



Prelude to Resonance

Curated by Parisa Majidy

February 15 - March 15, 2025



California Center
for the Arts, Escondido
FOUNDATION

PARISA
PROJECTS

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“Resonance is where the past sings with the present.”

PARISA PROJECTS, in collaboration with the Escondido Museum, proudly presents “Prelude to Resonance”, an exhibition highlighting contemporary Persian artists who skillfully navigate the intersection of tradition and modernity. Through a dynamic selection of paintings, sculptures, and mixed media works, these artists reinterpret cultural narratives, shedding light on the evolving identity of Persian art in the contemporary world.

The exhibition unfolds over four weeks, each dedicated to a unique theme that explores transformation, resilience, and the profound connections between past and present. Themes such as heritage, feminism, societal introspection, and environmental consciousness are thoughtfully examined, offering visitors an immersive journey through the richness of Persian artistic expression.

Informed by the spirit of KHOR, the Middle Eastern estuaries that symbolize interconnectedness and fluidity, Prelude to Resonance becomes a metaphor for the exchange of cultural values and ideas across time and space. Just as the estuaries represent the delicate balance of nature, this exhibition underscores the ongoing dialogue between history and innovation. Visitors are invited to reflect on the evolving narrative of Persian art, where the past and present come together to create a vibrant and ever-changing artistic landscape.

Location: Escondido Museum, Gallery 1

Museum Hours: Wednesday – Sunday, 10 AM – 5 PM (Closed Mondays & Tuesdays)

Weekly Themes & Featured Artists

WEEK ONE: Legacy Reimagined

"The past is a thread woven into the fabric of today."

This week delves into cultural heritage through the lens of contemporary artists, honoring tradition while redefining it for the present. From intricate floral compositions to innovative takes on Persian miniatures and mirrorwork, these works bridge the past and future. KHOR artists such as Narges Fadakar, known for blending Persian miniature techniques with modern practices, and Mahtab Khodadadi, who explores the relationship between ancient totems and modern tools, create a visual dialogue where identity and memory intertwine. Their works reflect the evolution of Persian art, where tradition meets modernity in fresh and innovative ways.

WEEK TWO: Unveiling Her Voice

"Her story is one of resilience, strength, and infinite expression."

Highlighting narratives of femininity and empowerment, this week showcases KHOR artists exploring identity, resistance, and personal evolution. Rozhan Bagheri, whose "Lost Paradise" series reimagines the biblical figure Lilith, and Shiva Noroozi, with her bold, geometric depictions of the human figure, offer compelling interpretations of womanhood. Blending traditional and experimental techniques, they challenge societal boundaries and celebrate the multifaceted nature of the female experience, giving voice to narratives that transcend time and place.

WEEK THREE: Beyond Silence

"What is unspoken carries the weight of truth."

Through abstraction, symbolism, and raw expression, KHOR artists like Ali Saeedi and Ayda Roozbayani tackle themes of struggle, endurance, and societal reflection. Saeedi's surreal landscapes blend abstraction and figuration to offer poignant reflections on collective memory and crises, while Roozbayani's juxtaposition of human emotions with nature explores themes of introspection and the impact of industrialization. Their works provide powerful meditations on the fragility of existence and the unspoken complexities of modern life.

WEEK FOUR: Private Visions

"A collector's eye sees beyond time."

This week presents a carefully curated selection from private collections, offering a striking conclusion to the exhibition. Fataneh Foroughi, whose delicate floral still-lives immortalize the fleeting beauty of nature, and Dariush Hosseini, whose oscillations between figuration and abstraction explore the tension between chaos and order, illuminate themes of transformation, cultural memory, and the human connection to time and space. Their works reflect the depth and evolution of contemporary Persian art, providing visitors with a broader perspective on the narrative of Persian artistic expression.

About PARISA PROJECTS

PARISA PROJECTS, based in San Diego with strong ties to the Tehran art scene, plays a pivotal role in supporting Middle Eastern artists and fostering overseas talent within the USA art scene. Through a plethora of initiatives, including open art shows, workshops, and community events, the organization actively cultivates connections and dialogue among artists and enthusiasts. Their efforts extend to curating a diverse collection of Middle Eastern artworks, highlighting the brilliance of talents ranging from Abbas Nasle Shamloo to Zaam Arif.

In addition to their California engagement, PARISA PROJECTS positions itself at the forefront of the contemporary art landscape. Collaborating with institutions such as the California Center for the Arts, we endeavor to introduce Middle Eastern art to new audiences through innovative platforms like pop-up exhibitions.

Beyond showcasing artworks, PARISA PROJECTS is committed to educational outreach, striving to deepen the community's understanding and appreciation of Middle Eastern art. Through various educational programs and initiatives, PARISA PROJECTS aims to foster a more inclusive and informed art community, furthering cultural exchange and appreciation. As a nonprofit organization, PARISA PROJECTS is also a key supporter of the KHOR Art initiative, collaborating with SARAI Gallery to advance its mission.

Visit www.parisaprojects.com to learn more about us.

About KHOR Art Initiative

"KHOR" (pronounced /xor/ or /kɔ:/) is an inlet, a small gulf. It is a delicate tidal area with its own ecosystem. This native word for Middle Eastern estuaries is a symbol of middle eastern art, especially in Iran, which represents a unique and highly influential cultural-geological region in the world.

Organized by SARAI Gallery, KHOR Art Initiative is a supportive and competitive open call reviewed remotely by a first-rate regional and world art expert jury panel. KHOR Art Prize is a free-entry event designed to provide local artists with the rare opportunity for world-class exposure by learning the latest criteria for self-presentation and having their work reviewed by an elite art jury. Besides the usual prize, being known to a greater audience and having their works exhibited, KHOR's shortlisted artists enjoy the recognition of being associated with what is fast becoming established as a prestigious award in the region. Some of KHOR's previous winners have soared particularly high, going from obscurity to being represented by SARAI at top regional and world art venues within just a few years.

KHOR Art Initiative was born amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Iran in May 2020. Despite all the challenges and lack of experience, we were determined to organize an event with major objectives in mind, when we thought it could prove most helpful for our art community. On rather short notice, not only did we succeed in bringing together a group of elite international jurors but also were met with a warm welcome from artists from all across Iran. For more than half of our jurors - who represent a wide range of roles in the world of art - this was the first chance to be exposed to Iranian art today. KHOR Art Initiative has since continued to steadily grow and evolve, including the development of a more elaborate selection process, holding curated physical exhibitions by selected artists, diversification of media submitted as part of each artist's practice, and, last but not least, the discovery and introduction of tens of fresh and exciting talents to the Iranian art scene and the art world community.

KHOR, initially an annual event, transitioned to a biennial format in 2023. The fifth KHOR is therefore scheduled for 2025.

Visit www.saraigallery.com to learn more about the past KHOR Art Initiative's jury panels, winners, and related collaborations.

Spotlight On KHOR Artists

WEEK 1-3



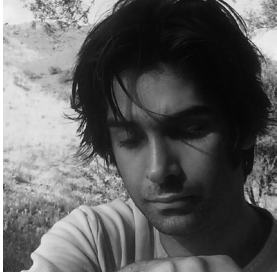
Ali Saeedi (b. 1971, Iran) improvises surreal landscapes using muted palettes and Baroque-inspired compositions. His apocalyptic scenes merge abstraction and figuration, offering poignant reflections on collective memory and imagination building after a crisis.



Ayda Roozbayani (b. 1995, Iran) juxtaposes human emotions with nature, blending classic and modern techniques. Her works, rich with symbolism, explore themes of introspection, loneliness, and the interplay between industrialization and humanity.



Faraz Nassersharif delves into the abstraction of natural and urban forms. His works evoke a sense of mystery and motion, often utilizing earthy tones and layered textures. With a focus on human-environment interactions, Nassersharif's paintings invite viewers into dynamic yet



Homayoon Hayati (b. 1985, Iran) uses fabric and collage to create intricate landscapes that merge natural and manmade elements. Inspired by his experience as a surveyor, Hayati's works are layered reflections on the interconnectedness of humans and their environment.



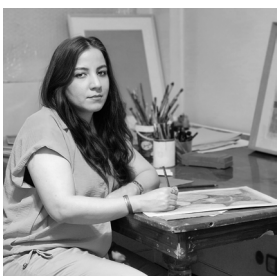
Leila Farrokhi weaves narratives of memory and heritage into her contemporary works. Combining traditional Iranian motifs with modern materials, her art celebrates the persistence of cultural identity amidst change.



Mahtab Khodadadi (b. 1998, Iran) received her BA in painting at the University of Guilan. In the "Common Form" series, she studies the relationship between objects and humans. The artist invites us to recognize the similarity between ancient totems and modern tools. She reduces tools such as meat grinder and sewing machine to their most basic forms to emphasize not only their similarity with totems - since both are inspired by nature - but also to remind us of the sacred and almost idol-like place these tools have in the contemporary world; an age where technological tools aren't just a symbol of something sacred but a replacement for it.



Marzieh Bagheri (b. 1985, Iran) creates haunting works that explore the decline of human civilization. Her paintings, often dominated by greys and muted tones, depict ruins and desolation, reflecting fear, despair, and the fragility of existence. Bagheri's evocative landscapes challenge viewers to confront the darker side of human progress.



Narges Fadakar blends traditional Persian miniature techniques with modern practices. Her reinterpretations of classical works, often deconstructing iconic miniatures, uncover hidden layers through innovative surface manipulation. With themes of memory and identity, her art engages with cultural evolution, creating a compelling dialogue between the past and present.



Neda Kashani's practice involves intricate storytelling through vibrant compositions. Exploring themes of resilience and transformation, Kashani's work resonates with emotional depth and cultural significance.



Niloofar Mohammadifar (b. 1987, Iran) creates intuitive and dynamic paintings inspired by her surroundings. Her works capture human resilience amidst societal and political upheaval, often infused with subtle humor and poignant commentary.



Rozhan Bagheri (b. 1995, Iran) reimagines the biblical figure of Lilith in her "Lost Paradise" series. Drawing from Iranian painting traditions, Bagheri explores themes of female agency, water as a motif, and layered compositions that reflect resilience and mysticism.



Rozita Nosrati explores the fluidity of memory and identity. Her works utilize delicate textures and layered forms, offering quiet meditations on personal and collective experiences.



Shilan Ebrahimi (b. 1984, Iran) explores the human condition through emotive and symbolic compositions. Her works reflect themes of longing, identity, and transformation, combining traditional techniques with modern sensibilities.



Sadaf Seyed (b.1996) is a Tehran-based artist with a BA in painting from the University of Art and an MA from the University of Sooreh, Tehran, Iran. In 2022, her work was featured at the KHOR Artists Group exhibition, and she held her first solo exhibition, "Titanium White", at the SARAI Gallery in 2023. Despite her young age, she has exhibited her works in numerous exhibitions nationally and internationally in Chicago, Miami, and Dubai.

Seyed's distinctive visual language is characterized by simplified spaces, geometric shapes, and a limited color palette, with influences from traditional Iranian painting.



Sadegh Khalifeh (b. 1983, Iran) blends industrial aesthetics with environmental concerns. His works, informed by his years in the industrial sector, reflect the complex relationships between humanity, machinery, and nature in post-industrial landscapes.



Shima Faridani (b. 1982, Iran) crafts metaphorical works that explore inner worlds and existential questions. Utilizing diverse techniques, she deconstructs and reimagines everyday objects, transforming them into profound visual meditations on identity and perception.



Shiva Noroozi (b. 1980, Iran) crafts stylized, geometric depictions of the human figure. Drawing from literature and Iranian traditions, her bold, angular forms invite viewers into uncanny, introspective worlds.



Ayda Roozbayani
Outliers, 2023
Oil on canvas
100 x 80 cm
39 3/8 x 31 1/2 in
(ASU16)



Shima Faridani
Crossed eyes and horse-heads, 2021
Color pencil on cardboard
95 x 70 cm
37 3/8 x 27 1/2 in
(FDL03)



Narges Fadakar
Zal and Rodabe, 2023
Gouache, watercolor, iso-graph pen and dry pigment on cardboard
60 x 50 cm
23 5/8 x 19 3/4 in
(NSF03)



Rozhan Bagheri
Lilith Return of Spring, 2022
Oil on canvas
65 x 45 cm
25 5/8 x 17 3/4 in
(RZB0201)



Sadegh Khalife
Black Trace 3, 2023
Oil and acrylic on canvas
190 x 140 cm
74 3/4 x 55 1/8 in
(KBS03)



Rozita Nosrati
Untitled, 2019
Ink and Pastel
69.5 x 44.4 cm
27 3/8 x 17 1/2 in



Homayoon Hayati
Hamoom lake, 2021
Collage
150 x 120 cm
59 x 47 1/4 in



Faraz Nassersharif
Nape, 2022
Tissue on canvas
120 x 120 cm
47 1/4 x 47 1/4 in
Diptych



Ali Saeedi
Iranshahr 11, 2021
Acrylic on canvas
130 x 98.5 cm
51 1/8 x 38 3/4 in
(SIR11)



Niloofar Mohammadifar
A Thorn Went Into Her Bot-
tom As She Sat Down, 2019
Acrylic and oil on canvas
169.5 x 150 cm
66 3/4 x 59 in



Shilan Ebrahimi
Untitled, 2016
Rust paint on aluminum
50 x 70 cm
19 3/4 x 27 1/2 in



Shiva Noroozi
Candles, 2022
Acrylic on canvas
Diptych
100 x 200 cm
39 3/8 x 78 3/4 in
(NBC11)



Neda Kashani
Lockdown forever, 2018
Acrylic on canvas
100 x 150 cm
39 3/8 x 59 in



Mehri Nadriyan
Untitled, 2019
Acrylic on canvas
150 x 200 cm
59 x 78 3/4 in



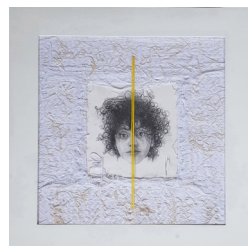
Marzieh Bagheri
Situation #26, 2020
Acrylic and metal oxides on canvas
40 x 32 cm
15 3/4 x 12 5/8 in



Sadaf Seyed
Titanium White 22, 2022
Sand, Cement, Dm5 Glue, Gesso, Acrylic on canvas
97 x 85 x 5 cm
38 1/4 x 33 1/2 x 2 in
(STS22)



Mahtab Khodadadi
Radio+Meat Grinder, ca. 2019
Mixed media on canvas
80 x 120 cm
31 1/2 x 47 1/4 in



Leila Farrokhi
Untitled, 2022
Drawing & mixed media
60 x 60 cm
23 5/8 x 23 5/8 in

Highlights From Our Private Collection

WEEK 4



Abbas Nasle Shamloo (b. 1983, Iran) is a painter and art educator who holds an MA in painting from Tehran University. He was the selected artist at the 4th Contemporary Iranian Drawing Festival, in 2010, and Baharestan Annual Urban Arts Festival, in 2018 and 2019. Nasle Shamloo's work has been represented by SARAI Gallery at top art fairs around the world including ASIA NOW 2021 and KIAF SEOUL 2022. He was also part of a dual exhibition called "Let There Be Noor" in 2022 at Cromwell Place, London.

Abbas Nasle Shamloo's nature evokes a perpetual sense of loss, loneliness, and alienation. His urban landscapes, quiet playgrounds, and somber scenery often depict minuscule solitary figures and wandering animals predestined to fail in finding any solace or shelter either in their built or natural environments. Shamloo's visions are nurtured by long observations and sometimes photography, yet he ultimately prefers to work from memory. His use of acrylics and ink among other media provides him with the immediacy and versatility required for his imagination to pour out freely onto papers and canvases.



Dariush Hosseini (b. 1970, Iran) holds a BA in painting and an MA in illustration from the University of Tehran where he was a lecturer and a member of the Faculty of Fine Arts until 2011. He is also an associate at Iran Painters Association. Hosseini has held 11 solo drawing and painting exhibitions in Iran and more than 50 group exhibitions in Iran, Turkey, France, and the United Arab Emirates. Notably, his paintings from the "Wide Shut" series were presented at KIAF SEOUL 2021 by SARAI Gallery. Hosseini has been a jury member in more than 15 visual arts festivals, held many drawing and painting workshops, lectures, and artist talks in Iran. He has also written several articles and reviews for Iranian visual arts magazines.

His body of paintings and drawings consists of oscillations between figuration and abstraction not only throughout his career but at times even in the process of painting on a single canvas, while rarely adhering to a pure end of this spectrum.



Fataneh Foroughi (born in 1986) received a master's degree in painting from Isfahan University of Art and a bachelor's degree in painting from Zahedan University of Art. She has had numerous solo and group shows.

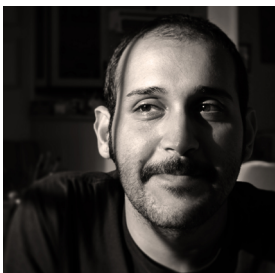
Inspired by the still-life paintings of the 17th century, Foroughi's work centers primarily on the delicate beauty of flowers. Light also holds an essential visual and conceptual significance in her work. The artist observes the movement and interplay of light on the flowers in silence for hours, immortalizing these perfect fleeting moments into masterpieces.

Through her meticulous compositions and emotional connection with her subjects, she invites viewers into a silent dialogue with these floral subjects. Her paintings transcend mere representations, becoming gateways into the intricate relationship between humans and their surroundings.



Parham Peyvandi (b. 1989, Iran) holds a BA in Urban Designing and an MA in Painting. Peyvandi's paintings mainly focus on the contradictions as well as the connections between the urban and natural sceneries. His educational background in urban studies and the enchanting landscapes of his birthplace, Mazandaran, are the two main points of inspiration for his works. Represented by SARAI Gallery, Peyvandi had a solo booth at the Armory Show 2022 and has appeared at several other top art fairs around the world including KIAF Seoul 2022, and Taipei Dangdai 2023.

Whether representational or imaginary, for Parham Peyvandi, the process of creating urbanscapes begins with strolling around, sketching, and taking quick notes out in the real world. To paint the fantasy realms, he would continue to work inside his studio, away from the urban context, creating a necessary spatial and temporal distance where the soulless urban spaces could blend with imaginary elements thanks to the use of a bright color palette and bending the rules of perspective.



Sam Nikmaram (b. 1991, Iran) is a visual artist. He received his BA in sculpture from Tehran University of Art, Tehran, Iran. Nikmaram has participated in several sculpture biennials and many group exhibitions both at home and throughout Europe. Nikmaram's wide range of collaborations through the years include theater stage design, puppet show design, urban sculpture design and construction, and furniture design among other skills.

Sam Nikmaram's foundation in graphic design back in high school provided him with an opportunity to experiment with a variety of artistic media. Attending to nature is one of the key features in his work, both in the technique and the sustainable and ecological approach to sculpture, and as a source of inspiration for the subjects of his focus. An attitude that largely explains the use of papier-mâché and disposable items in the structure of his art pieces, a material that has its own history and stories. In his view, imagination and myths are present in many actual and tangible aspects of the world, which is why many of his social concerns are reflected in his works in an imaginative way.



Parham Peyvandi
Untitled01, 2024
Oil on canvas
120 x 90 x 2 cm
47 1/4 x 35 3/8 x 3/4 in
(PPD0601)



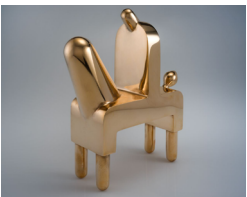
Dariush Hosseini
In the Earth's Arms, 2012
Acrylic on canvas
118 x 170 cm
46 1/2 x 66 7/8 in
(HIY13)



Fataneh Foroughi
To the Sunshine15, 2021
Oil on canvas
80 x 130 cm
31 1/2 x 39 3/8 in
(FUF15)



Abbas Nasle Shamloo
Enclosure 24, 2023
Acrylic on canvas
70 x 70 cm
27 1/2 x 27 1/2 in
(NEE24)



Sam Nikmaram
Horse and Tired Rider, 2024
Bronze
25 x 23 x 8 cm
9 7/8 x 9 x 3 1/8 in
(SNM0302)