

Bittersweet Longing of Nostalgia

Art and politics

Book of People

by

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Statement of Authorship

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Abstract

“Bittersweet Longing of Nostalgia”, aims to demonstrate the relationship between art, nostalgia and politics. In the early 20th century, the human world underwent many changes. The swift pace of change has touched every aspect of human life, including science, philosophy, politics, and society, and this transformation has also been reflected in the arts. During this period, committed artists were both supported and opposed, as many debated the role of politics in art. From 2022 through 2023, Iran is experiencing a revolution that will profoundly impact its political, social, and cultural landscape. The aim of this treatise is to examine whether artists can participate in ideological changes and whether the politicization of works affects the artist's intentions. The research utilized a combination of library-based research, autobiographical and auto ethnographic techniques, and studio-based exploration to investigate the intersection of politics, art, and protest. The research concludes that artists who genuinely believe in their ideologies (not due to government coercion) should enter the political arena and use their art to support the social movement. I argue that by expressing their preferred ideology, artists can create long-lasting and influential works. In order to develop a connection to the Women Life Freedom Protests in Iran, I am creating artworks that are related to my memories and/or the common nostalgia of collective memory. I borrow from the style of Persian miniature, a form of art that has a long history in Iranian culture and contains a great deal of metaphor and hidden meaning. I specifically use the Persian miniature as a symbol for Iranian to evoke their nostalgic memories in the new environment and create a connection between the present and the past.

Keywords:

Art protest, Nostalgia, Miniature, Politics, Anti-art washing

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Throughout the past year, I tried to place the following short poem by Sa'adi at the heart of my activities. I hope I have been able to play my role as a human and speak out for those who need it most.

*Human beings are members of a whole,
In the creation of one essence and soul.
If one member is afflicted with pain,
Other members uneasy will remain.
If you've no sympathy for human pain,
The name of a human you cannot retain!*
Sa'adi

To freedom fighters around the world!

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1 Introduction

It is a brave undertaking to leave everything and everyone behind and begin a new chapter in your life upon immigration. The migration experience can be strange, filled with sadness for the past and hope for the future. As someone who had lived in a patriarchal society for many years, my first days in Canada were filled with excitement. However, after several exciting weeks had passed, I felt more and more lost in a strange world. The new place didn't seem like home to me, nor did I remember my homeland; I just felt lost. After asking my friends what they thought about the first days and weeks after moving, I realized they all had some experience.

I was looking for signs that would remind me of home. The presence of rugs, miniatures, Iranian food, and traditional music made the new environment feel like home to me. To create this feeling in *Iranian Immigrants*, I used the Iranian miniature to illustrate the collective memories of Iranian immigrants. My thesis progressed well before the protest movement of women in Iran took place. Why did I decide to leave Iran? Women have suffered years of restriction and deprivation of basic rights. Is that why? My mind always wanders back to the homeland when I see the events taking place. I was numb every day as more terrible news was reported, unable to do anything and thinking of home. Reading, hearing, and seeing that young girls have been arrested, tortured, sexually abused, and killed, falsely presented as suicides.

The sheer level of violence and cruelty in my country was overwhelming and difficult to comprehend. Since the Internet was shut down nationwide in Iran, we have seen fewer protest videos and photos. I went several weeks without speaking to my family, and I was concerned about this lack of communication. Three years ago (in 2019), a one-week internet blackout resulted in the death of 1,500 innocent people during the bloody Aban protests. There is a great deal of fear associated with internet outages because we know that more incidents are likely to occur without the ability to communicate. In a few weeks, I turned all this sadness into anger and used the anger to accomplish something meaningful

to be the voice of the people of my country. My duty as an artist is to express what I see in the world around me.

I started sharing artwork on Instagram to spread awareness about what was happening in Iran or those who had been arrested or sentenced to death. In creating the artworks, I used the style of Iranian miniatures a centuries old form of Iranian narrative painting. In my works, I depict Iranian motifs that have been incorporated into a new composition and structure, serving as a reminder of so called 'orientalism aesthetics' and Iran's history from a new perspective. Within four weeks, my account reached 12 million viewers. Through this experience, I observed that a work of art had greater impact than a simple photograph, and a photograph was more influential than a text.

In addition to these social media followings, television programs and newspapers have offered to interview me about protest artworks. Many Iranian families send me messages about their beloved children and ask me to speak on their behalf. Currently, my sense of inner calm comes from my involvement in what appears to be an imminent revolution. However, after this activity, I will not be able to return home, and Canada will become my home. Maybe this situation help me create a sense of belonging to Canada in a short period of time. I have been threatened by pro-regime people who tell me to stop creating my artwork, and since my family is there, I am always concerned about them, but we have no choice but to win. As an artist, I believe art is a powerful tool for social change and activism. In Iran, where the government is known for its strict censorship and suppression of dissenting voices, the role of art as a means of protest and resistance is especially important. Through my artwork and activism, I aim to challenge the oppressive regime in Iran and advocate for human rights, freedom of expression, and democracy.

The Iranian government has a long history of censoring and persecuting artists and intellectuals who speak out against the regime. The state-controlled media and censorship laws make it difficult for artists to express themselves freely, and those who do face the risk of imprisonment and persecution. In such a repressive environment, art becomes a powerful means of protest and resistance. My art aims to challenge the dominant narrative

promoted by the Iranian government and expose the reality of life under a repressive regime. Through my paintings and illustrations, I strive to raise awareness about human rights violations and the plight of political prisoners. My work often features images of people who have been victimized by the government, such as protesters, activists, and journalists, to humanize their struggle and draw attention to their plight.

In addition to my artwork, I participate in protests and demonstrations to show my support for human rights and democracy. These protests, often organized by grassroots movements, allow people to unite and voice their opposition to the regime. I hope to inspire others to speak out against the government and demand change through my participation.

One of the most significant ways my activity as an artist contributes to the anti-regime in Iran is by challenging the government's attempts to control the narrative and silence dissent. By creating art and participating in protests, I am asserting my right to accessible expression and challenging the government's attempts to suppress opposing viewpoints. This is especially important in a society where censorship and propaganda are pervasive, as it provides an alternative perspective and helps counter the government's propaganda.

Of course, my activism comes with risks. The Iranian government has a long history of cracking down on dissent, and artists and activists are often targeted for persecution. However, I believe that the importance of speaking out and challenging the regime outweighs the risks. Through my artwork and activism, I hope to inspire others to join me in the fight for human rights and democracy in Iran.

Art and politics have been intertwined throughout history, with art often being used as a tool to convey political messages to the public. From poetry and sculpture to architecture, art has been used to communicate the concepts and ideas sought by politicians to the general public. This complex relationship has been present since the emergence of politics in human history.

In the past, power was concentrated in the hands of kings and nobles who accumulated wealth in their palaces. As a result, art was used to translate the politicians' goals into

beautiful language and presented them to society, and in return, the power centers supported the artists (Clark, 1956). For example, during the Renaissance, wealthy patrons such as the Medici family commissioned artists such as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo to decorate their palaces and churches. This allowed artists to make a living, but also ensured that the patron's wealth and power were celebrated in the artwork.

As civilizations developed, artists were eventually able to achieve relative independence. It was because their art was purchased by individuals other than those in power, and the general public gained a new perspective on their art (Tillotson, 1990). This issue is particularly evident in societies following the 17th century and particularly in the 19th century. During this time, artists began to challenge traditional norms and explore new forms of expression, which were not always in line with the goals of the politicians in power.

Despite the relative independence that artists have gained, the relationship between art and politics remains complex. In many cases, art is still used to convey political messages. For example, during the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, artists such as Jacob Lawrence and Romare Bearden used their work to challenge racial injustice and call for change (Greenblatt, 2004). Similarly, during the Apartheid era in South Africa, artists such as William Kentridge and Esther Mahlangu used their work to challenge the oppressive regime and call for democracy.

In the 20th century, artists became actively engaged in society and its issues, rather than merely catering to wealthy patrons. This trend can be traced back to the rise of modernism, which emphasized individual expression and creativity. According to Hal Foster, a renowned art critic, modernist artists were “committed to exploring and expressing the complexity of contemporary life” (Foster, 1983). They used their art to comment on political and social events, and to present new theories and ideas. In the 20th century, artists became actively engaged in society and its issues, rather than merely catering to wealthy patrons. This trend can be traced back to the rise of modernism, which emphasized individual expression and creativity.

For this reason, many political actors have attempted to use this tool to bring people together with their preferred policies throughout history. However, the best use of this tool and media would be an artist who uses it to express ideas they believe in wholeheartedly. The point is that if an artist enters politics by their own choice and not by government pressure, they can use the weight of their art to satisfy their political beliefs and bring many thoughts.

This research explores this issue of how art influences the political arena through artists who contribute to conversations in political arenas based on their belief in the political struggles. The writer believes regardless of whether an ideology is right or wrong, it will lead a person to happiness or not, whether it is implemented in its proper and perfect form or not, still, the belief and faith of an artist will bring masses of people along with it. Artists who are committed to the future of their cities, their countries, and even the world, and who care about the fate of humans, usually attempt to improve the world by showing the good and the evil, the suffering and the blessings of humanity. Accordingly, it seems likely that they see this reform and reaching happiness as a result of a particular ideology and is directing the masses toward that belief and ideology through their artworks. Therefore, although the ideology is right or wrong, this paper aims to demonstrate that art and artists influence society in particular and unique ways – through the production of artworks.

It is necessary to define the concepts raised in these questions to find answers to these research questions. To facilitate the understanding of what these terms mean in this study, a definition and explanation has been presented for the terms art and aesthetic, nostalgia, ideology. The connection between art and politics is then discussed in general and historically, as well as the impact of art on society. Finally, Iran's revolutionary art and prominent artist's artworks have been examined as case studies.

1.1 Literature Review

A discussion about political art, its role and application in politics, its use for ideological purposes, and its use in attracting public support for political events such as revolutions and reforms have clearly not just recently begun, and will likely continue as elements in continued socio-political discourse. Many books, treatises, and articles have been written about this topic, and each social group has analyzed it from a different perspective. Some researchers and experts have conducted extensive studies on the movement of art in the political and social context of societies and their effectiveness and influence on historical events. This group of scholars believes that art has a social and political role, although sometimes they consider its entry into these fields to cause its decline. As Nematullah Fazeli¹ writes in issue 116 of Mah Honar², book about cultural studies: “The approach of cultural studies to art is in such a way that it tries to open up the power relations and political dimension of art and various forms of discrimination, inequality, dominions, oppressions, repressions. As a result of this approach, the beautiful and the artistic do not have eternal or natural characteristics; according to Kant, social structures arise and are formed as a result of economic, social, and political developments, as well as the interests of social groups” (Fazeli, 2008).

If art enters the political and social arenas, some experts consider the condition of originality to be the artist's intention. Other articles and essays published in this field have focused on the art of a specific political or historical period and the advantages and disadvantages of politicizing art. According to Alireza Mohammadi³, in an article entitled “Art for Tyranny,” (Mohammadi, 2008), the influence of fascism on German art was strong after 1933. He writes: “After 1933, there was a strong wave of German citizens fleeing, a unique phenomenon in human history. Within a few years, all of Germany's cultural elite had left. Art experts affiliated with the Nazi Party confiscated more than 20,000 works of art from museums and exhibitions as part of their initial efforts to establish the Third Reich. Everything the Nazi art experts didn't understand or that wasn't in line with their awful taste

¹ Iranian anthropologist, author

² The specialized monthly magazine, review of books and art

³ Iranian poet and writer

was perverted or misleading.” These collection of articles and research addresses the pressure of ideological governments on art and artists and the destructive and ominous effects these pressures and censorships have had.

An article by Ezzatullah Foladvand⁴ entitled “*Art in the Chain of Ideology*” is another example of such an article. He refers to the art of the Stalin era in Russia: “Genuine art breaks meaningful patterns, doubts imitative values and attitudes, and is new and innovative. Art challenges stillness and silence and breaks the old order. Therefore, the conflict between the ruling ideology and the artist, who considers imitation and submission to be the death of creativity, is inevitable. One of the many eras of the struggle between ideology and art was the period of Stalinism in Russia. Art and artists were strictly monitored by Stalin, who was the power of art,” (Foladvand, 2004). In this article, he narrates some of the confrontations between the artists of the Stalin era and the government, then points to the blocking of art by ideological governments to show what happens to creativity in the age of cruelty.

“Arnold Hauser”⁵ also believes that the politicization of art does not compromise its authenticity. He writes: “Artistic creations are more closely related to their time than to science or art history as a single and integrated undertaking. The works of different artists do not have any common goal, nor do they complement each other. Every individual begins independently and achieves their goal in the most effective manner possible. The value of later works is not necessarily greater than that of earlier works. There is no comparison between works of art. Distinguishes the truth in art from the truth in science, which explains the value of knowledge acquired by art, which is never harmed by ideological constraints” (Hauser, 1951).

⁴ Iranian thinker and translator

⁵ Hungarian-German art historian and sociologist

1.2 Research Questions

- What roles can artists and art practices play in effecting ideological or social change in contemporary Iran?
- How might the politicization of artworks trouble the intention of the artist?

1.3 Methodology

I came to this study as an Illustrator with an Aerospace engineering background. My pursuit of being an engineer began with a childhood dream. If we were to ask all of the children of the world what they would like to become in the future, we would likely find that astronauts would be the most common answer. In the same way, it was the dream of becoming an astronaut that led me into the field of aerospace engineering. Astronautics is a special and amazing dream that even imagining it requires a wide range of imagination and intelligence. Throughout human history, even our ancestors have sought to answer thousands of questions and discover the mysteries of the wonders of heaven. Upon the discovery of ancient paintings in Utah caves dating back to a thousand years BC, comprising images of spaceships and people wearing masks like astronauts, the question arises: Is this painting the work of extraterrestrial beings? Or is it just a picture of a dream of space travel and a brilliant and ancient idea of astronautics? What made me switch from aerospace engineering to illustration was actually imagination. I had more opportunity for imagination in illustration and even with illustration travel to space is possible for me.

The research methodology employed in this study was a combination of library-based research, autobiographical and autoethnographic techniques, and studio-based exploration. The primary objective of the study was to examine the intersection of politics, art, and protest. The library-based research involved an extensive review of existing literature and related studies on the topic. This approach allowed the researcher to gather a comprehensive understanding of the subject and identify any gaps in the current body of knowledge. The review included both academic and non-academic sources such as books, journals, newspapers, and online resources. The autobiographical and autoethnographic techniques were employed to gather personal experiences and reflections of the researcher.

This approach enabled the researcher to reflect on their own experiences and relate them to the broader societal and political context. The researcher's personal experiences were used to inform the research and provide an additional layer of insight into the subject matter. The studio-based exploration involved creating and analyzing artworks that reflect the themes of politics, art, and protest. This approach allowed the researcher to explore the subject matter in a more creative and experiential manner. The researcher produced a range of artworks including illustrations that were analyzed in relation to the research objectives. The combination of these three research methods provided a multi-dimensional approach to the study of the intersection of politics, art, and protest. The research was able to gather data from multiple sources and perspectives, providing a comprehensive understanding of the subject. The findings of this study could be used to inform policy decisions and contribute to the broader academic discourse on the relationship between art, politics, and social movements.

2 Definitions and Concepts

The researcher intends to explain in this chapter the concepts of art, aesthetics, nostalgia, Identity and Cultural Identity.

2.1 Art

“What is art?”, a question that many have thought about for centuries, among them, scientists, philosophers, and, of course, artists who organized their intellectual and creative lives to find an answer, the final, definitive convincing answer has not been found. As I ponder over the question of "what is art?" myself, I cannot help but wonder if there will ever be a definitive answer. Perhaps the beauty of art lies in its ability to evoke different emotions and interpretations from each individual. As the world continues to evolve, so does art, and with it, the endless possibilities of what it could be. One thing is for certain, though, and that is the impact art has on society and its culture. Through their artistic achievements, many artists worked and created continuously in the modern era and enabled the advancement of philosophical discussions. Many were artists and philosophers, and their responses to the fundamental question, “What is the artwork?” showed greater sensitivity. Some artists develop their creative force by responding to the creation's inner and spiritual needs. Still, most make the basis of their work based on wisdom and philosophical belonging and mainly rely on finding a possible answer to that same fundamental question. All their answers were temporary, conditional, and not specific and permanent. The question “what is art?” has yet to be answered in a way that seems complete. All answers are correct in some aspects but do not find a general point and are not durable against scathing criticisms, (Ahmadi, 2011).

Pakbaz⁶ believes that “Art in a general and abstract sense refers to any activity that is both spontaneous and restrained. He attempted to categorize the arts into two categories: decorative arts and applied art. Decorative arts does not serve any ulterior motive, and its

⁶ Iranian writing and painter

product has value in and of itself, whereas applied art has a purpose beyond the product itself” (Pakbaz,2007).

Babak Ahmadi⁷, the Iranian scholar argues that: “In the effort to define art, Plato introduced the concept of ‘art as imitation’ as a result of his research into the relationship between art and reality, and it remains one of the essential concepts of art philosophy. In Plato's definition and most other discussions about the concept of imitation that have occurred so far, attention has been paid to the functional nature of art, which is the impact of artworks on people's social and moral lives. Plato's dialogue in the republic is the essential text in which imitation or mimesis is discussed” (Ahmadi,2011). Experts and thinkers have divided art into two groups, fine art and applied art, and assigned separate values and definitions to each. “A distinction between fine art and applied art emerged during the Industrial Revolution” (Pakbaz, 2007).

Definitions of processes and functions:

Many definitions proposed in the last years of the 20th century have emphasized the importance of complex characteristics in the definition of art. Definitions can be categorized into two functional and process groups. Functionalists believe that art is created when a purposeful service is provided. Only when something can fulfill the purpose we envision for art can it be called a work of art. However, this view suggests that art serves the purpose of creating an enjoyable aesthetic experience. A work of art has been deemed only when built according to a suitable process or formula, regardless of whether or not the work fulfills its intended purpose. In the beginning, art may have served a functional purpose, but with the development of the process, this concept has become increasingly important.

Art's value is considered the essence of its nature by functionalists. Nevertheless, the definition process is entirely descriptive and does not include any consideration of value. George Dickie's “institutional” theory is one of the most famous examples of a process definition (Dickie, 1974). In his first definition, a work of art is, first of all, a type of artifact

⁷ Iranian writer, and researcher

and, second, a set of aspects indicating a person or group of people on behalf of the art world have a purpose.

Historical definitions:

Art is only considered art once it has been assigned a place in the world of art, according to Arthur C. Danto⁸ (1973). This place results from the previous history of artistic production in general and by a specific artist. By drawing his tie, Picasso could create a work of art, but if Cézanne had done so, his work would not be considered art. Observations such as Danto's have made philosophers aware of the importance of historical context to the creation and presentation of art. This definition is not very acceptable (something is considered a work of art only when placed in a proper and correct relationship with its predecessors). Thus, it will be rejected since it does not explain what the definition of art could not be, except that it illustrates a link between contemporary art and established artists. Various methods of referencing, repeating, generalizing, or denying are available. The difference between these forms lies in the content of their definitions. Different ways have been proposed to relate today's works to previous works of art, each leading to another purpose of contemporary art.

Combined definitions:

The merits of numerous theoretical perspectives can be combined to produce combined definitions that avoid the weaknesses of each perspective individually.

Robert Stecher⁹ (1997) proposed an interpretative definition. He believes that something can qualify as a work of art if and only if it belongs to one of the most significant forms of art at the time of its creation, if it fulfills one of the functions of art at the time of its creation, or if it is an artifact that meets such a function. Although the definition is functionalist in the first place, it is consistent with the claim of progressivism that it affects the art of art, even if it implements one of the arts of art. Poetry, painting, and artistic music are the only forms that remain relevant in the creative functions that remain relevant.

⁸ American art critic, philosopher

⁹ American painter

Danto has also proposed an interpretive definition. According to Arthur Danto, art should first be about something and then convey its meaning. Even though these conditions are necessary, he doubts that they are sufficient (Danto, 1981). Danto's theory can be summarized as follows: something is an artistic work only if it has a subject (subject), and gives a view or point of view regarding that subject (has a style). Third, a rhetorical omission (metaphor). Fourthly, this omission informs the audience about what has been omitted (interpretation). Fourth, the work under discussion and, as a result, its performances must be rooted in art history.

Despite all the differences in tastes and definitions, political and social art belongs to the most comprehensive descriptions of art and has an influential place in both the social and political spheres. But before we discuss this topic further, it would be beneficial to examine one of the topics mentioned and asked about at the beginning of this article, namely beauty, and aesthetics. In works of art, what is the meaning of aesthetics? How does it relate to the artwork's subject? How have philosophers, artists, and experts defined the term. As part of this study, I will look at the complex topic and subject of memory, as evoked through art, and through an active state of nostalgia.

As I explore the different theoretical perspectives and combined definitions of art, I am struck by the diversity of opinions and ideas. It is fascinating to see how different scholars and artists approach the question of what makes something a work of art. Despite this, I find myself drawn to the idea that art should convey meaning and evoke emotions in its audience. I believe that this is what makes art so powerful and enduring, regardless of its form or function. As for the role of politics and society in art, I think that it is essential for artists to engage with the world around them and use their creativity to inspire change and progress. However, I also recognize the importance of beauty and aesthetics in art, and how they can help to elevate our collective experience of the world. Ultimately, I believe that art should be a reflection of the human experience and that it has the power to bring us closer together and enrich our lives in countless ways.

2.2 Nostalgia

Nostalgia is a complex emotion that can be characterized as a bittersweet inner feeling towards people, situations, and things of the past. The word "nostalgia" is derived from the Greek words *nostos* and *algos*, meaning "return" and "pain and suffering," respectively. In the Persian language, the semantic range of this word includes meanings such as homesickness, feeling of loneliness, feelings of sadness and suffering, and longing for the ideal past-real or imaginary. The term nostalgia was coined in the 17th century by the Swiss physician Johannes Hofer, who believed it to be a "cerebral disease" that afflicted Swiss mercenaries fighting wars far from home. Symptoms of the disease included homesickness, anxiety, weeping episodes, irregular heartbeat, insomnia, and disordered eating.

Historically, being labeled as nostalgic meant being considered ill, and students of the Bern Republic in Basel, native servants who migrated to Germany and France, and Swiss soldiers who fought outside their country were believed to be affected by the disease. In the late 17th century, Hofer proposed that nostalgia was caused by "the quite continuous vibrations of animal spirits through those fibers of the middle brain in which impressed traces of ideas of the Fatherland still cling" (Hofer, 1688/1995). The term nostalgia was considered a medical term from the 17th century until the late 20th century.

However, in the latter part of the 20th century, nostalgia came to be regarded as a sense of patriotism with a positive attitude, rather than as a disease.

Nostalgia is what evokes memories, and it can be a powerful force in shaping personal identity and cultural memory. It is an honorable act for a person to define the past and remember it, even if it is sad, and to preserve, review, and highlight it in their memory. Furthermore, as a pillar of romantic nationalism, the desire for the homeland has been sought out as a symbol of patriotism, and memorial works have been created to honor it.

The important point in the definition of nostalgia that can be observed in the context of this research and its assumptions is that: Nostalgia, from the viewpoint of psychological pathology, refers to a dream that originates from a powerful past (joy, painlessness and

peace of mind). The past that no longer exists and cannot be reconstructed. Therefore, defining the past and remembering it - even if it is sad - is an honorable act for a person, and they are interested in preserving, reviewing, and highlighting it in their memory; Some people are inherently optimistic about the past and regret its loss, so remembering what no longer exists is an enjoyable experience. As a general rule, nostalgia is an "unconscious behavior that manifests itself in all people including artists. It is a general, natural and instinctive feeling that exists among humans. Any time a person reviews his past experiences and feels a sense of sadness, coupled with some sense of intoxicating pleasure, he has experienced nostalgia, which in Persian can often be described as the sadness of longing and the longing for the past" (Sharifian, 2006).

In Iran, nostalgia has been a common theme in protest art, as artists use their work to express their longing for a past that is no longer attainable. This sentiment is often accompanied by sadness and loss as people reflect on the beauty and peace that once existed in their country. Many Iranian artists use their art to protest the current political climate, which they see as destroying the past they cherish. By evoking a sense of nostalgia, these artists can connect with their audience on a deep emotional level, reminding them of the beauty and potential that once existed in their country and inspiring them to work towards a better future. Through their art, they are able to express their love for their country and their hope for a better tomorrow.

2.3 Identity and Cultural Identity

In the field of humanities and social sciences, as well as in psychology, identity is one of the most complex concepts. The multifaceted phenomenon that has been defined and discussed by a wide range of thinkers and theorists. From these definitions, it is evident that identity has a number of dimensions and one definition cannot encompass all of these dimensions. It is also clear that identity is a dynamic phenomenon and not a fixed concept.

2.3.1 Identity

The concept of identity is complex and multilayered, and it has been viewed from various perspectives by scholars and thinkers. In his 1980 work, the late Dr. Mohammad Moin

defined identity as that which validates one's essence by identification, and which may also refer to external existence (Moin, 1980). Identity is considered one of the divine names from which it can be inferred that God has breathed into the human from his essence, and human identity is a return to man's divine existence, which is why humans have different identities. "God has created human beings in different groups, nations, and nations, so their gems and identity are different" (Ayatollahi, 2010). On the other hand, Rubber's French dictionary defines identity as having similar characteristics and forms, identifying oneself as an individual, and feeling a sense of belonging to a group.

Identity encompasses the feelings of individual independence and social belonging and begins with "I" and ends with "We" (Hayati et al., 2007). A person's identity is what he or she understands about themselves or their group identity. Identity is a response to who he or she is and what we are as a group. There is no absolute concept of identity according to Nietzsche (and many scholars discuss this topic, see contemporary discourse on Intersectionality for example). Religion can be verbally defined as an absolute concept, but in the social arena, identity is subject to relativity and there are substantial differences from generation to generation. In the context of being or not, identity refers to special me or special we.

Lukman and Berger¹⁰ view identity as encompassing all the roles and tendencies that a person has internalized during their socialization, and formed, retained, changed, or reformed during the process of socialization. Theories of identity have evolved from fixed theories to ones that consider identity as a set of representations that are constantly changing and have fewer fixed elements. Identity consists of several layers, and each human being possesses multiple identities, including individual identity, social identity, and cultural identity, which is the most important dimension for art, (Lukman and Berger, 2015).

National identity is often conflated with cultural identity, but cultural identity is seen as more than national identity by many experts, as it originates from the social culture of each individual.

¹⁰ American-Austrian sociologist

The concept of identity has been studied and analyzed from various viewpoints, with each perspective providing a unique understanding of this complex and multifaceted concept.

Collective identity takes place in the context of a local, local-global or global nationalism or nativism. This identity connects people based on what they have in common. Such as religion, nationality, ethnicity, gender, language, professional subject or opposing culture. For example, there are people who jointly oppose the environment or oppose the arrogant system. “Actually, the collective identity is in opposition to the individual identity”, so it can be concluded that “the common sense is the key to the collective identity,” (Kamrani, 2010).

2.3.2 Cultural Identity

Identity and culture are related through their relationship with the concept of social action. As such, identity can be considered as a result of the dialectic that occurs between the semantic network of a person's mind and the network of their social relationships.

It can be argued that cultural commonalities are elements and components that are common to most societies, and cultural identity is part of what distinguishes a society from others, as well as nostalgia. As a result of the deep connection between culture and identity, identity is often viewed as a cultural phenomenon, and culture is an expression of identity. Thus, the cultural environment as a part of the social environment plays a significant role in the development, maintenance, and change of identity. Although objective structures are independent of the individual's will and guide their actions, these same structures are also created by the social development arising from the relationship between the individual (secondary nature) and society (the arena). In the view of anthropologists, cultural identity consists of components such as nation, political territory, language and religion” (Ruh al-Amini, 2000). As a result of these explanations and definitions regarding nostalgia and its types and examples, deepens my understanding of the commonalities between cultural identity and nostalgia. Thus, nostalgia has emerged as a concept and is an example of cultural identity.

The Persian miniature plays a significant role in shaping and expressing cultural and collective identity in Iran. Cultural identity refers to an individual's sense of belonging to a particular cultural group and their connection to the shared beliefs, values, and traditions of that group. Collective identity, on the other hand, refers to the shared sense of identity among a group of people. The Persian miniature, through its depiction of traditional Iranian motifs, symbols, and stories, represents the cultural heritage and identity of Iran. These elements of the Persian miniature help to transmit the values and beliefs of Iranian society from one generation to the next, and play a role in shaping the cultural identity of Iranians. By preserving and promoting this cultural heritage, the Persian miniature also contributes to the formation and reinforcement of a collective identity among Iranians, unifying them through a shared sense of cultural heritage and history. In this way, the Persian miniature can be seen as an important tool for expressing and reinforcing cultural and collective identity in Iran. The cultural and historical significance of the Persian miniature, as well as its role in shaping cultural and collective identity, have made it an important part of the country's artistic heritage.

Conclusion

For centuries, thinkers, philosophers, and experts have been grappling with defining art and aesthetics. The definitions of these categories have become increasingly diverse and sometimes contradictory in this era. Several researchers have classified these definitions into different categories. There are several types of groups, such as functional, trend, historical, and consolidated. Each of these definitions has merits and demerits, and the author of this study has chosen to rely on close definitions. This definition has the advantage of gathering the strengths of other theories while avoiding their weaknesses to some extent. According to Arthur Danto, art should first and foremost be about something and then communicate its meaning. I employ Arthur Danto's theory of art in my consideration of how art impacts social lives of societies.

Danto's theory is summarized as follows: a work of art must have a subject, convey a viewpoint or point of view related to that subject and convey its meaning through

metaphors. The audience should be involved in the interpretation of this metaphor. An artistic, historical, social, cultural context is required to discuss the work and its interpretation.

Danto's theory combines functionalism, progressivism, and historicism. According to him, the purpose of the artwork is to allow the audience to participate in the interpretation of the subject matter. Whenever a work is created based on the ideological beliefs of the artist, and its purpose is to accompany and excite the audience, the audience should be encouraged to participate in the interpretation of the work. Visual elements and elements compatible with the audience's experiences are used to achieve this intervention. A combination of factors could be more complex to arouse the audience's inattention.

3 Iranian Narratives and Myths

Iranian narratives and myths are an integral part of the country's rich cultural heritage. These stories have been passed down through generations and continue to influence Iranian art, literature, and even everyday life. From epic poems like the Shahnameh to the tragic tales of legendary heroes and the religious teachings of Zoroastrianism, Iranian myths and narratives offer a glimpse into the country's ancient history and traditional beliefs. In this section, we will explore some of the most notable Iranian narratives and myths.

3.1 Shahnameh

The “Shahnameh” (Book of the Kings) is a monumental epic Persian poem written by the poet Ferdowsi in the 10th century. The poem tells the story of Persian history, culture, and mythology from the creation of the world to the Arab conquest of Iran. The “Shahnameh” is divided into several sections, each of which tells a different story and features a different set of characters. The poem covers a wide range of themes, including the rise and fall of dynasties, the struggles of heroes and kings, love, betrayal, and the quest for justice and freedom.

Some of the most famous characters in the “Shahnameh” include the legendary hero Rostam¹¹, the evil king Zahhak¹², the wise king Jamshid¹³, and the brave blacksmith Kaveh. The poem also features numerous mythical creatures, including dragons, demons, and heroes with superhuman powers. Throughout the “Shahnameh,” Ferdowsi uses vivid imagery, colorful storytelling, and powerful characters to convey the rich history and cultural heritage of Persia. The poem has been celebrated for its beauty, poetic mastery, and cultural significance, and is widely regarded as one of the greatest works of Persian literature. While the “Shahnameh” is primarily a narrative and story-based text, its themes of justice, power, and the struggle for freedom have inspired many Iranian artists to use the poem as a source of inspiration for their art protests. Through their art, these artists have

¹¹ legendary hero in Persian mythology known for his strength and courage

¹² evil tyrant king with snakes growing out of his shoulders

¹³ mythical king who discovered wine and became arrogant

sought to critique and challenge the political and social issues of their time, using the themes and characters from the "Book of Kings" to create powerful and meaningful messages about the state of their country and the world. In this way, the "Shahnameh" has played an important role in the artistic and cultural heritage of Iran, and its themes and characters continue to inspire new generations of artists to use art as a means of protest and social critique.

The characters and elements from the "Shahnameh" are widely used in artworks for several reasons. First, the characters in the "Shahnameh" are timeless and universal, embodying the struggles and triumphs of humanity. The heroes and villains of the poem, with their heroic acts and moral dilemmas, have a relatable and inspiring quality that makes them appealing to audiences both ancient and modern. Second, the "Book of Kings" is a rich tapestry of myths, legends, and historical events, providing artists with a wealth of visual and symbolic elements to draw from. The poem contains colorful characters, dramatic events, and richly detailed landscapes, making it fertile ground for artistic inspiration. Third, the themes of the "Shahnameh" are deeply relevant to the political and social issues of Iran and the wider world. The struggles for justice, power, and freedom that are depicted in the poem speak to the ongoing challenges that people face in their own lives, making the characters and elements from the "Shahnameh" an ideal means for artists to comment on and critique the world around them. Finally, the cultural significance of the "Book of Kings" in Iran cannot be overstated. The poem is a cornerstone of the country's cultural heritage, and its themes and characters have played a significant role in shaping the collective identity of the Iranian people. By drawing from the "Book of Kings" in their art, artists can tap into this cultural heritage and make a powerful statement about their place in the world.

In order to shed light on the reasons for the inclusion of characters and elements from the Shahnameh in the artworks, characters and elements will be discussed.

3.2 Rostam

Rostam is the hero and the central character that creates the content of an epic. A narrative, and a long poem, it describes his thoughts, actions, and fights to defend his prestige and gain independence and superiority over his enemies. A chart of the hero's characteristics, which is based on repeated themes in the epics, must be included along with some of the "heroic institutions" and "heroic periods" of each subject. It is considered extraordinary and is highlighted in epic works to distinguish them from other types of literature, such as lyrical and educational works.

According to Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, Rostam's character is characterized by courage, bravery, and godliness. Even though Rostam has roots in real history, he is a representative of Iran from an epic and fictional perspective. Therefore, Rostam is considered a distinguished character, and his story should be described separately.

In the *Shahnameh*, Rostam is known as “Rotstakhm” (meaning the holder of the mighty top), which has almost the same meaning as Tahmtan, his Persian nickname. It is believed that Rostam, the legendary hero of Iranian epics, was the son of Zal, the white hero of the national epic, and Rodabah, the daughter of Shah Kabul. With the aid of the resourceful Simorgh, he was born by cesarean and soon acquired a manly body and mane. He lived his entire life in freedom in Zabulestan. Only in times of trouble did he rush to the aid of Iranians, kings, and princes, saving the Iranian nation on several occasions. Identifying the origin of Rostam's story is one of the most challenging topics in Iranian fiction. Rostam's name does not appear in the *Avesta*. As far as we can tell, the real Rostam was one of the Parthian noblemen and generals, and when he made his way into national stories, he became a fictional figure. Several bizarre habits were attributed to him, such as carrying 700 kg of mace and living for 600 years. As a result, we can be confident that the real Rostam existed in the historical past of Iran, of course, in the form of a believable character. However, when he entered the story, he was above reality, as is customary in mythology.

This book has many characters and heroes, each of whom is known as a central hero at the right time and place. Therefore, in every period of the fictional eras of the *Shahnameh*, we

are faced with heroes and good people. In particular, we cannot identify a specific individual as the main hero of Shahnameh. Rostam, the most famous and influential hero of ancient legends and traditions in Iranian culture, is undoubtedly the most renowned hero after Islam. Our entire culture and politeness have been shaped by it. As a result of his seven-hundred pounds of mace and mighty lasso, his powerful and tiger-like appearance, and his impenetrable armor, he has been recognized as a national hero in Persian literature. He has always lived with people, and people have lived with him. There have been numerous narratives and legends about him. He is said to be the epitome of bravery and bravery in Persian literature, and no book can be written without his name and memory. In Iranian culture, his name is associated with bravery. Rostam is undoubtedly the most famous hero of the Shahnameh, who did not spare any effort for the land of Iran, and he gave his life on this path, falling into a well and dying; as a result Shaghad's 14 conspiracy.

To understand Haft Khan¹⁵, the heroes must make a heroic choice: choose the difficult path, fight against it, and defeat it. These Haft Khans are associated with battles with animals, such as dragons, wolves, lions, demons, etc., which are symbols in these battles. As a psychological analysis indicates, the hero kills animals to combat the animalistic and instinctive aspects of his existence, which wisdom does not accept. The wolf, the lion, and the dragon represent the animal that sleeps in us, forces and instincts that, by risking his life and winning over them with the help of intelligence and awareness, the warrior repels the darkness of the soul. In a mythological interpretation, animal killing is considered a battle with demonic forces, and it is mentioned in the Shahnameh.

As a symbol of protest and resistance, I use Rostam, a legendary hero from the Persian epic Shahnameh. The struggle of contemporary protesters is symbolized by Rostam, who represents bravery, determination, and resistance to oppression. As a result of this representation, my artwork seeks to connect the works of the past with the efforts of today, and to inspire others to fight for justice and equality as well. It is essential to point out that

¹⁴ Half brother of Rostam

¹⁵ It refers to the Seven Climes or Seven Regions of the ancient world as understood by the Persians. Each clime was thought to have its own distinct climate, geography, and culture.

it is not necessary to search for the real Rostam in the layers of history but to consider him a symbol of Iran and the Iranian people. In this artwork, Hossein Ronaghi¹⁶ illustrates the bravery of Rostam for the Iranian community for the years he fought for freedom and the Iranian nation. In 2023, Ronaghi was on a hunger strike for more than sixty days to benefit the Iranian community.

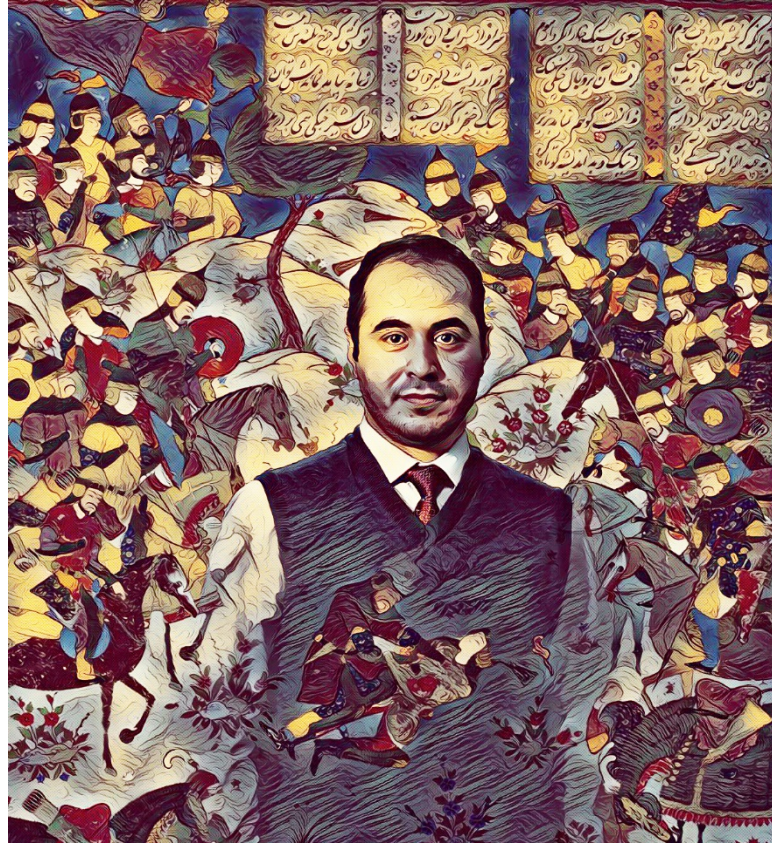


Figure 3-1. Hossein Ronaghi- based on Rostam Symbol

3.3 Dragon

The art of a people is a manifestation of the cosmology and anthropology of a people and a manifestation of public beliefs, dreams, fears, and hopes. Studying the symbols and signs manifested in a nation's art allows us to uncover their ideas and thoughts and reveal the bright shadows of their collective conscience. One of the most prominent concerns is the conflict between goodness and evil. In ancient Iranian culture, Ahuramazda

¹⁶ Hossein Ronaghi is an Iranian blogger and human rights activist who was imprisoned for his online activities and suffered from health issues as a result of mistreatment in prison

/əˌhʊərəˈmæzdə/ manifests eternal light, and Ahriman and Divs¹⁷ are manifestations of darkness and darkness.

It is necessary to intentionally present the literature of the dragon since Iranian painting is closely related to literature, and the painter draws inspiration from epics and lyrical poems. Furthermore, legends have appeared in the literature of many ancient civilizations, including Iran, Egypt, Babylon, China, and India, with various explicit and implicit meanings, but only in Iran, it is a symbol of wrongdoings and crookedness.

In the world, the Divs is responsible for all people's evils, misdeeds, and crookedness, and Ahriman is responsible for all the sins, wrongdoings, and crookedness. Demonic forces can manifest in natural forces (such as earthquakes and tornadoes). Animals were considered to be the answer to human questions in ancient times. "In the epic literature of Iran (and other nations), humanity is incarnated, and the conflict between good and evil is portrayed as a battle between a human and a dragon. Giving people freedom and servitude, and finally, the most glorious warriors and the terrifying dragons are life and death," (Sultani Gard Faramarizi, 2007).

Ferdowsi's Shahnameh portrays a two-dimensional dragon. It is a manifestation of filth and simultaneously a symbol of strength and courage. To understand a part of Iranian culture, it will be imperative to know this animal's place in Shahnameh and its double. The site of the dragon in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh provides insight into the ancient people's view of this animal. This view is undoubtedly essential for understanding its meanings and symbolic significance. Dragons are derived from the combination of Aji and Dahak. An aji is a snake; a dragon is a stout, large, and mighty animal. Shahnameh describes it as very dangerous and harmful. Consequently, a single dragon can cause the death of a large number of people. Therefore, more than half of its use in the Shahnameh is in fighting brave warriors like Gershasb, Ghstasb, Rostam, Esfandiar, Bahram, etc., with this deadly and powerful animal.

¹⁷ The word "div" (also spelled "deev" or "dive") refers to a type of supernatural creature, usually translated as "demon" or "evil spirit."

Based on Ferdowsi's use of the dragon, the animal is either like greatness or a metaphor for the warrior a strong animal or something like the sky against which a person is entirely powerless. The dragon is a recurring symbol that often represents evil, tyranny, and oppression. The dragon is often depicted as a powerful and dangerous creature that must be defeated by the heroes of the story in order to restore peace and justice. This depiction of the dragon reflects the idea that evil must be confronted and defeated in order for good to triumph. In the poem, dragons are often associated with evil kings and tyrants, such as Zahhak, who is depicted as having two serpents growing out of his shoulders. These serpents must be fed with the brains of young men in order to keep him in power. The defeat of these evil rulers and the dragons associated with them symbolize the triumph of good over evil and the restoration of peace and justice. Additionally, the dragon is also a symbol of wealth and power. In the poem, dragons are often depicted guarding treasures and are considered a source of great riches. This depiction reflects the idea that wealth and power can be both a blessing and a curse, and that it is important to use them wisely and for the greater good.

Historically, killing this animal has been a source of happiness for people. They believed that impurity would be removed from the world by slaying dragons. From the time of the earliest manuscripts until the last Iranian painting schools, the design and role of the dragon have been a focus of painters. My artwork explores the timeless themes of good versus evil through a contemporary lens, as it features dragons from the Shahnameh as the enemies of young people. This interpretation echoes the story of Zahhak, a classic tale of power, corruption, and oppression. Through this interpretation, my artwork serves as a commentary on the dangers posed by those in positions of power and the importance of standing up against oppressive forces to fight for justice and equality.



Figure 3-2. Ebrahim Naroui – based on Dragon Symbol

3.4 Siavash

A noble and celestial face of the Shahnameh, Siavash was born to an Iranian father and a Turani¹⁸ mother. As a child, Kavos¹⁹ entrusted Rostam with the responsibility of teaching him the lessons of heroism. Rostam takes Siavash to the king's palace after seven years of education. After seeing Siavash, Sudaba²⁰, Kavos's wife, falls in love with her. Nevertheless, Siavash rejects Sudabah's love and is accused of betraying his father. Kavos Shah is seeking a solution to overcome his doubts, and the devotees believe that the way to salvation lies through fire. As Siavash rode his horse into the fire with faith in royal glory, he escaped without injury. Afrasiab, the king of Turan, rushes to Iran at this time.

Along with Rostam, Siavash leaves for Balkh to please his father and free himself from scheming Sudabah. The king is informed of his victory there. Despite this, Siavash finds

¹⁸ Turan is a region that is often portrayed as the traditional enemy of Iran

¹⁹ Kavos (also known as Kaykavous or Kai Kavus) is a legendary king of Iran, father of Siavash

²⁰ Sudaba (also spelled Sudabeh) wife of Kavus

himself in Turan during an adventure when luck does not favor him. Afrasiab's daughter is taken as his wife there. As Siavash grows in Turan, he builds two cities, Gard and Gang.

Siavash's innocence and the effectiveness of his blood, which was spilled on the ground, play an essential role in the Shahnameh, which is why even Afrasiab and his brother Gersiv emphasize it. It is the tragic story of a man who surrenders to a destiny greater than himself to comply with social interests and moral considerations. Despite being fully aware of its dark side, Siavash is somehow a victim of fate. His view of the world is that it is a tool that leads him to death. In Siavash's view, because he is correct in thinking, time, destiny, and forces are at work, something that no one can change, so he cannot be happy. As it is true that he has understood it in advance, he is the ruler of his self, not his existence, which is the entire universe. As a result, such a person does not expect or desire anything contrary to his wishes, (Avesta 1388).

The Story of Siavash

The tragedy of Siavash Mahmoodi, whose name echoes that of the legendary figure in Persian epic poem Shahnameh, has inspired me to create an artwork that honors his memory and pays tribute to the bravery and sacrifice of those who fight for justice and freedom. In the Shahnameh, Siavash is unjustly accused of a crime and is sentenced to death. Despite being innocent, he chooses to sacrifice himself to maintain the honor and justice. Siavash's death is considered a great tragedy in the epic poem, and he is remembered as a symbol of selflessness and bravery. This event serves as a powerful lesson about the consequences of false accusations and the importance of maintaining justice and fairness in a society.



Figure 3-3. The Slaying of Siyāvash- Ferdowsi's Shahnameh



Figure 3-4. The Portrait of Siavash Mahmoodi

3.5 Angel

In the Shahnameh, angels are depicted as supernatural beings that serve as messengers of the divine and have a significant role in guiding human affairs. They are often portrayed as benevolent and protective, and their presence in the story symbolizes the influence of the divine in human events.

One interpretation of the angels in the Shahnameh is that they represent the concept of justice and balance in the world. They are often depicted as mediating between opposing forces and helping restore order in conflict situations. This interpretation aligns with the theme of justice and the importance of restoring balance throughout the Shahnameh.

Another interpretation is that the angels in the Shahnameh symbolize the power of faith and belief. Shahnameh's presence in the story conveys that belief in the divine can give people the strength and courage to face challenges and overcome obstacles. Overall, the angels in the Shahnameh symbolize the power of justice, balance, and faith in shaping the course of human events.

My painting pays homage to the mother of a protester fighting for freedom by incorporating elements of the angels from the Persian epic Shahnameh. By depicting the angels as symbols of justice, balance, and divine guidance, I aim to convey the strength and resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity. Through this interpretation, my painting serves as a tribute to the mothers who have sacrificed so much for the cause of freedom and serves as a reminder of the power of love, hope, and courage in the face of oppression.



Figure 3-5. Gohar Eshghi – based on angel Symbol

4 Ideology and Politics in Relation to Art

Through my research and writing, I have been exploring the relationship of art to social and political issues. This is because political actors and systems of power are rooted in the heart of a society, and their decisions, opinions, and thoughts significantly impact the community's social, economic, and cultural life. As a result, a reference to the sociology of art has been made at the beginning of this chapter before explaining the relationship between art, politics, and ideology.

4.1 Politics and the Power of Art

The relationship between art and politics has been long recognized by rulers and thinkers, who have either monopolized it or driven it out of society. Plato's Republic exemplifies the conflict between political ideology and art, with art often being expelled to protect citizens from "incorrect" thoughts and feelings. However, churches and courts historically supported artists and did not confront politics until the politicized art movement emerged in the 17th century. Protest art gained prominence with artists like Honoré Daumier, and in Stalinist Russia, the conflict between ideology and art was fierce (Folavand, 2013). Churches and courts historically did not confront politics, but rather mildly supported artists. Charles Philippe, a French cartoonist from the 17th century, was an early example of artists confronting politics through his caricatures of King Louis Philippe in 1831. This event marked the beginning of the politicized art period in the artistic world. Protest art and anti-regime artists gained prominence, such as through the political projects of French artist Honoré Daumier. During Stalin's regime, art became a powerful tool for ideology and one of the fiercest conflicts between ideology and art occurred (Folavand, 2013). Art has always been able to influence and criticize politics and society. The ideological function of art, which addresses specific political issues, assumes that certain issues are of political importance. However, this approach is limited and assumes that the artist differs from a preacher. Art may gain significance in this context when viewed in opposition to politics. As E. H. Carr noted, condemning ideologies is an ideology, (Qazlesafli, 2001).

Art and ideology have a complex relationship, as ideologies desire power and uniformity while art relies on individuality and creativity. Ideologies disguise their motive for seeking power, while art breaks the mold and avoids imitation. In any case, ideology seeks supremacy and dominance, so it is used to make everyone the same color, to make them accept uniform and approved values and beliefs, and to bring them to the lowest common denominator. Alternatively, art relies on individuality and avoids uniformity. Creating original art is a way to break the mold of addicts, doubt imitative values and attitudes, and be creative and innovative. Therefore, the conflict between the ruling ideology and the true artist, who views imitation and obedience as the death of creativity, is inevitable (Folavand, 2013).

According to Herbert Marcuse, art has the power to increase people's awareness and understanding of themselves and their environment, and can stand against chaos and disorder caused by the lack of reasonableness. He believes that art is essential for preventing individuals from being suffocated by reality, and can help individuals recognize and address issues in society. Marcuse views art as a means to emancipate beauty, imagination, and reason in all spheres of subjectivity and objectivity, and believes that art can express truth without being controlled by the status quo, (Marcuse, 1978).

All that is said about the influence and power of art is only meaningful when viewed through the eyes of an audience. Therefore, here we are discussing art types and styles designed to communicate with the audience (generally) and have a social purpose. A form of art in which humanity and philanthropy are fundamental components and goals. This artist collects many people's experiences and expresses them through clear, compact images. The art is a dynamic reflection of life, influencing both the artist and the audience, as it takes shape. Art teaches people to be creative, bold, courageous, and active participants in struggles and transformations. In Maxim Gorky's²¹ words, “art is a struggle against or in support of something. It is not indifferent and cannot be because man does not transcribe

²¹ Russian writer and socialist political thinker and proponent.

reality but rather confirms, transforms, or destroys it” (Gorky, 1906). The history of art is nothing but the development of human's active or transformative capabilities.

A positive or destructive power of art depends upon the social perceptions of the artist, their perception of things as usual and desirable, and finally, their taste, and it is in life that it can be effective. The artist who does not separate himself from the mainstream of society and considers striving for social progress a natural thing does not see any conflict between the ideological and aesthetic tasks of art because he believes these two issues as one and that the title solves their indissoluble relationship. Artists do not copy life but rather interpret and change it.

As a result, conservatives of the ruling class believe “art can give people false and inauthentic ideas, disturb, upset, worry and confuse them, and because it emphasizes individuality and deviation rather than homogeneity, it can cause damage to society's beliefs. Therefore, the protectors of the ruling class always regard it with suspicion. In cases where art does not significantly impact people, it is considered a harmless pleasure, a luxury, and an escape. It is considered cunning, destructive, and disturbing when people (in terms of negation) (principles) are strongly influenced, and it damages the substructure of our most favorable beliefs and social attitudes” (Bardsley, 1998). Attempts by dictatorial and totalitarian rulers and politicians to confine art to a corner of isolation or to confine it to the monopoly of power have driven some artists closer to the corner. As a result, their art became a very effective form of socio-political criticism around the world.

For art to intensify its politicization, I argue that three conditions be met. Whenever the conditions listed below become objective in society, art is unintentionally politicized and seriously conflicts with governments and most laws. Firstly, this dispute is likely to arise in a situation where an existing conflict and cracks have damaged a hypothetical society that naturally developed in the social and political environment. Under such circumstances, the national spirit is weakened, and the economic gap in the community is widened. The art form can use its language and methods to present problems in this situation. Secondly, the possibility of art challenging reality becomes stronger when the legitimacy and

efficiency of government leaders are questioned. Art can bring together different societal emotions and lead them toward a specific goal. Art can undoubtedly unite different emotions in society and lead them to a common objective. Thirdly, when works of art are displayed in public, the possibility of controversy also exists. The issue has naturally widened the audience, so different points of view will likely be pushed in one direction, endangering the stability of our society in the process.

As such, the best form of political and social art is not in galleries and for special thinkers but in public and for the masses. As an example of a politically motivated theory of aesthetics, Marxism places great emphasis on the educational role of the arts. Marxist interpretation of art binds aesthetics to a political program for social purposes.

As an artist, I strongly believe in the power of art to challenge the ruling ideology and express the truth. I see imitation and obedience as the death of creativity and view art as a means of standing against the chaos and disorder caused by the lack of reasonableness in our society. Art can increase people's awareness and understanding of themselves and their environment. It can inspire individuals to actively participate in struggles and transformations and bring about social change. It is not just a harmless pleasure or luxury, as some may perceive it, but it can significantly impact society. The ruling class often views art with suspicion as it can give people false and inauthentic ideas and disturb society's beliefs. However, art should not be censored or limited as it is a free expression that can challenge the status quo and push for progress.

4.2 Art Protest and Revolutionary Art in Iran

Art Protest typically refers to art that is created in response to a specific issue or event and is intended to raise awareness or spark dialogue about that issue. Art Protest can take many different forms, including street art, performance art, and visual art. The goal of Art Protest is often to draw attention to a particular social or political issue and to encourage viewers to take action in response. Revolutionary Art, on the other hand, is art that is created with the explicit purpose of promoting political or social revolution. Revolutionary Art is often associated with political movements and may be used to inspire and motivate people to

take action against oppressive systems or structures. This type of art often reflects a particular ideology or political perspective and is intended to promote revolutionary change.

While both Art Protest and Revolutionary Art are forms of activism that use art as a tool for social change, they differ in their goals and approaches. Art Protest seeks to raise awareness and spark conversation about a particular issue, while Revolutionary Art aims to inspire and mobilize people to take direct action to overthrow oppressive systems and structures. The Islamic Revolution in Iran, which took place in 1979, was a complex political, social, and religious movement that involved a wide range of actors and factors. While the influence of revolutionary artists in the Islamic Revolution is debated, it is generally agreed that art played a significant role in shaping the cultural and political landscape in which the revolution took place. In the years leading up to the revolution, Iran was experiencing a cultural renaissance, with artists and intellectuals challenging the authoritarian rule of the Shah and exploring new forms of expression. Many of these artists were critical of the Shah's government and the West's influence in Iran, and their work reflected a desire for social justice, political freedom, and national self-determination.

During the revolution, artists played an important role in shaping public opinion and mobilizing the masses. Poets, writers, musicians, and visual artists used their work to express the aspirations and frustrations of the Iranian people and to galvanize support for the revolutionary cause. For example, the singer and songwriter Kourosh Yaghmaei wrote and performed revolutionary songs that became anthems of the revolution, while the playwright and filmmaker Bahram Beizai used his art to critique the Shah's government and to promote the values of the revolution. After the revolution, the new Islamic government embraced the arts as a means of promoting its vision of society and culture. The government funded and supported a wide range of artistic endeavors, including literature, music, theater, and visual arts, and sought to create a new national culture that reflected the values and beliefs of the Islamic Republic. However, the relationship between the government and artists was not always harmonious, as artists struggled to navigate the complex and often restrictive cultural policies of the new regime.

4.2.1 Anti-Regime Woman Artists

There are many artists in Iran who have used their work to critique the policies and practices of the Iranian government and to advocate for greater political freedom and human rights. Here are some examples of anti-regime protest artists in Iran:

Shirin Neshat

Shirin Neshat is an Iranian-American artist who is known for her work that explores themes of gender, identity, and politics, particularly in the context of the Islamic Republic of Iran. While she is often described as an anti-regime artist, her relationship with the Iranian government and its policies is complex.

Neshat was born in Iran in 1957, but left the country after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. Her experiences of displacement, cultural identity, and political upheaval are central to her artistic practice, which includes photography, video installations, and film. Neshat's early work, such as her "Women of Allah" series from the 1990s, was characterized by a critical engagement with the Islamic Republic's policies and their impact on women's lives. The series featured powerful images of veiled women holding guns, challenging traditional stereotypes of Muslim women as passive and submissive. The work was widely celebrated in the West and brought Neshat international recognition as an artist who used her work to challenge oppressive regimes.

However, Neshat's relationship with the Iranian government became more complicated in the years that followed. In 2009, she expressed support for the Green Movement, which emerged in response to the disputed presidential election that year. The movement was critical of the Iranian government's human rights record and its restrictive policies, and Neshat used her art to express solidarity with its goals. Despite this critical stance, Neshat has also been critical of the Western media's representations of Iran and of the simplistic narratives that are often used to describe the country and its people. Her work seeks to explore the complexities of Iranian society and culture, and to challenge both Iranian and Western audiences to confront their assumptions and prejudices.

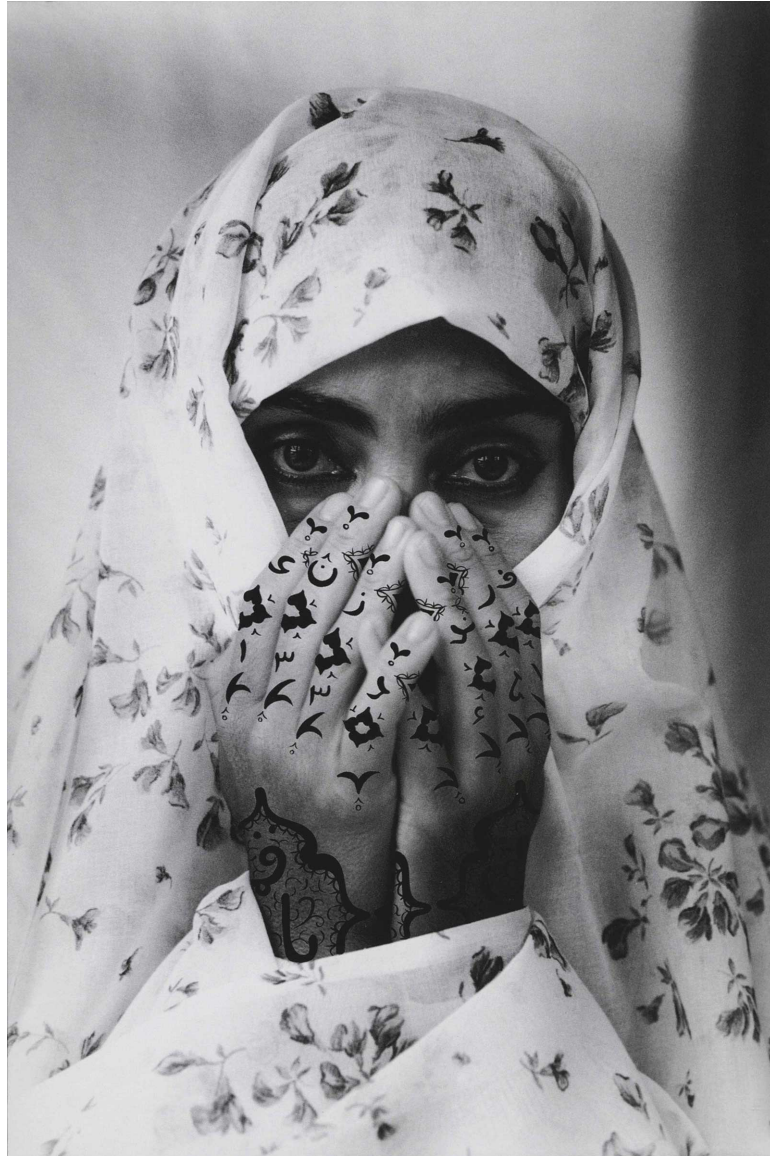


Figure 4-1. Shirin Neshat

Arghavan Khosravi

Arghavan Khosravi is a talented artist who creates surrealist paintings that explore themes of exile, freedom, and empowerment with a focus on female protagonists. Through her enigmatic compositions, Khosravi alludes to the restriction of human rights, particularly those of immigrants. Her work reflects both her own experiences and those of a broader community, making it both semiautobiographical and universal. She is one of the contemporary protest artist. Drawing on a variety of cross-cultural influences, Khosravi incorporates elements from ancient Western sculpture, the posturing of contemporary

fashion magazines, and the compressed perspective of Persian miniature painting. She often uses printed textiles from Iran as her canvas, incorporating the patterns and textures of these materials into her work. In addition, she experiments with three-dimensional canvases, constructing her own shaped wood panels that add further depth and create optical illusions that augment the compositions. Khosravi's artwork is not only aesthetically sophisticated, but it also incorporates visual metaphors, historical references, and reactions to current social narratives. Her work provides a labyrinthine world that leaves its audience with much to decode and appreciate. Each painting tells a story that reflects the complex nature of Iranian culture and society.

Khosravi's artwork focuses on the sense of uncertainty and repression that is woven into Iranian society. One does not need to be Iranian to relate to the messages conveyed in her artwork. She often obscures the identities of the women featured in her paintings, allowing viewers to imagine themselves in each situation regardless of their cultural background. One of the ways that Khosravi has been able to capture the Iranian experience is by using metaphor to depict life in a patriarchal society that is constantly at the brink of war. She is heavily influenced by the circuitous storytelling nature of Persian miniatures, which she uses to weave intricate stories that highlight the complexities of Iranian life.



Figure 4-2. Arghavan Khosravi Painting

Conclusion

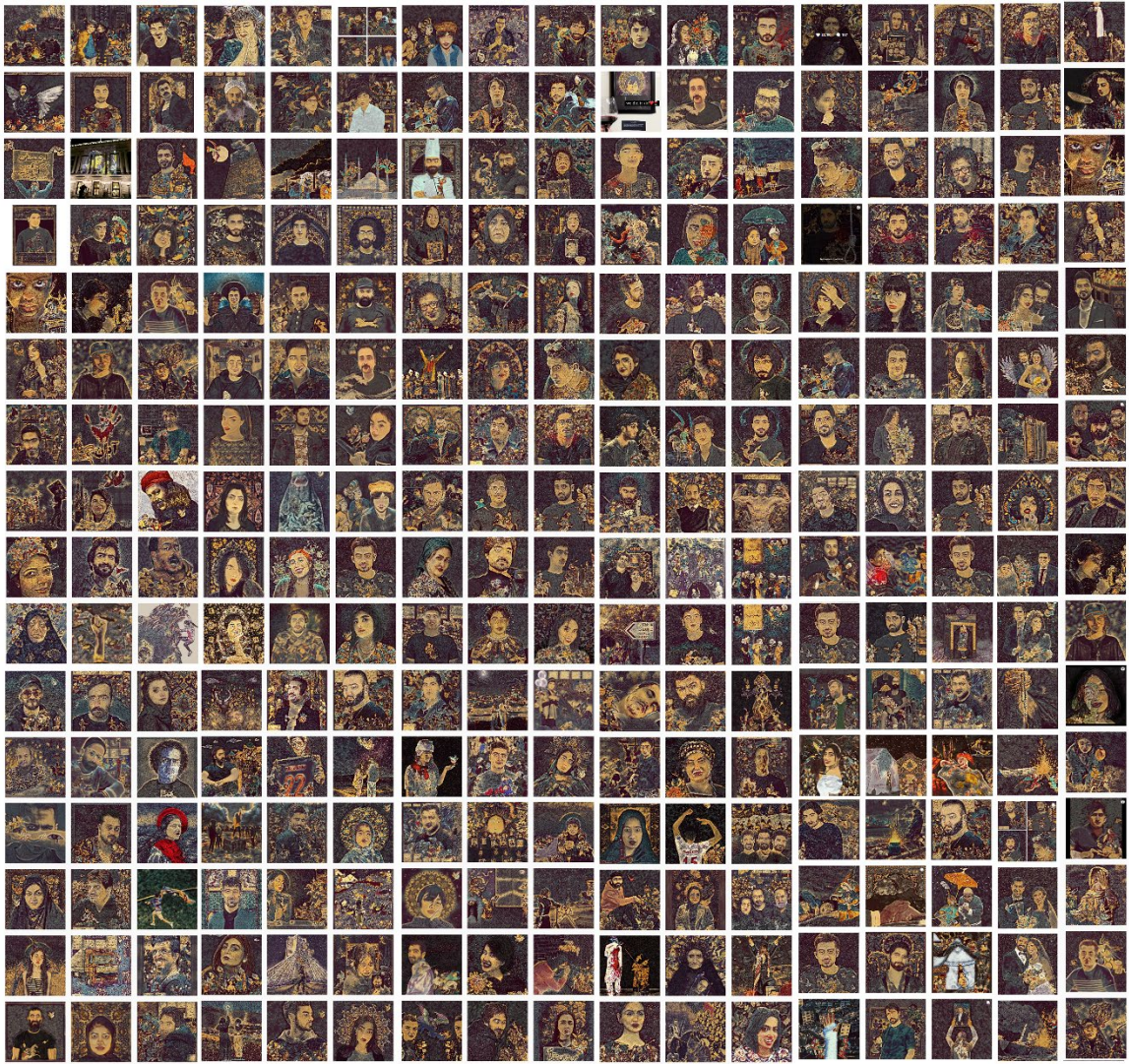
Numerous artists have been deeply engaged with the social and political issues of their time throughout art history. To be a committed artist, one must be able to express their opinions regarding these pressing concerns, as it is the artist's responsibility to engage with society. The conversation between the artist and the community must occur in a language everyone understands. In the case of painting, it often involves familiar symbols and precise depictions of reality. Painters are not only artists but also members of society, so they cannot escape oppression, injustice, corruption, hypocrisy, and misery. There is a

growing need for artists to express their beliefs more urgently or even use their art as a weapon to advocate for change as poverty decreases.

It is essential to distinguish between Art Protest and Revolutionary Art, two distinct forms of art activism that aim to influence social and political change. While Art Protest aims to raise awareness and promote dialogue, Revolutionary Art inspires direct action to overthrow oppressive systems and structures. During the Iranian Islamic Revolution, artists played an essential role in expressing the aspirations and frustrations of the Iranian people and mobilizing support for the cause of the revolution. In addition, artists faced challenges in navigating the government's cultural policies as the new Islamic government embraced the arts to promote its vision of society and culture. The relationship between art and revolution is complex and multifaceted, and artists around the globe continue to use their work to promote social and political change.

With the understanding that art can be a powerful tool for social and political change, my focus shifted to exploring the role of art in protest movements. In this next chapter, I will delve into my experiences in the studio as I created artwork that aimed to provoke thought, inspire action, and raise awareness of critical social issues. Through my art, I sought to contribute to the ongoing conversation about the intersection of art and activism and explore how these two spheres can work in tandem to effect change.

5 Studio Work



The collection is an adaptation of an Iranian painting. To convey the message of the images, I was searching for elements that could be used in both form and content. Thus, I used Shahnameh (book of the King), which is one of the most well-known Iranian books in the field of epics.

The paintings can be viewed from two perspectives. Essentially, Iranian painting has been narrative and story paintings for centuries, which have recorded historical events. This can be seen in the many miniatures and illuminated manuscripts produced during the Islamic Golden Age and later periods, which often depict stories from the Persian epic poems such as the "Shahnameh" and Islamic legends. These paintings often feature intricate details and vivid colors, creating a rich visual experience for the viewer. Additionally, the Persian miniature style, with its use of bright colors and delicate lines, has had a lasting influence on the development of Islamic and Middle Eastern art. The narrative and story-telling aspect of Iranian painting remains an important aspect of the country's artistic heritage. Furthermore, these works are a symbolic adoption of Iranian motifs that have been rearranged and made new in a new composition and structure, which can be both a reminder of the oriental aesthetics and a retelling of the history of Iran through a new perspective.

From a conceptual and content perspective, this collection is, in a sense, a rereading and rethinking of today's events in a historical context. Iranian painting has a rich history and encompasses a variety of styles, techniques, and themes. From a conceptual perspective, Iranian painting often reflects the cultural, historical, and religious beliefs of Iranian society. These paintings often depict traditional Iranian motifs and symbols, such as gardens, calligraphy, and mythological creatures, as well as historical events and figures. From a conceptual perspective, Iranian painting can be seen as an expression of the collective identity and cultural heritage of Iran. The concept of Iranian painting is closely tied to the idea of cultural preservation and the transmission of cultural values from one generation to the next. It is also important to remember the people who have fought for freedom and high human concepts for many centuries and were oppressed, but not forgotten. This is along with the memories of national struggles.

I created portraits of individuals that reflect the viewpoint of those free-thinking and justice-seeking individuals who firmly believed in the concept of human freedom and could not be compelled to submit to oppression or be indifferent towards the society in which they live. They are not concerned with their own personal interests and those of their families. It is my intention to be a voice for free souls.

It is my belief that due to their influence on society, artists have a wide audience. It is for this reason that they have always been terrorized by the rulers. I believe that Iranians are not unreasonable in their expectation that some Iranian artists will participate in the protests. The Iranian economic system and cultural exchanges are not independent structures as they are in the West. There are many artists who are directly or indirectly affiliated with government agencies. Therefore, citizens (as taxpayers to the government) have a right to expect their voices to be heard. The concept of "tyranny" is legitimized by any direct or indirect contact with the oppressive apparatus. The idea that the concept of "tyranny" is legitimized by any direct or indirect contact with the oppressive apparatus suggests that the experience of oppression can lead to a greater awareness of the need to resist such abuses of power. As political philosopher Michel Foucault argued in his book "Discipline and Punish," oppressive systems rely on the obedience and compliance of those subjected to them. Therefore, any act of resistance, no matter how small, can serve to undermine the legitimacy of the oppressive apparatus.

Finally, the statement let us not forget that silence only strengthens the weapons of oppressors, and history does neither forget nor forgive it suggests that there is a moral imperative to speak out against oppression. This idea has been expressed by many political thinkers throughout history, such as Martin Luther King Jr., who argued that "In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends" (King, 1968).

5.1 Art in Protest

Protest artists have the potential to significantly influence social and political movements by using their art to bring attention to current issues, raise awareness, and inspire change. Through their art, protest artists can communicate powerful messages and visual

representations of the injustices and inequalities at the heart of a movement. By creating works that are accessible, thought-provoking, and emotionally engaging, protest artists can reach a broad audience and help to build support for a movement.

In addition, protest art can be essential in shaping the discourse and narratives surrounding a movement. By presenting alternative perspectives and challenging dominant cultural narratives, protest artists can help shift the public discourse in ways that are more equitable and just. Furthermore, protest art can serve as a powerful form of resistance and defiance, expressing the collective spirit of a movement and inspiring others to take action. Through their art, protest artists can give voice to marginalized communities and empower them to fight for their rights and dignity. The influence of protest artists on a movement can be significant and far-reaching. By using their art to bring attention to critical issues, shape public discourse, and inspire change, protest artists can play a critical role in advancing the causes of social and political justice.

5.2 Technique and Dissemination Strategies

In the context of protest movements, rapid art creation can play an essential role in amplifying the messages and causes being advocated for. Digital collage is a medium that is well-suited for fast-paced, agile art creation, as it allows artists to combine multiple images and elements into a single composition quickly. Furthermore, creating digital collages rapidly and easily makes it possible for protest artists to respond promptly to real-time events and developments. For example, artists can create digital collages in response to breaking news, to highlight issues and injustices, or to provide a visual commentary on current events. In addition, digital collage is a versatile medium that can be shared and disseminated rapidly through digital channels, such as social media, websites, or blogs. This allows protest artists to reach a broad audience quickly and amplify their messages and causes to a global audience. Overall, fast speed in creating art in the context of protest movements is an essential tool for artists who want to make a difference. Digital collage provides an agile, versatile, and powerful medium for creating impactful and thought-provoking works that can help to shape public opinion and bring about change.

5.3 Color Palette

The color palette used in traditional Persian miniatures, including those in the "Shahnameh" (Book of the King), is characterized by its vibrant hues. It is common for miniatures to feature a limited palette of colors, with the primary colors being red, blue, green, yellow, and white. These colors were often made from natural materials, such as crushed minerals and plant pigments. In miniatures, red is often used to symbolize strength and bravery, blue represents wisdom and stability, green is associated with nature and life, yellow indicates wealth and prosperity, and white represents purity and goodness.

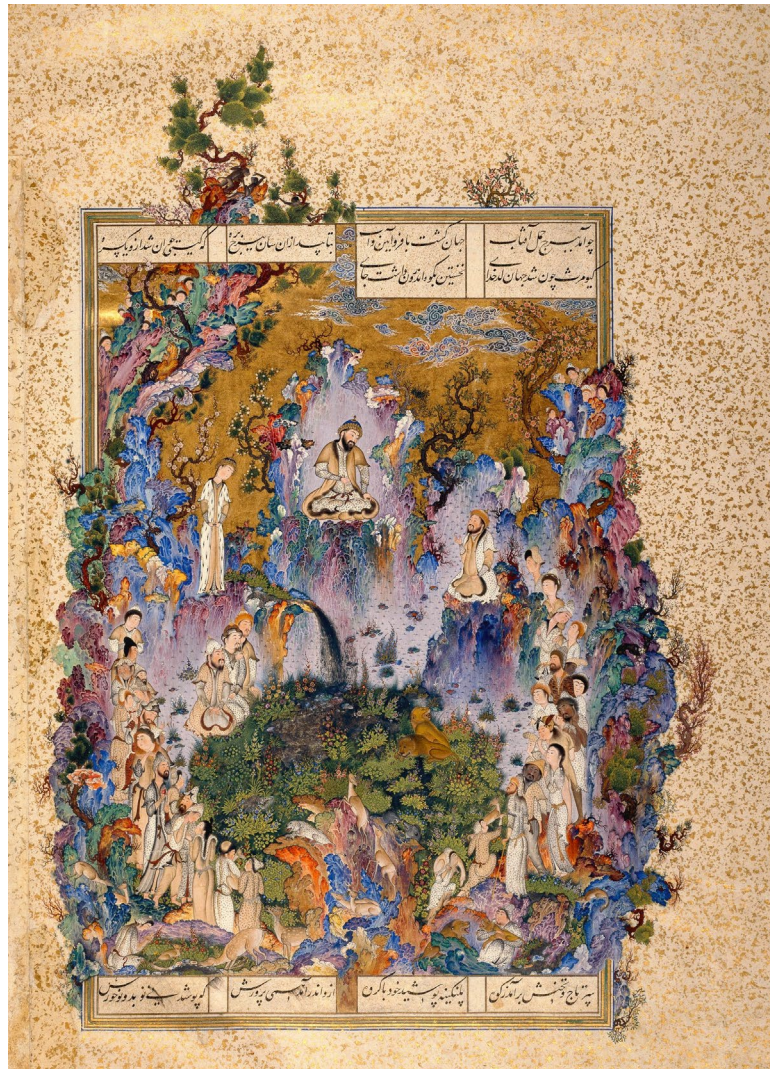


Figure 5-1. Sultan Mohammed. Kayumars' Court, Collection of Sadruddin Aga Khan.

The use of color in the miniatures is carefully considered, and the artists often use color symbolism to convey meaning and convey the emotions and actions of the characters depicted. For example, red is often used to represent the epic hero Rostam, while green is associated with the character of Zal, the father of Rostam. The use of a dark color palette in traditional Persian miniatures, including those in the "Shahnameh" (Book of the King), is relatively limited. However, it is sometimes used to convey a sense of sadness, mourning, or evil. For example, black can be used to symbolize darkness, death, or evil, while dark blue or dark red can be used to convey a sense of sadness or loss. In some miniatures, dark colors are used to create a sense of contrast and to emphasize the emotions of the characters depicted. Like all elements of Persian miniature art, the use of color is carefully considered and is used to convey meaning and emotion.

I have used a very dark color palette in this collection. A dark color palette used in protest art to convey a sense of seriousness, sadness, anger, or fear. Dark colors such as black, navy blue, dark red, or dark green can help to evoke a mood of tension and unease, which can be appropriate when addressing serious issues such as injustice, oppression, or violence. In these series of protest art, a dark color palette can draw attention to the negative aspects of a situation and encourage the audience to engage with the issues being raised. In addition, dark colors can create a sense of urgency and create a visual contrast with the bright, cheerful colors often associated with positive emotions. A dark color palette also creates a sense of solidarity and unity. For example, black is often associated with mourning or mourning for a loss and can be used in protest art to create a shared sense of sadness or loss among those affected by a particular issue. Overall, a dark color palette can be an effective tool for protest artists who want to convey the serious nature of the issues they are addressing. By using dark colors, artists can create visually striking works that engage the audience with the issues at hand.



Figure 5-2. Voria Ghafouri

5.4 Illustrative Process

In order to create the artwork, there are five steps that need to be followed:

1. Research the story of the main character: Before starting the creative process, it is essential to have a deep understanding of the character and their story. Read about the character and gather all the relevant information to bring them to life in your artwork.
2. Find a related illustration from Shahnameh: Shahnameh is a rich source of inspiration for artists, with its vivid illustrations and powerful stories. Find an illustration that is related to your main character and their story. This illustration should capture the essence of the character and their story.

3. Combine the story and illustration with a digital collage: Once have found the suitable illustration or elements use digital tools to combine it with the story of the main character. Create a digital collage showcasing the story and the illustration, bringing them together meaningfully.
4. Edit the collage in photoshop: After the digital collage has been created, it's time to fine-tune and edit it in photoshop. Use photoshop's powerful tools to make any necessary adjustments to the collage, such as color correction, lighting, and contrast.
5. Finalizing with digital paint: The final step is to use digital paint to add the finishing touches to the artwork. This can include adding texture, depth, and detail to the collage, as well as using different painting techniques to create a unique and personalized piece of art. As an artist, I believe that the use of special brush strokes, such as wavy or flowing strokes, can add a unique and impactful element to an art protest. These brushstrokes have the ability to convey a sense of movement and energy, which can further amplify the message of my artwork. Moreover, the use of distinct brushstrokes can help to differentiate my protest artwork from other forms of art, making it more recognizable and memorable. When combined with other elements such as color, composition, and subject matter, these special brushstrokes can work together to create a unified and powerful visual statement. I also find that the use of special brushstrokes can be a way to express my individuality and creativity as an artist. By experimenting with different techniques and styles, I can create a truly unique and impactful protest artwork that speaks to my personal vision and values.

By following these steps, I can create beautiful and meaningful artwork that showcases the story of the main character, combined with the rich tradition of Persian miniature found in Shahnameh. As an artist who creates protest art, I know the importance of timeliness and a rapid turnaround time. For my art to be as impactful as possible, it must be created quickly and efficiently so that it can be shared and viewed by as many people as possible. Using photographic translation and sharing each piece is also crucial to spread the artwork's message far and wide. By creating artwork quickly and sharing it on social media and other platforms, I could reach a broader audience and increase the impact of my protest art. my art can have a powerful effect on people worldwide.

5.5 Exhibition

As an artist passionate about social justice and change, I have created an art protest exhibition of more than 300 artworks. Through various mediums, including projection art, motion graphics, and interactive art, the exhibition aims to encourage visitors to think about and act on issues that are important to me.

The projections serve as a powerful and immersive backdrop to the works in the exhibition. A projection art display is a large-scale, multi-dimensional display that invites the viewer to reflect on the injustices and inequalities in our society. The bold and striking colors and shapes used in the projection art provide a visual metaphor for the urgency and importance of the issues being addressed. The two motion graphics pieces in the exhibition are equally powerful and feature intricate details and subtle commentary that evoke thought and inspire action. Besides the projection of motion graphics, the exhibition also includes two interactive art pieces, allowing visitors to interact with the art more hands-only. These interactive art pieces are intended to spark conversation and encourage viewers to consider their role in creating a more just and equitable society.

5.5.1 Goodbye, Free Soul

This installation is an interactive piece that utilizes images of Iranian people during a recent revolution. The use of hands is a symbolic gesture of saying goodbye to these people who have passed away. By shaking the viewers' hands, the artwork creates an interactive experience that encourages viewers to engage with the images. This artwork is culturally critical, as it brings attention to a controversial and often overlooked human right topic. The use of technology in this piece is also significant, as it allows the audiences to manipulate the images and create an immersive environment for them.

This installation also challenges traditional academic disciplines, as it combines Iranian traditional miniature with scientific research to create a unique and innovative experience for the audience. I believe that my project shares a common origin with computer and interactive art but reaches out to cover many new disciplines. The exhibition of this artwork

is a testament to the growing support for hybrid art and its inclusion in the contemporary art world. It represents cutting-edge artistic exploration and highlights the importance of collaboration between traditional art and computer science in our rapidly evolving technological landscape.

As an artist, I am responding to the central role scientific and technological research plays in contemporary culture. I am going beyond merely using technological tools and gadgets (e.g. computers) in my work to engage deeply with the processes of research. I am creating revolutionary art at the frontiers of scientific research. I see art as an independent zone of research that pursues areas of science and research ignored by mainstream academic disciplines. I am developing technologies that would be rejected by the marketplace but are nonetheless culturally critical. I am pursuing inquiries that are seen as too controversial, too wacky, too improbable, and too speculative for regular science and technology. I enter into the processes in research at all stages: setting research agendas, development of research processes, visualization, interpretations of findings, and education of the public.

5.5.2 Free Toomaj

The code I use in my interactive work is designed to create an real-time exhibition that can be projected onto a wall in a gallery setting. The artwork is centered around the story of Toomaj Salehi, an Iranian protester, and rapper who has been in solitary confinement for 4 months under intense mental and physical torture. This artwork aims to raise awareness about Toomaj Salehi's plight and encourage viewers to take action to help him.

The artwork is designed to be interactive, with viewers able to trigger the appearance of an illustration of Toomaj Salehi by approaching a mounted and empty frame on the wall. When viewers step back and stand 2 meters away from the frame, they will be able to view information about Toomaj Salehi, including his name, story, and the fact that his life is in danger. The code works by utilizing PoseNet, a machine-learning model, to detect the presence and position of viewers in relation to the mounted frame. If PoseNet detects that a viewer is within a certain distance from the frame, an illustration of Toomaj Salehi will

be displayed. If the viewer steps back and is within a specific range from the frame, information about Toomaj Salehi will be displayed instead.

Conclusion

The research and exhibition regarding art protest and the use of projection and interactive art may evolve in a variety of ways in the future. We may be able to create even more immersive and interactive viewer experiences by exploring new technologies and mediums. It may be possible to provide a deeper level of engagement and participation in the artwork by incorporating virtual and augmented reality. In addition, the exhibition could be taken to different cities and countries, allowing a broader audience to engage with the artwork. Social media and online platforms could also be utilized to reach a wider audience and to build a global community of individuals passionate about art protest and social change. Additionally, the research could explore the historical and cultural context of art protests in different regions worldwide, providing a deeper understanding of the intersection of art and politics. Collaborations between artists and researchers from diverse backgrounds and perspectives could result in a more comprehensive and inclusive understanding of the role of art in political activism.

I strongly believe that artists have a critical role to play in effecting change in Iran. Through their art, Iranian artists can challenge the status quo and provide alternative perspectives on social and political issues. By pushing boundaries and breaking taboos, artists can create a space for dialogue and critical thinking on sensitive topics. Iranian artists can use subversive or provocative art to challenge dominant narratives and spark conversations on critical issues. By doing so, they can inspire new ways of thinking and offer fresh perspectives on entrenched problems. Another way artists can drive change in Iran is through public art, interactive art, and community engagement projects. These initiatives provide a powerful tool for bringing communities together and highlighting social issues.

By creating art that is accessible and engages with local communities, artists can build bridges and foster social cohesion.

Of course, artists' role in effecting change in Iran is not without its challenges. Political context, cultural norms, and individual motivations all play a role in determining how successful an artist's efforts will be. I still believe that the arts have the potential to inspire and mobilize individuals, challenge dominant narratives, and create new opportunities for social change in Iran.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Here are selected achievements:

- **Selected Documentation:**

BBC Persian: don't tell mom anything

<https://www.bbc.com/persian/articles/cndzdn29kwo>

Ananke Magazine: Iranian women's identity in resistance

<https://anankemag.com/2023/02/13/iranian-womens-identity-in-resistance/>

Futures Without Violence Organization: Iran's school girls, fighting for freedom, and gasping for air

https://policy.futureswithoutviolence.org/resource_center/irans-school-girls-fighting-for-freedom-and-gasping-for-air/

Mediapart Magazine: "Woman, life, freedom" everywhere and in Clermont - support for the Iranian people

<https://blogs.mediapart.fr/georges-andre/blog/281022/femme-vie-liberte-partout-et-clermont-soutien-au-peuple-iranien>

Humboldt Foundation: Protests in Iran: Against the system with art

<https://www.humboldt-foundation.de/entdecken/newsroom/aktuelles/proteste-im-iran-mit-kunst-gegen-das-system>

Qii Magazine: Eine Stimme für freie Seelen

<https://www.instagram.com/p/Cn3vULqOMo4/>

Deutschland Magazine: Protests in Iran, Using art to fight the system

<https://www.alumniportal-deutschland.org/en/magazine/science-research/protests-in-iran-using-art-to-fight-the-system>

- **Selected Exhibitions:**

“The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco”, SF. US, 2023

“The Israel Museum”, Jerusalem. IL, 2023

“Iran Today”, University of Denver, Denver. Us, 2023

“The Protest Art of the Iranian Revolution”, Wisconsin Madison University, 2023

“Postcards from Iran”, Bologna Academy of Fine Arts, BO. IT, 2023

“Woman, Life, Freedom”, Amherst College, MA. CA, 2023

“Woman, Life, Freedom” Chalmers University, GBG. SE, 2023

“Daily Defense”, Hague, NL, 2023

“Anonymously from Iran”, NY. US, 2023

“Woman, Life, Freedom” Public library, HAL. CA, 2023

“Iran Rising”, Fathom Gallery, Washington DC, US, 2022

“Woman, Life, Freedom”, OCADU, Toronto, CA, 2022

Appendix B

How does the code work?

This is a p5.js sketch that uses the ml5.js library to detect poses from a webcam feed and displays a series of images on the screen based on the detected poses. The code initializes some variables such as an empty array to hold the images, the index of the current image, and a scale factor to resize the images. The preload() function loads a sequence of 10 images named "1.png" to "10.png" into the image array using a loop.

First code

```
let images = [];  
let currentIndex = 0;  
let scaleFactor = 0.8;  
let video;  
let poseNet;  
let poses = [];  
let hands = [];  
function preload() {  
  for (let i = 1; i <= 10; i++) {  
    images.push(loadImage(i + ".png"));  
  }  
}  
function setup() {  
  createCanvas(1280, 960);  
  video = createCapture(VIDEO);  
  video.size(1280, 960);  
  video.hide();  
  poseNet = ml5.poseNet(video, modelLoaded);  
  poseNet.on("pose", gotPoses);  
  textAlign(CENTER);  
  imageMode(CENTER);
```

```

}

function gotPoses(newPoses) {
  poses = newPoses;
}

function modelLoaded() {
  console.log("poseNet ready");
}

function draw() {
  background(255);

  if (poses.length > 0) {
    hands = [];

    for (let i = 0; i < poses.length; i++) {
      let pose = poses[i].pose;

      let hand = pose.rightWrist.x < pose.leftWrist.x ? "right" : "left";

      hands.push(hand);
    }

    if (hands.includes("right") && hands.includes("left")) {
      if (currentImageIndex < images.length - 1) {
        currentImageIndex++;
      } else {
        currentImageIndex = 0;
      }
    }

    image(images[currentImageIndex], width / 2, height / 2, images[currentImageIndex].width * scaleFactor,
images[currentImageIndex].height * scaleFactor);

  } else {
    image(images[currentImageIndex], width / 2, height / 2, images[currentImageIndex].width * scaleFactor,
images[currentImageIndex].height * scaleFactor);
  }
}
}

```

How does the code work?

The `setup()` function creates a canvas and a video element to capture the webcam feed. It also initializes the `poseNet` object from the `ml5.js` library to detect poses from the video stream. The `draw()` function is called every frame and starts by clearing the background. It then checks if there are any poses detected and, if so, checks if both hands are visible. If both hands are visible, it moves to the next image in the image array. If not, it keeps displaying the current image. The `image()` function is used to display the current image at the center of the canvas with the specified scale factor. Overall, the sketch creates an interactive experience that changes the displayed image based on the user's hand positions.

Second code

```
let poseNet;

let video;

let noseDetected = false;

let rightHandDetected = false;

let toomajImg;

let scaleFactor = 0.3;

let cameraDistanceThreshold = 2; // in meters

let noseAngleThreshold = 30; // in degrees

function preload() {
  toomajImg = loadImage('2.jpg');
}

function setup() {
  createCanvas(windowWidth, windowHeight);
  video = createCapture(VIDEO);
  video.size(windowWidth, windowHeight);
  video.hide();
  poseNet = ml5.poseNet(video, modelReady);
  poseNet.on('pose', gotPoses);
```

```

background(0); // Set background to black
}

function modelReady() {
  console.log('Model Loaded!');
}

function gotPoses(poses) {
  if (poses.length > 0) {
    // Check for nose detection with high confidence
    let nose = poses[0].pose.keypoints[0];
    if (nose.score > 0.9) {
      noseDetected = true;
    } else {
      noseDetected = false;
    }

    // Check for right hand detection with high confidence
    let rightWrist = poses[0].pose.keypoints[10];
    let rightThumb = poses[0].pose.keypoints[9];
    let rightIndex = poses[0].pose.keypoints[11];
    let rightMiddle = poses[0].pose.keypoints[12];
    let rightRing = poses[0].pose.keypoints[13];
    let rightPinky = poses[0].pose.keypoints[14];

    if (rightWrist.score > 0.9 && rightThumb.score > 0.9 && rightIndex.score > 0.9 && rightMiddle.score > 0.9 &&
rightRing.score > 0.9 && rightPinky.score > 0.9) {
      rightHandDetected = true;
    } else {
      rightHandDetected = false;
    }
  }
}

```

```

}

function draw() {
  // Set background to black without showing video feed
  noStroke();
  fill(0);
  rect(0, 0, width, height);

  // Display text if right hand is easily detected by PoseNet and facing camera within 2 meters
  if (rightHandDetected) {
    textSize(30);
    fill(255); // Set text color to white
    textLeading(60);
    textAlign(LEFT);
    textStyle(BOLD);

    text("TOOMAJ SALEHI\n An Iranian protester rapper \n has been in solitary confinement\n for 4 months under intense
    mental\n and physical torture!\n His life is in danger.", width/1.4, height/2.22);
  }

  // Display image if nose is detected with high confidence
  if (noseDetected) {
    image(toomajImg, width/2 - toomajImg.width*scaleFactor/2, height/2 - toomajImg.height*scaleFactor/2,
    toomajImg.width*scaleFactor, toomajImg.height*scaleFactor);
  }
}

// Helper function to calculate distance between two points in 3D space
function calculateDistance(p1, p2) {
  let dx = p1.x - p2.x;
  let dy = p1.y - p2.y;
  let dz = p1.z - p2.z;
  return Math.sqrt(dx*dx + dy*dy + dz*dz);
}

```

Appendix C

Artworks File:

It can be found in the Image Section on the OCAD University Open Research Repository.

<https://openresearch.ocadu.ca/>