانی آقای ضیاءپور، از این جهت که بحثی را شروع می‌کند و سر صحبت را باز می‌نماید و زمینه گفت‌وگوهای قرار می‌گیرد و موافقین و مخالفین می‌سازد، بسیار جالب است.» [“Matn-e konferāns-e žiāpur [Ziapour’s Text of the Conference].”]

247 «ناگزیر بودم هرازچندگاهی بنا به لزوم و مصلحت برای آگاهی کنجکاوان و عموم، از مکاتب مختلف و زمینه‌ها و علت وجودی و خصوصیات آن‌ها سخنرانی‌هایی ایراد کنم یا در رسانه‌ها بنویسم، تا آگاهی‌هایی به مردم به قصد نمایاندن چگونگی وضع میدان هنر در جهان [The Developments of Painting in Our World],” Jalil Ziapour, “Taḥvolāt-e naqāši dar jahān-e mā [The Developments of Painting in Our World],” Website of Jalil Ziapour, accessed July 13, 2018, <http://www.ziapour.com/lectures/ما-در-جهان-ما/>.

248 «پس در فرصت‌های مناسب این مطلب را در سخن‌هایمان بازگو می‌کردیم و مخالفان را که می‌خواستند از راه تحمیق و برانگیختن [Ziapour, “Lozum-e hamrāhi [The Essential Accompany].”]

of art.”<sup>249</sup> The influence of the contributions in debates and exhibitions was to the extent that, shortly before fighting cocks’ final collective work in magazines of *Apadana* and *Modern Art*, Ziapour confirmed the modern artists’ success in the promotion of modern art in society: “There is no one who does not know about the artistic movement (in particular the modern painting) in Iran, in fact that clamor and manifestations in painting and its fast development was not seen in any other field of art. The reason [for this privilege] was also due to the debates that were held on it [...]”<sup>250</sup>

A review of the talks and exhibition debates by the fighting cocks on different occasions such as exhibitions, congresses, festivals and so forth reveals four major pillars for these discussions: first, lectures with a more research and art historical approach; second, critical discussions with a focus on artistic criticism; third, technical and stylistic discussions around modern art and, fourth, Western modern art and its possibility in Iran. For the first pillar of discussions, topics rather returned to ancient history and civilizations in Iran. The main objective of this group of talks was to prepare the ground for social acceptance of modern art via illuminations on rich points of Iranian traditional arts and, as a result, its adaptability to Western modern styles, in particular Cubism and Surrealism. In the very first years of Fighting Cock Association, for instance, there was a talk entitled *Naqāšān-e qadim-e irān dar miān-e ketāb-hā če mikardand wa bāzmāndegāneshān če mikonand?* [“What Did the Iranian Traditional Painters Do in Books and What Do Their Survivors Do?”] at Ziapour’s atelier in 1949. This talk was an attempt to show how the miniature paintings had been successful in inspiring the Western modern artists—particularly in Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism and Surrealism. Ziapour argued that Persian miniature painting included a series of features for which it should be considered congruent with the principles of Western modern art, or even as an inspiring source of it.<sup>251</sup>

The general features for which he claimed this potentiality in miniatures were the highly emotional and free expression, the uncommon and decorative coloration, and application of bizarre forms and compositions. In a more detailed argument he also referred to visual features in miniature that made it receptive and adaptable to the new artistic developments discussed by the fighting cocks. These features included suggestion of movement, timelessness, an understanding of colour harmony, shadow effects via lines despite the flat coloration and lack of per-

249 «ما مسائل مختلف هنری را از هر دسته و مؤسسه‌ای که باشد به بحث می‌گذاریم. انتقادات را می‌پذیریم و نیز به بحث و نقد می‌گذاریم. [Ziapour, “Har bār ke fru beyoftim [Any Time That We Fall],” 3.]

250 «کسی نیست که از نهضت هنری (خاصه نقاشی نو) در ایران بی‌اطلاع مانده باشد، در واقع آن هیا هو و تظاهری که نقاشی به راه انداخت و جهش و سرعت پیشرفتگی که به کار برد، هیچ یک از هنرهای دیگر نتوانستند به کار برند علت آن هم مباحثی است که در اطراف آن [Jalil Ziapour, “Barāy-e šenākt-e honar če čiz-hā bāyad dānest [What Should We Know for the Appreciation of Art],” 83.]

251 Ziapour, Jalil. “Naqāšān-e qadim-e irān dar miān-e ketāb-hā če mikardand? [What Did the Iranian Traditional Painters Do in Books?],” *Website of Jalil Ziapour*, accessed January 4, 2018, <http://www.ziapour.com/lectures/ها-چه-م-80%8E2%نقاشان-قدیم-ایران-در-میان-کتاب/>.

Fig. 5-27 "The front page of *Irān* newspaper in which it had pointed to the significant role of Ziapour in holding debates," *Irān*, April 17, 1949. National Library and Archives Organization of Iran



spective and attention to figures' anatomy. [Fig. 5-28] The main point made by him was to emphasize that Persian miniature, before the influence of European art during the Safavid dynasty, preserved its originality by Iranian artists' mastery over their own authentic culture. Nonetheless, this originality gradually gave way to imitation influenced by European art until the 19th century and it reached its apex with Kamal al-Molk and his legacy of Naturalism and academic Realism. This practice of imitating nature eliminated the imagination in Iranian artists and replaced it with the habit of creating replicas, even from the old miniatures. Worst of all, he attacked artists who combined these imitative miniatures with their newly learned techniques (i.e. perspective, chiaroscuro, etc.) and claimed that by doing so they aided the survival of the miniature as an Iranian national art: "They do not know that if they add Naturalistic perspective and anatomy to our traditional painting (the painting that inspired world's artists in creating Western modern arts), they have indeed begun a way which has been experienced by foreigners 600-700 years earlier much better, then they [Western artists] have abandoned this method and have applied perspective and so forth in other ways."<sup>252</sup> As Fighting Cock defended, Western modern art was not an entirely unprecedented style in Iran and many of the modern styles had roots in abstract, surreal and geometric motifs of Iranian Islamic arts. For instance, Ziapour offered people to find these similarities, before Cubism or any other Western style, in their own carpets,

«غافلند اگر به مینیاتور یعنی همین نقاشی قدیم ما (که سرمشق و مایه الهام هنرمندان خارجی در ایجاد هنرهای نو برای خود آن‌ها شده) 252 انتواتمی و پرسپکتیو نقاشی طبیعی بدهند، کاری را شروع کرده‌اند که بیگانگان خود از حدود ۶۰۰-۷۰۰ سال پیش شروع کرده و به خوبی هم [ibid.] از پس آن برآمده‌اند، سپس آن را رها کردند و اینک به طریق کار خودشان از پرسپکتیو و غیره به طریق دیگری استفاده کرده‌اند.»

domes and the walls of mosques.<sup>253</sup> In one of his interviews with *Rastāḳiz* newspaper in 1977, he considered this precedence as the main reason why Fighting Cock emphasized Cubism when introducing modern art to the people. He explained that, although Iranians' eyes were acquainted with surrealist and symbolic features in the traditional motifs, Fighting Cock's preference was Cubism to begin with. On the one hand, Iranians were more regularly in contact with geometric shapes in their daily life and, on the other hand, the simplicity of the geometrical forms made them more comprehensible than those in Surrealism or Symbolism: "At a time I thought we had to make a change in our art and reform it from its traditional status and to make it concurrent with the world, I chose Cubism. Because it was more familiar to people and we had inherited its requirements from our past [...]."<sup>254</sup>

It should be noted that, not only did the fighting cocks emphasize adaptability of Iranian traditional art to the Western modern art, but also they considered the origin of some aspects of the modern art in the Iranian-Islamic arts. In a remarkable talk on *Vižegi-hā-ye honar-e eslāmi wa naqš-e irān dar olgusāzi-ye tamadon-e eslām* ["Aspects of Islamic Art and Iran's Role in Its Receptivity to Islamic Civilization"], it is seen how Ziapour applied his new theory (*Painting and a Comprehensive School*) to prove there were similarities between Iranian traditional art and Western modern art. In his argument, he introduced the abstract geometric shapes—the principal Iranian-Islamic decorative motifs—as semi-familiar shapes that like intermediary shapes connected the familiar and unfamiliar shapes to each other.<sup>255</sup> Similarly in



Fig. 5-28 *Razm-e bahrām-e čubin wa sāva šāh* [The Battle between Bahram Chubin and Saveh Shah], 1430. Watercolour on paper, 185 × 183 mm, Administration of Cultural Heritage (Golestan Palace)

253 Jalil Ziapour, "Kubism dar irān naqāši-ye besyār bā ḥozūr vali bigāna ast [Cubism Is a Very Present but Unknown Style in Iran]," in *Majmu'a soḳanrāni-hā-ye honari-taḥqīqi-ye zendayād ostād jalil ziāpour* [A Collection of Master Jalil Ziapour's Art and Research Lectures], ed. Shahin Saber Tehrani (Tehran: Jahād-e dānešgāhi, 2003), 102.

254 «در دوره‌ای که من فکر می‌کردم بایستی یک تحولی به هنر مملکتمان داد و از آن شکل کهنه آن را درآورد و به صورت جهانی و با [...]» [Rezai, "Poštawāna-ye farhang-i-ye mardom az naqāši čē bud? [What Was the Cultural Background of Iranian People about Painting?]."]

255 Jalil Ziapour, "Vižegi-hā-ye honar-e eslāmi wa naqš-e irān dar olgusāzi-ye tamadon-e eslām [Aspects of Islamic Art and Iran's Role in Its Receptivity to Islamic Civilization]," in *Majmu'a soḳanrāni-hā-ye honari-*

his theory, Ziapour applied the term close unnatural for semi-familiar shapes that were between natural and far unnatural shapes. As he had discussed, the modern artists' attempt was rather to reflect their own subjectivity than nature and, as a result, their works, both in design and coloration, were less natural or less close to nature. Nonetheless, he had agreed that none of the modern styles were completely successful in reaching this quality and they still dealt with close-unnatural (or semi-familiar) shapes. At this talk, he considered the same functionality for the geometric motifs as the close unnatural shapes in Iranian traditional art. That is, the abstract and geometric motifs that commonly existed in people's everyday life—as in the designs of their carpets, ceramics, textiles, architecture, etc.—in fact existed in people's collective memory and could suitably bridge the internal world of the artist to the world outside. Accordingly, he concluded that Western modern artists had been inspired by this quality in Iranian-Islamic art (for which he also included his speech with quotes from Western artists and scholars).<sup>256</sup> He argued this inspiration, for instance, in Impressionism, Fauvism, Cubism and Surrealism and, at the same time, emphasized that they were different iterations of modern art and not a fundamental form to be transferred to other cultures. For this argument, he cautioned two important points in making any comparisons between Western and non-Western modern art. The first point was that he emphasized the agency of the socio-cultural contexts of each society (ethics, religion, emotional habits and the like) in the formation of different narrations of the new art styles. The second point was his attack on the Western approach to non-Western modern art.<sup>257</sup> Regarding this second point, he considered it a fundamental failure by Western scholars in studying the non-Western art based on their own scientific means of understanding such as perspective, light-and-shade effect, etc. This Western understanding of art was in contrast with, for instance, Iranian artists who had inherited the traditional principle to observe art not as a science, but as an essential "craftsmanship" at the service of life.<sup>258</sup> He noted the differences between what he called Iranian modern Fauvism, Cubism and Surrealism and their Western European types. In his differentiation, there was a composed quality in Iranian modern styles compared to

*taḥqīqī-ye zenda yād ostād jalil zīāpur [A Collection of Master Jalil Ziapour's Art and Research Lectures]*, ed. Shahin Saber Tehrani (Tehran: Jahād-e dānešgāhi, 2003), 343–50.

256 *Ibid.*, 354–55.

257 *Ibid.*, 354.

258 In Iranian-Islamic traditional art "craftsmanship" was in connection with the Greek definition "Techne" that at the same time included the artistic expertise and material, and necessitated a type of "knowing" denoting "truth or disclosure" of the truth in objects. Thus, according to this understanding of art, the traditional art (Techne) equated with an innovative act (not mere making) that revealed the truth beyond the appearance of objects. Similarly, in Iranian-Islamic art, art (Techne) was considered as a sacred means to disclose the sacred truth in an object—to render something, which is not visible from the spiritual world. [Mohammadreza Rikhtegaran, "Ruḥ-e honar-e dini: taamoli dar mabāni-ye nazāri-ye honar wa zibāi: honar wa teknoloژی [The Spirit of Religious Art: A Thought on Theoretical Principles of Art and Beauty: Art and Technology]," *Honar*, no. 22 (1992): 13–14.]



their Western types, since Iranian-Islamic culture went along with the virtues of patience and self-restraint.<sup>259</sup> For instance, although Western Fauvism emphasized on a rebellious spirit through rough and rude designs and colorations, Iranian Fauvism displayed this rebellious quality with sensibility, patience, and respect for ethics. He explained that Iranian Surrealism also shared the quality of estrangement of forms, but it did not apply it to uncommon forms to display fear or distress (as in Western Surrealism). Similarly, he defended the same quality in Iranian Cubism; although it was in contrast to Western Cubism that revolted against the bitter machine age, Iranian Cubism had to be understood as forms and motifs that were designed geometrically in a moderate and rhythmical state. The best work among Ziapour's own paintings, which might exemplify this statement, is *My Life* (1991). The painting that was worked in Ziapour's Personal Method of the 1990s, reflects not necessarily what he called as Iranian Cubism, but more importantly a visualization of all his attempts for creating a modern work with respect for the contextual features of his home country. These contextual features were the very peculiarities that distinguished Iranian modern art from any other modern art. The cubes, squares and rectangles that were borrowed from the geometry of tileworks in the traditional architecture of Iran, were covered by a grid-like composition deriving from the same source in mosques, carpets, etc.<sup>260</sup> Added to this, the colours applied by him were selected from the same traditional contexts; i.e., the pure colours (also frequent in European modern painting) with emphasis on certain hues (white, yellow, crimson, blue, dark green and black) as a traditional coloration. *My Life* represents all of these features and, as its title conveys, Ziapour apparently aimed by this painting to capture his endeavours for establishment of such modern style. The extreme abstract application of line, colour and form is evident, *My Life* is nothing but coloured squares themselves behind the gridded ground, as if the whole life of the artist had been nothing but this search. [Fig. 5-29]

For the second pillar of the association's talks, members adopted a critical approach to the artistic issues and emphasized on the essentiality of correct critique. These critical talks followed different goals. The main subject of these criticisms was to criticize the orderly quality of education promoted by the state at Faculty of Fine Arts and other institutions and, as its result, the formation of certain artistic establishments in opposition to the modern art. According to the enmity of the association with the faculty, *Cock's Claw* magazine published the text of a strong critical talk by the association against the academy and state administrators in 1953.<sup>261</sup> In fact, this was an attack from the young modern artists against the modernization policies of the regime that was executed via a conservative educational system at

259 Ziapour, "Vižegi-hā-ye honar-e eslāmi [Aspects of Islamic Art]," 352.

260 *Jalili žiāpur* [*Jalil Ziapour*], directed by Houshang Azadivar (Tehran: Goruh-e farhang, adab wa honar-e šabaka-ye dow-ye šedā wa simā [Department of Culture, Literature and Art of IRIB2], 1989), DVD.

261 Ziapour, "Āh mardom! [Alas, people!]," 16-19.

the faculty. Although this conservatism included a mixture of programs in academic Realism, Naturalism and modern art (mainly Impressionism), the works did not go beyond a hurried imitation of the West. For the fighting cocks, this imitation was a result of Western modern culture imposing itself on the rest of the world—the pattern being adopted by the non-Western states to attain their modernizational plans too: “Examples and programs evidently prove that there is no other intention than imposing the ideas, destroying the national characteristics and in one word colonizing the other cultures, and the faculty’s administrators follow these plans blindly.”<sup>262</sup> Accordingly, in another talk by Ziapour that was published in *Ādarpād* newspaper under *Naqāshi-ye kubism wa dalqak-hā-ye mā!* [“Cubist Painting and Our Clowns!”] in 1950, he sharply criticized this corrupt educational basis and its effect on a social indifference toward local modern artists and their works. By posing a few questions, he allocated the responsibility of educating society to the artists themselves and institutes such as associations and galleries: “How much we have been indifferent about our own artists’ works [...]. Who has kept the people this much ignorant? Aren’t the artists and art lovers to blame? [...] Didn’t they have to assist in publishing books for people? Didn’t they have to exhibit the paintings for them? Didn’t we need associations by which people could learn about these issues? [...] Our society [teachers and intellectuals] due to lack of these very associations, exhibitions, institutions and artistic debates [...] suffers today from an artistic confusion.”<sup>263</sup>

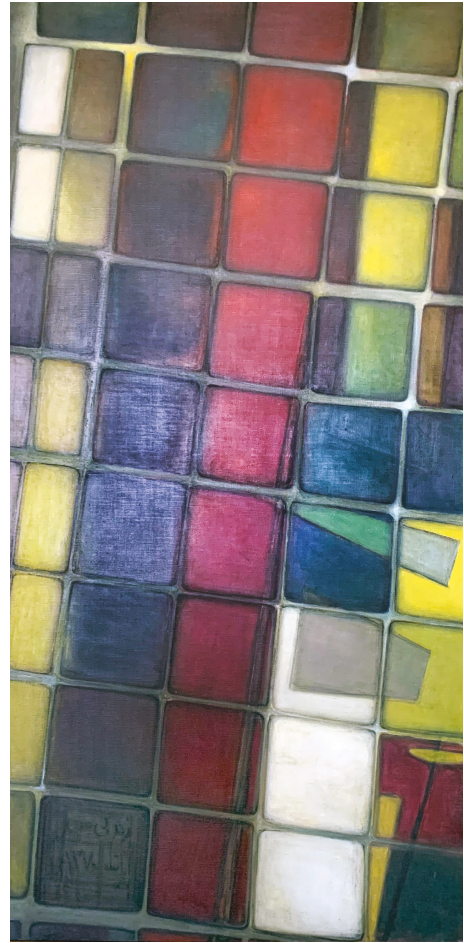


Fig. 5-29 Jalil Ziapour, *Zendege-ye man [My Life]*, 1991. Oil on canvas, 160 × 82 cm, Jalil Ziapour’s collection

«زیرا نمونه‌ها و برنامه‌ها به خوبی نشان می‌دهند که جز نظریات تحمیلی و از میان بردن شخصیت‌های ملی و به طور کلی هدف استعماری 262 [Ibid., 19.] فرهنگی نظر دیگری در میان نیست و گردانندگان هنرکده هم کورکورانه آن‌ها را اجرا می‌کنند.»

«چقدر ما نسبت به آثار هنرمندان خود بی‌اعتنا مانده‌ایم [...] چه کسانی مردم را این همه غافل گذاشته‌اند؟ [...] آیا صاحبان نوق نمی‌بایستی 263 در این مورد تشریح مساعی می‌کردند کتاب‌هایی را تهیه می‌کردند و در اختیار مردم می‌گذاشتند؟ آیا نمی‌بایستی نقاشی‌ها را در معرض تماشای

The critical talks given by the association not only addressed the government and the system of education in the arts, but also tackled those who, under the titles of art expert and critic, misinterpreted modern art. The role of the fighting cocks in response to this situation was to emphasize on the true act of criticism in art. The main argument of these talks was that modern art could never be appreciated by the people and critics of its time as a beautiful art because it still was a new phenomenon for Iranian society. This pressure by people and critics on modern artists came from an unfit measurement and caused isolation of the artists. Therefore, fighting cocks encouraged the modern artists that if their works were not acknowledged by the society in their own time, they would be appreciated in future.<sup>264</sup> In another talk under *Honarmandān-e maṭrud* ["The Rejected Artists"] that was published by *Desert* magazine on February 14, 1950, he also argued this deficiency based on people's habit in enjoying the works of art that demanded no deep contemplation. According to him, the art experts and critics who sided with this notion were in fact demagogues who pretended sympathy with society in order to restrict modern artists in their work. But Ziapour condemned them for this demagoguery, arguing that they could never be qualified to criticize art or comment on it: "The competence of artistic criticism and analysis is not for those who cannot distinguish between how to think and how to render a thought. [...] An avant-garde artist cannot be guided by an uninformed pseudo-critic."<sup>265</sup> In another considerable talk that surveyed reasons of the encounter of the society and critics with the modern art, Ziapour introduced two types of critics and compared them to the avant-garde artists, arguing the reasons for their antagonism toward modern art.<sup>266</sup> These two were either inclined to the traditional arts or they pretended a tendency to modern art. For the first critics, this antagonism was the result of a lack of awareness concerning the true meaning of beauty; it was absence of information that caused the backwardness in them. The second critics, however, had a conservative approach and lingered between traditionalism and avant-gardism. The conservative critics, based on each occasion, attempted to satisfy both traditionalists and the modern artists and this hypocrisy in them stemmed precisely from their fear of being called conservative or backward critics. Accordingly, he attacked these critics for their misinterpretation of modern

مردم بگذارند؟ آیا انجمن‌هایی نمی‌بایست برپا تا مردم هم به این گونه امور واقف می‌شدند؟ [...] محیط ما به علت فقدان همین گونه انجمن‌ها و همین گونه نمایشگاه‌ها و مؤسسات و همین گونه مباحث هنری است [که اگر این فقدان نبود آیا استادان و روشنفکران ما امروزه دچار این وضعیت می‌شدند؟] [Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāši-ye kubism wa dalqak-hā-ye mā! [Cubist Painting and Our Clowns!], *Ādarpād*, May 3, 1949.]

<sup>264</sup> Jalil Ziapour, "Barā-ye šenākt-e honar čē čiz-hā bāyad dānest? [What Should We Know for the Appreciation of Art?]," *Nabard-e zendegi*, no. 4 (1955): 84.

<sup>265</sup> [...] «صلاحیت انتقاد و اظهار نظر در هنر، از آن مردمی نیست که چگونگی فکرکردن را از چگونه نشان‌دادن آن فکر تمیز نمی‌دهند. [...]» [Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāši [Painting]," *Kavir*, no. 2 (1950): 14.]

<sup>266</sup> Jalil Ziapour, "Honaršenāsān-e dasta-hā-ye moḵtalef wa honar-e now [Different Art Experts and Modern Art]," *Šahsavār*, October 2, 1950.

artworks: "What should be considered as a danger is the incoherency and absurdity of comments by these pretentious (conservative) critics that could confuse people's attitude [to modern art]."<sup>267</sup> Here, he pointed to the conservative criticism by Robin Khalatian in the leftist newspaper *Peyk-e şolh*.<sup>268</sup> The text, as Khalatian's review of the group exhibition of Apadana Gallery (March 1950), had strongly condemned Cubist paintings of the exhibition due to their pure Formalistic appearance but had taken side with its Impressionistic works because of their less abstract and more representational aspects. In his talk against Khalatian, Ziapour referred to some of Khalatian's comments on art that proved his illiteracy with regards to both Impressionism and Cubism. For instance, Khalatian had claimed that a successful work of art should fulfill its audience's expectation: "An artist will reach his aim and will satisfy the desires of the common audience if his work of art is attractive and can stimulate its audience in a comprehensible way."<sup>269</sup> In response to this opinion, Ziapour argued that these conservative critics had no other role than agitating public opinion about modern art and hindering its social development: "A work which is made for a common audience is not a work of art! [...] How could we agree that an avant-garde artist finds its innovation in the realities which are observable to common people or displays the ordinary facts that everyone can see?"<sup>270</sup>

The critical approach by Fighting Cock Association in debates and exhibition contributions was not only in response to the art experts who lacked expertise in modern art. The association was also critical of those conservative or traditional artists and opponents who deliberately had hostility toward the modern artists. In their exhibition contributions, the members frequently mentioned that they had no criticism against the common people because society was allowed to comment on art freely. But the fighting cocks rigidly condemned irrelevant comments by other artists or writers who attacked modern art based on a personal hostility. For instance, one can find many statements by the members reflecting the notion that "the artists who challenge the modern development or interfere with our work, their attempt will meet no end. This is because the modern art evolves without their permission."<sup>271</sup> One observes the same reaction against a writer who had written a sarcastic text in *Jām-e jam* magazine about Ziapour's talk on the history of Iranian painting at Apadana's group exhibition (1950). The writer, who had poked fun at Fighting Cock's defense of Cubism, had maliciously asked "if Cubism could

267 [Ibid.] «آن چه خطر نام دارد پراکنده‌گویی و بیهوده‌گویی‌های متظاهرین (محافظه‌کاران) است که اندها را مشوش می‌کند.»

268 Khalatian, "Enḥetāt dar honar-e naqāši [Decadence in Painting]."

269 «چنان چه اثر هنرمند جذابی داشته باشد و بتواند در بیننده تولید هیجان و زبان حال مفهوم سوژه باشد، هنرمند توانسته است به مقصود [Ibid.] ابداعی خویش برسد و خواهش‌های تماشاچی عادی را اقیاع کند.»

270 «اثری که برای تماشاچی عادی ساخته می‌شود اثر هنری نیست! [...] چگونه باید برای یک هنرمند مترقی پذیرفت که اساس ابداعش را [Ibid.] روی حقایق که به چشم عموم دیده می‌شود بگذارد و حقایق عادی را که همه می‌بینند نشان بدهد؟»

271 «هنرمندانی که در میانه این سیل دستوپا می‌زنند یا سنگ تکفیر به سوی ما پرتاب می‌کنند، تلاش بیهوده و منفی می‌کنند. زیرا آنان چه [Ziapour, "Kubism dar irān naqāši-ye besyār bā ḥozur [Cubism Is a Very Present], 105.]»

be considered any painting style at all!" In the same speech, "Cubist Painting and Our Clowns!", Ziapour uncovered the malicious aim behind the writer's text. With attention to the fact that his talk at Apadana had only included the older Iranian painting styles (and not Cubism), he found the writer's text to be merely an opportunity to attack Fighting Cock. In condemning this behavior by such writers, he said: "They waste their time by doing a clown's job and instead of useful texts, they fill newspapers' columns with false rumors for people. Today, society is eager to distinguish the truth from falsity. It is necessary that our art enthusiasts do their best to update people about art of their own country and the world [...]. Yes, everybody laughs at a clown's job."<sup>272</sup>

The third pillar of the association's talks and exhibition contributions was to educate people about the technical and stylistic features of the modern art. Obviously, this approach was essential in order to pave the way for a better communication of modern art to society. In one of the talks held at Guity Club in 1950, the association evidently declared this aim behind its debates: "[These debates] were held in order to acquaint you with the stylistic features of the seemingly bizarre and exotic pictures that, due to your lack of information about their style, looked abstract, ambiguous and ridiculous [...]."<sup>273</sup> But the important point about the technical debates of Fighting Cock was that these subjects were described with a general and simplified language comprehensible for the common audience. Members openly pointed to the fact that their technical talks were only to provide people with the information on the history of the formation of modern styles, but they did not give any profound detail about the works that were created in these styles. In other words, for the aim of simplifying their talks, they argued the modern styles in terms of reasons for their formation, their aims and types of each style.<sup>274</sup> An overview of members' technical talks approves repetition of certain ideas upon which they attempted to describe the modern art. The most important ideas were the emphasis on emergence of the modern art as an essential result of new social, economic and emotional grounds (contextual necessities), upheaval against restrictions on the artist's free expression (revolutionary qualities) and attention to the subjectivity and subconscious of the artist (artist's internal world versus external

«وقت خود را صرف دلچکی کنند و ستون روزنامه‌ها را به جای مطالب آموزنده از لاطانات پرکنند که مردم بخوانند. امروزه مردم، مشتاق دانستن حق از ناحق هستند. لازم است صاحبان نوق ما هر قدر ممکن است در توضیح و تشریح اوضاع هنری کشور خود و اوضاع هنر جهان بکوشند [...] از دلچکبازی مردم همه خواهند خندید.» [Ziapour, "Naqāši-ye kubism [Cubist Painting]," 92-93.]

«... برای آشنا کردن شما خانمها و آقایان در مورد نحوه‌ی کار روی تصاویر به ظاهر عجیب و غریب بود که بر اثر عدم آشنایی این شیوه برای کسانی صورت انتزاعی داشت و ابهام‌آمیز و مسخره‌می‌نمود [...]» [Jalil Ziapour, "Nofuḍ-e bo'd-e čāhārom (zamān-e nesbi yā naqāši-ye čāhār bo'di) dar naqāši [The Emergence of the Fourth Dimension (Relative Time or Four-Dimensional Painting) in Painting]," in *Majmu'a soḡanrāni-hā-ye honari-tahqiqi-ye zenda yād ostād jalil zīāpur [A Collection of Master Jalil Ziapour's Art and Research Lectures]*, ed. Shahin Saber Tehrani (Tehran: Jahād-e dānešgāhi, 2003), 215.]

<sup>274</sup> Jalil Ziapour, "Kubism, silenderism, obžektivism, konstruktivism wa kolāžism [Cubism, Cylinderism, Objectivism, Constructivism and Collagism]," *Andiša wa honar*, no. 6 (1955): 400.

nature). Although these central ideas were argued with reference to changes in the application of colour and form in new compositions,<sup>275</sup> they were mainly described in terms of general explanations on formation of the Western modern styles. For instance, Impressionism was introduced as a style in revolt from Naturalism and Realism and was against surrendering to the external world as an absolute reality. Impressionism questioned this absolute reality with specific attention to the fact that the external world was constantly changing with various effects of the sunlight and artists revealed this influence via their individual impression. Therefore, Fighting Cock introduced Impressionism as the first modern style through which the artist could truly approach his own mind and memory.<sup>276</sup> Most frequently, these central ideas were repeated in members' discussions on Cubism and Surrealism. It was only Cubism and Surrealism that could better fulfill the necessities of their own time. In his talks, Ziapour repeatedly introduced Cubism as the most congruent style with the age of machines: "In the mechanical life, where the gigantic wheels move and tremble the earth and all activities have adopted geometric and disciplined manner. Where life's simple foundation is at crisis under smashing cog-wheels and screams for rescue out [...], how could we display it [this condition] with common smooth and fine lines and forms of our present styles?"<sup>277</sup> Later in the same talk, when referencing the different types of Cubism, he argued that these different types are essential entries for the artist to voice the freedom of expression: "Parallel with life's various contexts, artist (since he was avant-garde) wished to scape the restrictions and to be free. The goal was to show that he had absolute freedom of expression and act. Artist wanted to assure himself and the people and boast about this freedom [...]. This personal feeling of freedom implied freedom for the public."<sup>278</sup> This emphasis on freedom, according to Fighting Cock, was basically a revolutionary act by modern artists since World War I and the association introduced Surrealism as the freest style in modern art. When compared with Naturalism and Realism, Surrealism had opened wider fields of action that resulted from Surrealists' rejection of common realities, and instead, their substitution with *unsteady* realities and artist's subconscious.<sup>279</sup> In a considerable talk by Ziapour at his atelier on *Sureālism* ["Surrealism"] that was published in *Fighting Cock* maga-

275 *Rang-hā wa rābeṭa-hā* ["Colours and Relations"], for instance, was one of the talks held at Fighting Cock Association in 1949 discussing colour, line and composition in painting from Impressionism to Cubism. [See: Ziapour, Jalil. "Naqāši [Painting]." *Korus jangi*, no. 3 (1949): 13-18.]

276 Jalil Ziapour, "Ampersionism [Impressionism]," *Andiša wa honar*, no. 2 (1954): 93.

277 «در زندگانی ماشینی جایی که حرکت چرخ‌های عظیم کارخانجات زمین را به لرزه در می‌آورد و فعالیت‌ها صورت هندسی و منظم به خود گرفته است، زمانی که شالوده ساده زندگانی، زیر دنده‌های خردکننده ماشین‌ها، حالت بحرانی و محتضر به خود گرفته، و نعره‌های از حلقوم‌های خشک برای درآمن می‌کشد [...] چگونه می‌شود با خطوط و سطوح نرم و عادی ظریف به صورت مکاتب موجود آن‌ها را نمایش داد؟!» [Ziapour, "Kubism, silenderism, ... [Cubism, Cylinderism, ...]" 401.]

278 «به همراه همه چیز زندگانی، هنرمند هم می‌خواست (از آن جا که پیشرو می‌باشد) از قیود فرار و آزاد باشد. هدف، این بود که هنرمند نشان بدهد کاملاً آزادی عمل و بیان دارد. هنرمند می‌خواست به خود و مردم اطمینان بدهد و به رخ بکشد که آزادی عمل دارد [...] این احساس نشان بدهد کاملاً آزادی عمل و بیان دارد. هنرمند می‌خواست به خود و مردم اطمینان بدهد و به رخ بکشد که آزادی عمل دارد [...] این احساس نشان بدهد کاملاً آزادی عمل و بیان دارد.» [Ibid., 405-6.]

279 Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāši [Painting]," *Kavir*, no. 1 (1950): 10.

zine in the same year (1949), it is understood that the association considered Surrealism as even a more comprehensive school than Cubism in terms of the freedom of expression it allowed. In this regard, Ziapour even rejected his own teacher André Lhote who found Surrealism a style only to astonish and arouse viewers with fake messages in a short amount of time.<sup>280</sup> In response to Lhote, and by reference to Freud's theory about the subconscious, Ziapour argued that a Surrealist's success was in the ability to make his imaginary fantasies real and, therefore, to enjoy a truthful internal pleasure in addition to the external pleasures.<sup>281</sup>

In simple words about the stylistic features of the modern art, the main objective of Fighting Cock Association, rather than technical discussions, was to explain why the definitions of "art" and "artist" should adapt themselves according to the principles of the modern time. In one debate held at the association on "The Meaning of Modern Art" and published by *Post-e tehrān* newspaper in 1955, Ziapour explained the reasons of such necessary adaptation. Within the course of time that new changes occur in life, he asserted, there will also be changes in the artist's demands and thoughts that are revealed in terms of new emotional excitements. In order to translate these feelings into a work of art, he emphasized the rejection of Naturalistic and Realistic styles and their replacement with new styles.<sup>282</sup> In an interview with *Mehr-e irān* newspaper, he further explained these new styles. He argued that at the modern time artists came up with queer ideas for which they could not find any equivalence in common nature. Therefore, in the new styles, modern artists' encounter with nature became selective and combinative and the works of art that they created took a "new or uncommon nature."<sup>283</sup> It was this very uncommon nature of modern art that no other artist, other than the avant-gardes, could undertake its responsibility. In another talk by the association in Guity Club in 1950, the reason for this appropriation by avant-garde artists was argued based on their disconnection with any restriction: "[An avant-garde artist] is someone who with no concern for the tastes, severities and enmities of the majorities or minor people does his utmost to advance and trespasses the rules, conventions and comments as possible [...]. These artists, who found the logical modern art on correct principles and technical development, never accept traditionalists as artists of their time."<sup>284</sup>

280 Jalil Ziapour, "Naqāshi [Painting]," *Korus jangi*, no. 4 (1949): 3-4.

281 *Ibid.*, 7-8.

282 Ziapour, "Mafhum-e honar-e now [The Meaning of Modern Art]."

283 Jalil Ziapour, "Honar čist wa honarmand kist [What Is Art and Who Is Artist?]," *Mehr-e irān*, October 11, 1949.

284 « [...] کسی است که بدون توجه به اختلاف سطح محیط و ریزمخوانی‌ها و معرکه‌گیری‌های اکثریت یا اقلیت جامعه خود، تا آن جا که برای او مقدور است در پیشروی می‌تازد و همه قوانین و قراردادهای و سلیقه‌ها و اظهار عقیده‌ها را تا هر جا که لازم باشد زیر پا می‌گذارد [...] این هنرمندان هم که پایه هنر نو منطقی را روی مبانی صحیح و تکامل فنی می‌گذارند هرگز هنرمندان گذشته را به هنرمندی نمی‌پذیرند و آنان را هنرمندان گذشته نمی‌شناسند. » [Jalil Ziapour, "Taḥvolāt-e naqāshi dar jahān-e mā [The Developments of Painting in Our World]," *Website of Jalil Ziapour*, accessed July 13, 2018, <http://www.ziapour.com/lectures/تحوالات-نقاشی-در-جهان-ما/>].

The fourth pillar of the association's talks was illumination around Iranian modern art. This series of debates concentrated on aspects of modern art in Iran and its necessary relation to traditions and local features in order to develop a *national* modern art. The association significantly confirmed the possibility of an Iranian modern art coloured by the particular features relating to Iranian artists' historical, geographical and traditional conditions. In an interview with Fighting Cock by *Ferdowsi* magazine in 1967, one notices the logic upon which members confirmed this notion. The main discussion by the association was that modern art never existed incipiently, but it had roots in more preliminary forms that, in the course of time, became processed by more sensitive artists. By this view, they actually meant that modern art as a definition denoting something *new* never existed and all nations, according to their level of civilization, had contributed to the progression of art in the course of time. They argued that these contributions became effective via international relations in different fields of art and culture. But according to the awareness of local artists of each region about their own national arts, their modern art could therefore never be an imitation of Western modern art.<sup>285</sup> Basically, the association considered it a successive evolutionary quality for the traditions of each nation. Since traditions updated themselves in history, they therefore existed in even the most contemporary forms of artworks. In an important lecture by Ziapour at University of Tehran later in 1999, he obviously explained this notion about the tradition. In his talk, he defined tradition as conceptions of one society and conventions that were shaped in the course of time and that society was bound to respect them. But, at the same time, he argued that the traditions gradually adapted themselves according to the contemporary requirements.<sup>286</sup> Thus, the artist's role in this process was to direct the traditions based on a *zeitgeist* and not relying on their appearance: "So the artist should deal with what directs society to a newer phase with more essential and up-to-date traditions. It is this role by the artist that transfers the traditions, in case of their necessity, to the next generations."<sup>287</sup>

These viewpoints, by association in defense of an Iranian modern art, is better understood in members' discussions on the application of Western modern styles in Iran. For instance, regarding the promotion of Cubism in Iran, again in another interview by *Donyā-ye jadid* magazine in 1967, this notion by the association is noteworthy that any temporal originality for modern art had to be rejected. This was because members refused modern art as an all-at-once occurrence, and instead, argued that every society possessed the essential potentiality for modern art that

285 "Goftogu bā koros jangi [An Interview with Fighting Cock]," 276.

286 Jalil Ziapour, "Soḡanrāni-ye ziāpur dar dānešgāh-e tehrān [Ziapour's Lecture at University of Tehran]," in *Majmu'a soḡanrāni-hā-ye honari-taḡiqi-ye zenda yād ostād jalil ziāpur [A Collection of Master Jalil Ziapour's Art and Research Lectures]*, ed. Shahin Saber Tehrani (Tehran: Jahād-e dānešgāhi, 2003), 405–6.

287 «پس هنرمند باید آن چه را که جامعه را به مرحله دیگر سوق می‌دهد و سنت لازم‌تری را به وجود می‌آورد و در هر مرحله، سنتی [...]» [Ibid., 406.] نوگرایانه می‌سازد، به این طریق هنرمند می‌تواند همیشه سنت‌ها را بر حسب نیاز به معاصرهای بعدی سوق بدهد [...].



was manifested as soon as its means were provided.<sup>288</sup> Accordingly, Cubism played the same role for Fighting Cock as a means of activating the potentials of an Iranian modern art. In many of his debates, for instance, Ziapour had referred to the geometric and abstract decorative motifs of Iranian traditional arts and had defended their similarities with the principles of Western modern styles—in particular Cubism. In the same interview with *Donyā-ye jadid*, he said: “If once I talked about Cubism, my point was to suggest to have a look behind ourselves too. Our people everyday walk on their carpets with geometric motifs but they do not realize that these motifs are also Cubist. I never asked artists to be Cubist or to follow it, but I have always cautioned to make use of the national potentialities.”<sup>289</sup> This fidelity to the aboriginal features in the modern art of each region was indispensable for its artists. This indispensability was for the contextual effect on the artists. The geographical and climatological features of one region differed from another and unconsciously influenced artists in their selection of colours and forms. In another interview with *Rastākiz* newspaper in 1977 and with reference to this contextual effect, Ziapour attacked those who considered Iranian Cubism as a replica of European Cubism. In his argument, he reasoned that for those local artists who were informed about their own national arts this imitation would be impossible: “[...] if I have been the son of this country and if I am still its son and if I have spent my lifetime here and have grown up in this climate, therefore, all contextual factors will unavoidably influence me so that I cannot imitate other contexts.”<sup>290</sup> It can be inferred from this series of talks and debates that Iranian modern artists forbade any disconnection with their historical past. If the Cubism in Iran, for instance, did not resemble the European Cubism, it was because *Cubism* was selected among many other *-isms* to develop Iranian traditions according to their contemporary necessities.<sup>291</sup> In other words, Iranian modern art was situated somewhere between the local and international art and at the same time, it was not a replica of either of them, as it was following in the footsteps of both.

288 Jodat, “Goftogu-i bā jalil ziāpur [An Interview with Jalil Ziapour],” 3.

289 «اگر یک زمانی من صحبت از کوبیسم کردم، نظر من این بود که به پشت سر خود هم نگاه کنیم، مردم ما هر روز روی فرش هایشان که دارای نقوش هندسی است راه می‌روند و تشخیص نمی‌دهند که این نقوش هم کوبیسم و یا هندسی است. من به هنرمندان نگفتم که کوبیسم [Ibid.] باشی یا از کوبیسم اروپا تقلید کنی. بلکه همیشه گفتم از مایه‌های هنری ملی استفاده کنی.»

290 [...] اگر من فرزند این مملکت بودم و هستم و عمرم را در این جا گذرانده‌ام و از این آب و هوا استفاده کرده‌ام، خواناخواه تمام عوامل [...] «Goftogu-i bā ostād jalil ziāpur: kubism-e orupā-i dar irān? [An Interview with Jalil Ziapour: European Cubism in Iran?], *Rastākiz*, May 26, 1977.]

291 *Jalili ziāpur [Jalil Ziapour]*, directed by Houshang Azadivar (Tehran: Goruh-e farhang, adab wa honar-e šabaka-ye dow-ye sedā wa simā [Department of Culture, Literature and Art of IRIB2], 1989), DVD.

## 6 Epilogue

The role and contribution of the first modern artists in the institutionalization of modern art in Iran have aspects which have been unattended both historically and theoretically. Two working conditions are ascertainable for the underestimation of artists' active role. Firstly, a considerable part of the existing literature on the issues relating to the modernity and modernism has reviewed these developments with attention to the Iranian state's modernization plans particularly during the first Pahlavi era. Secondly, having possessed the big box and the financial capital, the state could quickly exert this capital on the field of art as from the late 1950s and, as the major component of the field of power, could establish its position as a major patron of modern art. This patronage occurred via eye-catching projects such as holding the biennials and large exhibitions in the public galleries, covering the monthly fees of the private associations and galleries, the participation of Iranian modern artists in international art events, making noticeable purchases from the artists and galleries, etc. All these measures that culminated in formation of a market for modern art in the middle of the 1960s, led to an underestimation of the cultural patronage that artists exerted during the 1940s and 1950s. A primary step, thus, is to separate the cultural measures of the modern artists from the financial sponsorship by the regime. Also, it is noteworthy to study the artists' contribution as being superior to the financial supports exerted by the regime after a two-decade delay. The financial acts of the regime were highly dependent on the artists' cultural role. That is, if the artists had not prepared the social space with cultural activities in their private spaces, the turning of the state toward modern art could have been a turning to a void with no logical sense. More importantly, this separation, and the superiority of the artists' role to the state's act, also calls attention to the project of artistic modernism as an issue relating more to the private sector than to the government. Although the existing studies on Iranian modern art have not yet argued this separation and superiority explicitly, the discussions on various aspects correspond to this finding. A majority of these surveys considers artistic modernism in Iran only based on independent efforts by the artists and covers approximately the period between foundation of the Faculty of Fine Arts and the end of the 1950s. It is from the first *Tehran Biennial of Painting* and, more specifically, with the involvement of the Empress Farah Diba's Special Office that the state's patronage of modern art becomes also an issue to investigate. This separation and superiority, however, is clearly understood from explorations of the activities of individual artists, associations and galleries during this period.

It was precisely within the period for activation of the modern artists that a shift in artistic patronage happened toward centrality of the artists. During this time, the artists became independent from their old patrons—mainly the courts and also

the aristocrats and wealthy families. This event, in addition to the negligence of the royal court about the new artistic changes and the unknown nature of modern art to the rich families, was much more due to the development of the idea of artistic *autonomy* and *self-sufficiency* for the modern artists. The artists were collecting a new cultural expediency by learning about modern styles (either at the faculty or by travelling abroad). This cultural expediency, on the one hand, was no longer in line with the goals and the artistic tastes of the old patrons and, on the other hand, did not allow artists to put themselves at the service of the orderly and functional demands of them. The artists insisted the financial supports by the state to be without any supervision or intervention. An autonomous and self-sufficient position in the field of art was an aim for both Fighting Cock, as the first private art association, and Apadana, as the first private art gallery. Regarding members' texts and debates, this aim was influenced by their defense of "art for art's sake." Accordingly, artists made their private institutes in forms of collective groups and work. They entered the field of politics by taking the role of intellectuals and rejected political profiteering from the arts. This profiteering behavior occurred in two ways. First, the state sought revival of the national identity and, therefore, mainly supported the national arts and the artists who represented this quality in their works. Second, the political parties and the cultural relations societies of the foreign countries promoted their own plans; for instance, the leftist Tudeh Party by the support of VOKS (Iran-Soviet Cultural Relations Society) promoted Social Realism among Iranian artists. It was in reaction against this political air that Fighting Cock obviously added to attacks in its manifesto, *Nightingale's Butcher*. In the text of the manifesto, modern artists were repeatedly warned against any inclination toward the art of the past or the committed art and condemned both as "art of dead bodies."

Now what is the essentiality in attending to the cultural activities by the artists? These cultural activities, on the one hand, prove how modern art was institutionalized in Iranian society and, on the other hand, they demonstrate the artists' understanding of modern art. The activities point to the fact that all measures were in line with the artists' aim of legitimating independence in their field. The first measure; i.e., foundation of the movement or avant-garde spaces of Fighting Cock Association and Apadana Gallery, was hence based on a collective work. These spaces had to establish the new position of their founders as modern artists and their modern art in the field of art and versus their competitors. Also, these activities had to communicate the new artistic developments to the social field. Therefore, Jalil Ziapour (a main founding member of Fighting Cock Association) after painting *The Uprising of Kaveh*, which represented his rebellion against the stagnant artistic space in Iran, issued his new theory *Painting and a Comprehensive School. New Theory by Jalil Ziapour. Rejection of Past and Contemporary Schools from Primitive to Surrealism*. It was an unprecedented act by an Iranian artist at that time to theoretically discuss art. This new theory, in fact, drew a line on all previous conceptions

in arts among the Iranian artists. It argued a new paradigm of artistic subjectivity that, in contrast to the objective imitation of the world (a common practice among Iranian artists of the time), emphasized the artist's mentality and his return to the internal world. For this purpose, the most significant role of Fighting Cock was to promote a *critical view* in art and to introduce the artist primarily as the critic of his work and the world around him. This new subjectivity had to be transferred by the young fighting cocks via modern schools such as Impressionism, Cubism, Surrealism and others. To transfer these ideas culturally and to shape their own audiences, Fighting Cock began its work with the publication of *Fighting Cock* magazine and the radical *Nightingale's Butcher Manifesto*, participated in exhibitions, and held debates and talks. When the association began its work during the 1940s, its members from various fields of painting, writing, music, dramaturgy and poetry showed deliberate attention to the local features and folklore in their works. This aim was so serious that the members through their debates or texts in their magazine agreed for a "national school" in painting, music, writing and others. According to their definition of this national school, the artist's knowledge of modern art (in terms of modern techniques and attention to the artist's mentality and the inside world) had to be applied within his own socio-cultural grounds and as a natural process of development. This national approach to modern art was followed by the members until the second series of *Fighting Cock* magazine. This was the time that the association adopted a more technical approach to art. The artists no longer had to reflect the culture of their living place but their own imagination. It was from this period that the association published its manifesto and approached notions of Dadaism and Surrealism.

Both approaches that were reflected through fighting cocks' cultural activities; i.e., inclination to a national school and, later, attention to modern art with more emphasis on technique, became two major trends in Iranian modern art and were followed by other private associations and galleries. For instance, the discussion of identity in the arts was followed either superficially by artists of Saqqa-Khaneh Group or more thoughtfully by members of the art association and gallery Hall of Iran. Or, the technical centrality was also pursued by later artists' groups like Independent Artists Group or personally by individual artists who collaborated with the group as guest artists. Both approaches continued to be promoted upon collective collaboration of these private associations and galleries with similar cultural activities as in Fighting Cock and Apadana—i.e., via manifesto, magazine, exhibition and debate. It should be noted that the cultural activities of the private associations and galleries also shared the essence of avant-gardism versus commercialism. In other words, these new spaces observed the converse relation between financial success and their independent art. Although, the traditional patrons of art did not care for modern art and its purchase in the 1940s, modern artists did not plan to sell and rather focused on the cultural aspects of their work. It was due to this commercial

disinterest that more independent associations and galleries found trouble with the state's eventual supports from the end of the 1950s. Artists complained that the state's support went along with consequent controls and had a paralyzing effect on the natural growth of Iranian modern art. These complaints were not only asserted in the artists' debates, but also were published in their manifestos, codes of practice and catalogues.

Bringing into view the above-mentioned points, it should also be indicated that they are restricted only to those private associations and galleries that favored the cultural role to the sales or commercial aspects of their work. This means that not all the private associations and galleries that dealt with modern art represented cultural issues as well. In the middle of the 1960s, new private galleries instead adopted the sales or commercial role. Although some of these commercial galleries also represented modern artists, they lacked the movement or avant-garde role of their cultural competitors in terms of the critical publications, debates, manifestos, etc. These commercial galleries had almost no problem with the official supports and, on the contrary, benefited from close relations with the court and, in particular, Special Office of the Empress because of their considerable purchases. As a result, the cultural patronage being discussed is not precisely attributable to the sales or commercial spaces and further surveys are required to explore their role in promotion of a commercial market for modern art in Iran. To understand the insistence of the movement or avant-garde associations and galleries on autonomy (as a protection for the natural growth of modern art), it is essential to explore any possible difference between modern art promoted by these spaces and the sales or commercial spaces. There are, of course, more relevant questions that lead to distinguish the different nature of the movement or avant-garde spaces from their sales or commercial counterparts. These questions may concentrate on any relation between the sales or commercial spaces with the official patronage and the reasons for their collaboration; they may ask about the sources and intentions of a patronage at sales or commercial spaces; and may shed light on the influence of these spaces in conducting the field of art with respect to both artistic taste and the audiences.

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Recent studies on artistic modernism pay particular attention to the art histories of the non-West by doing less with Western theoretical conducts and how they define “modern art.” The present book, in line with these studies, surveys artistic modernism while it recognizes “modernism” as a response to confluences of social, economic and political forces. The book thus skips frameworks of a comparative study for the strategies that mainly aim to unveil similarities or dissimilarities between what *is* modern and what *is not*. It instead returns to and captures the ways artists conceived their works as modern art; moreover, it collects documents which better display the relation between these works and their contextual causes: What is needed more now is an understanding of the necessities which encouraged artists into creating new forms as absolute responses.

**Parastoo Jafari** completed her master’s degree in art research at IAU Tehran with an interest in artistic developments of post-Islamic Revolution Iran. She received a doctoral degree in art history at LMU Munich focusing on material and intellectual contexts of artistic modernism. She collaborated as research assistant with Walter De Gruyter and University of Munich, contributed to curatorial projects on Iranian art and, as an author and translator, works with topics relating to modern and contemporary art with particular attention to Iran.

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