

Professional scientific sessions for art, architecture and urban planning Thursday evenings

Held in: Conference hall of Herampey Consulting Engineers

Date: 27.02.2015

Title: Contemporary painting and movie in Iran (Pahlavi era)

Speakers and panel members: Mr. P. Shoghi and Mr. S. Cyrus

The first speaker Mr. P. Shoghi began his speech telling that the birth of the Iranian movie in Qajar era coincides with journey of Nasser-el-ddin Shah to France and Belgium, and the introduction of the cinematography to Iran. The first Iranian movie registered in the history is the parade ceremony in Belgium where the Shah was attending the ceremony (21.06.1279).

Meanwhile in the other parts of the world the cinematography targets the masses of population, in Iran it becomes a monopoly of the royal elite. The first attempt to popularize the cinematography happens when in 1284 M.E. Khan Sahafbashi creates a space that looks like a movie hall, but after the initial period the activity is banned by the cleric authorities. After these timid attempts the following activities are realized by Armenian, Georgian and Azeri migrants.

During the Pahlavi era what happens in the Iranian movie is strictly related to the social happenings. After a decade of the new dynasty establishment and the beginning of the modern urban life development, the economic stabilization followed by the invasion of the western products, the Iranians remember and revitalize their historic heritage, becoming step by step more confident inspired by patriotic sentiments and the past Iranian glories. This is the key to the creation of movies, especially documentaries. One of the first pioneers in this field is a man called K. B. Mohtamedi, who begins his activity filming families gatherings, the crowning ceremony, the ceremony for the foundation of Tehran university or the railway.

The first experience for the professional movie is made in 1308 by a man called Agaessian (most probably from Russia) that found a movie school called cinema artist. His first film is made in the same year called "Abi and Rabi". Aganessian didn't have success because he did not speak Farsi that blocked the instauration of social-cultural relations and because of technical limitations. At the same time the first Iranian spoken film "Doktare Lor" is made in India by A. Sepanta. But because of the lack of the government attention, interest and protection, the Iranian movie collapses and fails and the end of the first Pahlavi era.

During the world war II the Iranian movie experiences its second birth thank to the activities of Mr. Koosha (called the Iranian movies' founder) that provides the necessary equipment for a modern production. Until the revolution most of the historic-documentary movies are made in his studios. One of the most important personalities in the Iranian movie is S. Khachikian who makes movies that in somehow are weak copies of the western action movies.

The '40 movie experience a new wave, where social and political problems are focused and presented and this is the pre-revolution period when this kind of movies are censored and the Iranian production

diminishes from annually 91 to 6 in 1356. The reason is that the western movie has invaded the local market and the government is absolutely not interested to what happens to the local production and activity.

The second speaker is Mr. S. Cyrus who believes that Safavid era can be considered as the beginning of modern art in Iran. This is the period when the artists challenge the traditions that fed them during their artist growth. The painter get familiar with the European artistic expression. There are different reasons for the gradual approach to the foreign sources, that in Mr. Cyrus opinion are 1-the trade of the Europe made paintings.2)direct contacts with the European painters based in Julfa-Isfahan.3)the paintings of the Armenian painters that live in Julfa.4)the Gurkani school paintings based in India.5)the saturation of the arts in Safavid era.

Continuing his speech Mr. Cyrus explained that till the Qajar era the traditions are respected and maintained, but during the kingdom of Nasser-el-ddin and the most famous paintor of that period Kamal-ol-molk the traditions are broken and ignored. This painter follows the formalist school, he goes to Paris to study the realists school, ignoring the modern expressions and movements. In this context he began a movement that containing many western elements and parameters, continues to be faithful to the Iranian traditional values. The next generation ignores and forgets this path, trying to follow painters like Picasso.

Mr. Cyrus believes that the painting in Iran is not popular, so many important events are not reflected in the artistic productions. After the Mashrute revolution there are three paths: 1-the school of Kamal-ol-molk.2-the Russian realistic school.3-the cafe painting.

During the kingdom of Reza shah he tries to modernize and “civilize” the Iranian society, cancelling the weak points. In this period he mentions three directions that are 1-the Reza shah painting.2-the kamal-ol-molk style that changes its name to old school.3-the Isfahan school that continues its activity. After the occupation of Iran in 1942 the western culture invades the Iranian society and the painters are deeply influenced by the foreign styles, that doesn’t reflect the Iranian identity. Some of the famous painters of this period are H. Behzad, J. Zia and other modern artists that in some way try to awaken the Iranian society and in different case they have success.

During the last period of Pahlavi era, the Shah Mohammad Reza and his wife encourage the artistic activities, achieving good results. The principles of the arts are taught in Iran, valuable art works are bought, different programs and events are organized. All these factors cause the birth of the modern movement in Iran. In 1964 we assist to the sakkhakhane styl’s creations that contains both the traditional and modern elements. In 1978 the modern arts museum is founded, the former styles continue to operate and in many cases different Iranian artists are internationally well known. After the Islamic Revolution there is change of direction from national identity to religious identity.