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CONGRESS

Middle East and Muslim Worlds
Studies

28 June - 2 July 2021



Panel 9

The circulation of cultural products between Iran and the world

What are the interactions between the Iranian cultural, art and media scenes and the rest of the world? What connections do they have? This panel seeks to introduce a multidisciplinary approach where researchers in different fields of the humanities and social sciences will present their work to answer these questions. The aim is to highlight research about cultural and media production (literature, television, visual arts, and theatre) in Iran. The objective is to understand the social, historical, economic, political, and cultural issues by focusing on specific national spaces and the circulation of practice and production between Iran and the rest of the world. National issues are at the heart of this panel where, on the one hand, it will be a question of bringing to light Western influences on cultural and media products in Iran and, on the other, of the presence and promotion of Iranian artistic production on the international scene.

Person in charge : Asal Bagheri (IUT Métiers du Multimédia et de l'Internet, Cergy-Paris Université)
Discussant: Clément Therme (Institut universitaire européen de Florence)

Program

Shahrouz Mohajer (UMR 8167 - Orient et Méditerranée, Paris Sorbonne Université)

Western historiography of Iranian visual art in the context of the visual arts of the Islamic world in the 19th century

Since the 15th century, some independent works on the history of art in different European languages have been written in the West. Due to the lack of non-European art concepts in most of these works, gradually a new concept of marginal art such as Persian arts is formed and Iranian visual arts are emphasized by orientalists and western historians. Before the 19th century, there were few references to Iranian visual arts. Indeed, it was during the 19th century that the first independent works on this field were authored by foreign scholars and historians.

But what exactly is this art? And what exactly do the terms used such as "l'art de la Perse", "l'art persan", "l'art de l'Iran" and "l'art iranien" mean? The explanation becomes even more difficult when the contemporary term "Islamic art" is associated with Iranian art by European historians. Moreover, the geographical determination of Iranian art has always been controversial for foreign historians and researchers.

This paper attempts to answer these questions by uncovering and bringing to light the state of Iranian visual art, more precisely, Iranian painting, in art historiographies by French researchers who wrote the first independent works in this field of study, in the mid-19th century.

Laetitia Nanquette (University of New South Wales, Sydney)

Children and Young Adult Literature in Post-Revolutionary Iran: Production and Circulation

Compared to adult literature, Iranian children and young adult literature are visible and successful on both the national and the international scenes. In this talk, I analyze the history of this literature and its functioning, as well as the role of the state in its evolution in the past 40 years, to understand the reasons for its success. The main ones are the support of powerful institutions; the professionalization of the field; and the role of quality illustrations in children and young adult books.

Asal Bagheri (IUT Métiers du Multimédia et de l'Internet, Cergy-Paris Université)

Iran's Got Talent; a semiological analysis of a TV program

The program "Asr-e Djadid" literally translated as «New Era», is the Iranian version of "France's Got Talent", and was broadcast for the first time on the country's third national channel during the Winter and Spring of 2019. This unprecedented entertainment program, whose endings were scheduled for the feast of Ramadan, largely broke audience records. The Islamic Republic of Iran Television, directly supervised by the Supreme Leader, is the most important propaganda tool in Iran and therefore censorship imposed on it remains the most extreme. This work is a semiological analysis that attempts to reveal the iranisation of a Western entertainment program and to answer the following questions: how Iranian television nationalizes, «purifies» and Islamises a Western «product» whose main appeal runs counter to the laws and standards imposed on Iranian television? And how could this show be seen as an attempt to create a space for negotiation where issues of power and artistic freedom question each other?

Bahar Azadi (Institut de Démographie, Université Panthéon-Sorbonne, Inserm, Université de Paris)

An armed theatre: from theatrical performance to trans subjectivation in Iran

Saman Arastou is an Iranian theatre and cinema, director and actor. His theatrical activities center around his personal life as a transgender man (FtM), largely informed by his personal experiences and suffering during the process of gender transition and stories he collected from other trans people during his workshops. Violence is omnipresent in Arastou's plays and he acknowledges Antonin Artaud and Augusto Boal as inspiring his use of "bare stage" without specific settings and materials. There is no "fourth wall" in his performances; he speaks directly to the audience and sends his message by reminding them that they belong to the same world and story, as portrayed on stage. In 2017, Saman's play *Be Who You're Not* was the only Asian selection at the FIND2017 festival in Berlin. We will explore how his «Theatre of the Oppressed», inspired by Western movements of the 70s, helps him to discover his trans identity and provides the means to face the hostility, to gender transition, within his society.