

# فن أبو ظبي abudhabi art

تُجارِخانه آریا  
ARIA GALLERY



فن  
أبو ظبي  
abudhabi  
art  
Booth/A 34

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Since its establishment in 1992, Aria Galley's primary focus has been on painting and sculpture, introducing artists, and exhibiting artworks with a Modernist approach. Along these lines, the gallery organized a project called "Reinterpreting Iranian Modern Art". With the project, the gallery aims to introduce progressive, influential Iranian artists through exhibitions, publications, interviews, and reviews featuring their artistic process and developments.

The evolution of avant-garde and contemporary art in Iran charts a complex and captivating journey, spanning from its inception to the present day. Iranian artists, in their quest to align with global artistic movements, have pursued a dual approach: engaging actively with international trends while simultaneously re-examining their own cultural and environmental heritage. This synthesis has allowed them to forge distinct artistic voices and visions. The formative experiences of many leading figures in Iranian avant-garde art attest to this ongoing process, showcasing a deep-seated commitment to gradually developing unique styles and integrating foreign influences as enduring, transformative elements rather than fleeting trends.

Sirak Melkonian, a celebrated Iranian artist and a leading figure in the first generation of abstract painters, exemplifies this transformative journey in Iranian art. Beginning his career in the 1940s, Melkonian initially focused on realist depictions of his surroundings. However, by the 1950s, as avant-garde currents gained traction among Iranian artists, his style evolved toward a more expressionist and socially engaged approach. During this period, he achieved a unique aesthetic characterized by bold, expressive lines and defined planes that conveyed a new depth in his subjects. This approach eventually matured into a distinct abstract style, notable for its geometric structures.

In early 1970s, his travels to southern Iran, particularly to the Sistan and Baluchestan region, played a significant role in shaping these works. The resulting compositions, while abstract, evoke aerial landscapes, organic shapes, and skeletal frameworks, deeply rooted in his reflections on the region's landscapes. Melkonian's landscape paintings from the 1940s through the 1960s vividly capture his artistic evolution and lay the groundwork for his most definitive creative period.

In contrast, Hadi Hazavei, another eminent Iranian artist, emerged professionally after receiving formal education in Iran and training at the Faculty of Fine Arts during one of its most illustrious periods. Initially, Hazavei created works deeply inspired by the indigenous and mythological heritage of his homeland, incorporating themes such as mourning rituals, mythic symbols, and motifs from Iran's ancient art. These elements were expressed within a contemporary framework shaped by his academic environment. His early work reveals a strong emphasis on geometric forms rooted in traditional Iranian aesthetics. While Hazavei later moved away from these explicit references, many of his celebrated recent works still trace their lineage to this foundational period. His series of glazed brick panels and abstract compositions exemplify this ongoing interplay between continuity and evolution in his artistic journey.

Examining the distinct phases in the work of pioneering Iranian artists reveals the dynamic richness of their artistic journeys and their active engagement with a multitude of influences. Through dialogues with global contemporary art movements and deep reflections on the cultural and historical layers of their homeland, these artists have crafted a legacy of profound and impactful contributions. Today, their work not only embodies the essence of Iran's contemporary art but also expands it, continuing with greater complexity and resonance than ever before.





## Sirak Melkonian

(1930 – 2024)

Sirak Melkonian began his artistic journey along a path distinct from Iran's emerging avant-garde movement. A self-taught artist, he pursued his craft independently after completing high school. As an entrepreneur, he further enriched his artistic foundation by establishing his own graphic studio, where he created designs for various industries.

His participation in several prominent exhibitions in the 1940s, including a group show at the Iran-USSR Society, marked his formal entry into the art world.

A pivotal moment in his career arose through his friendship and collaboration with Marcos Grigorian, as they both played key roles in advancing Iran's modern art movement. By the late 1950s, Melkonian's drawings and paintings began to reflect a deepening engagement with social themes, often portraying the lives of marginalized groups through depictions of veiled women and traditional "Zurkhaneh" athletes. This thematic focus drew him closer to Iran's avant-garde movement. Yet, Melkonian was not content to remain within these bounds and soon shifted toward abstraction.

His most influential period began in the early 1970s following travels to southern Iran, particularly the Sistan and Baluchestan region, where he absorbed the area's striking landscapes. The resulting works are captivating abstract interpretations of these landscapes, solidifying his place within Iran's avant-garde.

During the 1970s, Melkonian also joined the "Azad" Painters and Sculptors Group, a collective recognized for its innovative and diverse approaches. After the Iranian Revolution, Melkonian emigrated to Canada, where he remained active in the arts. He passed away in 2024, leaving behind an enduring legacy in modern Iranian art.

## Museums:

Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

LACMA, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, USA

Bank Pasargad Museum, Tehran, Iran

Sepah Bank Museum, Tehran, Iran

Museum of Fine Arts, Saad Abad Palace, Tehran, Iran

Jame Jahan Nama Museum - Niavaran Palace Complex, Tehran, Iran

Kerman Museum of Contemporary Art, Kerman, Iran

Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMOCA), Tehran, Iran



## Solo Exhibitions

2024| Bavan Gallery, Cromwell Place, Nine Works of Iranian Modern Art, London, UK. 2024| +2 [Deh Vanak] & +2 [Fereshteh] Galleries, A Collection, Tehran, Iran. 2024| Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMOCA), Masters of Fine Arts, Tehran, Iran. 2024| Neagh Art Gallery, The Artwork of Legendary Artists, Tehran, Iran. 2024| Art Centre Gallery, New Year New Vision, Tehran, Iran. 2024| Jameel Arts Centre, Some Season: Fereydoun Ave & The Laal Collection, Dubai, UAE. 2024| Art Centre Gallery, Black & White, Tehran, Iran. 2024| Mah Art Gallery, Summer Group Show, Tehran, Iran. 2023| Art Centre Gallery, A Selection of Contemporary Iranian Artist, Tehran, Iran. 2023| Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMOCA), Footprint, Tehran, Iran. 2023| Artibition Gallery, Collector, Tehran, Iran. 2023| Liam Gallery, Small Works/Great Artists, Tehran, Iran. 2022| Sahar K. Bolouki Fine Art Gallery, 5 Titans of Iranian Modern Art, Toronto, Canada. 2022| Leila Heller, The Mana Jalalian Collection: A Rare Collection of Iranian Modern Art, Dubai, UAE. 2022| Sahar K. Bolouki Fine Art Gallery, Asia Now Art Fair, Toronto, Canada. 2021| Victoria and Albert Museum, Epic Iran, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK. 2021| Javid Gallery, Roots Exhibition, Tehran, Iran. 2021| Artibition Gallery, Small Artworks Collection, Artibition Gallery, Tehran, Iran. 2020| Aria Gallery, Teer Art, Tehran, Iran. 2019| Meem Gallery, Iran Print, Dubai, UAE. 2020| Aria Gallery, Teer Art, Tehran, Iran. 2019| Meem Gallery, Iran Print, Dubai, UAE. 2019| Aria Gallery, Roots, Tehran, Iran. 2018| National Gallery of Armenia, Soundliness of Contemporary Art, Yerevan, Armenia. 2018| Aria Gallery, Certified Copy, Tehran, Iran. 2018| Golestan Gallery, 100 Works 100 Artists, Tehran, Iran. 2017| Seyhoun Art Gallery, Fifty-Year: Works By 50+5 Artists, Tehran, Iran. 2016| Art Centre Gallery, Unveiling Parviz Tanavoli's Largest Sculpture, Tehran, Iran. 2015| Art Centre Gallery, Pioneers of Visual Arts, Tehran, Iran. 2006| University of Tehran, To The Memory of Morteza Momayez, Tehran, Iran. 2006| Tehran Museum of Contemporary Arts (TMOCA), East of Imagination Show of Iranian Contemporary Painters, Tehran, Iran.

2005| Tehran Museum of Modern Art (TMOCA), Tehran, Iran. 2004| Arta Gallery, Toronto, Canada. 2004| Lazar Gallery, Tehran, Iran. 2003| Armenian National Gallery, A Selection of Iranian Contemporary Art Over Three Generations, Yerevan, Armenia. 1997| Los Angeles Central Library, Arvest '97, Contemporary Armenian Artists' Exhibition, Los Angeles, CA, USA. 1995| Baghoomian Gallery, Contemporary American Artists' Exhibition, New York, USA. 1979| Salon De Mont Rouge, 24th Exhibition of Contemporary Artists Dedicated To Gustave Moreau, Paris, France. 1977| DC National Armory, Wash Art 77 International Exhibition, Washington DC, USA. 1977| Salon De Mont Rouge, 22nd Exhibition of Contemporary Artists Dedicated To Salvador Dali, Paris, France. 1977| Grande Palais, FIAC '77 Art Fair, Paris Contemporary Art, Paris, France. 1976| Iran-America Society, Contemporary Iranian Art from its Origin until Now, Tehran, Iran. 1976| Saman Gallery, Volume & Environment 2, 5th Exhibition of Azad Group, Tehran, Iran. 1975| Takhte Jamshid Gallery, 2nd Exhibition of Azad Group, Tehran, Iran. 1975| Mess Gallery, Blue, 3rd Exhibition of Azad Group, Tehran, Iran. 1975| - International Basel Art Fair Exhibition, Basel, Switzerland. 1975| Saman Gallery, Selected Works of Iranian and International Artists, Tehran, Iran. 1974| Ministry of Arts & Culture, Annual Show of Contemporary Iranian Artists, Tehran, Iran. 1974| Art & Culture Ministry Gallery, Contemporary Artists Exhibition on The Occasion of 7th Asian Games 74, Tehran, Iran. 1974| The Works of Iranian Contemporary Artists at The 100th Exhibition of Ghandriz Gallery, 7th Festival of Art & Culture, Jashne Farhang Va Honar, Tehran, Iran. 1967| Traveling Show of Contemporary Iranian Artists, New York, USA. 1961| Saderat Bank Headquarters, Kali Group Exhibition of Contemporary Artists of Iran, Tehran, Iran. 1959| Musée d'Art Moderne de Paris, Paris Biennale, Paris, France. 1958| Abiaz Palace, 1st Tehran Biennale, Tehran, Iran. 1958| Giardini della Biennale, Venice Biennale, Venice, Italy. 1957| Iran-America Society, Contemporary Iranian Artists' Exhibition, Tehran, Iran. 1956| Abiaz Palace, Contemporary Iranian Artists' Exhibition, Tehran, Iran. 1954| Mehregan Club, Contemporary Iranian Artists' Exhibition, Tehran, Iran. 1953| Iran-USSR Society, 4th Annual Exhibition (Voks), Tehran, Iran. 1946| Mshaguyts Armenian Cultural Centre, Group Exhibition, Tehran, Iran.





Sirak Melkonian . Untitled . 100x70 cm . Oil on hard paper . Dated 1964



Sirak Melkonian . Untitled . 40x60 cm . Oil on canvas . Dated 1970





Sirak Melkonian . Untitled . 60x70 cm . Oil on canvas . Dated 1957



Sirak Melkonian . Untitled . 66x76 cm . Oil on canvas . Dated 1957





Sirak Melkonian . Untitled . 50x70 cm . Oil on canvas . Dated 1970



Sirak Melkonian . Untitled . 50x70 cm . Oil on canvas . Dated 1970





## Hadi Hazavei (1940)

Hadi Hazavei is an Iranian artist, educator, and researcher who completed his undergraduate studies in painting during the golden era of the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran, spanning from 1962 to 1968. He was one of the founders of the Qandriz Gallery but, like some of his peers, did not remain within this group and chose to forge his own path. After participating in several solo and group exhibitions, he travelled to the United States for further studies, obtaining a Master's degree in painting and a Doctorate in Art Education. He then returned to Iran, where, in addition to pursuing his artistic endeavours, he served as the head of the Department of Art History and Sociology at Farabi University.

His portfolio includes captivating activities, such as painting the side walls and ceiling of Sohrab High School in the village of Eradan (in the Garmsar County) and creating several murals in the United States.

In the realm of research and writing, Hazavei's contributions are noteworthy. In addition to unpublished research, he authored a book titled Art Education Programs (for Middle School Teachers), which is regarded as one of his valuable efforts in the field of art education. This book was published in 1984, with a circulation of twenty-five thousand copies. The following year, he wrote another book on art education for fourth - and fifth-grade students, further expanding his contributions in this area.

One of his latest works is a book about Sia Armajani, co-authored with Morteza Vali, published in 2015 by Nazar Publishing house.

In recent years, Hazavei has been living and working between Iran and the United States. His solo exhibitions in several galleries have led to greater recognition of his work, especially among younger audiences. Throughout his various career phases, Hazavei has consistently engaged with the traditions of Iranian art—a focus that, except for a brief period of his activity, diverges from the prevailing trends of neo-traditionalism in Iran, such as the Saqqakhaneh movement. This commitment to tradition is more evident when considering the different phases of his artistic journey.

## Exhibition:

2014 | Solo exhibition Shirin Gallery New Yourk City. 2012 | Middle East Gallery, Tehran, IR. 2011 | Zora Gallery, New York, US. 2010 | Mahe Mehr Gallery, Tehran, IR Solo exhibition. 2009 | Solo exhibition Mahe Mehr Gallery, Tehran, IR. 2008 | Solo exhibition Homa Gallery, Tehran, IR. 2008 | Oveissi Gallery, Tehran, IR. 2005 | Calypso Gallery, Stone Harbor, NJ, US.

2004 | Shelburne Gallery, Newry, Ireland. 2000 | Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran, IR "Symbolic Expression in Iranian Modernist Painting". 1995 | Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran, IR "Symbolic Expression in Iranian Modernist Painting". 1978 | Iran American Society at the Abraham Lincoln Center, New York, US. 1975 | Solo exhibition Columbia University Exhibition Hall, New York, US. 1967 | Borgez Gallery, Tehran, IR. 1966 | Tehran University Museum Hall, Tehran, IR. 1965 | Marmar Palace Art Exhibition, Tehran, IR

1964 | Ghandriz Gallery, Tehran, IR. 1964 | Fourth Tehran Biennial, Tehran, IR. 1963 | Iran Gallery, Tehran, IR. 1963 | Solo exhibition Tehran University Museum Hall, Tehran, IR. 1962 | Third Tehran Biennial, Tehran, IR. 1961 | Solo exhibition Tehran University Museum Hall, Tehran, IR



## Murals:

2006 | Church of St. Nicholas of Talentino, Atlantic City, NJ, US. 2006 | Restoration of art work, JCC, Margate, NJ, US. 2005 | Church of St. Nicholas, Atlantic City, NJ, US. 2004 | Sands Corporation, Atlantic City, NJ, US . 2004 | Dromore School, Warrenpoint, Ireland . 2003 | Architectural Exhibition, Las Vegas, US . 2003 | Caesars Entertainment Corporation, Atlantic City, NJ, US. 2002 | Church of St. Nicholas, NJ, US. 2000 | Harrah's Entertainment Corporation, Atlantic City, NJ, US.

1988 | 8 Panels for Ocean One, Atlantic City, NJ, US. 1987 | Private Resident, Ventnor, NJ, US. 1986 | Harrah's Corporation, NJ, US. 1983 | West Gate, Boom Boom Room, Nyack, NY, US. 1975 | Barret's Mansion, Ocean City, NJ, US. 1974 | Willow Brook Center, Wayne, NJ, US. 1974 | Boba's Center, Atlantic City, NJ, US. 1973 | Western Union, Newark, NJ, US. 1973 | House of Décor, Ramsey, NJ, US. 1972 | Finley Center, City College of New York, New York, US. 1970-1971 | Aradan School, Aradan, IR. 1962-1967 | 15 various murals in private and public spaces, IR

## Books:

2008 | Art of Fatimid in Egypt. 1995 | Miraculous Journey of Mohammad (Translation). 1985 | Geometric Concept in Islamic Art (Translation). 1980 | A Short History of Iranian Art, From Cave to Teahouse Painting . 1985 | Art Education Programs for Junior High School

Reprinted annually between 1986 -1992 . 1985 | Art Education for Forth Grade. Reprinted annually between 1985 -1994. 1985 | Art Education for Fifth Grade Reprinted annually between 1985 -1994

## Lectures & Exhibitions Organized:

2013 | "A. Petgar Social Realism," Kahmalolmolk Museum, Tehran, IR. 2013 | "Comparison of Armory Fair in New York and Dubai Art Fair," Tehran University Fine Arts College, Tehran, IR. 2012 | "E. Ashtiani Artwork, Barg Gallery," Tehran, IR . 2010 | "Contemporary Art in Egypt," Tehran University Fine Arts College, Tehran, IR . 2011 | "Ardeshir Mohasses," Kensington Central Library, London, UK. 2009 | "Ardeshir Mohasses," New York University, New York, US. 2009 | "Evaluating Youth and Children's Artwork," Linwood, NJ, US. 2004 | "Persian Calligraphy," Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran, IR. 2004 | "Youth Artwork," Linwood City Hall, NJ, US. 2001 | "Selected Art Work," Egg Harbor Township Hall, NJ, US. 1997 | "Evaluating the Third Biennale of Painting and Drawing," Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran, IR. 1995 | "Evaluation of First International Biennale of Graphic Art," Tehran, IR. 1994 | "Symbolism in Children's Art Work," Japan Art Education Convention, Kyoto, JP . 1985 | "Art Education in a Changing Society," International Art Education Convention, Rio, BS.

1984 | "Art Education in Troublesome Times," National Art Education Convention, Atlanta, GA, US . 1986 | "Art Program and Revolution," NJ Art Education Association, NJ, US. 1981 | "The Current Art Education in Iran," International Art Education Convention, Adelaide, AU . 1978 | "The Role of Crafts in Art Education," Isfahan, IR

## Professional Membership:

1975-present | International Society for Education Through Arts (INSEA). 1975-present | Association Internationale des Critiques d'Art (AICA). And Invention: 1974 | "Touching Art with No Sight," Copyright by Library of Congress





Hadi Hazavei . Untitled . 81x74 cm . Mixed media on Cardboard . Dated 1964



Hadi Hazavei . Untitled . 80x73 cm . Mixed media on Cardboard . Dated 1960





Hadi Hazavei . Untitled . 80x150 cm . Mixed media on cardboard Mounted on canvas . Dated 1960





Hadi Hazavei . Untitled . 160x90 cm . Mixed media on canvas . Dated 1963



Hadi Hazavei . Untitled . 70x43 cm . Mixed media on cardboard . Dated 1963

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2024