

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



FARHANG FOUNDATION is a nonreligious, nonpolitical, and nonprofit foundation dedicated to celebrating Iranian art and culture for the benefit of the community at large.



Areas of Focus



Constituencies

Trustees, Council Members, Advisers & Supporters

Iranians, Iranophiles, and Iran Scholars who support the mission of Farhang Foundation and our programs by donating their time, knowledge, and financial support.

Iranian Americans

These are the custodians of one of the richest cultures in the world, who benefit from learning more about their art and culture. They are also the individuals who will later be our cultural ambassadors to the community at large.

Community at Large

We feel that Iranian art and culture can contribute positively and should be woven into the multicolored tapestry of great cultures that compose America. That's why our mission at Farhang Foundation is to celebrate and promote Iranian art and culture for the benefit of the community at large.



Letter from the Chair: Farhang's 16th Year



Dear Friends of Farhang,

As we celebrate our continued growth and success, I want to acknowledge the efforts of all involved in helping Farhang Foundation pursue its mission of celebrating Iranian arts and culture, for the benefit of the community at large. It is with immense pride and gratitude that I present to you a report of our collective accomplishments of the past fiscal year.

At the core of our mission is the belief that Iranian culture has a universal message of resilience, creativity, and unity. The challenges of the past few years, especially for the Iranian community everywhere, have reminded us how important it is to preserve our cultural identity and to support those who use their voices, art, and talents to do so. In 2023/24, we reaffirmed our commitment to these ideals with an outstanding series of programs and initiatives that united diverse audiences and shared the beauty of Iranian culture with our global community.



ZAN: Voices of Freedom was one of the defining moments of this past year. On April 16, 2023, the historic **Alex Theatre Performing Arts Center** in Los Angeles became the stage for a concert that resonated deeply with all who attended. ZAN was not just a celebration of music; it was a tribute to the powerful female voices of Iran. Acclaimed young artists **Niaz Nawab**, **Gola**, and **Gelareh Sheibani** captivated the audience with

their vocal and musical performances, under the expert musical direction of **Erwin Khachikian**. Each artist brought a unique sound to the stage, blending original compositions with beloved Iranian classics. The concert was a profound homage to the **#WomanLifeFreedom** movement, a beacon of hope and empowerment for Iranian women. It was a night that reminded us all of the strength and resilience of women in Iran and around the world.



As is our tradition, we returned to USC to take part in the **Los Angeles Times Festival of Books** on April 22-23, 2023, where our popular **Iran Through Books** booth attracted thousands of visitors. This annual gathering, one of the largest free book events in the U.S., gave us the opportunity to share the richness of Iranian literature with an ever-growing audience. Our booth hosted discussions with guest authors, including **Sepehr Haddad**, author of **A Hundred Sweet Promises**, and **Dr. Sahba Shayani**, presenter of **Persian Myths & Legends**.

Their presence helped deepen our visitors' engagement with Iranian storytelling and history.



Our long-standing collaboration with the **UCLA Film and Television Archive** continued, culminating in the annual **Celebration of Iranian Cinema**, held from April 29 through May 14, 2023, at the **Hammer Museum**. A standout moment from this year's series was the premiere of **The Voice of Dust and Ash**, a documentary about the life and legacy of **Maestro Mohammad Reza Shajarian**. Directed by first-time filmmaker **Mandana Biscotti**, the film was a moving tribute to one of Iran's most beloved figures. Moreover, the series presented a diverse selection of works by Iranian filmmakers, and we were proud to support the screening of short films that highlighted the **#WomanLifeFreedom** movement, curated by **Dr. Roya Razstegar**. In view of the fact that our award ceremony for **The Farhang Short Film Festival** was canceled in 2022, we had a special presentation to honor the top three winners of the competition.



In a new partnership, Farhang Foundation was thrilled to collaborate with the **South Coast Repertory** theater company for the world premiere of **avaaz**, written and performed by **Michael Shayan**, from April 29 to May 27, 2023. This heartfelt and humorous production, directed by Tony-nominated **Moritz von Stuelpnagel**, was

a tribute to Iranian culture and family, offering audiences a glimpse into the playwright's life and heritage. The show was a joyful celebration of Nowruz, filled with personal reflections and cultural pride, delivered with authenticity and warmth.



On May 10, 2023, we collaborated with **PEN AMERICA** for the **World Voices Festival** at the **Skirball Cultural Center**, hosting the panel discussion titled **Woman, Life, Freedom: The Role of Art in the Struggle for Human Rights**. This powerful conversation, moderated by author **Amir Soltani**, brought together artists and activists to discuss the role of art in the ongoing fight for human rights, both in Iran and globally. The panel explored the global impact of the feminist revolution in Iran, with thought-provoking insights from Afghan activist **Crystal Bayat**, visual artist **Tala Madani**, poet **Nesar Mohammadi**, and multimedia artist **Nazanin Noroozi**.

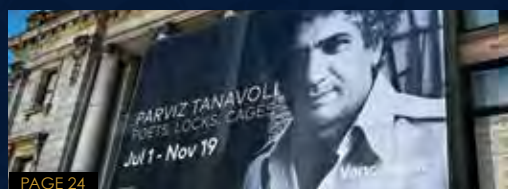


Continuing our support of musical performances, we helped present **DIÂR**, an evening of innovative Iranian music, at UCLA on May 21, 2023. This concert, curated by **Dr. Shahab Paranj**, featured renowned Iranian virtuosos **Sohrab Pournazeri** and **Pejman Hadadi**, alongside the **Iranshahr String Quartet**. The event also marked Dr. Paranj's appointment as a postdoctoral fellow in the Iranian Music degree program at UCLA.



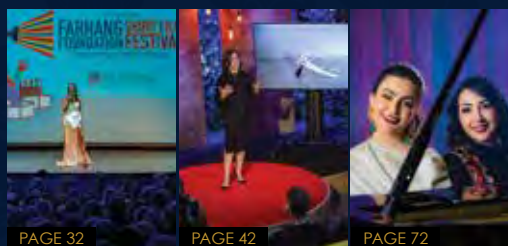
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We were also excited to be part of the **Ojai Music Festival** from June 8 to 11, 2023, in support of their lineup of Iranian musicians, including Master **Kayhan Kalhor** and members of the **Iranian Female Composers Association (IFCA)**. A powerful dialogue between Iranian and Western musical traditions was beautifully showcased at the event.



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As we grow, we hope for Farhang Foundation's mission to extend beyond our local communities. This year, we expanded our international presence through our collaboration with the **Vancouver Art Gallery** for the exhibition **Parviz Tanavoli: Poets, Locks, Cages**, running from July 1 to November 19, 2023. This landmark exhibition, the first major Canadian presentation of Tanavoli's art, highlighted the works of one of Iran's most celebrated artists and widened our global reach.



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Throughout 2023 we renewed our pledge to present and support both virtual and in-person programs. They included the **Farhang Performances** virtual series, the **Nowruz Concert at the Pacific Symphony** featuring master

Shahram Nazeri, our annual **Nowruz Celebrations at UCLA**, the annual **Nowruz Concert at Royce Hall**, **TED Immigrant Diaspora: Iranian**, and our **Annual Farhang Short Film Festival**. The diversity and quality of our offerings attest to our commitment to increase cultural and community engagements.



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On March 10, 2024, Farhang Foundation hosted its 14th **Nowruz Festival** at UCLA, the largest such celebration in the United States. The free festivities drew thousands of visitors to UCLA's campus, for a day of live music, traditional dances, storytelling, and children's activities. Together we marked the Iranian New Year, the coming of spring, and the renewal of nature.



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Later that evening, the celebration continued with the **Nowruz Concert at Royce Hall**, presented by Farhang Foundation in partnership with UCLA's **Herb Alpert School of Music**. Renowned musicians **Tahmoures** and **Sohrab Pournazeri** headlined the event, showcasing their extraordinary talent and creativity in a performance that seamlessly combined classical Iranian music with modern interpretations. The concert featured special guests, **Sahar Boroujerdi** making her U.S. stage debut with an evocative vocal performance, and two-time Grammy-winning soprano **Hila Plitmann**. They were accompanied by the incredible **Iranshahr Orchestra**, conducted by its musical director **Shahab Paranj**. The evening offered a breathtaking fusion of traditional Iranian melodies

and new compositions, celebrating the themes of Nowruz, rebirth, unity, and cultural pride. This unforgettable evening was a true celebration of Iranian music, another manifestation of Farhang Foundation's commitment to the preservation and promotion of Iranian cultural traditions through the arts.



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With a **Nowruz Concert** at Orange County's **Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall** on March 23, 2024, Farhang Foundation continued its long partnership with the **Pacific Symphony**. This prestigious event was a spectacular blend of traditional Iranian music and orchestral grandeur, featuring the legendary master of Iranian classical music, **Shahram Nazeri**. Known for his unparalleled vocal artistry and poetic expression, Nazeri delivered an unforgettable performance, touching the audience with the beauty of Iranian classical music.

The concert also featured the world premiere of **Persepolis**, a new composition by the esteemed Iranian conductor and composer maestro **Shardad Rohani**. This work added a brilliant feel to the evening, while vocalist **Mahsa Vahdat**, celebrated for her moving interpretations of Iranian music, lent her voice to the event. The entire night's performances captured the spirit of Nowruz, weaving together traditional Persian music with modern elements that resonated

deeply with both Iranian and non-Iranian audiences. As a sold-out audience filled the concert hall, their enthusiasm and appreciation created an atmosphere of shared cultural pride. This event underscored the Pacific Symphony's commitment to celebrating diverse musical traditions, and Farhang Foundation was honored for be taking part in bringing this extraordinary performance to the stage.

Preparing for our upcoming year, we are set to pursue our mission with optimism and determination. The challenges of the past year have reminded us of the importance of our work, and we are committed to celebrating Iranian culture through the arts. We are inspired by the artists, scholars, and members of our community who make this work possible. We are equally grateful for the support of our partners, sponsors, and volunteers, without whom nothing would be possible!

In closing, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Farhang Foundation Board of Trustees, our Council Members, the Executive Team, and all those who have contributed to our success this year. Together, we continue to foster a deeper appreciation of Iranian culture and hope to share its richness with our global community in every corner of the world.

Thank you for being part of this journey.

Sincerely,

H. Emrani

Dr. Haleh Emrani
Chair, Farhang Foundation

How
YOU
Can
Help



DONATE financially
to support our programs



SIGN UP for our
email newsletter



VOLUNTEER your
time and talents



ATTEND our events
with friends and family



ZAN: VOICES OF FREEDOM

NIAZ NAWAB • GOLAZIN • GELAREH SHEIBANI



Farhang Foundation proudly presented **ZAN: Voices of Freedom**, an extraordinary concert celebrating the powerful female voices of Iran, held on April 16, 2023, at the historic **Alex Theatre Performing Arts Center**. This inspiring event marked the Los Angeles stage debut of acclaimed artists **Niaz Nawab**, **Golazin**, and **Gelareh Sheibani**, who captivated the audience with vocal and musical performances that resonated deeply with the spirit of resilience and freedom.

Under the expert musical direction of **Erwin Khachikian**, each artist brought her own unique sound to the stage, blending original compositions with beloved Iranian classics. These renditions honored Iran's rich cultural heritage while paying tribute to the **#WomanLifeFreedom** movement, a profound call for justice, equality, and empowerment for Iranian women. The concert not only showcased the talent of these exceptional artists but also stood as a beacon of hope and solidarity, inspiring all in attendance with a powerful message of freedom and unity.



THE ALEX





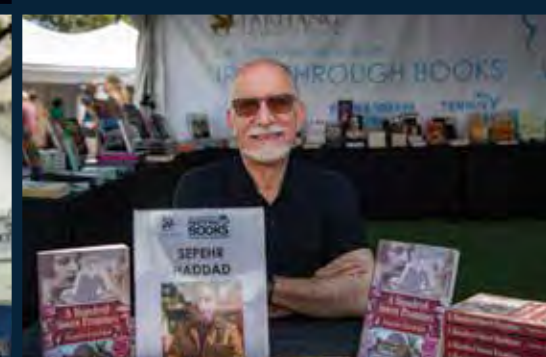
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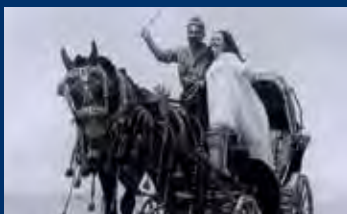
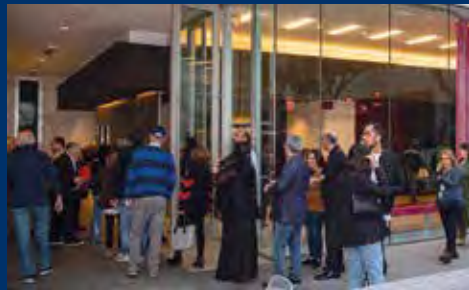
THROUGH BOOKS

Los Angeles Times FESTIVAL OF BOOKS AT USC



Farhang Foundation was thrilled to return to the **L.A. Times Festival of Books** on April 22–23, 2023, on the beautiful campus of USC, with our celebrated presentation of **Iran Through Books**. Thousands of book enthusiasts visited our booth throughout this remarkable weekend, immersing themselves in Iranian literature and culture. This year, we were honored to host esteemed guest authors **Sepehr Haddad**, author of *A Hundred Sweet Promises*, and **Dr. Sahba Shayani**, author of *Persian Myths & Legends*, both of whom enriched the experience with their insights and engaging discussions. The L.A. Times Festival of Books at USC is America's largest free annual book festival, attended by over seventy-five thousand visitors each year.





Farhang Foundation continued its long partnership with the **UCLA Film and Television Archive** in presenting the annual **UCLA Celebration of Iranian Cinema** April 29 through May 14, 2023, with the premiere of *The Voice of Dust and Ash*, a captivating documentary on the life and legacy of Maestro **Mohammad Reza Shajarian**, directed by first-time filmmaker **Mandana Biscotti**. This year's series presented a compelling selection of seven feature film premieres by Iranian filmmakers, including *The Carriage Driver*, *Until Tomorrow*, *The Last Snow*, *World War III*, *Wind of Change*, and *Leila's Brothers*. A highlight of the series was an evening dedicated to thought-provoking short films on the **#WomanLifeFreedom** movement, curated by **Dr. Roya Razstegar**.

In addition, the **UCLA Film and Television Archive** proudly featured the top six short films from Farhang Foundation's Short Film Festival, spotlighting emerging talent in Iranian cinema. The program culminated in a special award presentation to honor the festival's top three winners. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the **UCLA Film and Television Archive** for its steadfast dedication to this annual series, celebrating the richness of Iranian cinema and its cultural impact.

UCLA Celebration of

IRANIAN CINEMA

UCLA
FILM &
TELEVISION
ARCHIVE





Farhang Foundation proudly partnered with the renowned **South Coast Repertory** to present the World Premiere of **avaaz**, an original work written and performed by **Michael Shayan**, under the direction of Tony-nominated **Moritz von Stuelpnagel**. Running from April 29 through May 27, 2023, this heartfelt production invited audiences into the world of Roya, a fabulous and endearing hostess, as she opens her home to celebrate Nowruz, the Iranian New Year. Amidst preparing a sumptuous feast, Roya takes the audience on a journey through her vibrant life—from Tehran to “Tehrangeles,” California.

This hilarious and deeply personal tribute to the playwright's mother was brought to life with warmth and authenticity by Shayan, the one who knows her best. Through rich traditions, humor, and passionate storytelling, **avaaz** wove a powerful tale of family, resilience, and cultural pride, creating an unforgettable theater experience that celebrated the bonds that unite us all.



WOMAN, LIFE, FREEDOM:

THE ROLE OF ART IN THE STRUGGLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS



Farhang Foundation was delighted to join forces with **PEN AMERICA** in presenting this year's **WORLD VOICES FESTIVAL** titled **WOMAN, LIFE, FREEDOM: The Role of Art in the Struggle for Human Rights** on May 10, 2023, at the **SKIRBALL CULTURAL CENTER**.

This panel discussion explored how artists, writers, and activists are mobilizing in the struggle for human rights and gender justice worldwide, the regional and global impacts of this feminist revolution, and how the words “Woman, Life, Freedom” have come to define a movement, inspiring action and allyship. To address these pressing questions and the real risks artists face when incorporating these themes in their work, writer, filmmaker, and human rights activist **Amir Soltani** moderated a conversation with Afghan women's rights activist **Crystal Bayat**, award-winning visual artist **Tala Madani**, Iranian poet-in-exile **Nesar Mohammadi**, and multimedia artist and member of the Art/Culture/Action collective, **Nazanin Noroozi**. The program concluded with a reception featuring music by **DJ Omid Walizadeh** and delightful Iranian cuisine by **Chef Mojdeh Eghbal**.



DIĀR

An Evening Celebrating Iranian Music

Farhang Foundation and the **UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music** proudly presented **DIĀR**, an evening dedicated to the beauty and innovation of Iranian music. Curated by **Shahab Paranj**, this exceptional concert event featured renowned Iranian virtuosos **Sohrab Pournazeri** and **Pejman Hadadi**, alongside the **Iranshahr String Quartet**, premiering four new compositions by acclaimed composers **Richard Danielpour**, **Ian Krouse**, **Reza Vali**, and **Shahab Paranj** himself. Held on May 21, 2023, at Schoenberg Hall, the event marked a historic celebration of Iranian musical artistry.

This concert also celebrated Shahab Paranj's appointment as a postdoctoral scholar in UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music's music department. Dr. Paranj's research delves into the construction and creative process of rhythm in the Āvazi vocal style, further enriching UCLA's commitment to advancing Iranian music and cultural scholarship.

UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music



UCLA'S IRANIAN STUDENT GROUP CULTURAL SHOW

Farhang Foundation was a proud sponsor of UCLA **Iranian Student Group (ISG)**'s annual cultural show on May 26, 2023, at UCLA's Ackerman Grand Ballroom.

This year's show was hosted by renowned news anchor and influencer **Shally Zomorodi**, who guided the audience through an exceptional evening of exploration and celebration. The program included the esteemed actress and grassroots activist **Yasmine Aker** gracing the stage in a heartwarming segment dedicated to Persian Poetry and acknowledgment of the humanitarian crises taking place in Iran. The evening also included the anticipated showstopping artistry from Persia's Got Talent's **Oliver Hakim**, **LA Daf Ensemble**, **Ashley Zarah**, and Iranian students of UCLA performing Bandari, Kurdish, and Modern Persian dances.



PANEL DISCUSSIONS

The Iranian Music Degree Program at UCLA

Exploring the Influence of Persian Music and Instruments in Composition

As a part of Farhang Foundation and UCLA's **Iranian Music Degree program**, esteemed composers and scholars were invited for a panel discussion titled **Exploring the Influence of Persian Music and Instruments in Composition**, curated by the program's new postdoctoral scholar of Iranian music, **Dr. Shahab Paranj**. The panel featured **Richard Danielpour**, **Ian Krouse**, **Reza Vali**, **Sohrab Pournazeri**, and **Shahab Paranj**, composers who have all incorporated Iranian instruments into their compositions. This free program was both live and virtual and took place on May 19, 2023, at UCLA's Lanai Hall.

Approaching Composition from a Non-Eurocentric Perspective

Then on May 22, 2023, another panel discussion took place at Lanai Hall. **Approaching Composition from a Non-Eurocentric Perspective** panel was moderated by **Dr. Shahab Paranj** in conversation with **Erberk Eryilmaz** from Ankara Music and Fine Arts University and **Reza Vali** from Carnegie Mellon University to explore the ways in which traditional Turkish and Iranian music enhance the creative process of contemporary composers.

UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music



GRAND
PERFORMANCES
PRESENTS

SHAHIN NAJAFI

On Saturday, June 17, 2023, Farhang Foundation, in collaboration with our long-standing partners at **Grand Performances**, hosted a free summer outdoor concert for thousands of visitors in Downtown Los Angeles, featuring the influential **Shahin Najafi**. A classically trained Iranian musician, poet, singer, and social activist, Najafi is celebrated for his powerful lyrics and fearless activism. His music boldly addresses pressing social issues, from theocracy and poverty to sexism, censorship, child labor, drug addiction, and homophobia. This dynamic performance offered audiences an unforgettable experience, blending artistry with a profound message of resilience and justice.

The event drew a large audience, eager to experience Najafi's thought-provoking performances. The concert began with an engaging opening set by **DJ Omid Walizadeh**, setting the stage for an unforgettable evening of music and social commentary.





PARVIZ TANAVOLI

POETS, LOCKS, CAGES

Vancouver
Artgallery

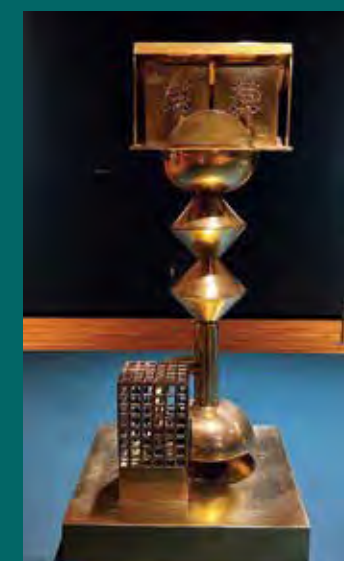
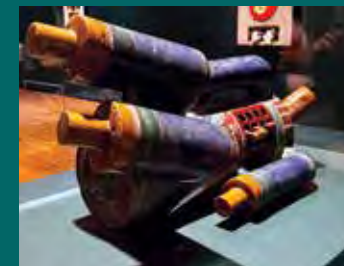
Art Opens pathways to our future



From July 1 to November 19, 2023, Farhang Foundation proudly partnered with Canada's renowned **Vancouver Art Gallery** to present **Parviz Tanavoli: Poets, Locks, Cages**, a landmark exhibition curated by Vancouver-based independent curator **Pantea Haghighi**. This exhibition marked the first major Canadian presentation of works by internationally acclaimed Iranian-born, Vancouver-based artist Parviz Tanavoli. This partnership was also the first ever international project for Farhang Foundation.

Tanavoli, celebrated for his unique synthesis of sculpture and poetry, captivated audiences with over one hundred works spanning six decades of his career. **Poets, Locks, Cages** offered a deep exploration of recurring themes in Tanavoli's work—the poet, the lock, and the cage—revealing the rich symbolism and profound meaning behind each. The exhibition highlighted Tanavoli's expertise in sculpture while showcasing his mastery across painting, printmaking, and mixed media. A pivotal member of the Saqqakhaneh school, Tanavoli draws inspiration from Iran's cultural heritage. Born in Tehran in 1937, he graduated from Milan's Brera Academy in 1959 and went on to teach sculpture at institutions such as the Tehran College of Decorative Arts, the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, and the University of Tehran, where he chaired the sculpture department for eighteen years. Since 1989 Tanavoli has divided his time between Tehran and Vancouver, contributing significantly to the international art scene.

The exhibition also featured Tanavoli's works from prestigious institutions, including the British Museum in London, the Grey Art Gallery at New York University, the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and Tate Modern in London, underscoring his global impact and the enduring relevance of his art.





IRANIAN MUSIC AND COMPOSERS at the

OJAIMUSICFESTIVAL

Farhang Foundation proudly supported Iranian composers and performers at the **77th Ojai Music Festival**, held June 8–11, 2023, at the scenic **Ojai Libbey Bowl**. This year's festival celebrated an extraordinary lineup of Iranian talent, including the renowned **Kayhan Kalhor**, alongside **Nina Barzegar**, **Golfam Khayam**, **Nasim Khorassani**, **Niloufar Nourbakhsh**, **Aida Shirazi**, and **Niloufar Shiri**. Known for presenting groundbreaking musical experiences, the Ojai Music Festival welcomed Grammy- and Pulitzer Prize-winning artist **Rhiannon Giddens** as its 2023 musical director, crafting a uniquely memorable edition that spotlighted diverse voices and cultures in an unforgettable setting.

This four-day event showcased an international array of artists, highlighting the talents of renowned kamancheh player Kayhan Kalhor and compositions by members of the Iranian Female Composers Association (IFCA). Notably, Aida Shirazi's piece was featured in the "Ojai Dawns" concert on Friday, Nasim Khorassani and Nina Barzegar had their works presented in the "Vis-à-Vis" concert on Friday, and Niloufar Nourbakhsh's composition was showcased in "The Willows Are New" concert on Saturday.

Kayhan Kalhor performed in four concerts throughout the festival, including the Thursday opening night concert, "**The Willows Are New**" concert, and both Sunday concerts at the Libbey Bowl. The event, organized in partnership with the **Ojai Music Festival** and the **Iranian Female Composers Association**, was a testament to the rich cultural heritage and artistic excellence of Iranian musicians and composers.



HAMED NIKPAY

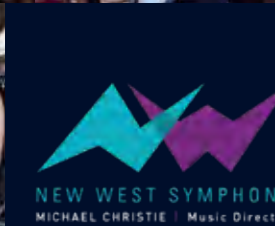
NEW WEST SUMMERFEST



The **New West Symphony** proudly presented the extraordinary **Hamed Nikpay** at the inaugural New West Summerfest, held at Moorpark College. This open-air, two-day music festival showcased Grammy-winning and Billboard-charting artists from a variety of genres, including Jazz, Country, Classic Rock, Mariachi, and Iranian music, creating an exceptional cross-cultural musical experience.

Hamed Nikpay, renowned for his unique fusion of classical Iranian melodies with contemporary sounds, captivated audiences with his distinctive style, which he calls "Sufi Funk." As a fusion vocalist, multi-instrumentalist, and songwriter, Nikpay delivered soulful harmonies and innovative compositions, immersing listeners in a fresh blend of Iranian tradition and modernity.

New West Summerfest celebrated the diversity of musical traditions in a vibrant, open setting, highlighting the power of music as a bridge between cultures and a platform for cultural exchange.



NEW WEST SYMPHONY
MICHAEL CHRISTIE | Music Director

نیاز Niyaz

THE FOURTH LIGHT

AN IMMERSIVE MULTIMEDIA EXPERIENCE

Farhang Foundation, in collaboration with **UCLA's Herb Alpert School of Music**, proudly presented **Niyaz: The Fourth Light, An Immersive Multimedia Experience** at **Royce Hall**. Following its international success, this critically acclaimed interdisciplinary show by the renowned electroacoustic music group Niyaz made an unforgettable Los Angeles debut.

The Fourth Light was inspired by the life and philosophy of **Rabia al Basri**, the first female Sufi poet and mystic, and took audiences on a breathtaking journey into the soul. The production combined live music and dance with cutting-edge interactive technologies, including advanced projection and body-mapping that responded to sound and movement in real time, creating a visually and emotionally immersive experience.

At the heart of this multi-sensory performance

was the powerful voice of award-winning vocalist **Azam Ali**. Through an artful blend of sound, space, image, and light, the audience was invited into a transformative experience, breaking boundaries between the art and the observer.

Founded by Iranian-born, Indian-raised vocalist and composer **Azam Ali** and Iranian multi-instrumentalist and composer **Loga Ramin Torkian**, Niyaz seamlessly fuses traditional Persian and Middle Eastern music with modern electronic elements. With four best-selling albums on Six Degrees Records, Niyaz has garnered global acclaim and extensive media coverage, including features on NPR, PRI, BBC World, *Billboard*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Huffington Post*. Their music transcends borders and cultures, creating a profound experience of cultural fusion and spiritual exploration.



UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music

Off the 405

Rahill

The Getty Center presented two remarkable events as part of the **Getty—Off the 405** series, showcasing their commitment to Iranian art and culture through dynamic public performances. The first event, held on July 29, 2023, featured a free concert by **Rahill** at the Getty Center in Los Angeles. The evening opened with a DJ set by **KCRW's Nassir Nassirzadeh**, setting the stage for Rahill's headlining performance. A multidisciplinary artist and musician from Michigan, now based in New York's Hudson Valley, Rahill is best known as a founding member of Brooklyn's garage-rock band Habibi. Her solo work reflects her Iranian American heritage, deepened by frequent visits to Iran. Rahill's debut LP, *Flowers at Your Feet*, pays homage to her familial roots in Shiraz and Isfahan, charting her evolution as a singer-songwriter. The album's first single, "Fables," is a vibrant, genre-blending pop track produced by art-pop icon Beck, showcasing her distinctively contemplative and radiant style.



DJ Maral

On September 17, 2023, the series continued with a performance by **DJ Maral** at the Getty Center. This event brought together three artists exploring themes of nature, life cycles, and cultural intersections. JJJJerome Ellis presented a unique, site-specific blend of poetry and music in the Central Garden, while Kerry Tribe premiered "The Complaint," a new performance piece. Maral closed the event with an electrifying set on the Garden Terrace Stage, blending Iranian classical and folk samples with experimental electronic genres like noise, punk/post-punk, and dub. Known for her critically acclaimed records *Ground Groove* (2022) and *Push* (2020) on Leaving Records, Maral's set offered a rich sonic journey, including collaborations with legends like Lee "Scratch" Perry, Panda Bear, and Penny Rimbaud, captivating the audience with her innovative fusion of sounds and influences.

Meet and Greet with Arash Dabestani

Farhang Foundation, in collaboration with the **Persian Academic and Cultural Student Association (PACSA)**, hosted an engaging meet-and-greet with author **Arash Dabestani** at USC's Michelson Hall. This event introduced attendees to Dabestani's latest book, *Narrated by the Dead*, and featured a screening of an animation inspired by *One Thousand and One Nights*, narrated by Dabestani himself.

Conducted in Persian, the event provided a unique opportunity for attendees to connect with Dabestani, a celebrated author known for his captivating storytelling. The combination of a book introduction and animation screening created a rich cultural experience, highlighting the beauty and depth of Persian literature for an appreciative audience.



PEYMAN SALIMI — IN CONCERT



The **Persian Academic and Cultural Student Association (PACSA)** presented **Peyman Salimi** in Concert at USC's Tommy's Place on October 20, 2023. For the first time in Los Angeles, Peyman Salimi, joined by talented Canadian bass player and singer-songwriter **Zoe Guigueno**, performed a captivating blend of pop and rock tracks from his latest album, *The Psychology of Letting Go*.

An Iranian Italian singer-songwriter, guitarist, and music producer, Salimi weaves his Iranian roots with English-style songwriting and folk influences, enriched with electronic elements. Born and raised in Iran, he began his musical journey at six with piano lessons before transitioning to guitar. His formal studies in Classical Guitar Performance at the University of Tehran and later in Florence, Italy, further refined his craft.

In 2023 Salimi released his third solo album, *The Psychology of Letting Go*, collaborating with **Zoe Guigueno**, **Sara Naeini**, and his bandmates from The Allophones. His evocative music bridges cultures through melodic storytelling, resonating with audiences worldwide.

This concert reflected Farhang Foundation's dedication to promoting Iranian art and culture through dynamic public performances, offering talented artists a platform to connect with and inspire diverse audiences, especially the younger generation.



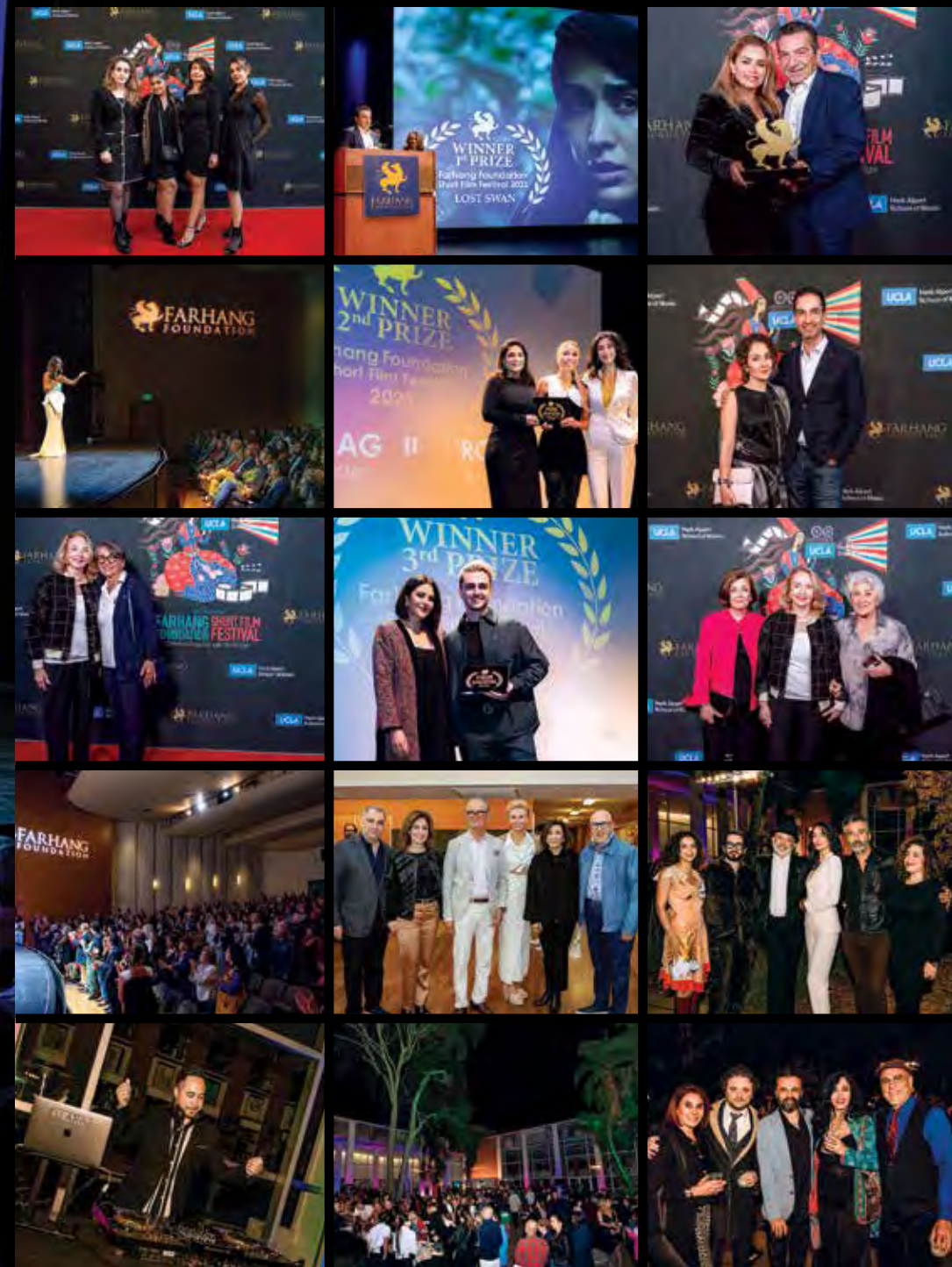


14th Annual FARHANG SHORT FILM FOUNDATION FESTIVAL ::: AWARDS CEREMONY :::

The 14th Annual Farhang Foundation Short Film Festival Awards Ceremony took place on October 1, 2023, at UCLA's Schoenberg Hall. The event was hosted by the talented actress and comedian **Melissa Shoshahi**, who guided viewers through the festivities. During the virtual ceremony, attendees had the pleasure of watching the top six short films of the year.

Ehsan Abbassei received the First Prize of **\$10,000** for the exceptional film **LOST SWAN**. **Teia Kane** and **Saba Eskandari** were honored with the Second Prize of **\$5,000** for the captivating film **BORN AGAIN VIRGIN**. **Arrad** was awarded the Third Prize of **\$3,000** for his outstanding music video **LIONESS**.

The Farhang Short Film Festival is a unique event dedicated to celebrating Iranian short films and offering substantial support to filmmakers worldwide, with over **\$200,000** in cash prizes awarded to date. The 2023 jury panel consisted of esteemed figures from the film industry, including **Desiree Akhavan**, the renowned actress **Necar Zadegan**, the director **Maryam Keshavarz**, **Roya Rastegar**, and special jury member the influential **Ms. Lily Amir-Arjomand**, visionary founder of the **Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (Kanoon)**. The jury chair was once again **Mark Amin**, CEO of Sobini Films. Their collective expertise and discernment played a pivotal role in recognizing and celebrating outstanding cinematic achievements.





Mohammad Barrangi

AT THE SAN DIEGO MUSEUM OF ART

Farhang Foundation, in partnership with the **San Diego Museum of Art**, presented two compelling programs featuring Iranian artist **Mohammad Barrangi**. The first, **Dreamscapes: Mohammad Barrangi**, took place on September 15, 2023, as part of Farhang Foundation's virtual events series. This enlightening program featured a conversation with UK-based Iranian artist Mohammad Barrangi, moderated by **Dr. Ladan Akbarnia** and Farhang's own **Roshi Rahnama**, offering audiences a glimpse into his layered artistic practice and unique perspective.

From October 4 to October 6, 2023, Farhang Foundation and the San Diego Museum of Art presented **Mohammad Barrangi: A Live Art Installation**. Held daily at the Colonnade entrance to the May S. Marcy Sculpture Court, this free, in-person event provided visitors with an exclusive opportunity to engage directly with Barrangi's creative process. During the installation, Barrangi demonstrated his signature reverse print transfer technique, allowing attendees to observe the meticulous steps involved in producing his large-scale works. For this special installation, Barrangi crafted a diptych inspired by Iranian history and visual traditions, providing a close-up view of the intricacies behind his art.

This immersive experience deepened visitors' understanding of Barrangi's art and techniques, such as those used in *Migration* (2018), a work acquired by the San Diego Museum of Art in 2021. The live installation enriched appreciation for contemporary Iranian art and highlighted Barrangi's innovative contributions to the field.

A contemporary Iranian artist, Barrangi combines modern printmaking techniques with the traditional aesthetics of Iranian illustrated manuscripts. His work, which explores personal identity and the universal themes of diaspora, often reflects his experiences as an immigrant in a globalized world. Barrangi's distinctive style blends Persian calligraphy, storytelling, and experimental mark-making, resulting in both intimate works on handmade paper and expansive murals. Born in Rasht, Iran, in 1988, Barrangi overcame the challenges of limited mobility in his left arm, creating his works with his right hand and both feet. His art—infused with Persian calligraphy, textual elements, and touches of humor—celebrates resilience and the adaptability of the human spirit.

BALBOA PARK
THE SAN DIEGO
MUSEUM OF ART



THE PERSIAN VERSION



Farhang Foundation, in collaboration with the **Sundance Institute**, proudly presented the exclusive Los Angeles red-carpet premiere of **The Persian Version**, a film by the talented **Maryam Keshavarz**, at the Laemmle Royal Theater in Los Angeles. This special event included a prescreening conversation with writer-director **Maryam Keshavarz**, senior programmer of the Sundance Film Festival **Shari Frilot**, journalist **Shirley Jahad**, editor **JoAnne Yarrow**, and casting director **Lindsey Weismueller**. Attendees enjoyed a unique opportunity to meet the team behind this award-winning film and engage in an intimate discussion about its creative process. **The Persian Version** has received critical acclaim for its exploration of cultural identity, family dynamics, and the immigrant experience.





FROM PERSIA TO IRAN:

A Modern Story

A LECTURE BY PROFESSOR
DR. ALI MIRSEPASSI
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Farhang Foundation, in partnership with **USC Dornsife's Iranian Studies Degree Program**, proudly presented *From Persia to Iran: A Modern Story*, a lecture by New York University Professor **Ali Mirsepassi**, as part of the **USC Distinguished Lecture Series**. Held at USC's Doheny Memorial Library, this free, in-person event provided valuable insights into a pivotal moment in Iranian history.

In December 1934 the Iranian government requested that foreign missions in Tehran replace the name "Persia" with "Iran." Professor Mirsepassi's lecture delved into the political intentions and cultural ramifications of this change, challenging the conventional view that it was merely a reflection of Reza Shah's admiration for Nazi Germany's nationalist ideologies. Instead, he presented a nuanced interpretation, arguing that the decision stemmed from an intellectual movement among Iranian nationalists during the interwar period to rediscover a cosmopolitan "idea of Iran." This intellectual pursuit was deeply influenced by the transnational experiences of Iranian émigrés, activists, and scholars who engaged with Weimar Berlin in the 1920s and continued their work upon returning to Iran in the mid-1930s.

Professor Ali Mirsepassi, the Albert Gallatin Research Excellence Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at NYU, is widely recognized for his contributions to Iranian intellectual history, political Islam, and modernity. His lecture offered attendees a deeper understanding of the complex historical forces that shaped Iran's identity in the modern era.



USC Dornsife
Dana and David Dornsife
College of Letters, Arts and Sciences
Department of Middle East Studies

IRANIAN FILMS AT THE 2023 NEW PORT BEACH FILM FEST

Farhang Foundation proudly partnered with the **Newport Beach Film Festival** to showcase an exceptional lineup of Iranian films for the 2023 festival, featuring the premieres of *Without Her* (Bi Roya) and *A Revolution on Canvas*.

Without Her, directed by **Arian Vazirdaftari**, captivated audiences at its October 18 screening at Triangle 4 Theatres in Costa Mesa. Starring **Tannaz Tabatabaei**, **Saber Abar**, and **Shadi Karamroudi**, the film presents a haunting narrative around Roya, who, just two weeks before emigrating from Iran to Denmark, encounters a quiet, lost young woman. Taking her in, Roya introduces the girl to her husband, family, and friends, unaware that this stranger harbors a mysterious intent to take her place.



The following night, *A Revolution on Canvas*, directed by **Sara Nodjourni** and codirected by her husband, **Till Schauder**, premiered at Regal Edwards Big Newport. This hybrid political thriller and verité-style documentary stars **Nahid Hagigat** and **Nickzad Nodjourni**, delving into the enigmatic disappearance of over one hundred "treasonous" paintings by Nodjourni, a leading figure in Iranian contemporary art. Through an in-depth exploration of these lost works, the film marks a powerful directorial debut for Sara Nodjourni, offering audiences a fascinating journey into art, mystery, and political history.





Iranian Films at the 2023 AFI FEST

In October 2023, Farhang Foundation proudly partnered with the prestigious **American Film Institute** for the ninth consecutive year to present the Iranian film lineup at the **2023 AFI FEST**, underscoring its dedication to promoting Iranian cinema and providing a global platform for Iranian filmmakers to share their narratives.

On October 26, 2023, the festival screened *Terrestrial Verses*, directed by **Ali Asgari** and **Alireza Khatami**. This powerful film addressed the oppression and conformity imposed by the Iranian government through a series of thought-provoking vignettes. Asgari and Khatami used each segment to showcase the restrictive limitations placed on freedom of choice and expression, employing wry humor to highlight the absurdity of these constraints. In a symbolic choice, the filmmakers kept those in power offscreen, while confining powerless individuals within the frame, effectively illustrating the lack of freedom felt by everyday Iranians. *Terrestrial Verses* featured a talented cast, including, **Sadaf Asgari**, **Gohar Kheirandish**, **Bahram Ark**, **Arghavan Shabani**, and **Servin Zabetian**, who brought depth and authenticity to this impactful story.

On October 28, 2023, AFI FEST presented *Shayda*, directed by **Noora Niasari**, followed by an engaging conversation with the director. *Shayda*, Australia's official Oscar® submission for Best International Feature, marked Niasari's remarkable debut and was executive produced by Academy Award® winner **Cate Blanchett**. Set in the mid-1990s, the film follows Shayda, portrayed by Cannes Best Actress winner **Zar Amir**, as she seeks safety in an Australian women's shelter with her six-year-old daughter Mona after her husband Hossein's abusive behavior escalates. As Shayda files for divorce—a taboo act within her Iranian community—the film intimately explores her journey toward independence and resilience, highlighting the obstacles she faces, including Hossein's court-mandated visits with Mona. Shayda shines a light on female solidarity and the resilience of motherhood, with supporting roles showcasing the strength of the women in the shelter. Winner of the World Cinema Audience Award at Sundance, the film boasts a strong cast, including **Osamah Sami**, **Mojean Aria**, **Jillian Nguyen**, and **Rina Mousavi**. *Shayda* was produced by **Vincent Sheehan** and Noora Niasari, with executive producers Cate Blanchett, **Andrew Upton**, **Coco Francini**, **Caitlin Gold**, and **Lindsay Lanzillotta**.

FARHANG FOUNDATION 12th Annual Fundraising *Gala*

Farhang Foundation proudly hosted its **12th Annual Fundraising Gala and Award Ceremony** on November 4, 2023, at the iconic **Beverly Wilshire Hotel** in Beverly Hills, drawing an impressive gathering of over 550 distinguished guests and sponsors. The enchanting evening featured captivating musical performances by the talented **Arash Avin**, with renowned news anchor **Shally Zomorodi** guiding the festivities as master of ceremonies.

A highlight of the night was the presentation of **Farhang's Heritage Award** to the extraordinary **Lily Amir-Arjomand**, visionary founder of Iran's **Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (Kanoon-e Parvaresh-e Fekri-e Koodakan va Nojavanan)**. This esteemed award honors individuals who have dedicated their lives to preserving Iranian culture, advancing Iranian studies, and enriching society through remarkable artistic contributions.

Funds raised at this annual gala are crucial in supporting Farhang Foundation's extensive range of over one hundred programs, projects, and initiatives.



TEDid

Immigrant Diaspora

Iranian

LIVESTREAM

On December 6, 2023, Farhang Foundation partnered with TED for the first time to present the 2023 TED Immigrant Diaspora: Iranian. This landmark virtual event was livestreamed for free, making it accessible to audiences worldwide.

As part of TED's broader initiative to elevate the ideas and accomplishments of immigrant communities, this first-of-its-kind event spotlighted inspiring voices from the Iranian diaspora, whose innovative ideas and perspectives are shaping our collective future. Iranian immigrants have long enriched their adopted homes, bringing creativity, industriousness, and cultural depth to the global community.

The event featured an extraordinary lineup of speakers who shared insights on immigration, culture, science, and more. Among them were filmmaker **Desiree Akhavan**, celebrated for her unique storytelling; poetry professor **Leili Anvar**, who brings Persian literature to life; **Dr. Abbas Ardehali**, a trailblazing cardiothoracic surgeon; **Maryam Banikarim**, a seasoned executive with a wealth of business insights; **Newsha Ghaeli**, a data expert uncovering hidden narratives in numbers; **Dr. Hani Goodarzi**, a pioneering biomedical researcher; **Golriz Lucina**, a creative producer known for groundbreaking projects; and **Niaz Nawab**, a singer and composer whose music bridges cultures. Each speaker offered a distinct perspective, enriching the conversation on topics that resonate deeply within and beyond the Iranian diaspora.



A REVOLUTION ON CANVAS

Exclusive Los Angeles Premiere

Farhang Foundation and HBO Documentary Films proudly presented the exclusive Los Angeles premiere of *A Revolution on Canvas*, directed by Sara Nodjourni and Till Schauder, at the Laemmle Royal Theatre. Following the screening, an in-person Q&A session took place with Nickzad Nodjourni, Sara Nodjourni, Till Schauder, and Sussan Deyhim, moderated by Houman Sarshar, offering the audience a unique opportunity to engage with the creators behind the film.

A Revolution on Canvas is a captivating hybrid of political thriller and verité-style documentary. In her directorial debut alongside her husband and codirector, Till Schauder, Sara Nodjourni unravels the mystery surrounding the disappearance of more than one hundred "treasonous" paintings by her father, renowned Iranian modern artist Nickzad Nodjourni. Born in Kermanshah, Iran, in 1942, Nickzad Nodjourni studied art at Tehran University of Fine Arts and later earned a master's degree from the City College of New York. Upon returning to Tehran, he joined the faculty of his alma mater and became politically active, creating revolutionary posters that openly criticized the Shah's regime. After his exile following the revolution, Nodjourni continued to express his political stance through his art, using figurative painting laced with satire and cultural motifs to comment on sociopolitical issues.

Sara Nodjourni brings a global lens to her work, focusing on perspectives often overlooked by Western media. Her producing credits include *When God Sleeps*, a widely acclaimed documentary that played at over one hundred festivals worldwide and was shortlisted for the 2018 German Academy Award. Codirector and cinematographer Till Schauder is known for his work on *The Iran Job* as well as *When God Sleeps*, both shortlisted for German Academy Awards, and has directed multiple award-winning documentaries. Together, they present a profound exploration of art, exile, and political identity in *A Revolution on Canvas*.

HBO DOCUMENTARY FILMS



11th Annual Virtual Celebration of Shab-e Yalda

Farhang Foundation celebrated the **11th Annual Shab-e Yalda** on December 16, 2023, at UCLA's Schoenberg Hall, marking the arrival of the winter solstice with an evening rich in Iranian culture through enchanting music, evocative poetry, and captivating storytelling. Presented entirely in Persian, this event honored the age-old tradition of **Shab-e Yalda**, celebrating light, warmth, and resilience.

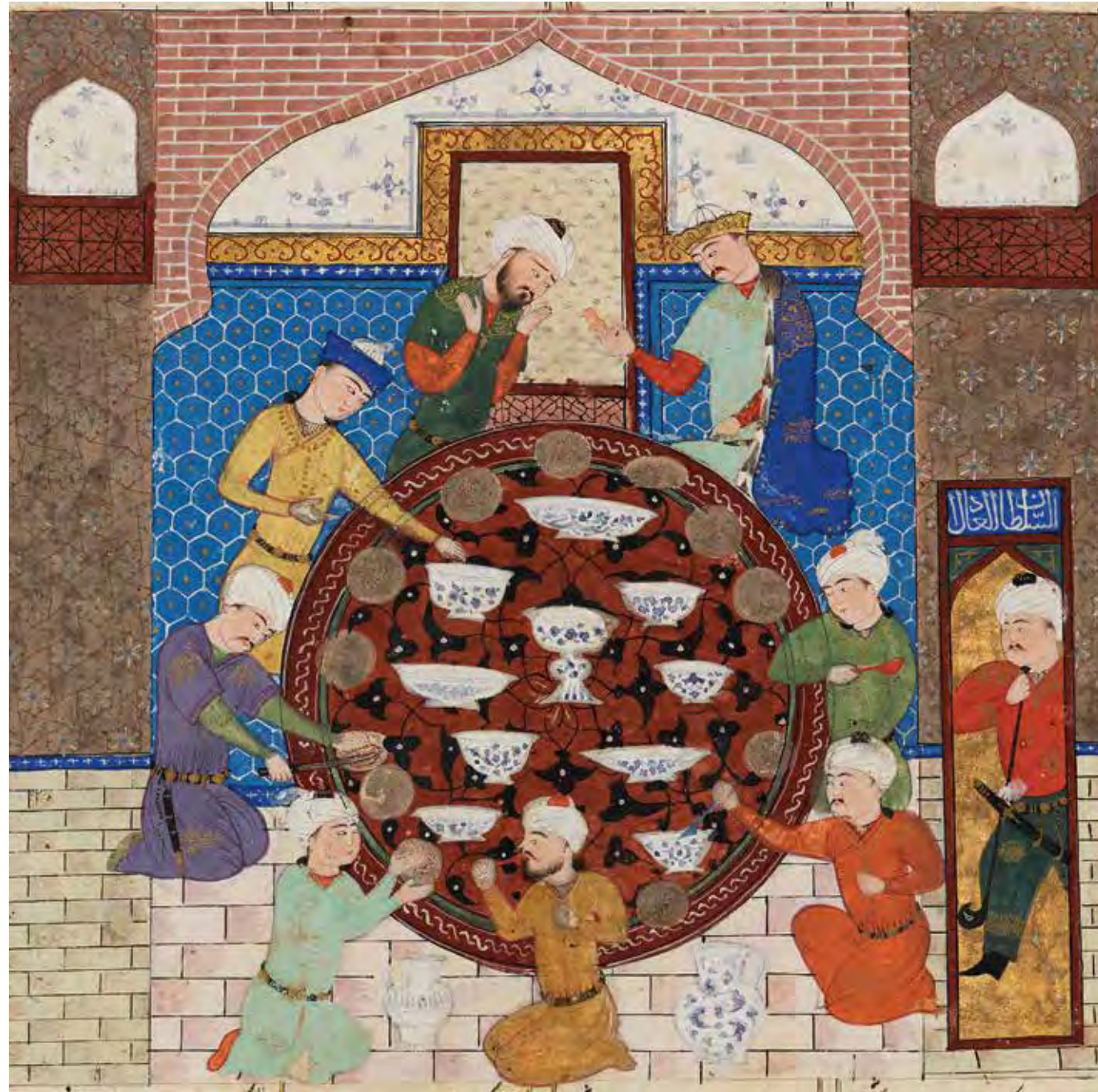
The evening's program featured **Gordafarid**, Iran's first female "Naqqal" (traditional epic storyteller) of Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* (The Epic Book of Kings). Since 1998 Gordafarid has redefined this ancient art form, traditionally dominated by men, with powerful and unforgettable performances. For over nine years, her storytelling has been a highlight of Farhang Foundation's Shab-e Yalda, captivating sold-out audiences with her vibrant narration and dedication to Persian epic tales.

Adding to the night's enchantment was **Voices Unveiled**, performed by vocalists **Maliheh Moradi** and **Mina Deris** with compositions by **Ehsan Matoori**. **Maliheh Moradi**, a rising star in Iranian classical music, trained under legendary Iranian vocalists Mohammad-Reza Shajarian, Parisa, and Ali Asghar Shahzeidi, captivating international audiences with her evocative voice. Now based in the U.S., she continues her journey as a prominent vocalist in Voices Unveiled. **Mina Deris**, born during the Iran-Iraq war, combines ancient Arab melodies with modern electronic styles, creating music that transcends cultural boundaries and has earned her worldwide acclaim as part of the Voices Unveiled ensemble.

The evening's music was masterfully composed by **Ehsan Matoori**, an Iranian Santoor player, composer, and producer known for his collaborations with world music legends and membership in various prestigious music ensembles. Matoori's compositions, inspired by global musical and poetic traditions, are crafted to evoke unity and joy.

Copresented by the **UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music**, this memorable event was a heartfelt celebration of Iranian culture and heritage, bringing the beauty and warmth of Shab-e Yalda to life.





DINING WITH THE SULTAN:

The Fine Art of Feasting

Farhang Foundation proudly supported *Dining with the Sultan: The Fine Art of Feasting* at the **Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA)**, a unique exhibition that ran through August 4, 2024. This groundbreaking exhibition was the first to explore Middle Eastern—and specifically Iranian—art within the context of its rich culinary traditions.

Dining with the Sultan featured approximately 250 remarkable works of art related to the sourcing, preparation, serving, and enjoyment of food, gathered from thirty public and private collections across the U.S., Europe, and the Middle East. These exquisite objects, many of exceptional quality and historical significance, were presented through the universal tradition of fine dining.

Highlighting the communal joy of shared meals, the exhibition celebrated food as both a sensory and a social experience, bringing together visual allure and culinary history. It offered fresh insights into the luxurious tableware and dining customs of the royal courts of Iran and the Middle East, illustrating how the artistry of fine dining was integral to courtly life.

Farhang Foundation commended LACMA for their dedication to showcasing Iranian art and culture in such an innovative and culturally resonant way.

LACMA

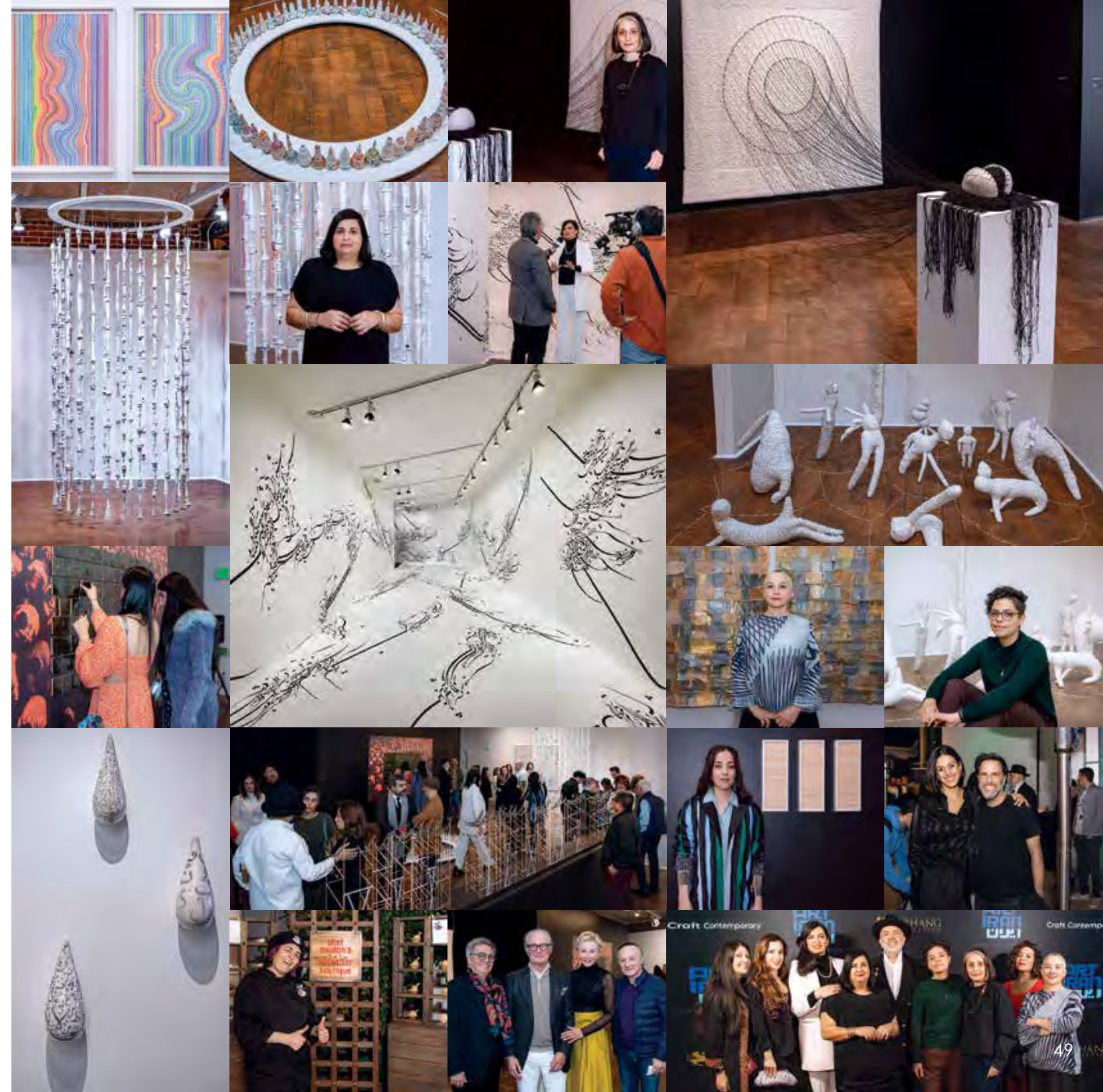


FALLING INTO LANGUAGE EXHIBITION OPENING NIGHT

From January 27 to May 5, 2024, Farhang Foundation proudly partnered with **Craft Contemporary** to present **ART IRAN: *Falling into Language***. This unique project began with an open-call competition to curators worldwide, ultimately awarded to **Roshanak Ghezalbash** and **Hoda Rahbarnik**. Their winning exhibition showcased nine Iranian artists who incorporated elements of the Persian alphabet—handwriting, text, and fragments—as central to their artistic expression. The featured artists included **Golnar Adili**, **Parastou Forouhar**, **Taraneh Hemami**, **Elnaz Javani**, **Maryam Palizgir**, **Hadieh Shafie**, **Shadi Yousefian**, and the collaborative duo **Neda Moridpour** and **Pouya Afshar**.

Through their innovative work, each artist highlighted the profound connections between language and art in Iranian culture. This exhibition reflected Farhang Foundation's dedication to promoting Iranian art and culture, inviting visitors to explore the intricate interplay between language and visual expression in contemporary Iranian art.

Craft Contemporary



PERSIAN CYANOTYPES
WITH SEPIDEH BADAKHSHANIAN

On February 11, 2024, the **Craft Lab Family Workshop: Persian Cyanotypes** with **Sepideh Badakhshanian** provided a hands-on experience for participants to engage with Persian language and art. Part of the *ART IRAN: Falling into Language* exhibition, this workshop allowed attendees to create cyanotype light prints using sunlight and stencils of Persian letters, words, and proverbs. Led by artist **Sepideh Badakhshanian**, the workshop encouraged creativity and cultural appreciation, connecting participants of all ages with the beauty of the Persian language and the works displayed in *ART IRAN: Falling into Language*. This educational Craft Lab offered families an inspiring and enjoyable way to experience Iranian culture.



SHAPING THE IDEA OF FALLING INTO
LANGUAGE – PANEL DISCUSSION

On January 28, 2024, **ART IRAN: Falling into Language** launched with a free inaugural gallery conversation titled *Shaping the Idea of Falling into Language at Craft Contemporary*. This event featured exhibition artists, **Hadieh Shafie**, **Maryam Palizgir**, curator **Roshanak Ghezlbash** and contributing writer **Michael Chagnon**, who offered insights into the themes and concepts behind the groundbreaking exhibition and its accompanying publication. Attendees explored the diverse uses of the Persian alphabet and its integration into contemporary artistic practices, gaining a deeper understanding of the poignant themes in the exhibition.



SHAYDA

EXCLUSIVE LOS ANGELES PREMIERE

Farhang Foundation and **Sony Pictures Classics** hosted the exclusive Los Angeles premiere of *Shayda* at Lumiere Cinema at the Music Hall. This special screening included an engaging Q&A session with lead actress **Zar Amir** and director **Noora Niasari**, moderated by actress and activist **Sara Seyed**.

Shayda, inspired by true events, is the work of Tehran-born, Australia-raised writer, director, and producer Noora Niasari. The film stars Zar Amir, Cannes Best Actress Winner for *Holy Spider*, and is executive produced by Academy Award® winner **Cate Blanchett**. *Shayda* premiered at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival in the World Dramatic Competition, where it won the Audience Award, and was selected for several prestigious festivals, including the 48th Toronto International Film Festival, 76th Locarno Film Festival, 28th Busan International Film Festival, 67th BFI London Film Festival, 37th AFI Fest, and 71st Melbourne International Film Festival. It also received the Young Talent Award at the 31st Filmfest Hamburg and won CinefestOZ, Australia's most lucrative film prize.

Selected as Australia's official submission for Best International Feature Film at the 96th Academy Awards, *Shayda* has earned Niasari significant acclaim. Following her win for Best Direction in a Feature Film at the 2023 Australian Directors' Guild (ADG) Awards, she received a nomination for the Michael Apted Award for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in a First-Time Theatrical Feature Film at the 76th Directors Guild of America (DGA) Awards.

The film centers on Shayda, a courageous Iranian mother who finds refuge in an Australian women's shelter with her six-year-old daughter. During the Iranian New Year, they find comfort in Nowruz rituals and the hope of new beginnings. However, Shayda's newfound stability is threatened when her estranged husband reappears, challenging her hard-won path to freedom.

SONY PICTURES CLASSICS



Getty

The Decorated Page: The Arts of the Book in the Persian World

a Lecture By Massumeh Farhad



Farhang Foundation, in collaboration with the **Getty Center**, presented *The Decorated Page: The Arts of the Book in the Persian World* as part of the Getty Center Talks series. This enlightening lecture, held at the Museum Lecture Hall and streamed live via Zoom, featured **Massumeh Farhad**, the Ebrahimi Family Curator of Persian, Arab, and Turkish Art and the senior associate director for research at the **Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art**.



Focusing on the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Farhad's presentation delved into the meticulous preparation and application of pigments and their essential role within Persian manuscripts. Her discussion complemented the *Drawing on Blue* exhibition, on view from January 30 to April 28, 2024.

Exploring the evolution of color as a defining feature in Iranian book art, Farhad traced its development from early Qur'an folios to the intricate illustrations and illuminations of later literary and historical works. Her expertise offered attendees a deeper understanding of the significance of these pigments within the cultural and artistic context of Persian manuscripts.



The image is a vibrant collage celebrating the 14th Annual Nowruz at UCLA. At the top left, a title reads "14TH ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF NOWRUZ AT UCLA". Below it, two columns of text describe the event. The right column is a dense grid of small photographs showing various activities: a woman in a white dress dancing, a group of children drawing, a man playing a violin, a large floral archway, a group of people in traditional costumes, a child in a blue shirt, a group of people in traditional costumes, a person in a butterfly costume, a person in a red hat, a person in a yellow costume, a person in a green shirt, and a group of people in traditional costumes. The bottom half of the collage features a large photograph of a diverse crowd of people sitting on the grass, watching the event. On the far left and right edges, there are decorative vertical borders with stylized illustrations of a woman in traditional Persian dress and a lion.

The success of this event was made possible by the dedication and hard work of the many volunteers who generously contributed their time and energy, ensuring a smooth and memorable experience for all attendees. Their unwavering commitment helped create an event filled with joy, unity, and the cultural richness of Iranian heritage.

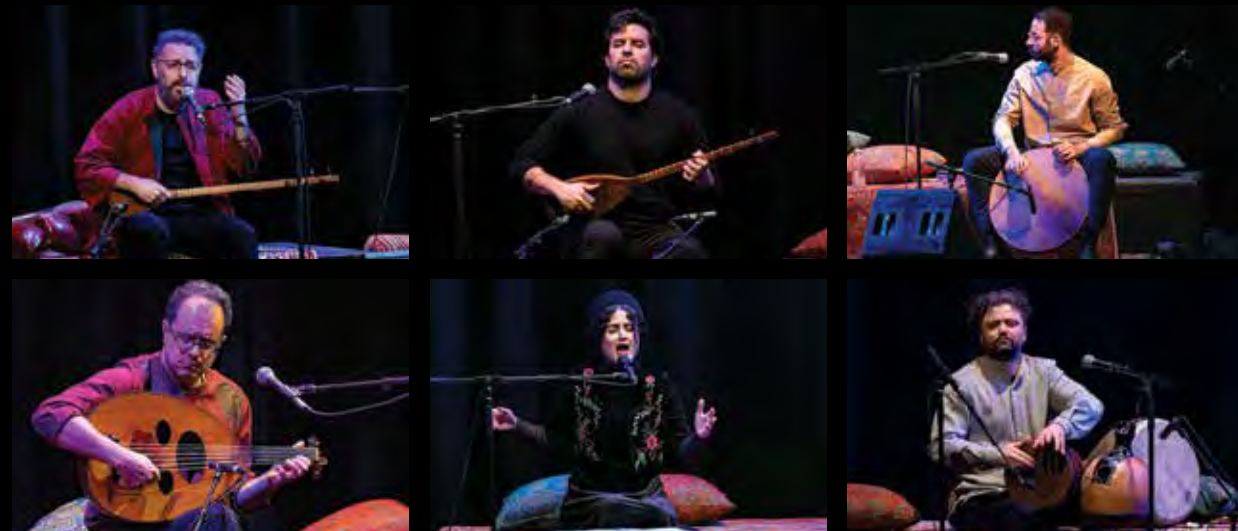


THE NOWRUZ CONCERT AT ROYCE HALL

The **2024 Nowruz Concert** at UCLA's renowned **Royce Hall** on March 10, 2024, was a spectacular highlight of Farhang Foundation's annual Nowruz celebration, weaving together the rich musical heritage of Iran with vibrant contemporary artistry. Presented in collaboration with UCLA's **Herb Alpert School of Music** and Farhang's historic **Iranian Music Program**, this special concert brought the stage to life with the extraordinary talents of **Tahmoures** and **Sohrab Pournazeri**, who led the evening with their masterful artistry and soulful interpretations.

The concert featured captivating performances by special guests, including **Sahar Boroujerdi**, making her Los Angeles stage debut, whose heartfelt vocals moved the audience, and two-time Grammy-winning soprano **Hila Plitmann**, whose powerful voice added a stunning dimension to the musical journey. Accompanied by the **Iranshahr Orchestra**, under the skilled direction of **Shahab Paranj**, the evening was an unforgettable fusion of traditional Iranian melodies and innovative compositions that celebrated the spirit of Nowruz with unmatched depth and beauty.

As the music unfolded, each piece was a testament to Iranian cultural heritage, blending classical forms with contemporary flair and capturing the essence of renewal that Nowruz represents. The atmosphere in Royce Hall was electric, with each note resonating not only in the hall but also in the hearts of everyone present. This unforgettable concert was a tribute to the enduring beauty of Iranian music and a powerful reminder of the cultural unity and renewal that Nowruz symbolizes, leaving the audience with memories to cherish for years to come.



UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music



THE NOWRUZ CONCERT

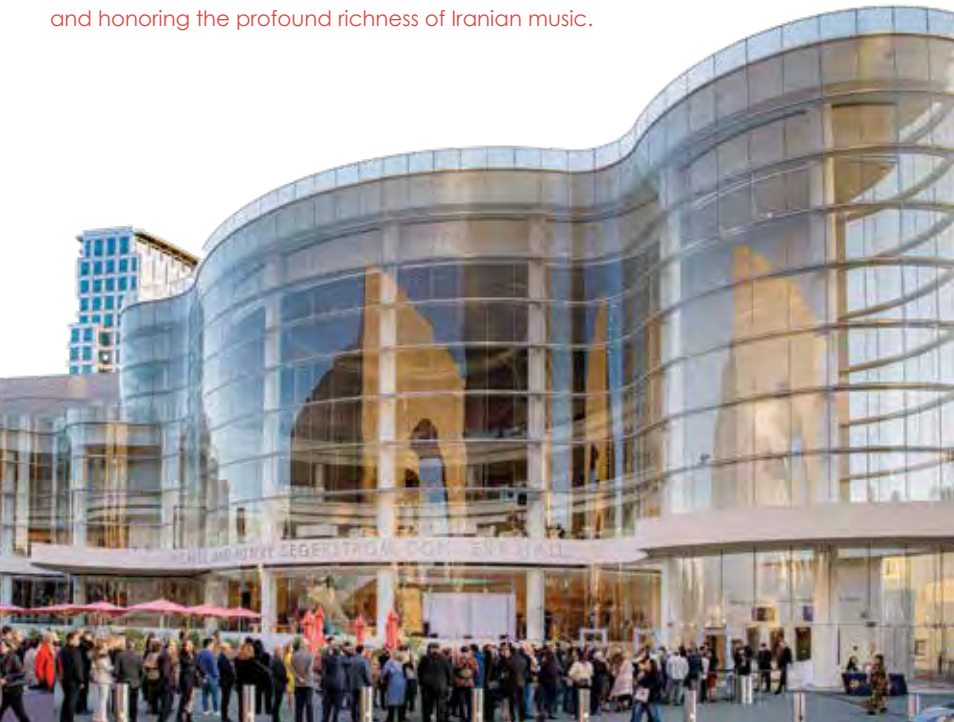
by the Pacific Symphony
featuring Shahram Nazeri



On March 23, 2024, Farhang Foundation was thrilled to once again collaborate with the esteemed **Pacific Symphony** and its music director, **Maestro Carl St. Clair**, to present the annual Nowruz Concert at the prestigious Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall. This year's event was especially memorable, featuring a mesmerizing performance by the legendary **Shahram Nazeri**, one of Iran's most celebrated masters of traditional music.

The concert also showcased exceptional talent, with distinguished guests including **Maestro Shardad Rohani**, who debuted his latest composition, *Persepolis*, captivating vocalist **Mahsa Vahdat**, and the talented **Sorvad Ensemble**, led by **Pejman Hadadi**. Together, they offered a beautiful blend of compositions that honored the cultural heritage of Iran, bringing the spirit of Nowruz to life.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the sold-out audience, whose enthusiastic presence made the evening truly unforgettable. Special thanks go to the Pacific Symphony team for their unwavering dedication to celebrating Nowruz and honoring the profound richness of Iranian music.



HAFT-SÎN DISPLAYS



Beginning March 15, 2024, Farhang Foundation proudly continued its collaboration with the **Beverly Center** and **Westfield Century City Shopping Center**, unveiling two breathtaking **Grand Haft-Sîn** installations in honor of Nowruz, the Iranian New Year. Designed with meticulous care by **A Seed and Stone**, these displays offered visitors an enchanting journey into the heart of Iranian culture, highlighting the profound beauty and symbolism of this ancient tradition. Each element of the Haft-Sîn was thoughtfully crafted, celebrating the renewal and hope that Nowruz brings. Guests were invited to enjoy these captivating installations through March 31, immersing themselves in the festive ambiance of Nowruz.

Farhang Foundation extends its heartfelt gratitude to **Westfield Century City** and the **Beverly Center** for their dedication to honoring Nowruz. Their commitment to celebrating this timeless festival enriched Southern California's cultural landscape, bringing the vibrant spirit of Nowruz to the community with elegance and cultural pride.



BEVERLY CENTER



CENTURY CITY

CELEBRATION OF NOWRUZ

A Virtual Global Presentation



GORDAFARID

On March 19, 2024, Farhang Foundation proudly presented a unique virtual Nowruz program featuring **Gordafarid**, the first female Iranian "Naqqal" (traditional Epic Storyteller) of Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* (The Epic Book of Kings). This virtual event brought to life the story of **Barbad in Khosrow Parviz's Nowruz Celebration** through Gordafarid's powerful narration, enhanced by the artful cinematography of **Arash Rad**. Since 1998 Gordafarid has excelled in performing the traditional art of Persian storytelling, or Naqqali, dedicating herself to preserving and revitalizing this ancient form. She has traveled throughout Iran to collect stories, following in the footsteps of Naqqali masters and challenging social norms that once restricted this art form to men in public venues. Her groundbreaking achievements earned her recognition from Morshed Torabi, Iran's most renowned Naqqal, who honored her by bestowing upon her his cane.

RANGIN KAMAN ENSEMBLE

On March 23, 2024, Farhang Foundation presented another special virtual Nowruz performance, this time featuring the **Rangin Kaman Ensemble**. The ensemble's rendition of the Northern Khorasan folk song "My Flower" (او مید گلیم) was a captivating celebration of Iranian musical heritage. Composed by **Esmail Sattarzadeh** and arranged by **Hossein Behroozinia**, the piece was performed with **Fahimeh Mousavi's** evocative vocals, accompanied by **Alireza Amani** on the Dotar, **Reza Behroozinia** and **Hossein Behroozinia** on the Barbat, and **Mohammad Reza Hashemi** on the Dohol and Daf. This enchanting performance brought the vibrant spirit of Nowruz to a global audience, offering a rich glimpse into Iran's folk traditions.



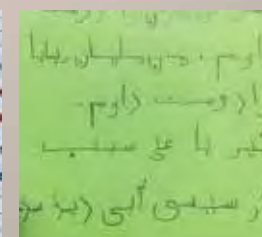
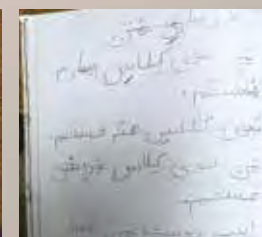
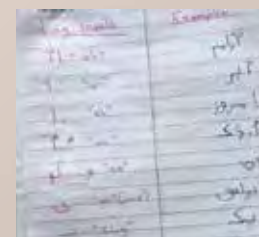
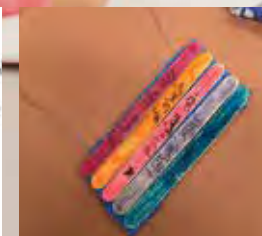
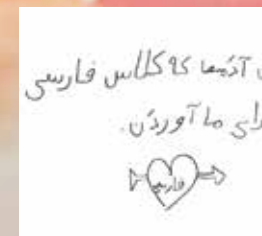
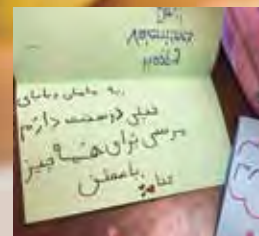


Nowruz Piruz

An Iranian Feast Celebrating Nowruz

On March 22 and 23, 2024, Farhang Foundation, in partnership with **Knife Pleat**, proudly presented **Nowruz Piruz**, a six-course dining experience to celebrate the Iranian New Year. Held at the **Michelin-Starred Knife Pleat** in South Coast Plaza, Costa Mesa, this exquisite event featured a signature caviar course crafted by award-winning **Chef Tony Esnault**, along with original recipes by **Shamsi Katebi**.

Guests embarked on a culinary journey through the rich flavors and traditions of Iranian cuisine, elegantly curated to mark the arrival of Nowruz. With its refined setting and gourmet offerings, Nowruz Piruz provided a memorable and unique way for attendees to embrace the spirit and joy of the Iranian New Year.



Persian 101

Persian Language and Culture After-School Program

Farhang Foundation believes that the most immediate and enduring way to preserve Iranian heritage and honor its culture, history, and language is through education.

In 2015, with the community's support, Farhang Foundation launched the first-ever **Persian Language and Culture After-School Program** in partnership with local public and private schools of Southern California. This program, which is provided free of charge to participating schools, creates a platform for **K-12 students** to be exposed to Iran's rich and beautiful language and culture.

To date, over eight hundred students have enrolled in this program across fourteen schools throughout Southern California.

FARHANG CONNECT

Live Virtual Talks by Influential Iranians and Scholars of Iran

The Creative Process in Making SONG OF THE NORTH

With **HAMID RAHMANIAN**
and **RAMIN LOGA TORKIAN**
in conversation with **AZAM ALI**

Farhang Foundation and Fictionville Studios presented *The Creative Process in Making Song of the North*, a virtual event featuring an insightful conversation with **Hamid Rahmanian**, the visionary creator behind the groundbreaking production *Song of the North*, and **Ramin Loga Torkian**, the composer who crafted its captivating score. Moderated by celebrated vocalist and composer **Azam Ali**, who also lent her artistry to the project, this discussion offered attendees an exclusive look into the creative journey behind the production.

The conversation delved into the collaborative process, exploring the innovative approaches and artistic visions that brought *Song of the North* to life. Audiences gained a unique perspective on the intricate elements that make this production so special, which prepared them for its Los Angeles premiere at UCLA's Freud Theatre from April 5 to 7, 2024.



Farhang Foundation presented **Hezar Ava — 150 Years of Iranian Music**, a virtual event in the Farhang Connect series, featuring a compelling conversation between **Morteza Hosseini Dehcordi**, **Mohammad Hossein Ebneyousef**, and **Dr. Shahab Paranj**. This discussion offered a deep exploration into Hosseini Dehcordi's extensive research, interviews, and compilations, which spanned more than twenty-five years and culminated in a

six-volume series on the history of classical and popular Iranian music.

FARHANG
CONNECT

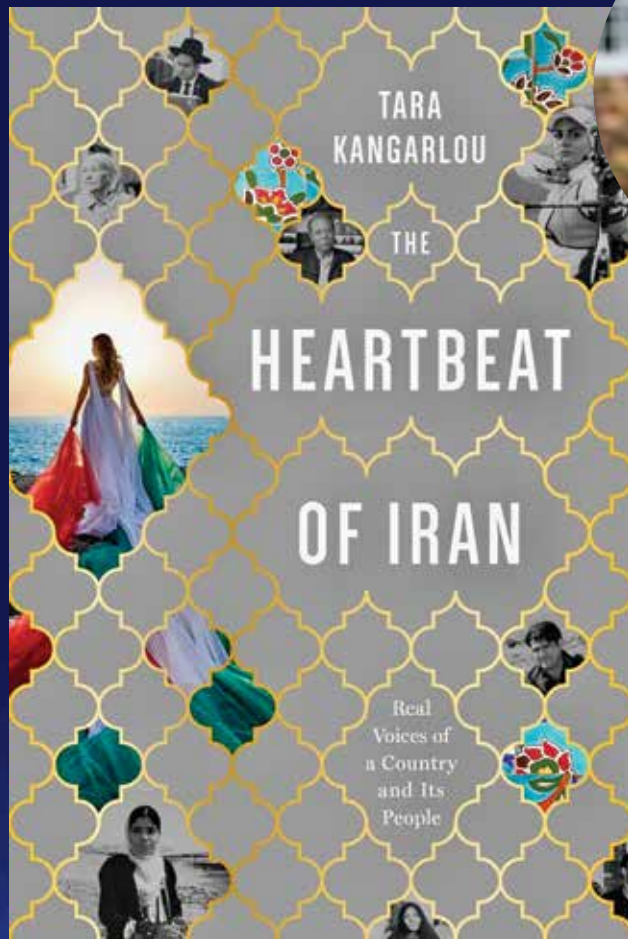
Morteza Hosseini Dehcordi is the author of **Hezar Ava**, a four-volume book focusing on the history and artists of traditional Iranian music. This virtual event provided a platform for Mr. Hosseini Dehcordi to share his profound knowledge and passion for Iranian music with a wider audience.



FARHANG
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TARA KANGARLOU

In Conversation with
ABDI NAZEMIAN



Farhang Foundation welcomed journalist and author **Tara Kangarlou** to an insightful conversation with **Abdi Nazemian** on July 15, 2023. This virtual event featured a discussion centered on Kangarlou's acclaimed book, *The*

Heartbeat of Iran: Real Voices of a Country and Its People, offering an intimate look at the lives of everyday Iranians and the country's multifaceted society.

Award-winning journalist, author, and humanitarian Tara Kangarlou shared her experiences capturing the often-overlooked stories of individuals within Iran. With a background that includes work with major news outlets like NBC, CNN, CNN International, and Al Jazeera America, Kangarlou brings a unique perspective to her storytelling. She is also the founder of Art of Hope, a nonprofit dedicated to supporting the mental health of war-torn refugees and internally displaced persons.

Joining her was Abdi Nazemian, a best-selling author and screenwriter celebrated for his Lambda Literary Award-winning works and inclusion on TIME's list of the hundred best young adult book authors of all time. Nazemian discussed his latest book, *Only This Beautiful Moment*, and offered his insights on storytelling, cultural identity, and representation.

This engaging conversation provided the audience with a profound understanding of Iran's rich cultural tapestry and the nuances of Iranian life, while also exploring the power of narrative in bridging cultural divides.

FARHANG
CONNECT

AZAM ALI AND RAMIN LOGA TORKIAN

In Conversation with
DR. SHAHAB PARANJ

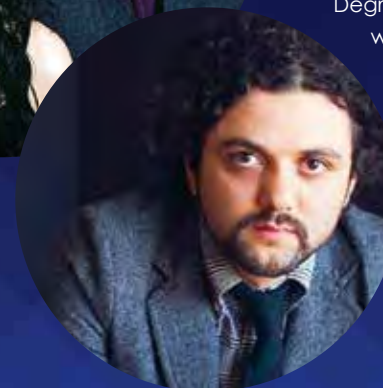
INTERSECTION OF ART & TECHNOLOGY

Farhang Foundation, in collaboration with **UCLA's Herb Alpert School of Music**, presented **Azam Ali & Ramin Loga Torkian in Conversation with Dr. Shahab Paranj** on August 5, 2023, as part of the Farhang Connect series. This virtual event offered an in-depth exploration into the intersection of art and technology in the work of Azam Ali and Ramin Loga Torkian, the renowned musical duo behind Niyaz.

Ali and Torkian shared insights into how they blend traditional Iranian and Middle Eastern sounds with contemporary electronic elements, creating a unique fusion that transcends cultural and geographical boundaries. Dr. Shahab Paranj, Postdoctoral Scholar of Iranian Music at UCLA and Musical Director of the Iranshahr Orchestra, facilitated the conversation, guiding attendees through the duo's creative process and artistic philosophy.

Founded by Iranian-born, Indian-raised vocalist and composer Azam Ali and Iranian multi-instrumentalist and composer Ramin Loga Torkian, Niyaz has released four best-selling, critically acclaimed albums on Six Degrees Records—all debuting at #1 on iTunes. Their work has drawn widespread media attention, with features on NPR, PRI, BBC World, *Billboard*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Huffington Post*.

Their innovative music and captivating performances have garnered an international following, particularly with their multimedia production *The Fourth Light*, praised for its artistic vision and use of technology. This event offered a rare glimpse into the creative process behind their music, emphasizing how Niyaz pushes the boundaries of musical expression.



UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music

KOUROSH BEIGPOUR MYSTICAL ORIGINS OF PERSIAN CALLIGRAPHY

As part of our Farhang Connect series, Farhang Foundation presented **Kourosh Beigpour: Mystical Origins of Persian Calligraphy**, a virtual event featuring award-winning graphic artist and type designer **Kourosh Beigpour**. This engaging session offered a glimpse into the rich world of Persian calligraphy, as Beigpour shared his profound understanding of the art form's mystical origins.

Beigpour explored the spiritual and historical influences that have shaped Persian calligraphy, emphasizing his commitment to preserving its authenticity while also infusing it with contemporary expression. Renowned for his innovative approach, Beigpour's work has earned

him international acclaim. Attendees of this event were treated to a rare look at his creative process and the sources of inspiration that fuel his work.

Based in Los Angeles, Beigpour holds a BFA from Tehran University of Art and an MFA in International Contemporary Art and Design from Limkokwing University. His portfolio, which spans Persian and Arabic typography and identity design, has reached audiences in more than twenty countries. His impressive client list includes notable institutions such as Google, The J. Paul Getty Museum, and UCLA, reflecting his skill and influence in the world of graphic arts.



PROFESSOR ABBAS AMANAT SEARCHING FOR AZADI A HISTORY OF UNFULFILLED HOPES



On October 14, 2023, Farhang Foundation proudly presented **Searching for Azadi: A History of Unfulfilled Hopes**, a lecture by Professor **Abbas Amanat** from Yale University, as part of our Farhang Connect series. In this insightful virtual event, Professor Amanat explored the enduring Iranian quest for liberty, examining its Persian origins and the troubled history marked by forces of absolutism and intolerance.

Abbas Amanat is the William Graham Sumner Professor of History Emeritus at Yale University. Since 1983 he has taught courses on the history of early modern and modern Iran, Shi'ism, the modern Middle East, and the Persianate world. He has authored ten books, including *Iran: A Modern History* (Yale University Press, 2017) and *Ahd-e Qajar va Sowda-ye Farang* (London, 2021). His forthcoming works include studies on the solar calendar and Iranian identity, historiography and reconstruction of national identity in Iran, and a biography of Fatemah Zarin-Taj Baraghani Qorrat al-Ayn Tahereh.

Professor Amanat has edited or coedited thirteen volumes and published numerous articles, encyclopedia entries, and opinion pieces. He served as the Chair of the Yale Council on Middle East Studies and the Director of the Yale Program in *Iranian Studies*.

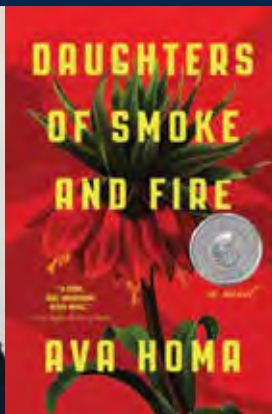
Additionally, he was the editor-in-chief of the journal *Iranian Studies* and is currently the editor-in-chief of the forthcoming series on Sources for the Study of the Persianate World.

Lectures on Iranian Modern and Contemporary Art

UC SANTA BARBARA
IRANIAN STUDIES INITIATIVE

Farhang Foundation was delighted to present the Annual Iranian Studies Lecture Series in collaboration with the University of California, Santa Barbara's Iranian Studies Initiative. This enriching series, centered on the theme of Persian and Iranian Literature as World Literature, offered a comprehensive exploration into the diverse dimensions of Persian and Iranian literary traditions. Co-organized with UCSB's Graduate Center for Literary Research and supported by the Gramian-Emrani Foundation, the series featured renowned scholars who shared their unique insights into the global significance of Iranian literature.

All these virtual lectures are accessible on Farhang.org/UCSB, providing an invaluable resource for those interested in Persian and Iranian literature. This lecture series underscored Farhang Foundation's commitment to promoting Iranian art and culture through thought-provoking and educational programming, enhancing appreciation for the rich literary legacy of Iran.



Daughters of Smoke and Fire: Art, Activism, and Identity

Ava Homa

The series commenced on October 21, 2023, with *Daughters of Smoke and Fire: Art, Activism, and Identity*, a live lecture by acclaimed Kurdish author **Ava Homa**. Homa's talk illuminated the intersections of art, activism, and identity within Iranian history and society, highlighting the power of literature to advocate for cultural and social change.



I Speak from the Edges of the Night: Translating Forugh Farrokhzad's Collected Poems

Dr. Domenico Ingenito

On November 18, 2023, **Dr. Domenico Ingenito** presented his newly translated collection of Forugh Farrokhzad's poetry in *I Speak from the Edges of the Night*. This beautiful Italian translation includes select poems by the legendary Iranian poet, some of which have never been previously published. Ingenito's talk provided a deep dive into Farrokhzad's poignant verses, revealing new dimensions of her work and offering a rare glimpse into her legacy through the lens of translation.



The Worldliness of Sohrab Sepehri's Poetics

Dr. Fatemeh Shams

The third lecture, *The Worldliness of Sohrab Sepehri's Poetics*, took place on January 24, 2024, featuring scholar **Dr. Fatemeh Shams**. This insightful presentation provided a close reading of Sepehri's *Eight Books* (Hasht Ketab), emphasizing the themes of betweenness and otherness that define Sepehri's modernist vision and cement his legacy as one of Iran's most influential poets.



Publishing and the State in Iran from the 1950s to the present

Dr. Laetitia Nanquette

On February 24, 2024, the series concluded with *Publishing and the State in Iran from the 1950s to the Present*, presented by **Dr. Laetitia Nanquette**. This lecture explored the intricate relationship between the Iranian state and the publishing industry, tracing how state influence has shaped the evolution of the industry and its role in constructing Iran's national identity over several decades.

FARHANG PERFORMANCES

Farhang Performances, Farhang Foundation's virtual performing arts series, continued to captivate audiences worldwide with an exciting lineup of new premieres featuring Iranian artists from across the globe. This initiative has provided a meaningful platform for performing artists and audiences alike, fostering a deepened appreciation for Iranian culture and the arts.



ERFAN *Be Yade*

The series opened on April 6, 2023, with **Be Yade**, a nostalgic and mesmerizing performance featuring **Erfan**, one of Iran's most acclaimed rappers, songwriters, and producers, in collaboration with **Kajart Studios**.



On May 18, 2023, Farhang Foundation premiered **Behind the Scenes**, an exclusive performance by the **Namâd Ensemble**, inspired by the poetry of the renowned **Mohammad-Reza Shafiei Kadkani**. The ensemble included acclaimed musicians **Pejman Hadadi** (Tombak and percussion), **Mahboobeh Golzari** (vocals), **Kourosh Taghavi** (Setar and composition), **Bashir Faramarzi** (Santoor), **Arzhang Rafei** (Bamtâr), **Saeed Kamjoo** (Kamanche), **Behfar Bahadoran** (Tar), and **Naser Sheikhzadegan** (Oud), with mix and mastering by **Bashir Faramarzi**.



Sharghiye Ghamgin

On July 1, 2023, Farhang Foundation presented **Sharghiye Ghamgin**, part of the Farhang Performances series, featuring **Niaz Nawab**, **Gola**, and **Gelareh Sheibani**. Produced by **Erwin Khachikian**, this performance was part of **Zan: Voices of Freedom**, celebrating the young female voices of Iran.



Mina Deris IRANAM

A Musical Tribute to the Resilience of Iran
Following **Sharghiye Ghamgin**, on August 24, 2023, the Foundation showcased **Iranam**, a moving tribute to the resilience of Iran, featuring **Mina Deris**. Directed by **Shahab Eftekal** and produced by **Renah Studio**, this performance beautifully combined poetry and music.

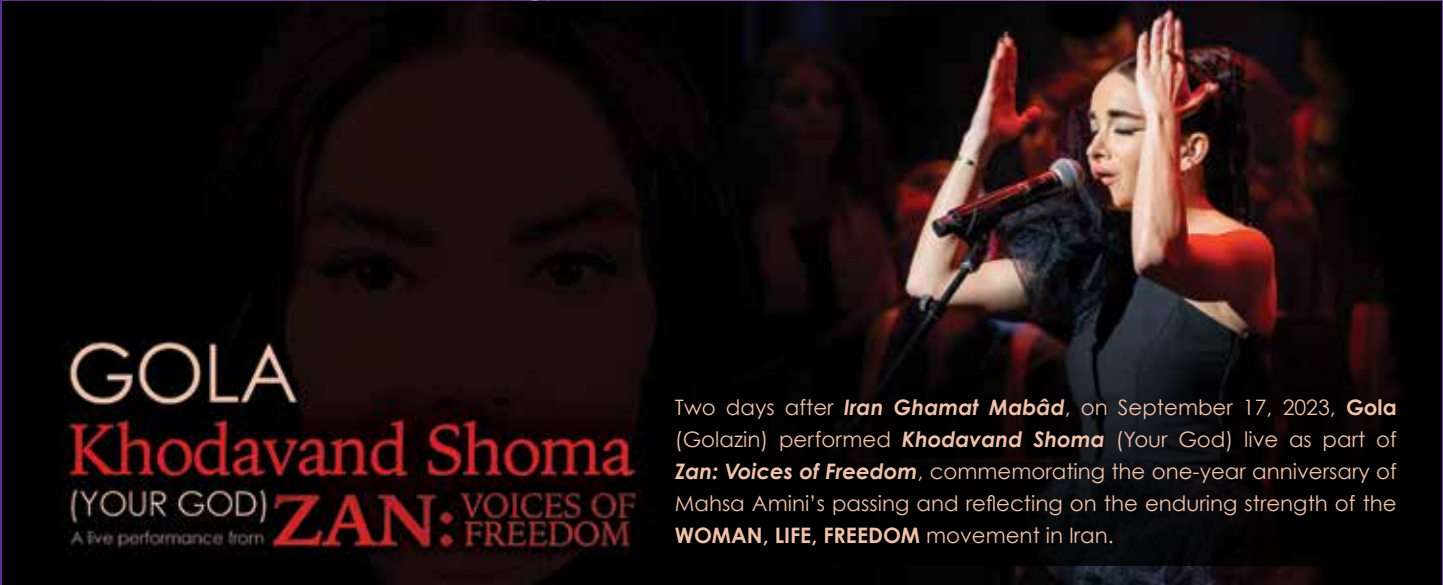


Iran Ghamat Mabâd Mina Deris & Maliheh Moradi

On September 15, 2023, the Foundation presented **Iran Ghamat Mabâd** (May Iran Never Grieve), featuring **Mina Deris** and **Maliheh Moradi**. Inspired by the words of **Mahatma Gandhi**, this tribute highlighted the resilience and unity of the Iranian people.

FARHANG PERFORMANCES

Farhang Foundation remains dedicated to celebrating Iranian art and culture through these engaging and impactful performances, fostering unity and pride within the global Iranian community.



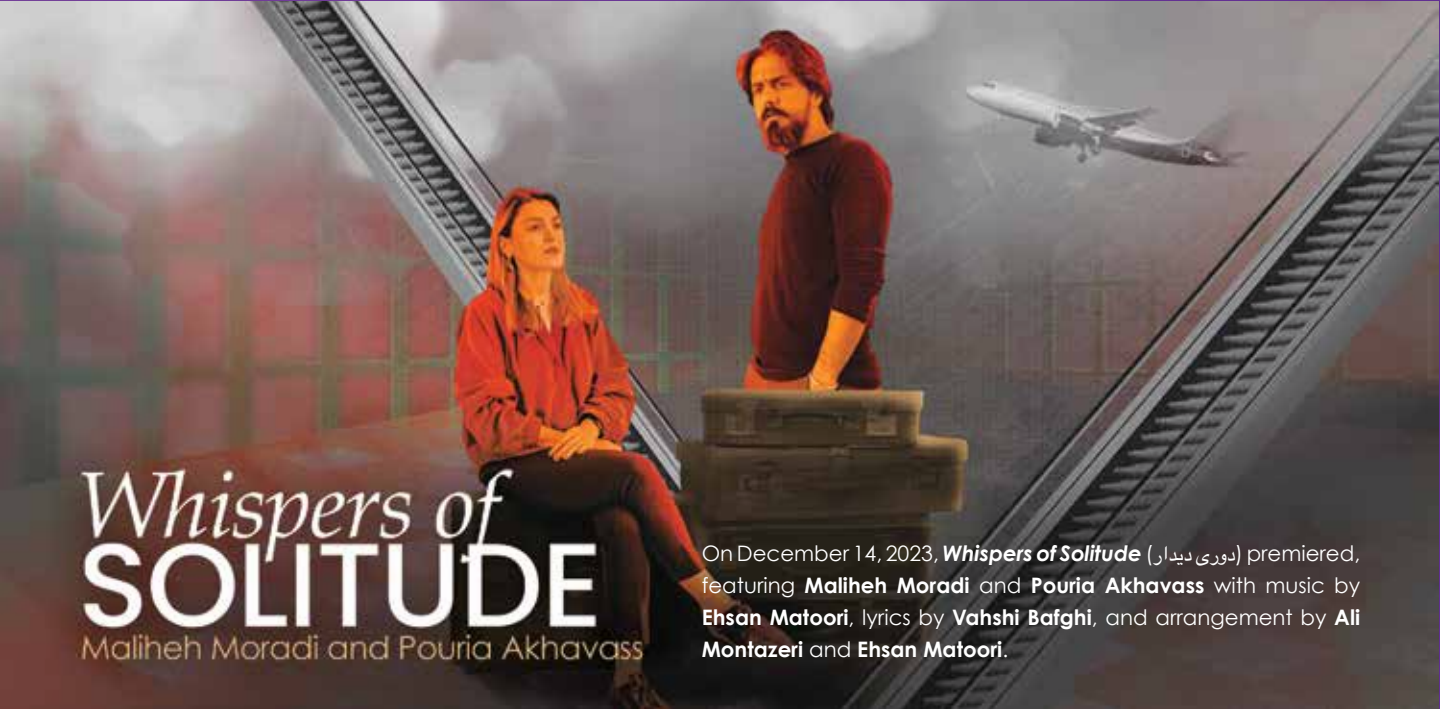
GOLA
Khodavand Shoma
(YOUR GOD) **ZAN: VOICES OF FREEDOM**
A live performance from

Two days after *Iran Ghamat Mabâd*, on September 17, 2023, **Gola** (Golazin) performed *Khodavand Shoma* (Your God) live as part of **Zan: Voices of Freedom**, commemorating the one-year anniversary of Mahsa Amini's passing and reflecting on the enduring strength of the **WOMAN, LIFE, FREEDOM** movement in Iran.



NIAZ NAWAB
Hagh (Right) **ZAN: VOICES OF FREEDOM**
A live performance from

Continuing the series, on November 30, 2023, Farhang Foundation presented **Hagh** (Right), a powerful performance by Niaz Nawab inspired by the poetry of Hafez, conveying profound messages of justice and truth.



Whispers of SOLITUDE
Maliheh Moradi and Pouria Akhavass

On December 14, 2023, *Whispers of Solitude* (دوری دیدار) premiered, featuring **Maliheh Moradi** and **Pouria Akhavass** with music by **Ehsan Matoori**, lyrics by **Vahshi Bafghi**, and arrangement by **Ali Montazeri** and **Ehsan Matoori**.



JAANA ENSEMBLE
BAADE SABA
A Musical Tribute to the Folk Music of Iran

The series closed the year with **Baade Saba**, presented on December 20, 2023, by the **Jaana Ensemble**. Directed by **Alireza Safarnejad** with musical direction by **Mahsa Golmakani**, this tribute to Iranian folk music showcased traditional melodies from various regions of Iran, aiming to reconnect contemporary audiences, especially those in the diaspora, with the rich heritage of Iranian folk traditions.



Maah Pishooni

Farhang Foundation's virtual series **Farhang Stories** proudly launched a new episode, featuring the enchanting Iranian fairy tale **Maah Pishooni**, beautifully narrated by the talented mother-daughter duo, **Negar Estakhr** and **Nargol Rashidian**. Farhang Stories serves as a dedicated platform for sharing Iranian children's stories and folktales, bringing the magic of these tales to the younger generation in the diaspora and celebrating Iranian cultural heritage through storytelling.



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Become A Member Today!

Join member-supported Farhang Foundation in this mission. Today, during uncertain times, Farhang and the artists and cultural projects we support need your backing more than ever.

So, please join today at **Farhang.org/Membership**

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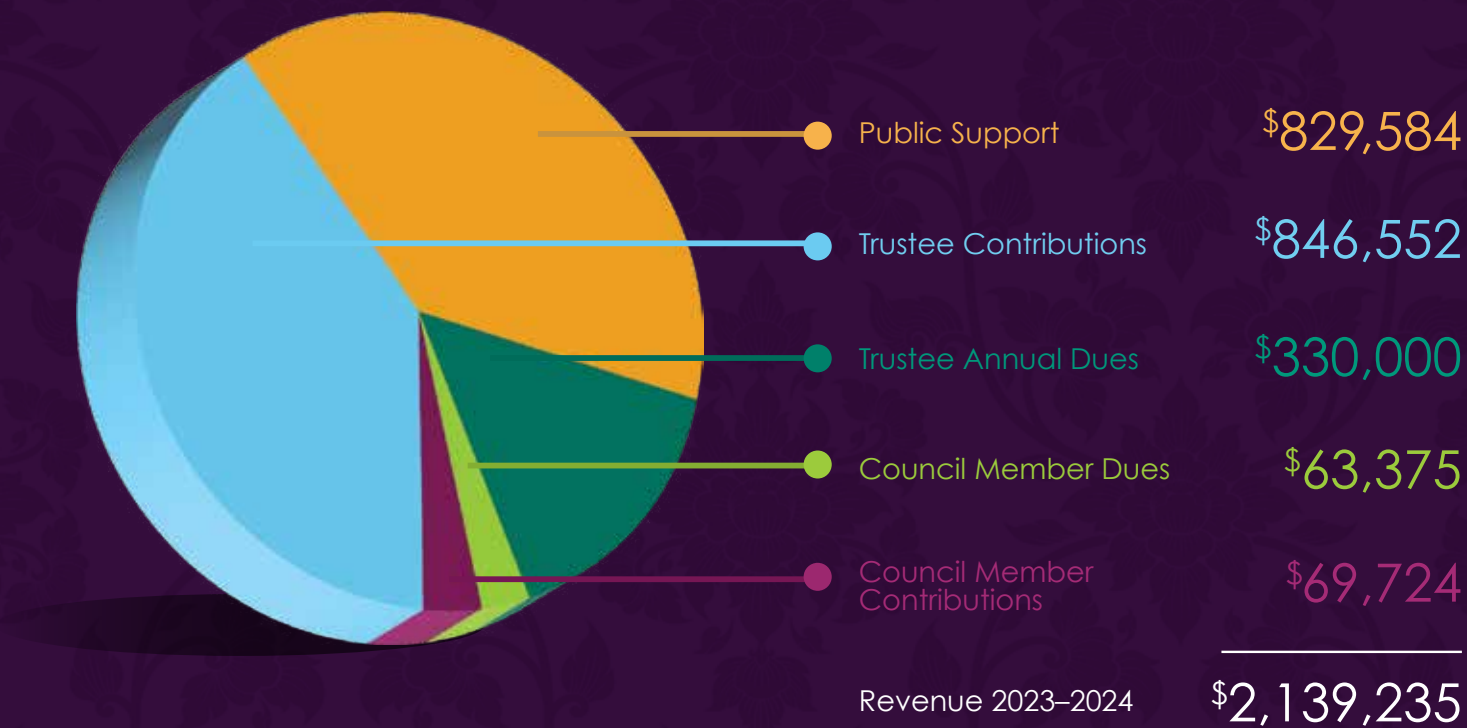
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