



IPRPD

International Journal of Arts, Humanities & Social Science

Volume 01; Issue no 03: August 10, 2020

# The rise and downs of contemporary Afghan painting over the last hundred years<sup>1</sup>

Hamideh Ansari<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Hassan Ali Pourmand<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Ali Asghar Fahimifar<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD student in Art Research, Faculty of Art and Architecture, Tarbiat Modares University, E-mail: [Hamideh2018ansari@gmail.com](mailto:Hamideh2018ansari@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Associate Professor and Faculty Member of the Faculty of Art and Architecture, Department of Art Research, Tarbiat Modares University

<sup>3</sup>Associate Professor and Faculty Member of the Faculty of Art and Architecture, Department of Art Research, Tarbiat Modares University

Received: 27/06/2020

Accepted for Publication: 20/07/2020

Published: 10/08/2020

## Abstract

*The present study focuses on the rise and downs of contemporary Afghan painting in the last hundred years, which has been organized with a descriptive-analytical approach with a qualitative approach. The purpose of this article is to explain and recognize contemporary Afghan painting and to seek answers to these questions: What is the relationship between contemporary painting and the old? To what extent has the Western style of globalization influenced Afghan painting? What is the purpose of explaining contemporary art trends in Afghan paintings? The results of the study showed that contemporary painting, with the support of old components and the modern and new approach of artists, has a completely different identity from its artistic past and a kind of artistic surrealism that was initially associated with the romantic view in most contemporary works. Can be seen. Painting in the early twentieth century seems to be very much in line with the literature of that period, which needs further study. Literature known in the Indian style, especially in poetry. Although the influence of Western style on painting was much later than in other arts, and after its introduction to the field, it was introduced over the years, but from the mid-eighties onwards, the basic principles of ancient painting among artists to some extent Found. Traditional beliefs and indigenous approaches are one of the main features of contemporary painting.*

**Keywords:** Painting, Contemporary Afghan Painting, Western Method.

---

## Introduction

The subject of contemporary Afghan painting in the last hundred years needs to be examined in the light of its long history. The antiquity and background of painting in Afghanistan can be traced back to various periods, even before Islam. This art has undergone many changes and transformations over the years due to the special geographical situation of Afghanistan and the location of the great

---

<sup>1</sup>Paper from the dissertation entitled "Study of the Effect of Indigenous Aesthetic Traditions and Western Painting Art on the Formation of Contemporary Afghan Painting" and with the guidance of Dr. Hassan Ali Pourmand and the advice of Dr. Ali Asghar Fahimifar

civilizations of the world. (Figs. 1, 2 and 3), the images are carved in Persepolis, which shows that at that time, Afghanistan was also one of the most civilized and prosperous lands. Because the scope of the Achaemenid Empire was beyond Afghanistan and modern Iran. These are the images of the ancient people of Afghanistan, including the Balkhis, the Gandarians, and the Sakas.

Since Afghanistan has been at the center of civilization, especially in the eighth and ninth centuries AH, has led to the emergence of unique artistic styles and trends, the emergence of many literary, scientific and artistic figures. Its special branch, which is a branch of traditional insights and



Figure (1), Some Ancient People of Afghanistan in the Prominent Roles of Persepolis, Balkhian, Source: A Brief History of Afghanistan, Abdul Hai Habibi.

beliefs resulting from ethnic and cultural ties based on religious principles, necessitated a literary expression of religion in mystical literature and in the works of valuable poets such as Nezami Ganjavi, Rumi, Ferdowsi, Jami, etc. . The complex and deep Islamic and mystical concepts in the language of these great and well-known poets were created by artists in simple and understandable forms through illustrations and their illustrations, images decorated with those concepts and long meanings. Painting played an important role in conveying Islamic and mystical concepts as an illustrated medium.

Religion, as one of the main parameters in the formation of a kind of mystical expression in Afghan painting, has often led to the formation of arts within



Figure (2), Some Ancient People of Afghanistan in the Prominent Roles of Persepolis, Gandarian, Source: A Brief History of Afghanistan, Abdul Hai Habibi.

the framework of religious values and beliefs that have arisen from the artist's inner traditions and concepts. This prevailing thinking, which has long been a dominant element in Asian civilization and art, led to the formation of arts with high mystical implications. The simplicity and abstraction of the designs, the lack of realism using two-dimensional technique, are among the most important artistic features that are well seen in the designs of different periods, from the Achaemenid era to the Sassanids

and after Islam. Examining these works, it is clear that the relationship between religion and art is at its peak.

In recent years, the need to pay attention to painting among artists and art centers in the



Figure (3), Some Ancient People of Afghanistan in the Prominent Roles of Persepolis, Sakasha, Source: A Brief History of Afghanistan, Abdul Hai Habibi.

country has increased significantly, but due to numerous breakdowns for various reasons, including successive wars, the path and approach of artists to this art has changed a lot. Examining the historical course and analyzing contemporary works to express the identity of contemporary painting may be one of the most fundamental issues that need to be addressed before any research can be done. The requirement of this research is to study the old painting by extracting the important components that form the identity of the old painting, in order to identify and classify

the contemporary painting. The main question is to examine the relationship between contemporary painting and the old, and in what direction is the situation of contemporary painting moving in the direction of Western thought in art? And what artistic future can be drawn and predicted from current works? Of course, a lot of research has been done on painting and its history, but directly on contemporary Afghan painting, with the exception of a dissertation that thematically examines the paintings of the last three decades, is another study in this field. It hasn't happened. Therefore, the theoretical foundations of contemporary Afghan painting were examined in many studies in this field.

This article examines contemporary works during the years 1298 to 1398 AD. Therefore, the research question arises as to what are the factors influencing the transformation of contemporary painting? By studying the course of painting during these years, the index of this study will be the ancient components in painting, and by using them, the rate of change and transformation of contemporary works will be examined. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to study contemporary painting and its changes and developments during the last hundred years. The expected result of this research is to identify new and innovative approaches in contemporary painting and to identify the factors that cause it.

### Painting and its nature

The use of the word painting based on literary evidence has a long history. For example: An element of the famous poet of the Ghaznavid period (died 431 AD) in his divan in describing the beauty of the horse and praising the Sultan of Ghaznavid, has written as follows: [www.ganjoor.net](http://www.ganjoor.net) Don't look at the quadrupedal footsteps of the artist's smooth art, because he is a cream painter (Onsari, poem number 35). Or valuable poets such as Saadi Shirin-Sokhan have also mentioned the word painter. As: I would like to go to the painter's eye and eyebrow prescription and tell him to do this in the form of an arch and a customer (Saadi, Ghazal 552). In the Islamic Encyclopedia, Barbarand has chosen the title "drawing" to design in the art of painting, calling it the act of drawing, and he believes that it cannot always be separated from painting. He believes that drawing on linear illustration and pure design is also an important element in the decoration of the applied arts (Barbarand, 1960: 451-453). Line and dot are the most important parts of painting. Nearly all of the paintings, both murals and manuscripts written in manuscripts and inscriptions, are all in some way linear and dotted. In drawing all the details of the work, thin and thick lines have been used to express the purpose of the painting.

Painting in various styles appeared in various schools such as Baghdad, Shiraz, Mashhad, Qazvin, Herat, Bukhara, Tabriz and Isfahan. Important features and principles of painting include the absence of light sources, flat and two-dimensional spaces, the emphasis on elements with lines and dots, both in design and color, subjects derived from nature and lack of natural realism, and refreshing subjects. They draw the old.

### Afghanistan's Civilization Background

On both sides of the Hindu Kush region, Afghanistan has had advanced agriculture and irrigation, and has been one of the region's civilizations in handicrafts, mosques, medicine, astronomy, textiles and metallurgy. The origins of the land may be thousands of years before man began to cultivate and live in caves. A source in the National Museum of Afghanistan said that "Afghanistan's land has been recognized for centuries by successive generations of identities, cultures and beliefs."



Figure (4), Design of two winged valves, engraved on white ivory. Bamvan

This important and sensitive geopolitical and geopolitical position of Afghanistan has played an important role in shaping the rich cooperation of great cultures and civilizations such as Iranians, Greeks, Mesopotamians and Indians in this country and depicts the ancient cultural heritage of this country. From the Greek-Buddhist statues of Gandhara to the murals of the caves of Bamyan and to the gilding and calligraphy motifs that adorn the buildings of the early Islamic period "(1931-1985: Tissot). There are many paintings and drawings left in Bamyan and in the shrines and mountain dwellings. Most of these paintings and drawings remain intact due to their mountainous nature and difficulty in accessing them. The design of the two

winged valves, carved on pieces of white ivory, is completely two-dimensional and is related to the design tradition of the Islamic period (Figure 4).

Herbert also points out that: "Since the Paleolithic era and during historical periods, the people of Afghanistan, or the ancient East Iranians, have played a major role in introducing and



Figure (5), Sassanid  
princes, muralist,  
Afrasiab stratum,  
Panjikent, 7th century

expanding world religions and playing an important role in trade and commerce. They have been to Asia. Thus, Afghanistan has historically been the scene of attacks by invaders and explorers, whose footprints can still be seen in every corner of the land” (Herbert, 56). The ancient land of Afghanistan, according to historical evidence, has a history of nine to twenty thousand years BC. But the roots of civilization, which indicate the existence of people with culture and civilization, are almost three thousand years BC. Therefore, the art of this region, which was one of the main features of its civilization, has a long history.

One of the characteristics of Afghanistan's historical period is that it is familiar with most of the world's historical civilizations, meaning that the Mesopotamian civilizations, the eastern Mediterranean coasts, Egypt and Iran, Greece and Rome are familiar and sometimes mutually exclusive, while the Chinese and Indian civilizations each. They have been separate and independent. Meanwhile, Afghanistan has been more involved in civil trade both with the Mediterranean coast and with the Indian and Chinese civilizations (Ghobar, 2010: 82). Murals excavated by explorers from the Soviet Union in the Balkh region, Varahshah, Afrasiab (old Samarkand) and most importantly in Panjikent. Most of them belong to the sixth to eighth centuries AD. The method of designing the remnants of these excavations in comparison with the works of lithographs, metal objects, tools, fabrics, etc., are all in line with the type of design of the Sassanid period. For example, the role of animals and birds in the costumes of Afrasiab Palace murals, which are now housed in the Samarkand Museum of Art and Culture, is very similar to the designs of animals engraved on Bostan arch stone carvings. The design and role of decorations on clothes completely indicate the decorative methods of Sassanid art (Khazaei, 1398: 50 and 51). (Fig. 5).

In the middle of the seventh century (642-870 AD), at the same time as the Arab invasion of Iran, the Arab Muslims defeated the Sassanid Empire in the battles of Velaja, Nahavand, and Qadisiyah. The Arabs then invaded eastern Iran and captured the city of Herat in 642. In 667 AD. The eastern regions of Iran came under Arab attack, and the city of Kabul, which was ruled by the Sistan command, was completely destroyed in 683 AD, and until 870 AD, all the eastern regions of Iran (present-day Afghanistan) were conquered by the Arabs, and finally The final conversion of Afghanistan to Islam took place during the Ghaznavid period in the 11th century.

### **Religion and mystical literature are the main sources in ancient painting**

In fact, Persian literature, which was the main source of painting, played an important role in the flourishing of traditional art. Register. Persian literature, an important part of which was the description of religion and religious principles in literary language, became the basis for the flourishing of mystical and religious art that was manifested in literature, architecture and painting. Hence the astonishing change in traditional art, the culmination of which became apparent by the end of the Timurid period. The modeling of the world, with the help of mystical and Islamic principles, created an admirable manifestation of special arts that brought a kind of representation of the unseen world to the visible world.

The cities of Balkh, Herat, Neishabour, Mashhad, Samarkand and Bukhara are among the major cities and centers of art and civilization of Greater Khorasan, with Afghanistan at the center of this civilized geography. The irreplaceable position of this historical region, which has been at the forefront of its time in terms of art and culture, cannot be ignored. Therefore, one of the most important parts of prehistoric painting study in this area should be examined. The basis of mysticism and philosophical religious insight, which played a very important role in changing the attitude of artists, was also established in most of this land.

Since religious love and knowledge are united in meaning, and art is the tangible form of true love and mysticism, the source of which is absolute beauty and perfection, and in the original sense, art is inherently religious and divine. Because religion is necessarily inherent in art, and art inherently must be a religion that exists and cannot be otherwise. We must recognize art as equal to true beauty,

and true beauty is inherently sacred and religious. As a result, art in the true sense is the tangible form of the sacred (Nowruz Talab, 2000: 332). The symbolic expression of art is the objective manifestation of the inner self, which in the hierarchy of meanings, has a tangible and apparent form that gives rise to meanings through forms and forms. Islamic arts have a very strong symbolic expression. Elements and motifs, although derived from nature, do not rely on nature and sensations. All the components are placed together with great care and elegance. The main theme of this type of visual expression is based on Islamic thought, mysticism and religious principles. This religious attitude and belief existed in the region's artwork even before the advent of Islam.

The existence of manuscripts and illustrated paintings in them are original works of the connection between mystical literature and art, which can be seen in the Shahnameh of Baysanghari, Shah Tahmasb, Abu Mansour, Joki, etc., which testifies to the connection between mystical and philosophical literary insights and art.

The relationship between religion and art flourished and developed in Iran more than ever during the Islamic period. Although there are no guidelines for the creation of works of art in Islamic law, they play an important role in creating the atmosphere as well as the context for the creation and formation of Islamic art. In fact, it is the spirit of Islam and spiritual etiquette that shapes and shapes the spiritual nature and dimensions of Muslim artists (Khazaei, 2000: 171).

### **Afghanistan painting after the collapse of the Timurid dynasty**

We know the Timurid period with the peak of painting, literature and art, the center of which is ancient Herat, one of the southwestern cities of present-day Afghanistan in the neighborhood of Iran and Khorasan Razavi. The Afghan painting originated in the rich Herat school of the Timurid period. Painting has been central and comprehensive since the late seventh century AD, which has become a well-established method in the tenth century AH. However, after the extinction of the Timurid dynasty and the rise of the Safavids in Iran and the Sheibans of Transoxiana and the Gurkhans of India, it created an unfavorable and shaky ground that will continue to invade the region until the following years. For this reason, after the fall of the Timurids, present-day Afghanistan did not have an independent state and was governed by local governments. During this period, only the western part of Afghanistan was occupied by the Safavids, which gradually withdrew from the Houthis after their emergence, leaving only Herat and the western strip, which later fell to the Abdalians. Prominent artists and stylists working in royal libraries and art centers have migrated to Iran, Bukhara, and some to the court of Babarshah in India. We are witnessing the flourishing and prosperity of art in Tabriz with the arrival of Professor Kamaluddin Behzad and his students, to whom the Safavid Shah was very interested and entrusted with the management of the library.

Artists such as Mir Mosour and his son Mir Seyyed Ali and Abdolsamad Shirazi, who were painters of the Royal Library and participated in the illustration of Shah Tahmasb's Shahnameh, went to the Gurkhanian court with Homayoun (Khazaei, 1398: 113). This geographical area (Afghanistan Today), after the collapse of the Timurids and the disintegration of the great masters and artistic gatherings that existed before, did not prosper and due to the lack of authority and stable conditions, the best artists went to Iran, Bukhara and India and although they cause artistic flourishing in those lands, but their own security is devoid of artistic thought and the cultivation of artists. This situation gradually lasted, and although at some point in time, art intended to continue its past authority, but the disconnection and distance from those treasures had made it possible to take further steps. Changes in the world situation and the influence of the West in Asian countries, including Afghanistan, bring many changes and developments in art.

### **The holes of modernism in Afghanistan**

Afghanistan began today with the political history of its modern state and with the Hutk (1709-1729) and Durrani (1747-1823) dynasties. In the late thirteenth century, Afghanistan was coveted by the British and Russian empires. In 1919, after the Third Afghan-British War and the signing of the Rawalpindi Treaty, the country regained control of its foreign affairs from Britain and declared its

independence by King Amanullah. "Finally, in 1298 AH, 1901 AD, in an important speech, he declared independence in domestic and foreign policy and promised the people social justice, equality and equality" (Farhang, 1390: 592). The constitutionalist system that was started by culturalists and constitutionalists before Amanullah's rule was a turning point in the formation of modernism in Afghanistan, which needs to be addressed from a broader perspective. But what is important is the emergence of the constitution and its impact on the country's administrative system and changes in cultural and artistic infrastructure. The revival of art with the clear goals of the constitutionalists led to the unveiling of a major path in the field of art and literature in the country.

The reforms of Shah Amanullah, which took place in 1302 AD (1923) in the social field, led to the reaction of traditional and conservative elements, and after a civil war, in 1308 AD (1929) he was forced to withdraw from the monarchy.

The imperial system in Afghanistan lasted from 1312 to 1352 (1933 to 1973) with the end of the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, which lasted for forty years. Finally, it was disbanded in 1343 AD, and on 28 Cancer (July) 1352 D the new system of the republic was established under the presidency of Sardar Davood Khan. Since then, the presidential system, in which the president, the head of state and the government have been in power, has been explained by the system of government. After five years of Daud Khan's rule by the army leftists, which led to the occupation of the country on May 7, 1978 by the former Soviet Communist Party. With the occupation of the country, countless clerics, elders, intellectuals and prominent figures fled the country. Finally, with a continuous military attack on this country for ten years, inflicting serious injuries on the body of the country and killing and injuring hundreds of our homeless people on May 25, 1988, the retreat began on May 26, 1988. Delu (February 7, 1989) left the country. After the defeat of the Soviet Union and the Mojahedin government and the conflict between the Mojahedin commanders and then the Taliban government, with the capture of the capital in 1996, it is going through a turbulent period.

## Emergence of Modernism in Afghan Painting

From the 16th century, not only Afghanistan but also its eastern neighbor civilization, India, as well as Iran, centered on the Isfahan school, suffered from artistic Westernization. Visual arts were among the last arts to enter the field of painting after the literature and underwent changes.

The spread of Western influence and Western culture in the East began in the fifteenth century and was firmly established in the nineteenth century, which is still the case today. The causes of this growing influence must be traced to a variety of factors, perhaps the best of which are the dynamism and enthusiasm of Europeans' bold revelation in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The all-encompassing and unexpected search that began in all possible fields of human civilization. In economics and politics, it led to colonization, and in culture and art, it led to the presentation of new perspectives, which sometimes made the world view somewhat boring and uniform (Aghdashloo, 2000: 13).

Since the early twentieth century, Oriental painters have tried to keep up with the long-delayed and eventful path of Western painting. Artists who studied in Europe and returned home after graduation began teaching Western principles and teaching Western art, art, and technology to students at colleges. Although this acquaintance dates back to the centuries before the twentieth century, the impact of these influences on painting did not occur quickly. At a time when the country is still struggling to gain independence from the three post-Timurid regimes, there is a change in painting in Iran with the rise of Reza Abbasi and through artists such as Mohammad Zaman, who travels to Rome to learn classical European techniques. "This is the beginning of a formal and serious trend in Iranian visual arts towards the new findings of Western painting in the 1920s, when the Iranian School of Art began to operate" (Goodarzi, 2000: 293).

As we move forward, painting is becoming more and more popular, so that in recent times all the works of painting have become rak'ahs, with the difference that in ancient times, from the eighth century AH to the tenth century, it became more common to prepare and build shrines. Had a preface at the beginning of the inscription.

The prefaces generally include an introduction to the collection of binding works, a list of the names of the artists and their brief biographies - the chronological order, the name of the client and the name of the author, respectively. At the end of the preface to the history of the end of the verse, which is usually written in the form of a history article, is written. We do not have this situation in contemporary sources.

When the West and its influence entered the East with a new perspective, it took the image of Eastern art and civilization to the West, and Western elements also influenced Eastern art. The West's irreconcilable acquaintance with Islamic art and the region's particular artistic tendencies intensified in the mid-nineteenth century. More detailed studies of Islamic art began.

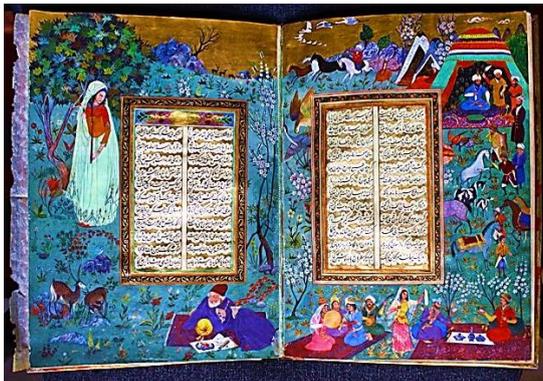


Figure (6), "An Ode to the Divan of Farrokhi Sistani's Poems in the Descent of Amir Abu al-Muzaffar Fakhr al-Dawlah Ahmad ibn Muhammad, Governor of Chaghanian", a calligraphy by Seyyed Mohammad Daud Hosseini Afghanistan National Archive - Treasure of the country's spiritual resources.

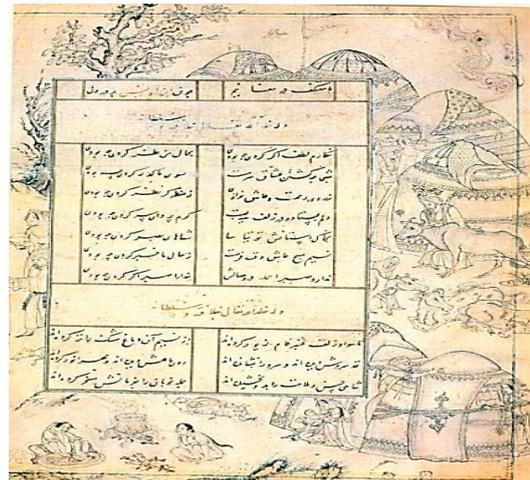


Figure (7), Camp of a nomadic life camp, the fifth design of the two-page divan, the divan of Sultan Ahmad Jalayer, probably Master Junaid Naghsh, 805 AH, Freer Art Gallery, Washington. Source: Islamic Iranian Design Art, Mohammad Khazaei.



Figure (8), Image of one of the pages of the manuscript, Source: National Archives of Afghanistan.

In the last hundred years, the visual arts and consequently the art of painting, although not very prosperous in the early part of this century, but with the establishment of the School of Masters of Industry by professors such as Professor Breshna, Professor Homayoun Etemadi, Professor Gholam Mohammad Mimangi and foreign professors In particular, German and Indian professors took a step towards the revival of the visual arts, which eventually led to the establishment of the visual arts, which eventually led to the establishment of the Faculty of Fine Arts in Kabul in 1983, attracting more art enthusiasts. With the establishment of an art center named after himself, Professor Gholam Mohammad Mimangi was the only center to include painting, sculpture, painting, calligraphy, and ceramics in his school's curriculum. The painting is licensed by the Afghan Artists' Union, which is affiliated with the Ministry of Information and Culture. The important point in this period is the influence of Western methods on art. In Afghanistan, the establishment of the German School of Industry can be seen as the starting point for new artistic trends.

Many examples of manuscripts with excellent illustrations from the Timurid period to the early twentieth century, such as the books of Shahnameh, Golestan Saadi, Haft Orang Jami, etc., are kept in the National Archives in Kabul. Examples of several manuscripts from the early twentieth century show that the illustration of literary books and the close connection between literature and mysticism and painting still hold a special place in Afghanistan. The motifs used, composition and

coloring in this manuscript are more naturalistic compared to the works of the Timurid and Safavid periods and have less design and color strength. The predominant color is turquoise blue, which covers most of the work surface, and even the motifs are influenced by this color. The elements are less compatible with each other and have less visual communication (Fig. 6).

One of these new trends has shifted the independence of painting from literary texts, which was a new way of painting, to a central character rather than a content-oriented one. What is seen in the later works in terms of subject matter, composition, color, and motifs is the decline in the artistic expression of these paintings, which compares with the previous masterpieces of painting. For example, the quality of the designs and the fragmentation of the elements and components of the subject, both in terms of size and fit, and in terms of the type of design, lack of frames, lack of poetry, etc., are far from previous periods (Fig.8). On the other hand, the influence of styles such as the Indian Mongols and the desire for naturalism can also be identified in these works.

Attention to the characters and images of Nimrokh, which is one of the characteristics of Indian painting, can be seen in the page quoted from Abu Mansouri's Shahnameh (Fig. 9). And painting did not go unnoticed in this artistic transformation and turned to the Indian approach. The semi-facade images and the very simple and basic background view, using short and flat colors, are the hallmarks of Mongolian Indian painting, which can also be seen in this work.

We also see the influence of Safavid style of painting in Iran by Reza Abbasi and Mohammad Zaman, pioneers of the new style of painting, in Afghan painting. This is exactly what happens when we see less of a gathering of talented painters, and supporters of art don't look at art as valuable as they used to. For this reason, we see copying of some of Reza Abbasi's works and the methods that became common in Iran after Timurids (Figs. 10 and 11).



Figure (12), a work by Nadima Yousefi, a graduate student of painting, Faculty of Art, Herat University, Activity in Free Art Collections, 2017, Source: Photo Archive, Faculty of Art, Herat University.

Establishing a School of Professional Industries founded by the Germans in Kabul, foreign and domestic professors taught painting and art at the school. Among those who played a significant role in the development of this school was Professor Breshna, who after the establishment of the Faculty of Art of Kabul (1982) as a professor. The establishment of this art school, the employment of art professors from European countries and India, created a new movement in contemporary Afghan art. The founders of the school were artists who practiced painting in Farang, and after graduating, they continued to practice Western techniques at the center. The Kabul Art School was originally called the Faculty of Literature, and a year later it was renamed the Faculty of Fine Arts.

Painting, graphics, sculpture and cinema were taught. But there was no mention of Islamic painting or art until the early 1980s, when the field of graphics was gilded and to some extent painted. Painting is still on the curriculum at Kabul Art College as a limited course. Establishment of Rangin Kerman Conservatory in Herat in 1990, under the supervision of Ustad Mofizadeh, Ustad Mashal Art School and Anis Conservatory. Artistic centers in Herat followed a naturalistic approach to painting from the 1960s to the early 1980s. Painting at the Faculty of Arts of Herat, in 2002, was a course that in 2003, as a separate department in order to strengthen this field of art, entered the field more seriously.

Painting at the Faculty of Arts of Herat, in 2002, was a course that in 2003, as a separate department in order to strengthen this field of art, entered the field more seriously. The activities of Herat painters led to the display of biennial painting exhibitions at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Herat after many years away from this art. These two anniversaries continued until the spring of 1398 AH. By reviewing each biennial, important changes can be realized. He saw the evolution of painting in terms of access to new techniques, new experiences and creativity, and the rise of those interested in it. Efforts to modernize are important and fundamental goals in these biennials in Herat. Mohammad Tawfiq Rahmani, an assistant professor at Herat University's Faculty of Arts and secretary of the biennial, emphasized the artist's creativity and individual identity, the introduction of new effects in

contemporary Herat painting and gilding, and the growth and development of these arts. Mojan



Figure (11) The daughter of the king of the Second Climate, a page from the manuscript of Haft Orang Jami, probably from a manuscript made in the early twentieth century, source: National Archives of Afghanistan.



Figure (10), the daughter of the king of the second climate, a work by Reza Abbasi, source: The book of Islamic Iranian Islamic design art, Mohammad Khazaei

Mozaffari, an American conceptualist living in the United States, also said: "We've developed a new approach to painting to provide a specific type of alignment in which important miniature visual elements such as horses and hawks are put together alongside important modern and postmodern elements that are indicative of the electronics industry." Crossing the closed borders and achieving a spiritual peace and escape from the material world shown by the movement of birds, we see in the work of Nadima Yousefi who has worked on several stories using elements taken from ancient painting. Therefore, the visual and visual form of the work is similar to the previous drawings and is similar. Many of the motifs have been copied from old artifacts, but they are oblivious to delicate processors and engravings. The arrangement of each image is just to express the different types of human activities that each work considers a symbol of the world

around them (Fig. 12).

The influence of Western and modern methods on painting and at the beginning of the work is



Figure (13), Women of Today and Yesterday Afghanistan, Soghari Hosseini, Calligraphy: Abdolhadi Fahim with Technique: Gouache and Watercolor, 2014, Kabul, Dimensions: 30 × 40, Source: Turquoise Mountain Institute Photo Archive

remarkable, but in recent years the experience of various and new methods has been experienced so that the painter in the competition with how to better express his artistic identity to the old components of desire. It has shown more and has a special place among painting audiences. The theme of the sweet watercolor, which was worked on by Soghari Hosseini from the work of Sultan Mohammad, can be seen in two very strong frames with dark brown and light blue colors that show the past and present. In the middle of the frame, each painter's face is observed in a completely realistic way, taking into account the delicate processors that are one of the components of the old painting. Photography and then painting on the photo is one of the techniques that has recently become popular in painting and is mostly done by Kabul painters. This style is influenced by the Pakistani style and has gained influence among Afghan painters (Fig. 13). This work has more expressive power than the work



Figure (14), Ghandi Gol Gholami, Herat, 51 × 75 cm, gouache and watercolor, 1396, Source: Herat University School of

of Ghandigol Gholami (Fig.14), which was made in Herat. Masterful payments and elegance of visual expression are more visible in Hosseini's small work. Although the pattern is inspired by the candy flower and the theme, as well as the decorations around the painting from the old paintings, it seems that the colors are less mature and the elements are less appropriate. The view of the landscape is realistic by drawing mountains and skies and creating a light source.

The founder of the Western style, instead of the traditional method in traditional painting, was the birth of a new era that presented new solutions and possibilities in almost all fields of human social life. (Aghdashloo, 2000: 16). The breeze of modernism has opened a place for itself in the artistic space of Afghanistan. Young artists, willingly or unwillingly, were placed in the midst of Western experiences in art. There were a variety of art groups, and countless artists were involved. The important point to note is that there is no illustration of manuscripts in this period. The illustrations are mostly in the form of a single leaf with a view of the character and the subject of the image of a human, animal or flower and

chicken, and nature disappears in the landscape. Artists are increasingly interested in decorating and performing arts. If we want to get this influence from the study of literary texts and poetry of that time, we cannot obtain valid evidence because literature in this period was completely separated from the visual arts and logically, painting was in contact with literature. Only at a time in the 1930s and 1940s, when the trend of Romanticism in literature became so prominent, did it spread to other arts, including painting.

The dominant current of Afghanistan in the thirties and forties was the current of Romanticism, which was more prominent in the fields of art, especially literature and poetry (Alipour, 2017: 37). Literature is somehow a return. Painting also sought to return to the past in a romantic



Mohammad Saeed Moftizadeh, gouache and watercolor  
Dimensions: 30 × 40 cm, Herat,  
Source: Photo from the archive of Professor Tawfiq Rahmani.

way, offering an emotional spirit to the world. (Picture 15), is a work by Ustad Moftizadeh from Herat and one of the artists of the 70's and early 80's. Only the design of boys' and mother's clothes is of the local type of clothing of the people of Herat and Afghanistan. The characters are quite realistic, and only the type of pen engraving of the elements, which is one of the main features of ancient painting, is considered in this work. This type of work, which is more common in contemporary works of Herat, continues in the continuation of the Romantic movement of the thirties and forties.

This trend is particularly recognizable by the current of modernity and the turmoil created by cultural change by the rulers of the time and the untimely influence of the left in traditional societies with religious beliefs to the extent that it continued until the late 1980s. Social, lyrical and mystical subjects in the form of single-page paintings enter Herat's painting field through the torchbearer, after

which his students continue on this path. Although the reality of Romanticism was a reference to nature, and nature was a means of expressing the artist's feelings, Afghan painters with a religious approach followed the flow of Romanticism in painting. Romantic themes with religious themes and a traditional look were the tools of the artist to heal the surrounding disorder, to be more in tune with nature, and to bring peace and order.

This approach is also seen in a work entitled Ibrahim in Fire, which was worked on by Professor Mohammad Tawfiq Rahmani, but the summary in the processors and the level of the maps is much longer than in previous periods (Figs .15 and 16).



Figure (16), Ebrahim Dar Atash, Mohammad Tawfiq Rahmani, Technique: Watercolor and Gouache, Dimensions: 30 × 40 cm, 2002, Source: Herat Art School Photo Archive.

From these works, it can be concluded that there have been artistic exchanges between artists from Herat and Iran.



Figure (17), Three Horses, Master Mohammad Tamim Sahibzadeh, Silver Sheet and Mineral Paints, 2014. Source: From the artist.

After the fall of the Taliban in 2001, the opening of new doors for artists, painters no longer tried to spend hours traditionally performing a painting, but to summarize and use new tools to express art and With the help of a few brief components of ancient painting, they created works of art. Modernist artists, who, without the support of the original art of their homeland, considered reaching the vast horizon of Western art as a way for the flourishing of their art, gradually caused a kind of confusion. The spark of the West and the opening of extensive trade and art market connections at home and abroad have encouraged young artists to make up for the backwardness of all these years

through day-to-day efforts and familiarity with new and diverse styles. New tools, new ways of expressing art, access to art sites, entry of educated artists in Europe and the United States, European travel to Afghanistan and the establishment of higher art institutions alongside scientific and artistic



Figure (18), Habibullah Mashhadi, taming three wild horses, Safavid period, about 957 AH, British Museum, London. Source: Islamic Iranian Design Art, Mohammad Khazaei.

during this time and in previous periods, and was replaced by the Pashto language in the literary sphere, to the point that new generations were less aware of their artistic past. This was while the trumpet of colonialism was sounded again in the country in 2002, but this time it was accompanied by the cultural fever of the West. The chronic disease of the disappearance of artistic identity courses



Figure (19), a work by Professor Mohammad Tamim Sahebzadeh, Government Conversation, Using Collage Techniques and Mineral Colors, Source: From the artist.

at a great distance from the old traditions, the empty intellectual space of young artists, with its seemingly watery fascination with the color of Western methods and the flow of modernism, brought a kind of artistic pluralism and a turbulent market. And the complexity of art took shape over a decade. With all the influence and influence that the West inflicted on art and painting, but very soon the artists of painting regained their path and established the original support of the art of painting. After the end of Hamid Karzai's presidency in 2006, artists will be sent abroad to continue their studies. Some of the immigrant artists who lived in Pakistan and Iran returned to the country and brought with them a bag of art and experience. In such a situation, art and painting suffer from disharmony and dispersal in the styles and teaching of this art. The Mongol and Pakistani Indian styles, the new Iranian style of painting, the Western artistic styles, add to this turmoil in the scientific and artistic centers.

The structure of the meanings of the paintings was mixed with the traditional and modern approach. Artists who had learned art during their migration to Pakistan worked in the direction and style of Pakistani artists; however, they were more likely to follow local principles when choosing a subject. The painter created a picture of narrative literature, myths and religious concepts with a modern look and a new style. The simultaneous view of the country's captive indigenous traditions and culture and the attitude of leading artists in the field of Western art was not hidden from the view of the Afghan painter in Pakistan. A clear example of this method and view can be seen in the drawings of Master Khadem Ali, Master Mohammad Tamim Sahibzadeh (Figs 17, 18, 19 and 20).

The painting of three horses in (Fig. 17), which is an imitation of the work of horses by Habibollah Mashhadi in the Safavid period (Fig. 18), has been done on a three-millimeter silver sheet. One of the horses is decorated with azure colors in a natural way. It is clear how modern execution works with the use of old drawings in this work. The simplification and application of new tools in the creation of this work and the combination of both modern and traditional methods have given it

centers, encouraging artists to learn art and welcoming Europeans and Americans to the arts Indigenous people provided the ground for the growth of art. The creation of art galleries in various fields such as painting, calligraphy, painting and gilding, inviting foreign professors and artists who had gone to study in other countries had created a happy atmosphere that made a huge flood of art enthusiasts affiliated with universities and art centers. We see non-government affiliates.

It is noteworthy that from the end of Amanullah's reign, approximately from 1302 AD (1923) to the end of the Taliban regime, which took place with the US military attack on Taliban bases, in 1380 AD (September 11, 2001), that is, about 78 years, All past legacies, from literature, culture, and the arts to the state of the economy, were declining, and old artistic traditions were marginalized day by day by the scattering of painters in the country and the migration of many to other countries. The Persian language, which was the only major source in painting, was removed from the literary circle of the country

during this time and in previous periods, and was replaced by the Pashto language in the literary sphere, to the point that new generations were less aware of their artistic past. This was while the trumpet of colonialism was sounded again in the country in 2002, but this time it was accompanied by the cultural fever of the West. The chronic disease of the disappearance of artistic identity courses



Figure (22), Pirmard, Ahmad Masih Farhad, Dimensions: 20 × 30, 2014, Source: Turquoise Mountain Institute Photo Archive



Figure (21), Ghazni and Cultural Heritage, Soghari Hosseini, Dimensions: Cut 30 × 40 and image size 20 × 30, Year: 1392, Source: Turquoise Mountain Institute Photo

between Persian-speaking immigrants and the host language community. Artists individually or in small groups were engaged in artistic activities in the field of visual arts. Therefore, the ground was not prepared for the cultivation of the young generation of poets. But in painting and painting, due to the interest of Pakistani artists and the usual trend of painting in that particular style, he also encouraged immigrant painters to paint in the style and context of the host country. This could have happened for several reasons. One is to create jobs for Afghan artists in Pakistan who have had to learn how to paint. Another reason is the market for the sale and purchase of works of art and the request of permanent customers for paintings painted through active art centers in Pakistan, and immigrant artists working in these centers tried to attract customers and those in charge of the art center. . Perhaps another reason was the small payments and the use of natural and organic materials that matched the artistic origins of Afghanistan, and young painters sought to bring themselves closer to the cultural and artistic origins of their homeland.



Figure (23), Two demons with dragons, Master Mohammad Siah Ghalam, Tabriz, about 800 to 850 AH, reference 2153 Topkapi Museum of Istanbul

a new shape, which is very different from the old and modern works. In (Fig. 19), we see flat and two-dimensional spaces and dominant colors in painting, but with a new and modern expression. Because the work is done with collage technique and mineral dyes have been used. This work is more similar to graphic works than painting. But since there is a lot of connection between graphics and painting in creating two-dimensional spaces, let's define the range of colors used and the presence of standing figures that are quite similar to painting figures.

The presence of Afghan artists in Pakistan and Iran, with their participation in cultural and artistic associations and the establishment of spontaneous cultural and artistic associations in these two countries, will to some extent unite Afghan art and literature. But writers and artists who immigrated to European, American, and Central Asian countries were more individual than collective.

The cohesion that was provided in Iran due to the common language and other cultural, literary and artistic commonalities for immigrant poets and artists was not available in Pakistan due to the lack of linguistic and cultural closeness



Figure (20), Buddha, by Khadem Ali, Kabul, Source: From Khadem Ali's website.

Twentieth-century Afghan art can be described as an art with a lot of social responsibility. The decorative approach and romanticism in painting until the late 1940s was the dominant approach in painting, after which artistic activities in the field of painting became very marginalized until the communist era, when the realism in painting began to flow and artists such as Professor Mohammad Saeed Mashaal Herat and Professor Homayoun Etemadi, Professor Breshna and Professor Mohammad Tamim Sahebzadeh in Kabul, professors such as Khadem Ali abroad and some other painters can be mentioned in this field. In the communist period, there is a degree of cohesion and unity in the field of arts, but after the victory of the Mojahedin in the 1970s, the relative order and cohesion

that existed in the communist period is completely destroyed. Scattering and pessimism, despair and despair can be seen in art, especially in the literature of that period. The culmination of this art among

artists and enthusiasts dates back to the late Taliban regime, with the activation of the country's academic centers such as the Herat and Kabul Arts Schools, as well as government-affiliated centers that operated mostly in large cities. Painting also breathes new life into the newly created space, but as can be seen from the review of the works, we can see the continuation of realism in painting after the Taliban period in some works (Figs. 21 and 22). What we see in (Fig. 20) is the subject of the myth that the artist deliberately uses images of demons to express his historical expression in isolation from people who have become demons in the eyes of others. The method of execution, in detail, is similar to the old style of painting, due to the presence of fine dots and lines used to shape the motifs. Of course, the painting that was popular in India was not in the time of Herat Timurids, but the whole work does not remind us of the original paintings at all. Most of this artist's work is in line with these themes and the same way of performing. Perhaps the reference to the works of Mohammad Siah Ghalam is not without grace, which was once a tradition breaker of his time. This artist is considered to be the source of strange and alien elements in painting, the source and source of innovation in his time (Fig.23). Most of this artist's work is in line with these themes and the same way of performing. The artist is currently one of the international artists working in many European, American and Asian countries. In (Fig. 22), a very real subject is drawn, which is usually photographed beforehand, and from several photographs, the best one is chosen as the subject of the painting, or the motifs of one subject are selected from several photographs. The paintings are then designed. Professors who contributed greatly to keeping the art of painting alive and passing it on to the new generation, such as Professor Enayatullah Shahrani, Gholam Mohammad Meymangi, Qassem Ghafouri, Homayoun Etemadi and later artists such as Professor Khadem Ali, Professor Mohammad Tamim Sahebzadeh and Professor Shir Ali Hosseini in Kabul and Asat. Mohammad Saeed Mashaal, Ustad Rahimi, Ustad Mohammad Saeed Moftizadeh, Ustad Lotfa al-Haq and Ustad Mohammad Tawfiq Rahmani in Herat are among the pioneers of the art of painting, some of whom are still alive and some of whom are living abroad Are active.

## Conclusion

It is safe to say that the full history of Afghanistan cannot be traced back to Afghanistan and Afghanistan. Rather, the ancient history and the Middle Ages should be searched in the history of Avestan and Shahnameh of Iran and in the history of Greater Khorasan, and without a doubt the history of Avestan and Shahnameh and Greater Khorasan of Iran is a history of Balkh, Bamyan, Sistan (Nimroz), Zabol and Kabul. And Herat, Merv, Ghor, and Georgia are inseparable from the Avesta of Zarathustra and the Shahnamehs, and from the history of the Pishdadians, the Kianians, and the Dari literature.

With this introduction, it can be stated that the dynamism of art and culture in the land of Afghanistan has a long history and has been at the forefront in various sciences such as philosophy, astronomy, mysticism, literature, etc. Now, although the land has a new history as a country and a nation, but in terms of historical antiquity, it is one of the oldest countries in the world and was one of the great civilizations that coincided with the current neighboring countries, especially Iran. Has shared artistic and cultural experiences. The historical course of this land from our pre-Christian to late Timurid periods is as follows and is the only platform with Iran and some countries in the region.

What has been learned from the study of the history of painting in Afghanistan from the beginning of the twentieth century to the present, despite the influence of the West and the influence of colonialism for many years, can be seen in local and cultural manifestations in Afghan painting. Topics in contemporary painting are derived from everyday customs and current living conditions. Most of the works of art are in line with the problems and concerns of the people, which the artist has cleverly addressed. Most of the topics are social and have literary and religious backgrounds and themes. While human and social themes are influenced by neighboring countries, especially Iranian painting, the indigenous feature of Afghan painters' works in drawing space, drawing people's clothing or the job status of the people there is more realistic than the old paintings. It happens. Even in the type of painting, the UAE design and the design of the written lines (written literature) they use have indigenous characteristics. Can be seen. From the study of some of the paintings, there is a

kind of extreme realism in contemporary paintings, the design of which is based on previously prepared photographs and then depicted on special paper using painting techniques.

Twentieth-century artistic features in Afghan painting can be classified into several components, including the use of new artistic tools, indigenous and religious themes, central character, the simultaneous combination of two traditional and modern approaches, attention to reality and attention to drawing. Ordinary people's lives are simply a desire to summarize the visual expression in the design and color and multidimensional spaces.

It should be noted that the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan with war is one of the main obstacles to the establishment of art with strong foundations, and the numerous ups and downs due to the ongoing wars have diminished artistic views and deviated from the original originality. In this article, an attempt was made to make a brief review of several contemporary works with a visual reference to the old painting, the process of contemporary painting. However, it is necessary to examine the situation of contemporary painting in relation to its time.

## Works Citation

- Aghdashloo, Aydin. 2000. Reasons and process of influence of Islamic societies on Western art. The first collection of biennial articles on Islamic painting (Shadow of Toubā). Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Academy of Arts.
- Khazaei, Mohammad. 2000. The Eternal Values of Iranian-Islamic Painting. The first collection of biennial articles on Islamic painting (Shadow of Toubā). Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Academy of Arts.
- Khazaei, Mohammad. 1398. The Art of Iranian-Islamic Design. Samat Publications, Tehran.
- Dust, Mir Gholam Mohammad. 2011. Afghanistan in the path of history. Volume I, Erfan Publications, Kabul.
- Culture, Mir Mohammad Siddiq. 2011. Afghanistan in the last five centuries. Twenty-first edition, Erfan Publications, Tehran.
- Goodarzi, Mostafa. 2000. An Introduction to Contemporary Iranian Painting. The first collection of biennial articles on Islamic painting (Shadow of Toubā). Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Academy of Arts.
- Nowruztab, Alireza. 2000. Religious structure of art. The first collection of biennial articles on Islamic painting (Shadow of Toubā). Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Academy of Arts.

## Internet Sources

- "Ahmad Shah Durrani". Encyclopædia Britannica Online. Retrieved 2010-09-09.
- D. Balland (2010). "AFGHANISTAN x. Political History". دانشنامه ایرانیکا (Encyclopædia Iranica Online ed.). Columbia University.
- F. Tissot, "Catalogue of the National Museum of Afghanistan 1931-1985", Preface
- Hiebert, F. , Cambon, P. , ۲۰۰۸, AFGHANISTAN Hidden Treasures from the National Museum, Kabul, page 56, Washington, National Geographic, ISBN 978-1-4262-0295-7
- M. Longworth Dames, G. Morgenstierne, and R. Ghirshman (1999). "AFGHĀNISTĀN". دانشنامه اسلام (CD-ROM Edition v. 1.0 ed.). Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV.
- B. Brend, "Rasm;" in Encyclopaedia of Islam (Ed. II), Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960. Vol. VIII, pp. 451-453. [www.https://ganjoor.net](https://ganjoor.net)