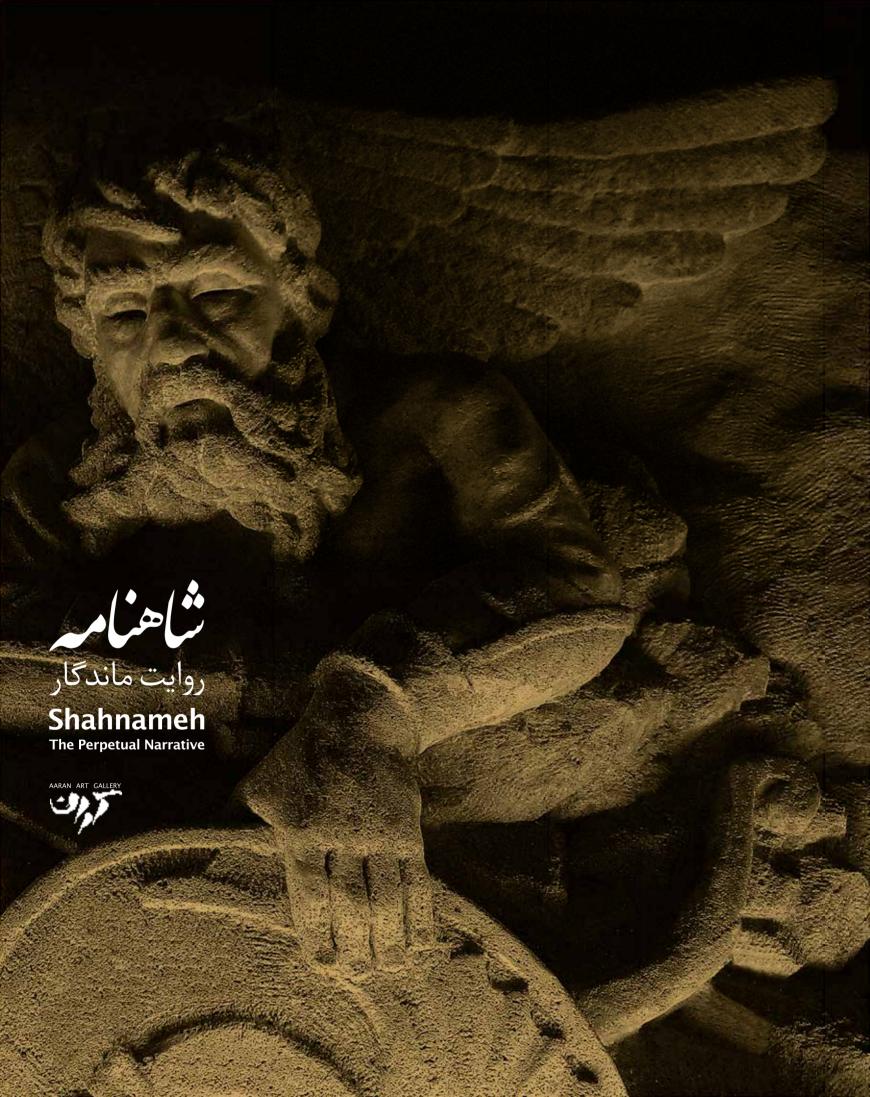
Akram Ahmadi Tavana Curatorial Projects

Shahnameh, The Perpetual Narrative (Curtain 1) 2016





جستاری در بازتاب شاهنامه در هنر مدرن و معاصر ایران

پژوهشگر اکرم احمدی توانا با مقدمه خانم دکتر فیروزه ملویل

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خردمند شمالی، کوچه دی، پلاک ۱۲ تلفن: ۷-۸۸۸۲۹۰۸۶



هنرمندانی که آثارشان در این نمایشگاه عرضه خواهد شد:

عربعلی شروه . نیکزاد نجومی . مهدی حسینی . گیزلا وارگا سینایی . فریدون آو . مرضیه قرهداغی فرح اصولی . ترانه صادقیان . شیرین نشاط . جمشید حقیقتشناس . سعید روانبخش . رضا هدایت بهنام کامرانی . یاسمین سینایی . علیرضا جدی . سیامک فیلیزاده . امیرحسین بیانی . علا ابتکار آرتمیس شهبازی . علیرضا فانی . مهسا خیرخواه . آیلین بهمنیپور

با سپاس از بنیاد میراث ایران، که با قبول بخشی از هزینه این کاتالوگ ما را همراهی نمودهاند.



ييشگفتار

از زمان سرایش شاهنامه، این متن علاوه بر جایگاه ادبی و زبانشناسی، به دلیل یادآوری شکوه ایران باستان از اهمیت ویژهای برخوردار بوده است. تعداد زیاد شاهنامههای مصور از سویی بخش عمدهٔ سنت کتابآرایی ایران و در نتیجه تاریخ نقاشی ایران را تشکیل میدهند و از سوی دیگر هر یک مستقل از دیگری زبان گویای تاریخ معاصر خود هستند. در واقع در این نسخههای مصور به دلیل دغدغههای فرازمانی و فرامکانی شاهنامه، هنرمندان به خوبی از قابلیت تأویلهای سیاسی، اجتماعی و فرهنگی متفاوت بهره گرفتهاند. شاهنامه به عنوان موضوعی برای خلق اثر هنری در دورههای متأخرتر نیز مورد توجه شماری از هنرمندان بوده است. گویی در هر عصر جان دوبارهای به این متن کهن دمیده میشود. در حدود یک قرن گذشته و همزمان با ورود نقاشی مدرن، در ایران نیز همانند دیگر کشورهای خاورمیانه دغدغههایی نظیر هویتجویی و گرایشهای بومی و محلی در ذهن برخی از هنرمندان شکل گرفت. آنها به دنبال راههایی بودند تا آثار هنری خود را که از زبان مدرن استفاده می کردند از آثار هنری غربی متمایز کنند. در شرایطی که تکنیک و فضای تصویری مستقیماً وام گرفته میشد، موضوعات بومی که شاهنامه یکی از آنها است راه مناسبی برای رسیدن به این مقصود بود.

در این متن طبق طبقهبندی رویین پاکباز که چهار جریانِ موازیِ نقاشی آکادمیک، نگارگری جدید، نقاشی قهوهخانه و نقاشی نوگرا $^{\prime}$ را در نقاشی ایران $^{\prime}$ مشخص کرده، یافتههای تصویری مورد بررسی قرار گرفتهاند. در گروه نخست یا همان گرایش آکادمیک تنها یک هنرمند در زمینهٔ مجسمهسازی به این موضوع پرداخته است. نگارگری جدید در دورههای پیش و پس از انقلاب هر بار با رویکرد و هدفگذاریهای ویژهای مورد توجه حکومتها و هنرمندان بوده که با توجه به جایگاه شاهنامههای مصور در نقاشی قدیم ایران عجیب نیست که هنرمندانِ این جریان به این موضوع پرداخته باشند. مهمترین راه حضور تجسمی شاهنامه در میان عامهٔ مردم، از اهمیت ویژهای مهمترین راه حضور تجسمی شاهنامه در میان عامهٔ مردم، از اهمیت ویژهای به دلایلی که جلوتر خواهد آمد اثری از شاهنامه نیست، اما بخش عمدهٔ برخوردار است. در دستهٔ نقاشی نوگرا نیز در سالهای پیش از انقلاب به دلایلی که جلوتر خواهد آمد اثری از شاهنامه نیست، اما بخش عمدهٔ آثار مربوط به سالهای پس از انقلاب است. علاوه بر اینها آثار مربوط به تصویرسازی کتاب کودک نیز خصوصاً در دوران پیش از انقلاب مورد توجه قرار گرفته است.

از آنجایی که هر نوع بیان هنری متأثر از فرهنگ جاری پیرامون خود است، برای بررسی وقایع تجسمی اشاره به زمینههای اجتماعی، سیاسی، فرهنگی و اقتصادی ضروری مینماید. مقطع زمانی مورد بررسی در این متن یک صد سال گذشتهٔ ایران، یعنی از دوران حکومت رضاشاه پهلوی، تا امروز در نظر گرفته شده و انقلاب اسلامی ایران در سال ۱۳۵۷ نقطهٔ عطف بررسی تاریخی این نوشتار است. رویکردهای دو حکومت پیش و پس از انقلاب به شاهنامه نه فقط به عنوان یک شاهکار ادبی بلکه به عنوان میراث ملی هویت ایرانیان از جمله مسائل قابل بحث است.

در اینجا بحثی دربارهٔ وامگیری هنر دورهٔ معاصر از ویژگیهای نقاشی ایرانی در میان نیست، بلکه مسئلهٔ اصلی بررسی موضوعی و احیای موضوع

شاهنامه در هنر سدهٔ گذشتهٔ ایران است. ۳ بنابراین منظر این نوشتار کاملاً بر موضوع تمرکز دارد و به توصیف آثار میپردازد.

در این نوشتار تلاش شده تا هم با استفاده از اسناد و مدارک منتشر شده و هم از طریق دیدار و گفتگو با هنرمندان، نویسندگان، منتقدین، کیوریتورها، مجموعهداران و گالریداران اطلاعاتی جامع جمعآوری شود. این اثر خالی از اشکال نیست و موضوع نیز پروندهای باز است. چه بسا هنرمندانی که از نظر نویسنده دور مانده باشند. علاوه بر این متأسفانه امکان ارتباط با برخی از هنرمندان به دلیل مهاجرت و یا انزواجویی و یا عدم همکاری فراهم نشد. تمامی تصاویر نیز یا با اجازهٔ هنرمندان و مجموعهداران و یا از کتابهای منتشر شده مورد استفاده قرار گرفتهاند.

از دکتر فیروزه ملویل سپاسگزارم که این مقاله به تشویق ایشان به انجام رسیده است. و همین طور بسیار مرهون لطف دکتر حمید کشمیرشکن هستم. علاوه بر هنرمندانی که نام آنها در ادامه خواهد آمد و اغلب آنها به گرمی پذیرای من در کارگاه خود بودند و اطلاعات مفیدی دربارهٔ آثار در اختیارم قرار دادند، باید در اینجا از کسانی که در معرفی اتفاقات و یا ارتباط با هنرمندان و یا دیگر موارد یاری رساندند، سپاسگزاری کنم: استاد رویین پاکباز، جواد مجابی، دکتر ابوالفضل خطیبی، دکتر علی اصغر میرزایی مهر، لیلی گلستان، لیدا بربریان، محمودرضا بهمن پور، جمال الدین اکرمی، حسین ثعلبی، داریوش اسدی کیارس، محمود نورایی، بابک یادگاریان و بهرنگ صمدزادگان.

برگزاری نمایشگاهی از آثاری که بهانه نوشتن این مطلب بودهاند در اسفند ۱۳۹۴ در گالری آران تهران اتفاقی ایدهآل و تکمیل کنندهٔ آن بود. از خانم نازیلا نوعبشری بسیار سپاسگزارم که نه فقط نمایشگاه که این پروژه به حمایت بیدریغ ایشان به بار نشست.

اكرم احمدي توانا

۱. پاکباز، رویین (۱۳۸۳) نقاشی ایران از دیرباز تا امروز، انتشارات زرین و سیمین، ۱۸۶
 ۲. با اندکی تسامح میتوان آن را در هنرهای تجسمی ایران نیز صادق دانست.

مسئلهٔ مههم رجوع به ایران باستان از دوران فتحعلی شاه (۱۲۱۳–۱۵۱۵ه.ش) در حکومت قاجار آغاز شد. ساخت سنگنگارههای متعدد، سرایش شاهنشاهنامه توسط فتحعلی خان صبا به تقلید از شاهنامه و تاج معروف کیانی از بارزترین نمودهای این گرایش است. هر چند این رویکرد در زمان پادشاهان بعدی قاجار به این شکل و شدت دنبال نشد اما با روی کارآمدن رضاشاه پهلوی این مسئله مجدداً به شکل جدی تر و فراگیرتری مطرح شد. یکی از اولین توجهات حکومت رضاشاه پهلوی به شاهنامه برگزاری هزارهٔ فردوسی و ساخت آرامگاه او در سال ۱۳۱۳ شمسی بود. ساخت آرامگاه با کشف محل دفن فردوسی در سال ۱۳۱۸ و مقارن با پایان یافتن ساخت بنا یک کنگرهٔ علمی بسیار بزرگ به پیشنهاد ملک الشعرای پایان یافتن ساخت بنا یک کنگرهٔ علمی بسیار بزرگ به پیشنهاد ملک الشعرای این کنگره به عهدهٔ محمدعلی فروغی و دکتر صدیق اعلم نیز دبیر آن بود. ۱۰

۴. فتحعلی خان کاشانی متخلص به صبا که سرآمد شاعران دربار بود.

۵. راوندی، مرتضی (۱۳۸۲) تاریخ اجتماعی ایران (بخش دوم از جلد هشتم: حیات ادبی مردم ایران)، مؤسسه انتشارات نگاه، ۱۷۶

 با سپاس از دکتر علی اصغر میرزایی مهر که جزئیات تز منتشرنشدهٔ دکترای خود را در اختیار قرار دادند.

 ۷. صدیق، سجادی (۲۵۳۵) فردوسی و ادبیات حماسی؛ مجموعه سخنرانی های نخستین جشن طوس ۲۵۳۴، سروش—انتشارات رادیو و تلویزیون ملی ایران، ۲۰۵

. ۸. این کنگره از ۱۲ تا ۱۶ مهر ماه ۱۳۱۳ در دارالفنون تشکیل شد و در ۲۰ مهر همگی رهسپار توس شدند و رضا شاه پهلوی آرامگاه را افتتاح کرد.(صدیق،۲۵۳۵، ۲۰۲)

 ٩. غُروی، مهدی (۲۵۳۵) شاهنامهٔ فردوسی در نخستین نیم قرن شاهنشاهی دودمان پهلوی، انتشارات وزارت فرهنگ وهنر—بنیاد شاهنامه فردوسی، ۴۴ تا ۶۲

 ۱۰. رضا شاه پهلوی در پیامی به مناسبت این اتفاق علاوه بر ابراز خوشحالی خود از گردهمایی اندیشمندان ساخت بنای آرامگاه را نشانهٔ حق شناسی ملت ایران می داند. (سجادی،۲۵۳۵، مقدمه)

Andre Sevruguin

۱۲. پسر آنتوان سوروگین (۱۳۱۲–۱۲۰۹) عکاس

۱۳. مقارن با سال ۴۱۶ هجری قمری

۱۴. قرابگیّان، مارکار (مانی) (۱۳۱۳) فهرست ۴۱۶ تابلو درویش پروردهٔ ایران در هزارهٔ فردوسی، مطبعهٔ محاسد ۱

\\(\Delta\). Krasberg, Ulrike. (2008) Sevrugian, Bilder Des Orients in Fotograafie und Malerei. Societats-Verlag, p71

۱۶. قرابگیان،۱۳۱۳، ۲

۱۷. حاُمدی، محمد حسن (۱۳۹۰) برگهای پژوهش۱ (اسناد و آراء نشستهای پژوهشی هنری نگارخانه برگ (۸۸–۱۳۸۷))، نشر پیکره، ۴۶ . (متأسفانه نیافتم که این اثر به سفارش چه کسی و چه سازمانی ساخته شده ولی بعید است این تلاقی زمانی اتفاقی باشد.)

۱۸. سیف،هادی (۱۳۷۳) ابوالحسن خان صدیقی، مرکز انتشارات کمیسیون ملی یونسکو در ایران، ۲۶

در سال ۱۳۲۰ محمدرضا شاه پهلوی به قدرت رسید. در سالهای آغاز حکومت به دلیل بحرانهایی مانند جنگ جهانی، ترور ناموفق شاه، ملی شدن نفت و همین طور کودتا شرایط فرهنگی مناسبی در کشور وجود نداشت. در این سالها تنها ابوالحسن صدیقی چند اثر با موضوع شاهنامه خلق کرد. او در سال ۱۳۲۲ مجسمهای از فردوسی برای مدرسهٔ دارالفنون و در سال ۱۳۲۵ سه خوان از شاهنامه ۱۹ را برای سر در زورخانه بانک ملی و در سال ۱۳۳۵ یک تندیس از فردوسی برای میدانی در رم ساخت.۲۰ تا این که در سالهای دههٔ ۴۰ شمسی و تثبیت حکومت محمدرضا شاه پهلوی و بهبود چشمگیر اوضاع اقتصادی و همین طور ازدواجش با فرح پهلوی، على رغم تمامى تناقضات اجتماعى و سياسى، ايران از نظر فرهنگى وارد مرحلهٔ تازهای میشود. تأسیس کانون پرورش فکری کودکان و نوجوانان، نوسازی آرامگاه فردوسی، سفارش چاپ مجدد شاهنامهٔ بایسنغری۲۱ و همچنین تأسیس بنیاد شاهنامه و جشنوارهٔ توس از جمله اقدامات حکومتی در زمینهٔ شاهنامه است. معمولاً در حاشیهٔ این اتفاقات نیز در رشتههای مختلف هنرهای تجسمی به بهانههای مختلف آثاری خلق شده که در ادامه به آنها یرداخته خواهد شد.

همواره باید در خاطر داشت که در این سالها سیاستگذاریهای حکومت در عرصهٔ هنرهای تجسمی بیشتر به دنبال حمایت و گسترش هنرنوگرا است که این هنرمندان چندان توجهی به موضوع شاهنامه نداشتند. در خصوص هنر نوگرای ایران باید گفت که هرچند در قرون گذشته روند نقاشی ایران با تغییراتی اندک پیش میرفت اما در حدود یک قرن گذشته و پس از بازگشت گروهی از دانشجویان جوان به ایران که با اتفاقات هنر روزجهان آشنایی پیدا کرده بودند ناگهان این روند به شدت سرعت گرفت. در واقع "پایه ریزی و گسترش هنر مدرن ایران در طول دهههای ۱۳۲۰ و ۱۳۳۰^{۳۲۲} اتفاق افتاد و پرشورترین و اثرگذارترین فرد این جنبش جلیل ضیاءپور بود که همواره به دنبال راهی برای مدرن کردن نقاشی ایران با حفظ ارزشهای بومی از طریق عناصر تصویری کهن ایرانی بود. نکتهٔ جالب توجه این است با وجود این که در ایران شاهنامه مهمترین راه ارتباط مردم با نقاشی و تصویر بوده است، اما با آغاز نقاشی مدرن ایران چندان مورد توجه هنرمندان نوگرا قرار نگرفت. کارکرد اجتماعی شاهنامه از نظر جواد مجابی "با پز متکبرانه و تحقير عامهٔ مردم هنر مدرن منافات داشت. ٣٣٠ جالب است که با وجود پيوند درونی نقاشی قدیم ایران با ادبیات کلاسیک این مسئله کمتر مورد توجه اولین نقاشان مدرن واقع شد و هر کجا که نقاشان به ادبیات پرداختند، بر خلاف سنت کتابآرایی، ادبیات فولکوریک را در نظر داشتند. نقاشان مدرن به دنبال موضوعات ایرانی و نه لزوماً ادبی بودند تا حرفهای بومی را به زبان جهانی بزنند. در واقع میتوان گفت آنها بیشتر دغدغهٔ تصویر و موتیفهای تصویری داشتند. در هنر مدرن ایران یکی از قدیمی ترین آثار موجود با موضوع شاهنامه اثر ضیاءیور است که با عنوان "کاوه آهنگر که در سال ۱۳۲۵ در انجمن ایران –شوروی (وُکس) نمایش داده شد."۲۴

۱۹. به کمند کشیدن زن جادوگر، کشته شدن دیو سپید، کشته شدن اژدها به دست رستم (سیف، ۱۳۷۳، ۲۰)
 ۲۰. حامدی،۱۳۹۰، ۴۶و ۴۷

۲۱. نسخهٔ خطی شاهنامه بایسنغری دستاورد کتابخانهٔ هرات در دورهٔ تیموری و به تاریخ ۸۳۳. این نسخه از معدود نسخههای نفیس و مهمی است که هم در داخل ایران نگهداری می شود و هم هنوز با شیرازهٔ اولیهٔ خود باقی مانده و ورق ورق نشده است. ۲۲. کشمیرشکن، حمید (۱۳۹۴) هنر معاصر ایران، ریشهها و دیدگاههای نوین، نشر نظر،

تهران، ۵۷ ۲۳. مجابی، جواد (۱۳۹۳) سرآمدان هنر نو، نشر به نگار، ۱۵

۲۴. مجابی، جُواد، (۱۳۷۶) ٌ پیشگامانُ نَقاشی ٌ معاصرٌ ایران(نسل اول)، نشر هنر ایران، تهران،۱۰ (متأسفانه تصویری از این اثر نیافتم.)

یکی از قدیمی ترین و مردمی ترین زمینه های حضور شاهنامه در هنرهای تجسمی ایران نقاشی قهوه خانه است که پس از پیروزی انقلاب مشروطه ۲۵ توسط هنرمندان آموزش ندیده رواج مییابد. استادان این هنر عامیانه در آغاز عصر مدرن در ایران و آغاز شهرنشینی به دنبال احیای موضوعات کهن رفتند. داستانهای ادبیات کلاسیک ایران و تاریخ اسلام دو بخش عمدهٔ موضوعات نقاشی قهوهخانه را میسازند که داستانهای شاهنامه بیشترین سهم را در گروه نخست دارند. در میان نقاشان این جریان بیش از هرکس دیگری حسین قوللر آغاسي (۱۳۴۵–۱۲۶۹) حماسهٔ پهلوانان شاهنامه را تصویر کرده است.۲۶ او و دیگر نقاشان این مکتب با در نظر گرفتن خواست مردم داستانهایی را که بیشتر مورد توجه آنان بود و از منظری که خوشایند آنان بود به تصویر مى كشيدند. ٢٧ به تصوير كشيدن يرچم "نصر من الله و فتح قريب" بر دوش سیاوش، و یا نمایش همیشگی پیروزیها و دلاوریهای قهرمانان شاهنامه از جمله دخل و تصرفات نقاشان قهوهخانه است که با توجه به ارزشهای حاکم در شرایط زمانی خاص و یا با در نظر گرفتن خواست مردم^{۲۸}ایجاد شدهاند. گفتنی است مارکو گریگوریان (۱۳۸۶–۱۳۰۴) هنرمند نوگرایی بود که متوجه ارزشهای هنری این آثار شد و با برگزاری نمایشگاههای متعدد در ایران و کشورهای دیگر به طرح این هنر بومی پرداخت.

با توجه به این که نااستواری بنای آرامگاه فردوسی۲۹ از همان سالهای اول ظاهر شد، نوسازی این بنا از جمله اولین اقدامات محمدرضا پهلوی در بزرگداشت فردوسی بود که دستور آن در سال ۱۳۴۲، سی سال پس از ساخت بنا، صادر شد. ۳۰ و عملیات آن چهار سال طول کشید. ۳۱ و بالاخره در ۱۰ اردیبهشت سال ۱۳۴۷ شاه و شهبانو آن را گشودند.^{۳۲} متن سخنرانی محمدرضا شاه پهلوی در مراسم افتتاحیه نشان از تأکید او بر اهمیت شاهنامه دارد. ۳۳ در بنای جدید مجموعه نقوش برجستهای بر دیوارهای داخلی بنای آرامگاه توسط حسین حجارباشی زنجانی ٔ ساخته شد. که اغلب نیز به شرح داستانهای زندگی رستم پرداختهاند(تصویر۴). پس از آن در سال ۱۳۴۹ و ۱۳۵۰ دو مجسمه از فردوسی به ترتیب برای آرامگاه او در توس و بعد در میدان فردوسی تهران باز هم به ابوالحسن صدیقی سفارش داده شد 70 (تصویر۱). همانطور که پیشتر آمد او مجسمههای متعددی با موضوع شاهنامه و بیش از آن پرترهٔ خود فردوسی ساخت. ۳۶ تصور یک شخصیت ستبر و قوی از فردوسی در ذهن اغلب افراد به واسطهٔ آثار او شکل گرفته است. صدیقی دلیل این ویژگیهای ظاهری فردوسی را این گونه توضیح داده: "از نظر من رستم شاهنامه، خود فردوسی است. رستم تمام صفات فردوسی را دارد. انسانی با اندیشه و تفکری بزرگ. من در مجسمههایی که از فردوسی ساختم، رستم را در مقابل خود دیدم. ۳۷۳

در سال ۱۳۴۸ اولین دوره از جلسات سخنرانی و بحث دربارهٔ شاهنامه مقارن با جشن فرهنگ و هنر به مدت سه روز در موزهٔ ایران باستان آغاز شد. ۳۸ تأسیس بنیاد شاهنامه به دستور محمدرضا شاه یهلوی در سال ۱۳۵۰ از دیگر اقدامات مهم بود که تأثیرات بنیادی در فضای فرهنگی داشت.۳۹ در بند ۲۳ در برنامههای بنیاد نیز به لزوم تحقیق و بررسی یردهها و تصاویر شاهنامه در شاهنامهخوانیها و قهوهخانهها تأکید میشود. ۴۰ حدس و ثبت جزئیاتی نظیر پوشاک و ابزار رزم در سالهای دههٔ ۵۰ زیر نظر جلیل ضیاءپور (۱۲۹۹–۱۳۷۸) در بنیاد شاهنامه فردوسی در زمان ریاست دکتر محمدامین ریاحی اتفاق افتاد. ضیاءپور از طریق متن شاهنامه و گزارشگران همزمان با او 1 دربارهٔ پوشاک و ابزار اطلاعاتی جمعآوری کرد. بهروز گلزاری (۱۳۷۹– ۱۳۰۸) زیر نظر جلیل ضیاءیور به اجرای نقاشیها می پرداخت. ۴۲ هرچند میتوان ضیاءپور را تندروترین هنرمند حامی مدرنیسم دانست و علی رغم این که او به شدت دلبستهٔ گونهای از کوبیسم بود اما در این مجموعه تنها به دنبال بازنمایی و مستندسازی تصویری توصیفات ادبی می رود و از هر گونه خیال پردازی و تجربیات بصری و تأویل تجسمی معاصر چشمپوشی می کند.

باید در نظر داشت که هر چند اغلب برنامههای مذکور در مرحلهٔ اول بر پژوهشهای نظری بر شاهنامه و درمرحلهٔ بعد بر بررسی نسخههای خطی (نه لزوماً مصور) متمرکز بودند، اما راه را برای پژوهشهای حوزهٔ تجسمی و خلق آثار هنری هموار میکرد. چنانکه در هفتههای شاهنامه، از دیگر اقدامات دولتی در این زمان، سخنرانی جلیل ضیاءپور با عنوان شاهنامه و هنر سنتی ایران در بنیاد شاهنامه اتفاق افتاد.^{۴۳}میتوان جشنواره توس را که اولین دورهٔ آن از ۲۲ تا ۲۷ تیر در ۲۵۳۴ (۱۳۵۴) به همراه سخنرانیهایی در دانشکده ادبیات دانشگاه فردوسی مشهد برگزار شد، از جمله آخرین اتفاقات رسمی در دورهٔ یهلوی درباره شاهنامه برشمرد. ۴۴

چاپ نسخهٔ مصور شاهنامهٔ بایسنغری در قالب کتابی نفیس به عنوان هدیه به سران کشورهای مهمان در جشنهای ۲۵۰۰ ساله در سال ۱۳۵۰ از نمونههای بزرگداشت شاهنامه به عنوان یکی از مهمترین آثار قدیم ایران در دوران حکومت شاهنشاهی پهلوی است. با توجه به سیاستهای کلی برگزاری این جشنها، یعنی نمایش قدمت و قدرت شاهنشاهی ایران، شاهنامه انتخاب مناسبی برای قدرتنمایی و اعلام پیشینهٔ تاریخی بود. این کتاب با مقدمهٔ بازیل گری به سه زبان انگلیسی و فرانسوی و آلمانی و نه فارسی در ۱۱۶ صفحهٔ به چاپ رسید.

میتوان انتشار بازنویسیهای شاهنامه را که مناسب برای کودکان باشد، از زيربنايي ترين اقدامات حكومت پهلوي براي گسترش فرهنگ شاهنامه خواني

۲۵. پاکباز، رویین (۱۳۸۱) دائره المعارف هنر، انتشارات فرهنگ معاصر، ۵۸۶

۲۶. مجابی، ۱۳۷۶، ۶

۲۷. رجبی، محمدعلی(۱۳۸۵) حسن اسماعیلزاده – نقاش مکتب قهوه خانهای، نشر نظر، مقدمه (همانگونه که در شاهنامههای مختلف این انتخاب متناسب با سلیقهٔ پادشاه حامی

۲۸. سیف، هادی (۱۳۶۹) نقاشی قهوه خانه، موزه رضا عباسی – سازمان میراث فرهنگی

۲۹. به دلیل عدم اطلاع از آبهای زیرزمینی(صدیق،۲۵۳۵،۲۰۷)

۳۰. غروی،۲۵۳۵، ۸۷

۳۱. غروی،۲۵۳۵، ۸۸

۳۲. غروی، ۲۵۳۵،۹۳

۳۳. به عنوان نمونه میتوان به یکی از جملات کلیدی این سخنرانی اشاره کرد: "باید کاری کرد

که مردم فردوسی و شاهنامه را بیشتر و بهتر بشناسند. "(غروی،۲۵۳۵، ۹۹) ۳۴. متأسفانه هیچ منبعی برای کسب اطلاعات بیشتر از این هنرمند یافت نشد. ۳۵. حامدی،۱۳۹۰، ۴۷

۳۶. در این سالها به بهانههای مختلف و در نقاط متفاوتی از ایران و دنیا همچون ایتالیا، آلمان، فرانسه و تاجیکستان تندیسهای بسیاری از فردوسی به دست هنرمندان ساخته شد. ۳۷. سىف، ۱۳۷۳، ۸۸

۳۸. غروی،۲۵۳۵، ۹۵

۳۹. غروی،۱۳۵۵، ۹۹

۴۰. غروی،۲۵۳۵، ۱۰۹

۴۱. ضیاءپور، جلیل (۱۳۵۴) ، پوشاک و رزم ابزار در شاهنامه، مجله هنر و مردم شماره ۱۵۳

۴۲. تصویری از این آثار یافت نشد.

۴۳. غروی،۲۵۳۵، ۱۱۰

۴۴. دستور برگزاری جشن ها از سوی فرح پهلوی در هشتمین جشن هنر صادر شده بود. (سجادی،۲۵۳۵،مقدمه) و هدف برگزاری آنها، هنر و ادب و فرهنگ ایران بوده است. (سجادی،۲۵۳۵،۱۶) هر چند دغدغههای حفظ اصالت زبان و فرهنگ(برهان ابن یوسف (۲۵۳۶) شاهنامه نیاز زمان ماست ۵۱–۵۵) از جمله انگیزههای برگزارکنندگان این جشنها بود، اما تلاش برای نشان دادن رابطه دیرپای میان مردم و شاهنشاهی (برهان، ۲۵۳۶، ۱۲) هم در نوشتهها و سخنرانی های این مراسم دیده میشود.

۴۵. Hillenbrand, Robert. (2010)"Exploring a Neglected Masterpiece: The Gulistan Shahnama of Baysunghur", Iranian Studies. V43. UK, 104

برشمرد. هم زمان با تأسیس کانون پرورش فکری کودکان و نوجوانان بخر سال ۱۳۴۴ تصویرسازی شاهنامه برای کودکان آغاز شد. در واقع این نهاد دولتی با برنامهریزیِ دقیق، انتخاب و بازآفرینی متنهای کهن برای کودکان را محور کار خود قرار داد. ۲۰ در یک گردهمایی برای کتابهای کودکان و نوجوانان در سال ۱۳۵۴ در مالزی، نمایندهٔ ایران یکی از راههای ایستادگی در برابر هجوم فرهنگ کاذب (داستانهای قهرمانی مصور) را استفاده از منابع ملی با شیوهٔ بیان امروزی دانست. ۲۰ تصویرگرانی چون فرشید مثقالی، علی اکبر صادقی، نفیسه ریاحی، نورالدین زرین کلک، نیکزاد نجومی و دیگران نیز هر یک با رویکردهای ویژهٔ خود این متون را میآراستند. تجارب جدیدی نظیر کتاب رستم واسفندیار که توسط سیروس میآراستند. تجارب جدیدی نظیر کتاب رستم واسفندیار که توسط سیروس در این زمان است(تصویر۵). همواره باید به خاطر داشت که به دلیل تازگی در این زمان است(تصویر۵). همواره باید به نقاشی و طراحی گرافیک و میزمندان پیش از آن که تصویرساز باشند به نقاشی و طراحی گرافیک و ساخت فیلم انیمیشن مشغول بودند. ۵۰

از جمله اولین نمونههای موضوع شاهنامه در تصویرسازی، توسط مرتضی ممیز (۱۳۸۴–۱۳۱۵) اتفاق افتاد. او داستان زندگی رستم را در سال ۱۳۴۵ تصویرسازی کرد و با استفاده از این تصاویر تقویمی برای شرکت پارس نفت طراحی کرد(تصویر ۶). ممیز در این مجموعه به شیوهٔ چاپ دستی و به صورت سیاه و سفید با زبان به شدت بیانگر ویژهٔ خود این متن حماسی را به تصویر می کشد.

فرشید مثقالی (۱۳۲۲) در سال ۱۳۴۶ با تصویرسازی کتاب جمشید شاه یکی از اولین نمونههای تصویرسازی جدید ایران را خلق کرد. او عناصر سنتی را به بستری نوین میبرد و به آنها موجودیت جدیدی میبخشد. او در کتاب جمشید شاه با ترکیببندیهای ایستا، بازی خطوط سیال سیاه، که یادآور قلمگیری نقاشیهای قدیم ایران است، و همینطور فضاهای تخت، نقوش تزئینی لباسها، فرم صخرهها و در نهایت رنگگزینی محدود ارجاعات متعددی به نقاشی ایرانی دارد(تصویر۷).

نیکزاد نجومی (۱۳۲۰) در سال ۱۳۴۷ کتاب بستور را تصویرسازی کرد. این کتاب از حیث کودک بودن شخصیت اصلی و تأثیرگذاری روانی دلاوری او، برای کودکان حائز اهمیت است. ترکیببندیهای پویا، اغراق در اندازه و استفاده از نقوش تزئینی در لباسها از ویژگیهای این اثر او است^{۵۱}(تصویر۸).

زال و سیمرغ و همین طور داستان زال و رودابه در سال ۱۳۵۱ به دست نورالدین زرین کلک (۱۳۱۶) به تصویر درآمدند. او نیز مانند دیگر هنرمندان این زمان با توجه به مؤلفههایی نظیر پرسپکتیو، نقوش تزئینی، جدول کشی و استفاده از رنگ طلائی سعی در ایرانی—بومی کردن فضای آثار خود دارد(تصاویر ۱۰۹).

على اكبر صادقى (۱۳۱۶) با بيانى حماسى در دههٔ ۵۰ شمسى به تصويرسازى شاهنامه روى آورد. اولين كتاب او با مضمون گردآفريد در سال ۱۳۵۲ و دومين اثر او آوردهاند كه فردوسى ... نوشتهٔ شاعر حماسه پرداز معاصر ايران مهدى اخوان ثالث (م.اميد) در سال ۱۳۵۴ به چاپ رسيدند. او همواره با حفظ اسلوب نقاشى كلاسيک به سراغ موضوعات حماسى و ذهنى معاصر خود مى رود 10 (تصوير ۱۲).

نفیسه ریاحی (۱۳۷۹–۱۳۲۲) در سال ۱۳۵۵ هفت خوان رستم را با نگاه به فلزکاریهای دورهٔ ساسانی تصویرسازی کرد. او نه تنها به لحاظ ویژگیهای زیباییشناسی بلکه حتی در تکنیک نیز به شدت به برجستهنمایی این آثار پایبند ماند. ریاحی در جزئیاتی نظیر صورت و لباس و نقوش تزئینی به آثار دورهٔ ساسانی وفادار بود(تصویر۱۹).

در سالهای پایانی حکومت پهلوی کارتونیست معاصر کامبیز درمبخش (۱۳۲۱) در چند اثر از مجموعهٔ مینیاتورهای سیاه خود به شاهنامه پرداخت. او در سالهای ۱۳۵۲ تا ۱۳۵۴ با طنز افشاگر^{۱۵} خود و از طریق وارد کردن عناصر زندگی معاصر با شخصیتهای شاهنامه در موقعیتهای حساس زندگی آنها شوخیهای تلخی میکند که سرشار از کنایات و اعتراضات سیاسی است. انتخاب طنزآمیز قالب مینیاتور برای توصیف دنیایی سرشار از رسمها و چارچوبهای متضاد با آن، شیطنت دیگری بر این کارتونها میافزاید. ۵۵ میتوان این مجموعه آثار درمبخش را از معدود حرکتهای خودجوش هنرمندان پیش از انقلاب دانست که به هیچ عنوان دستوری نبوده و هنرمند با توجه به شرایط زیستهٔ خود، شاهنامه را گزینهٔ مناسبی برای بیان مقصود می یابد (تصویر۱۴).

پس از انقلاب اسلامی ایران.

انقلاب اسلامی نقطهٔ عطفی در مطالعات تاریخ معاصر ایران است. برخلاف تأکیدهای بسیار زیادِ حکومت پیشین بر تاریخ ایران باستان که اتفاقاً شاهنامه یکی از نمودهای مهم آن بود، در سالهایِ نخستین پیروزی انقلاب توجه چندانی به این موضوع نشان داده نشد. شاید ارجاع ذهنی واژهٔ شاه به محمدرضا پهلوی که در میان عموم مردم با این نام خطاب میشد در این تصمیم بیتأثیر نبود. حتی نیروهای انقلابی قصد ویرانی مجسمه فردوسی اثر ابوالحسن صدیقی در میدان فردوسی تهران را داشتند. خوانش سیاسی، ضداسلامی و شاهنشاهی از شاهنامه تا آن جا پیش رفته بود که در کلاسهای تخصصی ادبیات دانشگاهها هم اشاره چندانی به این موضوع نمی شد. از سوی دیگر به دلیل رفتارهای هیجانی پس از انقلاب متأسفانه در این زمان تمامی دستاوردهای فرهنگی و هنری حاصل از رونق سالهای دهههای ۴۰ و ۵۰ شمسی نادیده گرفته شد. در واقع در دههٔ ۶۰ با توجه به

۴۶. کانون پرورش فکری کودکان و نوجوانان را باید پایهگذار ادبیات و تصویرگری نوین در ایران به شمار آورد. نویسندگان و تصویرگران برجستهای در این سال ها با کانون همکاری می کردند. نویسندگان به نامی همچون مهرداد بهار، م.آزاد و مهدی اخوان ثالث به تنظیم نثری ساده از متن شاهنامه برای کودکان و نوجوانان مبادرت کردند.

۴۷. اکرمی، جمال الدین (۱۳۸۳) کودک و تصویر، سازمان پژوهش و برنامه ریزی آموزشی – انتشارات مدرسه برهان، ۲۸

۴۸. این موضّوع در مقدمهٔ کتاب رستم و اسفندیار به قلم فردی با نام اختصاری س.ط آمده. که احتمالِ نزدیک به یقین سیروس طاهباز است که در سالهای ۱۳۴۹ تا ۱۳۵۷ مدیر انتشارات کانون بوده است.

انتشارات کانون اوقاه است. ۴۹. متأسفانه هیچ منبعی برای کسب اطلاعات بیشتر از این هنرمند یافت نشد.

۵۰. مجموعهٔ این آثار در خرداد ماه سال ۱۳۸۹ در موسسهٔ فرهنگی و هنری صبا وابسته به فرهنگستان هنر در تهران و در قالب نمایشگاهی از چهار دهه تصویرسازی ایران با عنوان حکمتها و حماسههای فردوسی برگزار شد.

۵۱. ممیز، مرتضی (۱۳۹۰) رو به رو (گفتگوی ابراهیم حقیقی با مرتضی ممیز)، انتشارات خحسته، مقدمه

۵۲. او در همان سال کتاب طلسم شهر تاریکی را نیز تصویرسازی کرد. او تعمق در تصاویر شاهنامههای چاپ سنگی برای انجام این کار را به ذهن سپردو اثرات آن در مجموعه سال ۲۰۱۳ که جلوتر به آن پرداخته خواهد شد، به خوبی عیان است.

۵۳. او در خاطرات خود می گوید: "پهلوانان و عوالم آنها را بهانهای کردهام تا از روزگار خودم، از این زمان و زمانه، سخن بگویم، از انسان حرف بزنم." مجابی، جواد و زرین کلک، نورالدین (بهار ۱۳۷۷) برگزیده آثار علی اکبر صادقی ۱۳۷۹–۱۳۵۶، نشر هنر ایران، ۱۵ ۵۸. محصص، ایراندخت، (۱۳۵۴) طراحان طنز اندیش ایران، انتشارات دنیا، مقدمه ۵۵. مجابی، ۱۳۸۸، مقدمه

حکومت تازه تأسیس اسلامی و همینطور جنگ میان ایران و عراق که مدت کمی پس از پیروزی انقلاب آغاز شد، نقاشیهایی با پیامهای ایدئولوژیک و تبلیغ ارزشهای اسلامی (و نه ملی) و ترویج شهادتطلبی و ایثارگری به سمت کم رنگ کردن همهٔ دستاوردهای نسل نخست هنرمندان نوگرای ایران رفت. برخی از هنرمندان نوجو در این سالها یا ایران را ترک کرده بودند^{۵۶} و یا در کارگاههای شخصی خود در تنهایی و سکوت مشغول کار بودند. در واقع در سالهای آغاز حکومت جمهوری اسلامی ایجاد گونهای هنر ایرانی–اسلامی برای انتقال ارزشهای فرهنگی انقلاب مطرح بود.۵۸

این سیاستگذاریها "تأثیر معکوسی بر قشرهای متوسط و تحصیلکردهٔ شهری داشت یعنی به جای این که آنها را از سرگذشت ایران پیش از اسلام دور کند، توجهشان را بیشتر به این دوره جلب کرد. "۵۸ در کنار رشد گرایشهای عمومی به شاهنامه در اواخر دههٔ ۴۰ با روی کار آمدن دولت سازندگی ۵۹ فضای فرهنگی کشور آزادیهای اندک پس از سالهای جنگ میان ایران و عراق را تجربه کرد.

در دی ماه ۱۳۶۹ در دانشگاه تهران کنگره جهانی بزرگداشت فردوسی با ۲۷۰ مقاله و حضور ۱۲۰ استاد خارجی از ۲۳ کشور و ۱۷۰ استاد ایرانی برگزار شد. ^{۶۰}حضور هاشمی رفسنجانی به عنوان رئیس جمهور وقت در این کنگره دلیلی بر رسمیت یافتن شاهنامه پژوهی در ایران پس از انقلاب بود. او در سخنرانی خود خوانش اسلامی حکومت از شاهنامه را عیان کرد. ۶۱ در ادامه مصطفی معین ۶۲ نیز با مطرح کردن سوابق اسلامی برای شخصیتهای شاهنامه مانند رستم و کاوه و سیاوش این دیدگاه را دنبال کرد.۳۰ به نظر میرسد اعتراض به افرادی که به دنبال توجیه نظام شاهنشاهی توسط شاهنامه بودند، تأکید بر همسازی فرهنگ اسلامی و فرهنگ فارسی و ایرانی و همین طور استفاده از این متن برای تحلیل نظام فکری و اجتماعی جامعه از جمله مسائل مورد نظر در این همایش بودند که در سخنرانی دکتر معین

اما با بازنگری در تجربههای گذشته و تعمق در هنر معاصر جهان، از میانهٔ دههٔ ۱۳۶۰ پویشی تازه آغاز شد.^{۴۵}اولین اتفاق مهم درباره تجلی شاهنامه در هنر پس از انقلاب ایران به همت رویین پاکباز اتفاق افتاد. این نمایشگاه در سال ۱۳۶۸ برای بزرگداشت فردوسی و هزارمین سال تدوین شاهنامه با حضور ۱۳ نقاش و مجسمه ساز در گالری افرند تهران برگزار شد. آریا شکوهی اقبال، فاطمه امدادیان، سارا ایروانی، عباس سارنج، یعقوب عمامهپیچ، پرستو فروهر، توران قمری، حسین قرهگزلو، داود مظفری، معصومه مظفری، نصرتالله مسلمیان، امین نورانی هنرمندان حاضر در این نمایشگاه بودند.

این نمایشگاه شاید بیش از هر چیز حاصل شناخت پاکباز از تاریخ نقاشی

ایران و سنت مصورسازی شاهنامه و تلاش او برای ارائهٔ نمونهٔ معاصری از این سنت بود. در مقدمهٔ نمایشگاه نیز چنین میآید: "شاهنامه از دیر باز کارمایه هنرمند ایرانی بوده است و پس از هزار سال همچنان اندیشه و احساس در هنرمند بر میانگیزد. ذهن شاعر بر جایگاهی بلند استوار مانده، ولی برداشت هنرمند از اثر سترگ او با زمان دگرگون می شود." ۴۶۰ با وجود این که دستاوردهای هنری این نمایشگاه در کارنامهٔ هنری هر کدام از این نقاشان بسیار با اهمیت است اما هیچ یک از آنها این موضوع را برای خلق آثار بعدی خود برنگزیدند. به عنوان مثال دو اثر مرگ رستم از یعقوب عمامهییچ در این نمایشگاه از آثار مهم زندگی هنری او هستند(تصویر۱۵).

همانطور که دوران پهلوی تأکید بر تاریخ ایران باستان موجبات کمرنگ شدن تاریخ دوران اسلامی ایران را فراهم کرد، در دوران حکومت جمهوری اسلامی تأکید حکومت از هویت ملی به هویت اسلامی تغییر یافت. یکی از نمودهای این تلاش در زمینهٔ هنرهای تجسمی برگزاری بیبنال نگارگری تهران از سال ۱۳۷۲ توسط وزارت ارشاد جمهوری اسلامی ایران است. هنرمندانی که گرایشهای سنتی داشتند این زبان را وسیلهٔ بسیار مناسبی برای بیان ارزشهای ایرانی با توجه به پشتوانهٔ غنی اسلامی میدانستند. این هنرمندان نه تنها از حمایتهای دولتی مستقیم و غیرمستقیم برخوردار بودند (و هستند) بلکه از طرف عامهٔ مردم و همین طور از جانب خارجیانی که همچنان به دنبال وجوه اگزوتیک هنر شرق هستند به شدت حمایت شده (و میشوند).

به این ترتیب مبادرت به تولید نسخهٔ مصور شاهنامه نه از حیث اهمیت متن شاهنامه بلکه از نظر جایگاه شاهنامه در سنت مصورسازی کتاب در تمدن اسلامی طبیعی مینماید. هنرمندان نگارگر جدید با جهان معاصر خود همراه و همزمان نمیشوند. در واقع این هنرمندان به بازسازی شکلی سنت بدون در نظرگرفتن شرایط زندگی معاصر میپردازند. اغلب آنها دستاوردهای هنری زمان خودرا نادیده میگیرند و تنها به وسیلهٔ موضوع به دنبال امروزی کردن آثار خود هستند و در نتیجه دستاورد چشمگیری به این آثار نمیافزایند.

در سال ۱۳۷۱ شاهنامهای نفیس با نقاشیها و تذهیبهای مجید مهرگان (۱۳۲۴) به چاپ رسید. تلاش برای شکوهمندی این اثر نه فقط در نقاشیها که در خوشنویسی آن نیز به چشم میخورد. ۶۲ در سال ۱۳۷۲ محمود فرشچیان نیز شاهنامهای را با تعداد اندکی نگاره به همراه تذهیب و تشعیر

یکی از جدیدترین آثار در این گروه مربوط به حجت شکیبا (۱۳۲۸) است. شکیبا در سال ۱۳۹۲ شاهنامهای با بیش از ۵۰ نگاره منتشر کرد که تذهیب و تشعیر آن نیز به قلم او است(تصویر۱۶). او با استفاده از نشانههای میراث باستانی، خصوصاً هخامنشی، و قاجاری و همینطور تلفیق تکنیک نقاشی سنتی ایران و تجربههایی از هنر رئالیستی به نوعی هنر التقاطی ایرانی رسیده است. او در نمایشی کاملاً زمینی از موجودات اساطیری تلاش می کند تا روایتی معاصر در صلح و آرامش کامل و بدون نشانهای از جنگهای شاهنامه ارائه دهد. علاوه بر این در تمام این سالها آخرین نسل هنرمندان نقاشی قهوه خانه نیز فعال بودند اما کیفیت این هنر به دلیل از دست دادن خصلت

۵۶. کسانی همچون اردشیر محصص و نیکزاد نجومی و دیگران

۵۸. جهانبگلو، رامین (۱۳۸۴) ایران در جستجوی مدرنیته، نشر مرکز، در گفتگو با نادر

[.]م. ۵۹. دولت پنجم و ششم جمهوری اسلامی ایران که به مدت ۸سال به ریاست هاشمی رفسنجانی از ۱۲ مرداد سال ۱۳۶۸ رسماً کار خود را آغاز کرد.

رفسیبه هی از ۱۳۷۸ سال ۱۳۷۸ نمیرم از این پس که من زنده ام(مجموعه مقالات کنگره جهانی بزرگداشت فردوسی (هزارهٔ تدوین شاهنامه) در دی ماه ۱۳۶۹ در دانشگاه تهران)، مؤسسه انتشارات و چاپ دانشگاه تهران، ۳

۱۵. هاشمی: "فردوسی بر توحید و خدا شناسی تکیه دارد."ستوده،۱۳۷۴، ۱۵
 ۲۶. وزیر وقت فرهنگ و آموزش عالی

۶۳. ستوده، ۱۳۷۴، ۷

۶۴. ستوده،۱۳۷۴، ۹–۸ ۶۵. پاکباز، ۱۳۸۱، ۵۹۷

۶۶. از کاتالوگ نمایشگاه به قلم رویین پاکباز

۶۷. خط مقدمه و قطعات از: غلاحسين اميرخاني، قطعات شكسته از: يدالله كابلي خوانساري و خوشنویسی متن از علی سجادی است.

کارکردی اولیهاش $^{^{6}}$ و همین طور فقدان هر گونه حمایتی در مقایسه با آثار پیشینیان به شدت تنزل پیدا کرده بود(تصویر (1)).

از سوی دیگر نباید فراموش کرد که در سال ۱۳۷۲ بخشهایی از شاهنامهٔ شاه تهماسبی نیز به ایران بازگشت. شاهنامهٔ شاه تهماسبی یا شاهنامهٔ شاه تهماسبی یا شاهنامهٔ شاه تهماسبی یا شاهنامهٔ شاه یسخهٔ مصوری است که تولید آن به سفارش شاه اسماعیل صفوی (۹۳۰–۸۹۲ ه.ق)، بنیانگذار حکومت صفویه، آغاز شد و به عنوان هدیه به فرزندش شاه تهماسب(۹۱۹–۹۵۵ ه.ق) اهدا شد. با وجود این که این نسخه انجامه ندارد اما آن را متعلق به سالهای ۹۳۴ ه.ق/۸–۱۵۲۷ میدانند. این نسخه به عنوان هدیه بر تخت نشستن از سوی شاه تهماسب به سلطان این نسخه به عنوان هدیه بر تخت نشستن از سوی شاه تهماسب به سلطان مشارکت دو نسل از هنرمندان آن زمان است. این نسخه ۲۵۹ برگ دارد و در قرن بیستم بیشتر اوراق آن در مالکیت آرتور هوتون بود. در سال ۱۳۷۲ بخش عمدهٔ این نسخه شامل ۱۱۸ نگاره از مجموع ۲۵۸ نگارهٔ آن توسط جمهوری اسلامی با تابلوی زن اثر ویلیام دگونینگ معاوضه شد و هم اکنون در موزه هنرهای معاصر تهران نگهداری میشود. 89

در سالهای دههٔ ۷۰، خصوصاً پس از خرداد ۱۳۷۶ و روی کار آمدن دولت اصلاحات، ۲۰هم آزادیهای نسبی در نمایش آثار و سیاست گذاریها حاصل شد و هم برگزاری دوسالانهٔ نقاشی تهران، افزایش رشتههای هنری و پذیرش دانشجو در دانشگاهها، افزایش گالریها، تأسیس گروهها، و در نهایت افزایش سرعت و حجم ارتباط با اتفاقات بینالمللی جو متفاوتی از سالهای دههٔ ۶۰ ایجاد کرد.

دههٔ ۸۰ نیز شاهد تلاشهای متعدد فردی و گروهی در پرداختن به شاهنامه در هنرهای تجسمی ایران است. هنرمندان با گرایشهای فکری متفاوت شاهنامه را موضوع خلق آثار خود قرار دادند. در یک سو هنرمندانی قرار دارند که تنها با تکیه بر وجه روایی شاهنامه به دنبال خلق روایت تصویری معاصر از این متن بودند. بسیاری از این هنرمندان در آثار خود که با رسانههای مختلف خلق شدهاند نه فقط به لحاظ موضوعي روايتي معاصر از شاهنامه را ارائه میدهند بلکه به دنبال آن هستند که ارزشهای زیباییشناختی نقاشی قدیم ایران را نیز به روز کنند. در سوی دیگر هنرمندانی اغلب جوانتر قرار دارند که شاهنامه را نه وسیلهای برای بزرگداشت گذشته که بهانهای برای نقد ایران معاصر میدانند. در واقع با توجه به شرایط فرهنگی، اجتماعی، سیاسی و اقتصادی بسیار پیچیدهٔ ایران پرداختن به خویشتن از طریق شاهنامه در کار برخی از هنرمندان نه به شکل خودشیفتگی فرهنگی پیش از انقلاب بلکه به صورت نقد هویت تاریخی مطرح شد. مسئلهٔ جستجوی هویت در میان اغلب هنرمندانی که به شاهنامه پرداختهاند با نگاه انتقادی همراه است. در ادامه به آثار هنرمندانی که در دههٔ ۷۰ شمسی به این موضوع توجه نشان دادهاند به ترتیب زمان خلق آثار و یا نمایش آنها پرداخته خواهد شد.

در آغاز دههٔ ۷۰ و یا به عبارت دقیقتر در سال ۱۳۷۱ نمایشگاه نقاشیهای جمشید حقیقتشناس (۱۳۴۱) در گالری سیحون برگزار شد. این نمایشگاه با موضوع شاهنامه و با تکنیک نقاشی پشت شیشه بود. او این تکنیک

سنتی نقاشی عامیانه ایران را کاملاً به سیاق شخصی خود درآورد(تصویر۱۷). تعداد کل این آثار ۱۰۵ اثر بود ولی تمامی آنها در این نمایشگاه به نمایش در نیامدند. این آثار از نظر زیباییشناسی سنتهای تصویری پیش از اسلام ایران را به ذهن متبادر می کنند. فضاسازی، طراحی عناصر و جزئیات ارجاعات عیانی به دستاوردهای تجسمی و نقش مایههای مفرغینههای لرستان و آثار دوران هخامنشی و ساسانی دارند. خاکستریهای رنگی، استفاده از خطوط شکل نما از ویژگیهای این آثار است. در آن زمان انتخاب موضوع شاهنامه چنان با جریان روز جامعه غریبه بود که حقیقتشناس در طول نمایشگاه بارها مورد این پرسش قرار گرفته که آیا او این سالها در ایران زندگی کرده؟ و حتی حضور او در جنگ ایران و عراق برای مخاطبان غیر قابل باور بوده است. ۲۱ به گفته حمید کشمیرشکن او از جمله هنرمندانی ست که آغاز فعالیت او به سالهای پس از انقلاب باز می گردد و با جدیت بیشتری درگیر چالشهای بنیادین مرتبط با مسائل فرهنگی و اندیشهای ست.۲۲او در سال ۱۳۷۸ مجموعهای دیگر با نام دو سویهها بر محوریت تضاد خیر و شر خلق کرد که خوانشی دو وجهی از هر روایت دارد. رستم-دیو و فریدون-ضحاک و نمونههایی از این دست در حال تبدیل و شکست و پیروزی دائم هستند. این آثار با تکنیک ترکیب مواد و کلاژ خلق شدهاند. در یک جهت غلبهٔ خیر بر شر است و با ۱۸۰ درجه چرخش شر بر خیر غالب می شود. وجود چند طرح برای پرترهها و استقلال نسبی خط از سطح و همین طور توجه بسیار زیاد به فضاهای منفی از خصوصیات تصویری این مجموعه است(تصویر ۱۸).

بیشک نام عربعلی شروه (۱۳۹۰–۱۳۱۸) یکی از اولین نامها در رابطه با پیوند میان شاهنامه و هنرهای تجسمی در سالهای اخیر است. او نقاش، معلم، نویسنده و مترجم پُرکار در حوزهٔ هنرهای تجسمی بود که بیش از هر چیز به دلیل سادهزیستی و سخاوت معلمگونهاش و در اواخر عمر توصیهاش به خواندن شاهنامه در ذهنها باقی ماند. او تعداد بسیار زیادی طراحی و نقاشی در دههٔ ۸۰ شمسی، دههٔ آخر زندگی خود، با این موضوع خلق کرده است. روحیهٔ جستجوگر او به گونهای بود که طیف متنوعی از مواد و رسانههای متفاوت را می آزمود. او خالق یک نقاشی دیواری در محوطهٔ مجتمع محل سکونت خود با موضوع زال بود۳۲ (تصویر۱۹). مجموعه ای از کارهای شاهنامهٔ او طراحیهای آب مرکبی است که به سنتهای شرق دور نظر دارد(تصویر۲۰). این هنرمند مجموعهٔ دیگری نقاشی با رنگ روغن و یا اکریلیک بر روی تخته و یا وسایل بازیافتی چوبی مثل درب و پنجره انجام داد(تصویر۲۱). بخشی از این آثار در زمان حیات او در سال ۱۳۸۴ در گالری طراحان آزاد در قالب نمایشگاهی تحت عنوان شاهنامه به نمایش در آمدند. او با توجه به گرایشهای مدرنیستی خود از بازنمایی صرف داستانهای شاهنامه فراتر رفت و با دغدغهٔ رنگ و فرم به دنبال نمایش سوژهها و فضاها بود.

در سال ۱۳۸۱ کارگاه نقاشی و روایتگری شاهنامه به پیشنهاد رضا هدایت $^{\dagger \gamma}$ در گالری لاله تهران به مدت $^{\dagger \alpha}$ روز با حضور $^{\dagger \alpha}$ نقاش و همراهی هانیبال الخاص (۱۳۸۹–۱۳۰۹) برگزار شد. ترانه صادقیان، رضا هدایت، ناصر محمدی، کیوان عسگری و سیروس آقاخانی هنرمندان حاضر در این کارگاه بودند. آنها $^{\dagger \alpha}$ رنگ سبز، زرد، آبی، قرمز و بنفش را به ترتیب برای به تصویر کشیدن داستانهای مربوط به جمشید، زال و سیمرغ، کیخسرو، سیاوش و همین طور رستم و سهراب برگزیده بودند. در این برنامه نقاشان به صورت

۷۱. در گفتگو با هنرمند

۷۲. کشمیرشکن،۱۳۹۴، ۲۳۵

۷۳. در شهرک پاس فرهنگیان تهران

۷۴. او از خُویشاوندان عربعلی شروه است و در زندگی حرفهای خود بسیار از ایشان متأثر

۶۸. پاکباز، ۱۳۸۱، ۵۸۸

 $[\]ensuremath{\mathfrak{S}}\xspace^{\ensuremath{\mathfrak{S}}\xspace^{\ensuremath{\mathfrak{S}}}\xs$

[.] دولتهای هفتم و هشتم جمهوری اسلامی ایران که به مدت . سال از . خرداد . ۱۳۷۶ به ریاست محمد خاتمی آغاز به کار کرد و نقطهٔ عطفی در حوزهٔ مطالعات فرهنگی ایران است.

بداهه و بدون پیش طرح نقاشی می کردند. علاوه بر این در روز ۲۱ خرداد ۱۳۸۳ جشن بزرگداشت فردوسی در محل دانشکده ادبیات دانشگاه تهران برگزار شد که شامل اجرای موسیقی، شعر خوانی، سخنرانی، نمایشگاه کتاب و همین طور نمایشگاه نقاشی بود. هانیبال الخاص، عربعلی شروه، ترانه صادقیان، ناصر محمدی، سیروس آقاخانی، فروزان پرویز فرزام، فرخنده مرعشی، رضا هدایت و غزاله توکلمند هنرمندان این نمایشگاه بودند. عموماً هنرمندان تنها از منظر قابلیتهای تصویری شاهنامه به این موضوع پرداخته بودند و بیشتربه دنبال نگاه مدرن به یک موضوع سنتی با هدف بومی کردن هنر مدرن بودند.

از میان این هنرمندان تنها ترانه صادقیان، ناصر محمدی و رضا هدایت در آثار بعدی خود به شاهنامه پرداختهاند. ترانه صادقیان (۱۳۳۵) از منظر یک هنرمند زن به نگاه فردوسی به زنان نیز میاندیشد. در سال ۱۳۸۳ در یک نمایشگاه انفرادی در گالری الهه مجموعه آثار خود با عنوان شاهنامه را ارائه کرد. او همچنان نیز با این موضوع نقاشی میکند و سعی دارد تا با دوری از کلیشهها و از دید یک هنرمند زن معاصر به بازنمایی تصاویر ذهنی فردوسی بپردازد. او هنرمندی است که با قدرت طراحی و تأکید بر اهمیت خط و لکههای رنگی، ارزشهای بصری نقاشی ایرانی را در روایت تصویری شاهنامه دنبال میکند(تصویر۲۲). ناصر محمدی (۱۳۴۵) نقاش فیگوراتیوی است که با استفاده از فامهای رنگی خالص و قدرت طراحی در بازنمایی شخصیتهای حماسی به آنها جنبهٔ اکسپرسیو میدهد(تصویر۲۳). رضا هدایت (۱۳۴۵) نقاش داستانپردازی است که در استفاده و کنترل رنگ مهارت دارد. او در دورههای مختلف زندگی خود نگاهی به شاهنامه نیز داشته و طراحیها و نقاشیهای بسیاری با این موضوع خلق کرده است(تصویر ۲۶). از دیگر هنرمندان نزدیک به عربعلی شروه در این زمان جعفر نجیبی (۱۳۳۲) و مرضیه قرهداغی (۱۳۳۱)بودند. جعفر نجیبی علاوه بر تجربیات جوانی خود در سالهای دههٔ ۵۰ شمسی، در فاصله سالهای میان ۸۰ تا ۸۲ نیز آثار متعددی با موضوع شاهنامه داشته است. هر چندآثار سفالی او روایتی رئالیستی از موضوعات اساطیری است، اما در مواردی هم با دغدغههای کوبیستی سطوح را در نظر دارد. او همین طور به ساخت پرترههایی از خود فردوسی مبادرت کرده(تصویر۲۴). مرضیه قرهداغی در آثار سفالی خود همانند یک استوری بُرد سه بعدی در وجوه مختلف به روایت افراد و یا بخشهای متفاوت داستان میپردازد(تصویر۲۵). او در نیمهٔ دوم دههٔ هشتاد شمسی مجموعهای از آثار خود را که شامل ۳۳ مجسمهٔ سفالی بود در گالری طراحان آزاد تهران به نمایش گذاشت.

مهدی حسینی (۱۳۲۲) نقاش، استاد دانشگاه هنر و نویسنده و مترجم در حوزهٔ نقاشی ایران است. تعمق او بر نقاشی ایرانی پیوند درونی میان نقاشیهایش با این دنیا را طبیعی مینماید. اولین مجموعهٔ او دربارهٔ شاهنامه طراحیهای سالهای ۱۳۸۴ تا ۱۳۸۶ است که با بیانی تغزلی برخی داستانهای معروف در نسخههای مصور را به تصویر در آورده. خاکستریهای ملایم، خطوط سیال، ترکیببندیهای خلوت و پراکنده و همین طور نقوش تزئینی از ویژگیهای این آثار است(تصویر۲۸). او مجموعهٔ دیگری با تکنیک چاپ قلمکار و موضوع شاهنامه دارد که در سال ۱۳۹۲ در گالری خاک به نمایش درآمدند. طراحیهای او توسط صنعتکاران اصفهانی چاپ قلمکار به صورت مُهر در آمده وسپس از آنها نمونههای چاپی گرفته شده است. توجه به ارزشهای بصری خط در آثار حسینی ریشه در خطوط کنارهنمای نقاشی ایران دارد(تصویر۲۷). اما کار ارزنده و جدید او شاهنامهای در قالب آرتیست بوک است. او به مناسبت ۲۲ تصویر شاهنامهٔ بایسنغری ۲۲ مجلس شاهنامه

را بر روی پارچهٔ متقال به شیوهٔ چاپ قلمکار اجرا کرده است. صفحات متن نیز به دست صنعتکاران بازار تهران و به شیوهٔ بیرقهای عزاداری امام حسین(ع) با نخ سیاه روی پارچه سفید گلدوزی شده است.

فرح اصولی (۱۳۳۲) هنرمند شناخته شده ای است که تلاش می کند تا تکنیک و زیبایی شناسی نقاشی قدیم ایران را معاصر کند. 4 نقاشی های اصولی در نقطهٔ نامعلومی میان سنت و معاصریت قرار می گیرد. هرچند حاصل نهایی کار او جلوه ای به شدت سنتی دارد و وفادار به نگارگری قدیم ایران است اما به لحاظ دیدگاه و تکنیک کاملاً خارج از قواعد این هنر حرکت می کند. استفاده از ابزاری چون ایبراش که در هنرهای سنتی ممنوع است ویژگی شاخص آثار او را می سازد. او در مجموعهٔ شاهنامه در سال ۱۳۸۵ هر چند به رسم هنرمندان پیشین به سراغ مصورسازی شاهنامه می رود، اما با تمرکز بر موقعیت زنان در شاهنامه مسیر تازهٔ خود را در پیش می گیرد. زنانی که با در کنار و یا پشت سر قهرمان داستان به تصویر در آمده اند شخصیتهای یا در کنار و یا پشت سر قهرمان داستان به تصویر در آمده اند شخصیتهای متفاوتی به سراغ موضوع شاهنامه می رود و با به تصویر کشیدن نقاط اوج متفاوتی به سراغ موضوع شاهنامه می رود و با به تصویر کشیدن نقاط اوج زندگی قهرمانان در یک کادر نوعی زندگی نامه تصویری از زاویهٔ نگاه خاص خود ارائه می دهد (تصویر ۳۰).

گیزلا وارگا سینایی (۱۳۲۳) هنرمند ایرانی – مجارستانی ست که به دنبال ایجاد فضایی اساطیری در آثار خود به شاهنامه میپردازد. او با انتخاب عناصر نمادین و ایجاد فضاهای تصویری کهن و اشارات کنایی روایتی تازه از زندگی اساطیر و شخصیتهای شاهنامه میسازد. او در طراحی پیکرها و عناصر و همینطور رنگگزینی به شدت وامدار نقاشی ایرانی ست (تصویر ۳۱).

مجموعهٔ شاهنامه علیرضا جُدی (۱۳۴۸) در سال ۱۳۸۵ در گالری آران تهران به نمایش در آمد. روایت و میل به داستانسرایی و همینطور صورتهای اساطیری بنمایهٔ نقاشیهای جُدی است. در واقع آثار او پیوندی از قصههای دور تا حوادث روز است. ۷ لایههای متعدد خاکستریهای رنگی، سطوح گستردهٔ هندسی، طراحیهای مدادی با جزئیات بسیار و موجودات تلفیقی از خصوصیات آثار اوست که در این مجموعه نیز دیده میشوند. استفاده از بافت چاپ سنگی، عجایب المخلوقات، سرهای بریده و بدنهای مثله شده، شمایلهای مذهبی، طراحی لباسها و کلاهخودها، به بازی گرفتن مفهوم فضا و همینطور حضور نوشته نشان از ارجاعات متعدد او به پیشینهٔ تصویری ایران دارد. پیچیدگیهای نمادین و استعاری در آثار جدی امکان تاویلهای گوناگون از تصاویر را به مخاطب میدهد (تصویر ۲۲).

چیدمان نقشهای گردآفرید اثر یاسمین سینایی (۱۳۴۷) نمایشی از شکوه زنانهٔ این شخصیت در شاهنامه است. این مجموعه در سال ۱۳۹۳ در گالری کرتیارد دوبی در نمایشگاهی به کیوریتوری فریدون آو به نمایش در آمد. سینایی به بهانهٔ گردآفرید و شخصیت چند وجهی او، در زندگی شخصی و جنگ آوری و نبرد با دشمنان، به دغدغههای خانوادگی و اجتماعی و وظایف متعدد زن معاصر میپردازد. اوموضوعات خود را با استفاده از مواد بازیافتی نظیر کاغذ و مقوا شکل میدهد. در این مجموعه حجمهای سینایی در کنار ویدئوآرتی از پردهخوانیهای شاهنامه در فضای گالری چیدمان شدهاند(تصویر۳۳).

Ya. Issa, Rose and Ruyin Pakbaz and Daryush Shayegan (2001).Iranian Contemporary Art. Booth-Clibborn Edition, London,105

۷۶. پویا آریان پور در مقدمهٔ مجموعه آثار جُدی ۷۷. احمد امیننظر در مقدمهٔ مجموعه آثار جُدی

علاوه بر رسانه نقاشی، رسانههای جدید دیگر که در اواخر سالهای دههٔ ۱۳۷۰ در ایران متداول شده بود توسط برخی هنرمندان به کار گرفته شدند. احمد نادعلیان، سعید روان بخش، بهنام کامرانی و پویا افشار با مضمون شاهنامه اما با رسانههای جدید آثاری خلق کردند. احمد نادعلیان (۱۳۴۲) از جمله هنرمندانی است که در سالهای گذشته به سراغ ابزارها و روشهای جدید رفته. او در مجموعه آثار هنر محیطی خود در تنگهٔ تاریون در روستای یلور در سال ۱۳۷۹نقش ضحاک را روی سنگ حکاکی کرده است. انتخاب این محل در دامنهٔ کوه دماوند از آن رو است که در شاهنامه، فریدون پس از دستگیری ضحاک او را تا پایان جهان در کوه دماوند زندانی میکند. در باور اساطیری صدای فعالیتهای آتشفشانی کوه دماوند به نالههای ضحاک نسبت داده می شود. متأسفانه این اثر در سالهای بعد توسط جویندگان گنج نابود شد. تنها در فیلم مستند "رودخانه هنوز ماهی دارد" اثر مجتبی میرطهماسب تصاویری از آن وجود دارد. علاوه بر این نادعلیان در یک اثر تعاملی (اینتراکتیو) چند رسانهای در سال ۱۳۸۳، در حاشیهٔ نمایشگاه شاهکارهای نگارگری ایران در موزهٔ هنرهای معاصر تهران، نگارهٔ دربار کیومرث از شاهنامهٔ شاه تهماسب را موضوع اثر خود برای کودکان قرار می دهد. در این اثر دیجیتال که مورد توجه بزرگسالان نیز واقع شد امکان

جستجوی فرم از میان صخرهها برای مخاطبان وجود داشت.

سعید روان بخش (۱۳۴۵) در سال ۱۳۸۰ در اثر چند رسانهای خود با نام مهرهٔ سرخ ۷۸ به سراغ شاهنامه رفت. ۷۹ هر چند ارجاع او به شاهنامه از گذر شعر سیاوش کسرایی ۸ است، اما نگاه روان بخش به این شعر به عنوان شکل معاصر شدهای از داستان رستم و سهراب فردوسی است. او با انتخاب شاهنامه به عنوان موضوع و در قالب هنر چند رسانهای و با تبدیل کتاب به اجرای گستردهای با مشارکت نزدیک به بیست اجراگر، هنرهایی نظیر یرده خوانی، نقاشی قهوه خانه و شهر فرنگ را در اثر خود به کار می گیرد. روانبخش با حذف مؤلفهٔ زمان در چهار پرده به دنبال بیان دور تکرار در الگوهای فرهنگی ایرانیان است که پسرکشی را یکی از نمونههای بارز آن بر میشمارد. چیدمان پردهها در این اثر به گونهای تعریف شده که بیننده حرکتی از بیرون به درون اثر دارد و با فرو افتادن هر پرده گروه پانزده نفری مخاطبان از آن عبور کرده و به پرده دیگر (درون اثر) می رسند. در واقع هر یرده یک برگ از کتاب است که ورق خوردن هر صفحه به پایان یافتن یک روز در قهوه خانه تشبیه شده که از طریق اجرای زندهٔ افکت صدا بیان می شود. در این اثر رستم و سهراب از اجراگران زنده در پرده نخست تبدیل به باد در آخرین پرده می شوند و در کتاب و پرده می پیچند. تبدیل مهرهٔ سرخ سهراب به خورشید در انتهای اثر کنایه از هر چه باشد در درون خود کنایه از پیوند اسطوره با طبیعت و بقا در جهان دارد(تصویر۳۵).

بهنام کامرانی (۱۳۴۷) در برخی از مجموعههایش به موضوع شاهنامه توجه دارد. تمرکز او برشخصیتهاست و از این رهگذر موضوعات و داستانهای شاهنامه را بهانهای برای انتقادهای خود از سیکل تکرارشوندهٔ تاریخ ایران قرار میدهد. در اثر بازیافت از مجموعهٔ لبه تکرار سهرابکشی صراحتاً بر بیهودگی این سیکل اشاره دارد. وارونه شدن ویژگیهای بارز قهرمانان شاهنامه در آثار کامرانی طعنهای به ناخوشایندی شرایط قهرمانان معاصر دارد. نمونههایی نظیر رستم گرفتار در چاه و اسفندیار نابینا شده نوعی زوال تدریجی در اتفاقات جاری ایران را به رخ میکشد. او در اثر اسفندیار مغموم

۷۸. اشاره به بازوبندی که رستم به عنوان نشان پسرش به تهمینه داده بود.

۸۰. شاعر نیمایی معاصر(۱۳۷۴–۱۳۰۵)

یهلوان غمگین در لباس اساطیری را بر روی لایت باکس چاپ کرده و از طریق نوریردازی از پشت به آن جلوه و معنای متفاوتی داده است(تصویر۳۴).

عليرغم اين كه يويا افشار (١٣٤٣) سالهاست از ايران مهاجرت كرده اما نگرانیاش برای کمتوجهی به روایات و قصههای کهن\^ عامل اصلی خلق مجموعه هفت خوان قصه است. این آثار در سال ۱۳۹۱ در گالری آن تهران به نمایش در آمد. او با مثال زدن حکومت هزارسالهٔ ضحاک نقد اصلی خود را از نادیده گرفتن اهمیت محتوای آموزندهٔ داستانهای شاهنامه بیان میکند. او علاوه بر چند اثر نقاشی در یک اثر چیدمان به همراه ندا مریدپور (۱۳۶۲) با استفاده از کاشیهای فیروزهای که کلماتی از متن شاهنامه با رنگ سفید روی آن به خط نستعلیق خوشنویسی شدهاند، امکان ساختن روایتی تازه از شاهنامه را با جابهجا کردن کاشیها به مخاطب خود می دهد (تصویر۴۰).

علاوه بر هنرمندان پیشکسوت برخی از هنرمندانی که شروع و یا اوج فعالیتهای آنها به آغاز دههٔ ۸۰ شمسی باز میگردد، با توجه به فضای سیاسی ایران در این سالها و امکان طرح موضوعات صریحتر، به گرایشهای انتقادی از فرهنگ و آداب ایرانی توجه نشان دادند. این هنرمندان اغلب دوران کودکی خود را در سالهای آغاز انقلاب و جنگ گذرانده و تمام نابسامانیهای این سالها تأثیر خود را در شکل گیری شخصیت و زندگی آنان باقی گذاشته بود. آنها شاهنامه را وسیلهای برای نمایش تضاد میان روایت پرشکوه تاریخ و شرایط نامناسب فعلی ایران قرار میدهند، که لزوماً تنها شامل انتقادات سیاسی نیست. در ادامه ابتدا به آثار چند هنرمند پیشکسوت و بعد از آن به آثار هنرمندان جوانتری که با این نگاه به شاهنامه يرداختهاند، اشاره مي شود.

فریدون آو (۱۳۲۴) هنرمند برجستهای است که در ده مجموعه شاهنامه و به ویژه شخصیت اساطیری رستم را موضوع کار خود قرار داده. این ده مجموعه عبارتند از: پنج شخصیت اصلی شاهنامه (۱۳۷۷)، رستم و سهراب ا (۱۳۷۷)، رستم و سهراب۲ (۱۳۷۸)، رستم و سهراب+خط (۱۳۷۹)، رستم در اواخر تابستان (۱۳۷۹)، هفت خوان رستم (۱۳۷۹)، در جست و جوی یهلوان ها (۱۳۸۲)، رستم در چله زمستان (۱۳۸۸) و جدیدترین آنها رستم و رادیو اکتیو و همین طور رستم در هوای آلوده است. او در مجموعه نخست و در قالب چهارمجسمه و یک چیدمان که با استفاده از مواد مختلف ساخته شدهاند، به پنج شخصیت اصلی شاهنامه پرداخته که نشان دهندهٔ شاه، ملکه، روشنایی، تاریکی و دیوها هستند(تصویر۳۶). در مجموعههای بعد آثاری سوژه محور، بدون هر گونه فضاسازی و تنها با تأکید بر شخصیتهای محوری موضوع پسرکشی، شکل می گیرند. در ادامه رستمهای آو رفته رفته در فضاهایی متفاوت، اما همچنان بدون ارجاع مکانی مشخص، مانند سطوح رنگی و بافت در هم تنیدهٔ خوشنویسی، قرار می گیرند. این فضاها همچنان در جهت برجستهتر کردن سوژه در کادر هستند. شخصیت اصلی، رستم – یهلوان، که گاهی در برخی مجموعهها به صورت یک نماد تکرار شده، مردی خسته از نبرد یا پیروز مبارزه و یا حتی شاید عاصی از تقابلی تاریخی دیده میشود. در آثار آو اسطوره رستم در قالب یک ورزشکار به یکی از مردم معاصر و متأثر از اتفاقات جاری همین جامعه تبدیل میشود. تصویر آشنای قهرمان – پهلوان کشتی درگیر پیش پا افتادهترینها و جدیترینها ست: از یک تقابل اساطیری – حماسی گرفته تا هوای آلوده و سختی تنفس. شاید بتوان گفت تقابل دوتایی که در اغلب آثار آو به چشم میخورد بیارتباط

با نگاه ایران باستانی ثنویت نیست. نمایش جذابیتهای مردانهٔ بدن قهرمان - پهلوان نیز وجه مشترک تمامی این آثار است.

شیرین نشاط (۱۳۳۶) مجموعهٔ شاهنامه، شامل عکس و چیدمان ویدئویی، را در سال ۱۳۹۱ در گالری باربارا گلدستون نیویوریک به نمایش گذاشت. این مجموعه به وضعیت زیربنائی قدرت در ساختارهای اجتماعی – سیاسی میپردازد. نشاط با الهام گرفتن از بهار عربی و نهضتهای اجتماعی آن، و با ارجاع به منابع تاریخی و معاصر، و همین طور استفاده از نمادهای تصویری، مجموعهای را خلق نمود که در واقع شبکههای ارتباطی زیرساخت یک جامعه را نمایش میدهد. هرچند اتفاقات مذکور الهامبخش نشاط بودهاند اما دغدغههای او بسیار فراگیر است.

در این آثار هنرمند به پیوند میان انسان معاصر و گذشتهٔ اساطیری ایران اشاره میکند. در این مجموعهٔ عکس سه بخشی شامل: تودهها و میهنپرستان و خائنان، نشاط قسمتهایی از شعر شاهنامه و همین طور تصاویر مربوط به نسخههای خطی و یا چاپ سنگی مصور را بر روی بدن و یا صورت سوژههای عکسهایش مینشاند. جوانان ایرانی و عرب به عنوان مدلهای این عکسهای سیاه و سفید قرار گرفتهاند. انتخاب سوژهٔ شاهنامه، به عنوان یک متن سیاسی که همواره مسئلهٔ قدرت سیاسی— نظامی در آن تعیین کننده بوده، برای هنرمند و حساسیت سوژههایش انتخاب دقیقی است. دغدغههای جنسیتی، سیاسی، فرهنگی و اجتماعی او به عنوان یک هنرمند مهاجر قابلیت آن را دارند که از منظر تأثیرپذیری — تأثیرگذاری (از— بر) قدرت مورد توجه قرار گیرند. او در ویدئوی خود نیز مسئله عدالت و قوانین جبری قدرت را مورد توجه قرار میدهد و مخاطبان خود را به چالش و تردید میان دو جایگاه قربانی و قدرت فرا میخواند(تصاویر۳۷ه۸۳).

نیکزاد نجومی (۱۳۲۰) از جمله هنرمندان مطرح ایرانی ست که در سالهای پس از انقلاب ایران را ترک کرد. او در مجموعهای از آثار جدید خود از تصاویر شاهنامههای چاپ سنگی برای پسزمینه استفاده کرده است. این مجموعه که دیروز— امروز نام دارد، صراحتاً بر مسئله خشونت و تکرار آن در تاریخ اشاره میکند. رنگ سیاه و خاکستریهای رنگی ضعیف در کنار لکههای مرکب تکنیک مناسبی برای این موضوع اعتراضی ست. رستم در پس زمینه خنجر میزند و شمشیر میکشد و مردان امروزی در پیشزمینه شکنجه میکنند و درگیر مبارزه اند. با وجود ارجاعات بومی عیان، این آثار مرز نمی شناسند و می توانند اعتراض به خشونت در تمام دنیا را هدف قرار دهند(تصویر۳۹).

مجموعه آثار رستم ۲ـ بازگشت سیامک فیلیزاده (۱۳۴۹) شامل ۱۶ اثر است. این آثار در سال ۱۳۸۷ در گالری آران تهران، در سال ۲۰۱۰ در گالری پرینس لندن و بالاخره در سال ۲۰۱۱ در موزهٔ لکما لس آنجلس به نمایش در آمدند. او محکمترین ضربه به بیننده را در آغاز کاتالوگ نمایشگاه خود با طنزی ویرانگر و بیرحم وارد میکند، و همهٔ ارجاعات عیان به شاهنامه و شخصیتهای شاهنامه را یکسر اتفاقی و در نتیجهٔ خطا میداند. ۲۸ تلاش او برای انطباق و یا ترکیب داستان زال با امیر سام قاجاری و در همان حال کنایه به انگلیس هراسی برخی ایرانیان در ادامهٔ همین رویکرد، فضای خاص خود را ساخته و بیپروا به مخاطب عرضه میکند. فیلیزاده به دنبال پیوندی میان وجه اساطیری و حماسی رستم و خانوادهاش، به عنوان سرشناس ترین

۸۲. "تصاویر این نمایشگاه بر اساس یک داستان تخیلی شکل گرفته است و هر گونه شباهت اسامی شخصیتها در این داستان با شاهنامه فردوسی کاملاً اتفاقی است." (از کاتالوگ نمایشگاه)

شخصیتهای شاهنامه، با دنیای معاصر است که انتقاد از فرهنگ معاصر را نیز به آن افزوده. هر چند وجه انتقادی کار فیلیزاده بسیار برجسته است اما باید در نظر داشت که او عناصر هنر پاپ و یا حتی کیچ را به لحاظ بصری در کارش مورد توجه ویژه قرار داده. شعاری بودن متنها و انتقاد از جامعهٔ مصرفی در این راستا قابل بررسی هستند. خط نوشته در آثار فیلیزاده هم به رابطهٔ متن و تصویر در نقاشی ایرانی ارجاع دارد و هم به عنوان راهنما برای رمزگشایی اولیهٔ اثر به کار گرفته می شود. او از تصاویر شاهنامههای مصور عناصری همانند کلاهخودِ رستم، رخش، طبیعت و معماری را وام میگیرد. او در این مجموعه شوخی با رستم و زندگی خانوادگی او را به مرز هزلی انتقادی و کوبنده می کشاند. تقلیل نبردهای پرشکوه و دلاورانهٔ رستم با دشمنان ایران زمین به دعواهای خیابانی با اکبر دیو، سردستهٔ اراذل و اوباش، طعنهای به تنزل سطح اختلافات و بهانههای دعاوی در ایران امروز است. تبديل سيمرغ به وانت نيسان و استحالهٔ سهراب از جواني غيور و غیرتمند به یسری ظریف و آراسته همچون مدلهای تبلیغاتی که حالا نه لشکر توران که اسپایدر من به خونخواهی او بر خواهد خواست، تغییر مدلهای فرهنگی ایرانیان از عصر حماسه به قرن بیست و یکم را نشان مے دهد (تصاویر ۴۱ و ۴۲).

من أنم كه ... عنوان مجموعه عكسى از على رضا فاني (١٣٥٨) شامل هفت عکس رنگی به شیوهٔ عکاسی صحنه است که در سال ۱۳۹۰ در گالری راه ابریشم تهران برگزار شد. عنوان نمایشگاه یادآور مصراع من آنم که رستم بود پهلوان است. در این آثار شخصیت رستم که تنها از طریق کلاهخود و جثهٔ عظیم او قابل تشخیص است، در دوران معاصر و در حال انجام فعالیتهای روزمره از قبیل تماشای تلویزیون و غذا خوردن نشان داده شده. هنرمند با ارجاع به رستم به عنوان شخصیتی مستقل از شاهنامه فرصتی برای نقد فرهنگی امروز ایران فراهم میکند. ۸۳ در واقع انتقاد اصلی او از این رفتار ایرانیان است که با سرگرم شدن به افتخارات بزرگ گذشتههای دور کشور خود، امروز را در بیهودگی و بیثمری طی میکنند. ۸۴ انتخاب عناوین فاخر برای تصاویری که سوژه را در حالتهایی معمولی نشان می دهند کنایهای تلخ و گزنده به این مسئله دارد. در واقع او در این هفت اثر، هفت مضمونی را پیش میکشد که از مهمترین موضوعات نقد فرهنگی امروزه جامعهٔ ایران است که در قالب طنزی بسیار تلخ به نمایش در آمده. در این تصاویر رستم در مرز میان انسان و ابرانسان در حرکت است. نشان دادن رستم نه فقط به عنوان یک پهلوان اسطورهای بلکه به عنوان نماد سرسختی و دلاوری و نجاتبخشی در فرهنگ ایران در حال ادرار (تصویر۴۴) و یا پس از خودارضایی با نامهای پر طمطراقی نظیر ایستادگی و خودکفایی، توهم قدرتمندی و دوران پرشکوه حماسی را نیز به چالش میکشد. ساختار کلاسیک و ترکیببندیهای استوار، نورپردازیهای حساب شده، انتخاب دقیق تمامی جزئیات موجود در هر تصویر از جمله ویژگیهای این آثار است.

امیرحسین بیانی (۱۳۵۶) بیش از هر چیز دل بستهٔ جهان نقاشی ایرانی است. او به دنبال بیان دغدغههای اجتماعی و سیاسی خود در قالب زیباییشناسی نقاشی ایرانی است و این مسئله مانع از نگاه انتقادی او به ادبیات و زنان، موضوع همیشگی آثارش، نمیشود. بر آن زنان در شاهنامه چه گذشت؟ عنوان مجموعهای است که در سال ۱۳۹۱ در گالری محسن تهران به نمایش گذاشت و در آن بیانی با نگاه تیزبین و انتقادی خود از سطح و موضوعات کلیشهای حقوق زنان در ایران فراتر رفته و با نگاهی

۸۳. در گفتگوی خصوصی با هنرمند ۸۴. از کاتالوگ نمایشگاه

ستایشگرانه ۸۵ زنان شاهنامه را به تصویر کشیده. در این مجموعه او از یک سو نقاشیهای برجستهٔ تاریخ هنر جهان را در نظر داشته و از سوی دیگر نقشمایهها، عمق نمایی، کادر نوشتار، خط نستعلیق را از سنت نقاشی ایرانی وام گرفته است. پیکر دفرمه شدهٔ زنان، فامهای رنگی خالص، ضرب قلمهای سریع و سراسیمه، دنیایی پر جنب و جوش و همین طور اندازههای بزرگِ آثار، اندازههای آثار تا ۲ متر هم میرسند، در مقابل قطع کتابی آثار نقاشی ایران، خاکستریهای رنگی، سطوح صاف و یکنواخت، فضای ساکت و ساکن و قرار می گیرد و خوانش معاصر بیانی از زیبایی آرمانی و عالم ساکت و سرد نقاشی ایرانی را نشان می دهد(تصویر۴۶).

محسن احمدوند (۱۳۶۱) با طنز انتقادی خود در ترکیببندیهایی فعال و پویا به مضمون شاهنامه میپردازد. به گفتهٔ فریدون آو "او هنرمندی است شوخ طبع و شاعر مسلک که در کارهایش چیره دستانه مجاورت و تنش را به همنشینی میخواند."۸۶ در آثار او حضور متن نوشتاری و عناصر تزئینی و حتى قسمتهايي از نمونههاي چاپ سنگي يادآور زيباييشناسي نقاشي ایرانی است. طنز نقادانه و تلخ او عاری از چشمنوازی نیست، همانند دیگر آثارش حیوانات در این مجموعه نه فقط حضور دارند بلکه بهانهٔ شوخیهای جسورانهای با شخصیتهای اساطیری نیز شدهاند. به عنوان مثال او اسب با هوش و درایت رستم یعنی رخش را به شکل الاغ نمایش میدهد که در فرهنگ حال حاضر ایران نماد بلاهت است. او با کنار هم گذاشتن شخصیتها و عناصری از زمانها و مکانهای مختلف مفاهیمی نظیر تاریخ و جغرافیا را به بازی میگیرد. جنگآوری و مبارزهطلبی و تأکید ویژه بر نیروهای مردانه در آثار او خودنمایی میکنند(تصویر۴۳).

هنرمند ایرانی – امریکایی علا ابتکار (۱۳۵۷) با شناخت عمیق خود از شاهنامه در مجموعه آثار متفاوتی به این موضوع توجه نشان داده است. او در سالهای جوانی تعلیم نزد استادان نقاشی قهوهخانهای و نگارگری را به تجربیات آکادمیک خود افزود و مهارت اجرایی بسیار بالا در آثار او از این رهگذر فراهم آمده. او در سه مجموعه آثار خود به طور خاص به شاهنامه میپردازد. در مجموعه نخست روی صفحات کتابهای چاپسنگی نقاشیهایی با موضوع جنگ خلق کرده است. این مجموعه در ادامهٔ سنت مصورسازی کتاب علاوه بر بستر خلق آثار به لحاظ تکنیک نیز بسیار به نقاشی نسخهها وفادار ماند. در آثار او وارد شدن عناصر مدرن جنگی به دنیای کلاسیک نبردهای شاهنامه کنایهای به جنگهای معاصر است(تصویر۴۹). در مجموعهٔ دیگری ابتکار با در نظرگرفتن جایگاه زنان در فرهنگ ایران کلاه دیو سپید رستم را بر سر زنانی از اطرافیان خود گذاشته و با افزودن تكنيك كلاژ به قلمگيريها، فضايي تلفيقي ساخته است. و بالاخره در آخرين مجموعه به نام آیندهنامه او با در نظر گرفتن حضور اسطوره و تاریخ در شاهنامه، متن اساطیری شاهنامه را تا وقایع معاصر ایران بسط داده و عدم استفاده از تجربیات تاریخی را در فرهنگ ایران به نقد میکشاند. او با تلفیق عناصر هنر پاپ و کمیک استریپ با زیباییشناسی نقاشی ایرانی به دنبال بیان دنیای چند یارهای است که در زندگی خود تجربه میکند.

و آیلین بهمنی پور و مهسا خیرخواه از جمله هنرمندان جوان و علاقهمند

AY. Painting The Persian Book of Kings today, Ancient text and modern image, forwarded by Charles Melville, Editor Manfred Milz. Published by Talking Tree Books. Autumn 2010, on occasion of Contemporary Shahnama Millennium Exhibition The Prince's Foundation Gallery London.

به فرهنگ اند. آرتمیس شهبازی (۱۳۵۷) هنرمندی است که در حاشیهٔ یرداختن به پرترهٔ حاکمان ایرانی، یادشاهان و پهلوانان اساطیری شاهنامه را نیز مورد توجه قرار می دهد. هرچند او در کودکی از ایران مهاجرت کرده اما با توجه به ارتباط عمیق با ادبیات فارسی در این نقاشیها با ارجاعات مکرر به متن شاهنامه به دنبال نوعی بازسازی میراث کهن است. در اغلب این آثار از تکنیک آکریلیک روی چوب استفاده شده است. ضربقلمهای آزاد، رنگهای خالص درخشان، طراحیهای سیال جلوهای راحت و بیتکلف به آثار او میدهد(تصویر۴۵). آیلین بهمنیپور (۱۳۶۸) در مجموعهٔ ضحاکنامه هر چند ضحاک را بهانه خلق آثار خود قرار داده اما تداوم ظلم در روزگار معاصر را بازگو می کند. او تلفیقی از زیبایی شناسی نقاشی قدیم ایران، تصاویر کتابها و مجلات و همین طور تصاویر کالبدشکافی علمی را برای رسیدن به زبانی ترکیبی که تجربهٔ زیستهٔ او باشد، به کار می گیرد. او نه فقط در تکنیک که در مفاهیم و زیباییشناسی آثار خود نیز رفتاری کلاژ گونه در پیش گرفته است. تعلیق عناصر در فضا و سیکلهای تکرارشونده در ترکیببندیها کنایهای از بستر خلق آثار است(تصویر۴۷). مهسا خیرخواه (۱۳۶۰) با دلبستگی به اساطیر در مجسمهها و نقاشیها و زیورآلات دستساز خود به شاهنامه رجوع كرده است. دغدغههايي نظير تطبيق اساطير اقوام مختلف و برداشت انسانهای امروزی از اساطیر در مجموعهٔ اسطورهبازی مورد توجه او بودهاند. به عنوان مثال او در کنار تجارب تکنیکی خود هفتخوان رستم را با مراحل بازیهای کامپیوتری مقایسه می کند و این که چطور کاربر با عبور موفق از یک مرحله به مرحلهٔ دیگر پیش می رود (تصویر۴۸).

در سالهای اخیر برگزاری نمایشگاه شاهنامه هم زمان با افتتاح مرکز شاهنامه پژوهی پمبورک در دانشگاه کمبریج انگلستان اتفاق مهمی هم در مطالعات شاهنامه، خصوصاً نمونههای تصویری شاهنامه، در هنر معاصر ایران بود. در این نمایشگاه علاوه بر آثاری از برخی هنرمندان مذکور همچون فریدون أو و سیامک فیلیزاده، نمونههایی از آثار علاقهمندان به شاهنامه و هنرهای تصویری نیز به نمایش در آمد.۸۸

بخش دیگری که در زمینهٔ آثار تجسمی با موضوع شاهنامه باید مورد توجه قرار گیرد آثار دیواری شهری برای ایستگاه مترو فردوسی تهران است. این آثار از طرف شرکت متروی تهران به هنرمندانی که اغلب در زمینهٔ صنایع دستی فعال هستند، سفارش داده میشود. تکنیک این آثار بسیار متنوع است اما از لحاظ موضوعی بیشتر بر شخصیت رستم و داستانهای مربوط به زندگی او تأکید دارند. این آثار به لحاظ تجسمی و موضوعی چالش ویژهای را دنبال نمی کنند و صرفاً به دنبال تجارب تکنیکی و حفظ وجه تزئینی خود

در خصوص تصویرسازیهای کتاب در سالهای اخیر باید گفت که متأسفانه

با وجود این که تولید نمونههای تصویری حماسی برای کودکان از اهمیت

بالایی برخوردار است اما در چند سال اخیر آثار سطح پایین بسیاری با

تیراژ بسیار بالاتولید شده. اما در هر صورت نباید در این میان نمونههایی که هم از لحاظ ویرایش متن برای کودکان و هم از لحاظ ارزشهای بصری تصویرسازیها استاندارد مناسبی دارند را از نظر دور داشت. تصویرگران

برجستهای نظیر کریم نصر (۱۳۳۱) و وحید نصیریان (۱۳۵۰)کتابهایی با

موضوع شاهنامه برای کودکان تصویرگری کردهاند. نصیریان هنرمندنی است

گرایش به موضوعات حماسی فارغ از این که هنرمند چه رویکرد ویژهای در مواجه با موضوع برمی گزیند، همواره موضوع جذابی، حداقل برای هنرمندان علاقهمند و یا آگاه به تاریخ و فرهنگ قدیم ایران، است. آرتمیس شهبازی

۸۵. کاتالوگ نمایشگاه

۸۶. فریدون آو (۱۳۹۳) گزیده ای از طراحیهای محسن احمدوند، بنگاه

که در مجموعهٔ افسانههای شاهان و پهلوانان به قلم م.آزاد با قدرت طراحی فیگوراتیو بسیار بالای خود لحنی حماسی به اثر خود نیز بخشیده.اثر کوروش پارسانژاد (۱۳۴۶) برای داستان رستم و سهراب با استفاده از نقاشیهای قهوهخانهای منصور وفایی یک نمونهٔ ویژه است. پارسانژاد شخصیتها و تا حد محدودتری فضاها را از پردههای نقاشی قهوهخانهای وعلاوه بر این جدول کشی، کادر سرداستان و کتیبه را از کتابآرایی و نسخههای خطی وام گرفته است و آنها را در فضای گرافیکی تلفیق کرده(تصویر۵۰).در کانون پرورش فکری کودکان و نوجوانان در سال ۱۳۹۲ مجموعهٔ نامهٔنامور به سرپرستی افسانه شعبان نژاد و با مدیریت هنری هدا حدادی در دوازده جلد انجام شده است(تصویر۵۳). کمال طباطبایی، محرم اسلامنژاد، سحر حقگو، راهله برخورداری، پژمان رحیمیزاده، مانلی منوچهری، عاطفه ملکیجو، عطیه بزرگ سهرایی، عطیه مرکزی، نیلوفر میرمحمدی و گلریز گرگانی تصویرگران این مجموعهاند. در سال ۱۳۹۳ در نشر چکه نیز مجموعه بیست و چهار جلدی شاهنامک نوشتهٔ آرمان آرین و به تصویرسازی لیلی بیست و چهار جلدی شاهنامک نوشتهٔ آرمان آرین و به تصویرسازی لیلی درخشانی چاپ شده است(تصویر ۵۴).

در این راستا باید به مجموعهٔ صد جلدی داستانهای شاهنامه اشاره کرد که در حال حاضر توسط خانه ادبیات در دست انتشار است و جمال الدین اکرمی مدیریت هنری آن را بر عهده دارد. بارزترین ویژگی تصویرسازیهای این مجموعه کودک محوری و خیال انگیزی تصاویر است. هیچ گونه تلاش تصنعی برای اضافه کردن لحن حماسی در آثار دیده نمی شود (تصویر ۱۵). تصویرگران برجسته ای نظیر برادران عامه کن، علی (۱۳۸۹–۱۳۵۵) و حسن، و علی نامور و بسیاری دیگر از جمله هنرمندان جلدهای منتشر شدهٔ این مجموعه هستند.

هنرمند دیگری که در ادمهٔ سنت مصورسازی شاهنامهها باید مورد توجه قرار گیرد، حمید رحمانیان است. او با گردآوری بیش از ۸۰۰۰ تصویر از تاریخ کتابآرایی، شامل نسخههای خطی و چاپ سنگی، و تلفیق و ترکیب آنها تصاویر دیجیتال از شاهنامه ساخته است. شاهنامهٔ او با ۵۰۰ تصویر بیش از چهار سال به طول انجامیده. انتخاب لحظات خواب و رویا در داستانهای شاهنامه برای تصویرسازی موضوعی است که تا این زمان مورد توجه هنرمندان نبوده(تصویر ۵۲).

در یایان باید گفت شاهنامه، که از حدود دویست سال پس از سرایش آن همواره فراتر از یک اثر ادبی مورد توجه هنرمندان تجسمی بوده، در دورهٔ معاصر نیز همچنان به عنوان موضوع آفرینش هنر قرار دارد. دلایل و انگیزههای هنرمندان برای انتخاب این سوژه و همین طور نحوهٔ پرداختن به آن با توجه به شرایط اجتماعی، سیاسی، فرهنگی متفاوت بوده است. دو رویکرد اصلی تأکید بر تاریخ ایران باستان و یا تاریخ ایران اسلامی، در فهم مواجهه حکومتها با این موضوع مسئلهٔ مهمی است. در سالهای حکومت خاندان پهلوی در ایران نمونههای آثار تجسمی پراکنده اما کاملاً حمایت شدهای در حاشیهٔ کنگرهها و یا جشنهای و مراسمهای بزرگ ادبی خلق شدند. اما در دوران جمهوری اسلامی با توجه به گذر از شاهنامهستیزی اوایل انقلاب هرگز حمایت دولتی در حرکتهای تجسمی در پرداختن به شاهنامه وجود نداشت و همواره هنرمندان در تلاشهای خود جوش و مستقل بیشتر فردی و کمتر گروهی به این موضوع توجه داشتهاند. هنرمندانی بودهاند که به دلیل توانایی بینظیر فردوسی در ساختن تصاویر ذهنی از صحنههای نبرد و یا حتی عاشقانهها به سراغ شاهنامه رفتهاند. با وجود این که در گذشته شاهنامه وسیلهای برای بیان ابهت و عظمت هویت ملی ایرانیان بود،در

دورههای متأخر هنرمندان دیگری آن را به عنوان راهی برای نقد فرهنگی و اجتماعی برگزیدند.

طی قرون متمادی، هنرمندان ایران با بهره گیری از اسطوره شناسی و شعر به طرح دنیائی شگرف پرداختهاند که به آرمانهای زیبائی، حقیقت و کمال وفادار بوده است. دنیائی که درآن پاسخی برای جبران سرخوردگی، خشونت و آشوب که به نظرهمیشه بخشی از روزمره گی زندگی ایرانی بوده. هنرمندان پناهگاهی برای تسلی بخشی، لذت و روشنگری بینندگانشان ساختهاند. آنان میراث پارسی را گرامی داشتهاند، زندگی ایرانیان را غنی ساخته و الهام بخش آنان برای تلاش در بهتر شدن بودهاند.

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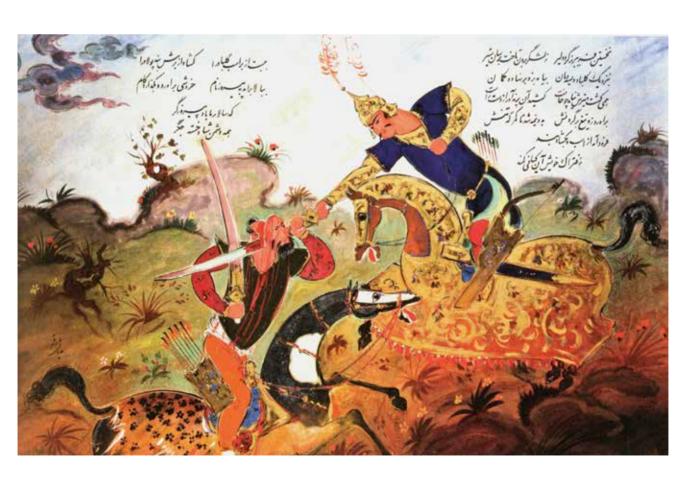


تصویر ۱ . ابوالحسن صدیقی . مجسمه ابوالقاسم فردوسی . میدان فردوسی تهران . ۱۳۵۰ Fig 1 . Abolhassan Sadighi . Statue of Ferdowsi . Ferdowsi Square,Tehran . 1971





تصویر ۲ و ۳ . آندره سوروگین . از مجموعه "نقاشیهای شاهنامه" . ۱۳۱۳ Fig 2 & 3 . Andre Sevrugian . shahnameh . 1934





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Fig 6 . Morteza Momayez . Illustration for Calender for the Pars Oil Company . Ink on Paper . 34×47.5 cm From the collection of Mrs. Lili Golestan . 1966

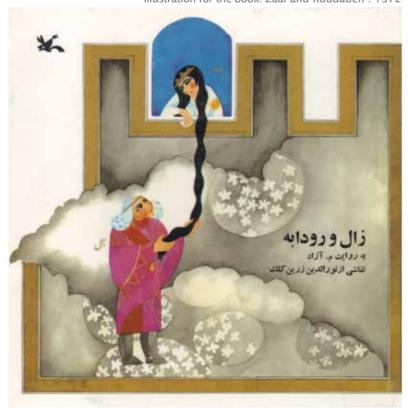


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تصویر ۱۰ . نورالدین زرین *کلک .* تصویرسازی برای کتاب زال و رودابه . ۱۳۵۱ Fig 10 . Noureddin Zarrin Kelk Illustration for the book: Zaal and Roudabeh . 1972 تصوير ۹ . نورالدين زرين كلك . تصويرسازى براى كتاب زال و سيمرغ . ١٣٥١ Fig 9 . Noureddin Zarrin Kelk Illustration for the book: Zaal and Simorgh . 1972





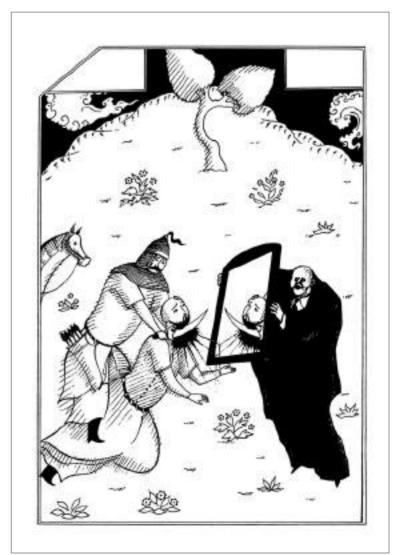


تصویر ۱۱ . حسن اسماعیلزاده . جنگ رستم و اشکبوس . رنگ روغن روی بوم . ۱۰۰×۱۵۰ سانتی متر Fig 11 . Hasan Esmaeel Zadeh . Battel of Rostam and Ashkbos . Oil on Canvas . 100×150 cm





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تصویر ۱۵ . یعقوب عمامه پیچ . مرگ رستم ترکیب مواد روی بوم . ۲۰۰۸ سانتیمتر . ۱۳۶۹ Fig 15 . Yaghoub Ammamehpich . The Death of Rostam Mix Media on Canvas . 120×80 cm . 1989



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۱۳۸۶ . عربعلی شروه . نقاشی دیواری زال . ۱۳۸۶ Fig 19 . Arabali Sharveh . Mural Painting . Zaal . 2007

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تصویر ۲۰ . عربعلی شروه . از مجموعه "شاهنامه" آب مرکب روی کاغذ . ۳۵×۳۵ سانتیمتر . ۱۳۸۶ Fig 20 . Arabali Sharveh . Shahnameh Ink on Paper . 60×35 cm . 2007



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تصویر ۲۲ . ترانه صادقیان . کیومرث . جوهر و اکریلیک روی بوم . ۵۰×۵۰ سانتیمتر . ۱۳۸۳ Fig 22 .Taraneh Sadeghian . Kiumars . Ink and Acrylic on Canvas . 50×50 cm . 2004



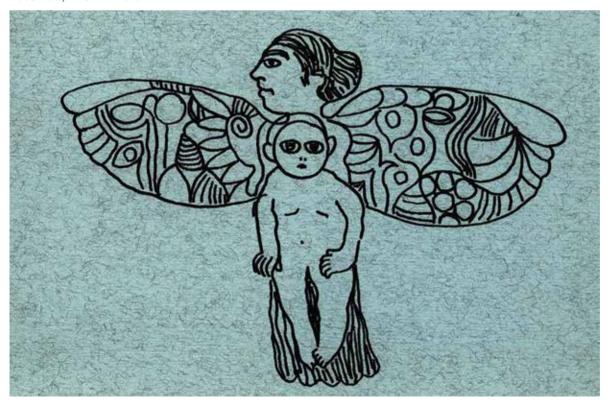
تصویر ۲۳ . ناصر محمدی . از مجموعه "شاهنامه" . اکریلیک روی بوم . ۱۳۸۱ Fig 23 . Naser Mohammadi . Shahnameh . Acrylic on canvas . 2002



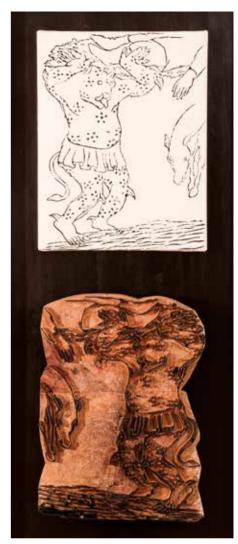


تصویر ۲۴ . جعفر نجیبی اسفندیار . سفال ۲۰×۱۰×۲۱ سانتی متر . ۲۸۲۲ Fig 24 . Jafar Najibi Esfandyar . clay 20×10×12 cm . 2003

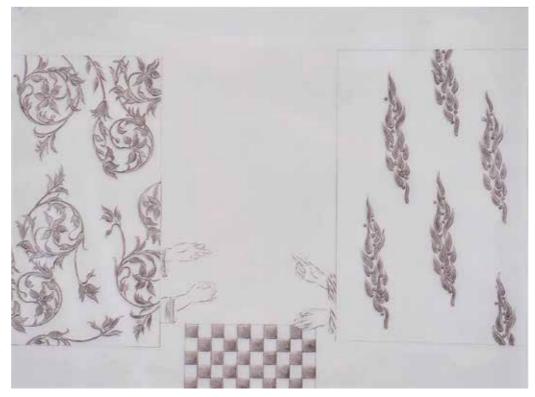
تصویر ۲۵ . مرضیه قرمداغی . حاکم ستمکار ری ۲۵×۱۵×۱۰ . سانتیمتر ۱۳۸۲ - ۲۸×۱۵×۱۰ . سانتیمتر Fig 25 .Marzieh Ghareh-Daghi . Rey's Wicked Ruler 2003 . clay . 28×10×15 cm



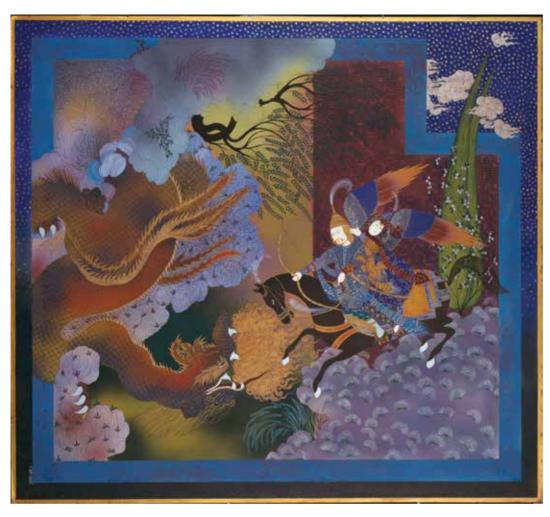
تصویر ۲۶ . رضا هدایت . سیمرغ روان نویس روی کاغذ ۱۵×۲۵ سانتی متر . ۱۵×۲۵ Fig 26 . Reza Hedayat Pheonix . ball pen on paper 15×25 cm . 1995



تصویر ۲۷ . مهدی حسینی . رستم و اکوان دیو چاپ نقش . ۱۰۰×۵۰ سانتیمتر . ۱۳۹۲ Fig 27 .Mehdi Hosseini . Rostam and Akvan Div Print . 110×50 cm . 2013



تصویر ۲۸ . مهدی حسینی بازی شطرنج بزرگمهر و رای هند ۴۰×۶۰ سانتیمتر . ۱۳۸۶ Fig 28 . Mehdi Hosseini Chess Playing of Bozorgmehr and Ambassador of India 40×60 cm . 2007



تصویر ۲۹ . فرح اصولی . بهرام وآزاده ۱۳۷۸ . منتی ۲۵×۸۰ سانتی متر . ۴ig 29 . Farah Ossouli Bahram and Azadeh Gouach on Paper . 75×80 cm . 1999

تصویر ۳۰ . فرح اصولی . سیاوش . ۱۳۹۴ . گواش روی مقوای ضخیم، سه لت . هر لت: ۲۵× ۱۱۰ سانتی متر Fig 30 . Farah Ossouli . Siyavash . 2015 . Gouach on Paper . Triptych, overall size 110×225 cm









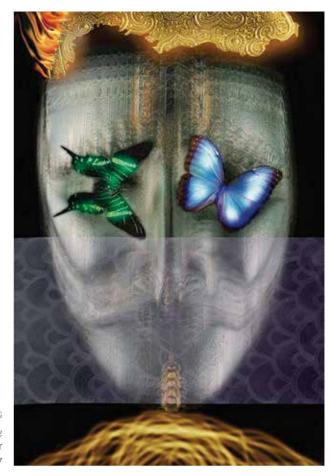
تصویر ۳۱ . گیزلا وارگا سینایی . نبرد (از مجموعه "شاهنامه") . اکریلیک روی بوم دو لتی . هر لت ۱۲۰×۱۲۰ سانتیمتر . ۱۳۸۲ Fig 31 . Gizella Varga Sinai . War (from The Shahnameh series) . Acrylic on Canvas . dyptych, overall size 120×180 cm . 2003



تصویر ۳۲ . علیرضا جدی . از مجموعه "شاهنامه" ترکیب مواد روی کاغذ . ۷۰×۵۰ سانتیمتر . ۳۸۶۶ Fig 32 . Alireza Jodey . From Shahnameh Series Mix Media on Paper . 70×50 cm . 2007

۱۳۹۳ . ياسمين سينايي . گردآفريد . اينستاليشن . 77 Fig 33 . Yasmin Sinai . Gordafarid . Installation . 2015



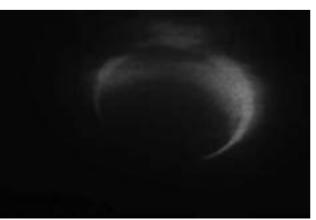


تصویر ۳۴ . بهنام کامرانی . اسفندیار مغموم پرینت روی لایتباکس . ۷۰×۵۰ سانتیمتر . ۱۳۸۵ Fig 34 . Behnam Kamrani . Doleful Esfandyar Print on Light Box . 70×50 cm . 2007

 170 . سعید روانبخش . مهره سرخ . پرفورمنس . 170 . Fig 35 . Saeed Ravanbakhsh . Mohreh Sorkh . Performance . 2001

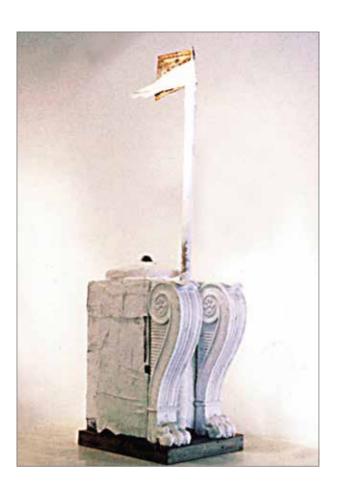






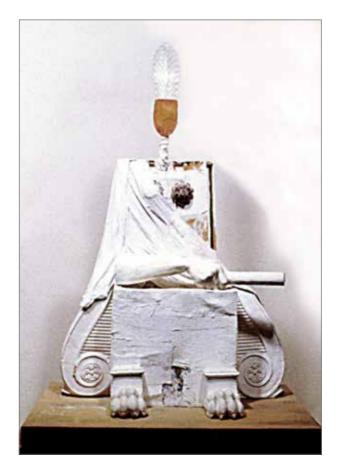




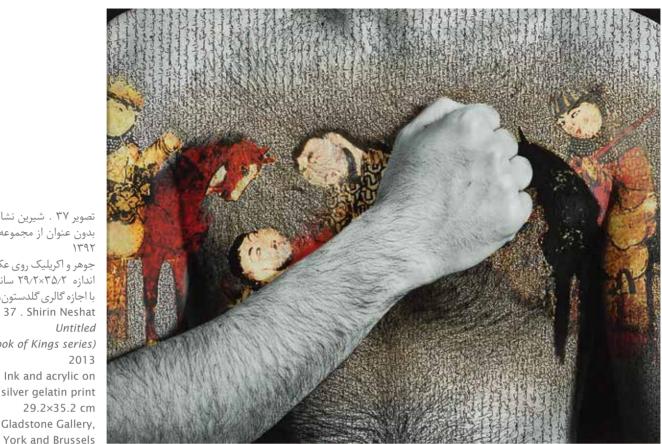








۱۳۷۷ . فریدون آو . پنج شخصیت اصلی شاهنامه . میکس مدیا . ۳۶ Fig 36 . Fereydoun Ave . Principle Characters of the book of Kings . Mixed media . 1998



تصویر ۳۷ . شیرین نشاط جوهر و اکریلیک روی عکس با چاپ ژلاتین اندازه ۲۹/۲×۳۵/۲ سانتیمتر

با اجازه گالری گلدستون، نیویورک، بروکسل Fig 37 . Shirin Neshat Untitled (from The Book of Kings series) 2013

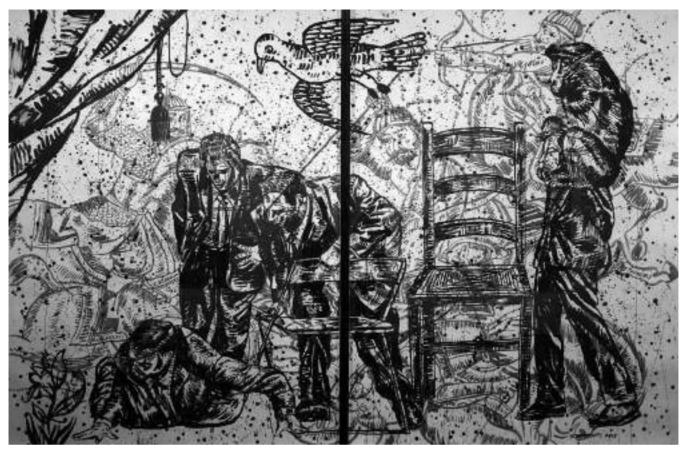
> LE silver gelatin print 29.2×35.2 cm Courtesy Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels



تصویر ۳۸ . شیرین نشاط بدون عنوان از مجموعه "کتاب شاهان"،

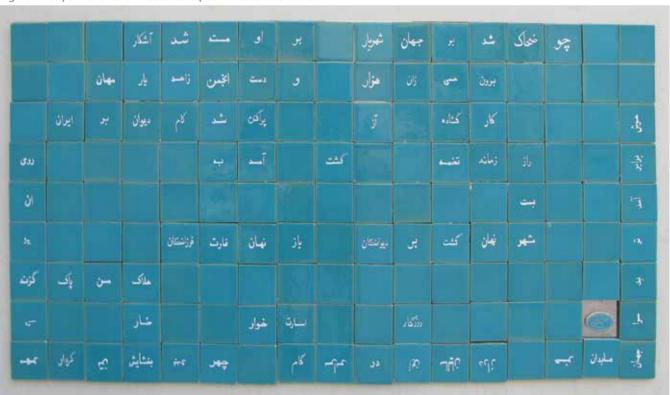
جوهر و اکریلیک روی عکس با چاپ ژلاتین اندازه ۲۶/۷×۳۲/۴ سانتیمتر با اجاًزه گالری گلدستون، نیویورک، بروکسل Fig 38 . Shirin Neshat Untitled (from The Book of Kings series) 2013 Ink and acrylic on

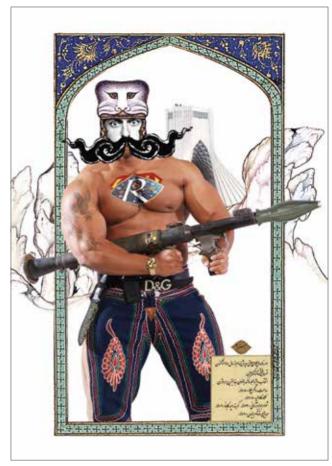
> LE silver gelatin print 26.7×32.4 cm Courtesy Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels



تصویر ۳۹ . نیکزاد نجومی . از مجموعه "دیروز _ امروز" . مرکب روی کاغذ . ۳۰۴×۲۰۳ سانتیمتر . ۱۳۹۱ Fig 39 . Nicky Nodjoumi . from series "Yesterday-Today" . Ink on Paper . 203×304 cm . 2013

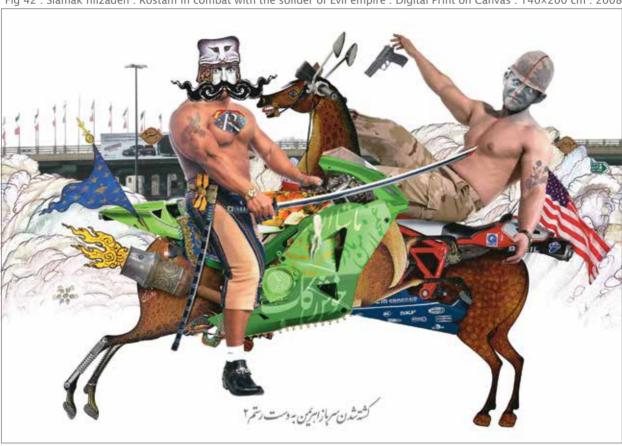
تصویر ۴۰ . پویا افشار و ندا مریدپور . چیدمان . ۱۳۹۱ Fig 40 . Pouya Afshar and Neda Moridpour . Installation . 2012



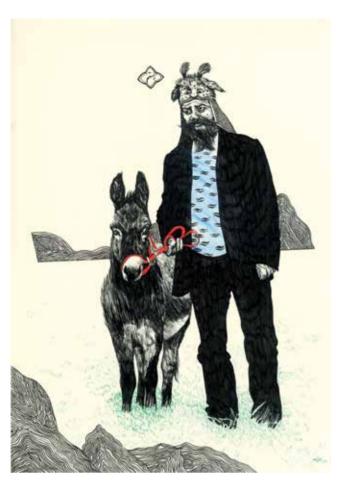


تصویر ۴۱ . سیامک فیلیزاده . بازگشت رستم بعد از ۳۰ سال پرینت روی بوم . ۱۲۰×۸۰ سانتیمتر . ۱۳۸۷ Fig 41 . Siamak filizadeh Return of Rostam after 30 years Digital Print on Canvas . 120×80 cm . 2008

تصویر ۴۲ . سیامک فیلیزاده . کشته شدن سرباز اهریمن به دست رستم ۲ . پرینت روی بوم . ۲۰۰×۱۴۰۰ سانتیمتر . ۱۳۸۷ Fig 42 . Siamak filizadeh . Rostam in combat with the solider of Evil empire . Digital Print on Canvas . 140×200 cm . 2008







تصویر ۴۳ . محسن احمدوند . رستم ترکیب مواد روی مقوا . ۴۱×۲۱ سانتیمتر . ۱۳۸۵ Fig 43 . Mohsen Ahmadvand . Rostam Mix Media on Paper . 41×31 cm . 2007

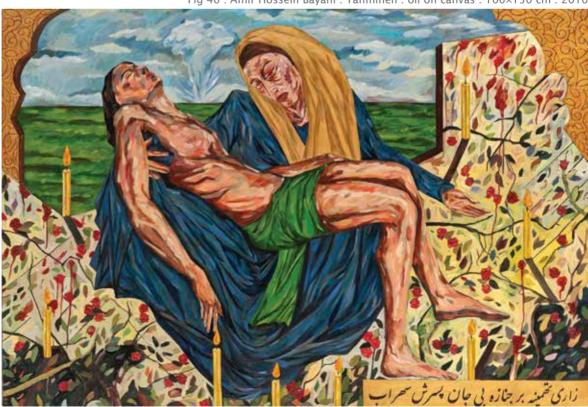
تصوير ۴۴ . عليرضا فاني . ايستادگي(از مجموعه "من آنم که ...") . ۱۳۹۱ . ۱۳۳×۱۰۰ سانتي،متر Fig 44 . Alireza Fani . Perseverance, form the series "I'm The One Who ..." . 100×133 cm . 2012



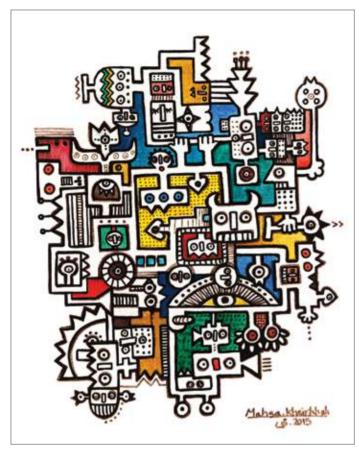


تصویر ۴۵ . آرتمیس شهبازی . نخستین پادشاهان اکریلیک روی چوب . ۱۳۹۱ Fig 45 . Artemis Shahbazi . The First Kings Acrylic on Gessoed Wood . 2013

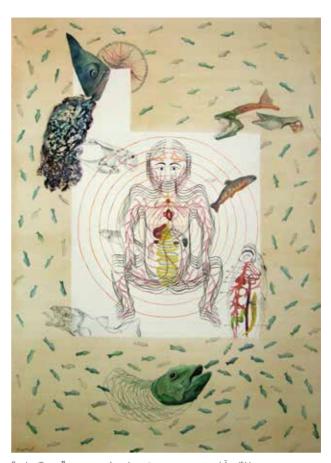
تصویر ۴۶ . امیر حسین بیانی . زاری تهمینه بر جنازه بیجان پسرش سهراب . ۱۵۰×۱۵۰ سانتیمتر . رنگ روغن روی بوم . ۱۳۸۹ Fig 46 . Amir Hossein Bayani . Tahmineh . oil on canvas . 100×150 cm . 2010





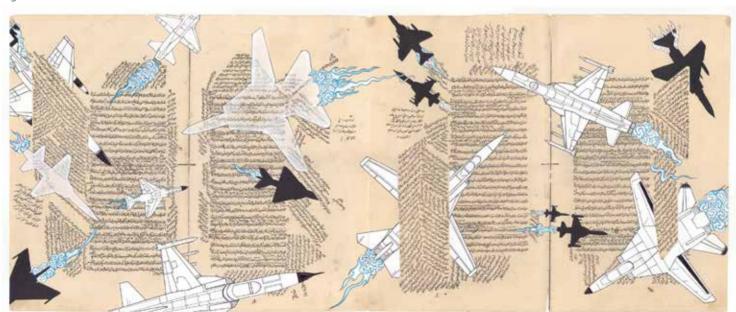


تصویر ۴۸ . مهسا خیرخواه . از مجموعه "شاهنامه بازی" اکریلیک روی بوم . ۳۰×۳۰ سانتیمتر . ۱۳۹۴ Fig 48 . Mahsa Kheirkhah . Shahnameh-Bazi Acrylic on Canvas . 30×23 cm . 2015



تصویر ۴۷ . آیلین بهمنی پور . نقض فنی از مجموعه "ضحاک نامه" ۱۳۹۱ . کلاژ، آبرنگ و مرکب روی مقوا . ۲۰×۵۰ سانتی متر . ۱۳۹۱ Fig 47 . Aileen Bahmanipour . Technical problems, from Zahak-Nameh series . 70×50 cm Collage, watercolour, ink and tea on paper . 2012











تصویر ۵۲ . حمید رحمانیان تصویرسازی دیجیتال برای شاهنامه . ۱۳۹۱ Fig 52 . Hamid Rahmanian Digital Illustration for Shahnameh . 2013

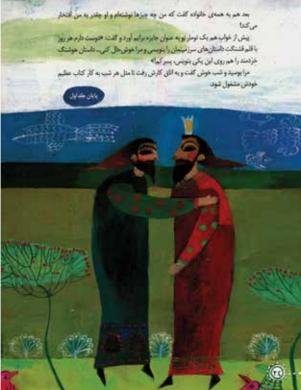
تصویر ۵۱ . حسن عامه کن . تصویرسازی برای مجموعه صد جلدی داستانهای شاهنامه . ۱۳۹۱ Fig 51 . Hasan Ammeh kan Illustration for the book: 100volume of Shahnameh Stories . 2012

تصویر ۵۰ . کوروش پارسانژاد تصویرسازی کتاُب رستم و سهراب . ۱۳۸۳ Fig 50 . Korosh Parsanejad Illustration for the book: Rostam and Sohrab . 2004

تصویر ۵۳ . پژمان رحیمیزاده

تصویر ۵۴ . لیلی درخشانی تصویرسازی برای شاهنامک . ۱۳۹۳ Fig 54 . Leily Derakhshani

Illustration for the book: Shahnamak . 2013 خزدمند را هم روی این یکی بتویس، پسر گیرانه مرابومید و شب خوش گفت و به اثاق کارش رفت تا مثل هر شب به کار





تصویرسازی برای مجموعه نامه نامور . ۱۳۹۲ Fig 53 . Pejman Rahimizadeh Illustration for the book: Nameh Namvar . 2013

The 100-volume of Shanameh stories currently under publication by Khaneh Adabiat is an extensive project which is under production with artistic direction of Jamaledin Akrami. The most striking characteristics in the illustrations of this collection are the fantastical imagery and childoriented approach. There has been no ostentatious attempt to exaggerate the epic tone of these works(fig. 51). Remarkable illustrators like Ali Ammehkan(1976-2010) and his brother Hasan, Ali Namvar, and many others have contributed to the still unpublished collection.84

One more example that is a reflection of continuity of book illustrating is the Shahnameh of Hamid Rahmanian (born 1968). By gathering more than 8000 images from the history of book making, including manuscripts and lithographed books, and integrating them he has produced a collection of digital imagery of Shahnameh. His book has over 500 images and has taken four years to complete. Selecting and illustrating moments of dreams of the main characters in stories of Shahnameh, is a unique approach, which is entirely new to the genre(fig.52).

The appeal of Shahnameh for visual artists, which began two centuries after its creation, has remained solid and in contemporary times continues to be an inspiration for creation of art. The reasons and motives of artists in choosing this subject and their artistic interpretation, has been diverse, due to social, political and cultural contexts of their times. The two alternating approaches of emphasizing either on Iran's Ancient history, or its Islamic history, can explain different attitudes of regimes; while under the rule of Pahlavi dynasty production of art on the subject was encouraged for official events, but in years proceeding the Islamic revolution, and despite the anti-Shahnameh sentiments of the first few years, artists, whether individually or collectively, have referenced Shahnameh in a completely independent approach. Artists have been drawn to the magnificent abilities of Ferdowsi in visualizing the battles and even romantic scenes. Not withstanding the exalted position of Shahnameh as a constant source that recalls the glory and magnificence of Ancient Persia, generations of artists have alluded to its stories to criticize the cultural and social inadequacies.

For centuries Persian artists have used mythology and poetry to depict a wondrous world, loyal to ideals of beauty, truth and perfection. A world where they have found the redeeming answer to brutality chaos and frustration that seems always to have been a part of daily life. Artists have created sanctuaries, providing consolation, delight and revelation for their audiences. They have preserved a Persian legacy, enriched our lives and inspired us as a nation to become better than we are.

84. Painting The Persian Book of Kings Toda, Ancient text and modern images, foreword by Charles Melville, Editor Manfred Milz. Published by Talking Tree Books. Autumn 2010, on occasion of Contemporary Shahnama Millennium Exhibition The Prince's Foundation Gallery London.

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surfaces, silent and motionless spaces, and overall provide a contemporary reading of notions of the ideals of beauty in the mute and frigid world of Persian Painting(fig.46).

Mohsen Ahmadvand (born 1983) has created energetic and dynamic compositions, expressive of his critical tone, on the subject of Shahnameh. According to Fereydoun Ave: 'he is an artist with a sense of poetry and humor who manages to skillfully bring together proximity and tension.'83 The presence of script, decorative elements and even images from lithographed books are reminiscent of Persian Paintings' aesthetics. His bitter and bold criticisms are also eye catching. Just like his other works, animals not only exist in his works, but they are the excuse for bold shenanigans about mythological characters. For example, he has depicted Rakhsh (Rostam's intelligent and brave horse) as a donkey which is a symbol of stupidity in Iranian culture. By placing characters and elements from different times and places next to each other, he has played with concepts such as history and geography. War mongering and emphasize on masculinity are visible in his works(fig.43).

Iranian- American artist Ala Ebtekar (born 1978) with his deep knowledge of Shahnameh has created different works related to it. He has been professionally trained in his youth by masters of coffeehouse school of painting and Iranian miniature painting and has therefore developed exceptional skills. In three of his series Shahnameh is the main focus. In the first series, he has created paintings with the subject of war on pages of a lithographed book. In this series, while artist pays homage to the art of book making, he remains loval to techniques of paintings of manuscripts. In his works, adding modern elements of war into the classical world of Shahnameh battles references modern day wars(fig.49). In another series, by taking in to consideration the position of women in Iranian culture, Ebtekar uses Rostam's Helmet adorned with the head of white dive, on the head of women he personally knows and by mixing collage techniques and textile prints, creates an integrated space. And lastly in his latest series titled Ayandeh-Nameh, allowing for Shahnameh's mythical and historical facets, he expands Shahnameh's epical text to cover current events in order to criticize ignorance and disregard of history in Iranian culture today. By combining elements form pop art and comic strips with aesthetics derived from Persian Painting, he attempts to describe a fragmented world that are part of his lived experience.

The appeal of legends, regardless of artists' approach has always been an interesting realm at least for artists who are conscious of history and are interested in Iran's ancient culture. Artemis Shahbazi, Aileen Bahmanipour and Mahsa Kheirkhah are among these artists. Artemis Shahbazi (born 1978) is an artist who besides working on the theme of Shahnameh has also painted portraits of Iranian rulers, kings and mythological heroes. Although she has migrated at a young age, but because of her deep links with Iranian literature, she seeks to restore ancient heritage by using frequent references to the text of Shahnameh in her paintings. In most of these works using acrylic on wood, and with unrestrained brush movements, pure bright colors and fluid designs she has created an easy and unconventional effect(fig.45). In the series Zahaak-Nameh, Aileen Bahmanipour (born 1989) uses Zahhak to point out to despotic attitudes in modern Iranian culture and history. In her works, she fuses aesthetics of Persian Painting with

images from books and magazines and those of books of autopsy to create a hybrid language to express her own personal lived experiences. Not only in her chosen technique but in concept and aesthetic, her works are collage like. The suspended elements and repetitive cycles in allegorical compositions are part of her approach (fig.47). Mahsa Kheirkhah (born 1982) is interested in mythical characters and has referenced Shahnameh in her sculptures, paintings and jewelry pieces. One of her approaches is to link and adjust mythical characters of different ethnic groups, and modern day perception of people from these characters, are the focal point in her series "Ostoureh-Bazi- Playing with Epics". For example besides technical experiments, she compares the Seven Labors of Rostam, to stages of computer games, and how by succeeding in one level, the gamer can reach the next level(fig.48).

in 2010, the opening of the exhibition "Painting the Persian Book of Kings Today" at The Prince's Foundation Gallery in London, coinciding with the launch of Shahnama Centre at Pembroke college in UK's Cambridge University has been an important event. Curated by Fatima Zahra Hassan Agha, works of a number of both Iranian and non Iranian artists were displayed and a fully illustrated book with foreword by Charles Melville was published.

The other subject that is note worthy is the commissioning of imagery of Shahnameh for Tehran's Ferdowsi metro station, by Tehran's Urban transportation company. These works are created by artists in the field of arts and crafts, and various techniques are applied. The focus is Rostam and his life and deeds, but both visually and concept wise they do not challenge the subject and therefore are only representational and decorative.

An important part of impact of Shahnameh in today's art is illustrated versions of the book. Unfortunately in recent years, although creating visual references for children is of outmost importance, but the quality of latest publications in high numbers leaves a lot to be desired. Fortunately there are some good examples of high quality textural and visual publications that are worth mentioning. Renowned illustrators like Karim Nasr (born 1952) and Vahid Nasirian (born 1971) have illustrated books for children on the subject of Shahanmeh. Nasirian in his collection of 'Legends of Kings and Heroes' written by M. Azaad, has applied his highly evolved figurative drawing skills to successfully portray the characteristics of heros of Shahnameh. Korosh Parsanejad (1967) is inspired by the story of Rostam and Sohrab, and has incorporated techniques of Coffee House paintings of Mansour Vafaei, and the result is an exceptional example of this genre. Parsanejad has borrowed characters and spaces from the Coffeehouse paintings: drawing tables, epigraphs and inscriptions of the old style of book making and manuscripts are some of the ingredients in his graphic approach(fig.50). In 2013, The Institute for the development of Children and Young Adults produced Nameh Namvar collection in 12 volumes under the supervision of Afsaneh Shaban Nejad and with artistic direction of Hoda Haddadi. The illustrators are: Kamal Tabatabaei, Moharram Eslam Nejad, Sahar Haghgoo, Raheleh Barkhordari, Pejman Rahiminejad, Maneli Manouchehi, Atefeh Malekijoo, Atieh Bozorg Sohrabi, Atieh Markazi, Niloufar Mirmohammadi and Golriz Gorgani(fig. 53). In 2014, Chekkeh publication has also published a twenty-four volume titled Shahnamak written by Arman Arian and illustrated by Leily Derakhshani(fig.54).

to ancient Persian notions of dualism. Depiction of the attractive male body as a hero or a champion is the common trait in all these works.

Shirin Neshat (born1957) The Book of Kings, was presented in 2012 as series of photographs and a video installation, both of which explored the underlying conditions of power within socio-cultural structures. Inspired by the sweeping momentum of recent political uprisings in the Arab world. Neshat turned to both historical and contemporary sources to generate richly provocative metaphors for the network of relations that comprise a society. Divided into three groups—the Masses, the Patriots, and the Villains—Neshat's portraits of Iranian and Arab youth comprise black and white photographs with meticulously executed calligraphic texts and drawings inscribed over each subject's face and body. These texts and illustrations-drawn from Shahnameh as well as from contemporary poetry by Iranian writers-both obscure and illuminate the subjects' facial expressions and emotive intensity, intimately linking the current energy of contemporary Iran with its mythical and historical past. In this body of work. Neshat returns to the confrontational nature of her iconic Women of Allah series, while re-focusing on themes of revolution and the bold-faced defiance of youth. Related to this set of photographs, in her threechannel video installation, Neshat draws upon themes of justice and the struggle of the artist against the constraints of authoritarian rule. Creating a space where moral judgment is questioned and the viewer's allegiances oscillate between identifying with the victim and being accomplice to power, Neshat investigates the repressed and unspoken elements of social and cultural consensus through this bold new work(figs.37-38).

Nicky Nodjoumi (born 1941) is among the acclaimed artists who left Iran after the Iranian revolution. In a collection of his new works, he has used images from the lithographed Shahnamehs in the background of his drawings. The series titled "Yesterday-Today" precisely explores the concept of violence and its repetition in history. The black and light grey colors besides patches of ink are appropriate techniques to emphasize his critical point of view. Rostam is using his dagger and sword in the background, and the contemporary men in the foreground are engaged in battle and also are torturing others. Despite the obvious local references, these works are without border and emphasize on anti violence sentiments all over the world(fig.39).

Rostam II- The Return, is a series of 16 works by Siamak Filizadeh (born 1970). This series were exhibited at Aaran Gallery in 2008, London's Prince Gallery in 2010 and eventually at LACMA Museum in 2011. He hits his audience by the text of his catalogue with a devastating and merciless humour and calls all explicit references to Shahnameh and its characters false and a mere error. In his works, he combines or compares Zaal's story with Amir Saam Qajari and also mocks the Iranian anglo-phobia and boldly offers his own distinct world. The visible sarcasm and critic in this series are accentuated by use of imagery from pop culture and kitsch products. The slogan like scripts in the digital prints and criticism of a an overtly consumer society are some of these elements. The script that Filizadeh uses in this series references the connection between text and image

in Persian Painting, and are also precursors to decipher the story.

In his works, he has borrowed elements such as Rostam's hook, Rakhsh (Rostam's Horse), natural and architectural imagery of the illustrated versions of Shahnameh. His merciless sarcasm is directed at Rostam and his life and deeds. Ridiculing Rostam's glorious and heroic battles with the enemies of Iran, by reducing them to street fights with Akbar Deev who is a thug, is an ironic reference to the shallowness of disputes and issues in Iran today. Turning Simorgh into a Nissan van and transforming Sohrab from a zealous and fearless young man into an elegant and polished young boy resembling today's fashion models waiting to be avenged by spider-man instead of the Army of Touran, are all expressive of a paradigm shift in Iranian social and cultural values from the epic era to the 21st century(figs.41,42).

'I'm the one who...' is the title of a series of photograph⁷⁹ by Alireza Fani (born 1979) that consists of seven colored staged photographs. In these seven works, Rostam's character that is only recognizable by his helmet and his massive torso is depicted in a contemporary context doing mundane things; watching television or eating. By referring to Rostam as an independent character from Shahnameh, the artist provides an opportunity for the cultural criticism of contemporary Iran.80In fact, his main criticism is directed at Iranians who are vain and indolent and by entertaining themselves and contemplating Iran's past achievements are wasting their lives.81 By choosing glorious titles for mundane deeds, he ironically references these issues. In these seven works, he has in fact highlighted seven themes that are considered to be among the main issues in preset cultural criticisms of Iran. The bitterness of artist is evident in these works. In these images, Rostam is depicted both as a human and a super human. Projecting Rostam not as a mythical hero but as a symbol of tenacity and courage in the Iranian culture, urinating or masturbating in his works with titles such as 'Perseverance' (fig.44) or 'self-sufficiency' aims to challenge the illusion of power and the glorious epic era. The classical structure and solid compositions and thoughtful lighting and careful selection of all the details in each image are some of the characteristics of this series.

Amirhossein Bayani (born 1977) is a great admirer of Persian Painting. He expresses his social and political concerns, and applies aesthetical forms of this school of painting, but this engagement does not impede him from showing his critical views, and generally literature and women's issues are constant subjects of his works. 'What happened to the women of Shahnameh?', exhibited at Mohsen Gallery in 2012, is the title of a series that goes beyond the cliché of women's rights in Iran and favorably portrays women of Shahnameh.82In this series, on one hand, he pays attention to the impressive paintings of the history of art and on the other hand uses motifs, perspective, textual frames and hieroglyphics of the school of Persian painting. The deformed body of women, pure color shades, and fast and furious paintbrushes and a vibrant and fastidious world, next to the sizes of the paintings that are about two meters against the size of the paintings of manuscripts of Persian painting, stand in opposition to gray colors, smooth and uniform

^{78. &}quot;Images of this exhibition have been created based on an imaginary story and any familiarity in names with Shahnameh characters is accidental." (From the exhibition's catalogue).

^{79.} An exhibition with the same title was held at Silk Road Gallery in 2011. The title is a reference to a famous line of Shahnameh.

^{80.} Conversation with the artist

^{81.} From the exhibition's catalogue

^{82.} From the exhibition's catalogue

were placed besides the videos that recited stories of Shahnameh(fig.33).

Besides paintings, other new mediums that became popular in Iran during the late 1990s have also been applied by some of the artists. Ahmad Naadalian, Saeed Ravanbakhsh, Behnam Kamrani and Pouya Afshar have used new mediums and Shahnameh as their subjects. Ahmad Naadalian (born 1963) is one of the artists known in recent years for his application of new mediums. In his collection of environmental art in the village of Polur, close to Damavand mountain, in 2000 he engraved image of Zahhak on stone. According to Shahnameh after capturing Zahhak, Fereydoun keeps him imprisoned in the Damavand mountain until the end of the world. The local myth has it that the volcanic sounds of Damavand are considered to be the echo of Zahhak whining. This engraving was destroyed by treasure hunters, mistaking the stone as a marker for a treasure. The only recording of this work is in a documentary film, by Mojtaba Mirtahmas, titled "The River Still has Fish".In addition to this, in a multi media interactive work in 2004 and in conjunction with the exhibition of 'Masterpieces of Persian Painting' held at Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, he used the image of the Court of Kiumars, as part of an interactive digital art work that allowed specially children to change part of the images on the screen.

Saeed Ravanbakhsh (born 1966) presented his multi media work titled "Mohreh Sorkh" in 2001.73 His reference to Shahnameh is through one of Siavash Kasraie's⁷⁴ poems, that Rayanbakhsh considers a contemporary narration of the story of Rostam and Sohrab. By choosing Shahnameh as a subject and use of multimedia art, and by transforming the book into an elaborate installation-performance, with participation of over 20 performers, he appropriates Pardeh Khani, Coffeehouse painting and Shahr e Farang peep hole, techniques. By eliminating time in this four acts, he references the recurring theme of what is termed as "Pesar Koshi".75 The installation of the Pardeh/each act, is done in such a way that the viewer is moved from outside in to the depth of the art work and with falling of each curtain/act, the group of fifteen viewers can move to the next curtain/ act. Infact each curtain/act is a page from the book that is turned and in conjunction with live sound effect, is supposed to show the end of day in a coffeehouse. In this work, Rostam and Sohrab, are the performers of the first act and gradually become the element of wind in the last act, and finally are enrolled in the book and the curtain/Pardeh. The transformation of the Talisman (the Mohreh Sorkh) to the Sun is innuendo to the inherent connection of epics with nature and signals continuity(fig.35).

Behnam Kamrani (born 1968) has referenced Shahnameh, in some of his works. His focus is on characters and he criticizes the repetitions in Iran's history. In the work "Recycled" from series "The Edge", refers to the futility of repetition of such imagery that shows killing of Sohrab by Rostam. The transformation of Shahnameh's heroes' characteristics in Kamrani's works is an ironic sneer at the circumstances of contemporary heroes. Examples such as

73. This work was part of thesis of Saeed Ravanbkash. Mohreh Sorkh is reference to the Talisman that was given to Tahmineh by Rostam, and Sohrab was wearing at the time of his death in the hands of his father.
74. A famous contemporary poet who alluded to the new style of poetry

75. Pesar Koshi, is a recurring team in Persian mythology and history, that refers to the killing of adolescent boys or young sons.

Rostam caught in a well and the blinded Esfandyar refers to Iran's gradual inability in dealing with its current affairs. In his work, 'Doleful Esfandyar', he has printed the image of the hero's sad face, wearing his ancient clothes, on a light box and through light effects, the image and the meaning is transformed(fig.34).

Despite living outside Iran for years, Pouya Afshar's (born 1984) is concerned with the little attention paid to narration and ancient stories, and these apprehensions were the main purpose behind creation of his "The Seven Labors of Story". ⁷⁶ By giving the example of Zahhak's thousand years of reign, he expresses his criticisms of the ignorance towards the educational aspects of Shahanmeh's stories. In addition to several paintings related to Shahnameh, in a installation and in collaboration with Neda Moridpour (born 1983), and by writing words in white on turquoise tiles, that are from text of Shahnameh, he gives the audience a chance to construct their own narrative by moving the tiles(fig.40).

A number of artists who began their careers by first decade of the new millennia, with the openings in the political scene, used the opportunity to criticize some of the most sensitive topics. These artists have spent their childhood years during the first years of the revolution and war, and having lived through those difficult times, they have been effected with the turmoil of those years. They have used Shahnameh as a means to project the contrast between the glorious narration of history and Iran's unsatisfactory current political and social conditions. The following is the chronicle of works of some of these artists.

Fereydon Ave (born 1945) one of the important contemporary artists and curators of Iranian art scene, he has alluded to Rostam in ten series of his works.

These ten series are: 'Five Principle Characters of Shahnameh (1998), 'Rostam and Sohrab 1' (1998), 'Rostam and Sohrab 2' (1999), 'Rostam and Sohrab + Script (2000), 'Rostam in Late Summer' (2000), 'The Seven Labors of Rostam' (2000), 'In Search of the Heroes' (2003), 'Rostam in the Midst of Winter' (2009) and the newest series 'The Radioactive Rostam' and 'Rostam in Pollution'. In the first series and by four multimedia sculptures and one installation, he has explored the five main characters of Shahnameh who are a king a queen, symbol of light, symbol of darkness and demons(fig.36). In the later series, initially the works were subject oriented and with no special settings and reference "Pesar Koshi", with main emphasize on the hero. However later on his Rostams are seen in different environments, but still without pinpointing any geographical points. These settings provide a background to emphasize the main subject in the frame. The main character, Rostam the Pahlevan⁷⁷, who is allegorically referred to in a number of series, appears as the exhausted man wary of war or victorious, or even apprehensive of continued historic confrontations. In Ave's works, Rostam as a champion is a contemporary public figure, effected by the current events of the society. The familiar image of the hero - Pahlevan, is engaged with both solemn heroic acts, as well as mundane affairs such as pollution and difficulty to breath. It could perhaps be said that the dual contrasts visible in his works are not unrelated

as started by Nima Youshij, (1926-1995)

^{76.} From the catalogue of exhibition at Aun Gallery 2012

^{77.} A Pahlevan is a champion of wrestling, who by earning the title and the armband, is selected as one of the leaders of society and holds a prestigious position.

Artists were improvising and painting spontaneously. On June 2004, a ceremony to celebrate Ferdowsi was held at the Faculty of Literature at Tehran University, with live music performances, poetry readings, lectures, a book fair and a painting exhibition. Hannibal Alkhaas, Arabali Sharveh, Taraneh Sadeghian, Naser Mohammadi, Cyrus Aghakhani, Forouzan Parviz Farzaam, Farkhondeh Mar'ashi, Reza Hedayat and Ghazaleh Tavakolmand were the participating artists in this exhibition. The approach of these artists was to create modern imagery of Shahnameh, and engage with visual aspects of this epic.

Among these artists, only Taraneh Sadeghian, Naser Mohammadi and Reza Hedayat, continued working with the subject of Shahnameh in their later works. In her works, Taraneh Sadeghian (born 1956) has explored Ferdowsi's vision on women. Her series titled Shahnameh, was exhibited at Elaheh Gallery in 2004 and her paintings, away from clichés, continue to show the subjective vision of Ferdowsi from the point of view of a contemporary female artists. As a figurative painter, she uses the power of drawing to emphasis the importance of lines and color and by depicting visual narrations of Shahnameh, she explores characteristics of Persian Painting(fig. 22). Naser Mohammadi (born 1966) is a figurative painter who uses pure color pigments and applies his drawing skills to represent epic characters in an expressive style(fig. 23). Reza Hedayat (born 1966) is a narrative painter who is known for his expertise in applying and controlling paint. In different periods in his career he has had kept an eye on Shahnameh and has created numerous paintings based on its stories(fig.26). Among artists close to Arabali Sharveh during this period, Jafar Najibi (born 1953) and Marzieh Ghareh-Daghi (1952) can be named. Besides his early experiments in 1970s, between 2001 and 2003 Jafar Najibi created many works with Shahnameh as the central theme. Although his ceramic works are realistic narratives adapted from mythological themes, but in some cases his Cubist tendencies are evident too. He also has made portraits of Ferdowsi(fig.24). In her clay works and by using three-dimensional storyboards in various forms, Marzieh Ghareh-Daghi narrates the stories of different characters of Shahanemh. Thirty three of these ceramic works were displayed at Tarahan Azad Gallery(fig.25).

Mehdi Hosseini (born 1944) is a painter, former professor of the University of Art, writer and translator and dedicated to Persian Painting. His deep knowledge of Persian Painting, allows for the connection between his works and the world to appear normal. The first series of his works are a collection of drawings made between 2006 and 2008 using a lyrical expression to depict well-known stories of Shahnameh as seen in the illustrated versions. Soft grays, fluid lines, quiet and sparse compositions as well as decorative motifs are the characteristics of his work(fig.27). In another series, exhibited in 2013 at Khaak Gallery, using textile block printing techniques, he has worked on the subject of Shahnameh. His designs have turned into wooden blocks by the Isfahani textile-block print craftsmen to be applied as prints on textiles. Attention to linear values in Hosseini's works has roots in the contours of Persian Painting(fig.28). His latest and most notable work is the Shahnameh that is created as an artist book. Paying homage to the 22 images of the Baysonghori Shahnameh, he has created 22 images on unbleached white fabric using textile block printing techniques. Some pages are embroidered with black thread on fabric in the style applied in design of the flags that commemorate Imam Hossein's martyrdom, and is a yet to be offered to public.

Farah Ossouli (born 1953) is a very well known Iranian artist who has endeavored to revitalize the techniques and aesthetics of Persian Painting, and bring them to contemporary sphere.70Osouli's paintings occupy a vague point; in between the tradition and the contemporary. Although the paintings appear traditional, and faithful to the Persian Painting, but because of her outlook and technique, they exist outside the quidelines of this school of painting. Application of modern tools such as airbrush that is prohibited in traditional arts, are distinct characteristics of her work. In her Shahnameh series created in 2006, although she follows the path of old painters in visualizing the scenes of Shahnameh, but by focusing on women's circumstances in these stories she takes on a new and unique path; female characters that are depicted beside or often in the background of the life of the heroes are her main focal point(fig.29). Subsequent to this series and in different works, she returns to Shahnameh and by depicting the high points in the lives of heroes in one cadre, she offers a visual biography that relays her unique point of view(fig.30).

Gizella Varga Sinai (born 1944) an Iranian-Hungarian artist, adaptations of Shahnameh's stories result in creation of a unique mythological world in her paintings. By choosing symbolic elements and through creating visually ancient spaces and applying sarcasm, she creates a new version of the lives of icons and characters of Shahnameh. In drawing the torsos and elements and also in her choice of colors she is highly influenced by Persian Painting(fig.31).

Alireza Jodey's (born 1969) Shahnameh collection was created in 2007 and presented at Aaran Gallery in 2009. The passion for narration and also his interest in visualizing mythological characters are the foundation of Jodey's works. In fact, his works are a union of old stories and contemporary events.71 Multiple gray layers, broad geometric surfaces, pencil drawings with minute details and composed characters are some of the characteristics of his works and are visible in this collection. Using lithography print textures, freakish strange creatures, chopped off heads and mutilated bodies as well as religious icons, costume and helmet designs, playing with the concept of space and also the presence of script, are all indications of his numerous references to Iran's history of image-making. Symbolic and metaphoric complexities⁷² in Jodey's works, gives the audience the chance for different interpretations(fig.32).

Gordafarid series by Yasmin Sinai (born 1968) is the demonstration of the feminine magnificence of this Shahnameh character. The installation "The Act of Gordafarid", the only female warrior of Shahnameh was curated by Fereydon Ave and exhibited at Courtyard Gallery in Dubai in 2015. By depicting Gordafarid and her multidimensional character in battles and in her personal ordinary life, artist explores the challenges of family life and the many duties of contemporary women in society. She has been using recycled material such as paper and cardboard in many of her work, for her this is a symbolic act of recinarnation. In this exhibition, her installations

^{70.} Issa, Rose and Ruyin Pakbaz and Daryush Shayegan (2001), Iranian Contemporary Art. Booth-Clibborn edition, London, p105

^{71.} Pooya Arianpour in the introduction of Jodey's works 72. Ahmad Aminazar in an introduction of Jodey's works

1949) that was published in 2013, consisting of over 50 of his paintings and illuminations(fig.16). By using ancient motifs especially the Achaemenid and Qajar ones, and incorporating techniques of Persian Painting with realistic painting, he offered a type of Iranian mixed art. In an earthly show of mythological creatures he tried to present a contemporary narrative, one that was peaceful and had no trace of the epic battles of Shahnameh. In all these years, the last generation of painters of Coffee House school of painting were also active although the quality of their productions has deteriorated due to lack of support and elimination of live Shahnameh recitation from every day life⁶⁴(fig.16).

In addition, in 1993 parts of The Shahnameh of Shah Tahmasb, were returned to Iran. This Shahnameh was commissioned by Shah Esmail Safavi (1487-1524), the founder of Safavid dysnasty, as a gift to his son. The exact date of completion is not known but its believed to be 1527 AD, and not long after its completion, the manuscript was sent as a gift on the occasion of the accession of Sultan Salim, to Ottoman court. This project was realized at the royal atelier in Tabriz, the first capital of the Safavid dynasty, and involved two generations of the most renowned artists of the time and consisted of 759 folios of text, written in superb Nasta'liq script, and 258 pages of paintings of exquisite quality and artistic originality. By 20th Century most of the pages were acquired by Arthur Hotan, and later on offered to Iranian government. Finally by 1993, 118 pages from its total 258 were exchanged with a nude painting of William De Kooning's titled 'Woman' and are now kept at Tehran's Museum of Contemporary Arts.

By 1990s and especially after 1997 with the victory of the reformist government⁶⁵, artists became relatively freer in displaying their favored subjects. The resumption of Biennials of art, increase in the academic curriculums and university admissions, as well as rising number of private galleries and artistic groups, and ultimately the advent of communications that made connecting with the art world easier, resulted in a very different and invigorating art scene, compared to that of 1980s.

In the new millennia, numerous individual and artistic groups concentrated on Shahnameh. Artists with different orientations, made Shahnameh a central theme in their artistic production. On the one hand there are artists who by emphasizing on the stories of Shahnameh have created a contemporary visual narrative of this epic; in their multimedia works they have presented not only a modern narrative of Shahnameh but have updated the aesthetic principles of Persian Painting. On the other hand, there are a group of younger artists who use Shahnameh not to glorify Iran's past but to criticize the realities of Iran of today. In fact, because of the very complex cultural, social, political and economical conditions in Iran, referencing Iran's past is no more an ostentatious effort to grandiose the country's past, but rather to criticize the historical identity. The issue of identity is a common theme and concern among many of these artists, and what is remarkable is their critical outlook of history of Iran.

In 1992, an exhibition of paintings by Jamshid Haghighat Shenas (born 1962) was held at Tehran's Seyhoun Gallery. Totaling 105 works, and not all exhibited, these glass painting were focused on theme of Shahnameh. He personalized this popular traditional Iranian technique(fig.17), aesthetically these glass paintings were reminiscent of the visual traditions of the Iran of pre-Islam. The setting, the designs of elements and details all have visual references to the famous Lorestan's bronze motifs and the Achaemenid and Sassanid art. Grav colors and lines that resemble shapes, are some characteristics of these works. Choosing Shahnameh as a subject was so alien to the prevailing trends that during the exhibition artist was asked regularly whether he has lived inside Iran in the past few years! His presence as a soldier in the Iran-Iraq war seemed unbelievable to the audience too.66 According to Hamid Keshmirshekan, he is among artists whose activities began in the first few years after the revolution and he is seriously engaged with fundamental challenges related to cultural and intellectual issues.67 In 1999, he created another series titled 'Two-Ways' that focused on the eternal conflict of good and evil, with a bilateral reading of each narrative. Rostam-Demon. Fereydoun-Zahhak and other characters constantly at grips with transformation, defeat and victory. These works were collages of different materials and are about the conquest of good over evil and with a 180-degree rotation, evil overcomes the good. Presence of several designs for portraits and the relative independence of lines from surfaces and also, serious attention towards the negative spaces are some of the characteristics of these works(fig.18).

Undoubtedly Arabali Sharveh (1939 - 2011) is one of the well known artists linked to Shahnameh in recent years. He was a painter, teacher, writer and a translator in the field of painting and was known for the simple and generous life of a true teacher that he was. In his later years he constantly advised artists to read and to take on Shahnameh as a subject matter. He created a large body of work both in design and painting inspired by Shahnameh during the first decade of 2000. His probing mind led him to experiment with different materials and mediums. He created a mural in the common area of his residential complex with subject of Zaal⁶⁸ (fig. 19). He has also created a series of ink drawings, that are obviously influenced by the ink wash paintings of Far East(fig.20). In another series he has painted images inspired by Shahnameh, using oil and acrylic on board, or on wooden recycled materials such as discarded doors and windows(fig.21). Despite the Modernism inherent in his works, he managed to go beyond direct representation of the epic and used colors and forms to depict unique subjects and contexts. A series of his works titled Shahnameh, were exhibited at Tehran's Azad gallery in 2005.

In 2002, by the recommendation of Reza Hedayat(1966)⁶⁹, a five day workshop of Shahanmeh painting and storytelling was held at Tehran's Laleh gallery with the collaboration of Hannibal Alkhas (1930 –2010) and five other painters. Taraneh Sadeghian, Reza Hedayat, Naser Mohammadi, Keyvan Asgari and Cyrus Aghakhaani were the artists present in this workshop. They chose five colors of green, yellow, blue, red and purple to depict the stories of Jamshid, Zaal and Simorgh, Keykhosrow, Siavash, Rostam and Sohrab.

^{64.} Pakbaz, 2002, p 588

^{65.} The seventh and eighth governments of the Islamic Republic for eight years from 23rd May 1997 led by Mohammad Khattami. This period is considered a turning point in Iranian cultural studies.

^{66.} Conversation with the artist

^{67.} Keshmirshekan, 2015, p 235

^{68.}In Tehran's Pas Farhangian residential complex.

^{69.} He is Arabali Sharveh's relative and has been greatly influenced by him

There were even attempts by the revolutionary forces to destroy Abolhassan Sadighi's statue of Ferdowsi in Tehran's Ferdowsi Square. The political and anti-Islamic perceptions attributed to Shahnameh went so far that even literary courses in universities were not allowed to teach or discuss the Epic. Meantime, due to political exaggerated fervor of that era, many cultural and artistic achievements of 1960s and 70s were ignored. In fact, during the 1980s, with the new government in place and the start of the Iran - Irag war which began shortly after the revolution, painting became an instrument to convoy ideological messages, promoting Islamic values (and not nationalistic ones), martyrdom and self-sacrifice; the efforts of first generation of Iranian contemporary artist active right before the revolution, was mostly disregarded. During these years, a number of artists⁵² left the country or took refuge in their own ateliers and continued in silence and isolation. In effect, during the first few years after the revolution, only works that conveyed a kind of an Iranian - Islamic identity and promoted cultural values of the revolution were allowed to be shown in public domain and were highly favored by the regime.53

These policies had reverse effect on the middle class and the educated urban strata and instead of distracting them from learning about Iran of pre-Islam, made them more curious about it.⁵⁴ In addition to the growing gravitation towards Shahnameh by the general public during the 1980s, after the end of war and later on with the reformist government⁵⁵ in place, in general the country experienced a relatively freer cultural atmosphere.

In January 1990, an International congress was held at Tehran University to honor Ferdowsi. 120 foreign academics and 170 Iranian scholars participated and some 270 articles were presented. 56 The Presence of Hashemi Rafsanjani, the president of the country at the time, in this congress was a sign of recognition and encouragement for research on Shahnameh after the revolution. In his speech he revealed the new government's Islamic reading of Shahnameh.57 Following his speech, Mostafa Moeen,⁵⁸ also followed up on this thesis by proposing Islamic identities and background for main characters of Shahnameh such as Rostam, Kaveh and Siavash.59 Criticism over manipulation of Shahnameh for purposes of reaffirming monarchy ruling system, and emphasizing on the compatibility of Islamic and Persian cultures and utilization of Shahnameh's contents to analyze the intellectual and social structures of the society, were among the main focuses of Moeen's speech.60

It appears that upon reflection on past experiences, and contemplations on the increasing influence of global contemporary art, the regime had adapted a new approach. The first important event involving depiction of Shahnameh in arts, after the revolution was the result of efforts of Ruyin

Pakbaz. An exhibition to commemorate Ferdowsi and to celebrate the Millennium of composition of Shahnameh was held on 1989 with the participation of 13 painters and sculptors in Tehran's Afrand Gallery. The participating artists were: Aria Shokouhi Eghbal, Fatemeh Emdadian, Sara Iravani, Abbas Sarang, Yaghoub Ammamehpich, Parastou Forouhar, Touran Ghamari, Hossein Gharehgozlou, Davoud Mozaffari, Masoumeh Mozaffari, Nosratallah Moslemian and Amin Nourani.

This exhibition, above everything else, was the upshot of profound knowledge of Pakbaz on Persian Painting and the tradition of the illustration of Shahnameh and his efforts to offer contemporary interpretation of this long standing tradition. In the introduction of this exhibition he wrote: 'Shahnameh has long been a notable and driving force for Iranian artists and after a millennia still provokes thought and sentiment among them. The status of poet has remained on its exalted position and yet artists' interpretations of his splendid creation, has altered through times.' 62 Although participation in this significant exhibition was important to the career of these artists, but none of them returned to the subject in their future works. For example, the two paintings depicting the death of Rostam by Yaghoub Ammamehpich displayed in this exhibition are considered important works of his life(fig.15).

The Phalavi regime laid emphasis on importance of history of Ancient Persia, aiming to undermine the history of the Islamic era in Iran and after the revolution the Islamic Republic persisted on Islamic identity rather than the national one. One of the aspects of this attitude was evident in Tehran Biennial of Painting in 1993, held by Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. A number of artists with traditional inclinations, who were side stepped in the past, took advantage of the new guidelines and considered their approach to be a suitable instrument to express Iranian values with reliance on its basin of Islamic culture. These artists not only were (and still are) supported directly and indirectly by the government, but also were (and are) vigorously supported by the general public and foreigners that seek out the exotic side of the art of the East.

Consequently, attempts to produce illustrated versions of Shahnameh to cater to these tastes and not for its importance as continuation of a longstanding tradition, appears to be normal for this period. However book illustrating as an old art form, and a referral to past did not incorporate the contemporary conditions and therefore most of the artists who made modern day illuminated Shahnamehs (not withstanding the quality of their art) have failed to add any significant facet to the art of bookmaking in Iran.

In 1992, an exquisite version of Shahnameh consisting of the paintings and illuminations (Tazhib) of Majid Mehregan (born 1945) was published. The efforts aimed at producing a glorious book is evident not only in the paintings of the book but also in the quality of calligraphy and choice of the calligraphists⁶³. In 1993, Mahmoud Farshchian published a Shahnameh consisting of few paintings and illuminated and decorated pages.

Another example was the work of Hojjat Shakiba (born

^{52.} Artists like Ardeshir Mohasses, Niky Nodjoumi and others

^{53.} Kashmirshekan, 2015, p 210

^{54.} Dr. Nader Entekhabi's conversation with Ramin Jahanbegloo, 2005, Iran in Search of Modernity, p 232

^{55.} The fifth and sixth governments lead by Hashemi Rafsanjani for 8 years from 1989.

^{56.} Sotoudeh, Gholamreza, 1995, I Shall Not Perish, from series of lectures for The Global Congress of commemoration of Ferdowsi, (The Millennium of Shahnameh's creation), at Tehran University Publications, p 3

^{57.} Hashemi: 'Ferdowsi had emphasized on monotheism and theology.' (Sotoudeh, 1995, p 15)

^{58.} The Minister of higher Education

^{59.} Sotoudeh, 1995, p 7

^{60.} Soutodeh, 1995, pages 8-9

^{61.} Pakbaz, 2002, p 597

^{62.} From the catalogue written by Ruyin Pakbaz

^{63.} Introduction of the book was by Master Gholamhossein Amirkhani, and the texts written by two other masters, Yadollah Kaboli and Ali Sajjadi

and consequently Shahnameh was a perfect choice to convey authority and the historical context. The reproduction of 'Shahnameh Baysonghori', with an introduction by Basil Gary, was published in three languages; English, French, German (and not in Farsi), and consisted of 116 pages.⁴¹

The publication of Shahnameh's stories purposely simplified. to be suitable for children was another fundamental effort during the Pahlavi era to promote the culture of reading Shahnameh. At the same time, with the establishment of Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults⁴².By 1965, new attempts were made to illustrate the stories of Shahnameh for children began. In fact, this governmental institute, selected and rewrote texts for children as core of its activities. 43 At a Conference for Young Adults held in 1975 in Malaysia, the Iranian representative explained that the way to withstand cultural invasions is to use national resources in a modern and contemporary way.44 Illustrators such as Farshid Mesghali, Ali Akbar Sadeghi, Nafiseh Riahi, Noureddin Zarrinkelk, Nicky Nodjoumi and others, have contributed to some of the best designs for these books, applying their own unique approach and oeuvre. New experiments, such as the creation of the book Rostam and Esfandyar by Cyrus Rad⁴⁵ in the style of comic strip is one of the best examples of an avant-garde approach by any artist during this time(fig.5). It must be noted that because at the time illustrating books for children was a new genre in Iran, most of these artists were painters, designers and animators, rather than illustrators.46

In one of the first examples of new illustrations of *Shahnameh*, Morteza Momayez (1935 – 2005) compiled a set of images depicting heroic deeds of Rostam for a calendar for the Pars Oil Company in 1966⁴⁷(fig 6). In this collection, applying his highly expressive visual language, Momayez made interesting use of black and white imagery from lithographic books.

In 1967 and during the first years of the activities of the Institute, Farshid Mesghali (born. 1943) illustrated book Jamshid Shah, was printed. This book is one of the finest examples of book illustrating by an artist who is capable of transferring traditional elements in to a modern day context. In the book Jamshid Shah, he refers to Persian Painting through use of; static compositions, playful black fluid line (reminiscent of delineation in Persian Paintings), and applying flat spaces, as well as decorative motives for costumes and even nature. His choice of limited colors is also astounding(fig.7).

41. Hillenbrand, Robert, 2010, Exploring a Neglected Masterpiece; The Guilstan Shahnama of Baysunghur", Iranian Studies. UK, p 104

Nicky Nodjoumi (born 1941) illustrated the book 'Bastoor' in 1968. This book is important because the central character of the story is a child and the child's display of courage had a strong moral impact on children. Dynamic compositions, exaggerations in size and the use of decorative motifs on the costumes are some of the characteristics of this work⁴⁸(fig.8).

Noureddin Zarrinkelk (born 1937) illustrated the books 'Zaal and Simorgh' and 'Zaal and Roudabeh' in 1972. Just like other artists of his time, by paying attention to such elements as perspective, decorative motifs and drawing tables (as in manuscript paintings) and application of gold paint, he managed to make his work inherently Iranian(figs. 9,10).

Ali Akbar Sadeghi (born 1937) a consummate Iconography, began illustrating stories of Shahnameh in the 70s. His first book 'Gordafarid' was published in 1973 and his second book 'Legend has it that Ferdowsi...' written by the contemporary Iranian epic poet Mehdi Akhavan Sales (M.Omid) was published in 1975. By maintaining a classical style of painting, he has continuously depicted larger-thanlife and highly original characters and subjects⁴⁹(fig. 12).

Nafiseh Riahi (1943 - 2000) illustrated 'The Seven Labours of Rostam' in 1976 with a special focus on metalwork techniques of the Sassanid period. In her work, she remained committed not only to the aesthetic requisites but also to the techniques of the era. In her details, such as facial details, costumes and decorative motifs, Riahi remained highly influenced and inspired by the art of the Sassanid era(fig.13).

During the last years of the rule of Pahlavi monarchy, Iran's contemporary cartoonist Kambiz Derambakhsh (born 1942) incorporated Shahnameh in his 'Black Miniatures' series. Between 1973 and 1975, by using his sensational humor⁵⁰ and by juxtaposing elements of contemporary life and placing characters of Shahnameh in critical situations, a dark humor that alluded to political unrests of the era, is revealed . The choice of the format of manuscript paintings and the contrast of the this traditional world and it's contrasting guidelines, adds to the mischievous nature of these cartons.⁵¹ This collection by Derambakhsh can be considered as one of examples of few spontaneous gestural actions in the arts before the revolution where the artist has conceptually used Shahnameh to express his lived experience and his ideas(fig.14).

After Iran's Islamic Revolution

The Islamic revolution of Iran is a turning point in contemporary historical studies. Because the Phalavi regime had overtly emphasized Iran's ancient history, with Shahnameh as one of the focal points, in the first years after the revolution Shahnameh, as a subject, was not discussed in public arena. Perhaps, the word 'Shah', commonly used to refer to the last Shah of Iran, and the Epic's association with monarchy regime in Iran, was at the core of this sensitivity.

Zarrinkelk 1998, p 15)

^{42.} Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults' was instrumental in laying grounds for modernizing illustration of literary books in Iran. Prominent writers and illustrators collaborated with the institute. Well-known writers such as Mehrdad Bahar, M. Azad, Mehdi Akhavan-Sales, composed simple texts of Shahnameh for Children and young adults.

^{43.} Åkrami, Jamal oddin, 2004, Child And Image, Published by Borhan School Publication, p 28
44. Introduction of the book, Rostam and Esfandiyar, written by S.T, which

^{44.} Introduction of the book, Rostam and Esfandiyar, written by S.T, which is most probably a pseudo nom for Sirous Tahbaz who was the head of the foundation between 1970- 1978

^{45.} No further info about Cyrus Rad could be found.

^{46.} A collection of these works was presented in 2010 at Saba Cultural institute that is affiliated with Tehran's Art Academy. The exhibition was titled 'Wisdom and Epics of Ferdowsi' which showcased four decades of book illustration in Iran.

^{47.} Momayez, Morteza 2011, Face to Face, a conversation between Ebrahim Haghighi and Morteza Momayez. Published by Khojasteh Publication, Introduction.

^{48.} In the same year, he illustrated the book 'Spell of a City'. His adaption of lithographical prints of Shahnameh for this work influenced his future works (series made in 2013) which will be referred to later in this text. 49. In his memoire he says "I used heroes and their world in order to talk about my own era, about now, and to speak about people.' (Mojabi and

^{50.} Mohases, Irandokht, 1975, The Iranian Humor-Oriented Draughts Men, Donya Publications, Introduction

^{51.} Mojabi, 2009, Introduction

inherent connection with classical literature, was never explored by modern painters and whenever any of them focused on literature, he or she focused mostly focused on the 'folklore literature'.

Modern painters used Iranian themes and imagery and not necessarily literary subjects to express themselves within a native context whilst using a global language. In fact, it could be said that they were more concerned with visual motifs and imagry. Among the works of Iranian modern art, one of the oldest on the subject of Shahnameh is a work by Jalili Ziapour titled 'Kaveh the Blacksmith' presented at the Iran-USSR institute in 1946.20

Coffee House painting is one of the oldest and most popular forms of Shahnameh's presence in the Iranian visual arts. This style was developed by a group of untrained artists after Iran's constitutional revolution.21 One of the artists who was instrumental in developing this style was Hossein Qollar-Aghasi (1890-1966) who more than others, visualized the heroic acts of Shahnameh's characters.²² Taking into account peoples' tastes and what they preferred, he and other artists portrayed the populars stories for the gratification of the public.23 Depicting Siavash carrying an Islamic banner on his back, or portraying the bravery and victories of Shahnameh's heroes are the central themes in Coffeehouse painting style which were made and presented to the public and were directly influenced and inspired by the norms and taste of their time.²⁴ It is note worthy that Marcus Grigorian (1925-2007) one of the avant garde artists of the era, was made aware of the artistic merits of this kind of paintings and organized few exhibitions of these works in Iran and other countries.

The instability in the structure of the tomb of Ferdowsi appeared early on after its construction²⁵, renovation of the building was one of the governments projects that that began in 1963,²⁶ re design and construction took four years.²⁷ It was eventually completed on 29th of April 1968 and the structure was opened to public by the king and queen.28 Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's speech at the opening ceremony emphasized the importance of Shahnameh.29In this new structure. Hossein Hajarbashi Zanjani³⁰ was commissioned to create the bass reliefs on the interior walls of the tomb, based on stories of Rostam(fig.4). Later in 1970 and 1971, Abolhassan Sadighi was again commissioned to make two statues of Ferdowsi, one for his tomb in the city of Tous and the other for Tehran's Ferdowsi Square31(fig.1). As mentioned, he had already made several statues and portraits of Ferdowsi 32, the formidable image of a serious and well-built Ferdowsi

20. Mojabi, Javad, 1997, The First Generation of Iranian Contemporary Painters, published by Nashr Honar Iran, Tehran, p 10, no images could

- 21. Pakbaz, Rouyin, 2002, The Encyclopedia of Art, published by Contemporary Culture, (Farhang Moaesr) Publication. P 586
- 22. Mojabi, 1997, p 6
- 23. Rajabi, 2006, Introduction
- 24. Seyf, Hadi, 1990, Coffee House Painting, published by Reza Abbasi Museum, The Iranian Cultural Heritage organization, p 31
- 25. Due to the penetration of ground water (Sedigh, 1976, p 207)
- 26. Gharavi, 1976,p 87
- 27. Gharavi, 1976,p 88
- 28. Gharavi, 1976,p 93
- 29. As an example we can refer to one of the key sentences in his speech: 'We must do all we can so people can get to know more about Ferdowsi and Shahnameh.' (Gharavi, 1976, 99)
- 30. Despite all efforts no information about Hossein Hajarbashi Zanjani could be found.
- 31. Hamedi, 2011,p 47
- 32. During these years, many statues of Ferdowsi were made by artists inside Iran and in other countries such as Italy, Germany, France, Tajikistan

that is now associated with him is the result of his work. He explained his choice for features of his sculptures; from my point of view, Rostam of Shahnameh, is Ferdowsi himself, and Rostam has all his characteristics. A human being with grand idea and thoughts. In the sculptures that I made of him, I had Rostam in front of me.33

In 1969. The first series of lectures and deliberations about Shahnameh, was held at the National Museum of Iran, (Museum of Iran Bastan), for three days, coinciding with the 'Arts and Culture Festival'.34The establishment of 'Shahnameh Foundation' by the order of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi in 1971 was another important step that had a significant impact on the cultural atmosphere of Iran at that time.³⁵ In section 23 of the Foundation's Charter, the importance of research, study of scenes and images of Shahnameh in the traditional Pardeh-Khani as well as style of recitation of its poetry was emphasized on.36 Speculation about details such as garments and armory, and archiving such data was encouraged and studied under the supervision of, Jalil Ziapour and the director of foundation at the time was Amin Riahi. The extensive data that Ialil Ziapour managed to gather, through the text of Shahnameh and by recovering data from historical concurrent accounts37 was handed over to Behrouz Golzari (1929-2000), another modernist painter, and were illustrated by him under Ziapour's supervision.³⁸ Although Ziapour is considered a ardent modernist and despite his strong passion for Cubism, in this collection he mainly looked for visual representation and archival purposes was the main focus, and artists' imagination or interpretation was to take the back seat in the final results.

It's important to keep in mind that even though these afore mentioned programs were mostly focused on theoretical research of Shahnameh, and the study of manuscripts (not necessarily the illustrated ones), but they encouraged and paved the way for research in the field of visual arts and subsequent creation of works of art. During 'Shahanmeh Weeks', another of the programs supported by the government to revive the importance of this book, Jalil Ziapour gave a lecture titled 'Shahnameh and Iranian traditional art' at the foundation.39 The First Tous Festival took place between 13 - 18th July 1975, and consisted of lectures held at the University of Mashhad, and was among the last official events organized during the Pahlavi era. 40

The print of an illustrated version of 'Shahnameh Baysonghori' as an exquisite gift for the heads of states on the occasion of 2,500 years celebration of the Persian Empire in 1971, is yet another example of regimes honoring Shahnameh as one of the most important literary works of Iran. The general objective of these efforts and events was to project the archaism and power of Iran's monarchy system

- 33. Seyf, 1994, p 83
- 34. Seyif, 1994, p 83
- 35. Gharavi, 1976, p 99
- 36. Gharavi, 1976, p 109
- 37. Ziapour, Jalil, 1975, Garments and Arms in Shahnameh, People and Arts Magazine, (Mardom) issues 69, 153,154
- 38. No images was found
- 39. Gharavi, 1976, p 110
- 40. These festivals were organized by the order of Farah Pahlavi in the 8th edition of Shiraz's Art Festival (Sajjadi, 1976, introduction) aiming to revive the arts and culture of the county. Although concerns over protection and preservation of the language (Borhan, 1976, pages 51-55) and Iran's cultural resurrection (Borhan, 1976, p 27) were some of the objectives of the organizers, but efforts to project and emphasize the traditional link between people and the monarchy was also notable in the speeches and writings in these festivals. (Borhan, 1976, p. 12)

Shahnameh, The Perpetual Narrative A survey of impact of Shahnameh on modern and contemporary art of Iran By Akram Ahmadi Tavana

Before the Islamic Revolution

The important issue of reviewing Iran's ancient history and its subsequent revitalization, began during the reign of Fath-Ali Shah Qajar (1772-1834). The production of numerous Stone Reliefs, the commission of the illustrated Shahanshah-Nameh¹, in imitation of Shahnameh,² to the court appointed poet Fathi Ali Khan Saba (1765-1822). And the creation of the famous Kiani Crown are some of the most distinct manifestations of this tendency3. Although this approach was not followed in the same manner and urgency by later Qajar rulers, but after the succession of Reza Shah Pahlavi to power, this approach was renewed in a far more elaborate way. The first major event organized by Pahlavi regime, was the introduction of 'Ferdowsi Millenary Celebrations', and the construction of Ferdowsi's tomb in 1934. The construction of Ferdowsi's tomb at the location of his burial site began in 1926 with the efforts of Arbab Keykhosrow Shahrokh.4 In 1934 coinciding with the completion of the work at the tomb, a prominent gathering of scholars was held in the cities of Tous and Tehran by the recommendation of Malek o-Sho'arâ Bahâr, inviting 81 Iranian and foreign academics.5 Chairman of this congress was Mohammad Ali Foroughi and Dr. Sedigh Alaam⁶ was the secretary.⁷

During these celebrations in May of 1943, an exhibition of works by Andre Sevruguin (1896 - 1996) known as Darvish-Khan8 was held at the Dar-ol Moalemin's hall for two weeks. The collection of paintings presented in this exhibition was the result of the artist's nine years of work in isolation, consisting of 416 9 paintings to commemorate the anniversary of death of Ferdowsi. 10 In his works, Sevruguin followed the old traditions of Persian Painting but by adding new style of realistic painting, and predominantly the paintings of Reza Abbasi and Kamaloeddin Behzad¹¹, he created his own unique new visual language. In his works he liberally used the colors azure, vermillion, ruby and gold. that Ferdowsi had described in his poetry. 12 He would have live Shahnameh recitals by the traditional coffee house performers, during his painting sessions. Some scenes in his paintings are rare and exceptional given the number of paintings had never been this high in any examples of the illustrated copies of Shahnameh(figs. 2,3). In the same year, Abolhassan Sadighi (1894 – 1995) created the chalk torso of Ferdowsi. Before this, in 1933 and in collaboration with Hassan Ali Vaziri they created a chalk sculpture of Ferdowsi riding a Phoenix, but unfortunately this work no longer exists. 14

In 1941, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi came to power. In the first years of his reign, due to political turmoil resulting from; World War II, assassination attempt on Shah, nationalization of oil and the subsequent coup d'état culture and arts were hardly on agenda. During these years only Abolhassan Sadighi created several works inspired by Shahnameh. In 1943, he made a statue of Ferdowsi for the Dar ul-Funun School, and in 1946, he designed 'Three stages of the Labors of Shahnameh'15 which were installed on the transom of Bank Melli's Zoorkhaneh (a traditional Persian Gymnasium) and in 1956 made a statue of Ferdowsi for a square in the city of Rome. 16 Eventually during 1960s with stabilization of reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, and significant economic growth, and after the marriage of Shah to Farah Diba, Iran entered a whole new cultural era despite all the sociopolitical contradictions that existed in the country at the time. The establishment of the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, renovation of Ferdowsi's tomb, reprint orders of Shahnameh Baysonghori¹⁷, also the establishment of Shahnameh Foundation and Tous Festival, were some of the governmental efforts aimed to restore the importance of Shahnameh. Later in this text, we will explore other art works that were produced parallel to these events.

It is important to remember that during these years, government policies were more inclined to support modern art of which its artists had very little interest in Shahnameh. The Persian Painting had changed very little in past few centuries, but with return of groups of artists from Europe in 20th century, who were educated and well aware of the movements in the global art scene, the modern Iranian painting's advance was accelerated and the outlook and practices of artists was dramatically transformed. The founding and expansion of Iran's modern art began by 1940s and '50s.18 The most influential and passionate figure during this era was Jalil Ziapour (1920-1970) who insisted on modernizing Iranian painting, yet guarding the national values by maintaining visual elements from old Persian Paintings in his works. The interesting point is that, although Shahnameh was the most prominent instrument in visual dialogue with ordinary people, modern artists paid little attention to it. The social function of Shahnameh according to Javad Mojabi ' had little to do with modern art's arrogant and condescending attitude, aimed to scorn common people'. 19 It is curious that the old Persian Painting's

^{1.} Fathali Khan Kashani, known as Saba, who was the court appointed poet of the time

^{2.} Ravandi, Morteza, 2003, Iranian Social History, part two of the eight volume, Negah Publication, p 176

^{3.} From Dr.Ali Asghar Mirzaie Mehr's, unpublished thesis on the subject. 4. Sedigh Sajadi, 1976, Ferdowsi and Epic Literature, from collection of the first Tous Festival 1974, Soroush, the official publisher for Iranian National Radio and TV.

^{5.} This congress was held from 4-8th of October 1934 in Dar ul-Funun. On 12th of October all participants attended the inauguration of the tomb in presence of Reza Shah Pahlavi. (Sedigh 1975, p 207).

^{6.} Gharavi, Mehdi, 1976, Shahnameh of Ferdwosi in the first half century rule of Pahlavi dynasty, published by Ministry of Culture and Arts, Shahnameh Foundation, pages 44-62

^{7.} In a special message for this event, Reza Shah Pahlavi expressed his content over participation of scholars and declared the construction of the tomb to be a sign of gratitude to the poet. (Sajjadi, 1976, introduction) 8. He was the son of the photographer Antoin Sevruguin (1830 – 1933).

^{9. 416} is the year in the Islamic calendar

^{10.} Gharabgian, Markar (Mani), 1934, the list of 416 paintings of Darvish, in the millennium of Ferdowsi, publication of Parliament of Iran, 1

^{11.} Krasberg, Ulrike, (2008) Svrugian, Bilder Des Orientin Fotografic und Malerei. Societats- Verlage, p71.

^{12.} Gharabgian, 1934, 2

^{13.} Hamedi, Mohammad Hasan, 2011, from pages of Documents and ideas of researches conducted by Barg Gallery, 2008-2009, published by Peykareh publishing, no 46. (I was unable to find the commissioner of this work, but I believe the timining could have not been a coincidence) 14. Seyf, Hati, 1994, Abolhasan Khan Sadighi, The center for publications of National Commission of UNISCO in Iran p. 26

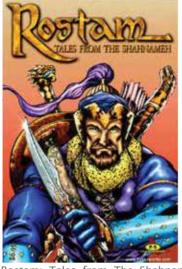
of National Commission of UNESCO in Iran, p 26. 15. The snarling of the witch by her hair, The killing of the white demon, Rostam killing the dragon (Seyf, 1994, p 20)

^{16.} Hamedi, 2011, pages 46 and 47.

^{17.} Shahnameh Baysonghori, is an important illuminated and gilded manuscript and is the product of Heart Library under Timurid rule, completed around 1430. A rare example of intact mansurcript that are still in Iran and not torn to pages.

^{18.}Keshmirshekan, Hamid (2015), Iran's Contemporary Art, Modern views and roots, Nazar Publications, Tehran, p 57

^{19.} Mojabi, Javad, 2014, The Notables of the New Art, published by Beh-Negar publication, p 15



28. Rostam: Tales from The Shahnameh, comic book, Los Angeles: Hyperwerks, 2010



29. Sohrab Kashani, The Adventures of Super Sohrab, 'Super Sohrab' series, 2012.



30. Still from Sohrab's blood, from the series of "Rostam in Wonderland" by Pouya Afshar and Soroush Rezaee, 2012-3



31. Kambiz Derambakhsh, Black Miniatures, 1973-5



32. Kambiz Derambakhsh, Black Miniatures, 1973-5



33. Aydin Aghdashloo's Untitled, Tehran, 1979



Shirin Adl, Key Kavus ascending the sky in flying machine, 2012



André Sevruguin, Key Kavus ascending the sky in flying machine, 1934



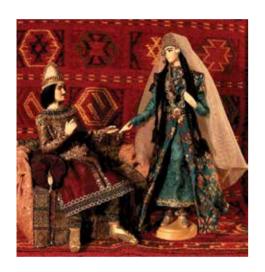
19. M. Moh, Manizheh invites Bizhan to her tent, Leningrad, Lomonosov (Imperial) Porcelain Factory, 1946



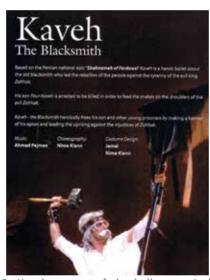
20. Vardges Surenyants, Ferdowsi reads his Shahnameh before Sultan Mahmud, 1913, National Gallery of Armenia



21. Victor Zabelin, Tahmina comes to Rostam in the middle of the night, St Petersburg, 2014



22. Irina Volkodaeva, Rostam giving Tahmineh an amulet before leaving for good, Moscow, 2015



23. Kaveh, poster of the ballet, music by Ahmad Pejman, choreography by Nima Kian, 2004



24. Zahhak - the Dragon King of Persia, poster of the play by Hossein Hadisi, Cambridge, 2013



25. Kaveh's Banner, poster of the film by Bencion Kimyagarov, 1961



26. Attributed to Qadimi, Kaveh tears Zahhak's scroll, Shah Tahmasp Shahnameh, Tabriz, 31v, 1524-1576, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran



27. Aydin Salsabili, Rostam, 3D model, 2014



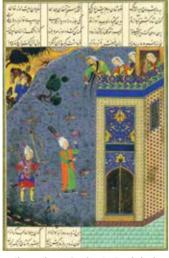
10. Peyman Soltani, Zal meets Rudabeh, 2012



11. Shirin Aliabadi, Miss Hybrid 6, Tehran, 2008



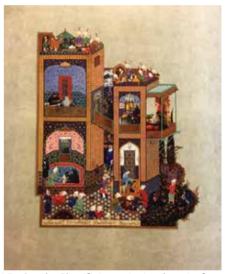
12. Shirin Adl, Zal meets Rudabeh, 2013



13. Attributed to Qadimi, Rudabeh makes a ladder of her tresses, Shah Tahmasp Shahnameh, Tabriz, f. 72v, 1524-1576, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



14. Zahra Hassan Agha, The Fall, 2010



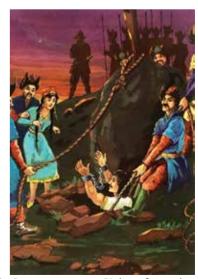
15. Soody Sharifi Love is in the air from 'Maxiatures' series, 2007



16. Attributed to Mir Musavvir, The nightmare of Zahhak, Shah Tahmasp Shahnameh, Tabriz, 28v, 1524-1576, Museum of Islamic Art, Doha



17. Veronica Shimanovskaya, Manizheh visits Bizhan in the pit, 2013



18. Rustam rescues Bizhan from the pit, Laleh workshop, Tehran, 1965



1. Varahran V hunts with his slave girl, 6 century. Sasanian silver plate, State Hermitage Museum



2. Bahram Gur and Azada hunting, Ferdowsi Shahnameh, Royal Asiatic Society, Ms 239, f. 362v, Herat, 1444



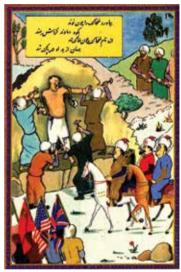
3. Abolhasan Seddighi and Hasanali Vaziri, Ferdowsi riding Simorgh, Tehran, 1933



4. Sergey Feofanov, Ferdowsi riding Simorgh, 2015



5. Phoenix, Ilkhanid tile, 13 century, Chicago Art Institute



6. Kimon Evan Marengo, Churchill, Stalin and Roosevelt watching Hitler-Mussolini-Hirohito being bound on the mountain, London, 1943



7. Feridun watching Zahhak being bound on the mountain Demavand, Ibrahim Sultan Shahnameh, Add. Ouseley 176, Shiraz, 1335, Bodleian Library, Oxford



8. Siamak Filizadeh, Without a shroud, 'Under Ground' series, 2014



9. Shirin Neshat, Divine Rebellion, 'The Book of Kings' series, 2012

traditional visual representations in book art and miniature painting to urban architectural designs, including sculptures and monuments, murals and the interiors of the Tehran metro stations, 3D images, photography, digital collages, comic books, films, including animation and video games³⁹, as well as theatre, music, opera, ballet, rap, hip-hop, fashion, jewellery, porcelain, carpets, etc. and their virtual and as well as digital versions.

It is inevitable that Ferdowsi's stories were and still are reinterpreted textually and visually. Every new staging of Shakespeare, although his words are preserved, is different. However, it is important to be able to know the original to appreciate its new interpretations. Iran is a country where the respect towards the national heritage is uniquely high. However, there are already quite a lot of Iranians who not only grew up but were born outside the country, but still feel exceptional attachment to its national heritage. For this reason the exhibitions, like the current one is of exceptional importance here in, Tehran and now, after the sanctions are lifted and the whole world is waiting for the revival of Iranian re-intergration into the world economically and culturally. It is not only Rostam-2 who is expected to come back home, like a prodigal son after his 30 years of being abroad, but already Sohrab-2, who compared with Sohrab Kashani's Super Sohrab (pl. 31) is born in the hostile territory and returning to the land of ancestors. For such Sohrabs the exhibitions like this have a strong educational dimension in the most attractive form: free from medieval didacticism but challenging individual creativity at an emotional level, sometimes provoking, and most of the time encouraging them to think and offer their own interpretation of the ancient history of the country full of contemporary myths and legends.

The exhibitions like this are to help develop the interest in this subject and the ability to distinguish between haut art and commercially oriented craft, between the artworks of, for example, Ossouli, Filizadeh and Neshat, and the photoshop designs of Rahmanian and Alangoo (pls.27 and 29).

The world of the Shahnameh is not a product of our days. It was born together with the epics, long before Ferdowsi, who together with Daqiqi and others turned a huge collection of Iranian folklore to the great versified chronicle of his nation starting from the creation of the humankind.

I would like to conclude this introduction to the richest topic on the modern visual Shahnameh not with words but with two pictures by Kambiz Derambakhsh. One depicts a man in a European suit who is trying to get rid of the old 'rubbish', swiping out of his life the images from the mediaeval manuscripts - warriors, horses, and flames, which recall the fire of the besieged fortresses, and even more so - of the iconic fire ordeal of Siyavush (pl.33). To make it more explicit, Derambakhsh attaches to the spear lying on the ground a misra' from Ferdowsi's story about Rostam and Isfandiyar. The second drawing shows that despite all the efforts of the man in the western suit and tie, he failed to lose his identity: a Safavid youth is still a part of his body and mind, which is much richer and joyous than

It is extremely plausible that the second exhibition after the London international show at the Prince's Gallery, solely dedicated to the idea of the *Shahnameh*, is now happening in Tehran and hosted by the famous Aaran Gallery - the place which introduced to the art world many young artists who are now among the greats.

Firuza Melville 4 February 2016 Pembroke College, Cambridge

the empty desert behind the man in the suite (pl. 34), as his country is indeed the axis of ancient cultures including the *Shahnameh*, though not of evil. And it is time to restore the leaves of the book of ancient history, torn like in Aydin Aghdashloo's "Untitled" painted in 1979 (pl.35).

^{39.} Vít Šisler, 'Digital Heroes: Identity construction in Iranian video games', in: Cultural revolution in Iran. Contemporary popular culture in the Islamic Republic, eds. A. Sreberny and M. Torfeh, London, 59-80, 171-192.

symbol of love, suffering, generosity, and forgiveness. She is looking down into the pitch dark pit, the walls of which are painted with some particles of soil. She is trying to see her beloved, but she sees us.

Sergey Feofanov's chamotte "Ferdowsi riding Simorgh" (pl. 4) is his interpretation of the continuity of the extremely culturally diverse (with Persian, Chinese and Mongol influences) tile decoration of the Imperial Palace in Takht-e Sulayman (pl. 5) and his own vision of the idea of Simorgh connecting the earthly and celestial world, supernatural creative fertility and Ferdowsi's divine inspiration, very similar to the vision of Abolhasan Seddighi and Hasanali Vaziri in their version of Ferdowsi flying on Simorgh (1933), present whereabouts unknown (pl. 3).

Victor Zabelin's "Tahmineh coming to Rostam" (pl. 21) at night reflects the situation of the labour migrants in St Petersburg, where the carriers of the Persian culture are mostly Tajiks and Afghans. This explains why his Rostam is depicted not as a noble knight in shining armour but more like a Tajik stall owner in the market.

Children's Shahnameh

It is of special interest to compare the Shahnameh illustrations in chidlren's books published in Iran and outside the country. Among the best British editions is the Shahnameh stories, rendered by Elizabeth Laird, and illustrated by Shirin Adl³⁶ (pl.12) in a very bright palette and technique of traditional collage, and what is important: with great respect for the original.

Quite the opposite tendency can be seen in Iran, where a lot of publications blindly imitate western imagery, and particularly the Disney Cinderella style, where all female characters as illustrated by, for example, Peyman Soltani (pl.10), look almost identical, even being all blond³⁷. It would be unfair to suggest that Soltani never consulted or disliked the mediaeval illustrations of the Shahnameh. Even more unfair would be to accuse her of not knowing Ferdowsi's stories as she was following the text adapted by Ali Dayi. The question is: were these discrepancies deliberate, i.e. do the blond ladies of such Shahnameh reflect the aspirations of the little Iranian girls for whom these books were designed to become the characters of Shirin Aliabadi ("Miss Hybrid 6", pl. 11) with blond hair, blue contact lenses and straightened noses? In any event: should we consider such diversions from Ferdowsi as mistakes and negligence, or the result of their deliberate creative approach, similar to the one applied by Nizami, Amir Khosrow, Jami, Nazim Hikmet, Xanthe Gresham, Zabelin, and many others?

It is notable that the previous wave of westernisation in the book illustration of Persian classics under the Pahlavis seems to be more gentle. For example, in 1965 a very heavily illustrated *Bizhan and Manizheh* book was published in Tehran, and demonstrated quite a serious attempt of reconstruction of historical costumes and objects of applied art to be shown in the pictures. The whole group of artists was involved in this project, who produced sixty paintings to illustrate this ancient Parthian legend, which is considered to have been Ferdowsi's first story (pl.18). However, like in the medieval royal atelier, none of the artists was mentioned

by name but only as Laleh workshop (kargah-e honari-ye lale,) 38 .

Sohrab from Tehranjeles

Such many-century uninterrupted interest in their rich and ancient cultural heritage seems to be the secret of survival through the social and political turmoil since the times immemorial, when according to the Shahnameh the Iranians were fighting the forces of evil in the shape of demons, dragons, witches, as well as Greek Alexander, Arab Zahhak and Sa'd b. Waqqas, or Turanian Afrasiyab, who become a part of the modern everyday life, helping shape if not mythological mentality an imaginative state of mind.

The recent decade-long heavy political and economic sanctions have increased the ideological tension between Iran and the West and triggered the revival of nationalism in the country as well as self-consciousness and self-esteem of those Iranians who live both in Iran and in the countries whose governments imposed the sanctions. Many successful businessmen of Iranian descent living abroad made serious efforts to dissociate themselves from the current ideology in Iran, which has been declared in the West the axis of evil. Such dissociation, however, strengthened their interest and support of both the ancient and contemporary Iranian art.

It has been indeed the rich and ancient cultural heritage combined with the ability of Iran to resist and counteract the pressure of the western sanctions that became a subject of special pride. It encouraged the Iranian emigres to keep the national identity through culture, supporting and promoting it for the sake of the second, and even third generations of the Iranians. Paradoxically, those who were born outside the country have already become the carriers of a different culture due to their host's linguistic milieu, which is not always friendly towards their farfetched motherland.

Such double identity makes those Iranians who settled down abroad, and especially those who were already born outside Iran close to those Shahnameh characters who, like Romeo and Juliet, were destined to find themselves in between two hostile camps. In the Shahnameh Iran is juxtaposed to its eternal enemy Turan, a collective symbol of the other. However, several key figures of the epic have their parents coming from both sides of the border: Sohrab, the son of the greatest Iranian hero Rostam and the Turanian princess Tahmineh from Samangan; Key Khosrow, the son of the Iranian prince the martyr Siyavush and the Turanian Princess Farangis, the daughter of the King of Turan, Afrasiyab; and most of all Siyavush, the ancient symbol of Iranian martyrdom. When he tried to escape troubles at the court of his father Key Kavus and the love-hatred of his stepmother Sudaba, he left Iran for Turan but was betrayed and executed. The Shahnameh image of Transoxanian Siyavush has the most ancient parallels in other cultures, like Ancient Egyptian Osiris, or Biblical Joseph that is associated with the cyclical cult of deity symbolising the dying and reviving of nature every spring. As mentioned above, the idea of the Shahnameh coincides with the idea of Iran, and goes far beyond the text of Ferdowsi's poem.

Nowadays this idea has already materialised into the whole existing multidimensional and multimedia world, which sparkles with the myriads of various facets: from rather

^{36.} This publication (Shahnameh stories, London: Frances Lincoln, 2013) was made possible due to the support of the Parita and Siamak Bagheri.
37. Shahnameh stories, bilingual: Persian-English, Tehran: Bartarin, 1390

^{38.} An abridged version of the Bizhan and Manizha. A story taken from the Shahnama of Ferdowsi, Tehran, 1965.

fate. This Fate is represented quite often in her Shahnameh series paintings by both a very masculine bearded Devil and a very feminine Angel - both having huge handsome wings, as in the manuscript paintings. For example, in her "Love and Death" from the 'Shahnameh' series (2007) she tells the story of Tahmineh's love, Sohrab's birth and his death - all witnessed by the symbols of Good and Evil, and connected by the Tree of Life. Her brand image is a winged Timurid-style warrior with a statically beautiful face who for the sake of what he believes is right, commits the most ugly crimes.

Sometimes she intertwines contemporary poetry into the mediaeval-like microscopically minute and exceptionally decorative ornamental details which turn to the various tools of murder and death: guns, daggers, swords. In the exhibition triptych, Ossouli narrates the tragic story of Siyavush. Three panels represent three phases of his life, the main indications of them are always in the compositional centre: the dawn of life with a blossoming cherry and a pink sky in the background, with two scenes above and below: the girl (his future mother) is harassed by her drunk father and the birth of Sivavush. The Day panel with the blue sky but a big cloud in the middle has two scenes: the unsuccessful seduction of his step mother Sudabeh and the subsequent ordeal by fire to prove his innocence to his father King Kay Kavus. The third panel is the night of Siyavush's life: with the stunningly tall and beautiful cyprus tree in the middle surrounded by the clouds. The two scenes depict him in bed with his beloved wife, Princess Farangis, the daughter of the King of Turan, Afrasiyab. He is telling her his nightmare, he has just seen - how he will be betrayed and executed. In the cartouche below his prophetic dream comes true: he is beheaded.

Siamak Filizadeh's set of digital prints of his Rostam-Il-The Return series ('Rostam returns after 30 years being brought up abroad', 2008) has been already acquired by two American museums (LACMA and MMA). His Rostam II is an ideal combination of the Persian tradition, reflected in the complex of typically Iranian phenomena, like zurkhaneh and the art of coffeehouses (collective image of Rostam-II), together with the deepest knowledge of the mediaeval iconography of the popular scenes of the Shahnameh (the White Div as a Drug dealer of the megapolis of Tehran), quite severe irony towards western pop-culture (Tahmineh, Spiderman), excellent understanding of the Iranian tradition and exceptionally kind and gentle sense of humour and sarcasm towards the world of the celebrities (wedding and divorce threat of Rostam-2 and Tahmineh).

It was quite unexpected to see after such a good-humoured project Filizadeh's next exhibition of staged digital photography in a Fellini-type deliberately theatrical setting. 'Under Ground' was dedicated to quite a macabre topic of the historical assassination of Nasir al-Din Shah (1831-1896), who is periodically exhumed, assassinated and buried again. Remarkably precise is his depiction of the main participants of the Great Game: Shah's prime minister, his man-like harem dwellers, and of course a Russian and a British envoys (pl.8). This brilliant although a bit disturbing show has a very clear message: the post-Ferdowsi Shahnameh is as actual for Iranian history and culture as pre- and the one by Ferdowsi.

Shirin Neshat's 'The Book of Kings' series of 2012, especially her *Divine Rebellion* (pl.9), has a warning as serious as Ferdowsi's Shahnameh when he was creating his manifesto

against the enemies of Iran. The warning is very quiet as death can be, but extremely powerful. The legs hanging in the air still bear the tattoo signs of the taste of their dead owner: it is a reproduction of a lithographic scene of Rostam killing the great Turanian warrior Ashkabus. A splash of his blood indicates the end of the battle and yet another victory of Iran. Very poignantly chosen episode as it often appears as a motto of the whole poem on the Qajar lacquer bindings of the Shahnameh manuscripts.

Apart from the Iranian artists working on the themes of contemporary Shahnameh, there are two more categories which should be mentioned. One consists of professional artists who are not Iranian by origin but offer their own interpretation of the Iranian epic masterpiece.

Non-Iranian artists from East and West: orientalists or at home among strangers

One of the earliest non-Iranian painters who presented his own Shahnameh series was André Sevruguin. Although Armenian by blood, Sevruguin grew up in Persia and knew Persian, so the Shahnameh was a part of his culture as well. The collection of his watercolours, recently donated by his son Emmanuel Sevruguin to the National Library of Armenia (Matenadaran) consists of his various representations of the Shahnameh stories, some of them betraying his good knowledge of the many-century illustration tradition, as, for example, Farangis, Kay Khosrow and Tus crossing the Oxus, or the completely westernised interpretation of the Ascension of the angel Sorush and Key Kavus ascending the sky. Another artist, Zahra Hassan Agha, the organiser of the London jubilee exhibition of 2010, is of Pakistani origin, so for her to understand Ferdowsi and his cultural milieu was also much easier that to complete westerners. However, apart from good usage of the traditional arabesque ornament of the background and the image of the early Mughal-like flower as protagonist of her visual narrative, her interpretation of the first meeting of Zal and Rudabeh (The Fall, 2010, pl. 14) has a strong connotation with Pink Floyd's 'flower scene' from their Wall (1978).

Non-Iranian artists illustrating the Iranian national epic is a subject of special research and publication. It would be enough to say that in many cases they would use its themes, like Montesquieu in his Persian letters during the French Enlightenment époque, to discuss their own, or non-ethnically limited ideas. However, most of them would inevitably have some Orientalist flavour. One of the best and the earliest such examples is porcelain vase from the Hermitage Museum, depicting the story of Bizhan and Manizheh³⁵ (M. Moh, 1946, Lomonosov/Imperial Porcelain Factory (pl. 19).

Veronica Shimanovskaya, a British artist of Russian origin offered her own, rather feminist approach to the Bizhan and Manizheh story (pl.17): according to Ferdowsi, neither Rostam, nor even Bizhan sitting in the pit let Manizheh know about the plan for how to rescue him, although it was Manizheh who lost everything for the sake of her love to Bizhan and who was the means of communication with Rostam. The reason for such disrespectful attitude towards her was their mistrust of women in general. In Shimanovskaya's large painting there are no Rostam or Bizhan. It is only one real heroine in this story and in the picture: it is Manizheh as a

^{35.} Once upon a time, Christmas gift, Exhibition catalogue, St Petersburg: State Hermitage Museum, 2015, 88.

To commemorate the Tehran conference of November-December 1943, Kem produced a series of six postcards where Hitler was consistently depicted as Zahhak, while his snakes bore the portrait likeness of his allies Mussolini and Hirohito³¹ (pl. 6). In the mediaeval manuscript illustrations Feridun, the great saviour of the Iranian nation, is usually depicted riding the cow Barmaya arriving at the mountain Demavand (outside Tehran) to observe Zahhak being bound inside its dead crater. This traditional scene was replaced by Kem with three brave champions of anti-Nazi coalition: Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin riding white horses. Barmaya by the time when Feridun became the king was already dead but such a discrepancy did not bother the anonymous artist, and it did not bother Kem.

It is remarkable that Akram Ahmadi Tavana, the author of this survey, an artist in her own right, also focuses on the image of Zahhak as the idea of the evil which exists among us in the shape of a human being of common origin. Ahmadi Tavana's interpretation of Zahhak of our days is very similar to the one by composer Hadisi: he is difficult to recognise as he adapted himself to modern life so successfully that even his famous snakes became invisible (pl.24).

Despite such consistently negative understating of this infernal image it is quite symptomatic to see one of the most fascinating illustrations of this episode 'recycled' to produce both conceptual art, like in Soody Sharifi's "Love is in the air", 2007 (pl. 15) and on the objects of an American fashion design company³². While Sharifi's idea is obviously to show that modern Iranians are still at home with their old and sophisticated culture, the designers seem to have little knowledge about it as the item is indicated as 'miniature shawl, Persian pattern'³³ (pl. 27). Most likely their targeted clientele are the Iranian emigre milieu, who although they do not know well the iconography of the famous Shahnameh imagery keep their attachment and interest in their cultural heritage.

Shahnameh as a book of love and generosity, or unleashed violence

During the exhibition in the Fitzwilliam Museum in 2010 one of the visitors left a note in the visitors' book, saying that he thought he was coming to the exhibition to see the illustrations to poetry and love, and saw the most violent scenes of human cruelty. Indeed, among all existing Shahnameh manuscripts there are two most common types of standard iconography: enthronements or royal receptions, and battle scenes. Royal receptions either in a garden or in a palace are for the most part rather static and unexciting. However, most of the battle depictions are full of shocking details of mass decapitations, bissections, impaling on poles, crucifixions, shootings, stabbings, hangings on gallows, devourings by horrible fire-breathing dragons, and fights with hairy demons with flaming eyes. Fountains of blood and pyramids of cut off human heads appear in the most delicately depicted landscapes and intricate interiors. As if the paintings try show the contrast of two happily coexisting worlds: the absolute infinite beauty of static nature and the infinite ugliness of stormy human activity.

31. Omidsalar, Iran's epic and America's empire. A Handbook for a generation in Limbo,

Obviously, human nature has hardly changed: Hollywood thrillers, or violent video games bring incredible profit to their producers. Most of the artworks at the exhibition have more violence than serenity, but its aim is to show the difference between the violence of the computer game and the wakening messages of art.

It seems that the general tendency of contemporary Iranian art has its direction towards not entertaining literature but in many cases gruesome history, with the idea of violence and hypertrophic 'masculinity'34 in the background. This is most likely due to a combination of political and social factors, especially the Iran-Irag war, which left a deep and hardly healing scar on the whole generation. Iranian artists both inside and outside the country in many cases use the visual patterns of the Shahnameh to reflect this phenomenon as during Ferdowsi's times violence, mass battles, death and blood were much more common than short periods of peace and gayety. By contrast, artworks dedicated to the Shahnameh, produced by non-Iranians have a completely different reception and interpretation of the similar episodes. Foreign artists tend to illustrate the stories, trying to give a close depiction of the textual original. At the same time their approach is not free from rather orientalist understanding of Ferdowsi's legends as romantically exotic Persian fairy tales, like in the imaginative art deco painting by Vardges Surenyants Ferdawsi reads his Shahnameh before Sultan Mahmud (1913, pl.20). Iranian artists usually go beyond mere illustration, while the most prominent feature of their concept is dissatisfaction, torture, and pain, decline, murder, and death. Even extremely decorative and delicate artworks, like, for example, by Ossouli, carry the same idea.

Pictures from the exhibition

Iranian perception of Iranian national epic: back to roots Only very few artworks will be discussed in this brief preface with the focus on those who know well both the textual and visual originals, the stories, which became a part of the classical Persian literature illustrative tradition and apply their knowledge and experience in their artworks. They, like Ossouli and Filizadeh, have developed their own concept, style and sometimes technique expressing their ideas. In many cases they introduce a comparison, not only between past and present and East and West, but also between kitsch and pop, and high art. Their visual interpretations tell their own stories, and in great detail.

For example, in his drawings Kambiz Derambakhsh, deliberately emulates a very laconic and decorative technique of Reza-ye Abbasi-style album portraits. The main theme of his easily recognisable settings of the generic Timurid- and Safavid-like paintings is the idea of death, murder, and blood depicted in a mundane and routine manner. Such medieval cruelty, which is a norm of the contemporary everyday life, is striking.

A very similar interpretation of the universal themes of love, birth and joy being juxtaposed with betrayal, pain, torture and death is depicted in the most exquisite technique of Farah Ossouli's paintings. The first impression they produce is infinite serene beauty, which by the time one gets closer to the details turns to the shocking cruelty and injustice of

^{32.} Cotton shawl by Alangoo, bringing underground fashion online, 2016.

^{33. &}quot;Zahhak sees the snakes growing out of his shoulders", attributed to Sultan Muhammad, Shah Tahmasp Shahnameh (1524-1576), f. 26v, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran

^{34.} Mehri Honarbin-Holliday, 'Emerging forms of masculinity in the Islamic republic of Iran', in: Cultural revolution in Iran. Contemporary popular culture in the Islamic Republic, eds. A. Sreberny and M. Torfeh, London, 59-80.

that nowadays it is not an easy task to identify which particular parts do not belong to Ferdowsi. The interpolated stories and the whole cycles about additional heroes, like Garshasp, Barzu, Faramarz, and others double the possible original up to ca. 80,000 baits.

All Ferdowsi's mediaeval successors tried to surpass their predecessor(s) and offer their own 'improved' version: among them were Asadi Tusi, Gurgani, Nizami, Amir Khosrow Dihlavi and many others. Such emulations have never stopped emerging. Ferdowsi's characters reappear in Simin Daneshvar's *Savushun*, or in Tajik poetry of W.W.II. Once translated, these stories receive further interpretations in text, fork example, 'Khosrow and Shirin' play by Grigory Ptitsyn (1941); Xanthe Gresham 'Rostam and Tahmineh' storytelling (2010).

Sculpture

In the first years after the Islamic revolution the attitude to the Shahnameh was influenced by the negative feelings towards the overthrown Pahlavi dynasty, who were associating themselves with the kings of the Shahnameh and Keyanid-Achaemenid glory. However, Abolhasan Seddeghi's monument to Ferdowsi on the Ferdowsi square survived the political turmoils although during the latest green movement it was among the first to acquire its green scarf. Seddighi, before his great commission to contribute to Ferdowsi mausoleum in Tus, was offered to create his sculpture to be sent to Rome in 1958 to represent the Iranian national symbol at the entrance to the villa Borghese. Due to this monument this square was called after Ferdowsi. By now this place hosts quite a few other literary icons of their nations²⁶.

The 3D digital very detailed metal-like models of Ferdowsi and his characters have been produced by Aydin Salsabili (pl.29).

Films

Among the first cinematographic interpretations there was Kimyagarov's quite Eisenstein-inspired Kaveh's Banner (1961) (pl. 26), followed by his romantic trilogy (The Legend of Rostam, 1971; Rostam and Sohrab, 1971, and The Legend of Siyavush, 1976), all in rather Soviet realism style. In Iran Bahram Beyzai's polemic film The Death of Yazdgerd was almost lost in between the generations as it was finished in the year of the Islamic revolution (1979) and thus was not welcomed on the Iranian television or cinemas due to the changed dress code for women. Among the latest, Iranian TV productions there was a heavily nationalistic 28-episode film Forty Soldiers (Chanel 4, 2007), where Ferdowsi's heroes Rostam, Sohrab and Isfandiayr join forces with Imam Ali, Malek Ashtar²⁷ and Abu Rafi'²⁸, and fight against the forty American commandos under general Hamilton who invaded Iran²⁹.

Animation

Ferdowsi's characters are still a part of the everyday life of the Iranians, as shown with warm and slightly bitter satire in the Pouya Afshar-Soroush Rezaee animation series project "Rostam in Wonderland" (2012-3) about the Rostam of the 11th century, who happened to be transferred to Tehran of the 21st century (pl. 33). Animation-type films since the first films by Ali Akbar Sadeghi (Seven Cities, 1971; Malek Khorshid, 1975; Zaal and Simorgh, 1977 and others) are particularly popular both in Iran and abroad. Almost all of them offer their own interpretations of the ancient stories, including Mehran Ghahari's complete reinterpretation of the famous tragedy of Rostam and Sohrab (2010), where in the finale it is not Rostam who kills his son but Sohrab who kills his father.

Opera and ballet

Due to Behrouz Gharibpour's puppet version of Loris Tjeknovarian's opera *Rostam and Sohrab* (1963) it is now possible to enjoy the original music production with female voices in the Ferdowsi Hall of Tehran and even watch the famous scene of the only night which Rostam and Tahmineh spent together.

The Feridun-Özsoy Opera played an important role in the modern history and diplomacy of Iran and Turkey. When Mostafa Kemal was preparing for the visit of Reza Khan in 1934, Ahmed Saygun (1907–1991) was commissioned to produce the first Turkish European-style opera Özsoy, which helped to re-establish good relationship between the two countries. In this opera Tur (Wolf) instead of following Ferdowsi and out of jealousy murdering his brother Iraj (Lion), reconciles with Iraj for the sake of their eternal brotherhood and filial love towards Feridun-Özsoy. Such a twist of the story removed the reason for the never-ending war between the two nations of Iran and Turan (with which Ferdowsi was associating the Turks).

Apart from the whole series of Soviet ballets, following the story of Khosrow and Shirin, the ballet *Kaveh the Blacksmith* (2004, composer Ahmad Pejman) was staged by Nima Kian and his Les Ballets Persans company based in Stockholm (pl.23).

Propaganda postcards

The well-established iconography of the most popular scenes of the Shahnameh during the many-hundred years of illustrating the poem was used by the British propaganda for producing the anti-Nazi posters³⁰. Two prominent professors Mojtaba Minovi (1903-1976) of Tehran, and Arthur Arberry (1905-1969) of Cambridge, advised political cartoonist Kem (Kimon Evan Marengo (1907-1988) who served at the British Ministry of Information during W.W.II. on the illustrations depicting Hitler as Zahhak. The image of Zahhak or the dragon king for centuries has been associated with the idea of universal evil, tyranny and suppression in general and the symbol of the foreign invasion in particular, although Ferdowsi's Arab Prince Zahhak never invaded Iran, on the contrary was invited by the Iranian nobles to rule country (pl. 7). Zahhak etymologically goes back to its Avestan prototype - the three headed demon Azhi-Dahaka. In the Shahnameh it is already a human king who like Faust sold his soul to the Devil. To avoid the torments of the serpents he acquired by the order of the Devil he has to feed them with the human brains. So this monster is literally devours the people of the country he is supposed to rule.

^{26.} Piazzale Ferdovsi is now a polygon of the national identities rivalry: next to Ferdowsi a monument to Nizami was erected by the Azerbaijan embassy (S. Mamedov and A. Ibadullaev, 2012), while the monument to Gogol was put by the Russian embassy (Z. Tsereteli, 2002).

^{27.} Imam Ali's most devoted companion.

^{28.} the governor of the Jewish fort Khaibar.

^{29.} Obviously, a mirror image of the early Christian myth of the Forty Roman soldiers of Sebaste, or forty martyrs of Christ who in the year of 320 were frozen to death but did not betray their faith.

^{30.} A. Wynn, The Shahname and British propaganda in Iran in World War II, Manuscripta Orientalia, vol. 16, No. 1, June 2010, 3-5; Omidsalar, Iran's Epic and America's Empire, 142-3.

national mentality is rooted in the exceptionally high interest of the general public in the national literary heritage.

Such phenomenal knowledge of the classical literature is caused by the very traditional style of education still widely practised in Iran and based on memorising enormous amounts of poetry alongside religious texts both in Persian and Arabic, exactly as it was prescribed in the collection of historical anecdotes *Chahar Maqaleh* ('Four discourses') compiled in the 12th century by Nizami Aruzi Samarqandi²⁴. It is not surprising, therefore, that the most popular poet of contemporary Iran is the 14th-century Hafez ('the one who knows the whole Qur'an by heart') whose ghazals are used in the everyday life in Iran in the same capacity of fortune telling as the Qur'an.

Generally, contemporary Iranian art has a lot in common with the national classics, both in literature and visual art, however, in many cases deliberately hidden to be revealed by the connoisseurs. Not often easily recognisable subjects, they are mostly only fragments of arabesque decor, or elements of images in different styles - Timurid, Safavid, particularly Qajar both royal and popular. They are heavily used by the artists working in various genres: painting, photography, digital collage, 3-D, video, film, theatre, music, opera, ballets, video games, etc. Their purpose is to give a hint of their knowledge of the history and the connection with the rich and ancient heritage. Among them are²⁵: Nasser Oveissi ("In blue", 1977; Where have the riders gone?, 2007); Aydin Aghdashloo ("Untitled", 1979), Parviz Tanavoli ("Farhad, the Mountain Carver", and many others); Shadi Ghaderian ("Qajar" series, 2001), Sadegh Tirafkan ("Multitude Nos 1, 4, 7", 2008; 'Whispers of the East' series, 2006-7); Shadi Ghaderian ('Ghajar series', 1998-9); Shoja Azari ("Fake: Idyllic Life", "The king is black", 2013); Babak Kazemi ("Exit of Shirin and Farhad", 2012); Arman Estepanian ("Mahgol", 'New Art' series, 2011); Shiva Sherveh ("Rostam's doll", 2013); Mona Hakimi-Schuler ('Stories I live by'series, 2013); Ahmad Amin Nazar ("Untitled", 2012); Shahriar Ahmadi ('Mi'raj' series, 2009; 'Memories of the First Hijra centuries' series, 2010); Reza Panahi (2008); Mostafa Choobtarash ('And so, I ordered the crickets' stings' series, 2012); Pooya Abbasian and Farshid Monfared ('Akil al-Muluk' series, 2009); Hadi Nasiri ("In my name", 2009); Sohrab Kashani ('The adventures of super-Sohrab' series, 2012); Mortaza Talebi ("The sword dance from the beginning of the end", 2010); Rokni Haerizadeh ("Leyli and Mainoon". 2006): Bahman lalali ("A woman smoking galvan". 2001); Rahim Najfar ("A Horseback rider in Ta'ziya", 1974); Hojatolla Shakiba ("Memorial photo", 1977); Gizilla Varga Sinai ("Untitled", 1990), Alireza Fani ("Employment", 2012); Ramin Haerizadeh ('Men of Allah' series, 2008); Taravat Talepasand ("The order of the Sun and Lion", 2007); Seyfollah Samadian ("Heaven and Hell", 2008); Afshan Ketabchi ("Banana" and "Behind the Hatch" from 'The Harem' series, 2008); Shirin Neshat ('Qajar' series); Pouran Jinji ("Louis Vuitton II", 2005; "Dual panel 4", 2007); Narges Hashemi ("Today is a gift", 2008): Khosrow Hassanzadeh ("Takhti". 2007: 'Ya Ali madad' series, 2008 and 'Pahlevan' series, 2006); Parastou Forouhar ("RED is my name. GREEN is my name", 2008; Kiss me, 2013); Asad Faulwell ("Pillars - Iran [1882-1989]", 2009); Monir Farmanfarmayan ("Heartache No 5, The Qajar Legacy", 2008?); Ala Ebtekar ("Elemental", 2004; "Ascension", 2007; "Under the indigo dome II", 2009); Fataneh Dadkhah ("Destruction", 2007?); Andisheh Avini ("Untitled", 2006); Fereydoun Ave ("Rostam in late summer revisited" series, 2000; "Endangered species", 2003); Hojat Amani ('Angel' series, 2010); Kamrooz Aram ("Mystic visions undetected by night vision strengthen the faith of the believers and make their enemies scatter. Part II", 2007); Nazgol Ansarnia ("Patterns", 2008); Shiva Ahmadi ("Horses", "Boat", "Pigs", 2007; "Oil barrel red", 2008; "Hocus-pokus", 2009); Negar Ahkami ("Wanted hand", 2006; "Islamables Mehrab shelf", 2004-7; "Trying to pluck her eyebrows, she blinded herself", 2009); Afsoon ('Seasons of love talismans' series, 2008; 'Fairytale icon' series, 2009); Samira Abbasy ("Favorite of ten thousand to my soul", 2005", Moth to a flame", 2008), Zhazeh Tabatabaei ("Lioness and the Sun lady", 1960s); Ali Akbar Sadegi ("Zal and Simorgh", 1978); Kambiz Derambakhsh ('Black miniatures' series, 1973-5); Hamid Hemayatian ('Permissibility: the Ambiguous and Distorted Historical Identity' series, 2014). Jalali Sousan-Abadi (Wealth of love, 1991), Soody Sharifi "Love is in the air" from 'Maxiatures' series, 2007), Ali Chitsaz ("The battle of Mamasani", 2008).

A very similar style of reinterpretation was applied by the Iranian artists to the well-known imagery of Western European art: Aydin Aghdashloo (from 'Memories of destruction' series, 1975 and 2001; Shirin Neshat (Pari, 2008); Ghessam Hajizadeh (untitled, 2006); Farah Ossouli ("Ars Poetica", 2009), Farideh Lashai ("4 minutes 30 seconds to recover Le temps perdu", 2008).

There are still quite a lot of artists who are continuing the tradition of folk crafts, following the style of *pardehs* and coffee house art, emulating the classical style of book miniature painting, carpet designs, glass painting, wood marquetry, etc.: Hadi Khan Tajvidi ("Shahnameh Majles", 1926; "Purple dome", 1930), or their Europeanstyle imitations: Abutaleb Moghimi Tabrizi ("If you want to know what wisdom is ask the dervishes", 1966); Mahmoud Javadipour (Ta'ziyeh, 1954; Festivity, 1958); Abbas Bolokifar ("Karbala Epic", 1985); Kazem Chalipa ("Zul-Janah", 1985); Mohammad Bagher Aghamiri ("Ashura Noon", 1986); Majid Mehregan ("Phoenix and Dragon", 1983); Mohammad Modabber ("The battle of Rostam", early 20th century); and Mahmoud Farshchian ("Flagbearer of Justice", 2010).

Post-Shahnameh, or the Shahnameh of our times

Right after the poem was finished it started to receive an unlimited number of imitations and emulations, some of which were interpolated into the corpus of the text by later authors and scribes throughout the centuries so masterfully

^{24.} This collection consists of the stories of exceptional importance for the history of Persian culture because it has the earliest surviving information about the greats of the Persian Golden age, including Ferdowsi himself. Nizami 'Aruzi in his only surviving Mirror for Princes was instructing the young prince how to become an educated ruler by learning hundreds of lines in both languages - the language of their religion and the language of their poetry.

^{25.} Only a selection of artists' names is given here, based on the materials already published in the following most recent catalogues and studies: Rose Issa and Ruyin Pakbaz, Iranian contemporary art, London, 2002: Fereshteh Daftari and Haggai Ram, Picturing Iran: Art, Society and Revolution, London, 2002; Talinn Grigor, Contemporary Iranian Art: From the Street to the Studio, London, 2014; Art of the Middle East: Modern and Contemporary Art of the Arab World and Iran, London, 2015; Iran inside out. Influences of homeland and diaspora on the artistic language of contemporary Iranian artists, New York, 2009; Different Sames. New Perspectives in Contemporary Iranian Art, H. Keshmirshekan (ed.), London, 2009; H. Keshmirshekan, Contemporary Iranian Art. New Perspectives, London, 2013; Susann Wintsch, "I can't get no sleep: contemporary art in Tehran," in: The Fascination of Persia. The Persian-European dialogue in seventeenth-century art and contemporary art of Tehran, Zurich, 2013, 266-293; Fereshteh Daftari and Layla Diba, Iran Modern, New Haven, 2013; Iran: iranomutomorphosis.net. Contemporary artists from Iran, Treviso, 2014; The eye of the Shah. Qajar Court Photography and the Persian Past, ed. Jennifer Y. Chi, New York, 2015. I also thank Janet Rady for her advise regarding some artists and their works.

Persian Dragon King (pl.24), composed by Hossein Hadisi, postdoctoral fellow at the Music Department, the University of Cambridge.

All these exhibitions were held in England, i.e. outside Iran and organised by non-Iranians. In Iran there has been one group Shahnameh workshop in Tehran (Laleh gallery, 2002), and a decade earlier - an exhibition of the contemporary reception of the Shahnameh in Iran. It was organised in Tehran's Afrand gallery by Ruyin Pakbaz in 1989, soon after the end of the Iran-Iraq war to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Islamic revolution and... the millennium of the completion of the poem (sic)14. It was guite a personal feat for both the thirteen artists and the organiser, as the participants in the war and the old revolutionaries were still associating the epic negatively with the overthrown regime rather than with national heroism in the style of Ferdowsi's Rostam¹⁵. Seemingly uneventful show was followed in 1990 by the International Ferdawsi Congress at Tehran University. where Ferdawsi was presented as a Shi'i with the special emphasis on the so-called 'Ship of Faith' passage16, while even his characters acquired some Muslim features.

It is believed that Iran's social, political and cultural domains have been dominated by three main components: modernity and its place in Iranian politics and society; nationalism; and Islamic Shi'i identity¹⁷. In the Shahnameh the idea of the martyrdom of several key characters, like Siyavush, Iraj, or Sohrab is very prominent and has the most natural continuation in the Shi'i mourning ceremonies of Imam 'Ali and his sons, which gives a unique merge of pre-Islamic and Shi'i Islamic ideas, peculiar to Iranian culture, and particularly reflected in visual culture. Popular representations produced for the *muharram* processions and 'ashura ceremonies are very similar in nature to the very ancient tradition of pre-Islamic cult of the sug-e Siyavush ('mourning of Siyavush') known in Soghdian and Khwarazmian milieux of Transoxania.

The general iconography of the stories used for the *pardeh*¹⁸ illustration programme widely represented in the interior decoration of the coffee houses is thus shared by both the *shahnameh-khani*¹⁹ and *ta'ziyeh*²⁰ performances. This was shown very explicitly at the latest exhibition of the *Art of the Coffee Houses*, in the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art in 2007. Such a merge would mean that any modern movements in Iranian art, like for example the famous

14. The anniversary was quite a conventional: Ferdowsi completed his poem in 1010 and died most likely in 1020.

Saqqa-khaneh²¹, which do not have an obvious relevance to the Shahnameh, would be still impregnated with its ideas.

So if the above-mentioned definitions of Iranian cultural identity (modernity, nationalism and shi'ism) are correct, the answer to the question why the contemporary *Shahnameh* exhibitions are so rare seems to be rather simple. If the idea of the *Shahnameh* is identical to the idea of Iran, the attempt to create something which already exists makes a special event rather pleonastic in Iran. The attitude towards it abroad is completely different.

Persian contemporary non-Shahnameh art

Iranian contemporary art has been a great fashion at the international art auctions and shows with the increasing popularity, especially since the Islamic revolution. At the latest 56th Venetian Biennale (9 May-22 November 2015) Iranian art was shown in several pavilions and a full scale publication was prepared²². However, most of the Iranian artworks participating in western auctions conform to the existing trends, making their art unidentifiable as specifically Iranian, producing the *déjà vu* impression with easily identifiable sources of inspiration, like Picasso, Duchamp, Matisse, Shagal, Warhol, Klimt, or Kandinsky.

Such process of integration of Iranian visual art into western culture started during the Pahlavi period despite the personal royal support of folk arts and crafts. It was the time when the rapidly europeanising Persian urban society was eagerly and enthusiastically absorbing western elements in literature, visual art, music, dance, cinema, etc., trying to prove that art is universal and not tied up to and by national identities. However, the many-century tradition was too robust and resistant, as seen in a poem by Forugh Farrokhzad who was among those who started to wage the war against the old rules and traditions. However, having adopted purely western ideas and rules of prosody into her poetry, she wrote one of the most enchanting poem called Ghazal (چون سنگها صدای مرا گوش می کنی), which could compete in its classical style and technique with the masterpieces of the past. The same phenomenon could be applied in visual art.

There have been many waves of artistic interaction between Iran and the West. After the Hellenistic interaction with the Achaemenid, Parthian and Sasanian dynasties the next serious wave of Perso-European cultural intercommunication arrived in Persia during the Safavid period²³. More actively the artists started to turn from the 700-year old tradition to a style more European in expression in the mid-19th century. However, it was already during the Pahlavi period that the images in many cases stopped being just illustrations of the text but started to express a completely different, conceptual approach of representing not only the stories but their ideas.

Despite such long process of latent *gharbzadegi* (western influence), Iranian contemporary culture managed to keep a very peculiar feature which is unique and distinguishes it from all others. This unique feature reflecting the Iranian

^{15.} See introduction by Akram Tavana, p.

^{16.} Raya Y. Shani, 'Illustrations of the parable of the Ship of Faith in Firdausi's prologue to the Shahnama', Shahnama Studies I, London, 2006 17. Hamid Keshmirshekan, Contemporary Iranian Art. New Perspectives, London, 2013, Kirstie Imber, review of H. Keshmirshekan, "Contemporary Iranian Art: New Perspectives," Iranian Studies, vol. 49, issue 1, 2016 176-180; Mahmud Omidsalar, Poetics and Politics of Iran's National Epic, the Shahnameh, New York, 2011; Iran's Epic and America's Empire, A handbook for a generation in limbo, Santa Monica, 2012; Homa Katouzian, The Persians: Ancient, Mediaeval and Modern Iran, New Haven, 2010, 14 18. Curtain, used by a traveling storyteller during his partly improvised performances, which happen usually in the coffeehouses, or outdoors. Such curtains have the whole story visually narrated on one piece of canvas. A storyteller during his performance refers to a particular episode depicted on the pardeh. The sequence of episodes is not necessarily arranged in order. Usually the main scene, where the story culminates is placed in the centre, while less important episodes are shown along the borders or randomly around.

^{19.} Recitations of the stories from the Shahnameh, which is a very ancient tradition going back to the pre-Islamic times.

^{20.} Street passion play dedicated to the mourning of those perished at the battle of Kerbela (10 Muharram 61/10 October 680)

^{21.} Hamid Keshmirshekan, Saqqa-kana ii. School of art (2009), Encyclopaedia Iranica online.

^{22.} Iran: iranomutomorphosis.net. Contemporary artists from Iran, Treviso, 2014.

^{23.} The Fascination of Persia. The Persian-European dialogue in Seventeenth-century art and contemporary art of Teheran, Zurich, 2013, especially the essay by Gary Schwartz, "Between Court and Company. Dutch artists in Persia," 152-170.

also have been depicting the stories from non-Ferdowsi shahnameh-style narratives.

Shahnameh exhibitions

As far as almost all national and private, big and modest museums and libraries have manuscripts and artefacts related to the stories of the Shahnameh it would be a rare exhibition on Persian and Islamic art that would not contain at least a piece depicting one of its scenes.

The first celebration of the millennium in Iran, at the urging of the nationalist Sayyid Hasan Tagizadeh and others, has been well documented by Shahpur Shahbazi⁷, who discusses not only the construction of the modern tomb, which was inaugurated in 1934, but the month-long series of events in Tehran, Mashhad and Tus itself, as well as the publication of a large number of studies of Ferdawsi and the Shahnameh that were stimulated by the millennium. These include Henri Massé's Ferdawsi et l'epopee nationale (Paris, 1934) and special issues of Bakhtar Mehr, the Journal Asiatique and Iran-i Bastan. Furthermore, the occasion inspired some enduring contributions to scholarship, such as the new Burukhim edition of the text; the publication by Muhammad Qazvini of the Abu Mansuri version of the prose Preface, Fritz Wolff's invaluable glossary, Glossar zu Ferdosis Schahname (Berlin, 1935) and Dhabih-Allah Safa's magisterial Hamasasara'i dar Iran (Tehran, 1946)8.

Among the other celebrations outside Iran was an important conference on 29 May 1934 to celebrate the birth of Ferdawsi, hosted by the Oriental Institute and the State Hermitage Museum in Leningrad (St Petersburg), accompanied by an exhibition in the foyer of the Hermitage theatre. This too generated some valuable work, including L. T. Giuzal'yan and M. M. Dyakonov's catalogue of the Shahnameh manuscripts in Leningrad, an accompanying volume of illustrations, and a conference proceedings that includes valuable articles by many prominent Iranologists, including E. E. Bertels (later to supervise the publication of the complete Moscow edition). The introductory note was written by the Director of the Hermitage, losif Orbeli⁹.

Meanwhile art historians had been reminded of the importance of the Shahnameh in the formative stages of Persian miniature painting by the celebrated Exhibition at Burlington House in London, January-March 1931, which displayed numerous copies of the work¹⁰.

The last powerful wave of the Shahnameh Millennial celebrations washed the globe in 2010 from Tehran, Washington, and Dublin to Berlin, Lahore and St Petersburg. England hosted two of its most successful shows: one was in Cambridge on the traditional art of medieval Shahnameh manuscripts from the British collections 'Epic of the Persian Kings: The Art of Ferdowsi's Shahnameh' (curated by Barbara Brend). Its opening on 11 September 2010 at the Fitzwilliam Museum coincided not only with the anniversary of the beginning of American hysteria against the Muslim world but with the establishment of the Cambridge Shahnama Centre

7. Shahbazi, "Ferdowsı, iv. Millenary celebration," Encyclopaedia Iranica

8. See more in Akram Tavana essay below.

which grew out of the British Academy-funded Cambridge Shahnama Project.

The Shahnama Project's main achievement to date is the creation of an interactive online database of about 20,000 images from the national museums, galleries, libraries and private collections in Iran, U.K., France, Russia, Germany, U.S.A., India, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Tajikistan, Armenia, Spain, Malaysia and other countries. The Project has had a great scholarly and public impact: the website is garnering widespread interest, with 9,000 different users around the world consulting it every day.

Contemporary Shahnameh exhibitions

In the same 2010 jubilee year another international exhibition took place in the London Prince's Gallery and it was solely dedicated to contemporary perception of the ideas of the Shahnameh. This event, apart from several solo exhibitions by André Sevruguin¹¹, Siamak Filizadeh, Farah Ossouli, Shirin Neshat, Taraneh Sadeghian, Jamshid Haghighatshenas, Naser Mohammadi, Reza Hedayat, Artemis Shahbazi, Mohsen Keiany,¹² and several others, was the first international contemporary Shahnameh show in the whole history of modern art. It was curated by Zahra Hassan-Agha who at that time was affiliated at Sharjah University and the Cambridge Shahnameh Project. The show presented the works of seventeen famous and young artists from Iran, India, Pakistan, Russia, the US and Australia¹³.

After it there were two shows modest in size but extremely ambitious in perspective in Cambridge (2013 and 2014) as a part of the recently established series "Shahnameh Forever: Illustrating Shahnameh in the 21st century" (curated by Veronica Shimanovskaya). This series was born almost simultaneously with the Cambridge Shahnama Centre for Persian Studies due to the generous support of Bita Daryabari.

The main idea of these exhibitions is to show the continuity of the ancient story and its modern visual interpretation contemporaneous with our changing world. In other words that the ancient tales of the Shahnameh lived not only in the past and buried in the dusty manuscripts placed in the museums and libraries but they and their ideas are still alive in our time, mind and heart, and despite being very Iranian (Parthian, Persian, Soghdian, Khwarazmian, or Scythian) in origin, they have no ethnic boundaries and can be comprehensible in any international community. The exhibitions' mission is to show the interaction between the past and present, literature, art, music and dance, high art and pop-culture, East and West, Iran, Europe and the world. For this reason, the paintings by Siamak Filizadeh, Farah Ossouli, Fereydoun Ave. Veronica Shimanovskaya, Golnar Malek, and Sama Soltani were combined with an Ilkhanid tile with the Ferdowsi's verse, Feofanov's tile depicting Ferdowsi flying the Simorgh (pl.4), and Shahnameh manuscripts illustrated between the 14th and 17th centuries from the Cambridge collections. One of the shows was organised together with the premier of the opera Zahhak: the

^{9.} L.T. Giuzal'yan and M. M. Dyakonov, Shahnameh manuscripts in the Leningrad collections, Leningrad, 1934; Iranian miniature paintings in the manuscripts of the Shahnameh manuscripts from the Leningrad collections, Leningrad, 1935

^{10.} See Laurence Binyon, J. V. S. Wilkinson and Basil Gray, Persian Miniature Painting, London, 1933.

^{11.} Very recently a collection of more than a hundred paintings and photographs of Antoine and André Sevruguin's were presented to the Matenadaran by André Sevruguin's son Emmanuel. Twenty two of them depict the stories from the poems by Ferdowsi. Eight of them are currently on display. I thank Knarik Sahakyan for this information.

^{12.} His latest exhibition "Unseen Shahnameh" is currently shown at the Sanat Gallery, Karachi.

^{13.} Painting the Persian Book of Kings today. Ancient text and modern images, Cambridge, 2010.

but the one to whom he dedicated the deal of his life was Mahmud, the son of a Turkish slave who invaded his country!

Why did he decide to do this? Did he lose his mind like Don Quixote who refused to believe that the world was not like the one he wanted to see it?

Probably his main intention was to save his life's work from disappearance by giving it to someone who could appreciate at least its artistic merits. Sultan Mahmud was known as a great literary connoisseur: at his court he surrounded himself with dozens of brilliant poets⁵. But Mahmud was known even more as a great politician: at his court he established a special department of propaganda where the best poets of his time were employed to praise his personality, his lifestyle and his conquests. In case of Ferdowsi Mahmud had to make a serious choice: either to be known as a literary connoisseur, or a politician? And he preferred the second as he vividly saw that the poem was written not for him but against him. He did not have to pretend that he liked the poem for the sake of its artistic merits while its ideology disgusted him. He was already the most powerful ruler of the largest empire of his time. He had enough high-class poets to praise him, he did not need Ferdowsi, and the poem was rejected.

It is also possible that Mahmud felt that Ferdowsi tried to cheat him, thinking that he would swallow a bitter pill of its contents if it was wrapped in the sweet icing of lavish dedication to Mahmud, distributed on both sides of the poem - in the beginning and at the end. However, the pretty wrapping could not change the appeal and ideology of the poem, and after the superficial praise Mahmud could hear the genuine curse on all low class non-Iranian usurpers who should be kicked off the throne and out of the country.

What was even more important: Mahmud, using his strong pro-Sunni support was launching his regular military expeditions to India - the source of the enormous wealth of his empire under the umbrella of fighting the infidels. Ferdowsi's ambiguous religious identity, which was later declared pro-Shi'i, was probably an even more serious obstacle for his Shahnameh being accepted in Ghazna.

It is known that Ferdowsi used about a thousand baits (verses) of his predecessor Daqiqi, who allegedly was murdered in the bathhouse by his favourite slave. It is also believed that this murder was more a political assassination rather than a romantic tragedy, as Daqiqi was famous for his pro-Zoroastrian sympathies. In fact his thousand baits which Ferdowsi incorporated into his Shahnameh with proper acknowledgment were telling the story of the emergence of Zoroastrianism. Most likely the main reason for acknowledging Dagigi's authorship was to avoid the responsibility for depicting Zaratushtra and his religion sympathetically: Ferdowsi's own reputation was already quite damaged. It was not only a legend that Ferdowsi was not allowed to be buried in the Muslim cemetery, but in his own estate, where under the Pahlavis his magnificent mausoleum a la Cyrus' tomb was erected.

Ferdowsi stops his narrative when the Arabs invade the

country and bring Islam. It was such a coincidence that the last Sasanian general who was destined to fight the Arabs was also called Rostam, like the greatest hero of the mythological part of the poem. Rostam's correspondence with the Arabs before his fatal battle seems to be very revealing about Ferdowsi's own ideas about Islam and the Arab invasion. It is notable that some medieval artists would depict him as unsurpassable mythological hero Rostam, and in some cases the illustration would contradict even Ferdowsi's text: the artists would refuse to accept that someone called Rostam could be defeated and so the single combat between the Iranian general Rostam and the Arab general Sa'd b. Waggas would show Rostam killing Sa'd and not how it was in reality. It seems that for Ferdowsi the Iranian civilisation ended together with the Arab invasion, and there is nothing to write about afterwards.

Not surprisingly, Sultan's department of state propaganda declared the poem not only worthless but harmful, and ridiculed the ideals of Ferdowsi.

Shahnameh before and after Ferdowsi

Consequently, the *Shahnameh* disappeared for two centuries. What happened next? Since the thirteenth century until now the stories from the Shahnameh have been among the most popular in the Persian speaking world. Compared with Shakespeare's characters, who have become an inseparable part of the English culture, the Shahnameh's characters are a natural part of the Persians' everyday life. The poem and its ideas, like phoenix, survived two centuries of oblivion and successfully resurrected to help the whole nation to survive the most difficult periods in its history: wars, revolutions and sanctions.

Hundreds of luxuriously illustrated manuscript copies of the text as well as quite commercial-quality codices are kept in museums and libraries throughout the world as evidence of its popularity both in palaces and bazaars during the last thousand years.

However, the written tradition goes back to several centuries later. The earliest surviving manuscript dates back to 1217, i.e. about two hundred years after Ferdowsi's death, and the earliest surviving illustrated manuscripts belong to an even later period: the 14th century, i.e. another two centuries. This is one more enigma about Ferdowsi and his masterpiece, which is usually connected with Sultan Mahmud and his propaganda machine, namely role of the invasion of the Mongols who in turn were also responsible for the revival of the Shahnameh, trying to associate themselves with the idea of Iranian kingship and generally – the creme de la creme of the local culture.

Illustrating the Book of Kings

It is basically agreed that Ferdawsi's version of the great epic is the most frequently illustrated text in Persian art. The great Mongol Shahnameh (ca. 1330–36) and the Shah Tahmasp manuscript (mid-16th century) are towering masterpieces in the whole rich history of Persian painting⁶. It is known that some pre-Ferdowsi narratives which he later included into his Shahnameh inspired many silver objects of the Sasanian period (pl. 1) or Soghdian murals from Penjkent (now in the Hermitage Museum), which iconography once established would be developed later (pl. 2). The post-Ferdowsi but pre-manuscript ceramics of the 12th-13th centuries might

^{5.} the number of 400 mentioned in medieval chronicles and anthologies can be considered as a metaphor of plentifulness. About his head-hunting methods see the mentioned above Nizami 'Aruzi Samarqandi's Four Discourses.

^{6.} O. Grabar, Why was the Shahnama Illustrated?," Iranian Studies, vol. 43, Special issue 1 (Millennium of the Shahnama of Ferdowsi, 2010, pp.

The Shahnameh in the age of the Post-Shahnameh: from illustration to concept

از آن پس نمیرم که من زندهام که تخم سخن من پراگندهام

I shall not die, these seeds I've sown will save *My name and reputation from the grave...*¹

These words by Ferdowsi are always quoted to prove that his poem has universal importance and its narrative can be applied to all phenomena of human behaviour until nowadays. This essay is an attempt to discuss why the Iranian epic poem which was compiled a thousand years ago became a national symbol and until our days receives so many contemporary interpretations: contemporary to Ferdowsi, his successors and to us. There have been interpretations of text and image, while the text has been illustrated for more than 800 years, and much more frequently than Mona Lisa in the last 600 years.

Erik Maell, the author of the book specially dedicated to the exceptional popularity of Mona Lisa mentioned that 'no other painting in the history has been reproduced, reinterpreted, parodied, appropriated, and exploited as often as Mona Lisa'². The illustrations of the *Shahnameh* are much more numerous than all visual reinterpretations of Leonardo's masterpiece, and this phenomenon is the subject of this essay.

What is the Shahnameh?

Six years ago the world celebrated the Millennium of the completion of the Shahnameh in the version of Ferdowsi³, who for almost half of his life was writing his poem, or what sometimes is perceived in Europe as the encyclopaedia of Persian culture of its Golden Age, or the Persian bible: a legendary, heroic and romantic chronicle of his country since the creation of the world until the Arab invasion in the 7th century.

On 8 March 1010⁴ an old poet called Abu'l-Qasim Ferdowsi finished writing his *magnum opus*, having called it the Shahnameh, which could be translated from Persian 'The Book of Kings', or 'The King of Books' because it is a record of Persian royal dynasties in the shape of a poem that is still the longest ever written by a single author during the whole history of humankind. Authored by a hereditary aristocrat,

1. Abu'l-Qasem Ferdowsi, transl. by Dick Davis

it is a brilliant example of chivalric literature covering all aspects of mediaeval Iranian upper class society.

The poem and its author are surrounded by so many legends that even Ferdowsi himself could be a legend as we do not have any contemporary sources about him. The earliest surviving manuscript of his renowned poem was produced only two centuries after his death (now kept in Florence and dated 1217). This means that we literally do not know what Shahnameh Ferdowsi wrote, and which copy of the earliest surviving versions is closer to the original, as the difference between some of them is enormous. Even his real name is not known: Abu'l-Qasim Ferdowsi can be translated as 'the father of Qasim from paradise', which was quite a common way to describe yourself in the mediaeval Islamic world.

However, from the very beginning Ferdowsi's Shahnameh became a cult poem, a work of mythology, history, literature and propaganda: a living epic that became a symbol of national identity.

It is important to remember that Ferdowsi was not the first and the only to write his shahnameh: it was the time when the country needed a book like this. Similarly, in Arabia, the prophet Muhammad was among many of his contemporaries who claimed that they were receiving messages from God and declared themselves prophets and poets. In Iran it was the time when the global message was in the air: and the message was 'Motherland in danger!' And the main task of those shahnamehs, about which we know only that they started to appear around this time, was not to entertain but to consolidate the national forces against the foreign invasions around the right ruler who would have the right to possess farr (the divine charisma which can be given by God to only an Iranian and a royal by blood) and effectively solve all internal and external social, economic and political problems.

The campaign of collecting ancient folklore resulted in a great amount of tales and legends being compiled and organised in a corpus of ancient Iranian mythology according to the sequence of dynasties. Such compendium of legends, both imagined and historical, was equally perceived as trustworthy. It became the basis of the literary polished chronicle, where demons, angels, dragons and witches were participating in the narrative together with not only the Iranian heroes like elephant-sized Rostam, or the royal villains of Turan, as well as India, Byzantium and China but with Alexander the Great, Sasanian kings, or Sa'd b. Waqqas, the Arab general of the Muslim army.

Most likely Ferdowsi was writing his *manifesto* for the Samanids, the only dynasty that was Iranian by blood in the whole history of Iran since the start of the Islamic period. The Samanids ruled from Bukhara, enjoying their last glimpses of splendour, power and prosperity. Unfortunately, Ferdowsi was writing his book too long. By the time he finished the world behind the walls of his hereditary castle had drastically changed: the Samanids perished. They were conquered by the Turks led by Sultan Mahmud who established the capital of his powerful state in Ghazna: Ferdawsi's warning arrived too late.

The poet was trapped in his own mission: he had spent almost half of his life writing his very patriotic, nationalistic and royalist book about the foreigners invading his country,

^{2.} Erik Maell, Mona Lisa reinterpreted, Novato, 2015, 6.

^{3.} The spellings in English of both Shahnameh and Ferdowsi are absolutely conventional and have nothing to do with historical transliteration, as the phonetic system of the Classical Persian language, starting from its earliest literary manifestations in New Persian in the 9th century, mainly the poetry of Rudaki, up to Jami in the 15th century would be closer in fact to modern Tajik, or Dari, generally more archaic in both grammar and pronunciation.

^{4.} François de Blois, Persian Literature. A Bio-bibliographical Survey, 5 /1 Poetry to ca. A.D. 1100, ed. by C. A. Storey, London, 1992, 112–117; Firuza Abdullaeva & Charles Melville, Guest Editors' Introduction "Shahnameh: the Millennium of an Epic Masterpiece," Iranian Studies, vol. 43, no 1, February 2010. See also: A. Shapur Shahbazi, Ferdowsı, A Critical Biography (Costa Mesa, 1991), 23–30, for a comprehensive review of the evidence; despite all the calculations offered, he makes the surprising mistake of giving AD 939–40 as the equivalent of 329 AH, which actually covers 940–41. If the date in January 940 is correct, this should be 328 AH. See also Shahbazi, "Ferdowsı. i. Life," Encyclopaedia Iranica 9, 514–515; Daulatshah Samarqandi, Tadhkirat al-shu'ara, ed. by E. G. Browne, Leiden and London, 1901, 54. The earliest report, however, namely the Preface to the Baysunghur Shahnameh, gives the date as 416 [1025], a fact generally overlooked (see Baysunghur Shahnameh, Gulistan Palace Museum, ms. 716: 22 (f. 12r); Shahbazi, "Biography," 27–28, cites Ja'far b. Muhammad, Tarikh-i Ja'fari (i.e. Tarikh-i Kabir), of c. 1446, for the year 416/1025.

Preface

Since its composition and besides the importance of Shahnameh as the foremost literary and linguistic heritage of Persian identity, this monumental book has also been instrumental in evoking the glory of Ancient Persia. The large number of illustrated Shahnamehs on one hand present the traditions of the Art of Book in Iran and as a result vital part of the history of Persian Painting, and on the other hand, each are independently the expressive language of their contemporary history. In fact, because of Shahnameh's timeless quality, artists have well used its different political, social and cultural interpretational capacities that are found in the available illustrated versions. Shahnameh has been a constant inspiration for artists throughout centuries as well as in recent times. it is easily visible that in each era this ancient text has been given a new lease of life. Just about a century ago and at the onset of adaption of modern painting in Iran, like other countries in the Middle East region, issues such as the guest for identity and inclinations towards native visual aesthetics was explored by the progressive artists. They were looking for ways to distinguish their artworks from what was being produced in the West despite using a modern common visual language. While techniques and pictorial references were directly borrowed but the use of local subjects such as Shahnameh, appeared as an attractive means to reach this goal.

Ruyin Pakbaz in his important book, Iranian Painting- From Old Times until Today, identifies four parallel movements in Iranian painting: Academic, New-Miniature painting¹, coffeehouse painting and Modernist painting², the works examined in this study are based on this categorization. In the first group, the academic trend, only one artist has explored this subject with sculpture. Approaches and certain political motivations, before and after the Iranian revolution, the New-Miniature painting has been at center of attention of governments as well as artists, and given the singular importance of illustrated manuscripts, it is no surprise that Modern- Miniature painters have explored this topic. Coffeehouse painting, as the popular style of painting in the history of Iranian art, is considered the most important platform for the visual presence of Shahnameh among ordinary people. In the modernist painting category however, during the years prior to the revolution, for reasons that will be discussed later, there is hardly any sign of Shahnameh, and majority of the works discussed in this survey have been produced after the revolution. In addition, illustrations for children's books has been of importance particularly those produced before the Revolution.

Since any type of artistic expression is directly influenced by its peripheral culture, in order to explore visual arts it is necessary to investigate the social, political, cultural and economical aspects of its times. The period examined in this text expands one hundred years; from the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi to this day. Iran's Islamic revolution of 1979 is the turning point in the historical exploration of this document. The approaches of the two Regimes, before and after the revolution towards Shahnameh, not only as a literary masterpiece but also as the National heritage of Persian identity, should be part of any dialogue on Shahnameh and its continued presence.

By referencing to both published documents and archival material, and through meetings and discussions with artists, writers, critics, curators, collectors and gallerists, an attempt is made to gather comprehensive information and data. This survey is not free of flaws and the subject is an open topic for discussion and more research. There may be artists missing from my list, moreover, unfortunately I was not able to collaborate with some artists due to their absence or disinterest.

Iwould like to thank Dr. Firuza Melville whose encouragements was vital for the completion of this paper. Also, I am indebted to Dr. Hamid Keshmirshekan for his generous support. In addition to the name of artists that will come up later in this text who have welcomed me into their studios and lent me valuable information, there are other notable people who have shared their knowledge or connected me with sources and artists, namely: Ruyin Pakbaz, Javad Mojabi, Dr. Abolfazl Khatibi, Dr. Aliasghar Mirzaei Mehr, Lili Golestan, Lida Berberian, Mahmoud Reza Bahmanpour, Jamal-al-din Akrami, Hossein Sa'alabi, Darioush Asadi Kiaras, Mahmoud Nourei, Babak Yadegarian, and Behrang Samadzadegan.

The opportunity to exhibit part of art works that inspired me to conduct this survey, is a fitting finale. The exhibition will be held at Aaran Gallery by March 2016. I am grateful to Ms. Nazila Noebashari, without her unwavering support, not only the exhibition but this project would have never been completed.

Akram Ahmadi Tavana

In this paper the discussion about characteristics of Persian Painting and its influence on contemporary art, is not discussed, the main issue however is the thematic research and recording of the revival of art with subject of Shahnameh in Iran in the past century³. Therefore, the perspective of this article is completely focused on subject and only attempts to explain the works of art presented in this survey.

^{1.} New-Miniature painting is a reference to the new style of miniature painting that began with Hossein Taherzadeh Behzad in 1950s.
2. Pakbaz, Ruiyn, (2004), *Iranian Painting from Old Times until Today*, Zarrin and Simin Publications p186

Shahnameh, The Perpetual Narrative

A survey of impact of Shahnameh on modern and contemporary art of Iran By Akram Ahmadi Tavana Foreword by Dr. Firuza Melville Director of Research, Shahnameh Centre for Persian Studies, Pembroke College, Cambridge

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