

different samās

New Perspectives in
Contemporary Iranian Art



Editor
Hossein Amirsadeghi

Essays
Hamid Keshmirshakar
Mark Irving
Anthony Downey

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With essays by Hamid Keshmirshekan,
Mark Irving and Anthony Downey

Long considered a bastion of creativity in the region, Iran is currently experiencing a remarkable artistic revival in the middle of the most challenging of circumstances. Iranian artists – whether based inside or outside the country – are creating remarkable works that reflect their country's social and political environment, while incorporating their own personal worldviews and those of their adopted homelands. Seen together, these works form a new and exciting movement that can only gain in importance in the coming years.

Different Sames: New Perspectives in Contemporary Iranian Art catalogues this new movement, capturing its brilliance and creative energy. Packed with wonderful images, it is an important and lively compendium of thought-provoking essays, historical context and profiles of the leading artists, whether well-established (such as Parviz Tanavoli and Monir Farmanfarmaian), internationally recognized (such as Shirin Neshat, Y. Z. Kami or Mitra Tabrizian), or emerging (such as Ali Banisadr or Tala Madani). Exclusive interviews with the key artists, collectors and curators offer fascinating new insights, and allow the book to explore the differences and similarities between current international movements in art and the art produced both in Iran and by artists of the Persian Diaspora.

Art changes the way we look at the world, and *Different Sames* is an attempt to explain today's Iranian art movement in this spirit.

With 586 illustrations

On the jacket:

front

Timo Nasser

Epistrophy #1, 2008

Polished stainless steel, 150 x 150 x 100 cm

© Timo Nasser, courtesy galerie schleicher+lange, Paris

back

Mehdi Farhadian

Twins, 2008

Acrylic on canvas, 190 x 150 cm

© Mehdi Farhadian, private collection, London

For Ali Asghar Amirsadeghi
Father, salt of the earth

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35 Old Queen Street
London SW1H 9JD
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First published by
Thames & Hudson in association with
TransGlobe Publishing Limited
© 2009 TransGlobe Publishing

Text and captions copyright:
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Distributed worldwide
[except in the United States, Canada and the
United Arab Emirates]:
Thames & Hudson Ltd.
181A High Holborn
London, WC1V 7QX
United Kingdom

www.thamesandhudson.com

ISBN: 978-0-9545083-4-0

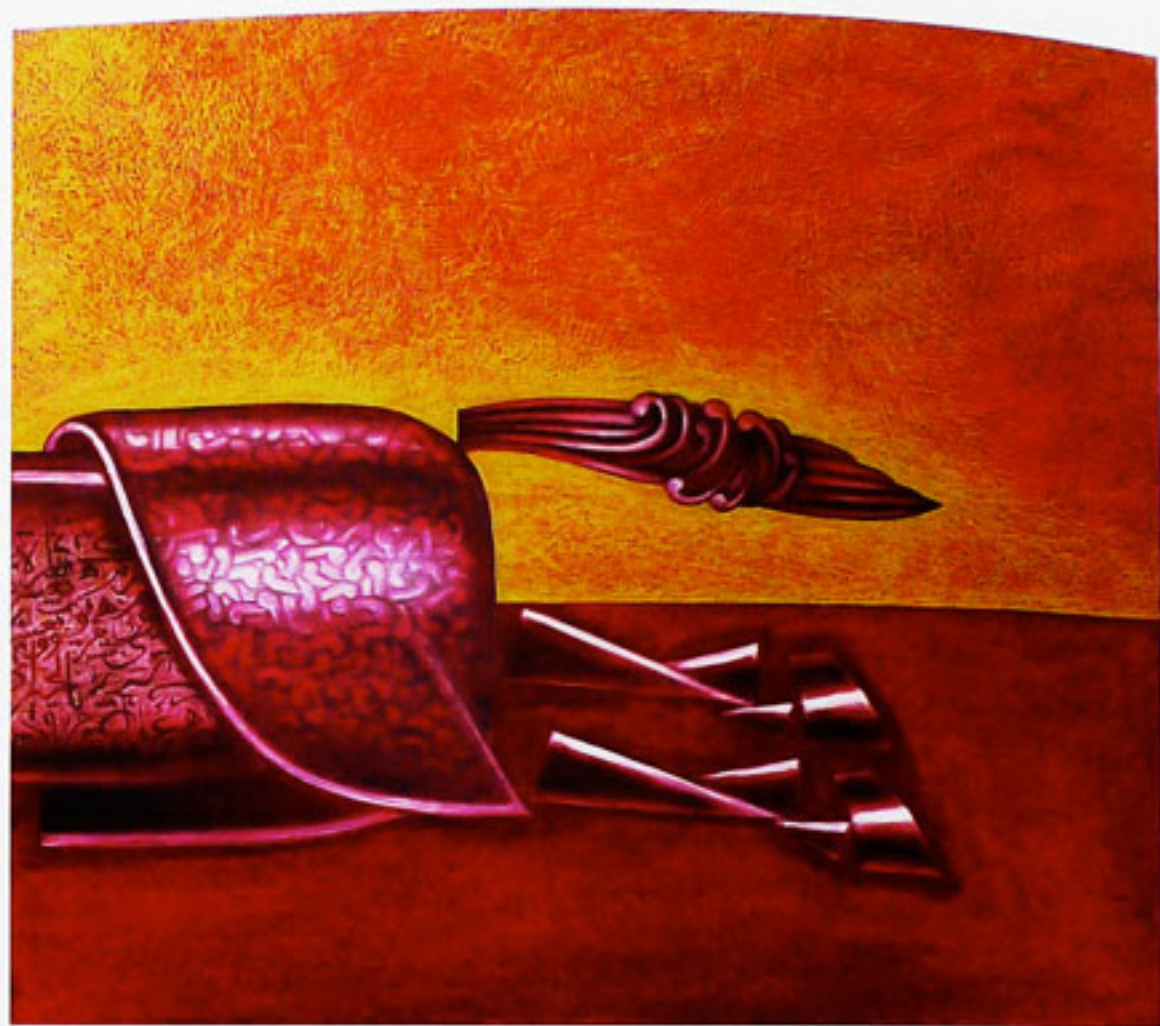
A CIP catalogue for this book is available from
the British Library

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Designed by Struktur Design Limited
Printed in Singapore

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Hassan Sarbakhshian
From the 'Daily Life' series
Photograph
© Hassan Sarbakhshian
Courtesy of Hassan Sarbakhshian a
Silk Road Gallery, Tehran



The graphic designer, painter and sculptor Reza Lavassani was born in 1962 in Tehran. He studied Painting at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Tehran University, but felt after graduating that his degree had not been enough to put him on 'the true path of painting'.

For this reason, he spent years studying philosophy in general, and mysticism in particular, all the time wondering about the basic meanings of mythology, sociology, religion, history and so on... This gave him: a new understanding of time, human beings and their inner needs. I then tried to apply this new understanding to painting and drawing, so that others could benefit from it too.

Having begun to understand what it was that he wanted to say, Lavassani had to decide how best to convey his message: 'In order to give a modern expression to my works, I searched for materials that would represent them more effectively. At last, I realized that all materials

and their functions are only secondary to drawing and spatial presentation, for as one reaches a modern understanding of spatial presentation, one will most probably find its suitable material.'

Lavassani's paintings and sculptures readily betray his interest in universal symbols and mythological legends. Ancient symbols are recreated in papier mâché to form horses, birds, women – the things that fascinated the very first artists, thousands of years ago. The same motifs appear in his paintings, signs of timelessness. The horse represents speed and nobility, the women fertility of the sacred, the bird a messenger between Heaven and Earth. Here Lavassani's philosophical training comes to the fore. At the heart of his works, however, is the belief that modern life distances us from nature and reality; as he says: 'reality and truth manifest themselves in the intellect and the heart and comprise the attributes which create mankind.'

above

Untitled Diptych, 2007

Oil and acrylic on canvas
100 x 150 cm

Private collection, London

opposite

Untitled, 2007

Mixed media on canvas
210 x 140 cm (9 panels)

© Reza Lavassani
Courtesy of Reza Lavassani and
the Assar Art Gallery, Tehran

