

UNEDITED HISTORY

Iran 1960 – 2014

Sequences of modernity in Iran from 1960 to the present

Over 200 works for the most part unseen in Italy, taking us through an exploration of Iran's contemporary history from 1960 until today. A unique occasion to renew our look on this multi-layered history and culture that often attracts attention.

December 11, 2014 – March 29, 2014

www.fondazionemaxxi.it

Rome, 10 December 2014. Over **200 works**, for the most part unseen in Italy, and **more than 20 artists** introducing us to more than half a century's art and culture in Iran; a country often arousing attention and fascination while its complexities still need to be unfolded carefully. Here is the challenge raised by **Unedited History. Iran 1960 – 2014**, an exhibition conceived by the Musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, curated by **Catherine David, Odile Burluraux, Morad Montazami, Narmine Sadeg**, on the overall, and **Vali Mahlouji** for **The Archaeology of the Final Decade** section. The exhibition is jointly produced with MAXXI (December 11, 2014 – March 29, 2015).

In the attempt to cross Iran's modern visual culture, **Unedited History** offers us a renewal of our viewpoint on this country and of the preconceptions that need to be challenged through a critical approach. The premise of this historical journey does not believe in assembling and presenting a unitary history of Iranian modern art. But rather in engaging with its gaps, blind alleys and unresolved complexities, proceeding with a specific montage that holds together the contentious dimensions of a seemingly "unedited" History. Thus the exhibition is divided into three large sections: **1/ The Years of Modernization (1960 – 1978), 2/ The 1979 Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War (1980 – 1988), and 3/ The Post-war era from 1989 to nowadays.**

The title of the event, **Unedited History**, borrowed from the cinematographic lexicon, conveys the idea of a history still in rushes, not yet arrived to a fully legible or collectively shared narrative, still on going a critical process of montage. In that perspective, such heterogeneous materials as **painting, graphic arts, caricature, photography, cinema or the living arts** are gathered in a comprehensive and transverse "proofreading", to be experienced in three distinct but interconnected sequences.

With the help of three generations of artists, from the 1960's down to the younger generation, the exhibition claim is that though the 1979 Revolution was an imposing rupture, it certainly was not a break with modernism at all. On the contrary, either seen from before or after 1979, a reediting of this recent history may articulate **various legacies in image making, documentary traditions and artistic genealogies.**

THE YEARS OF MODERNIZATION 1960 – 1978 The first section of the exhibition deals with the period in which culture became of national interest and the country witnessed a boom in the visual and performing arts, and publishing. These are the years when Third World nations looked out onto the international scene after the Afro-Asian Conference of Bandung (1955), down to the years of the oil crisis. Along with debates on national identity, the concept of *modern* is redefined, not just via the Biennials and the many events supported by Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and the Empress Farah Diba, but also thanks to the emergence of diverse forms of expression, characterized by techniques and symbols borrowed from both the ancient and the modern, history and myth, politics and metaphysics. This section is completed by the section entitled **THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE FINAL DECADE** expanding on two fields: a collection of archive material and documents restaging the Shiraz-Persepolis Festival of the Arts (1968-1978); and the Shahr-e No red light district of Teheran between 1973-1975, when Kaveh Golestan did a timely

photograph series of the prostitutes and their living conditions. Both historical and cultural zones that have remained overlooked and, at times, even lost.

This part of the exhibition includes works by **Kaveh Golestan** (1950-2003); **Ardeshir Mohassess** (1938-2008); **Bahman Mohassess** (1931-2010); **Morteza Momayez** (1935-2005); **Behdjat Sadr** (1924-2009)

THE 1979 REVOLUTION AND THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR 1979 – 1988 The generation of “modernists” is gradually reduced and pushed to the margins, worn out by the social transformations, the relations between the elite and the people, and the development of the diaspora. This new chapter calls into question the Iranian identity that, between the 1960s and 1970s, developed in almost schizophrenic reactions to the West. While Iranian art generates different systems of images, the 1979 Revolution takes on a pivotal role. This section of the exhibition does not seek at isolating the Revolution from the rest of Iran’s history, but, rather, observes its *before* and *after* in a new way, at a time when painting, the graphic arts, cinema and documentary practices, even though pressured by official ideology, were combined and influenced each other reciprocally.

This section includes works by **Hannibal Alkhas** (1930-2010); **Morteza Avini** (1947-1993); **Kazem Chalipa** (1957); **Jassem Ghazbanpour** (1963); **Bahman Jalali** (1944-2010); **Rana Javadi** (1953); **Bahman Kiarostami** (1978); **Kamran Shirdel** (1939); **Behzad Shishegaran** (1952); **Esmail Shishegaran** (1946); **Kourosh Shishegaran** (1944).

THE POSTWAR PERIOD FROM 1989 TO 2014 The aftermath of the war witnessed the gradual integration of the structures of capitalism in the Islamic Republic. The country’s civic society developed quickly thanks to the use of new technologies and public spaces. The different presidents and power shifts as well as political upheavals entail either openness or isolationism, influencing artistic and aesthetic trajectories, under the wider influenced of globalization. A generation of exiled artists, especially in France, experiment with very different types of new media and techniques. The apparent abandonment – which was more psychological than physical – of an independent art during the war years, brings us to reflect on the outcomes of a space often saturated with ideology and some dead ends of committed art. If the Revolution and war years meant taking side “for” or “against”, the post-war erases gradually emerging artworks conforming to the rules of the international art market. But meanwhile a great number of artists chose instead to stick to their singular and independent practice, in relation to the previous generation legacies.

This section includes works by **Mazdak Ayari** (1975); **Mitra Farahani** (1975); **Chohreh Feyzjou** (1955-1996); **Barbad Golshiri** (1982); **Arash Hanaei** (1978); **Behzad Jaz** (1975); **Khosrow Khorshidi** (1932); **Tahmineh Monzavi** (1988); **Mohsen Rastani** (1958); **Narmine Sadeg** (1955)

On the occasion of the exhibition, MAXXI’s **Department of Education**, also in view of the themes dealt with, which are so closely related to Iran’s culture and most recent history, has initiated **IL MIO IRAN (MY IRAN)**, a project of intercultural mediation that involves the whole Iranian community in Rome.

The aim of the project is to lend a voice to various viewpoints, produce multiple interpretations of the works and exhibition with the purpose of approaching an ever-growing public.

The press kit and images of the exhibition can be downloaded from the Reserved Area of the Fondazione MAXXI’s website at <http://www.fondazionemaxxi.it/area-riservata/> by typing in the password **areariservatamaxxi**

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UNEDITED HISTORY
Iran 1960 – 2014



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The exhibition has been conceived and organized by Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris in co-production with MAXXI – Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo

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Unedited History. Iran 1960-2014

Giovanna Melandri, President Fondazione MAXXI

When mentioning Iranian art, we immediately think of ancient Persia, the miniatures, the enormous buildings of the sixteenth century or to the wonders of Persepolis. In Italy, we know very little of contemporary Iranian art, with possible exceptions being a few “stars” from this wonderful country such as Shirin Neshat, the film director and poet Abbas Kiarostami and the cartoonist Marjane Satrapi. Yet, the art of former Persia is rich, lively and contemporary, although obviously drawing from the language and the splendor of its history. The exhibition *Unedited History. Iran 1960-2014* tracks, for the first time in Italy, a journey through the history of Iranian art of the last fifty years, offering the public a unique outlook on the culture of this fascinating country. An exceptional variety of styles and techniques unfolds along the galleries of the museum: paintings on canvas, photographs, videos, and posters give life to a vibrant historical narrative that goes from the Sixties to the present, depicting a country in restless change, haunted by upheaval and wars: a fabulous but also a cruel country.

Visitors to the MAXXI will be able to relive the historical events, the deep political and social transformations that have taken place in Iran in recent years, influencing the political balance in the modern world. An outstanding route divided into three main parts: the years of modernization, 1960-1978, which led to a considerable development of the arts, the Khomeini revolution of 1979 with the war between Iran and Iraq, and the post-war years, 1989- 2012, characterized by the difficult economic and social transition.

Previously presented at the musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, the exhibition at the MAXXI features a different arrangement, which offers more accesses and intertwining pathways: an open exhibition path in line with the fluid architecture of our museum. We have also chosen to characterize the exhibition with an important project of cultural mediation, involving the Iranian community in Rome, whose members produced writings that comment and re-read the works on exhibition and its different thematic sections, consequently tracing exciting alternative routes. Thus, through the ideas, thoughts and personal experience expressed by the Iranian community, the works presented attain greater historical significance. Additionally, thanks to a rich program of cultural events and educational activities – screenings, debates, meetings and workshops – we wish to provide the public with important moments of analysis to understand the history and culture of modern Iran. This vivid portrait finds a perfect complement in the exhibition catalog, an essential scientific tool to approach the art and history of this amazing country. In addition to essays by the curators, the volume brings together essays that analyze the works on exhibition and illustrate the cultural policy together with the main events of recent years: the Festival of Arts in Shiraz-Persepolis, the legacy of the war with Iraq, and the role of murals as a propaganda tool.

With this major exhibition dedicated to contemporary Iran, the MAXXI remains committed to the support and promotion of international art which is still little known in Italy. In the coming months, in fact, from the retrospective on Huang Yong Ping to *The Future Is Now*, an exhibition on Korean video art, we intend to characterize more and more this museum as an experimental laboratory open to the world.

Unedited History. Iran 1960-2014 testifies to our interest in establishing a broad network of partnerships with museums and institutions aiming at strengthening the promotion and development of contemporary creativity. I would therefore like to thank the musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris, which originally hosted this exhibition, the curators Catherine David, Odile Burluroux, Morad Montazami, Narmine Sadeg and Vali Mahlouji, through which it was possible to present for the first time such an important retrospective on Iranian art, and Hormoz Vasfi who generously supported the entire MAXXI project.

Unedited History. Iran 1960-2014

Hou Hanru, Artistic Director Fondazione MAXXI

The project *Unedited History* intends to present a fresh and singular insight on the Iranian contemporary visual arts scene since the years before the 1979 Islamic revolution. Iran, as well as its art world, has been largely isolated and misrepresented in the Western world since the abrupt parting from the West in the end of the 1970s. Its artistic creation, like its social reality, has been greatly ignored by the mainstream art and the cultural media outside the country, while only a few individual artists are accepted and promoted in the Western market and institutions. However, the contemporary artistic creation in Iran, oscillating between modernity and tradition, progressive ideas and engagement with social reality, has never ceased. On the contrary. It has developed through the day-today wrestling with social and economic changes mingled with the ups-and-downs of financial conditions, geopolitical conflicts, religious and political constraints, wars and social turmoil. Often, art acts as a direct witness of an intense reality. Artistic expressions in diverse and original languages have been created and experimented while the notion and expression of modernity have been regularly redefined and reinvented. Iran, along with its artistic production and the current geopolitical changes in the region and in the world, is increasingly becoming a new focus for the gaze from the outside. For the first time, *Unedited History* seeks to present a more relevant view of the dynamic but largely unknown art scene of the recent decades in the country. Refuting and refusing the market-oriented and cultural and political clichéd approaches to the issue – frequently adopted in the Western art world – the curatorial team of the project – consisting of figures of both European and Iranian backgrounds – has chosen to explore, in depth, the history in order to present the complex reality of the country and the equally complicated relationship between the social reality and the artistic creation in Iran. Instead of any holistic or clichéd reading of this history, the curators have resorted to a singular and honest position so as to explore and present the complexity itself offering articulations on the mutual influences of the social geopolitical events and the artistic productions. This approach not only provides a rich picture highly faithful to the reality of the artistic activities in a constant evolution. But it also demonstrates a necessary position to be taken in terms of intellectual and curatorial responsibilities. It may be seen as an exemplary exercise of serious engagement in dialogue between cultures and art communities.

Initiated and realized by Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, the project travels to the MAXXI. We are particularly grateful to this opportunity to welcome the exhibition in the city of Rome. It turns out to be the first of a series of projects that the MAXXI curatorial team is developing to emphasize the dynamic exchanges between the Italian-European art scene and the Middle-East-Mediterranean art worlds. Historically and currently the evolutions of societies and cultural identities on both sides have been closely connected, prompted by constant circulation of people, ideas and collaborations. This process has occasionally been disturbed by misunderstandings and conflicts. Today, in the globalized world, the distance between these two regions is brought much closer. Their destinies are intimately bounded together. Italy, and Rome in particular, like Paris and France, have a large Iranian community. The members are active in many fields – business, arts, politics – while diverse positions and values are represented so as to offer an energetic and cultural scene. At the same time, the communities' connections with their original country have never interrupted. The experiences of the back-and-forth between Europe and Iran are in fact a great source of inspiration for their creativities. A considerable number of Iranian artists have been actively present on the European scene. *Unedited History* also pays significant attention to their achievements by including some remarkable artists living in Europe. Accordingly, a series of events, dialogues and collaborations with the Iranian community in Rome is being organized to promote such a close link. A special thanks goes to Hormoz Vasfi, whose passion, knowledge and generous support have been vital to the realization of the exhibition in this venue. We would also like to acknowledge Gh. Ali Pourmarjan, of the Cultural Institute of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran, for his availability. The MAXXI curatorial the department of research and educational teams, in close collaboration with the Paris team, have made great efforts to enrich both the exhibition and the public programs. We are deeply thankful to them. *Unedited History* is a complex but unique intellectual and artistic endeavor. It opens a window for us to better understand the world and ourselves. We should always be reminded that the dialogues between the Middle East and Europe are a key element in the (re)formation of cultural identities for those living and creating in both regions.

Rome, 1 October 2014

Unedited History. Iran 1960-2014

Fabrice Hergott, Director of the musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris

We know that there is no society without art and, unless there is extreme deprivation or risk of imminent death, humans produce art. Iran is a large country, not only in terms of its sheer size and its population, but also its history. Sometime after writing was invented the first known cities seem to have been established there. Iran is simply one of the cradles of humanity, in the same manner as ancient Egypt, and well before the advent of civilisations in the Mediterranean basin that founded the western world. Since then, Iranian masterpieces have been in no short supply, even if many of them are now in western museums.

Over the last fifty years, Iran has known successive and often simultaneous tensions. A time under a myriad of influences led to a westernised monarchy, overthrown by a revolution – the most significant one of the 20th century, along with the Russian Revolution – that still has far-reaching effects beyond Iran today. The return of religion on a global level would not exist without the 1979 Islamic Revolution that undoubtedly contributed as much to current geopolitics worldwide, as the end of the communist USSR ten years later. A central country regarding its location as well as its history, Iran has become key in terms of its importance to the balance of power and influences in the modern world. And this influence is not restricted to a political level. It indicates the conscience of a society that has ceaselessly questioned changes in the world, upheavals, destruction and hopes, as never before. This awareness exists is not as surprising as the fact that we know so little about it. Yet, there are artists. Iran did not experience the paranoid and systematic destruction of its elite that most of the other countries experienced throughout the 20th century. Signs of this awareness are prevalent in the architecture, cinema, literature, comics and visual arts, but they never seem to have been associated with historical experience, only responding to the clichés that remain slightly colonial, through which the West looks at the world in general, and the huge and unfamiliar Persian world, in particular. As implied by its title, for the first time this exhibition provides an insight to circumstances in Iran, from Iran starting from this rough history that artists have often experienced individually and usually from within.

Perhaps it is the best if not the only way, nowadays, to approach a geographical location and consistent history. We are happy and proud to have helped Catherine David to produce this exhibition with the continual involvement of Odile Burlaux, the expertise of Morad Montazami and Narmin Sadeg, Vali Mahlouji for "Archeology of the Final Decade" and the support of Samira Kaveh. The project would not have been so ambitious without their outstanding commitment and the considerable work that they accomplished with the musée d'Art Moderne and Paris Museums teams.

Unedited History. Iran 1960-2014

INTRODUCTION

Unedited History. Iran 1960 — 2014 brings together the multiple forms of Iranian visual culture from the 1960s to the present. The exhibition's three chronological sections in Gallery 2 and Gallery 4 of the Museum are comprised of a wide variety of artworks — paintings, photographs, installations, graphic arts — and documents — archival material, journals, posters, videos — that help to reconstruct the social and political reality underlying the different manifestations of visual culture and modernism in Iran. The exhibition is thus an attempt to recreate the important 'sequences' of events, ideas and changes produced by these manifestations over the past fifty years: the period of the Shah, the Revolution and the birth of the Islamic Republic, the war against Iraq and recent decades. It is a reconstruction marked by absences, by difficulties resulting from the complexity of recent Iranian history, still the object of discussion. The title *Unedited History* refers to the process of film editing, to montage: the phase after a film has been shot but when the different sequences are still fragments, yet to be connected to create a coherent whole. The title is also an hypothesis: if there is no 'one' single and unique history of modernism, scripted and definitive, is it possible to consider the 'modernization' of Iran in the form of fragmentary and disconnected stories? One of the intentions of *Unedited History* is to demonstrate that the Revolution of 1979 and the Iran—Iraq War, fought between 1980 and 1988, did not bring an end to the process of modernity. On the contrary, it can be said to have (re)commenced from this moment, as demonstrated by cultural production from before and after these events, and connections between different forms of art.

Unedited History does not intend to account for all expressions of modernity, but instead to highlight the profound connections between visual culture and the diverse inheritances that descend from it. The exhibition concentrates on both the ruptures and elements of continuity, often less visible, between consecutive moments in a history that, nonetheless, is characterized by the same important figures. Testimonials, documents of a history that is still being written, together with often incomplete or difficult to access works, posters and journals serve as important elements describing Iran's social and political history during the second half of the twentieth century. Photography, film and a tradition of documentary works play a fundamental role in comprehending modernity, though they offer contradictory readings of images, above all after the 1960s. For this reason *Unedited History* begins precisely with this decade and is successively subdivided into three chronological sections: Gallery 2 hosts the first and the second sections, respectively *The Years of 'Modernization' 1960—1978* and *The Revolution and the Iran—Iraq War 1979—1988*, while Gallery 4 hosts the third section, *Contemporary Perspectives 1989—2014*, dedicated to recent artistic and cultural production.

The exhibition is enriched by texts commenting some of the works and sub-sections. They are the fruit of the intercultural mediation project *Il mio Iran (My Iran)*, curated by the MAXXI Education Department and the Iranian Community of Rome.

SECTION OF THE EXHIBITION

The Years of 'Modernization' 1960—1978

This was the period in Iran when the world of culture acquired its greatest importance, with a notable development of the visual and performing arts and publishing. It was a period of internationally recognized events, including the Biennales, and the birth of new institutions such as the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, supported by the Shah and particularly by the Empress Farah Diba. The focus at this time was on the definition of an Iranian identity and non-Western, or non-'westernized' art: the beginning of a process of 'modernization' through complex artistic forms and techniques that fused tradition with novelty, history with myth, and politics with metaphysics. At the same time, the inequalities between the different levels of Iranian society only increased, inciting strong protests against the Pahlavi monarchy.

Bahman Mohassess (1931 — 2010) was an exemplary figure at this time: his profound understanding of European culture and career as a painter, sculptor, stage designer and translator made him a "universal" artist. His work was characterised by a dialogue between classical mythology and the crisis of the individual in the wake of the Second World War. After studying sculpture in Rome, he shares his life between Iran and Italy. His pictorial works were strongly influenced by his training as a sculptor: his figures are volumes in a three-dimensional space.

Behjat Sadr (1924 — 2009) also studied in Italy, like many other Iranian artists from this period. Her work, like that of Bahman Mohassess, is emblematic of the cosmopolitanism of the 1960s and 70s. However,

unlike her contemporaries, Sadr experimented with European kinetic art, eventually arriving at a non-geometric form of abstraction in which she concentrated on the analysis of movement.

Morteza Momayez (1935 — 2005) was a graphic artist, painter, photographer and illustrator. During the early 1960s he began collaborating with the poet Ahmad Shamlou to create covers for the international literary review *Ketâb-e Hafteh* (Book of the Week), of which the latter was the director. In addition to texts by Iranian authors, the review also published the work of such international authors as André Gide, Lev Tolstoy and Tennessee Williams.

Another important figure in the graphic arts was **Ardeshir Mohassess** (1938 — 2008), an illustrator and journalist with the international press. The “ideal” library presented in the exhibition consists of his art books and different French and American publications. His work had a strong influence on younger Iranian artists thanks to their vast diffusion in the press. The first section ends with two unpublished documentaries that introduce the 1970s, a period of significant political uprisings and cultural changes: the archives

of the **Shiraz — Persepolis Festival of the Arts** and photographs by **Kaveh Golestan** (1950 — 2003) taken in Shahr-e No, Tehran’s red light district, between 1975 and 1977. The Shiraz — Persepolis Festival of the Arts was an important festival of music, dance, theatre, poetry and film presented annually between 1967 and 1977. It hosted some of the greatest Iranian and international artists: Persian traditions and the Western avant-garde. The Festival served as a space for exchanging and sharing artistic and intellectual ideas, in addition to being the source of much popular unrest during this period for being so distant from the real needs of the Iranian people. The photographs by Golestan, instead, expose the dark side and contradictions of pre-Revolutionary Iran. The black and white photographs of prostitutes living in the “citadel” of Shahr-e No document its precarious emotional conditions and poverty.

The Revolution and the Iran—Iraq War 1979—1988

The Revolution produced many images. They offer contrasting points of view and account for the representation of the individual as much as society — it is enough to consider the unprecedented mobilization of protesting crowds. Even the Iran—Iraq War, referred to by the Iranians as the ‘Imposed War’ or the ‘Sacred Defence’, is of fundamental importance to the development of documentary practices in photography, video and cinema. This was also the period of the creation of the clandestine archives of a range of disparate material that strongly contrasted the official interpretation of events.

The photographs of **Bahman Jalali** (1944 — 2010) and **Rana Javadi** (1953), published in the immediately censored book-manifesto *Days of Blood, Days of Fire*, record the events leading up to the fall of the Shah. The film *Memories of Destruction* by **Kamran Shirdel** (1939) — one of the most heavily censored documentary makers under the Pahlavi monarchy — links together unpublished fragments filmed during the Revolution, testifying to the dissemination of posters and graffiti on the walls of Tehran. The video *Flowers* by **Bahman Kiarostami** (1978) is another archive of images: the first to be broadcast by National Iranian Radio & Television after the revolutionaries captured the country’s communication infrastructures and television studios.

Gallery 2 presents a selection of posters from the Revolution, hung to recreate the sense of a street and subdivided to highlight the diversity between artists and techniques: the posters of **Group 57**, of the **Shishegaran** brothers, anonymous posters and those by alternative groups. They testify to the decisive role in the Revolution played by students and the universities, and their use as a means of communication, initially for Marxist revolutionaries, and later as a tool of propaganda in the construction of a national identity. The posters are inspired by local political or religious figures, or demonstrate the aesthetic influence of the Soviet and Mexican Revolutions. Some, finally, are reproductions of paintings by important artists such as **Kazem Chalipa** (1957), a profound connoisseur of modern European painting from the late nineteenth century and Mexican mural painting. Dense with religious and revolutionary symbols, his works expose the complex relationship between institutional art and historic testimony. **Hannibal Alkhas** (1930 — 2010), one of the prime movers in the generation of ‘revolutionary’ painters, adheres to the Marxist tendency, and becomes the teacher for many other painters. This fresco painting shows Imam Khomeini greeting the crowd, but it also features Ali Shariati, philosopher and political militant, famous for his speeches on the modernization of Islam, which were very influential on the mood of the popular uprising. The painter has also included himself, holding his paintbrushes, at the bottom. The work was painted on several canvases: it is typical of the way political frescos developed as a means of expression immediately after the Revolution.

The Iran–Iraq War was also chronicled from different points of view. Some directors and photographers chose to present the conflict on a daily basis, on the battlefield close to the soldiers. **Morteza Avini** (1947 — 1993), for example, in his first documentary series entitled *Haqiqat* (Truth) employs a highly subjective narrative, using a handheld camera and an omnipresent off–screen voice. The director establishes a brotherly tie with the soldiers – transcendent by the Revolution ideals and now ready to sacrifice their lives – editing their interviews in the trenches and exposing the humanity of daily gestures. Avini’s subjective narrative greatly influenced the Iranian records of the war.

Bahman Jalali testifies to the gradual and implacable destruction of the city of Khorramshahr – a port city on the Arvand River, an important channel for the transportation of oil – by the Iraqis. The photographer also visited the battlefields and recording how the soldiers lived, and how they died.

Contemporary Perspectives 1989—2014

After the end of the war with Iraq, modern capitalism was integrated gradually, though not without some difficulties, into the Islamic regime, and the country was witness to the development of a civil society. Even during these years, political changes had an influence on the development of the country’s artists. While in the past they were called upon to support the government – refusal meant silence, removal from the circuit of official art or forced emigration – they now produced works that responded increasingly more often to the requests of the international art market. Many artists, after relocating to Europe, above all France, experimented with different media and approaches to those taught back home until the 1980s. A new generation of photographers, all heirs of Bahman Jalali and Kaveh Golestan, instead remains faithful to the traditions of documentary photography of the 1970s and 80s, opposing the aestheticization of the images of fashion and advertising.

Mohsen Rastani (1958), from the same generation as Jalali and also a photojournalist from the front lines of the Iran — Iraq War, represents a model of commitment toward photography as a medium that remains independent of dominant ideology. With his Iranian Family series, still in progress, he intends to demonstrate the heterogeneity of post–war Iranian society through portraits of socially and culturally diverse families.

Tahmineh Monzavi (1988), a member of the younger generation of photographers and video artists, she is well inserted within the documentary traditions of the 1970s, working with what she terms ‘social contradictions’. Her projects deal with forms of social exclusion, complex themes such as transsexuals and figures relegated to the margins of society. The exhibition presents the series of photographs entitled *Tina Shamlou, Tehran*, a description of the daily life of a transvestite living in a women’s shelter, together with a selection of photographs from a tailor’s shop where a group of young men sew wedding dresses.

Mitra Farahani (1975) is also tied to the inheritances of the 1960s and 70s, even producing a documentary on the leading figures from this period, as Bahman Mohassess and Behjat Sadr. Her large charcoal drawings on canvas are strongly influenced by this period and so realistic that they resemble photographs. In the video here presented, she explores the boundary between still image and the moving picture by displacing the figure of the beheaded at the Villa Borghese, Rome, thus questioning our collective representations of David and Goliath. The works of the latest years of **Khosrow Khorshidi** (1932) deal with the link between city and memory: the drawings recreate the monuments and atmosphere of 1930s and 1940s Tehran – now vanished.

The multidisciplinary work of **Narmine Sadeg** (1955) is inspired by the popular story *The Conference of the Birds* by the twelfth century Iranian poet Farid al–Din Attâr. The artist invites us to reinterpret the elements of this traditional story through allegory: each visitor is asked whether he/she associates more with the winners or the losers in the story, and just who the real loser is.

The mixed media installation by **Chohreh Feyzjdjou** (1955 — 1996) is a ‘total’ work of art that assembles the most disparate collection of materials and objects. Her work – simultaneously a criticism of the commodification of art and a melancholy reflection on the passing of time – consists in the methodical classification and conservation of all her artistic creations in laboratory containers and scraped drawers. Killed by an incurable disease, Feyzjdjou’s work stands as a personal attempt to conserve the traces of her existence. **Barbad Golshiri** (1982) paid homage to Feyzjdjou by constructing a tomb–sarcophagus alongside the site of the artist’s burial in the Parisian cemetery of Pantin. The silhouette of the tomb erected for the exhibition suggests the anonymous sepulchres dedicated to the martyrs of the Iran–Iraq War, or to the postwar political dissident martyrs.

UNEDITED IRAN. Iran 1960 – 2014
ARTISTS - BIOGRAPHIES**Hannibal Alkhas**

(1930-2010)

He was a painter, sculptor, writer, translator and poet. After his Master of Fine Arts from the Art Institute of Chicago in 1959, he had a long career in Iran and in the United States as an art professor and mentored many aspiring artists – especially after the uprisings and revolutionary events of 1979 in Tehran, when he inspired a lot of the most renowned mural painters. He also established the successful Gilgamesh Gallery, one of the very first modern art galleries in Iran. His works have been exhibited in Iran, Europe, Canada, Australia, Israel, Dubai, and the US. He published art criticism, collections of short stories, children's books and memoirs in Farsi, and composed many poems in his native Assyrian (Syriac), a number of which have been set to music. His translations include modern Persian poetry into English, Carl Sandburg's poetry into Farsi, and an illustrated volume of Hafez's poetry into Assyrian.

Morteza Avini

(1947-1993)

Key figure in documentary cinema during the Iran-Iraq War, also an important contributor to *Sureh* magazine in the 1980s – notably with graphic designer Reza Abedini. On the eve of the Iraqi invasion, he undertakes a large-scale exercise to record and narrate the war (ideological purposes included). Before his best known series, *Revâyat-e fath* [The Chronicles of Victory] (broadcast on national television between 1985 and 1988), Morteza Avini truly defines an alternative device to classic war reportage in the eleven episodes of *Haqiqat* [Truth] (1980-1981): this one combines Shia mysticism and hand-held camera, with an emphasis on the editing and the writing process. The innovative form of his films propels them beyond simple 'propaganda,' although they remain closely linked to the history of the Islamic Republic. In last production *Shahri dar âssemân* [A Heavenly City], Avini documents traces of the war in the present instead – notably rescue operations for bodies and mine-clearing in which he died jumping on a mine. His aesthetical, social and political writings compile twelve volumes (publ. *Vâheh*).

Mazdak Ayari

(born in 1975)

Lives and works in Tehran.

After studying photography at Azad University alongside photographer Bahman Jalali, in 2004 he participates in the first documentary photography competition 'Kaveh Golestan'. In 2005, he exhibits at the 9th Tehran Photography Biennial. In 2010, Mazdak Ayari participates in the collective exhibition *Tribute to Bahman Jalali* at the Forouhar Gallery in Tehran, then in 2012 in *The Protection of the Iranian Panther* exhibition at Golestan Gallery, and in 2013 in *A View of Documentary Photography: 1978-2013* exhibition at the Silk Road Gallery. His photography focuses notably on privacy protocols and representations of family as well as on social and urban life in Tehran, overlooked subjects and unexpected encounters.

Azad Collaborative design Project**On-going project since 2008**

Designer: Reza Abedini Studio

Art Director: Aria Kasaei — StudioKargah

In 2008, Reza Abedini planned a non-commercial design project: a set of collaborations between a selected group of young Iranian graphic designers and Azad Art Gallery in Tehran. According to this idea, one of the designers among the group is supposed to design a poster for the bi-weekly events of the gallery. The catalog of the exhibition is printed on the backside of the poster. This poster/catalog is then folded and sent to the public as an invitation. This project has been running under the art direction of Aria Kasaei since Fall 2008. Azad Art Gallery Collaborative design Project is significant in its reputation by holding various approaches and aspects. During the past six years, 45 designers have collaborated with this project and 250 posters have been designed, printed and distributed which is definitely an exceptional record from a private gallery in the Middle East. The most notable aspect of this project is that the poster is not restricted to present an artwork from the artist. It depicts the designer's visual interpretation of the concept of the exhibition which means the poster itself, becomes a form of artistic expression.

Mohammad Reza Abdolali (born in 1983, lives and works in Tehran); Cassra Abedini (born in 1973, lives and works in Tehran); Reza Abedini (born in 1967, lives and works in Beirut and Den Haag, Netherlands); Ali Asali (born in 1988, lives and works in Tehran); Shahrzad Changalvaei (born in 1983, lives and works in New Haven, Connecticut); Homa Delvaray (born in 1980, lives and works in Tehran); Maryam Enayati and Leila Miri (born in 1978 and 1976, live and work in Tehran); Vahid Erfanian (born in 1981, lives and works in Mashad, Iran); Farhad Fozouni (born in 1979, lives and works in Tehran and Berlin); Behrad Javanbakht (born in 1976, lives and works in Tehran); Aria Kasaei (born in 1980, lives and works in Tehran and Paris); Mohammad Khodashenas (born in 1975, lives and works in Lahijan, Iran); Omid Nemalehabib (born in 1981, lives and works in Tehran); Peyman Pourhosein (born in 1980, lives and works in Tehran); Sanaz Soltani (born in 1984, lives and works in Tehran)

Kazem Chalipa

(born in 1957)

Lives and works in Tehran.

One of the most renowned artists of the revolutionary period and the Iran-Iraq War. He founded the department of visual arts at Hoze Honari va Sâzmân-e Tablighât-e Eslâmi at the start of the 1980s and teaches in many art departments (Tehran University, Soureh, Azad University). After assisting several key artists (Jalil Ziapour, Irandokht Mohassess), Kazem Chalipa also remains deeply influenced by the work of his father, Hassan Esmailzadeh – a pioneer of ‘coffee house’ art (*Naqâshiy-ye Qahve Khâneh* □), depicting great battles of Shiite saints and martyrs. Themes of the ‘Islamic Revolution’, ‘Sacred Defence’ or ‘Hidden Imam’ are often addressed by Chalipa, respecting symbolic code but according to a new scholarly appropriation of religious and political Iranian history. His paintings are very sought after and reproduced on the posters of different organisations during the war. He exhibits frequently in Iran and abroad, his works are held in the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art and Hoze honari va sâzmân-e tablighât-e eslâmi collections.

Mitra Farahani

(born in 1975)

Lives and works between Paris and Tehran.

After studying at Azad University in Tehran and at the School of Decorative Arts in Paris, she produces her first documentary film about a transsexual prostitute in Tehran (*Just a Woman*, 2001) winning the special jury prize at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2002. Then *Taboos* (□ *Zohre and Manouchehr*), in cinemas in 2004, a poetic documentary about sexual and romantic relationships in Iranian society. In addition *Behjat Sadr: time suspended* (2006), an intimate documentary about this important artist from the ‘modern’ period. In her last film, *Fifi Howls from Happiness* (2012), selected at the Berlin Festival and at the Cinéma du réel in Paris. Mitra Farahani continues her rigorous interrogation of key figures of modernity in Iran with Bahman Mohassess. Her first films appear to be marked by her visual art, cinema increasingly influences her drawings. Her technique with charcoal on canvas or screen reveals imposing fragments of bodies and disconcerting figures, shaped by reflection on the realism equally present in her films.

Chohreh Feyzdjou

(1955-1996)

After studying at the School of Fine Arts in Tehran, then in Paris, Chohreh Feyzdjou focused on installation work revealing a criticism of the commercialization of art as well as a more melancholic reflection about the passage of time. Her work in fact consisted of methodically classifying and preserving her own artistic production – including her oldest works – in collections of laboratory jars, faded containers and wallpaper rolls. In this ‘apocalypse grocery’ (Youssef Ishaghpour), she used materials such as tinted wax and walnut stain, that gave the objects a specific dark texture. Taken by an incurable autoimmune disease at the age of forty, Chohreh Feyzdjou’s work was an attempt to keep traces of her existence as well as fulfilling the mutual transfiguration of art and life. Her key exhibitions were at the Patricia Dorfmann Gallery (1992), the Galerie nationale du Jeu de Paume in Paris (1994), and at dOCUMENTA (10) in Kassel (1997). A large collection of the artist’s works was acquired by the Fonds national d’art contemporain in 2002 and deposited at the CAPC in Bordeaux that devoted a monographic exhibition to her in 2007.

Jassem Ghazbanpour

(born in 1963)

Lives and works in Tehran.

Beginning in 1979, his photography is rooted in social documentary, but also places great importance on architecture and local territories. It extends to experiences from the Iran-Iraq War (in Khorramshahr, his birthplace). Jassem Ghazbanpour is also committed to the memory of young martyr soldiers, to whom he pays tribute. In 1991, he creates Tiss publishers and notably publishes his book *Tehran Under Missile Attack*. His reportages about chemical attacks during the Iran-Iraq and Kurdistan War appear in international newspapers (*Time International*, *El País*). In parallel to his work as a photojournalist, Ghazbanpour pursues his activity as an 'archaeologist' photographer, as his (forthcoming) book *Neighbours' Mementos* demonstrates, resulting from the methodical removal of inscriptions left by Iraqi soldiers in Khorramshahr.

Kaveh Golestan

(1950-2003)

His work as photojournalist and documentary maker greatly influenced the current generation of photographers and artists. The poetic strength of his images – that cover pre- and post-Revolution – resonates beyond photojournalism. Before 1979, he documented the living conditions of women working in Shahr-e No, the red-light district south of Tehran, as well as the world of work and institutions supervising mentally ill children. In 1979, the Pulitzer Prize awarded his work on the Revolution. During the Iran-Iraq War, he was the first to photograph the chemical weapon attack launched by Saddam Hussein on the Kurdish population of Halabja. A monography, *Recording the Truth in Iran*, was devoted to him by Hatje Cantz publishers in 2007, the title of which is taken from the documentary film produced by Golestan in 1991 about the situation for journalists in Iran. Kaveh Golestan died in 2003 by jumping on a mine in Kifri, in Iraq.

Barbad Golshiri

(born in 1982)

Lives and works in Tehran.

After studying art at the School of Art and Architecture at Azad University in Tehran, he promptly becomes an independent multidisciplinary artist, critic and translator. Using various mediums, his work collates several areas of concern: the poetry of repetition; the body enduring political violence; the deconstruction of language and text. Over several years Barbad Golshiri develops work building tombs and memorials. Often designated for the anonymous without a grave for political reasons, these monuments also sometimes pay tribute to historical figures, such as Samuel Beckett and Jan van Eyck. Present on the international art scene for a decade, Golshiri exhibits his works in many institutions, including: Neuer Berliner Kunstverein, Berlin; Chelsea Art Museum, New York; Göteborg Konstmuseum, Gothenburg; Saatchi Gallery, London; ZKM, Karlsruhe. Exhibition curator in 2011 for the project *Disturbing Public Opinion*, gathering Iranian artists at the Röda Sten Art Centre in Gothenburg.

Arash Hanaei

(born in 1978)

Lives and works in Tehran and Paris.

After studying photography at Azad University in Teheran and acquiring in-depth knowledge of works produced during the Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War by the preceding generation, he develops a practice combining several mediums and techniques. Through amateur photography or new networks for disseminating the vernacular images, he endeavours to extend the protocols and codes of the documentary tradition. The series *Recreational Areas* (2008) and *Capital* (2009) both demonstrate a productive interference between digital design and photographic memory. The first explores an ironic perspective on the isolation of the individual and the repression of desire, whilst the second is intended as a map of the city of Tehran, questioning the transformation of public space post-war (notably the paradoxical coexistence of frescoes of martyrs and advertising slogans). His works are presented in several solo exhibitions (Silk Road and Aaran galleries in Tehran) and group exhibitions (CAB-Contemporary Art Centre in Brussels, Chelsea Museum of Art in New York, Asia House in London).

Behzad Jaez

(born in 1975)

Lives and works in Tehran.

After studying photography from 1997 at the School of Art and Architecture at Azad University in Tehran, he specialises in documentary practices with Kaveh Golestan and Bahman Jalali. He works furthermore as an independent photojournalist from 1998 to 2006 for several newspapers and produces different series: *Khatami and the People* (1997-2006), *The Crowd* (1997-2008), *Talabeh Studies* (2001-2002), *Mural and Electoral Inscriptions* (2002-2006), *The Earthquake in Bam* (2004). These projects are presented at the 9th Tehran Photography Biennial (2004), in the *Images of the Year* exhibition at the House of Artists in Tehran (2004-2005), and are published by the Italian magazine *Private* (2005). Behzad Jaez also participates in the collective exhibition *Tribute to Bahman Jalali*, at the Forouhar Gallery in Tehran, in 2010.

Bahman Jalali

(1944-2010)

Photographer, great connoisseur of the history of photography in Iran and demanding as well as generous teacher, Bahman Jalali has been an important 'purveyor' of images. His photographs of the 1979 Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War are emerging as key to a deep understanding of these events. After the Revolution, he taught and participated in the launch of the photography magazine *Aksnâmeh* in 1998. Between 2003 and 2006, he produced the series *Images of Imagination* from complex photomontage and the superimposition of negatives of images from the Qajar period and other documents. In 2007, the Fundació Antoni Tàpies in Barcelona and Catherine David organized the first monographic exhibition of his works, then presented by Camera Austria at the Kunsthaus in Graz in 2009. The Sprengel Museum in Hanover devoted a retrospective to him in 2011 after winning the Sprengel international prize for photography in 2009.

Rana Javadi

(born in 1953)

Lives and works in Tehran.

Rana Javadi and Bahman Jalali document the Revolution's student and popular uprisings. Some of these images are exhibited at the end of 1978 at the faculty of fine arts at the University of Tehran and compiled in the book manifesto *Rouzhây-e âtash, Rouzhây-e khoun* [Days of Blood, Days of Fire]. They join forces later to save significant photography archives from studios some of which started producing in the 19th century (Chehrenegar). Rana Javadi develops her personal work – as well as the series *When You Were Dying* (2008) – according to composition, photomontage and iconographic collage principles that adopt traditional and modern printing techniques, from the former as well as contemporary Iran. Since 1989 she has also worked as the director of photography at the Tehran Bureau of Cultural Research, and directed *Akskhâneh-ye Shahr*, the first photography museum in Tehran, from 1977 to 1997. Her works are exhibited in Iran, Europe and the United States.

Aria Kasaei

(born in 1980, lives and works in Tehran and Paris)

Aria Kasaei is recognized for his identity designs through art directing for galleries, institutes and cultural events such as Tehran Design Week, Damonfar Painting Biennial, Mohsen Gallery and Azad Art Gallery. A graduate of Graphic Design from Sooreh University, he co-founded StudioKargah with Peyman Pourhosein in 2001 in Tehran, where he still lives and works. He has exhibited his work in Iran and internationally including in France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Japan, China, United States, Canada & Mexico. Aria is an active contributor to the Neshan, Iranian graphic design magazine. He has been the curator of graphic design exhibitions such as Azad Collaborative Design Project in 2009 in Tehran and 2012 in Berlin, "From Iran" Poster Exhibition in Copenhagen in 2011, Assurbanipal Babilla retrospective exhibition in Tehran in 2013. He recently co-edited and curated "Fereydoun Ave: Designer" book and retrospective exhibition in Dastan Basement in Tehran. His graphic works have been featured in books and magazines such as Arabesque by Gestalten, Form magazine, Almanac of Asia-Pacific Design & Un Cri Persan.

Khosrow Khorshidi

(born in 1932)

Lives and works in Tehran.

In the 1960s he works as a film and theatre set designer in Italy (notably for Franco Zeffirelli and Luchino Visconti), then in 1968 he becomes director of the department of decorative arts of the University of Tehran. After working in the United States, since the beginning of the 1990s and his return to Iran, Khosrow Khorshidi exhibits his drawings, paintings and sculptures in different galleries. In 1996, he provides a stage set for the musical *Les Misérables* at the *Farhangsarâ-ye Bahman* in Tehran: performed without music, the stage set of the play is impressive. The drawings published in *The Good Old Days* (publ. Ketâb Sarâ, 2013) depict Tehran in the 1930s-1940s and its now almost extinct architecture. Initially produced for the needs of his students, these nostalgic drawings are a hit with a wide public as well as historians.

Bahman Kiarostami

(born in 1978)

Lives and works in Tehran.

The first film by this documentary maker and film editor, *Morteza Momayez, the father of contemporary graphic arts in Iran*, appears in 1996. Its subjects, relative to certain aspects of the cultural and social life in his country, form a sharp and subtle look at the complexity and paradoxes of a rapidly changing world. His filmography includes: *Tabaki* (2001), *I Saw Shoush* (2002), *Nour* (2003), *Infidels* (2004), *Two Bows* (2004), *Persian Gardens* (2005), *Pilgrimage* (2005), *Re-enactment* (2006), *Anonymous* (2007), *Statues of Tehran* (2008), *The Treasure Cave* (2010), *Javad* (2011), *Kahzirak*, *Four Views* (2013), *Taxi-Tehran* (2013). His most recent film, *Variations of a Hexicon*, explores the life and work of Monir Shahroudy-Farmanfarmaian.

Ardeshir Mohassess

(1938-2008)

His career as illustrator started off at the start of the 1960s, notably with the great poet Ahmad Shamlou, in the magazine *Ketâb-e Hafteh*. His satirical verve was then expressed in local papers, like *Keyhân* and *Towfiq*. Ardeshir Mohassess published several artist books and regularly appeared in the international press – *Jeune Afrique* as well as the *New York Times* from 1973 –, before definitively going into exile in the United States in 1977. His work explores a learned iconography, from miniature to Qajar painting including Honoré Daumier and Saul Steinberg. He participated in the 1st Biennial of Tehran in 1958 and received acclaim with a retrospective at the Asia Society in New York in 2008. The Library of Congress in Washington stores his series of drawings *Life in Iran* (published in 1994).

Bahman Mohassess

(1931-2010)

Following the coup d'état organized by the CIA against Mohammad Mossadegh, Bahman Mohassess left Iran in 1954 to study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome. He took part in many exhibitions, including the Venice Biennale in 1955, the Paris and São Paulo Biennials in 1962; he also exhibited in Iran where he rapidly gained recognition. Initially a painter, he also produced many sculptures (some of them monumental), a large number of which were destroyed or disappeared after the Revolution. During the 1970s, he moved definitively to Rome. He destroyed virtually all of his work on his last trip to Iran, only taking several small pieces with him. He stayed in Italy until his death without exhibiting, continuing to produce small format works in total solitude, notably collages, that he did not present. His work bears witness to a refined, tormented and mysterious spirit, embodying a modernity attracted by the most daring experiments, making Mohassess an almost mythical figure in 20th century Iranian art. He is also known for his translations of Italo Calvino, Jean Genet and Eugène Ionesco that he staged in Tehran.

Morteza Momayez

(1935-2005)

Graphic designer, painter, photographer, illustrator for adults and children, his career began in the Bahrami studio in 1958, where he received his first commissions – for logos – at the time, he was already familiar with Polish graphic design. He then met the great poet Ahmad Shamlou, for whom he produced over a hundred covers for *Ketâb-e Hafteh* magazine. In the 1970s, he established the discipline of graphic art at the faculty of fine arts of the University of Tehran, and worked intensely as poster designer for the theatre,

cinema and many festivals. After founding the first syndicate for Iranian graphic designers, he organised the exhibition *50 years of graphic design in Iran* in 1972 at the Mehrshah exhibition centre. He took part, with his students, in the 1979 Revolution. In 1987, Morteza Momayez initiated the Tehran Biennial of Graphic Design (at the Museum of Contemporary Art) and became director of the graphic design and photography department at the University of Tehran. His work was exhibited widely in Iran and abroad, in solo and group exhibitions.

Tahmineh Monzavi

(born in 1988)

Lives and works in Tehran.

Tahmineh Monzavi studies at Azad University in Tehran. Her documentary photography addresses various forms of marginality and exclusion, as well as means of interaction between private and public space. The series *Women in Grape Garden Alley* is produced with female drug users accommodated in a drop-in centre, while *High Fashion and Wind-Up Dolls* documents illegal catwalk shows in Tehran. In 2011, Tahmineh Monzavi wins the international Sheed Award for documentary and social photography.

Farhad Rahmati

(born in 1964)

Lives and works in Tehran.

After studying painting at the faculty of fine arts at the University of Tehran at the start of the 1980s, Farhad Rahmati perfects his training with the art historian Roueen Pakbaz, who introduces him to modern trends (expressionism, cubism, surrealism). Sedaqat Jabbar teaches him calligraphy, Hadi Hazavieh mural painting and photography. After his studies, he produces an epic work with Hussein and Ashura as the theme, comprising 72 oil paintings 210 × 140 cm. He continues to produce many sculptural, decor and set design works, notably for places of remembrance such as *shohadâ* (devoted to martyrs).

Mohsen Rastani

(born in 1958)

Lives and works in Tehran.

Photographer on the Iran-Iraq war front, he produces portraits of martyrs for families. After managing the photo department for several daily papers and other publications (*Sobh-e Emrooz, Tasvir...*), Mohsen Rastani founds the Association for Iranian photojournalists in 1999 and teaches in several universities. He covers many conflicts (Lebanon, Bosnia) that enable him to diverge from his more intimate experience of the Iran-Iraq War. However since 1994 he has almost solely devoted himself to the *Iranian Families* project, an extensive survey aiming to reproduce the diversity of Iranian society after the Revolution.

Narmine Sadeg

(born in 1955)

Lives and works in Paris.

After studying at the University of Tehran and the School of Fine Arts in Paris, she undertakes theoretical research and obtains a PhD at Paris-Diderot University about the correlation between text and image. Represented by Galerie Giovanna Minelli in Paris at the start of the 1990s, she is awarded the Villa Médicis hors les murs prize (1993) and produces a huge documentary video installation project that questions the institutional functioning of contemporary art (*Tell me about art*, 1993-1994). A blend of sculpture, drawing, video and installation, her works explore the notion of strangeness and invisible borders between inside and outside, here and elsewhere. Her work is exhibited at Villa Arson, Centre national d'art contemporain, Nice; CAVS & MIT Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts; Basilisk Gallery, Copenhagen; Werkstatt Gallery, Berlin.

Narmine Sadeg is also lecturer in the arts department of the University of Bordeaux-Montaigne.

Behjat Sadr

(1924-2009)

After studying at the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran, Behdjat Sadr went to Rome, where she graduated in abstract painting and informal art. Leaving frames and traditional colours behind, she used synthetic industrial paints that she ran on supports placed on the ground. When she returned to Iran at the end of the 1950s, her experiments with subject and gesture were quickly noticed by Pierre Restany

and, later, Michel Ragon. In the 1980s, when she split her time between Paris and Tehran, she notably produced photomontages in an unusual style reminiscent of her painting. Her works have been exhibited in many institutions in France and abroad: Galleria La Bussola, Rome (1958); Venice Biennale (1956, 1962); musée d'Art moderne de la Ville de Paris (1963); Grey Foundation, Saint Paul, Minnesota (1971); Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels (1972); Centre d'art Le Noroît, Arras (1985); Grey Art Gallery, New York (2010). In 2004, the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art devoted a large retrospective to her, as part of the series of exhibitions devoted to pioneers of modern art in Iran.

Kamran Shirdel

(born in 1939)

Lives and works in Tehran.

Symbolic representative of documentary and socio-political film, he initially studies at Centro sperimentale di cinematografia in Italy. Taught by Roberto Rossellini and Michelangelo Antonioni. After returning to Tehran, Kamran Shirdel produces many documentaries about non-conformists and the poor, sponsored by the Minister of Arts and Culture. However his films are regularly censored for looking behind-the-scenes of modernization and the White Revolution. He is forced into exile. Films that are now key and often rediscovered 'in retrospect', like *Qaleh* [The Women's District] and *Tehran is the Capital of Iran* (1966), are often finalized years after being filmed, due notably to material being confiscated. His famous trilogy is completed by another medium-length feature, *Women's Prison* (1965), but reference should also be made to *The Night It Rained* (1967), a first attempt to subvert the very form of documentary, in favour of a critical examination of appearances and discourse. Shirdel is also the founder and director of the Kish International Documentary Film Festival.

Behzad, Esmail and Kourosh Shishegaran

(born in 1952, 1946 and 1944)

Kourosh Shishegaran holds his first solo exhibition in Tehran in 1973. At the time, he is interested in the concept of '*Mass production*'. Reconciling art and people, his works are displayed in public areas, creating paintings that deliberately reproduce details from master paintings and also does 'poster art'. Poster production is at the heart of his practice from 1976, notably in support of Lebanon. Between 1977 and 1979, he initiates collaboration with his two brothers that at first consist of object and furniture design. The beginnings of the Revolution inspire two posters produced in October 1978, called *For a Free Press* and *For Today*. The three brothers launch a series of posters – individually signed but produced collectively – that respond, in real time, to each event or major event punctuating the Revolution process. These posters in public areas are first of all screen-printed, then offset printing is used. The three Shishegaran brothers also organize an overt exhibition at the University of Tehran library in March 1980.

Unedited History. Iran 1960-2014**Collateral events****curated by B.A.S.E. and the Department of Education****December 10, 2014 – March 29, 2015**

The program of collateral events and educational activities, whose purpose is to harmonize the museum's educational mission with its research goals, offers keys to interpretation that can help to learn more about the Iranian culture, and thus enrich the message offered by the exhibition.

My Iran**July 2014 – March 2015****Project of intercultural mediation with the Iranian Community of Rome**

Sharing strategies and producing instruments that can mediate complex meanings via the direct involvement of the community that the artists belong to is one of the museum's main goals on the occasion of the exhibition. The project envisages a series of group meetings with referents from the Iranian and Italian communities in which the artists and their works are analyzed in order to offer a personal reading made up of many different voices and opinions.

Silvia Mascheroni, an expert in intercultural mediation of artistic heritage and professor at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore of Milan, has offered her expertise for the educational project.

An Unedited History. Encounter with the Curators and the Artists of the Exhibition**December 10, 2014, 5 p.m.****Gallery 2**

On the occasion of the inauguration there will be a talk with the curators and the artists, moderated by MAXXI's Art Director Hou Hanru, to discuss the fundamental steps of the project within the exhibition.

Shab-e Yalda. The Feast of the Winter Solstice**December 20-21, 2014, 4 p.m.****Guido Reni Foyer****Teaching Workshops for Families on the Shab-e Yalda Festivity**

These pre-Christmas laboratories are dedicated to Shab-e Yalda, the joyous celebration of the longest night of the year, the night of the winter solstice. They will include a narrative part, in which children will be told Persian fables, and a creative part, in which adults and children will play and draw together, inventing a new fable with their favorite characters along with others from Persian tales.

Is the Revolution Over?***The Iranian Documentary and Film from 1960 to the Present Day*****curated by Italo Spinelli****February 14-15 2015****MAXXI B.A.S.E.**

Two appointments dedicated to Iranian documentary and cinema, to retrace the salient phases of filmmaking in Iran before and after the Revolution, also offering a glance at the prevalent themes and characteristics of visual artistic production in relation to the political, social and aesthetic events that have taken place over the past fifty years.

Nawrūz, the Persian New Year**March 21, 2015****Museum Hall**

On the occasion of the Nawrūz and to promote Persian culture and traditions, activities will be organized that recall the preparatory rituals for Chahârshanbe Sûrî (Feast of Fire, the last Wednesday of the year) and describe the symbolic meanings of the Haft Sîn (Seven "S"). The day when Nawrūz falls will be completely dedicated to the celebrations, with readings and dramatized readings of passages from contemporary Iranian literature. In the evening a Persian dinner will be organized with traditional music preceded by a guided visit to the exhibitions and laboratories for families.

Package: museum entrance ticket at a reduced price of 8 Euros + guided tour 4 Euros

Free dinner, max 150-guests

A Thousand and One Stories. Architecture, Poetry and Literature in Contemporary Iran

March 27-28-29, 2015

MAXXI B.A.S.E.

Three appointments dedicated to contemporary Iranian culture to tell the history, not yet finished, of the conflict between tradition and modernity in today's society.

Friday March 27: Encounter with contemporary Iranian architecture, from the last Shah's zeal to modernize, to the urban explosion of our day and age.

Two appointments with poetry and literature will follow, curated by Felicetta Ferraro (Ponte33).

Saturday March 28: *I will hang two red cherries from my ears*. The voice of Forugh Farrokhzad, and impassioned and courageous poet who, through her verses, has expressed the restlessness of an era of transformations along the thread of her personal and artistic choices characterized by absolute anti-conformism.

Sunday March 29: *Reading Iran*. Social transformation and cultural evolution through authors and the pages of contemporary literature.