

An Introduction to Mahmoud Farshchian's Style and Works (Theoretical and Practical Foundations)

Abstract

In etymology and terminology of the Iranian painting style of the contemporary period, unfortunately the inappropriate word "miniature" has been wrongly institutionalized within the artistic community. Namely, without referring to any specific document or research conducted, many people have not only accepted this foreign word but have also contributed to the promotion and spread of the use of this unprofessional term, thus adding to the misunderstanding of many of the audience of such artworks.

The western miniature is totally different in terms of fundamentals and approach with that of the eastern taste and worldview specifically the noble art of Iranian painting and has also portrayed less consistency in material and technical characteristics. On the other hand, and taking into account the characteristics of the Iranian painting, i.e. being "insightful", "Thematic", "structured", "functional" and "technical", it might be assumed that except in rare cases such as the small artwork background and some technical subtleties, the western miniature share not so much commonalities with the Iranian painting. But the contemporary Iranian painting, which is the continuation of and in line with the traditional one, has similarities and differences with the previous painting schools and yet enjoys its own specific functions and concepts. Through a comprehensive and professional approach towards the general, classic components the works and styles of the contemporary painters could be analyzed comparatively and their similarities, differences with and distinctive features from the works of traditional Iranian painters be specified. Due to their specific, independent character with that of the of traditional Iranian painting styles, amongst all, the works and style of one of the most prominent contemporary Iranian painters, i. e. , Mahmoud Farshchian, have been studied and analyzed comparatively to clarify the proportions and relations existing between the two artistic periods.

This paper endeavors to study the trend of creation and evolution of Mahmoud Farshchian's style and get a clear idea of its principles as well as theoretical and practical foundations and aims to make a comparative study of the artist's painting style with that of the traditional Persian painting styles. Making a comprehensive survey of the artist's style will not only clarify its position as compared to the previous painting schools and help evaluate its relation to the styles of the contemporary era, but also significantly contributes to make further policies and develop the future prospects of Iranian painting. In this study, a collection of non-repetitive texts and para-texts of the artist's major and minor books including colored works, with or without identifications, black and white pencil sketches, unpub-

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lished works in possession of state museums, private collections and undisclosed locations, making a total of over 538 works created between 1945 to the beginning of 2014, have been studied. Employing a descriptive-analytical approach, this theoretical paper has made a comparative analysis of the features of "traditional Persian painting" with "modern Iranian painting". The theoretical and practical foundations of Farshchian's style have been studied for the first time through a comprehensive and multidisciplinary desk study of library resources as well as field studies of the author taking into account all the artworks created (538 pieces) by the artist. Based on the findings, it is concluded that the western miniature, in its principles and viewpoint, is different from the taste and worldview of the eastern art particularly the Iranian one and is more dissimilar with respect to the materials and technical features employed. It could also be assumed that except in rare cases such as the small background of the artwork and some technical subtleties, the western miniature could not possibly share much similarity with the Iranian painting. However, on the word "Iranian painting" or better say "Negargari" which is far more professional and clear than "miniature", it should be said that although Negargari is a counterpart to the noble Iranian style of painting, yet we cannot apply the term 'traditional Negargari' to Farshchian's artworks because, although they share some commonalities with that of the fundamentals of the noble Iranian traditional painting, yet they possess prominent distinctive features. In every aspect of Iranian painting, Farshchian has employed some innovation and creativity of his own; thus leading to the creation of fresh theoretical and practical foundations that form his own specific, independent style. Taking into account such principles, the works of Farshchian could be called the "neo Iranian painting" style that has evolved in continuation and in line with the traditions of genuine Iranian painting style.

Keywords: Traditional Iranian Painting, Neo Iranian Painting, Farshchian, Style, Foundations

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Museums & Collections

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- Treasury of Patterns and Colors, Mostazafan Foundation, Tehran
- Mahmoud Farshchian Museum, Saadabad Cultural-Historical Complex, Tehran
- Fine Arts Museum, Saadabad Cultural-Historical Complex, Tehran
- The Nation's Museum (White House), Saadabad Cultural -Historical Complex, Tehran
- Islamic Parliament Museum, Tehran
- Fine Arts School Museum, Isfahan
- Museum of Contemporary Arts, Tehran
- Sahebgharanieh House- Museum, Niavaran Cultural-Historical Complex, Tehran
- National Arts Museum of Iran, Tehran
- The Martyrs Museum, Martyrs' Foundation of Islamic Revolution, Tehran
- Mohammad Ali Farshchian Collection, Tehran
- Atefeh Nojumi Molla Bashi Collection, Isfahan
- Elaheh Nojumi Molla Bashi Collection, Isfahan
- Amir Rezaeinabard Personal Collection, Tehran