Breakout Session 3: 
Arts and Performance

1) Fatema EFTEKHARY-RAD
Experience of Iranian Women painters since the Islamic Revolution of Iran

Abstract
This paper is looking at “Iranian women artist” contemporary history who has survived through all revolutionary years and difficult time. What I have concerned about this subject is some details that encourage us – women artist – to carry on and pull ourselves with all ups and downs of economic and social in Iran. Those specially made us stronger and more determined to show not only our “Utopia” which we fight for such as “Freedom, Humanity and equally” but also for our “Passionate and love” to life.

And now we are standing at the early of third millennium, and we “Iranian Women Artist” and the contemporary art are seeking for something. Art is wondering where it’s meaning and lost content is. And revolutionary who are grown up with revolution” Women painter” are searching for their identity. Although these two still are challenging with anti social behaviour, politics barrier and but these are all my excuses to writing about in this paper.

So far this paper is about our wondering in modernism and postmodernism period time. It is more difficult because we are women, we live in religious country and we are just artist. We survived and we carried this child. It appears that both Arts and Iranian women are searching, one for its lost meaning and the woman painter for its own forgotten identity through revolutionary arts. Both elements are struggling and combating political, economic as well as social hardship, and discovering these barriers are the objectives of this paper.

I hope I could make a good matrix of fundamental social and politic changes in Iran and variable art at the end of the second millenniums. I show a new aspect of interaction between these two by a critical and psychological view among recent paintings.

Key words
Iranian women painting, Revolution, Religious, Objective in painting, Social, Critical, Psychological, work for women painting.

Biography

2) Hamed YOUSEFI KOUPAI
Re-orienting the Orientalism: The Contemporary Art of Tehran

Abstract
In the past few years, the Iranian contemporary art has been internationally acclaimed for its unique conceptual and aesthetic language, as well as its provocative political connotations. Artists of around thirty years old, namely, the generation of the post-revolutionary Iran, following the way paved by the great cinematic names of the preceding generation, have been frequently invited to biennials, auctions, residencies, and exhibitions. Thanks to the globalized relations, the possibility of making new dialogues in international level, has influenced the local dialogue the artists are currently making with the everyday culture of their fellow citizens of the Islamic Republic. However, as far as the possibility
of a new politics is concerned, few attentions has been yet paid to the significance of the contemporary art. This essay is going to concentrate on the way the “Contemporary Art of Tehran” has been aesthetically constituted as a unique form of politically significant cultural expressivity. The constitution of this cultural form has occurred through a two-fold operation: First, the “Contemporary Art of Tehran” has defined itself as opposed to the “Iranian Modern Art” that, with its discourse of “Nativism,” prevailed the sphere of Iranian art of the twentieth century, especially the prolific years of 1970s; Secondly, it has defined itself against the so-called “exotic” art of some currently working Iranian artists such as Shirin Neshat. In other words, since, on the one hand, the Modern Art is considered as an “orientalism in reverse,” it is blamed for the same reasons the orientalism has been blamed for, and since, on the other hand, the “exotic art” works through a mechanism similar to that of orientalism, its criteria is abandoned in order to achieve an authentic aesthetics. However, the work of those artists who identify themselves as the “contemporary artists of Tehran” is not beyond all orientalist conceptions. The orientalism has played a major role, not only negatively, but also positively, in the constitution of their aesthetic language. Through a detailed study of four particular artworks, the essay will show how the artists have “re-oriented” the orientalism, and how, similar to their Modernist ancestors, they still deal with the question of identity through a self-“other” binary opposition, although the “other” is no longer a homogeneous conception of neither the West nor the orient. In particular, the argument will focus on how, both thematically and stylistically, the artists share a politically significant conception of re-orientation through the device of aesthetic displacement – either the displacement of the elements of popular culture of the Islamic Republic in order to add them to the artistic elements at their hand; or the displacement of elements of other local cultures gathered from around the world, thanks to being invited to the art residencies, in order to provide a self-consciousness through knowing others.

Biography
Hamed Yousefi is a postgraduate student of Aesthetics and Art Theory at Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy at Middlesex University in London. He received an MA in Cultural Studies from Allameh Tabatabai University, Tehran (2007). He has worked on different aspects of a developing political culture in Iran. With a background in journalism – as an editor at Shargh Newspaper which was banned in 2006 – he has concentrated on the youth culture and its potentialities for constitution of a new politics. More recently, he is working on a genealogy of the political culture of Islamic Republic. He has several publications, most of them in Farsi.

* These artworks are including:
  1- Shahab Fotouhi’s video, “Repeat After Me” (2008), shown in December 2008 at Barbican Centre, London;
  3- Mahmoud Bakhshi’s video, “Jesus” (2008), shown in December 2008 at Barbican Centre, London;
3) Mehran HOUSHIAR
An Account of Three Generation of Painters From Islamic Revolution in Iran

Abstract
An extract from the catalogue for the first Biannual exhibition of Iranian contemporary painting, which was held at Tehran Museum for Contemporary Arts in 1990, reads:

“…Today the committed and free artists who have erased the limitations of copying from their mind and thought, stronger than ever before go forth to provide a healthy, independent and dynamic arts movement for the future of Islamic Iran…”

This quote shows the particularity and idealistic goals of revolutionary arts and cultural strategists, during the first collective expression of post revolution works of painters in Iran. Arts of revolution can be looked at from various critical and analytical angles, but it might be sufficient to look at three generations of post revolution painters, descriptively, so as to illustrate the process which has formed contemporary Iranian arts.

This paper which uses both desk and action research methodologies attempts to investigate the manner in which ideals of the revolution had effected and penetrated the works of community of post revolution Iranian painters. At the same time a comparative study of those who lead this field in each generation will also be presented.

First generation: Majority of artists with a true love and affection for the revolution and its ideals behaved mostly emotionally influenced by contemporary politics, revolutionary radicalism and the imposed Iran-Iraq war. They could not bring any innovative to the fundamentals of Iranian arts as emotional and radical expressions do not permit rational impact.

Second generation: Democratic and people centred movements as well as politicians and governmental authorities introduced propagandist and slogan driven topics into artists work. This decade took form because of the vacuum created in the prior decade of revolution, radicalism and unwanted war.

Third Generation: Third generation of painters which contrary to preoccupations methods, encounters a new art form at a time that globalization is a prominent slogan amongst politician. This generation tries to portray its traditional, cultural and belief values (not as slogans, or blue prints) for its audience on the back of local, regional and national issues free from contemporary political and economic dominance.

Key Words
Iranian Islamic revolution, revolutionary art, revolutionary painters, committed art, conceptual art

Biography

4) Liliane ANJO
Contemporary Iranian Theatre: The Emergence Of An Autonomous Space

Abstract
In the aftermaths of the 1979 Revolution, the Iranian State established institutions based on a theocratic conception of Islam. New codes of behaviour, founded on strict religious dictates, were imposed on public space. Besides this puritan order, the setting up of the Islamic Regime provoked the exclusion of
citizens from any real participation in political decisions and subsequently led to the inadmissibility of any social claim. Furthermore, the Islamic State attempted to impose its authority even to the point of controlling people’s private lives. Since its establishment, the Islamic Republic has thus strived to shape the Iranian society in its own image, in accordance with its ideology.

The political failure of the reformist experience under Khatami’s presidency showed that the politico-social changes can’t be reduced to the action of the reformers who are present on the Iranian political scene. Indeed, the political institutions are in the conservatives’ hands. In the current circumstances, the endeavours towards politico-social change require an action repertoire enlarged to mobilization modes that don’t rest upon institutional politics. Opposition to the ruling regime has to explore the system’s interstices in order to create autonomous spaces and escape the Islamic State’s will of conformity between public sphere and official ideology. The emergence of a collective imagination crossing the social and cultural differences is determining in the transformation process the Iranian society is undergoing. This shared imagination is visible in several places, physical (fashionable cafés, the mountains around Tehran, etc.) as well as virtual spaces (novels, films, weblogs, etc.).

In the context of the Iranian authoritarianism, artistic practices represent decisive stakes. For the Islamic leaders, it is a matter of keeping control over any kind of public representation. For Iranian civil society, arts embody a unique form of expression and a possible space of autonomy. My contribution will focus on theatre considered as a possible autonomous space in Iran. In the field of artistic practices, fertile ground for dissent and social criticism, theatre turns out to be a privileged research topic, since it is a discursive and performative space based on the audience’s presence and interaction.

The recent revitalization of Iranian theatre made possible the emergence of a space both physical and virtual escaping state influence and official dogma. It appears nowadays to contribute to the elaboration of a shared consciousness of resistance to the regime’s authoritarianism. How can theatre, in spite of the censorship, embody a disobedience space? How can theatre artists put up with the Hezbollahi’s presence in the audience and elude their violence? My contribution intends to outline how the renewal of the repertoire and the working out of an original scenic language, enabled the emergence of a public space disregarding the official credo. The objective of my analysis is to examine an original relation towards politics: the way the opposition to the Iranian regime doesn’t intend to overthrow or to take hold of the government, but aspires to create autonomous spaces from the State.

**Biography**

Liliane Anjo graduated in Philosophy from University of Brussels, Belgium (*Université Libre de Bruxelles*). She then obtained a Master’s degree in Political Science at the School For Advanced Studies in Social Sciences, Paris (*Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*). Her dissertation about contemporary Iranian theatre, written under the supervision of Prof. Olivier Roy, analyzed how the recent revitalization of Iranian Drama made possible the emergence of a performative space (“Le théâtre iranien contemporain : espace performatif d’une société en mouvement”). In 2007-2008, she received a grant from the French Research Institute in Iran (*Institut Français de Recherche en Iran*) to carry out her field study. She is currently a doctoral student under the supervision of Prof. Farhad Khosrokhavar at the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*, where she is preparing a PhD. Thesis about the cultural policy and artistic practices in the Islamic Republic of Iran, through the perspective of contemporary theatre.

Personal page on the website of the “Institut Français de Recherche en Iran”: [http://www.ifriran.org/Recherche/LilianAnjo.htm](http://www.ifriran.org/Recherche/LilianAnjo.htm)