

**EXPLORING NATIONAL IDENTITY AND MODERN ART  
AESTHETICS, AN INVESTIGATION OF THE LIFE, ACTIVITIES AND  
ARTWORKS OF JALIL ZIAPOUR**

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**CULTURAL CENTRE  
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KUALA LUMPUR**

**2019**

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DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF VISUAL ARTS

CULTURAL CENTRE  
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA  
KUALA LUMPUR

2019

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Field of Study:

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# **[EXPLORING NATIONAL IDENTITY AND MODERN ART AESTHETICS, AN INVESTIGATION OF THE LIFE, ACTIVITIES AND ARTWORKS OF JALIL ZIAPOUR]**

## **Abstract**

This research will investigate Jalil Ziapour; a pioneer Iranian modern artist. The study will also explore Iranian identity in his paintings as well as his artistic activities, anthropological studies, and changes during different phases of his life from 1920 to 1999 alongside, modernism and nationalist movements in Iran. Ziapour was a creative artist and an active academician during the different phases of his life. Since he was looking for inspiration and innovation through the artistic creations in Iran, many artists and scholars appreciated him as an important modern artist, who made advanced the art of painting in Iran. However, he is not explored well particularly when it comes to taking into account the different dimensions of his artistic life. In my research, I investigated Ziapour, taking into account various dimensions of his different artistic activities, including his biography, the social-political situation of his time, and his theory of modern art, his art writings and his anthropological studies. I studied how he integrated Iranian identity and modern art aesthetics in his paintings and I analyzed how his painting styles changed during different phases of his life.

**Key Words:** Jalil Ziapour, modern artist, art works, artistic life, national identity

**[MENEROKA IDENTITI KEBANGSAAN DAN ESTETIKA SENI MODEN, SATU KAJIAN MENGENAI KEHIDUPAN, AKTIVITI DAN KARYA SENI JALIL ZIAPOUR]**

**Abstrak**

Kajian penyelidikan ini akan mengkaji Jalil Ziapour, salah seorang perintis seni lukis moden di Iran. Kajian ini juga akan menyelidik penerokaan identity warga Iran melalui hasil lukisan dan aktiviti seni beliau, serta kajian antropologi dan perubahan fasa kehidupan beliau di antara tahun 1920 hingga 1999, bersampingan dengan gerakan Modernisme dan Nasionalisme di Iran. Ziapour adalah seorang tokoh seni yang kreatif dan ahli akademik aktif dalam pelbagai fasa kehidupan beliau. Memandangkan beliau sering menerokai inspirasi dan inovasi menerusi ciptaan seni beliau di Iran, ramai pelukis dan cendekiawan menghargai beliau sebagai tokoh seni moden yang penting, dalam usaha menjayakan evolusi bidang seni lukis di Iran. Walaupun demikian, kisah perjalanan seni beliau tidak pernah dieksplorasikan secara terperinci dari segi dimensi yang berbeza. Dalam penyelidikan ini, saya menyiasat Ziapour dari pelbagai dimensi, sama ada dari aktiviti seni beliau yang berbeza, analisis biografi beliau, keadaan politik sosial sezaman, teori seni moden beliau, tulisan seni serta kajian antropologi yang berhubungan dengan beliau. Saya juga belajar bagaimana beliau menggabungkan Identiti Iran dan estetika seni moden dalam lukisan beliau. Di samping itu, saya mengkaji bagaimana gaya lukisan beliau berubah dalam fasa kehidupan yang berlainan.

**Keywords:** Jalil Ziapour, artis moden, kerja seni, kehidupan artistic, identiti kebangsaan

## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to give my regards and appreciation to all of the great people who helped me to organize this dissertation. With their creative cooperation and helpful attention, it became possible for me to go through to finish the work of this dissertation enthusiastically. I do appreciate my dear parents for their support and encouragement during the period of my study and work on this thesis dissertation and that, with their influential presence and warm care; I could pursue my goals and destiny. Working on the topic of this dissertation was started from the idea in mind and various negotiations with my dear supervisor, Dr. Genevieve Gamache, to study about the biography analysis of the artist about different dimensions of his life and changes in his artworks, which done in an analytical descriptive study. For this reason, I would like to give special thanks to my dear supervisor for her great help and supervision during the step by step progressions and work on the chapters of this dissertation. Thanks to 'Mehrdad Jalali' for his help during the translation works of the chapters, 3, 4 and 6. I firstly wrote some of the texts of these chapters in Farsi and then gave them to him to translate them to English and then I edited them again. I also give my thanks and regards to dear committee members for their attention, notifications and effective comments about the work of this dissertation. I would like to thank the office of public relations in the Contemporary Art Museum of Tehran, National Library of Tehran and Central City Hall Library of Isfahan, for their help and cooperation, and thanks to Cultural Centre, University of Malaya and my dear lecturers and wonderful friends for their various helps, suggestions, and supporting, during the process of works on this dissertation.

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# **Chapter1**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The historical analytical study of Jalil Ziapour and his artistic life, activities, researches, and paintings, formed the core of my investigation of the different dimensions of his life history. During my research, I studied the changes and events that occurred in the world and my country, in different stages of time and history; I especially looked at the social and political changes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly the concepts of modernism and nationalism and their effects on the art and culture.

As Ziapour is a pioneer modern artist, famous as the flagship of modern painting in Iran I was curious to study him to investigate how he innovated the art of painting in Iran. In my dissertation, I aimed to investigate his personal style of painting, his explorations of modern art and its integration with Iranian ethnicity and identity. For this, my dissertation is organized in 6 chapters. In the first chapter which is the introductory chapter, I stated the background information of the research, purpose statement, questions and, topics and the theoretical construct part in the topics of modernism and nationalism and their concept and definition. In chapter 2, I went through the literature review, which is organized in three parts in which I reviewed different scholars, who investigated Ziapour. First, I reviewed the publications discussing the artist's exhibitions, and then I looked at scholars investigating his art and movement and then the authors who placed him at the core of their publications. In chapter 3, I investigated the topics of modernism and nationalist movements in Iran and where the art stood during the time life of Ziapour, in between 1920 to 1999, in other words since the late Qajar era, to the Pahlavi's era and the two decades after the Islamic revolution in Iran. Chapter 4 is organized the periods of Ziapour's life in 4 sections. This helps investigating how his artistic activities changed during different times of his life in relation,

even in parallel, to the nationalist and modernist movements in Iran. I analyzed his biography, in relation to different stages of his life and influential events, since his childhood in his hometown, to his later years and his education and school time in Tehran and Paris, then I looked at his returned to Iran and the beginning of his cultural activities in Fighting Cock society and magazine and related events and exhibitions. Then I looked at the changes in his life and his cultural administrative duties including his anthropological studies as important influences for his art. In chapter 5, I analyzed some of his writings and texts in two sections, first his texts on modern art and second his texts on ancient history. As Ziapour was a writer, he published many texts and academic talks and writings, I selected some of his texts which are related to the highlights of this research. In chapter 6, I placed 8 pieces of Ziapour's paintings chosen, from 3 different phases of his work style, for the analysis. I analyzed how his style of painting changed during these 3 phases. In this chapter I linked most discussions and relations of the previous chapters to the analysis of the paintings. I paid particular attention to his innovative goals and cultural activities, his sources of inspiration, his anthropological studies, the changes in his life and connected them to his style of paintings. In the chapters, most of the titles of the references in the footnotes are translated from Farsi to English by me. For Ziapour's Writings, in chapter 5, I analyzed them from the main Farsi text and then summarized and translated them to English.

## 1.2 Thesis Statement

Previous publications often indicated that Ziapour was interested in the styles of western art. Some others indicated that he was a modern artist who promoted Cubism in the painted art of Iran. However, I contend that his art is more than a simple use of western modernist style; it is an integration of the Iranian identity, aesthetics of Cubism and his modern theory of art. I also argued that his art is a modern representation of Iranian identity, based and inspired by the ancient roots of Iranian civilizations and current multiple ethnicities. This interest and personal exploration in ethnicities of Iran as a source of nationalistic identity can be found in his figurative/abstract paintings, specifically, in the designs and motives of decorative artifacts, and in particular, his symbolic use of composition and coloring.

## 1.3 Background of Research

Jalil Ziapour was born on 25 April 1920, Bandar Anzali, Iran. He was the grandchild of Ziapour's family and his father was a famous craftsman in the town. From early childhood, Jalil showed his interest in fine arts and when he finished his elementary school, his father encouraged him to continue the family job, but Jalil covered his way. During high school, he worked hard and taught to younger students meanwhile, he participated in cultural programs in the school such as sport and theatre.<sup>1</sup>

In 1938 he moved to Tehran to continue his education in Music School and after passing a quite hard examination he started to study music composition there. Later on, the management of school shifted from Belgian lecturers to Iranian musician, 'Kolonel Ali Naqi Vziri' and composition course deleted from the schedule of school and then Jalil

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<sup>1</sup> شاهین صابری تهرانی، مجموعه سخنرانی‌های فرتیج تحقیقی و هنری استاد لیل‌الضیاء پور. ن. س. ا. س. فر. [Selection of Professor Jalil Ziapour Artistic Researches and Academic Talks], (Tehran: Eslimi, 2003), 11.

decided to change his course and started to study at Tehran Beaux Art School (Mostazrefeh Art School). After two years of study in Mostazrefeh School of Traditional Arts, Ziapour, experienced miniature, gilding, carpet designing and traditional painting and then in 1941, he changed his destiny to study modern art terms in Tehran Beaux Art University (Honarhaye Ziba). At the end of 1945, Ziapour achieved the honor of first-grade medal in culture and arts in the University of Tehran and got a scholarship to continue his education in France, where he studied at the 'Ecole Nationale Superieure des Beaux'.<sup>2</sup>

In Paris, he trained with masters such as 'Suverbie' on painting and 'Nicolousse' on sculpture. Then besides his main courses at the same time Jalil made efforts to follow other areas of comprehensive knowledge such as history of art, stylistics, history of civilization, social science, motives and costumes. He was also, influenced by Cubist art movement at Andrea Lhote's studio, which later led him to create his style of painting based on 'Iranian traditional nomads' and 'Cubist geometrics'.<sup>3</sup>

Returning to Iran in 1948 was a milestone for Ziapour's Life to start his development and transformation toward the fine art and literature society, till the last years of his life.

Ziapour in his life published 73 artistic speeches, 21 historical research papers, 28 books, and, 40 art pieces. He had various duties in the Ministry of Culture and Contemporary Art Museum and established two art schools. He lectured as a professor of fine arts in universities and influenced many artists who later became well-known painters such as Mohasses, Tanavoli, Zenderoudi, Kalantari, and many others of known as first and second generations of painters.

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<sup>2</sup> Naser Hariri, *About Art and Literature, Interview with Jalil Ziapour and Behrooz Moslemian*, (Babol: Avishan, 2001), 9.

<sup>3</sup> Hamid Keshmirshekan, *An Introduction into Contemporary Iranian Art*, (Tehran: Nazar, 2017), 83.





wanted to inform our national identity which inspired our cultural heritage.<sup>6</sup>

However, the series of activities and statements in Fighting Cock didn't look sweet for some of the people during that time. They misinterpreted the goals of this group and started to attack them. Therefore, Ziapour and his friends started a serious battle to promote the main goals of their manifesto: 1- Art for art sake. 2- Rejection the copying of old methods in art and literature, 3- To evolve the Realism style of painting. 4- Avoid the absolute copy of the western art style. The actions of the group emphasized the improvement of modern poem and modern painting in Iranian trends and following that, they published many critical discussions and dialogue statements about their intention.

It is noticed that the society of Iran then, was transforming from traditional to modern and industrialized. Therefore they believed that it was required that the same transformation occurred as well in the art and literature society. From 1947 to 1956, Fighting Cocks became popular in Iran and had various guest members from different branches of art and literature such as Nima Youshij and Sohrab Sepehri in modern poem, Bahman Mohases in painting and many other Avant-Garde artists. Later, this Society, experienced different situations while active, which even caused it to be banned from publishing and to change to the name of the magazine which changed several times from Fighting Cock to Kavar, Panjeh Kuros, Moj, Apadana and Honare No. Later, in 1952, in the second session of Fighting Cock, Jalil Ziapour left the group. Houshang Irani continued the movement in a different method. Finally due to the political changes in Iran and the desire for more freedom for modernism, the committee and magazine slightly turned off.

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<sup>6</sup> Hariri, *About Art and Literature*, 58. My translation from: مدغم! برین بودکبال داماتملی خورنوملی را وجهه  
برلشت طمان نو سرشسته خورهای تجسس می لایات و تنقو قرار دیم. من خواستیم: مهتملی مان ربا الهامگیری از موازات خوبه نهایی  
نو وارنکیم.

### 1.3.2 Movement of Modern Art in Iran (1950-1980)

Before 1941, Fine Arts in Iran, influenced by Kamalol Molk School of Arts. The students of Kamalol Molk (1848-1940, Iranian Painter during the reign of Naser-al Din Shah Qajar), used the naturalistic style of painting and this method was taught for many years in Mostazrefeh Art School. During the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, most parts of the world experienced modernism and its process which affected society, politics, and culture. Modernist movements included a wide range of discourse in various fields and trends which helped move forward and change the tradition and Realism forms in Europe mid-nineteenth century to forward.

However, in Iran, it seems that modernism started to develop from science and cultural Institutions such as the University of Tehran and the University of Fine Arts. Therefore, European masters in these universities had influenced on the studies in modern art. It is noticed that new generations of artists in Iran, refused to continue the naturalism in painting and they were looking for new sources of inspiration.

Jalil Ziapour was one of the graduates who was enthusiastic to introduce modern art terms to the society of art and culture of Iran. Other groups of artists such as Javad Hamidi (1918-2002), Hooshang Pezeshknia (1916-1972) and Mahmoud Javadipour (1920-2012), accompany him on this journey. From 1941 to 1951, a few art exhibitions were conducted in cultural societies like Iran and France Union, Iran and the Soviet Union and the Mehregan Club, and they were influential programs before the first Tehran Biennale.<sup>7</sup> Conducting speeches and meetings weekly in the Fighting Cock society and participation in Apadana art gallery, exhibitions and Biennales of Tehran since 1957, were also effective

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<sup>7</sup> Keshmirshakan, *Contemporary Iranian Art*, 78.

activities to the early steps of the modern art movement in Iran. The characteristics of painting in this era, was defined as abstraction and sensation. During that time, the styles of paintings transformed and evolved from its previous concepts and accomplishment. The aspects of painting often included the people and their daily lives in their environment. Artists also explored their imagination and feelings in to their art creations. In later approaches, it is viewed that Iranian artists, started to pay attention noticed ancient concepts which had been forgotten in the culture and revived them in their artworks. Ziapour was one of the first artists to introduce Cubism in Iran as a revolutionary term. But in years later, he created a personal style of painting which was based on Iranian culture. He started to discover himself to find out who he was and where is he was living.<sup>8</sup> In fact, at this level of his life (1951-1956), Ziapour began a kind of ‘national conciliate’ to promote his art style. He traveled to many regions in Iran and even mountainous and deserts to research about the culture of their people, their style of life, artworks and traditional motives and clothes. Since 1956, he was inspired by ancient and traditional architecture decorations of Iran and tile works. Therefore, he based the background of his paintings with tile divisions in tonal colors and the figures of native people in traditional costumes. As mentioned earlier, his private style of painting later was an inspiration for the next generation of modern artists such as Zendroudi and Oveisi, to create the Saqqa-Khaneh movement which was to become a genre of Neo-Traditional in the national style of Iranian painting.

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<sup>8</sup> Parviz Kalantari, "پرچم مدرن‌نقاشی مهن ایران", *پرهیز هنری* [“Flagship of Modern Painting in Iran”], *Tandis Journal of Art Research*, no.1 (2011): 224.

### 1.3.3 Ziapour's Paintings

The paintings of Ziapour carried a personal style based on his modern art theories and created far away from any copying. Alongside his influence by Cubism, as seen in his first paintings, Ziapour later discovered himself in studying Iranian ethnicity themes. The number of his artworks, as he mentioned in 1989, was approximately 31, which include some paintings, three graphic designs for the cover of the magazine, one carpet design, and three statues and engravings.<sup>9</sup> Also, in another quote, it is mentioned that “he has nearly 40 pieces of painting and two statues.”<sup>10</sup> From 1944 to 1950, his paintings created following Impressionist, Expressionism and Cubism Abstract style. From 1953 to 1991, the artworks were created in a style that is now referred to as his private style.

Ziapour's paintings were influenced by characteristics that include folkloric stories, poems nomadic life and colors of Iran as a kind of abstraction of figures and geometric lines on the surface. The paintings *Rise of Kaveh the Blacksmith*, (1944), was awarded at VOKS house in (1945), a bronze medal. Another painting, *Zeinab Khatun*, (1962), was awarded at third Tehran Biennale in 1962, the gold medal. Ziapour participated in several exhibitions in China, Japan, Venice, Pakistan, Turkey, and France and recently, in 2016, one of his paintings, *Me and Flight*, (1997) was sold at a Tehran auction.

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<sup>9</sup> Seasonal Art Journal. *گفتگو با جلال ضياء پور، نقاشن آشنای ایران، فصلنامه خريف*. [“Interview with Jalil Ziapour: Talking with Jalil Ziapour, Art Critical and Iranian Famous Painter”] *Seasonal Art Journal*, no.17 (spring and summer 1989).

<sup>10</sup> Mahsha Ziapour, *شاه ضياء پور، پوري دبولى پيل ضياء پور*, [“In a Memory of Jalil Ziapour, Pioneer of Iran's Contemporary Painting”], *Golestaneh Journal*, no.85 (January 2007): 31.

### 1.3.4 The summary of Iran's Art History

Generally, the discussion in the art history of Iran is divided into two different main periods: 1- The art of Iran before Islam. 2- The art of Iran after Islam. However, narratively, each of these periods also is divided into various other periods with their particular characteristics and evolutions.

1-The art of Iran before Islam: This era, is also divided into prehistoric era from 6000-4000, BCE. Artifacts from this period include mostly the ceramic, stone and metal samples remaining from the early civilizations and people who existed on the Iran Plateau, such as Elamite and Susa civilizations. Then the establishment of the first kingdoms and empires such as the Medes empire 678 BCE, Achaemenids, 550 BCE, Parthian, 247 BCE, and Sassanid, 224 BCE to 651 CE to the start of Islamic caliphates in Iran.

The studies of artworks and artifacts from these times are mostly focusing on ceramic artifacts, stone engravings, coins and seals and mosaic wall paintings, particularly from the artworks of the Achaemenid and Sassanid empires. From the Sassanid Empire to the beginning of Islam in Iran, there are notable developments in the production of decorative artifacts, particularly in metal plates, textiles and carpets which designed with symbolic patterns particular coloring combination and spiral, floral motives. Also, we can mention about the developments in the art of music in this period.

2- The art of Iran after Islam: In this period, the art courses of Iran continued the development of previous styles while being influenced by the spirit and characteristic of Islamic religion and its beliefs. During this time, the variety of decorative artworks entered the space and architecture, particularly of the palaces and mosques. Also, the creation of book publishing and calligraphy and illustration of the Quran and literary books developed

in this era. It started in 651, CE to contemporary time. We can identify specific influences by the characteristics of different time periods as well as specific schools of arts. The most famous of them was created during the 'Omavid caliphates', (750-661 CE), the 'Abbasid', (750-1258 CE), 'Seljuks', (1037-1194 CE), 'Ill-khanate', (1256-1335CE), 'Safavid', (1501-1721 CE), 'Afshar', (1738-1750CE), 'Zand', (1750-1794, CE), 'Qajar, dynasty', (1796-1925 CE), to the contemporary time and the 'Pahlavi era', (1925-1979), and the 'Islamic Republic' from 1979 to today.

The process of creation and evolution in the specific art of 'Persian Painting' and 'Persian Illustration', developed more in the second period due to the artworks of artists and the influences of different states as well as schools of arts in the centralized different cities in Iran. The most important states to the cohesiveness of Persian Illustration were 'Samani' and 'Seljuks', for the wall paintings, enameled ceramics and integration of Islamic and Persian literature to the painting. In the 'Mughal', era, the particular dynamism and achievement helped the 'Persian Illustration', to evolve in the illustrating of the published books, particularly poem books of 'Shahname' and literary books of 'Kalila and Demna', which continued to the next states and eras to the Timurid, Turkmen, and Safavid in Iran.

During these periods the different schools of arts were created for the promotion of arts in the central cities of Iran such as Schools of Shiraz, Herat, Tabriz, Ghazvin and Isfahan.

Each of these art schools had the different and particular characteristics for their creations. In these schools of arts, besides the art of painting, there were also other courses of arts like poetry and music, illustration and wall painting, architecture and Persian garden and other courses like calligraphy and gilding.

Generally, the art of 'Persian Illustration', in these schools of arts carried these characteristics: Figures and people, in connection with the daily life events, imagining and reporting the stories and evidence of life, illustration of the mystical and literary books, the imaginary scenes of the people, animals, plants, cliffs, and mountains in the nature.

These characteristics continued to the Safavid. There was a familiarity between Iran and European paintings which approximately, started in this era. Furthermore, beside to the miniature painting style, the kings of Safavid such as 'Shah Tahmasib', 'Shah Ismail' and 'Shah Abbas', were interested in the Naturalistic paintings, perspective and landscapes. At that time, painters from the Netherlands came to Iran to make the figurative pieces of the kings and their palaces. Some of the Iranian painters were also, influenced by Naturalism painting skills. One of the famous painters of that era was 'Mohammad Zaman', who was influenced by 'European painting' and later taught many students and his style of painting later developed during Zand and Qajar era.

During the Zand, state, and Qajar dynasty, the art of painting integrated aspects of Naturalism painting and Persian Illustration and three main courses of the painting titled, 'Persian Illustration', 'miniature', and 'coffee house painting', were officially practiced and developed by the artists and government. Some of the famous painters at that time were 'Mohammad Sadegh', 'Ostad Mehrali' and 'Kamalol Molk', who was the student of Ostad Mehrali in the Qajar School of arts. There was also, 'Karim Taherzadeh Behzad', 'Hossein Behzad', 'Mirza Agha Emami', on miniature and 'Hossein Ghoular Aghasi' doing coffee house painting.

Since the establishment of 'Mostazrefeh Art School' or 'the School Of Traditional Artifacts' in Tehran,(1916), by Kamalol Molk, the art of Iran was influenced by 'Kamamlol



Molk School of arts' and his friends and students like, 'Ismail Ashtiani', 'Ali Mohammad Heidarian', Abolhasan Khan Sadighi', and many others. The emphasize of these artists was on Naturalism miniature and the promotion of traditional handicrafts of Iran like gilding, tile works, carpet designing, ceramics, wood and metal works, and many more courses.

During the second Pahlavi era, around the year of 1941, the art of Iran encountered modernism approaches, alongside other trends in the society like culture, politics, and economy. The most important associations for the teaching and developments in modern art styles were the attachment of the 'Fine Arts University' to the 'Traditional Art School' in 1941. Also influential was the start of group art exhibitions, scholarships of art students to study in European art institutions and the avant-garde activities of graduated modern artists like Ziapour, Hamidi, Javadipour, Kazemi and Esfandiari and many others to pave away for creation of modernism in the art of Iran.

### 1.3.5 Where Ziapour Stand in the art history of Iran?

A- Ziapour lived at a time in Iran, in the second Pahlavi era, when the world encountered modernism and nationalism which changed after the Second World War years. The society of Iran was experiencing a dialogue between tradition and modernity in most of the trends from politics, economy and industry to the culture and art courses like cinema, theatre, literature, painting, poem and, music.

B- Ziapour was not a member of any political party or branches in Iran, but he was a man of his time, as he was looking for changes and coordination with the contemporary time. He was a scholar and active artist who looked for motivations and creativity. He did not participate in any opposition against the government, but he agreed with the modernism approaches to the art and literature in Iran from 1949 to 1951. He was also interested to

work on the 'national identity' and relate it to the art of painting. He was a pioneer Avant-Garde artist, alongside other groups of modern artists in Iran, to promote modern art terms.

C- Ziapour, as a modern painter, who studied and practiced both traditional and modern art in In Fine Art Schools in Iran and Paris, was worried about the repetition of traditional painting themes for years in the art academia of Iran and criticized the lack of art theory and art history courses in the art schools of that particular time, that is the 1950's in Iran. On one hand, there were Naturalist painters and students of Kamalol Molk, who organized the methods of painting in academia base on Naturalistic techniques and base on these rules, there was no other method for painting. On the other hand, there were miniaturists of the time, who ignored, modern art, as they thought that modern art will destroy the classic painting of Iran.

D- Ziapour aimed not to destroy the traditional painting of Iran and he was not against the miniature and realist painting. However, he constantly appreciated the art of Iran from the prehistoric time to the end of Safavid and believed that the artists during that time employed the unique aspects of nature to create their unique artworks. He then stated that, from a particular point in time after the Safavid era, the painting art of Iran was repeating what has been done in previously. There were no changes or transformation as the artists were employing to the discipline of Naturalism painting and they did not explore the unique elements of the nature to create art.

E- Ziapour aimed to promote and theorize modern art besides the traditional and classical courses offered at the art schools and universities in Iran and make a place for them as a way to go forward with an emphasis on 'national identity'. He was enthusiastic to bring innovations, spirit, and creativity in the art of painting, particularly in a way that, gave more

choices to modern artists to create their artworks. That was a reason for him to establish the Fighting Cock committee and magazine, where he and his similar thinker friends and students gathered and held weekly meetings and speeches on the topics of modern art and its pedagogical aspects to promote a better understanding of the modern art concepts.

#### **1.4 Purpose of this research**

The purpose of this research was to study Jalil Ziapour and to remember him as a pioneer modern artist and active scholar who aimed to bring innovation to the painting art of Iran. Although Ziapour, acknowledged as a pioneer modern artist, he has not been studied to the specifics of what considered as Iranian modern art style or recognized as Iranian and modern. The purpose of this research was to investigate his exploration of national Iranian identity, his modern art concepts and aesthetics and their integration into his paintings. In particular, this dissertation aimed to study the specifics of these explorations during different periods and situations of the artist's life besides his influential activities.

#### **1.5 Problem Statement**

Ziapour was an important modern artist and most of the artists and scholars in Iran mentioned that he was an important figure to the evolution of modern art in Iran. But he is not studied, particularly, with the details and dimensions of his modern art theory and his modern and Iranian paintings. Therefore, the reason for this dissertation is to investigate him accurately through various phases of his artistic activities, art writings, and paintings.

#### **1.6 Objectives**

- 1- To investigate the integration of national identity and the aesthetics of Western Modern Art, particularly Cubism, in Ziapour's paintings.
- 2- To investigate the integration of Ziapour's anthropological studies and his modern art theory in the composition of his paintings.
- 3- To investigate the changes in his paintings style, during different periods in Iran.

### **1.7 Research Questions:**

- 1- How he integrated the Iranian identity and the aesthetics of Western Modern Art, particularly Cubism in his paintings?
- 2- How he integrated his anthropological studies and his modern art theory to the composition of his paintings?
- 3- How his painting style changed during different periods in Iran?

### **1.8 The Method of Approach**

This research is a historical, analytical and descriptive study, and the method of approach for that is structured as an analytical and qualitative research. Some of my data was gained by accessing the libraries and by studying the relevant references from Iran. The data gathered and analyzed firstly from the paintings, texts, and books that were painted and written by the artist. Secondly books and texts published by other authors and writers about artist. We also accessed some other data gained from exhibition catalogs, published magazines, and previous documented interviews with the artist were also researched.

### **1.9 Delimitation and Limitations**

#### **Delimitation**

I have chosen 8 pieces of 3 different phases of Ziapour's paintings. Most of them were selected from his second phase artworks identified as his personal style series. The first phase of his paintings is less represented because there are no image and limited information about them.

#### **Limitation:**

It is not possible to interview the artist because he passed away a few years ago. The data used for the artist will be limited to the texts of interviews that have been done when he was alive. There is no access to some of artist's paintings as they were previously gifted or sold

to private collections, therefore my selection of paintings was limited to ones with clear colored image and specified provenance which are now kept in the Contemporary Art Museum of Tehran. However, as it is not permitted to visit some private collections in the museum, I tried to find some of quality images of those paintings from a few general books.

## **1.10 Theoretical construct**

### **1.10.1 Modernism**

Modernism is an approach in different trends of culture, politics, and society that bring changes alongside the traditions of society to develop new intellectual ideas. This change started from the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe and generally revolutionized the previous terms of art, music, literature, and architecture. Modernism was experienced in economies, industry and technology and could raise the quality of people's life and shifted it to the age of speed and the industrial revolution. It is basically, a way of thinking focusing on the aesthetic and philosophy of life in the contemporary era. John Clark, mentioned, "modernism as a discourse which privileges a linked series of artistic developments for a group of Euramerica cultures which had become modern according to primarily political, social or culture criteria."<sup>11</sup> However, art and literature were seen as the earliest trends influenced by these concepts to innovate new stylistics and terms that were closer to the social phenomenon of the time.

"The process of change is to be found in many countries from the late eighteenth to the twentieth century, but during the entire period, Paris was the key center for the visual arts."<sup>12</sup> Paris was also a center for innovation and people traveled there to attend the

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<sup>11</sup> John Clarck, ed., *Modernity in Asian Art* (Australia: Wild Peony LTD, 1993), 5.

<sup>12</sup> Christie Davies, "Degas to Picasso, Creating Modernism in France," *New Criterion*, England: Ashmelean Museum of Art in Oxford, Vol. 35, Issue. 8 (February 10- May 7, 2017): 62.



Warner Haftmann, (1912-1999), a German art historian, mentioned that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, people of Europe seized a strange spiritual restlessness that causes them to involve with great changes. This was a kind of reaction to their previous life trends. Haftmann explained that, some of the discoveries of modernism were first examined as experimental in the art of painting. He said that:

The impulse and starting-point for the transformation in pictorial thinking stemmed from a fundamental change in the relationship of modern man to reality, a change which operated in every intellectual sphere of the time. Its intellectual roots are to be found in Romanticism, in the realm of painting, the great French fore-runners, Cezanne, Seurat, Van Gogh, and Gauguin realized as early as 1880-1890 that the definition of this new relationship would be a central mission of the future painting.<sup>15</sup>

Modernism in art would explore the dialogue of painters and visible nature as a reaction to the previous forms of art. Therefore, at this time the subject matter of paintings became closer to the social essences of the nature and figures of local people, labors and their lifestyle, the landscape of farms and villager cottages appeared to in the composition of artworks. Artists started to capture the scenes from ordinary daily life about objects, nature, and people. Herbert Read, (1893-1968), English Art historian, explained modernism by this example of a Naive Man:

The naïve person might object that there is only one way of seeing the world the way it is presented to his immediate vision. But this is not true. We see what we learn to see, and vision becomes a habit, a convention, a partial selection of all there is to see, and a distorted summary of the rest. Read, continued that, Paul Cezanne, (1839-1906), paintings were a kind of Abstraction and Realization of Motifs. It was merely a solution for the representation of nature in painting and vocabulary for Post-Impressionism called modulation of colors and forms.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Warner Haftmann, *Painting in the Twentieth Century, Volume One*, trans. Ralph Manheim (London and Bradford: Percy Lund, Humphries and Company Limited, 1965), 17.

<sup>16</sup> Herbert Read, *A concise History of Modern Painting* (London: Thames and Hudson Ltd, 1974, Reprinted in 1986), 12.

To this point, the theory of visibility of objects or seeing the things from different perspective was defined and revolutionized by Paul Cezanne. This was the first stage for the creation of modern movement in art. However, during the 1980's, Cubism became as the most influential style in the formation of modernism in art and the founders were Pablo Picasso and Georges Braque. The views and ideas of Cubism were based on the simplified forms, the brightness of colors and geometric divisions which broken the objects to the surface of the painting and made a vague space.

#### 1.10. 1.2 Modernism in Asia

During the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a few decades after European, modernism, these phenomena, influenced Asian countries. This influence was caused by various transformations of the social and political spheres of those countries including the Middle East, South East Asia, India, Japan, and China. In the first steps in Asia, the concept of modernism was formed by the impact of European educational discourses and its industrial political changes. Modernism in its way disagreed with any despotism and dogmatism, which have been repeated for many years with no evolution. Somehow it opposed the cultural, social and political traditions of society. It also happened to the art forms and art courses of these countries. However, these phenomena faced a negative backlash from the Asian society because it was interpreted as a force from Euramerica in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to redefine them in modernist terms.

John Clark has a theoretical analysis of the aspects of Asian modernity, with an appropriate context that may be observed for other Asian art discourse. He said that:

Because many parts of Asia in nineteenth and twentieth centuries were forced to redefine themselves via their reaction to contact with, and often depredation at the hands of an



'other', the forms of modernity its cultures adopted seemed to many Euramericans to be derivative, secondary, disingenuous and inauthentic.<sup>17</sup>

Clark defines the various codes in the concept of modernity. The interpretation codes for traditional painting were practiced by possible techniques, possible convention and subject matter in traditional art schools and the subject matter codes which were used as a set of contexts the same as classical art in Europe which were antipathetic and in closed discourse. Moreover, an open originating code for the world discourse may be constituted by the models the artist follows or transform. This world interpretation may be confusion for traditional painting in Asia.<sup>18</sup>

Clark has also a comparison look toward the modernity in Asia and Euramerica that:

Modernity in Asia, certainly in its art discourses, has involved the acceptance and local transformation of art forms which has originated as modernism in Euramerica. This took place sometimes in a society which was modernizing, sometimes in a society which was not yet modern to other criteria.<sup>19</sup>

If modernism in Europe implied with a series of artistic developments, in Asia it indicated with the transmission of pictorial images and even mythological expressions. Meanwhile the modernism in Europe extended to post-modernism, in Asian countries, approached to the regional and cultural modernism. Clark said that: "Moreover, post-modernism which in Euramerica is the extension and critical relativization of modernism, is doubly relativized in Asia, since that was already the relation of the cultures of the region to modernism."<sup>20</sup>

The transformation from Naturalism to Abstraction showed innovative thinking by a new generation of artists. When modern Asian artists started to explore modern art, they faced disagreements and resistance from the classical artists. The pioneer artists influenced the development of modern art in their societies and opened a way for critical thinking. It is

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<sup>17</sup> Clark, *Modernity in Asian Art*, 2.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 2-3.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 6.

viewed that some of the closed discourses in art, later became more interpretive in style and technique. As Clark said that: " we may also see how techniques or styles such as salon realism, which were conservative or reactionary in their originating, cultures, could be radical in effect if not always in artist's intention in their culture of transfer."<sup>21</sup> However, the coming of modern art did not erase previous art forms. Instead these more traditional forms evolved with new creative elements. Modernism in Asia later was shaped as exploration of the 'National and Local' trends in where artists re-evaluated cultural symbols and revived traditional values, as they understood them. This approach in Asia is indicative of new traditionalism and cultural preservation.

Link to the above discussion, Jalil Ziapour was also a pioneer modern artist, when modernism framed this way in Iran, during the 1950s. He promoted modernism base on the certain ideas of Iranian nationalism rather than the western notion of the modern. Although Ziapour was a Paris educated and interested in Cubism art movement as a revolutionary term, but emphasized Iran's art history and its traditional values as suitable inspirations for the artists, to create modern and nationalistic art. Ziapour's movement started from the Fighting Cock art society in 1948, incorporation with his other similar thinkers to evaluate modern art of Iran base on creativity and 'national local' characteristics and also, transformation from Naturalism to Abstraction. We see that the movement of Ziapour, also faced negative backlashes from the traditional artists, but when we analyze Ziapour's writings and paintings, we obviously, see his interest in historical and anthropological Iran's studies and how he explored these aspects as identity and nation of Iran, specially, in his paintings we see Iranian colors and motives shaped in a modern composition.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Clark, *Modernity in Asian Art*, 6.

<sup>22</sup> For more details, please refer to chapters 4, 5 and 6, and the conclusion on page 195 of this thesis.

## 1.10. 2 Nationalism

The term, 'nationalism', is explored from the words, 'nation' or 'native', to define a particular 'identity' for the large group of people, as one community which live in a country or region. The country itself is a territory for the nation, which centralizes and unites within its geographical, borders the variety in a race or ethnic, religion, language and blood in one nation. While nationalism would be an ideology or movement, it is based on the strong feeling of belonging to a country or nation.

The expansion of nationalism, however, reinforced a sense of 'cultural consciousness' for the people to the character of 'patriotism' as 'to do something for the country' or 'to die for the nation'. These expressions strongly go through the interest for the 'self-community' and 'self-culture' between the people of its lands. 'Nation state', is a political structure into which nation is in the level of community. The people of the nation-state have a 'national identity', that clarifies they are from which country or belong to which particular nation, ethnic group or race. It seen for many national symbols in each country such as, flags, signs, motives and colors, languages, crafts, costume, food, etc.

Ernest Renan said: "A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things which in truth are both one constitute this soul or spiritual principle."<sup>23</sup> "Yet the essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common and also that they have forgotten many things."<sup>24</sup>

Benedict Anderson (1936-2015), mentioned: "Historically, the political community of the nation superseded the preceding 'cultural system' of religious community and dynastic

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<sup>23</sup> Homi K Bhabha, ed., *Nation and Narration* (London: Routledge, 1990, Reprinted, 2003), 19.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

realm.”<sup>25</sup> For him, since World War II, every successful revolution has defined itself in national terms and, ‘old nations’, once fully consolidated, find themselves challenged by ‘sub-nationalism’, within their borders-nationalisms which, naturally, dream. Indeed, in the political life of today, nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value.<sup>26</sup>

### 1.10. 2.1 History of Nationalism

The cultural roots of nationalism as Anderson mentioned stressed the idea of Walter Benjamin’s simultaneously of past and future in an instantaneous present an idea of ‘homogeneous empty time’ measure by clock and calendar. Anderson mentioned this transformation was important for the birth of imagined communities, which first flowered in Europe eighteenth century and the ‘novel’ and ‘newspaper’ provided the technical means for representing the ‘nation’.<sup>27</sup> The origins of nationalism, arose historically from three fundamental cultural conceptions: First particular script-language as an inseparable parts of the truth, in the religious communities, second, the monarchy belief as the cosmological rule of a person to other human and third, the combination of cosmology and history into the nation.<sup>28</sup> The core idea of nationalism or ‘official nationalism’ was to be a modern phenomenon, of the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, that occurred in the United States and Western European countries like France, Italy, Germany, England following the years of world wars. Benedict Anderson, explained Official Nationalism as “a merger of nation and dynastic empire is to remember that it developed after and reaction to the popular national

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<sup>25</sup> Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, ed., *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (London: Routledge, First Edition, 1995, Second Edition, 2006), 126.

<sup>26</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London, New York: Verso, 1983), 1-18.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., Page 24.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., Page 36.

movements in Europe since 1820s and in years later, this ideology, appeared to the most other parts of the world in Asia and Africa.”<sup>29</sup>

If we say that the nationalism and the idea of nations have historically existed since the world’s ancient societies and empires, like Roman, Egypt and Persia, China, India, and many others, we generally see it as being closer to the unification of the states and people and caring for their lands and development of the culture. On the other hand, if we look at nationalism as something modern in history, it is constructed after the division of the Roman Empire of the ninth century to forward, into the various nations in Western Europe.

Ernest Renan said: "It was in fact a Germanic invasion which introduced into the world the principle which, later, was to serve as a basis for the existence of nationalities."<sup>30</sup> He means, the basis for the existence of nationalities and their changes and effects to the racial stock and military aristocracy which then formed on France, Germany, England, Italy and Spain by various circumstances like Christianity religion, language of spoken, marriage and territories in the population, which were helped to bring about the result.<sup>31</sup>

Anderson’s point of departure is that nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it because of that world’s multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as of nationalism are cultural artifacts of a particular kind. The creation of these artifacts toward the end of eighteen century, was the spontaneous distillation of a complex ‘crossing’ of discrete capable of being transplanted, with varying degrees of self-consciousness, to a great variety of social terrains, to merge and be merged with a correspondingly wide variety of political and

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<sup>29</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 86.

<sup>30</sup> Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, 9

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 9-10.

ideological constellations.<sup>32</sup> Now crossing by the historical view of nationalism, we will take a look at its character in the post-colonial era.

### 1.10.2. 2 Nation and Post-Colonialism

Nations in the post-colonial era were created and constructed in those new countries, territories or cultures which newly released from the power and control of the colonial countries. During that time on, there was a feeling of anger from the intellectuals of the post-colonial countries in about the loosing of their cultural values and traditions. This made them passionate to research and look back for their historic and native cultures and create a new nation, reinforced the power of national identity and national culture. Frantz Fanon, (1925-1961), was a philosopher and pioneer intellectual in fields of Post-Colonial studies and critical theory. In his view, “A national culture is the whole body of efforts made by people in the sphere of thoughts to describe, justify and praise the action through which that people have created itself and keeps itself in existence.”<sup>33</sup>

Fanon mentioned that the passionate search in the national culture for the intellectuals of the colonized countries, shrink away from the western culture because they realized that they aware in danger of losing their lives and the oldest pre-colonial springs of their people. Following by that, the native intellectuals and writers progressively took on the habit of addressing their people through the published articles, newspapers and even their literary novels.<sup>34</sup> As he said that: "It has been remarked several things that this passionate search for a national culture which existed before the post-colonial era finds its legitimate reason in the anxiety shared by native intellectuals to shrink away from that." <sup>35</sup> Fanon means that

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<sup>32</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 1-9.

<sup>33</sup> Ashcroft, *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 120.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 119-120.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 119.

in the history of nationalism, in most parts of the world, especially the colonized and third world countries, after post-colonialism era and the years of world wars, there was a movement of 'modernism nationalism' which was established and led by the intellectuals and Avant-Gardes of the countries. These uprisings for the development and independence of their nation emphasized the self-culture and specificities on the native, local trends and ancient roots that were a positive action for the power of identity. On the other hand, it also faced several views of scholars, in about the construction of these nations, which was both positive and critical.

#### 1.10.2.3 Nation and critics

The critic of the nation is a contemporary topic in a theoretical construct of the national discourse. The core idea of the critics in the nation goes particularly around the debatable concepts of the discourse, in post-colonial societies and its powerful impact on the creation of national identity and a self-cultural image, after the colonial imperialism. This topic, most argued in the positive/ critical writings and theoretical views of Homi Bhabha, Timothy Brennan and also, Anderson.

Homi K Bhabha is a professor of English and scholar in fields of post-colonial studies and hybridity. He has a critical view on the ambivalent tension of the nation emerging a growing of awareness in the contemporary world of today or 'modernity' in the society. He defined that, "an image of the nation or narration might seem impossibly romantic and excessively metaphorical, but it is from those traditions of political thought and literary language that the nation emerges as a powerful historical idea in the west."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, 1.

For Homi Bhaba, the term of the national narrative is complex and related to the situation of modern time. He went through to questioning the progressive metaphor of modern social cohesion and mentioned that: “The many as one, shared by organic theories of the holism of culture and community, and by theorists who treat gender, class, or race as radically ‘expressive’ social totalities.”<sup>37</sup>

Timothy Brennan is an author and professor of English and comparative literature. He viewed, that, following the years of second World War, the discursive formation of nationalism came to other countries or ‘Third World countries’, as he said, for building their societies base on nationalism sense of ‘belonging’, ‘bordering’, and ‘commitment’, that various governments and the institutional movements, invented the solidity of political life.<sup>38</sup> For Brennan “The rising number of studies on nationalism in the past three decades reflects its lingering, almost atmospheric insistence in our thinking.”<sup>39</sup> It is to say that, study and thinking about nationalism can take us closer to different dimensions of its concept in the post-modern world of today. Some scholars, on the other hand, see a positive strength in nationalism, especially in the postcolonial era. Fanon explored in a passionate search for the nation and national culture by the intellectuals of the colonized communities.

The nation is important for post-colonial countries in the case that identity stands in international power. After the end of colonial power, they were creating a new nation, a new sentiment, flags, symbols and everything regarding the nation. So, they go back and search for what existed before colonial power and they could choose what they wanted and they would say that this part of a nation is important for post-colonial countries for the power of identity. On the other hand, Bhabha said that, although there is a need for unity in

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<sup>37</sup> Bhabha, *Nation and Narration*, 294.

<sup>38</sup> Ashcroft, *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*, 128-131.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 118.



post-colonial country, this unity is a construct and if we start from history and we chose what we want, then it is a new constructed sentiment.

Anderson proposed the following definition:

It is a political community-and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. And it is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.<sup>40</sup>

He puts nation and culture in contrast and questions them as a construct. He interpreted that the nation is an imagined community. In a nationalist community, as an individual part of this community, your neighbors feel the same way about cultural products and representations, like any flags, publishing, historical novels, and symbols and, etc. While we don't know every neighbor, these imagine shared relation to certain products, then it is why something constructs and imagined.

Consequently, as it is an important topic in political-culture science, for the terms, nation or nationalism or nation-states, there are a variety of positive and critical characteristics that different scholars went through to study and discuss them in their theoretical views.

Although the political structure of nationalism and its modern social ideology were to create the United Nations and ideal community, and were structured by a sense of unity and love, the national discourse was criticized and questioned by the scholars particularly when taking into account various points of view, particularly for racial issues, territory and borders. Today the topics of cultures and politics, is studied in relation other topics such as postmodernism, post colonialism, neo-universalism, and internationalism, also, hybridity and globalization. Yet the theoretical discourse of nationalism is still a discussable context with the political, social and cultural studies of nations.

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<sup>40</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 6.

#### 1.10.2.4 Ziapour's idea of Nation and Nationalism

In addition to the above discussion when it comes to 'nation', Ziapour is both positive and critic of the concept. Ziapour was an Iranian artist, Intellectual and art critic who was interested in the nation of Iran and had a passionate search about his national culture.

Therefore, the concept of the nation appears in his paintings and art writings. In his use of Iranian elements such as colors, (based on the colors found on historical-paintings, the material culture, and landscape), motifs (based on historical material culture), and figures of Iranian people (local ethnic groups) is a kind of exploration of national Iranian identity.

For Ziapour these ethnic and local aspects, on one hand, are rooted in the historical and ancient culture of Iran and they are precious heritages. On the other hand, these aspects he represented in his paintings existed in the life of villagers and tribal people in Iran and when Ziapour studied them he became interested to explore their historical values include their lifestyle, traditional clothes, color inspirations, handicrafts, etc.

The squares in Ziapour's paintings were also inspired by one of the ancient elements of Iranian architecture 'the tile works' and this element was a creative historical inspiration for him. In his writings and paintings, Ziapour, included tribal ethnic aspects because he saw them as positive symbols of the Iranian nation. Based on some of Ziapour's quotes, it is obvious that he strongly emphasized on the ancient and local part of the Iranian nation as a good source of inspiration to create nationalistic art.

In an Interview with Hariri, Ziapour answered this question that, to what extent does our historic art affect the work of today in our society, and how much can we use it? Ziapour answered that: Our historic art has long been used to us as a cultural inheritance. The best of this historic art is an inspiration to meet the needs of modernity and introspection and to

express how life is in our society. To express the spirit of the age of traditional times we need to have a broad understanding of the era of our traditions, and this knowledge is gained through the art of the time.<sup>41</sup> For Ziapour, the aim was to pay attention to the environment and the conditions in which he lived and then to create an artwork that was appropriate for the environment. Attention to the environment for him means that artists should pay attention to their particular geography, culture, history, and climate as a source of inspiration to create nationalistic art.

Ziapour said that: Perfect painters must meet these requirements: identify the cultural values of their community. Have a high level of performance. Have the highest level of content and spirituality in their community. Be aware of the world of life and life in their environment.<sup>42</sup> Ziapour means that artists and painters of Iran must know the valued national Iranian spirit and their culture to create artworks with imbued character. It is clear that his interest in the concept of nation was based on the history of the country and contemporary aspects which he identified as tradition and it is a very idealistic and essentialist view of him. He emphasized on a link between traditional culture and art history to create modern and nationalistic art. On the other hand, Ziapour sometimes criticized certain requirements, including the study of social regulations for the people who belong to that nation. The repetition of grids and squares in Ziapour's paintings is sometimes interpreted as a dual nation where the concept of the nation is both positive and negative. In the composition of his paintings, Ziapour used these squares freely and transformed them extensively from their original traditional forms. When Ziapour returned

<sup>41</sup> Hariri, *About Art and Literature*, 60. My translation from: فرنگ‌دشته ما طی زمان درازی برای ما چون ارشکاپرد. فرنگی فوری لشته لست بی‌هی‌است کم‌بختین‌های طن دوران خرد طلال‌ه‌ام‌اتو سرطوف‌ع‌ی‌از‌ه‌ا لست و باعث نگیرای و درون گرای و یعل چ‌ند و چون فرنگان‌ی‌جام‌عه‌ما لست. و برای‌بیان روح اعصار از م‌له‌های‌نیتی‌های‌دش‌ن‌اخت‌ویدی‌عی‌در‌م‌ورد‌دورل‌س‌نت ط‌مان‌ث‌لت‌م‌ب‌ش‌یم‌و‌طن‌ش‌ن‌اخت‌از‌ط‌ویق‌فر‌دوره‌ها‌ب‌ست‌می‌آید.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 39. My translation from: یک‌ن‌قاش‌س‌ر‌م‌بی‌ع‌یب‌و‌ن‌قص‌ب‌ط‌د‌ارای‌طن‌ش‌ر‌ط‌ط‌ا‌ش‌د: ج‌ام‌عه‌خود‌را‌از‌ج‌ه‌ات‌ارزش‌فرنگی‌ب‌ش‌اس‌د. در‌کا‌کرد‌ما‌از‌سط‌ح‌ال‌بر‌خور‌د‌ا‌پ‌ا‌ش‌د. دارای‌م‌خ‌وا‌ه‌و‌م‌ع‌ن‌ه‌ت‌ای‌سط‌ح‌ال‌ی‌ج‌ام‌عه‌خوب‌ل‌ش‌د‌ب‌ا‌ج‌ه‌ان‌ز‌نگ‌ی‌و‌فرنگان‌ی‌خود‌ا‌ش‌ر‌ن‌پ‌ا‌ش‌د.

from Paris to Iran, in 1949, he experienced some innovative experiences. Later, he started to create artworks and publish some books that were suitable templates for his environment and time. He started art criticism and writing books in fields of Iranian art, culture and, civilization. We see that his activities in Fighting Cock Art Society, and his interest and passionate search for self-culture was in parallel with the variety of social-political schanges in Iran during the Pahlavi second era, (1950). At that time, modernism and nationalism movements were alongside each other, for the revival of 'local and national' Iranian aspects and revival of ancient heritage.<sup>43</sup>

The majority of Ziapour's writings focus on the positive aspects of Iran which he sourced in history and traditions. This is particularly true in his publications of Iran's art history, anthropology and ancient and traditional clothing of Iranian people. It is obvious that he was interested in research and documenting these particular aspects of his nation.

In conclusion, by looking at various dimensions of Ziapour's artistic life, his anthropological studies and cultural activities in Iran as well as his paintings and art writings it is obvious that he was interested in exploring the national identity of Iran, which he sourced based to the history and the lived traditions of different ethnic communities as the precious parts of his nation. For him, this concept of the nation as routed in history and tradition was positive and should be promoted, particularly to create nationalistic Iranian modern art. He saw important values in historical and regional Iran which he wanted to present in modern form. However, this character is seen in various eras of Ziapour's artworks and different phases of his life in relation to different time periods of Iran history.

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<sup>43</sup> For more details, please refer to chapter 3, modernism and nationalism in Iran and chapter 6, analysis.

## Chapter 2:

### 2.1 Literature Review

There are different types of publications and documents about Jalil Ziapour and his movement. Some include articles, were from old newspapers and magazines published from 1948 to 1975. The texts during this time usually described and interpreted Ziapour's activities, speeches, exhibitions, and views in Fighting Cock committee society and private art galleries, meanwhile, some of the interviews with him contain biographical information and basic knowledge about the artist and his art movement. In recent years, also there have been seminars and speeches about related fields. These publications were limited and scarce. The particular texts about Ziapour were scattered and unorganized. Also, there was no detailed and fundamental research on this topic. In this literature review, I gathered some of the data about him which is about the specifics of this dissertation and divided this data into three categories: exhibitions, artist and the movement and general books, to bring out several views and researches about this topic and in conclusion I identified that what is new about this dissertation.

#### 2.1.1 Exhibitions

The first exhibition by Ziapour held in the VOKS house in Tehran in 1944 and his Expressionism oil on canvas painting, *Rise of Kaveh the Blacksmith*, (1944), received a bronze medal at the exhibition. Azadivar and the Seasonal magazine of art in their interview with Ziapour pointed out the influences of this painting on the society of Iran and how it was important as a new look to the modern painting.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Hooshang Azadivar, "مصباح جلال ضیا پور", [Interview with Jalil Ziapour,] *TV 2, Culture Art and Literature Group*, summer 1989; Saber Tehrani, *Selection of Academic Talks*, 55-58.

In 1949 and 1950, Ziapour's solo exhibition held in Ferdowsi amphitheater, incorporation with Fighting Cock society and in the same year, he participated in other group exhibitions in Apadana gallery and Fine Art House as the first galleries in Iran. The reports of Taherzadeh and Shirvani <sup>45</sup> explained the specific views around the exhibition in the Apadana gallery about technical points of modern painting.

Taherzadeh discussed and described Ziapour's style of painting in relation to Fine Arts to bring a critical analysis of his art. Shirvani, used art appreciation to study two early Cubism Abstract paintings of Ziapour, titled *Sepahsalar Mosque* painted in 1950, and *Public Bath* painted in 1949. Shirvani said that "these two paintings of Ziapour, created base on the Cubism style and Iranian principles."<sup>46</sup> Reading these texts, it is obvious that, there were literary talks about Ziapour's exhibitions, but there were no clear interpretations of the principles behind his paintings and how they were created and composed.

The next publications on Ziapour are documented between the years 1953 and 1977 a look at his participation in biennales and group exhibitions. "The magazine of Sepid va Siah described a grand exhibition of moderns & classics as uniquely federation of Ziapour's paintings and other classic painters at the same place."<sup>47</sup> This exhibition which was held in 1967 was the first gathering of contemporary artists of different fields, such as calligraphy painting, carpet, books, and coins. The magazine documented that "the art pieces by Ziapour in this exhibition were examples of the artist's aims and goals to create modern art in Iran reflective of its time."<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Tehrani, *Selection of Academic Talks*, 160-165.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 79-82

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 278-280.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 278-280.

“Dr. Yar Shater and Marco Grigorian, in the catalog of Tehran’s first painting biennale in 1958, and Tajvidi, as Mehdi Hosseini mentioned in his Tandis journal's article”<sup>49</sup>, published their interpretation of Ziapour’s painting from a modernist perspective and linked it to later works of younger painting artists and how they would be influenced by new ideas. These scholars indicated at the time that, modern art would shine in Iran if it could be understood by critics. This will help the young artists to express their creative ideas. Later artists, who would look and be inspired by Ziapour's paintings, will feel the mind revolution, particularly by looking at the paintings *Zeinab Khatun*, and *a Kurdish Quchani woman*, that participated in the first and second biennales of Tehran in years 1958 and 1960. Scholars Hosseini saw Ziapour's paintings as new dynamic compositions of native Iranian motifs and in Tajvidi's view these pieces express the nature of modern art. Scholars Khalili,<sup>50</sup>, Javadi pour,<sup>51</sup> Kalantari and Maleki,<sup>52</sup>, emphasized the influences of Tehran painting biennales and the participation of Ziapour’s paintings such as *Zeinab Khatun*, and *Quchani Woman*, at the first, second, third and fifth Biennale.

Besides to the discussions about the modern movement of Iran, when looking at these paintings scholars generally talked about their subject matter, coloring, themes, and technical style. There are limited interpretations that looked at how Ziapour explored his style of paintings as modern Iranian and nationalistic and explored what was exactly his source of painting inspirations.

<sup>49</sup> Mehdi Hosseini, "هنگامی که لیوناردو دلفینو به عشقش رسید", [“In a Memory of Jalil Ziapour,”] *Tandis Journal*, no.65 (January 2005): 4-5.

<sup>50</sup> Maryam Khalili, "جایگاه مدرنیسم در ایران", [“Modern Art Movement in Iran,”] *Visual Arts Journal*, Soure Mehr, no.24 (March 2006): 10-13.

<sup>51</sup> Hoda Amini, "مصاحبه با محمدرضا جوادپور", [“Interview with Mahmoud Javadipour, The Founder of Apadana Gallery,”] *Tehran daily News Paper*, no.26 (November 2009): 12.

<sup>52</sup> Parviz Kalantari and Touka Maleki, "لیوناردو دلفینو", [“Jalil Ziapour,”] *Tandis Journal of Art Research*, no.1 (2011): 221-243.

In Tehran, Contemporary Art Museum, occasionally, some of Ziapour's paintings have been part of group exhibitions. 'The catalogs of modern movement artists' exhibition'<sup>53</sup> and 'Iranian and Arab artists',<sup>54</sup> mentioned two of Ziapour's paintings such as *Zeinab Khatun*, and *The Nomads*, exhibited at those events. Also, in these catalogs, it is mentioned that, Ziapour, is one of the pioneers of Iran's modern art movement who participated in various exhibitions such as: VOKS1944, where received third grade medal, Ferdowsi theatre, (1950), Apadana gallery (1950), First Biennale of Tehran, (1958), Venice Biennale, (1958), Second Biennale, (1960), Third Biennale, (1962) where he received a gold medal and the Fifth Biennale of Tehran (1966), and exhibitions in several other countries such as China, Japan, Turkey and France.

### 2.1.2 Artist and the Movement

In an 'Interview with Anatol France, Cultural Society, in 1948'<sup>55</sup>, Ziapour was questioned on theoretical views about the modern art movement and nature of his paintings. The discussion starts with this topic of, what is art and who is an artist? Then continuing, the interviewer expanded the topics to the field of modern painting styles, Cubism and the importance of coloring in painting. This interview was done in the same year the Fighting Cock Society was established by Ziapour which documented some of his analyses and descriptions of his movement.

From 1948 to 1953, many of the articles in the Iranian newspaper, Mehriran, and in the magazine of Andishe va Honar were printed as a kind of art criticism and dialogue between

<sup>53</sup> Contemporary Art Museum of Tehran and Mohsen Gallery, *موزه فرهادی عصر ایران گالری محسن: آشنایی با* ["Jalil Ziapour,"] *to be familiar with Modern Art exhibition Artists, The Selection of Iranian Artworks in the Museum*, Tehran: The Visual Arts Development Institute, Mohsen Gallery (January 2005): 39-40.

<sup>54</sup> Contemporary Art Museum of Tehran Public Affairs, *فرهادی عصر ایران گالری محسن: آشنایی با* ["Jalil Ziapour,"], *Daryaye Avangan, The Modern Art of Iran and Arab*, Tehran: Mohsen Gallery and Contemporary Art Museum (2016): 82-87.

<sup>55</sup> Saber Tehrani, *Selection of Academic Talks*, 112-120.



Ziapour and his reviewers and critics. For example, in an article by Foroutan titled: '*Critics on Ziapour's Conference*'<sup>56</sup>, published in 1948, the writer is questioning, even criticizing the critics who spoke against Ziapour's texts in the Fighting Cock magazine. Then he explained the influences of this art society, in the establishment of a new movement which is adapted in today's world. Foroutan, in his text, used a literary tone to defend Ziapour's statements in the Fighting Cock. In his opinion, it was not correct for people who are not art experts to criticize Ziapour. According to him, the artist was an art expert, while the critics were general commentators.

'Ferdowsi magazine',<sup>57</sup> 'Donyaye Jadid magazine',<sup>58</sup> and scholar 'Faroughi',<sup>59</sup> in their interviews with Ziapour, noticed the efforts and recognized him as a symbol of patience and persistence in the formation of the modern art movement in Iran. They questioned Ziapour about the importance of modern art terms concept, the goal of Fighting Cock society, and Cubism about to his private and national style of paintings.

Scholar 'Pakbaz',<sup>60</sup> in his analytical view about the contemporary art of Iran, mentioned Ziapour as a 50 years veteran and a pioneer of modern painting in Iran. He also explained the importance of Fighting Cock society as a movement that was the starting point of modernism in the country. 'Hosseini Rad, Khalili and Eskandari',<sup>61</sup> reviewed the background of modern art movement in Iran and pointed out a series of cultural-political changes after the First World War that led to the movement.

Their description in this field of art linked the influences of Ziapour to a movement that

<sup>56</sup> Tehrani, *Selection of Academic Talks*, 75-78.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 274-277.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 260-264.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 295-298.

<sup>60</sup> Rouin Pakbaz, "روین پاکباز. "فرم عاصی ایران. (مدفیس میان و آوری. " [“Contemporary Painting of Iran :Modernism or Innovation,”] *Journal of Visual Art Studies*, no.7 (winter 1999): 160-173.

<sup>61</sup> Khalili, “Modern Art Movement in Iran,” 10-13.

started in 1949 and with his activities in Fighting Cock Society. They described Ziapour as a modern artist who was influenced by the Cubist movement and later created a personal and national style of painting. Reading these texts, it is obvious that, most of the scholars pointed out the impacts and relation between Ziapour's Fighting Cock Society and the movement of modern art in Iran. Also, they mostly focused on the Cubistic aesthetics of his paintings but there were no texts that explored the inspirations of Ziapour and his views of the nation and identity of Iran in his art.

### 2.1.3 General Books

Scholar 'Mojabi'<sup>62</sup> started a chapter of his book titled: *The Pioneers of Iran's contemporary painting (first generation)*, looking at the origin of modern painting in Iran in its historical art. He reviewed the terms in old schools and traditional styles of painting, such as Kamalol Molk School of art, miniature, and coffee house painting, looking for the first shreds of evidence of modern painting in Iran. Later he dedicated a few pages of the text of an interview with Jalil Ziapour, looking at his biography and discussing the importance of his activities during his life. He indicated that Ziapour's early journalistic enlightenment works and his later Iran studies and cultural, educational activities and his paintings even few, were introduced him as an avant-garde painter, awesome critic and flagship of a movement in Iran.<sup>63</sup>

Scholar 'Pakbaz',<sup>64</sup> in his book titled: *The painting of Iran from past till today*, had a new disciplinary look at Iran's painting, where he looked at the art doing a kind of historical comprehensive analysis. He started the study from the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century with a background on the school of arts in Iran. In the chapter on modern painting, he described

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<sup>62</sup> Mojabi, *The Pioneers*, 3-42.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 13

<sup>64</sup> Rouin Pakbaz, *رهنمای نگارگری ایران از سده های گذشته تا کنون* [*The Painting of Iran from past till today*], 5<sup>th</sup> edition, (Tehran: Zarrin and Simin, 2006), 202-220.

people, groups and institutions active in the modernist movements, such as first societies like the Fighting Cock and the Apadana gallery which were established by Ziapour, Sheibani, and Gharib in 1948. Pakbaz noticed the importance of Ziapour as an influential artist to the evolution of modern art in Iran including his efforts in the 1950s which led to the creation of National Art School focusing on Iranian art.

Scholar 'Keshmirshekan'<sup>65</sup> in his book titled *the contemporary art of Iran*, dedicated one chapter to explain the beginning of modern painting and its early beginnings in Iran. He started the argument by analyzing modern art and the situation of Iran during 1940's. Keshmirshekan, used Latin and Persian references, documents, pictures, and interviews with museums, galleries and organizations for his analytical research. He pointed out the main role of Ziapour, in promoting modern art, in addition to his speeches, critics and establishing Fighting Cock Society. He also analyzed the similarities between Ziapour and other artist's works and discussed the next generation of modern artists in Iranian modernism. Also, in this book, there are a few images of Ziapour's paintings like the *Sepahsalar Mosque*, (1948) as one of the first Abstract Cubist paintings of Ziapour.

Scholar 'Delzendeheh',<sup>66</sup> wrote a research base a cultural-political context of about three decades of modern art in Iran. He describes the subject of modern painting as a new creative during this time. Later he gives a biography of Jalil Ziapour and described his activities in the Apadana art gallery and the establishment of the Fighting Cock Society. Delzendeheh, in this chapter, describes the educational aim of Ziapour to promote modern art and gives Ziapour's statements about his style of painting and specified the importance of Cubism Abstract to interpret one of Ziapour's first paintings, *Public Bath*, (1948).

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<sup>65</sup> Keshmirshekan, *Contemporary Iranian Art*, 73-112.

<sup>66</sup> Siamak Delzendeheh, *سایامک دلزنندهت تحول انتصهری فزایران بیرس فظقادی [The Evolutions of Iran's Pictorial Art ;A Critical Discussion]*, (Tehran: Nazar, Second Edition, 2017), 230-300.

Reading these general books, it is obvious that, most of these scholars acknowledge Ziapour's influences and his impacts on the establishment of the modern art movement in Iran as part of in their publication. However, there are no general books published specifically about Ziapour and the different aspects of his artistic life.

#### 2.1.4 Conclusion

By reviewing this literature, I concluded that most of the scholars mentioned some elements and aspects of Ziapour's artistic life in general manner. There are no multidimensional or even in-depth researches on the artist. Also most of the texts and documents about Ziapour were scattered and difficult to find in an organized document that could be a comprehensive resource for study. Furthermore, there was limited information and only superficial interpretations of his paintings. Most studies acknowledge his importance, but do not look at his art in great depth.

Contrary to the previous published works, this thesis, brings Ziapour's texts and his art together and relate his interest in traditional culture and history art of Iran to his modern artworks, looking at this relation from a nationalistic perspective. This thesis brings a new reading of Ziapour's artworks, bringing together his anthropological texts and his art theory texts to show how he hybridized modern art and traditional culture together.

This research also reviewed and analyzes aspects of the nationalist and modernist movements in Iran during the years of 1920 to 1999 and how these evolutions changed during different periods of Ziapour's life. I investigated Ziapour's concept of nation and nationalism and how he integrated national Iranian identity and modern art aesthetics in his paintings.

## **Chapter 3/ Modernism and nationalism in Iran**

### **3.1 Introduction:**

This chapter focuses on the issues of modernism and nationalism in Iran. It, therefore, investigates the characteristics as well as, the political, social and ideological roots, of modernism and nationalism in Iran. The chapter will also look at the relationship between them. This chapter is in connection with the socio-economic-cultural and political atmosphere of Iran during the time when the artist of this research, Jalil Ziapour lived (1920-1999). The importance of, this part of my research is to investigate these movement's characteristics and their social repercussions on Iranian society. The part focuses on the influential events in the formulation of these two forces in the historical period from the late Qajar dynasty up to two decades after the Islamic revolution of 1979. I have divided this chapter into four main sections, starting first with the constitutional revolution of 1905. The second and third sections focus on the two Pahlavi eras (1925-1977) where major social and economic changes occurred. The last section looks at the time of the Islamic revolution which was influenced by Islamic reforms and major technological developments, as well as a strong desire to connect modernism with tradition.

### **3.2 The beginning of modernization and the formation of the national movement in Iran**

The beginning of modernism and modernity<sup>67</sup> in Iran dates back to the late Qajar dynasty, which coincided with the establishment of the constitutional system (1905-1911) and justice by the people. This process is generally accepted by the Iranian population as a necessary and fundamental reform of the socio-cultural, economical and artistic structures of Iran.

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<sup>67</sup>In Farsi: *تجدید و تحولات جدید* Tajaddod va Tajaddod Khahi.

The basis of these reforms was the acquisition of new sciences and technologies and the implementation of parliamentary political structure, rather than kingdoms. This movement found its roots in popular movements. It was a kind of national movement that called for the end of despotism - to the restraint of the king's powers and the implementation of justice based on national sovereignty.

Constitutionalism became a revolutionary movement in Iran due to the activities of various groups of Iranian people. Eventually, the Shah of Iran, Muzaffar al-Din Shah Qajar, (1853-1907), signed the constitutional decree<sup>68</sup> in 1905. After that, the National Consultative Assembly of Iran was formed. After this the constitution was signed by the Shah and a parliamentary system was established in Iran.<sup>69</sup> These changes were followed by many ups and downs and civil wars. For example, Mohammad Ali Shah, the crown prince, dissolved the parliament and opposed it. With the uprising of, and solidarity between, various groups of the people, including Iranian local rulers, clerics, marketers and intellectuals, the National Consultative Assembly was re-established in 1909. This coincided with the beginning of Ahmad Shah's reign 1898-1930, the last king of the Qajar dynasty.<sup>70</sup>

One important source of change was Dar-al-Funun School.<sup>71</sup> This school trained many teachers and produced many graduates who were influential in the formation of the constitutional movement. The school, which was founded in 1851 by Amir Kabir (1807-1852),<sup>72</sup> was the first modern Iranian school for teaching science and technology. A number of European teachers, helped by Persian translators, taught at this school. Graduates from this school, influenced by their European teachers, translated the works of political and

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<sup>68</sup> In Farsi: فرمان مشروطیت Farman Mashroutiat.

<sup>69</sup> Mohammad Ali Almasi, *تاریخ آموزش و پرورش اسلامی ایران*, [The History of Education in Islam and Iran] (Tehran: Daneshe emrouz, 1992), 432.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 432-434.

<sup>71</sup> In Farsi: مدرسه دارالفنون.

<sup>72</sup> He was minister (Sadr Azam) to Naser al-Din Shah Qajar (1848-1896).

social thinkers, as well as philosophers from Europe. They themselves became influential by promoting individual thinking through the publication and authorship of books. Also, a number of alumni of the school went to Europe to continue their studies. When they returned to Iran, they prompted the development of a new intellectual culture and movement. The most important of these were Mirza Malakm Khan, (1834-1908), Mirza Agha Khan Kermani, (1854-1897), and Mirza Abdul-Rahim Talibov, (1834-1911), who were considered modernists, independent thinkers, and law-makers.<sup>73</sup>

The major impacts of the constitutional revolution were the formation of various national groups in Iran and the formation of political and intellectual democracy. The emergence of modernization in Iran at the time was due to a sense of need for progress felt by the aforementioned educated elite and their followers. As for the sense of need for modernism and modernity in various social, political, and cultural trends at the time in Iran, It would be said that, in fact, first encounter or ideological relation between tradition and modernity and intellectualism and liberal thinking, as well as some of their negative outcomes, such as despotism, happened at that time.

Constitutionalism was strongly based on a desire for political changes and social progress. Lack of education, as well as despotism, were seen by many, including the educated elite, as hindrances to these signs of progress.<sup>74</sup> At the time, a number of French-British and American schools were established to teach foreign languages along with the Persian language in Iran. Also, the publication of the first newspapers, which was very much appreciated by the liberal scholars, educated and justice-seeking society also contributed to

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<sup>73</sup> Karim Mojtahedi, *آشنایی ایرانیان با فلسفه های جدید غرب* [Familiarity of Iranians with the New Western Philosophy] (Tehran: The Institute for Islamic Culture and Thought and the Institute for the Study of Contemporary Iranian History, 2000), 155-162.

<sup>74</sup> Moossa Ghaninejad, *کثر و سیغنی و زابت جدید: طبیبی و سوسعه در طرآنم حاضر* [Modernization and Development in Contemporary Iran], 1<sup>st</sup> Ed, (Tehran: Foreign Ministry, 1998), 24-31.

the formation of the constitutional revolution. Other factors influencing Iran's modernization were the foreign trips of the Qajar Shahs to different European countries, the establishment of the telegraph, post, customs lines, the establishment of foreign embassies in Iran, and trade-economic relations between Iran and various countries.<sup>75</sup>

The constitutional system was a national movement, to achieve democracy and law, that was campaigning against despotism and to increase the level of knowledge and education of the people. The core idea of the constitutional system was a kind of political democracy and development of the liberal government and achievements through modern science and technology of the day. However, the characteristic of this force later turned to a kind of traditional despotism and dissolved. The reason for this is mostly twofold. First, the internal disputes between constitutionalists, and second, foreign policy disputes between Iran and other countries. So, from that time onward, the ideas of intellectuals and progressive modernists in Iran tended towards nationalism.

Here, I linked the discussion to some theoretical views of Benedict Anderson to the characters of nationalism. Although, his studies are more in relation to the specifics of Western nationalism and the political situation in Southeast Asia and particularly Indonesia, where he lived, I see some similarities between his arguments regarding nationalism in his examples, and the creation of Iranian nationalism. As he mentioned that “the birth of the imagined community of the nation can best be seen if we consider the basic structure of two forms of imagining which first flowered in Europe in the eighteenth century: the novel and the newspaper”.<sup>76</sup> As mentioned earlier, when it comes to the developments in printing and publishing, of the first newspapers in Iran, was influential to the reinforcement of the

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<sup>75</sup> Almasi, *The History of Education*, 436-438.

<sup>76</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 24-25.



national movement. Anderson mentioned, that the ‘national print-language’, and the ‘growing of newspaper, novels and writings’, were of vital ideological and political importance, to the growth of what might be called ‘comparative history’, which led in time to the conception of a ‘modernity’ explicitly juxtaposed to ‘antiquity’. This was by no means necessarily to the latter’s advantage. He argued that the issue was fiercely linked to the ‘battle of ancients and moderns’ which dominated French intellectual life in the last quarter of the seventeenth century.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, we see in Iran, approximately, the same things happening, that is the continuous juxtaposition of tradition/ancestry and modernism in the Iranian national discourse, including in education, culture, politics and the economy. Ziapour, experienced these changes and developments in Iranian nationalism. He was born in 1920, during the end of Qajar era. This means he was 5, when the government shifted to the Pahlavi I era. He spent 16 years of his young ages and high school education years during this transformative time.

### **3.3 Iranian Modern Nationalism**

Modern nationalism in Iran<sup>78</sup> was inspired by Western culture and the study of its formation, but it was ideologically different. In other words, modernist nationalism was not based on Western history and philosophical transformations but was rooted, adapted and strengthen based on the traditional values of Iranian culture. Therefore, modernism in Iran was to maintain and revive ancient values and traditions while simultaneously emphasize some aspects of the Western modernism. This type of movement began seriously in the time of Reza Shah, (1878-1944), the first king of the Pahlavi dynasty, or the so-called First Pahlavi, in the years 1925-1941.

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<sup>77</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 67- 68.

<sup>78</sup> In Farsi: *تجديد و ملي گرايي در ايران* Tajaddod va Melli Garaie dar Iran.

Reza Shah began to create a modern Iran based on the revival of ancient and traditional values, but his goal for these reforms was to create a centralized state economy with an undemocratic and authoritarian character.<sup>79</sup> As a result, the social and political model of this era can be found more closely in a traditional model of Iranian society and is similar to a kind of patriotism and nationalism based on royal authority and power.<sup>80</sup> The reign of Reza Shah coincides with the communist governments of the Soviet Union, the authoritarian nationalism of Turkey and nationalism and socialism in Germany. These states had remarkable industrial and military progress, and Reza Shah, being inspired by them, tried to introduce a new system based on the new order that would advance Iran.<sup>81</sup>

Some of the national plans first implemented and that led to the development of Iranian modernity, included the establishment of a new order in the military, economic development, a change of the education system, the reform of the administrative system, the revival of ancient heritage, construction of the national railway, new urban districts and radio stations of Iran. These will be discussed in detail in the following section.

The economic development of Iran, took place with the introduction of industrial machinery, and, the development of traditional trade in the Iranian market. Under the supervision of the government, important reforms took place to change the political system of the country. Hiring in government jobs with administrative hierarchy was created and women were given more rights in the community. Also, changes were made in dressing that harmonized the style of men's and women clothing.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ghaninejad, *Modernization and Development*, 38.

<sup>80</sup> In Farsi: هی هنرپوسینی و نیت یبراساس هی ستم اقتدای اداش ا هی.

<sup>81</sup> Ghaninejad, *Modernization and Development*, 38.

<sup>82</sup> Peter Avery, *پیتیر آوری بتاهی خم عاصر ایران اتاسی سس لاسل مچلووی یکلودتای 82 مرداد 1318*, [Modern Iran], trans. Mohammad Rafiee Mehrabadi (Tehran: Heydari, 1967), 43-123.

Expansion of nationalism and the desire for modernism also led to the creation of a strong educational system between the years of 1921 to 1941. This flow came from three important concepts: one the Iranian's interest and respect for knowledge, the second a constitutional interest in the principle of nurturing Iranian educators for the development of education, and third was that the Reza Shah himself was concerned about knowledge.<sup>83</sup>

As I explained in the Biography chapter, during this time period, Ziapour spent his education years in his hometown and then he moved to Tehran to continue his education in a central city of Iran, where was developing and modernizing in education system. During this time, the government emphasized education and improved the cultural activities and educational systems of the schools. These changes were a combination of the western Iranian system.

Undoubtedly, Reza Shah used his educational system as a means of integrating the youth of the country and inculcating nationalist and innovative ideas among youths.<sup>84</sup> It was a means to combat superstition and backwardness and advance towards a new, integrated nation. These activities were rewarded by Reza Shah, but on the other hand, it was effective only in some people and there were also rising oppositions.

The first technical school in Tehran was opened in 1922, taught by the supervision of German teachers. Later, other technical schools were established under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture in other cities such as Tabriz, Shiraz, and Isfahan. The establishment of the University of Tehran on February 5, 1935, later became the center of science, economics, and politics. This university was initially under the control of the government and then became an independent institution. The teaching system of the

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<sup>83</sup> Avery, *Modern Iran*. 45-52.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 52., [جای نودی دی بیس تکوضا شان نظام آموزش خود ر به جوان و بوسله ایبرای یکپارگی جویانم ملکت تولدین انیشه  
[های ملکی گران نه نم طلب گویای بیب کاربرد]

University of Tehran was first based on the French system, and then the American and English systems in the educational and administrative staff were used.

Another of the nationalist activities of this era was the establishment of the Ferdowsi<sup>85</sup> Millennium Movement in October 1935. This Millennium was a cultural, scientific and literary gathering of intellectuals, poets and philosophers from Iran and other countries for the 1000th years the birth of Ferdowsi. This gathering became a reason to start the variety of extensive researches about this poet and his book titled Shahnameh. In the fifth parliament, some laws were also created to revive Persian names and ancient Persian heritage. For example, the Iranian calendar changed to the beginning of the Nowruz of Iranians. It also changed to a solar system. Furthermore, the names of some Iranian cities changed back to their ancient names. Excavations and rediscoveries of ancient Iranian art were also numerous, and German and American delegations often excavated in the country. Different schools of music were established and the musicians collecting folkloric music were encouraged.<sup>86</sup>

During this period, other changes were made in the social structure and urban system of Iran. The previously tribal-based divisions of the land were changed and in 1938 Iran were divided into 13 provinces. Each province was divided into smaller sections such as counties, districts, and rural districts. On behalf of the central government, people were assigned to manage the cities. Cities were governed by the governors and the divisions were governed by the county governors. An officer from the army also represented the government to monitor the tribal area.

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<sup>85</sup> In Farsi: *شاهنامه* A Persian Poet (935-1020 CE). He brought the myths and legends of the ancient kingdoms of Iran as the poems in his book, titled, Shahnameh. In Farsi: *شاهنامه فروسی*

<sup>86</sup> Avery, *Modern Iran*, 64.

One of the nation's largest national plans and innovations directed by Reza Shah was the establishment of a modern nationwide railroad connecting most parts of Iran from north to south and from east to west. This project was one of the most crucial national targeted projects to make Iran as one land and one nation. The railway, which connected most regions of Iran, was completed in 1938 and it was inaugurated with special ceremonies.

In April 1940, Radio Iran was founded. Its main programs included education, health, and culture and economic affairs. There was also an organization called 'Advertising' under the supervision of the government and the Ministry of Culture. Other important national and cultural projects of this time were the establishment of the Museum of Ancient Iran and the National Museum of Iran and the construction of the Mehrabad International Airport in Tehran.<sup>87</sup>

Generally, the renewal that occurred during the Reza Shah era was successful in two general directions: 1. Organizing the military and centralizing military forces. 2. Expanding education and universities with a Western curriculum system as well as adopting advanced science and technology and administrative reforms. The goals of this kind of modernism at the time were also focused on traditional collectivist values,<sup>88</sup> but also that the government should be centralized and powerful. Nevertheless, although the formation of nationalism and national pride went, at first, hand-in-hand with a revival of the past and traditional ideological values, in the following years, the desire for modernism was somewhat forgotten, and we saw a focus on tradition rather than modernism based on traditions. It was a prelude to the formation of a different kind of national pride and a return to the ideology that led to, in the following a reversal of modernity and a return to the past.

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<sup>87</sup> Avery, *Modern Iran*, 83-112.

<sup>88</sup> In Farsi: ارزش های جمعی ایران سریشی, Arzeshhaye Jam Gerayane Sonatie.

1941, the final years of the reign of Reza Shah coincided with the pressure from the Allied forces against the royal tsarist regime. Iran was not colonized but influenced by the heavy footprint of external countries. During the years of World War, I and II, the southern lands and cities of Iran were under the control of England, while the northern lands of Iran were under the control of the Russian Empire. Reza Shah resigned after the Allies arrived in Tehran and occupied the city. On September 17, 1941, while the Allies were still in Iran, the 22-year-old crown prince, Mohammad Reza Shah, came to the throne. His reign was inaugurated by the National Consultative Assembly and this was the start of a new era.<sup>89</sup>

Again, we take a look at Anderson's view, when he says that, during the mid-nineteenth century, Europe, witnessed a rapid increase in state expenditures and the size of state bureaucracies (civil and military). The expansion of bureaucratic middle class was relatively even in both advanced and backward states of Europe. Furthermore, Anderson states that, "the rise of commercial and industrial bourgeois was of course highly uneven".<sup>90</sup> Almost the same thing happened during the first Pahlavi era. Similarly, Anderson stated that, "the general growth in literacy, commerce, industry, communications and state machinery that marked the nineteenth century created powerful new impulses for vernacular linguistic unification within each dynasty realm".<sup>91</sup> As I explored, the same happened in Iran. Indeed, '*Farsi*', was promoted as the official language of the state and an emphasis was placed on the *Farsi* names, on the literature and culture.

Anderson also mentioned about "the rise of absolutizing monarchies and eventually Europe centered world imperial states. The inner thrust of absolutism was to create a unified apparatus of power, controlled directly by, and loyal to, the ruler over against decentralized,

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<sup>89</sup> Avery, *Modern Iran*, 193.

<sup>90</sup> Anderson *Imagined Communities*, 76.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

particularistic feudal nobility”.<sup>92</sup> As I mentioned earlier, during the Pahlavi I, we see the centralization of the system of government and royal power in Iran. This was a change from the Feudal system which had existed since the Sassanid era in the political and civil system of Iran's regions. During that time, the system of farm productions and financial power were based on a relationship between the landlords and the peasants. One of the main targets of nationalism in Iran in during the ‘Pahlavi I’ was to split the power of the landlords, and to centralize the government to prevent any possible local riots. This action followed by a series of ‘Land Reforms’ continued into Pahlavi II, era, with slightly different outcomes. However, feudalism was not entirely eradicated. It seems to have continued till the years of the Islamic revolution based on later changes that occurred to the political system.

### **3.4 Reverse modernism and the emergence of a new form of nationalism**

In this phase, called the second Pahlavi era or Pahlavi II (1941-1977), centers on what occurred during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, (1919- 1980). During this time, modernism and nationalism in Iran were influenced by three different forces. 1- The Shah's implementation of different measures and reforms for social, industrial and economic development and implementation based on the idea of modern Iran and great civilization. 2. The National Front, a coalition of people of various personalities and groups with patriotic goals. 3- The Tudeh party formed on the basis of socialist ideas and traditional collectivist ideals among the intellectuals of society. These three streams with different ideologies, and activities, ultimately led to the formation of a kind of reverse modernism<sup>93</sup> that had a patriotic and anti-colonial nature.

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<sup>92</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 55.

<sup>93</sup> In Farsi: *مدرنیسم وارونه*, Modernism Varoune.

In the following section, I briefly describe the effects of these three streams in the formulation of modernism and new nationalism in Iran.

### 3.4.1 Shah's actions and reforms

The Shah's first national actions for the development of modern Iran were based on three main pillars. First, the need for advanced communication; second, the need for rural development; third, the need for more contact with different groups of people who were far from the central parts of the cities. So, during the Pahlavi II era, the people from the middle class became able to find their place and power and they became more active in society and in politics.<sup>94</sup>

During this period, some modernization activities that had already begun during the Pahlavi I continued in the Pahlavi II era, while some plans from the past were not implemented. Furthermore, the repression of the tribes was stopped in this era, and they returned to their traditional lives. The plan also played an important role in reviving the nomadic productions of these people and their cultural values. Besides that industrial and commercial developments were supported in the country and various job structures were created. In 1941, the industry budget for planting modern machines increased five times. Urbanization, modern industry and administrative systems were developing. University education grew and many students were studying at universities inside and outside the country. Many of these graduates went to work in the public service as administrative employees, professional technicians, managers, teachers, judges, physicians

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<sup>94</sup> Peter Avery, *Modern Iran*, [پتیر آوری بت ای خیم عاص ایران اتا سیسیس لیل مپلوی نکلودت ای 82 مردات اصال حات لرضی], 4<sup>th</sup> edition, trans. Mohammad Rafiee Mehrabadi (Tehran: Ataie, 2000), 37-40.



or university professor. With the increase of state bureaucracy and educational facilities, the number of members of the intelligentsia increased.<sup>95</sup>

From 1945 to 1950, there was freedom of expression. This new-born freedom was well used by intellectuals, writers and artists. It is during this period that they emerged and shined. This era commemorates the modernization of Iran in the early '50s. Theater and Drama were also started at that time. Preserving the heritage of Iranian literature, along with other aspects of the lives of people, was introduced and young journalists entered the press.<sup>96</sup> This time also, coincided with the activities of the Avant-Gardes which led to the development of the modern art and the modern poetry movements in Iran. It is during that time that the Fighting Cock society, was established (1949) by Jalil Ziapour and other similar thinkers.<sup>97</sup> After the 1953 coup, the Shah relied on oil revenues and foreign donations to rebuild the army expand and organize the state apparatus as a two-pronged military force. The government also embraced the policy of expanding industries and commerce, and the lending and facilitation foreign investment. At the time, the growth of a group of industrial and commercial capitalism was under the control of the court and the global capital.<sup>98</sup>

In 1955, the White Revolution<sup>99</sup> or the Revolution of the Shah and the Nation took place, which included six amendments, most notably land reform<sup>100</sup> and improving the conditions of Iranian women's lives. Land reform was a bill in which agricultural land was taken from

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<sup>95</sup> Mohammad Hasan Bahrani, *3121-3181 ایران معاصر* [The Middle Class and Political Developments in Contemporary Iran from 1941 to 2001; Research in political discourses in the middle classes of Iran] (Tehran: Agah, 2009), 97-99.

<sup>96</sup> Avery, *Modern Iran*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 72-73, Abbas Milani, *امیر عباس هویدا و معمای* [Persian Sphinx: Amir Abbas Hoveyda and the Riddle of the Iranian Revolution], Trans. Abdul Reza Mahdavi (Tehran: Peykan Publishing, 2001), 239.

<sup>97</sup> Refer to chapter 4, parts titled, Fighting Cock society and the modern art movement.

<sup>98</sup> Bahrani, *The Middle Class and Political Developments*, 108.

<sup>99</sup> In Farsi: *انقلاب سفید* Enghelab Sefid.

<sup>100</sup> In Farsi: *اصلاحات ارضی* Eslahat Arzi.

large landowners and was then divided between peasants. The objectives of this rural development plan were to provide new agricultural models for the mechanization of agriculture and the progress of the peasantry. The bill also called for women to be able to vote.<sup>101</sup>

In 1959, the Shah was married to Miss Farah Diba. Educated in France, Farah was a painter, writer, and architect. She played an important role in the implementation of many cultural activities of the era. She supervised the department of education, the health sector, the welfare sector and the department of art and culture in her area of responsibility. The Carpet Museum of Iran, the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Center for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults were founded by this last department.<sup>102</sup>

Between 1962 and 1963 the knowledge corps was formed. The group was, formed by both instructors and military personnel who were sent to villages with a compact literacy program to familiarize villagers with new ways of life. It was one of the projects that were successful in bringing literacy to the villages and help them to get an education.

The 2,500-year celebration of the Persian Empire<sup>103</sup> was held on October 1971 in Persepolis. The ceremony included a series of celebrations held on the occasion of the 2500-year history of the kingdom of Iran. The purpose of this ceremony was to honor the history of ancient Persia and the ancient civilizations of the region. A ceremony was performed at the tomb of the Emperor Cyrus the Great of the Achaemenid Empire, as a sign of respect and acknowledgment of his importance for the country.<sup>104</sup> In this celebration, the

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<sup>101</sup> Milani, *Persian Sphinx*, 164.

<sup>102</sup> Avery, *Modern Iran*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 84.

<sup>103</sup> In Farsi: جشن های ۲۵۰۰ ساله Jashnhaye Dohezaro Pansad Sale.

<sup>104</sup> In Farsi: کوروش هخامنشی Achaemenid Kourosh.

heads and kings of 69 countries were present. The performance was magnificent but many in Iran were disappointed due to the huge financial cost.<sup>105</sup> In 1974, on the orders of the Shah, the Rastakhiz Party<sup>106</sup> was established, after which all the Iranian people of every group, religion, background, education, etc., were asked to become party members and therefore, to support the Shah of Iran. This party was similar to a socialist and single-party government, the goal of which was to create national unity and integrity in order to create a real patriotic school for the future, though based on the traditions of Iranian civilization.<sup>107</sup>

According to this plan, the Iranian civilization<sup>108</sup> was based on an Iranian worldview and national culture which was introduced to the world based on the claim of the historical greatness of Persia throughout different time periods and civilizations. This was based on believe that we should not be westernized, although we should not be an enemy of the Western society and its culture.<sup>109</sup>

Generally, the result of the Shah's modernism in this era was a sense of priority given to politics, economics, and infrastructures, which the Shah saw as important for the development of the happiness and social well-being of the Iranian people. Then, a series of intellectually driven modernizations of Iranian arts and literature began. Another focus was on the mythology and ancient history of Iran's land and emphasis on ancient Iranian civilizations. For various political and social reasons, the rule of the Persian Kingdom found many dissenters in Iran. In the Shah's dissenter's view, the repressions due to the Shah's actions and his excessive focus on the power of the court were a type of dictatorship of the government. The economic downturn and the livelihood problems of the people,

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<sup>105</sup> Karim Sanjabi, *کتابهای من چلی خاطرات سیاسی*, [Political Memories] (Tehran: Maharat, 2002), 283.

<sup>106</sup> In Farsi: حزب رستاکخیز, Hezbe Rastakhiz.

<sup>107</sup> Ghaninejad, *Modernization and Development*, 56-57.

<sup>108</sup> In Farsi: *تمدن ایرانی*, Madaniat Irani.

<sup>109</sup> Ghaninejad, *Modernization and Development*, 56.

which caused the 1963 uprising, undermined the king's relationship with the people.

Therefore, the insistence of the opposition and the necessity of political democracy with the cooperation of the modernists, ultimately, led to the victory of the clerical coalition in the Iranian revolution. In 1978 the rule of the Islamic Republic began.

### 3.4.2 National Front of Iran

The National Front<sup>110</sup> was a coalition of political figures from different groups and characters in Iran supported by Dr. Mohammad Mossadegh, (1882-1967). This uprising began in the mid-1949, with the union of various groups of people, trade unions, parties, and even people calling for a state based on social security and the maintenance of the constitution and the establishment of a national government with freedom of election. “The group had patriotic goals and called for national independence to provide freedom and democracy.”<sup>111</sup> Their ideology differed from Western nationalism, thus giving more attention to national independence than individual freedoms. At the time, Iranian nationalism was a kind of traditional patriotism, based on the ruler’s right to rule rather than the law. Similarly, the pursuit of the interests of the people was preferable to individual pursuits and desires. The National Front Integrity provided the basis for the collaboration of dispersed national parties and groups. The struggles of these groups eventually led to the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry which was previously under England, after which the national government of Dr. Mossadegh, whose first cabinet was ratified in 1951, came to power.<sup>112</sup> The constitution was approved at the first National Front congress on January 6, 1960. The congress also approved a comprehensive plan of national-level oversight of

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<sup>110</sup> In Farsi: جبهه ملی، Jebhe Melli.

<sup>111</sup> *نگاره افلی میهنپرستانه لختند و خواستالستقلال ملی شاهین آزادی و دمکراسی بوند*

<sup>112</sup> Ghaninejad, *Modernization and Development*, 43-47.

the political, economic, social, welfare, administrative, and agricultural reforms.<sup>113</sup> Since 1964, the Shah has opposed the National Front and gradually stripped its function.

From 1976, the National Front advanced with a newer approach, and in 1977, an organization called the Unity of Forces came to be, composed of all national parties: Iran's Party, the Iranian People's Party, the Third Force, and the Iranian People's Party. The group also published several newsletters and publications until it eventually entered a new stage with the victory of the Islamic Revolution. After the formation of the Islamic Republic and since 1981 the Iranian National Front entered into an informal activity.<sup>114</sup>

### 3.4.3 Tudeh Party

The Tudeh Party<sup>115</sup> was the main communist party of Iran. In 1932, the party was suppressed by Reza Shah because of plotting in the country. Their newspapers were closed and a number of activists were imprisoned. After 1941, under the occupation of Iran by the Allied forces, it formally became the Tudeh Party and began its serious work, which prompted a broadening of the Stalinist socialist and Marxist ideas between different groups of people, especially intellectuals. The founders of this group in Iran were 53 intellectuals, leftists and nationalists.<sup>116</sup>

The purpose of the Tudeh Party in Iran was to overthrow the capitalist system and imperialism, and to form a party of the exploited masses of people from the workers, peasants, the traders, progressive industrialists, and intellectuals. In the first years of its official activity in Iran, this party faced a huge number of different groups of people. It is safe to say that until 1951, most university students, university professors, military officers,

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<sup>113</sup> Sanjabi, *Political Memories*, 468. *اصول و اهداف جنبه‌مملی دوم بعیت بودند از: 3- اجماع حقوق و آزادی فردی و*  
*ایضاداعی 8- استقرار حکومت قانون و اتخاذ سبیل پیشرفت*

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 469-470.

<sup>115</sup> In Farsi: حزب توده, Hezbe Tudeh.

<sup>116</sup> Avery, *Modern Iran*, 111-112.

intellectuals, in particular, the authors, were of all members of the Tudeh party. This party also played an important role in the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry. Mossadeq, the leader of Nationalism Front believed that the formation of a national government without the Tudeh Party would not be possible at that time in Iran.<sup>117</sup> Although the Tudeh Party had a great influence on various developments in Iran, including the National Movement and the Islamic Revolution, after a while due to armed activity and a tendency toward an undemocratic nature, it was largely excluded from the Iranian politics.

In 1948, the Shah was assassinated and it was said that the Tudeh party was responsible for this assassination. This struggle became more serious when the group infiltrated the armed forces and the army. After this incident, the Shah and the government arrested and imprisoned the Tudeh Party elements, and some of them left Iran forever.

#### 3.4.3.1 Third Force (Reverse Modernism/ Iranian Socialism):

After the Tudeh Party became undemocratic, some of its members were expelled from the group and formed another new party that was more socialist in nature, called Third Force.<sup>118</sup> This group, which had a strong influence on the young and intellectual generation, was following anti-Western thoughts and focused on the realization of traditional Iranian ideals. Between 1953 and 1971, although the party was declared illegal by the government, it was the most attractive political organization among young people who were greatly inclined towards justice and equity and were dissatisfied with the livelihood system and other problems in Iran. Also, a great deal of the literature and social and revolutionary culture of the younger generation originating from the Tudeh Party of those days gave socialist ideas a sort of patriotic color, which sought to adapt socialism to the native conditions of Iran. As a result, there was a kind of thought of modernity that attempted to

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<sup>117</sup> Avery, *Modern Iran*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 43.

<sup>118</sup> In Farsi: *جبههٔ نیروی سوسیالیستی ایران* (Jebhe-ye Eghtesadi).

give Western thought an Iranian color and it led to the formation of a third force or reverse modernism. Some of the well-known figures and intellectual thinkers of this party were Khalil Maleki, (1901-1969), political socialist and the founder of third force movement, Jalal Al Ahmad, (1923-1969), socialist and philosopher novelist.<sup>119</sup>

After the Islamic Revolution, the group continued to operate informally in Iran for the first few years. The socialist branch considered the Islamic religion to be more harmonious with social justice as compared to any other school, so its members did not oppose the Islamic State. But after a while, due to the dispersion of groups and differences in ideology, their activities were completely stopped in Iran, and their members were either tried or immigrated to other countries.

In general, it can be said that the activities of the three above-mentioned changes, the Shah Reforms, the National Front, and the Tudeh Party, created a kind of modernity in Iran that, in a sense, it was inclined towards native culture. The second Pahlavi modernism was based on the concept of economic development and the advancement of the great civilization of Iran, which gave the Iranian society roots in the ancient and great civilizations of the past. The National Front had an autonomous and anti-colonial nature and it emphasized Iranian ethnic traditions for its nationalism. The Tudeh Party promoted patriotism based on socialism with an emphasis on the realization of traditional Iranian intellectuality that would not be based on western ways of thinking. They also worked for the unification of the middle class. Thus, the developments in this period in Iran, from 1941 to 1977, slowly led to the formation of a new trend called reverse modernism, which emphasized the self-culture and its integration with modern technology and science.

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<sup>119</sup> Ghaninejad, *Modernization and Development*, 50-57, Milani, *Persian Sphinx*, 94-96.

Here I will connect the nationalism theoretical discussion as I discussed in chapter 1, of Anderson, Homi Bhabha, Fanon, and Brennan. In my analysis, I explored that, the character of the nationalistic movement in Iran during Pahlavi II, was established upon interest and a passionate search for the self-culture, by the intellectuals of the society. This character was a positive action for the power of identity in the post-colonial societies, through the 'national culture', although, Iran was not a colonized country but it was under the influences of colonial power. As I explained, we see that, in this era, the movements of national front and intellectuals had an anti-colonial nature for the independence and freedom and that, they made reverse modernism and linked it to the traditional values of the society, new modernity in the nation for the revival of the self-culture.

In my analysis from Anderson, views, he explored that, insofar as all dynasts in Europe mid-century, were using some vernacular as language of state, and also because of the rapidly rising prestige all over Europe, of the national idea, there was a discernible tendency among the Euro-Mediterranean monarchies to side towards a beckoning national identification. Romanovs discovered they were Great Russians, Hanoverians that they were English, Hohenzollerns that they were Germans-and with rather more difficulty their cousins turned Romanian, Greek, and so forth. Almost, same as happened to the nationalism identification in Iran during the Mohammad-Reza Pahlavi, Anderson interpreted that, like Kaiser Wilhelm II, who cast himself, 'he was one among many of the same kind as himself', this caused for him to posed new dangers in the age of capitalism, skepticism and science, to less safely on putative sacrality and sheer antiquity. As a key to this situation of 'official nationalism'- which willed the merge of 'nation and dynastic empire', it developed after and in reaction to the popular national movements proliferating in Europe since 1820, modeled on American and French histories, and later became



modular in turn. The model for 'official nationalism', could be self-consciously, followed by states with no serious great power presentations, so long as they were states in which the ruling classes or leading elements in them threatened by the worldwide spread of the nationality-imagined community.<sup>120</sup>

Modern Nationalism, since the end of the eighteenth century, has undergone a process of modulation and adaptation, according to different eras, political regimes, economies, and social structures. The imagined community has, as a result, spread out to every conceivable contemporary society, near to an extreme modular transform of 'Revolution'.

Contemporary nationalism is the heir to two centuries of historic changes.

'Official nationalism', was from the start of the conscious, self-protective policy, intimately linked to the preservation of imperial-dynastic interests regarding the military reforms and variety of political and social system to serve the interest of the state. However, one should therefore not be much surprised if revolutionary leadership, consciously or unconsciously, come to play lord of the manor and 'official nationalism' enters post-revolutionary leadership styles in a much more subtle way.<sup>121</sup> In my exploration it was same that happened to Iran, but with slightly different, to the 1978 revolution of Iran, which happened and supported by a large group of people and leadership of 'Ayatollah Khomeini', was a unite revolution, regarding the establishment of a Republic government alongside by Islamic reforms.

As a link to the Biography Chapter, during this period, Ziapour was also influenced by the situation of the time in Iran. He spent 36 years of his life during the Pahlavi II era since he was 16 years old and turned to 52. Start of his education 1938, at Fine Art University in

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<sup>120</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 85-99.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 157-161.

Tehran and then his participation at first art exhibitions and his scholarship for Paris Beaux Art School. From 1948 to 1950, he established Fighting Cock society and magazine which characterized as a modern and national art movement with the educational goal and emphasize on the national Iranian identity and aesthetics of modernism on the art and literature, especially, painting and poem. The artistic activities of Ziapour were alongside by the activities of Intellectuals and National Front that had traditional and patriotic nature and happened from 1949 to 1951 in Iran. From 1953, to 1978, this traditional patriotic character, seen more anthropological, Iranian and local, in Ziapour's researches, writings, and his paintings, while still modern and national. We reviewed his cultural activities during this time of his life in the Biography Chapter.

### **3.5 Modernism and the ideology of development (since the Islamic Republic)**

In the previous discussion, it was said that the modernization movement in Iranian society in the 1970s moved towards traditional retrogression or traditional patriotism. In this process, the chosen solution was a kind of social and national lifestyle without dependence on foreign influence. This force claimed the combination of traditional Iranian values and scientific thinking. But after the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1978 and the change of regime of Iran into the Islamic Republic of Iran, the current course of modernism underwent some other changes.

At this time, modernism proceeded according to the 'ideology of development.'<sup>122</sup> This means that a kind of social engineering could help the development of science, technology and the economies with this emphasis on technology, science, and engineering; it was believed that social progress would ensue. This kind of modernism in a particular structure

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<sup>122</sup> In Farsi: *ی‌ن‌ل‌و‌ل‌و‌ی‌ ت‌و‌س‌ع‌ه*

for Iranian society is called a ‘combat for the reconstruction’<sup>123</sup> and a campaign of intellectuals and patriots for building the country. The state at the time-approximately shared similarities with the concept of technocratic state and tries to deal with society, including its social problem and managing society, using technology, economy, and science.<sup>124</sup>

The prominent feature of technocratic thought is its emphasis on the technical aspect of the relationship between human beings in the contemporary social system. In this thought, the issue of management has key importance to order, since the order is transient and relative in socio-historical and economic phenomena. In the meantime, in Iran, the idea of technological development and scientific achievements is sometimes associated with the traditional values of society, which is reminiscent of the same phenomenon of reverse modernism. After the Islamic Revolution, Islamic thoughts, law, beliefs, ethics, etc., also had an important impact on the constitution and the rules of Iranian society. Iranian identity covered all the people in Iran, from a variety of ethnic groups and religion. Therefore, as the majority of the populations are Shia Muslims, the principles of Islamic thought, such as “spirituality and national unity”,<sup>125</sup> are found in Islamic modernity. Indeed, after the revolution, the leadership of the clergy created another modern dialogue drafted on the basis of Islamic Shia jurisprudence.

The revolutionary era began with the widespread expansion of the state sector through the nationalization of industries, banks and other economic institutions and the development of foundations supported by clerics. In 1979, the conservation act of Iranian industrial development was approved by the Revolutionary Council, according to which many banks,

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<sup>123</sup> In Farsi: جهاد سازندگی

<sup>124</sup> Ghaninejad, *Modernization and Development*, 59-60.

<sup>125</sup> In Farsi: معنویت و وحدت ملی

stockpiles, and factories belonging to the former regime's affiliates became nationalized. Major changes in the society have taken place, most of which led to the publicizing the economy and business development.<sup>126</sup>

The first Iranian presidential term was hard and difficult. This period, which lasted ten years, was accompanied by the leadership of Imam Khomeini, (1902-1989), and the presidency of three presidents. This period coincided with the Iraqi imposed war, military operations and internal political turmoil in Iran. The war between Iran and Iraq took the lives of thousands of young people and equally missed, injured and became veteran. This war and its effects were symbolic of the consolidation of the revolution and martyrdom culture. The state of war has also had a significant impact on the formation of literary, artistic and cultural works of this era.

The second period coincided with the presidency of Hashemi Rafsanjani, (1934-2017), following the death of Imam Khomeini, and Sayed Ali Khamenei, became the leader of Iran<sup>127</sup> This period was known as the era of construction in the field of technology, and Hashemi Rafsanjani was called the “Commander of Construction”.<sup>128</sup> In this era, a general revision was made on the basis of a kind of unity between the institutions of the leadership and the presidency in developing various sectors of society.

Changes were made in the field of internal and external economic policy, and promise was made for rebuilding the country and removes the ruins of the war. The economy changed on the basis of market demand, and domestic and foreign production and investment

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<sup>126</sup> Bahrani, *The Middle Class and Political Developments*, 120.

<sup>127</sup> Leon Aharonian, *ایون آماروژان. روز های از زندگی هوانی من جلد دوم* [Days of My Stormy Life], Volume II Third release (Tehran: 2008), 867-868.

<sup>128</sup> In Farsi: *سر دراز زندگی*

increased. It also coincided with the growth of privatization and the upgrading of technocrats.<sup>129</sup>

Among other factors was the program to shift from inward development to export promotion and free trade policy, which reduced barriers to the private sector. This period coincided with the modernization of cities and the growth of modern construction. The growth of a young population who were looking for education and employment led to the establishment of the “Islamic Azad University”.<sup>130</sup> Islamic Azad University was established in Tehran and most of Iran's cities have a campus. The newly established academic institutions trained more specialized disciplines in line with the technology of the day.

Nearly 60% of university admissions were girls who were interested in university education. This era coincided with the achievements of the scientific and the Olympiad by the youth of the country. There were also significant advances in sports and scientific and artistic achievements, and various activities in arts and fine arts such as theater, cinema, music, and painting took place.

In 1997, the Iranian people participated in the election and 20 million people voted for the “reformist faction of the society”<sup>131</sup> based on the reform of the system and a clear formation. Sayyed Mohammad Khatami, the third Iranian president, introduced the “theory of civil dialogue”,<sup>132</sup> and his proposal was presented at the UN summit. This theory had a positive impact on Iran's domestic and foreign policy and created a kind of convergence and universal credibility for the Iranian people. In this period, another modern discourse was created in the form of reforms in the political and social space of the community. The

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<sup>129</sup> Bahrani, *The Middle Class and Political Developments*, 120-127.

<sup>130</sup> In Farsi: انشگاه آزاد اسلامی

<sup>131</sup> In Farsi: جنبه صالح طبعی

<sup>132</sup> In Farsi: تیوری گفتگوی مدنی

student organization also “consolidated unity, a frontier of various reformist groups in Iran”.<sup>133</sup> A sort of relative freedom was created for the press and a more open social space for the people was created.<sup>134</sup>

Consequently, modernism and nationalism in the two decades after the Islamic Revolution in Iran from 1978 and 1999 were influenced by national and popular movements and activities of the clerics to create economic and technological development in Iran, as well as the development of Iranian culture with Islam at its center. This modern and national discourse was based on the ideology of economic development and the growth of technocratic thought, as well as the creation of community-based reforms for intellectual development and intellectual freedom.

As a link to Ziapour’s Biography Chapter, I would explain that he spent 20 years of his life during this time in Iran. In section 4 of the Biography Chapter, I explained his activities during this time after the year 1979. From "1979 to 1999", he was still participated in the artistic researches and academic talks and created around 10 artworks. He held several speeches mostly in the topics of ‘Islamic art characteristics’, ‘coloring in the art of painting’, ‘fourth dimension in painting’, ‘Abstract art’ and ‘explanation of comprehensive plan’ which I explained some of them in the chapter of his writings. One of his last speeches held in the year 1999 at the University of Tehran.<sup>135</sup> During this time period Ziapour also continued his anthropological studies and his paintings. He also lectured painting and, art theory in his own studio and other courses in textile history and design and traditional Iranian costumes at several Universities in Tehran. From 1979 to 1985, he still continued his figurative style of paintings by the inspiration of Iranian tribal culture and

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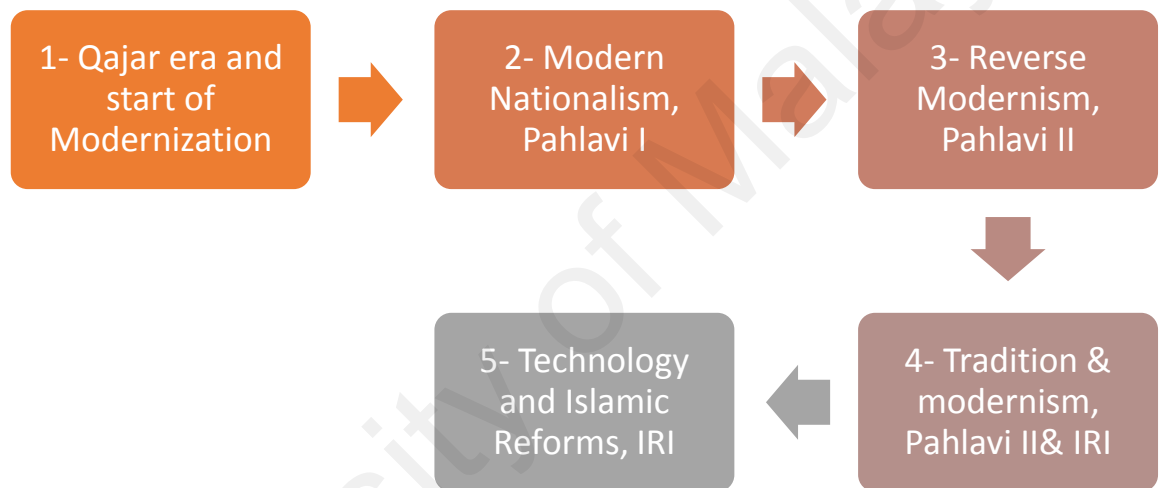
<sup>133</sup> In Farsi: *بی‌ازم‌انست بحییم و حدت*

<sup>134</sup> Aharonian, *Days of My Stormy Life*, 882-879.

<sup>135</sup> Tehrani, *Selection of Academic Talks*, 436.

their symbolic elements. After 1991 his paintings slightly turned to pure Abstraction, while still characterized as Iranian and national, some of the elements and principals of Islamic art viewed in the composition of his paintings and it was also exploring the mystical and philosophical thoughts of the artist during that time on his life.

Figure 3.1: The Tendency of Modernism and Nationalism in Iran, during 1920-1999.



### **3.6 Construction of Iranian Nationalism and where did the art stand**

#### **3.6.1 Qajar Art**

As I discussed before, the beginning of a national type of movement in Iran officially, dated back to the Qajar dynasty, 1905-1911, when the various groups of people from local rulers, clerics, marketers and intellectuals united together to the establishment of the constitutional system. This national movement campaigned to achieve democracy and law, development of education, and achievement through the modern science and technology of the day. At the same time, the inclination of 'nationalism in the art of Iran' based on various characteristics:

- 1- Emphasized on the traditional decorative arts and handicrafts of Iran, and revive them besides to the Classic styles of painting and Naturalism Qajar style of art. This movement, supported mainly by the king of Qajar, 'Naser Odin Shah Qajar', regarding the establishment of 'Traditional Art School of Tehran' (Sanayeh Mostazrefeh).
- 2- The art school established by Kamalol Molk in 1916 was a center for promoting the courses of miniature, carpet designing, gilding and the Classic Naturalism style of painting, taught and developed by Kamalol Molk and his students for years.
- 3- The approach in the art of this time generally went through to create 'Iranian style' in the aesthetic and beauty of the artworks, aimed to make a specific attraction about the selection of 'native Iranian artifacts'.
- 4- The senses in the art courses of the time, were mostly, portrayed the power of the king and his luxurious lifestyle, surrounded by the romantic nature and architect of the palace and the decorative artifacts and people inside the palace. However, it is



seen that few painters of the time were on the way to figure out the life of people outside the palace.

- 5- The collection of national artifacts, usually gathered by Naser Odin shah, for his private national art museum in the palace.

### 3.6.2 Pahlavi I, and Art

During the 'First Pahlavi' kingdom, 1925 to 1941, nationalism and modernism go alongside together by the actions of 'Reza Shah', and that, his reforms began for the new establishment of integrative European/Iranian system on education, military, economic, administrative system while, emphasized on the revival of the ancient cultural heritage of Iran. In this time, the 'nationalistic sense' in the art trend of Iran, went through these main topics:

- 1- Continuation of the previous art school of Kamalol Molk and the revival of 'national and traditional Iranian arts' mainly to the courses like 'Persian illustration', 'Tehran and Isfahan cities Schools of Miniature', and traditional handicrafts, centralized in many cities of Iran, beside to the Naturalism skills of painting.
- 2- Promoting the ancient and historical values of Iran in art and literature such as the establishment of 'Shahnameh Organization' in 1935. Emphasize the 'Farsi' language and 'Iranian art style' beside the world of art exhibitions. 'Integration of modern, nationalism and historical values of Iran land', regarding the Iranian nationalism.
- 3- Establishment of research institutions and invitations to the foreigner art historians and archaeologists like, Girshman, Herzfeld, Arthur Pope, and Andrea Godard to

come to Iran and develop the researches and publications in the topics of Iran art history.

- 4- Bring out the art collections to the public view, such as the establishment of the National Museum of Iran or 'The Museum of ancient Iran' in 1937.

### 3.6.3 Pahlavi II, and Art

After 1941, it was during the early years of government shifting from Pahlavi first to the 'Pahlavi Second' that the art of Iran, encountered to the new wave of modern art movements. While some of the national and traditional arts of Iran like Naturalism school of Kamalol Molk, miniature and traditional handicrafts were still preserving, by the government, the influences of European Avant-Garde art movements through the Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism and etc., appeared to the artworks of some of Iranian Avant-Garde artists. The new wave of modern art approaches in Iran found its way through the exploration of 'national identity' and making modern compositions on the theme of 'Iranian local culture' and creation of new 'Iranian style'. The new movement, gradually caused to the formation of a 'nationalistic art', like 'Saqqā Khaneh' school of art and reverse to the traditions, titled 'New-Traditionalism'.

The society of the time from 1949 to 1951 was encountered in the movements of National Front and Intellectuals that followed the patriotic goals, anti-colonial nature and emphasize on the topics of 'self-culture' and the unity for 'Iranian nation'. During this time, there were several activities and projects to the progression of 'cultural modernism' and 'official native art' of Iran that mostly supported by the government and the ministry of art and culture and artists also have participated in this approach independently or collaboratively. Some of the main activities from 1941 to 1978, in Iran, are as followed:

- 1- Creation of art groups by Avant-Garde artists for the development of modern art approaches and consciousness in the topics of 'national identity, art and cultural heritage'. In the groups like Fighting Cock society, Apadana art gallery, and artists like, Ziapour, Pezeshknia, Hamidi, Esfandiari, Javadipour, Ameri, Vishkaie, Grigorian and etc.
- 2- Reinforcement of modern art approaches besides the revival of traditional and ancient heritages of Iran, moreover after 1960s, by making motivations to the activities of Avant-Garde groups, magazines, associations, events, and group art exhibitions.
- 3- Establishment of five Tehran Biennales, with more emphasis on the 'new Iranian art style'. The exhibitions held from 1958 to 1966 and gradually reinforced the spirit of 'identity' and 'nation' to the art society culture.
- 4- Development of art institutions, public art galleries, museums and art centers in Tehran and other cities of Iran and participating in international art exhibitions.
- 5- Supporting and promoting the new approaches in the 'national arts' of Iran, like Saqqakhaneh, calligraphy painting, traditional and New-Traditional arts and integrative modern and traditional art

### 3.6.4 Islamic Republic and Art

After 1978, due to the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the ideology of nationalism changed. The art of Iran was also influenced by these changes. At the time, the ideology of Islam and Shia, which were religious expression for most Iranians since the Safavid era became more official through the establishment of the new government. Islam was now promoted as a national symbol for both the government and the Iranian people. For centuries, there were a variety of cultures and religions in Iran. After the Islamic

revolution, also these varieties existed in Iran and the concept of 'Iranian Identity' was yet related to all of the people with varieties who were born and lived in Iran. But the majority of its people believed in Shia ideology that is a branch of Islam like Catholics and Protestants that are branches of Christianity. Islam has two main branches of Sunnis and Shia. Both emphasize the unity of God, resurrection, and prophecy. However, Shia Muslims believe that Imam is a person who is the leader of Islamic unity after the prophet Mohammed. After the Islamic Revolution in Iran the concepts of 'Unity' and 'Nation' were very much under the influences of Shia ideology. These religious influences could be felt in most Iranian social structures and organizations, including the arts.

Specifically, in the art topic of Iran, to at least 2 decades after the revolution, for the area of this dissertation, the art activities were almost continuation of the previous terms with slight differences due to the demands of the time in cultural revolution and policy-making and still It was a question of 'identity' in relation to national modern and traditional arts of artists. Some of the related events and activities to these approaches were as followed:

- 1- The influential events such as 'festivals', 'anniversaries', 'meetings' and 'academic talks', happened in this era, that helped to the placement of specific values of the country and definition of cultural identity in the art, that connected to various courses such as cinema, theatre, music, painting and etc.
- 2- Attention to the cultural heritages beside to the modernism dialogs, New-Traditionalism, and Islamic identity, regarding the 'national identity', 'art and culture'.
- 3- Establishment of Islamic Art council in 1981, for the approaches in the courses of cinema, theatre, music, visual arts, literature and poem. Some of the main members

which mostly were students of the Fine Art University, like, Chalipa, Khosrojerdi, Eskandari, Goudarzi, Hosseini Rad and many others.

- 4- Establishment of the ministry of Islamic art and Culture in 1986, for the promoting of the ‘obligated revolutionary arts’.
- 5- Organizing the associations and groups of young artists to the creation of artworks base on the values of the revolution and Islamic culture of Iran.
- 6- Development of integrative modern arts of Iran such as calligraphy painting, Persian illustration, and miniature. Some of the artists: Ehsaie, Efjeie, Farshchian, Jazizadeh, Takestani, Aghamiri and many others.
- 7- Establishment of new series of biennales from 1991, gathering and showing the artworks with more emphasize on these main characteristics: aesthetic, traditional and Islamic Iranian arts, decorative arts, calligraphy painting, coffeehouse painting, and Persian illustration.
- 8- Presenting the artworks in the national art exhibitions which created a base on the ‘conscious cultural identity’.

Consequently, beyond the topics of post-modernism and internationalism which experienced in the future years and approaches in the art of Iran, generally, the concepts of cultural identity and national identity were closer to the traditions. The visual and conceptual aspects in the artworks of modern Iranian contemporary artists mostly emphasized the Iranian themes. Although the artworks created in the pure modern or pure abstract art styles it was a kind of exploration of ‘self-culture’ in the art.

### 3.7 Conclusion

Generally speaking, during this period of modernization, (1920-1999), Iranian modernism was structurally similar to a national movement that demanded development and progress in all parts of society and emphasized Iranian culture and civilization. Reviewing this chapter, it is clear that, modernism and nationalism in Iran, generally, were on the same route and have the same goal as well. In other words, throughout the different time periods of modern Iran, nationalist forces in supporting the country's modernization, through the development of Iran's economy and industry. Nationalism in Iran was also a social and political process that had many popular characteristics. The sources of this nationalism sometimes differ, for example in the Pahlavi's era, national identity was based on its ancient civilization roots, while after 1978, and it came to Islam. The Iranian modernization and nationalism streams led to major reforms in Iran's socio-economic and cultural system. This process, which began with the people's uprising, led to the establishment of the constitutional revolution in Iran in the late Qajar dynasty, which was founded on the rule of law and social justice. In the next phase, modern nationalism began as a result of the national plans of the Pahlavi era and the idea of great Iranian civilization based on ancient historic values. In continuing it led to the ideology of development and technocratic reforms in the contemporary time of Iran while coordinated with the Islamic beliefs, rules, and reforms after the Islamic revolution. These national and modernist reforms also influenced Ziapour and his cultural activities and artworks during the different periods as he was a man of his time include his activities in Fighting Cock Society, modern art movement of Iran and his paintings and art writings. He adopted various aspects of nationalist ideas from all the different periods of Iranian history, particularly passionate search for the self culture, historical art, and valuable cultural heritages of his nation.

## Chapter 4/Biography

### 4.1 Introduction

Jalil Ziapour (1920-1999), was a contemporary Iranian painter, art theorist, writer, and academician. He was a pioneer of modern painting and one of the first art critics in Iran. He is also known as a researcher and writer in fields of the ancient historic art of Iran, especially clothing and anthropology, who lived through nationalism changes and modernism reforms which indicated in the previous chapter. As mentioned in chapter 1, although an important figure in early modern art of Iran, his overview has not been studied thoroughly, by art historians. As I also mentioned in my literature review, during my searches I recognized that Jalil Ziapour was the influential figure and called the flagship of modern painting and father of Iran's modern art movement in the society of Iran's artists. Indeed, I was curious to study in this field to look at his life and activities and paintings, accurately. Ziapour spent his life during three different periods in Iran, shifting from the Qajar dynasty to the Pahlavi era I and II and years after the Islamic Revolution in Iran and he encountered different nationalist and intellectualism approaches during these periods and it was related to his artistic life. This chapter focuses on the life of Jalil Ziapour and I have divided into four main sections which describe different periods of Ziapour's life as well as his education, activities, how he influenced others, his academic work, and researches.

1. Early life and education in Iran, from 1920 to 1946. This part will base the story of the artist's young ages on two sections: the first one will go through the years in his hometown, till 1938 and then in the second part we will describe the details of his education years in Tehran. This section will shed light on the roots of his creativity and the reasons why he became an artist.

2. Education in Paris and coming back to Iran, years from 1946 to 1949. This section will give details about the artist education in Paris and then analyze the important influences for the artist, to the time when he came back to Iran. This is important for my research because the time in Paris, was very influential as he completed his studies in modern art and other comprehensive knowledge in Paris rather than Iran.
3. Ziapour and the Fighting Cock Society and the modern art movement in Iran, years from 1949 to 1951. This period marks the beginning of his activism in modern art and the developments by him and other artists in Iran and how he influenced the society of art in Iran.
4. His governmental duties and his work in anthropological researches, from 1951 to 1999: This section includes the list of artist's duties and his influential work resume in each year of his life. This period is important as he undertook many important projects with the government and shows his interests in Iranian history and anthropology, both, I content, influenced his later works.



## 4.2 Early Life and Education in Iran (1920-1946)

### 4.2.1 In his Hometown

Jalil Ziapour was born on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1920, in Bandar Anzali, one of the seaport cities in Gilan Province, which is located in the north of Iran. The city had a nice and rainy climate, with citrus fruits gardens and green flowery nature. Ziapour was creative during his childhood years in the home town. He was influenced by the regional environment where he grew up. His father, who was a craftsman who made shoes and sculpted and the cultural programs which held at his high school, also influenced him in his youth.

Bandar Anzali is seen, as the gateway between Iran and Europe civilization from ancient times. Indeed, it is a harbor city on the Caspian Sea, where exchanges of culture happened since the early days of the city. The city, therefore, has a strong cultural life, such as theatre, cinema and different courses of arts. All of which influenced him.

Ziapour was 5 years old, when the government shifted in 1925, from the Qajar dynasty to the Pahlavi era. Therefore, the country was facing changes in the politics, economy and industrial developments, which affected people's lifestyles. As I explained, in the previous chapter, part 1&2, of chapter3. As mentioned earlier, his family life also influenced him. Ziapour was the first born in a family of 9 children, with four other brothers and four sisters. His father, Sheikh Hasan Ziapour, was a famous craftsman in the town and coordinated the family job as a shoe designer.<sup>136</sup> He was a merchant in a big shop in the central old bazaar and constantly pushed his firstborn, Jalil, to continue the family job but Ziapour followed his interests, which were involvements into Fine Arts. His father also sometimes received orders to make wooden statues for religious ceremonial groups and

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<sup>136</sup> Arvin Ill Beigi, . "پرواز و نو شدن / آفرین و کشف: بیگرافی از جلال ضياء پور", ["Flying with new discoveries; Biography of Jalil Ziapour,"] In *Jalil Ziapour the Father of Iran's Modern Painting* (Bandare Anzali: Caspino, May 2001): 4.

Jalil helped him to make statues with different materials, such as clay and pieces of small bricks.<sup>137</sup> His elementary school, now called Sharaf School, was located near their house on a coastal street. To reach his school, Ziapour walked through beautiful sceneries, such as seashore way and passing by dense tall forest trees, while experiencing huge sailing ships on the coast. In other words, he grew up in a very scenic and natural environment which, I believe left their marks on him in adulthood. It is said that Ziapour showed his talent in painting already at the elementary school and sometimes impressed his classmates with his new designs.<sup>138</sup> When he finished his elementary school, he entered the Ferdowsi high school. At Ferdowsi high school, Ziapour was influenced by various interesting cultural programs and courses such as theater, music, and sport.

Apart from being good in the arts, he also won a few championships in gymnastics and swimming in fact, these programs and entertainments were influential for many students at school to show their talents and at the same time, experience the new activities in art.

Ziapour, at this school, had various talented classmates and friends, which later became well-known pioneers in courses of art, such as Ahmad Ashourpour (2018-2008), known as the father of folkloric singing of Gilan province.<sup>139</sup>

Most of the time after school, Ziapour was busy practicing his sketching, painting, and calligraphy. He also used to walk around the Anzali Lagoon and was influenced by the colors and lines of nature and the songs of the birds. He was also interested in writing his ideas. Therefore, sometimes he went to the surrounding forests and beaches to focus on his writing.<sup>140</sup> Besides, to help the family income, sometimes he sold some of his calligraphy artworks to the elegant customers and taught to his smaller schoolmates.

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<sup>137</sup> Azadivar, "Interview with Jalil Ziapour,"

<sup>138</sup> Ill Beigi, "Flying with new discoveries," 4.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.,

<sup>140</sup> The nature of his writings at that time is not clear.

He grew up, in a cultured city, the family of craftsmen and natural environment helped develop his artistic sensitivity. Like others of the same ages, Ziapour was enthusiastic to learn and experience new things and pursue his dreams. Therefore, in 1938, he decided to move to Tehran to continue his education.

#### 4.2.2 In Tehran (1938-1946)

Ziapour was 18 years old when he moved to Tehran and immigration to this city was important for him because he wanted to continue his education in the central city of Iran. He first decided to study composition at a music school. He passed a difficult entrance examination and achieved an excellent grade for the entrance. The music school offered him a scholarship, but, less than a year into his studies, various changes happened to the management of the school and the music composition course was deleted from the schedule. At this time, Ziapour, who could not pursue his interests in music composition, decided to join the Mostazrefeh School to study traditional art skills.

In Mostazrefeh School or (The school of Traditional Fine Arts), Ziapour practiced carpet designing, gilding, miniature, Persian illustration, and tile works. At that time the school was under the management of Hossein Taherzadeh Behzad (1887-1962), who was a famous painter and carpet designer. After two years of his study in there Ziapour was proficient in the different craftsmanship on the curriculum.<sup>141</sup>

In 1941, Mostazrefeh School merged with the University of Tehran as a new school now named the University of Fine Arts (Honarhaye Ziba). The modern painting was added to the schedules of the school. Ziapour who was interested in experiencing modern art decided to join the Fine Art University and take modern art courses. There, he was trained by

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<sup>141</sup> Darius Kiaras, "داووشکی‌ایارس", [The story of Jalil Ziapour and Fighting Cock Society,] *Tandis Journal*, (November 2009).

several lecturers or (Ostad), such as Hadi Khan Tajvidi and Mohammad Ali Zavieh, where he learned different skills of coloring in painting.<sup>142</sup> These modern courses, however, were based on Classicism, Realism, and Naturalism, which were techniques of painting taught by Kamal-al Molk (1848-1940) who established the Mostazrefeh School in 1916 and later was manager and lecturer at the school. Kamal-al Molk was a famous painter during the time of Naser al-Din Shah Qajar in Iran. He was very skillful in his technique of naturalism and he could make painting even more real than a photo. He traveled several times to Europe and France to study the Classic paintings. Some of Kamal-al Molk's master students such as Ashtiani, Ali Mohammad Heidarian and Vaziri, were lecturers at the school in 1941 when Zaipour was a student and him, Zaipour, was trained as a classicist under their supervision, to achieve a high level of skills of Naturalist painting.<sup>143</sup>

Andre Godard, a French archeologist in Iran, with Mohsen Foroughi, a famous Iranian architect, together designed several institutional buildings in Tehran, including the design for the Fine Art University. They also were behind an understanding between l'École des Beaux-Arts the Paris and the Fine Arts University in Tehran, where the former institution sent lecturers to teach in Tehran but also gave scholarships to graduates of the Fine Art University to go and study in Paris.<sup>144</sup> With the advice of Ismail Merat, who was the minister of education at that time, the curriculum of the school was organized based on the Paris Beaux Art programs. Some of the lecturers such as Madam Ashoub, Mrs. Aminfar, Ali Mohammad Heidarian, and Mohsen Moghadam, suggested extra programs for the skills of painting in Fine Art University. They planned sketch designing and Impressionism style changes for students to be practiced beside the Naturalism and Classicism courses. These

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<sup>142</sup> Kiaras, "Fighting Cock Society,"

<sup>143</sup> Tehrani, *Selection of Academic Talks*, 106-112.

<sup>144</sup> Keshmirshekan, *Contemporary Iranian Art*, 74.

classes were the first steps for practicing modern painting in Iran. Ziapour, Javadipour, Hamidi and some other students took courses in these classes. As Mohammad Javadipour mentioned in his memories with Ziapour at Fine Art University, “the sketch classes were influential for Ziapour and he experienced how to visualize the different themes and how to divide the spaces on the painting.”<sup>145</sup>

In 1945, Ziapour attended a group exhibition in (VOKS house) or the ‘Iran and Soviet Union Cultural Society’. The exhibition held by the participation of more than 125 artists of different styles,<sup>146</sup> such as Naturalism, Impressionism and Persian Illustration. In this exhibition, the artworks of artists such as Ziapour, Kazemi, Vishkaie and Moghadam, grabbed the attention of committee members, ‘Makarov a Russian Painter, Hamid Sayah and Maryam Firouz’.<sup>147</sup> Ziapour’s Expressionism painting titled ‘*Rise of The Blacksmith Kaveh*’ won a bronze medal from this exhibition. In the subject matter of this painting, Ziapour used a legendary Iranian story from ‘Shahnameh’, which characterized his work as the integration of Iranian and modern. During these 8 years in Tehran, Ziapour experienced different situations. He practiced both traditional Iranian art and modern art skills at the University of Fine Arts and trained by various lecturers. He also was attended to a group art exhibition at VOKS house, which his painting won a bronze medal. Finally, in 1946, Ziapour graduated from the Fine Art University of Tehran by achieving the highest grade for culture and art and received a scholarship to continue his education in France, at the École des Beaux Art.

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<sup>145</sup> Amini, "Interview with Mahmoud Javadipour," 12.

<sup>146</sup> Delzendeh, *The Evolutions of Iran's Pictorial Art*, 254.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 254.

### **4.3 His education in Paris and return back to Iran (1946-1948)**

#### **4.3.1 In Paris**

In 1946, at 26 Ziapour went to Paris, a city of culture and art. This research opportunity was important for Ziapour, because, he was enthusiastic to learn more new things and go beyond what he had studied in Iran. This happened, at the time when Iran opened its doors to the West for communicative education in science, culture, knowledge and the technology. Paris was not what it once was before WWII, but it was still an important artistic city. Compared to Iran, Paris was experiencing industrialization, growth in technology and modernization. Before the Great Wars, and still after, to some extent, Paris was an artistic center that saw the birth of many art movements and groups of artists, including the first and second generation of Avant-Gardes were active in Paris. For example, including, Classicism and Realism but also Impressionism, Neo-Impressionism, Surrealism, Fauvism, and then Cubism. In his two years of life in Paris, Ziapour continued his education at several art institutions, such as the Beaux Art School and Grande Chaumière. He was not the only Iranian who went to Paris around that time. Indeed, other influential Iranian artists who went to Paris include Abolhassan Khan Sadighi (1894-1995), a sculptor, painter and architecture, and Shokouh Riazi (1921-1962) another modern painter. When in Paris, Zaipour focused on various topics of study and constantly visited museums, art galleries, and libraries to experience his artistic and cultural knowledge. He often frequented Andrea Lhote's studio, where he was influenced by the Cubism art movement of Lhote. The school of Beaux Art, or École National Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, is an influential art school in France, founded in 1648. Some of the notable alumni of school such as Edgar Degas (1834-1917), Henri Matisse (1869-1954), Eugene Delacroix, (1798-1863), Claude Monet (1840-1926), Pierre Auguste Renoir (1841-1919), and many more, most were influential painters and sculptors of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The school was

modeled on classical antiquities, Greek art, and Roman architecture to preserve those ideas to the next generations. Alongside the discipline of painting, was the discipline of architecture and it was one of the most important studies at the École des Beaux-Arts and would influence a whole school of thought in various parts of the world. The entrance examinations were very by a competitive examination.<sup>148</sup> Although the school was founded by a renowned French Classicist, Charles LeBrun, the school still changed, in time, its approach to art. When Zaipour went to Paris, the school was influenced by different modernist movements. During the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, the instructions of the school were influenced by the evolution of modern art. Louis Kahn, (1901-1974) and Robert Venturi (1925), were influential architects to revive the school during this time. At the time, the school offered courses in drawing, painting, sculpture, and engravings to the talented students who were selected to attend.<sup>149</sup> In the system of Academia, each student would follow one master supervisor for the whole of his or her study. Students of different levels would attend a class at the same time. It was also expected that more advanced students would teach the more junior ones. The mixed courses occurred both in theories and experiments; however, the main courses focused more on experimental skills. The two most important skills were Sketching (*Esquisse* in French) and Rendering, (*Rendu* in French). In these methods, students first did quick freehand drawings with pencil, ink or charcoal (Sketching), and later they spent more time to complete their design (Rendering). Sometimes there were no images or live models for students and they must make their designs based on their imagination. This skill could be helpful for students to be fast and creative at the same time. At the school of Beaux Art, Ziapour took his main courses under the supervision of lecturers such as Souverbie in painting and Nicolousse in

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<sup>148</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The state Nobility*, (Stanford University Press, 1998), 35-133

<sup>149</sup> [www.jssgallery.org/Essay/Ecole\\_des\\_Beaux-Arts](http://www.jssgallery.org/Essay/Ecole_des_Beaux-Arts).

sculpture. Jean Souverbie (1891-1981) was a teacher at Ecole des Beaux-Arts, since 1945. He was famous for figurative paintings and compositions of still life. “Souverbie was interested in the works of French classical painter Nicolas Poussin and was influenced by Parisian Avant-Gardes group from 1920 to 1930s.”<sup>150</sup> His works connected with the Cubism movement and traditional naturalism. In 1929, he showed 54 works of Cubism painting at the Bernheim-Jeune gallery. Ziapour mentioned in his memory that professor Souverbie, in his classes did not believe that foreign artists should simply repeat French artistic styles.

However, he saw the different French artistic movements as potential influences and sources of inspiration for them. Ziapour indicated that Souverbie was interested in the Old Persian Illustrations gathered various types of printed miniatures in his studio. Zaipour even recalls Souverbie asking him one day, “Are these pieces familiar to you? Then, I answered yes and asked him, why you are working with these paintings? Then he served me a coffee and answered, for the inspiration.”<sup>151</sup>

Besides his school time at l'École des Beaux Art, Ziapour also registered at Grande Chaumière art school or Académie de la Grande Chaumière. The school was founded in 1904 by Claudio Castelucho. The rules of the academy were free from constraints and carried fewer disciplines, for example, Ziapour frequently researched and read at the library of the Académie, to study the history of art, social science, history of civilizations, motives and costumes. He also met different instructors at the Grande Chaumière, including Andre Lhote. He learned the skills and theories of Cubism painting and became more familiar with the modern schools of art. Andre Lhote (1885-1962) was a group member of Parisian

<sup>150</sup> [http://www.artnet.com/Jean Souverbie](http://www.artnet.com/Jean_Souverbie).

<sup>151</sup> Hariri, *About Art and Literature*, 64. خطابه هگفتند به روی همزکوش با سده های قاشی و ملتورم به چشم می خورد. خطاب به هگفتند. Hariri, *About Art and Literature*, 64. ایشان را پس بستبرای شکافست هرلناد مدین اسمش ورشت نکارم مم دهی بوده لایت قوت یکده ق موه رلبه منزعارف می کرد گفت واقع الی صتی دیسی هم لنادش ملبرای چه با آوا سر و کار داری گفت بیوای ال دام ال دام.



Avant-Gardes, alongside with Gleizes, Duchamp, Picabia and many others. He was from the second generation of Cubism painters, after Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque and Fernand Leger who were the first generation. Lhote's lessons and theories were based on the conservative Cubism method and the subject matters of his paintings composed were figures, people, still life and geometrics, with brilliant colorings and designs.

In his text titled, '*colors and relationships*'<sup>152</sup> Zaipour described the importance and influence of Lhote as such: "Lhote emphasized a new technique in coloring called 'passage' that could resolve the dryness of geometric lines and surfaces around the forms. The coloring passage had an important role in the evolution of painting and whatever makes a Cubism painting more acceptable."<sup>153</sup> Still according to Zaipour discussing Lhote, "Cubist artists must do three important actions: exaggeration, deduction, and deleting. Cubism is alongside with the mind, meanwhile expresses the wills and attempts of the physical world. A Cubist artist is a sensitive, secretive, careful and rational viewer."<sup>154</sup>

Although Ziapour was impressed by Lhote's theories in Cubism as well as the technique of his paintings, he did not exactly copy what Lhote was doing. However, it was an inspiration for him to create a personal style of painting later when he came back to Iran, which he combined with traditional ethnicity. Ziapour also noticed to his lecturer, professor Souverbie's quote which asked foreign students to learn European art styles as an inspiration and not to copy. In fact, for Ziapour, any knowledge and skills, which he learned in Paris, led him to recognize himself into the promoting of new thoughts, while preserving the history, culture and ancient art of Iran.

<sup>152</sup> In Farsi: رنگ‌ها و رابطه‌ها

<sup>153</sup> Tehrani, *Selection of Academic Talks*, 49-53. - به نقل از ضمیمه‌ای از یادداشت‌های دکتر زاپور: «لوت در گفت‌وگو با ج. هگرفت نتایجات (طرح‌ها) - 49-53. تهران، *انتخاب از سخنرانی‌های آکادمیک*. - به نقل از طرف خطوط و سطوح (فلسفه‌ی هنر) بدون دخالت تلویپاساژ (مگزین‌های پیش‌دلطف موی اطراف شریاء طلیعت را در کرد.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 49-53. آن‌دولوت می‌گوید: اغراق‌کردن، کم‌کردن و حذف‌کردن سبک‌ها را می‌تواند به‌آرامی‌پیردازد.

#### 4.3.2 Back to Iran from Paris and starting cultural and artistic activities

In 1949, Jalil Ziapour left France and returned to Iran. He had already experienced the European artistic and academic world, where various schools were developed in arts according to the demands of the era. He felt that the Iranian artistic community also needed to have certain changes like modern evolution both in art and literature that coordinated with the spirit of the time. He believed that, at that time, the Iranian painting style was performed in three ways for years: 1. The continuation of the old styles, which dated back to about 600 years earlier (for example Persian miniature); Ziapour believed that of course, Classic Persian Painting Schools are valued, but it would be an inspiration for modern artists of the time to create their new arts or in another word, to be innovative and not to repeat the past. 2. The Naturalism style; also, he agreed with inspiration and not to repeat the previous schools. 3. Modern art copied from Western art, which he did not agree with copying and he agreed with inspiration and innovation.<sup>155</sup> He also had the same belief in other areas of arts, such as music, architecture, literature, and poetry, which needed to be evolved. Once he returned to Iran, he tried to introduce his new experiences about modern European art in Tehran, and in certain ways, he succeeded.

On one hand, on that point in time, the political and social situation of Iran experiencing a freedom of expression space for intellectuals, from 1945 to 1950, as discussed in the previous chapter. On the other hand, he faced a certain kind of dual problem: his interest in modern art, which he wanted to bring to Iran, but also the fact that Iranians did not know their art history and historical art. He understood that in universities and colleges of Iran, still there were no lessons to be titled the history of Iranian arts, and what was taught was

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<sup>155</sup> Azadivar, "Interview with Jalil Ziapour,"

not consistent with the historical reality of the Iranian people.<sup>156</sup> Therefore, there was also a need to write and review Iranian art historically and theoretically. So, he began his cultural career at this time to introduce modern art in Iran to be in line with Iranian national art and culture. He intended to move Iranian art towards enlightenment, development, and innovation, and this was an introduction to the establishment of the Fighting Cock Society, (In Farsi: Anjoman-e-Khoroos Jangi),<sup>157</sup> which was the leading advocate publication for the introduction of new arts in Iran.

#### **4.4 Fighting Cock Society and the Modern art movement of Iran (1949-1956)**

##### **4.4.1 Fighting Cock Society and Magazine (1949-1956)**

In 1949, along with a number of his like-minded fellows, he established a committee, called Fighting Cock Society and then published a magazine having the same name to release articles and lectures made by the group. Ziapour was the director of the association and was the painting specialist; Gholam Hossein Gharib was the specialist in the field of literature; Hassan Shirvani in the field of theater; and Morteza Hannaneh in the field of music. Hannaneh later left the community due to differences in taste. At that time in Iran, as explained in the previous chapter, there was a freedom for expression for intellectuals to merge and shine. At the same time, also from 1949, to 1951, the activities of ‘Iran National Front’, was uprising for the patriotic goals, national independence, freedom, and democracy. This movement influenced most of the people in Iran and also, Ziapour and his friends as well, for the establishment of Fighting Cock Society.

The place of the association was Ziapour’s painting studio, where weekly cultural and artistic sessions of art critiques were held, and where they mostly focused on new art. The audiences were usually from among well-educated artists and open-minded people. In these

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<sup>156</sup> Azadivar, “Interview with Jalil Ziapour,”

<sup>157</sup> In Farsi: انجمن خروس جنگی

meetings, at every session, one group member or, as they called it, a fighting cock, delivered a lecture for about three hours, and after a short break with tea and coffee came up, and then they continued the session.

The guests were from different administrative and cultural departments, young and old, listened to the lectures while sitting on wooden floors. They asked questions if they had any and received their answers. Hence, the sessions were so alive because there were questions and discussion. It seemed that the sessions were very productive, lively and positive.<sup>158</sup>

The Fighting Cock magazine, which is still known as the most important periodical magazine in the avant-garde arts from that time, was published in octavo size. On the front page of the first issue of the magazine, there was a black and white Cubist drawing of a Cock, which was drawn by Ziapour, and it was followed by a modern poem from Nima Yushij, which has been a slogan of the association since then:

The Cock is crowing: Cock-a-doodle-doo, it sings, The solitude of the village concealed within, Through a path that a dried vein, Flows blood in one's deceased body, Its songs crawl over the cold body of a dawn, Goes around every part of the Lake Hamoon, As it sang, father came home, Brought good news to the free ears, Showed path to good places, To the caravans that are stuck in this no man's land, it sings soft, It sings warm, It flaps its feathers, It keeps the arms open.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> Tehrani, *Selection of Academic Talks*, 93-96.

<sup>159</sup> ققوولی قو. خروس می خوزد/ از درون غایت خلوت دل/ از شیب رهیکه چو زرگ خشک/ در تن مرگان دوزد خون میتن بر جدار  
سرد سحر/ میتراوید به مرسوی دامون/ بانویش از او ره آمپر/ مژده می آورب گوش آزاد/ تم نماید ر مشب مبادان/ کاروان را درین  
... [Translated to English by Mehrdad Jalali]  
Gou Ghouli Ghou, Korus mikhanad/ Az daroune nahofte khalvate del/ Az nashibe rahi ke chon rage khoshk/  
Dar tane mordegan davanad khoun Mitnad bar jedare sarde sahar/ Mitaravad be har souye hamoun/ Ba  
navayesh azo, rah amad pot/ Mojde miavarad be goush, azad/ Minamayad rehash be abadan/ Narm miayad/  
Garm mikhanad/Bal mikoubd/ Par mifashanad..., www.nimayoushij.com/poetry/ city of morning/ Korus  
Singing.

This poem consists of 10 verses. It is an interpretation of the character and the nature of the members of the association. They praised development, mobility, and modernization. Then a short article was published by Hannaneh about symphonic music and on the fourth page, an important article was published by Jalil Ziapour, entitled '*Painting*'<sup>160</sup> in which he reviewed and critic Iranian painting at the time, which used realism as a form a representation. But most importantly different aspects of western modern art were as a potential solution to the limited use of Naturalism in Iranian art. In this article, Ziapour addresses an artist's work in details and evaluates the impact of the progression of the Impressionism and Cubism schools on new art. He also points to the Cubism School and its similarity to the Iranian geometric designs in national arts, such as tile and carpet. He said these motifs can be inspirational for creating new artworks. In the next pages of the magazine, stories and plays by Manouchehr Shibli and Gholam Hossein Gharib were published. Therefore, with the first edition of this literary and artistic magazine, which contained scholarly and journalistic articles and lectures, a classical art and a new art of Iran found a playground to open up a place for a greater understanding of modern Iranian art.<sup>161</sup>

To describe the symbolism behind the name of the association and its goals and activities, it must be said that, firstly, Cock in Iranian mythology denotes a firm and brave bird that is glitter in appearance. It is conceptually a symbol of the angel Bahman or Vahouman, whose duty is to awaken the people. Therefore, as this bird is beautiful and colorful, and as it is a

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<sup>160</sup> Jalil Ziapour, "ج. ایل ضواء پور. قاشی", [“Painting,”] *Fighting Cock Magazine*, no 1, Issue 1, (1949).

<sup>161</sup> Kiaras, “Fighting Cock Society,”

warrior and fighter, it could be related to the area of painting and was also considered a good name for carrying the purposes of the association.<sup>162</sup>

The slogan of the association, written on the back cover of the first issue of the magazine under the motif of the cock, is based on a poem written by Farrokhi Sistani. It reads so:

"The story of Alexander got aged and became a myth / Say something new, which is a blessing." This poem, in a sense, talks about the myth of the story of Alexander, and asks the audience to come up with a new and fresh idea, because this innovation is against the bitterness of obsolescence and it brings sweetness.

The Fighting Cock magazine was published over two different periods. In the first period, from 1949 and 1950, it was published in five series, and Ziapour himself was the managing director. Also, the name of the magazine changed from the Fighting Cock to the 'Kavir'<sup>163</sup> or Desert, and then the 'Panjeh Khoros' or Cock's Paw.<sup>164</sup> In the second period from 1951 to 1956, Hooshang Irani became the director of the magazine and Ziapour left the group. At this time, the magazine was published in three or four series, and its name changed to Apadana and Honar-e-No (New Art).<sup>165</sup>

In the first issue, most of the magazine's articles belonged to Ziapour, and the rest were stories and plays by Gharib and Shirvani. There were poems by new poets such as Sohrab Sepehri and Nima Yushij and critical writings of Bahman Mohasses, a modern painter.<sup>166</sup> Also, published in the magazine were pieces of news from the world of music and paintings by writers and artists from other countries were translated and printed by the editorial

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<sup>162</sup> Alireza Rezaie, "Talking with Jalil Ziapour, the Master,"], *Rstakhiz Journal*, no.625, (1977).

<sup>163</sup> In Farsi: کهور

<sup>164</sup> In Farsi: پنجه خروس

<sup>165</sup> In Farsi: نپالنا - فرنو

<sup>166</sup> Touka Maleki, "Fighting Cocks, good news of the morning,"] *Tandis Journal of Art Research*, no, 1 (2011): 227-234.

board. Still in the first issue of the magazine, moreover, Ziapour published his famous article, ‘*The Abolition of Theories of the Past and Contemporary Schools, from Primitivism to Surrealism*,’ which imitated the first theory of modern Iranian art. In this article, he examines the tasks of painting from the early stages of human life to the recent schools, and notes that “so far the painting has not reached its final goal, which has progressed in its way, and its beauty has been neglected”.<sup>167</sup> He also described his strategies and ideas in 9 clauses.<sup>168</sup> Another important point is that for the first time in this magazine Ziapour published two of his first Abstract Cubist works, titled ‘the *Public Bath*’, 1949, and ‘the *Sepah Salar Mosque*’ 1949, which were controversial, because they were the first manifestation of Cubist paintings with Iranian elements.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter Ziapour was initially influenced by Andre Lhote's ideas in the art movement of Cubism. This influence was reflected/is visible in the many articles he wrote in the Fighting Cock. Ziapour defined Cubism as a style that is related to the age of the machine (technologies, speed, and, etc.), and was aimed at for artists who were more passionate and sensitive and therefore, would not be satisfied with simply copying the past or painting in Naturalistic styles.<sup>169</sup> Cubism broke the normal depiction of the objects and independently defined its own visual poetic based on lines and colors.<sup>170</sup> In this way, the theme was never preceded by shape and did not make a particular story. Hence, Cubism represented the vicissitudes of its time, and it had more informed and supportive followers.

<sup>167</sup> Jalil Ziapour, “The Abolition of Theories of the Past and Contemporary Schools, from Primitivism to Surrealism,” *Fighting Cock Journal*, Issue 1 (1949).  
 ت ا ک ن و ن ۷۲۳۱ ق ا ش ی ب ه ح د و د ف ر و ن خ ا ی ی ت خ ص ر ص ی خ و د ن ی ی د ه ل ر ت و ب ا س ط ر ف ر د ا ی ق ی ل خ ص و ص ل ی ا ت  
 ق ی ل ع و ص ر ف ی خ ت ا ل ط ب س ی ا ر ن ز م ک ی ل ش ت ه ل ر ت ب ب ک ا ر ر ف ن ت ن ط ی ن ط ر ی ه ل ک س ب ی ک ه ا ن ر ل ک ا م ل ه ی ن ا م م ی و ج و د م ی ا ی ن ک ه ح د و د و ت خ و ر  
 ق ا ش ی ر ا ل س ط ر ف ر د ا ج د ا م ی ک ن د .

<sup>168</sup> I have discussed these 9 clauses in chapter 3 (section).

<sup>169</sup> Tehrani, *Selection of Academic Talks*, 49-53.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 106-111.

In the same year (1949), the magazine was banned after its fifth issue, and Ziapour was called into a trial by the government. The Ministry of Culture even impeached one of the ministers of the parliament for allowing the publication of the magazine. Then Ziapour is called up and he is asked about Cubism and its meaning. He was asked if he was trying to promote the Communist thoughts, which is a question he would have to explain many more times in his life. When they were summoned, Ziapour and Gharib took a copy of the magazine and read a page of it in the office for them, and then he said to them that Cubism is different from Communism. In his explanation to the ministry, he explained that Cubism is an art movement in painting, and its concept comes from the word Cube meaning volume, which is very similar to Iranian geometric designs and artistic works, such as tile and carpet designs. He had to testify that they were not communists and did not promote communist's thoughts.<sup>171</sup> As explained in more details in the previous chapter, at that time in Iran some Communist groups were politically active against the government, and the government was trying to stop and arrest them. Later, some other intellectual socialists, left that communist group or 'Tudeh party' in Iran, and they established another party, titled 'Third Force', aimed with patriotic goals and traditional modernism in Iran. (I have explained in history chapter).

So, the administrative government apologized to Ziapour after they made sure the goals of the magazine were not political and the bans were removed and the Cock magazine continued its circulation. At this time, in late 1949, the magazine changed its name to 'The Desert'. Gharib and Shirvani chose this name for the magazine. They compare this meaning to the situation of literature at that time on in Iran. After several prints, the journal was banned again, and in late 1950, the magazine reprinted and renamed as The Cock's Paws. It

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<sup>171</sup> Tehrani, *Selection of Academic Talks*, 370-392.



means that the Cock was eaten and only his paw remained. At the time of the banishment of the magazine, Ziapour did not stop working and published some articles in other magazines and newspapers of that time, such as 'Shahsavari Weekly' – 'AzarPad Weekly' and 'Iran Mehr Newspaper'.

Ziapour is seen as a positive avant-garde artist who worked for changes in the artistic scene in Iran. Most of the avant-garde groups were strong activists who wanted to change things in Iran.<sup>172</sup> Two groups opposed them, the first was the more traditional artists who were used to making representational artworks, and the second group was the government (as seen in the continuous censorship of the magazine). Their tone was serious in their speeches, and the prose of their articles was usually journalistic and sharp. The avant-garde artists, of whom Ziapour was one of the leaders, were very strong, although not violent participants. The older generation of artists however, did not see what they could gain from these changes.

At the time, people like Ziapour and Nima Yushij were both seen as conservative modernists or, in a word, positivists, by the avant-garde group, while others saw them as new and controversial painters and poets who were perceived as trying to destroy the arts in Iran. Within Iran, the sentiments against Ziapour and his groups were coming from four different groups of already established artists. The first group included people who believed that painting should be understood by everyone and people of all trades should understand it. The second group included the miniaturists of the time who generally disagreed with modern art. The third group was Naturalists who were in majority at that time. And the fourth group was the modernists imitating the European styles.

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<sup>172</sup> Maleki, "Fighting Cocks," 227-234.

Ziapour believed that “these mentioned groups, were the people who sometimes talked bad behind the Cock Society and others, who wanted to keep the consent of those people, would ban the magazine while the magazine did not enter into political issues.”<sup>173</sup> Anyway, whatever their involvement was in this censorship, in the following years, Ziapour rejected any negative and destructive understanding of his artistic goals in the association. He responded to numerous questions asked in various interviews about whether he wanted to promote the Western art style and demolishing national art, and he repeatedly pointed out that “it's not at all correct, and if I introduced Cubism or interpreted Western art, it had an educational and enlightening aspect.”<sup>174</sup> In his interview with Nasser Hariri, he also said that “our goal for establishing the Cock Society was to bring national inspiration in our national new art in three fields of visual arts, literature and theater. I wanted to enter our national identity into a new world while inspired by our heritage without imitating or letting them imitate.”<sup>175</sup>

When the magazine changed its name, once more, to ‘the Cock’s Paw’, they entered to the second phase of the magazine’s life. In 1951, a poet named Hooshang Irani was elected as a board member during various meetings with the members of the group. At this time, Ziapour and Shibani left the community. They then said they left the group because of the radicalism of Hooshang Irani.<sup>176</sup> While Hooshang Irani was a good poet, he was a more radical modernist, and, in fact, abandoned all the shackles and as he entered the Cocks Association, he launched a revolution, called ‘*Purple Scream*’. He also published a

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<sup>173</sup> Rezaie, “Talking with Jalil Ziapour,”

<sup>174</sup> Mojabi, *The Pioneers*, 20.

<sup>175</sup> Hariri, *About Art and Literature*, 58.

<sup>176</sup> Maleki, “Fighting Cocks,” 233.

declaration called the '*Butcher of Babylon*' in 13 clauses that included his radical ideas about modern art.<sup>177</sup>

In the year 1952, while the Fighting Cock Society was still active, the name of the magazine changed to 'The Wave'. This time, the focus of the association was mostly based on the aesthetics and the critique of new poetry, on top of which various topics were discussed. At the same time, other guest members came to the association. In 1956, the magazine was published in two issues under the title 'Apadana', where in the first issue, it had an article by Ziapour, even if he did not entirely agree with the new radical modernism promoted by the associations of thinkers he helped create only a few years prior. Finally, at the end of the year 1956, while Iran's political and cultural atmosphere provided more freedom to the work of the modernists, the magazine was published in the third and final issue under the name of 'The New Art'.

#### 4.4.2 After leaving the fighting cock society

Beside the fighting cock society, another important boost for the modernist movement in Iran was the Apadana gallery and other locations that hosted many night meetings and art criticism sessions, as well as put together different exhibits of modern art. Ziapour was one of those who regularly attended the Apadana gallery and simultaneously with his activities in the Fighting Cock Society; he also held art sessions for certain audiences in the Apadana gallery exhibitions.<sup>178</sup> For volunteers attending the sessions, there were made membership cards. Along with other activities, painting classes were held for those who were interested. In six months, four art exhibitions of works of contemporary modern artists like Pezeshknia, Esfandiari, Hamidi, Kazemi and Ziapour were held in different styles. During the third exhibition, several works by Ziapour, named '*Three Oriental Chess players*'

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<sup>177</sup> Maleki, "Fighting Cocks," 233.

<sup>178</sup> Delzendeh, *The Evolutions of Iran's Pictorial Art*, 257.

(1949), *'Rope'* (1949) and *'The Public Bath'* (1949) were exhibited. Other literary figures who spoke at these exhibitions during these programs were Jalal al-Ahmad (1923-1969), an Iranian literary critic and translator who had a great impact on Iran's intellectuals and writers. Another speaker was Dr. Reza Jorjani, who encouraged various literary characters and artists to attend the Apadana gallery exhibitions.

Mahmood Javadipour said that: Ziapour's works exhibited at Apadana exhibition were the first of a series of modern and Cubist style paintings. For some people, this style of work was weird and they could not understand, so we held criticism sessions. We showed films and held various types of activities that could conceptualize arts to the people. In the same year that the Apadana gallery was established, we could introduce to a group of five or six thousand people the contemporary art and this was a great contribution to the art of our country.<sup>179</sup>

However, during the plans and programs at the gallery, sometimes there were conflicts and clash of ideas. In March of 1949, when Ziapour was speaking, a group of opponents of modern art attacked him and damaged some of his art works.<sup>180</sup> In April of 1950, when Dr. Jorjani was lecturing, he had a heart attack and passed away instantly, and after that event, the Apadana gallery closed its activities.<sup>181</sup> This six-month activity of Apadana gallery has nevertheless been influential in promoting modern arts.

After the Fighting Cock Society and the Apadana gallery, Ziapour participated in most of the group meetings and exhibitions held at various cultural and artistic venues, and occasionally held academic presentations and exhibited his paintings that were put under the collections of modern painting styles. These meetings also influenced the formation of

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<sup>179</sup> Amini, "Interview with Mahmoud Javadipour," My translation.

<sup>180</sup> Delzendeh, *The Evolutions of Iran's Pictorial Art*, 259.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 256.

the modern Iranian artistic movement, the most important of which were the Iran-France Society, the Iran-Soviet Union Society, and the Ferdowsi Theater Hall, where Ziapour held a solo exhibition in 1950. Also, a collection of exhibitions by Mehregan Club or the "House of Academic Teachers" were held since 1952 and continued. Another important exhibition was held at Shahpour Palace, which indicated the end of the government's unwillingness towards modern art works.<sup>182</sup>

Generally, most of the works of the modern Iranian artists in this era were more influenced by Impressionism and Expressionism then Fauvism, Cubism and certain other styles. Also, most of the paintings were created on special themes from the lyrical Iran's sceneries, the nomads, the bazaars, and old mosques, in other words, very romanticised/traditional subject matters, yet painted in a modernist style. After that, the National School of Saqakhaneh<sup>183</sup> was created, which was a kind of national art based on indigenous elements of Iran. The activities of Ziapour and the consequent challenges that later were developed between traditionalism and modernism in the Iranian arts were the first steps in the emergence of this artistic style or Saqakhaneh (traditional subject matter with a modern representation). Famous artists of this genre are Parviz Tanavoli, Hossein Zenderoudi and Nasser Oveisi. Although Ziapour was not a member of this new style, of Saqakhaneh, he was, in my view, a precursor.

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<sup>182</sup> Delzende, *The Evolutions of Iran's Pictorial Art*, 254.

<sup>183</sup> In Farsi: کهنه بوی اسرار

#### **4.5 1951 and the start of the administrative responsibilities and conducting research on the culture of the Iranian people**

During the 1950s, Ziapour started to work in another dimension of his artistic and cultural activities. He decided to conduct a fundamental investigation into the culture of ancient Iran and the ethnicity and languages of Iranian people. In other words, he was more inclined to a national type of reconciliation. This coincided with the fact that the government gave more freedom to the modernists and created a better atmosphere for creating artworks. Another influential event in this period was the establishment of a painting biennial that took place from 1958 to 1966 in five periods, and Ziapour was present by exhibiting his works.

From that time on, Ziapour was looking for Iranian identity, while he was still involved in modern Iranian art. It is obvious that he was looking for the cultural roots of Iranian identity in the past and in the regions, as he was involved in projects related to ancient civilizations of the region, and anthropology of the different ethnic groups or regional cultures in Iran. In his own words, he did what he wanted. To find the relevant answers for his questions that, who am I? And where I am living, he started to travel around the cities, villages, and regions in Iran even in deserts and mountains. He was interested in the historical artifacts, traditional costumes, and tribal people and anthropology. He studied them carefully as this was his research and he was independent, to do what he wanted.

From the first decades of the 1950s, Ziapour was busier working in the field of business and governmental missions. He was recruited by the Ministry of Culture and Arts and coordinate with the ministry in various missions to work on ancient Iranian culture.<sup>184</sup> He was not forced to do this, but his interests in ancient civilizations and anthropology were clear.

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<sup>184</sup> "مروری بر زندگی جلال ضیا اعیان پور مردی از" [“Reviewing the life of Jalil Ziapour, the man from Fighting Cocks,”] *Tehran daily Newspaper*, (17 November 2009).

The effect of his researches on ornamental motifs, ancient works, paintings, and colors, and traditional costumes of the region from the ancient time to the contemporary Iranian era was revealed not only in his books but in his paintings. His new works were of a special style, called by him 'his National and Personal style'. From 1953 to 1997, he created roughly, 15 pieces of his oil, figurative works, and his pure Abstract paintings, with this inspiration of his anthropological studies. These were very personal paintings, where he did not simply imitate any other style, either modern or traditional, yet it was a style inspired by Iranian ancient and traditional motifs and paints, integrated with modern art aesthetics. In other word, Ziapour's paintings are a sort of the modern interpretation of an ethnicity environment.

Briefly, from 1951 onward, the major art and research activities by Ziapour are as follows, in 1952, he was a teacher of art history and stylistics at Kamal al-Molk Art School. In 1953, he also wrote a book entitled '*The History of the Eastern, the Middle East, and European Public Art*'. Also, in this same year, at the request of the Directorate General of Fine Arts, he established two fine art schools for girls and boys and greased the wheels for the establishment of the Faculty of Decorative Arts. It is also at that time that he supported and helped students who wanted to pursue their education in the arts outside Iran.<sup>185</sup>

In 1955, he became the chairman of the cultural relations and a permanent member of the Council of Abyaz Palace Museum, and, in 1956, he attended the Biennale in Venice, where he represented the participating Iranian painters in the exhibition.<sup>186</sup> Since 1956 onward, Ziapour traveled around Iran and began thorough research on the history of mythology, the lifestyles, and the ancient Iranian dressing styles. He was also interested in the

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<sup>185</sup> [www.ziapour.com/activities](http://www.ziapour.com/activities).

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

manifestations of the Iranian ethnic life in different provinces and, in this regard, he prepared and formulated the results of his research. In the same year, co-sponsored by the Ministry of Culture and Art, Ziapour held a large exhibition of the Iranian ethnic groups at Abyaz Palace, wherein the featured people's different aspects of life, dressing styles, and customs of different cities.<sup>187</sup>

In 1957, he attended the first painting biennale of Tehran, and participated in the second biennial in 1960, and delivered lectures and papers and received a gold medal. In 1962, as a member of the National Directorate of Fine Arts participated at the UNESCO National Commission, and in the same year, he became a permanent representative of the Commissions assisting the artist's private studios. In 1966, he became the chairman of the Museum of Anthropology and as a representative of the Ministry of Arts and Culture at the meetings of the Executive Committee of the Montreal Fair. In the same year, moreover, he participated in the regional biennale of Tehran, where the countries of Turkey and Pakistan also participated.<sup>188</sup> In 1967, Ziapour traveled to Germany to visit the cultural and artistic facilities of the country and then traveled to France to supervise the Iranian Anthropology exhibition in Paris. His book titled '*The Garments of the Tribes, Nomads, and Villagers of Iran*' was published this year. Until 1970, he also authored three other books on ethnic Iranian clothing.<sup>189</sup>

In 1973, he became the leading researcher for The Ferdowsi's Shahnameh Foundation to investigate the clothes and the types of combat instruments based on the stories of Shahnameh. In 1978, he worked on extensive research on Iranian decorative artifacts. Hence, he traveled to most northern and southern and central provinces of Iran. In the same

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<sup>187</sup> [www.ziapour.com/activities](http://www.ziapour.com/activities)

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.



year, he also participated in exhibitions held in China, Japan, Pakistan, Venice, Turkey, and France as a representative of the Ministry of Culture and Arts. This same year, he was also a teacher of the history of clothing at Drama School of Tehran and he was also the representative of the Ministry of Culture and Arts in the Iranian Art Issues Study Group at Tehran University. In 1979, he was the chairman of the Artists' Association and then he was retired from his governmental jobs.<sup>190</sup>

After the 1979 Revolution in Iran, he stayed in Iran and continued his research on the history of Iranian arts and ethnic groups.<sup>191</sup> From 1979 to 1998, he taught arts, namely painting, art history, sociology of art and textile design, based on anthropological studies, at various universities such as Al-Zahra University, Tehran Art University, and Tarbiat Modares University.<sup>192</sup> He taught the undergraduate, postgraduate and Ph.D. degrees. During these years, Ziapour has created several other works of paintings. From 1979 to 1997, he created roughly, 9 artworks, and also taught painting in his studio. He always argued that he had intended to introduce Western art and thus brings about a new spirit in the art community and that he had never aimed to bring about sheer imitation.<sup>193</sup> He believed that every artist must first recognize himself and then do his job. Every artist can create new art with the effect of his surroundings and habits. It is the duty of your tradition and culture. Therefore, many of his students and artists have a particular style in their paintings. Some of them are Bahman Mohasses, Parviz Kalantari, Mehdi Hosseini, Nasser Oveisi and many other artists of the second and third generations of artists in Iran.

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<sup>190</sup> [www.ziapour.com/activities](http://www.ziapour.com/activities).

<sup>191</sup> Tehran daily Newspaper, "The man from Fighting Cocks,"

<sup>192</sup> Azadivar, "Interview with Jalil Ziapour,"

<sup>193</sup> Morteza Monsef, "موضوعی مصافحہ: مصاحبہ جلال ظہاء پور نقش و نگار سیم و ست حول فرم عاصی ایران." ["Interview with Jalil Ziapour- the Role of Cubism on the Contemporary Art Evolution of Iran,"] In *Jalil Ziapour the Father of Iran's Modern Painting*, (Bandar Anzali: Caspino, May 2001): 23-24.

After a period of being hospitalized, Ziapour passed away on Dec. 30, 1999, at the age of 79. However, he will live on in the minds and hearts of Iranians. Indeed, years after the death of Master Ziapour, his family and friends and some private galleries and cultural art centers hold anniversaries and sometimes his paintings are exhibited.

He was a scholar, art theorist, painter, fighting cock's founder, and publisher of valued series of books in ancient history and Iranian clothing. Master Ziapour was an influential face in Iran society of art and culture and a serious character in academia. He was a self-reliant and firm person who clears in expressing his thoughts, he was a strong critic and analyst and was very decisive and had a unique personality. He was an inspiration for the next generations of young artists.

#### **4.6 Conclusion:**

Ziapour is a pioneer modern artist and an impressive scholar, which was innovative and active in various phases of his life. He was a graduate of Mostazrefe art school and University of Fine art in Tehran 1946 and achieved first-grade medal of art and culture. He was alongside with various graduates to continue his education in Europe and studied at Paris Beaux art school and Grande Chaumie`re's academy. While inspired by Cubism painting and modern schools of art at Andrea Lhote's studio, he was also interested to preserve Iranian ancient history and Iranian identity in his art writings and his paintings. In 1949, when he returned to Iran, he started his cultural activities in Fighting Cock Society and its magazine, to open a new doorway for the destiny of modern and national art in Iran. He influenced by the intellectualism and nationalism movements in Iran during the years 1949 to 1951 and his concept of modern art was not to imitate from the European art style, but to study them as an inspiration and consciousness. He intended to bring a new spirit to the art community of Iran and believed that artists must recognize themselves and then create their styles by the inspiration of their culture and national identity, creating a modern Iranian art. His avant-garde activities, during 1950s to forwarding are important and valuable in the society of art and culture of Iran. He is known as the pioneer of art criticism and academic talks. However, he was one of the first researchers in the field of ancient historical arts of Iranian people, especially clothing, painting, and sculpture, and documented them in the series of books during 1960s. His paintings also based on the ethnicity and traditional aspects of Iranian culture and inspired by his anthropological studies. This inspiration was important and caused the formation of a modern and national style of painting in Iran, integrating the aspects and aesthetics of modern art and national Iranian identity.



Figure 4.1: Jalil Ziapour, Artist Self Portrate, Oil on Canvas, 50×70 Cm, 1944- Figure 4.2: Ziapour at Paris Beax Art School, 1946-1948.



Figure 4.3: Fighting Cock Society members 1949: right to left: Gharib, Ziapour, Shirvani.



Figure 4.4: The Logo of Fighting Cock Magazine.



Figure 4.5: Ziapor in his trips during 1960's.

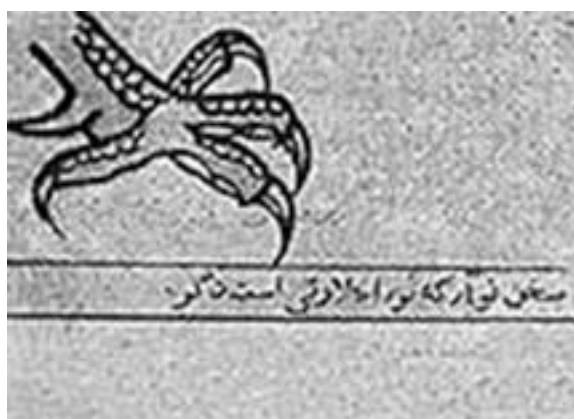


Figure 4.6: The Logo of Dessert and Cock's





Figure 4.7: Ziapour in his studio, during 1990's  
Source of Images: *Mojabi, the Pioneers*, Pages 20 & 39

## **Chapter 5/ Writings**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on Ziapour's writings, throughout what he wrote on the topics of modern art and historical Iranian art. Both of these topics were influential to his artistic practices and the themes of his paintings. Based on his career as a writer and researcher, looking at his writings would help recognize his views and thought process. In this section a look at his new and old writing styles is explained to explore why looking at his writing is important for this dissertation. Jalil Ziapour published various types of writings in the fields of art history, contemporary visual arts, and ancient costumes of the Iranian people as well as anthropology. His publications can be separated into two main areas: 1. Modern art; 2. Historical Iranian/Persian art and artifacts, particularly customs of ancient Iran. His writings published since 1949, at the time, when intellectualism and nationalism movements in Iran, emphasized on the Iranian modernism, with patriotic goals and democracy nature in social political, culture and art of Iran. He published a total of 28 books, most of them published between 1953 and 1977. For his historical publications particularly, he did field research as well as gallery/museum research. Eleven of his books focused on various topics related to ancient Iranian costumes. To this day, these books are still used as reference books. Ziapour also wrote many articles, critics, and texts containing his theoretical views on modern art. He published more than 73 articles from 1948 to 1999. He was also an important editor of the journal *Fighting Cock*, which he started in 1948. In this chapter, I have selected some of Ziapour's writings, both from his books and his articles. I tried to explore Ziapour's views on modern and national art, his criticism of realistic art, as well as his interests in ancient Persian and traditional ethnics. In this chapter, I will look at seven texts, 4 of them on modern art, and 3 of them on traditional Persian art.

## 5.2 Section of Modern Art articles:

### 5.2.1 Ziapour's Theory of Modern Art, (The Abolition of Theories of the Past and Contemporary Schools, from Primitive to Surrealism)

This article, published in the Fighting Cock magazine which established by Ziapour in 1948 Tehran. The main text also published in the book titled about art and literature by Naser Hariri<sup>194</sup>, which contains his interview with Ziapour and two of his essays. Ziapour in the essay discusses the evolution of art from naturalistic to pure abstract art, where he makes a case against supernaturalism of Iran at the time (the 1940's) as an anti-intellectual artistic form, while abstract art, for him, is closer to creativity and intellectualism.

In this article, he reviewed previous art terms and discussed their strengths and weaknesses, then compared their characteristics. In conclusion he reiterated why some abstract art forms, specifically Cubism, Fauvism, and ancient Persian art are superior to naturalistic forms of painting. His artistic writing can be roughly divided into three sections/topics: First, a description and critic of different art movements, including naturalistic painting. Second, he gave examples of what he considered superior artistic movements, such as Impressionism, Fauvism, and Cubism. Thirdly, he gave his solution for art in Iran. In the first part of his article, Ziapour defined three kinds of visual aspects in painting, which he then uses throughout the article.

1- Natural Forms or Real Form: [سورطیعی]<sup>195</sup> He uses these terms to refer to art that imitates nature as closely as possible).

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<sup>194</sup> Hariri, *About Art and Literature*, 15-28.

<sup>195</sup> Sovare Tabie.



2- Near-Unnatural Form: [صورت غیر طبعی نزدیک]<sup>196</sup> He uses this term to refer to semi-  
abstraction, which are shapes that have close similarities to common/natural forms semi-  
abstraction.

3-Far-Unnatural Forms: [صورت غیر طبعی دور]<sup>197</sup> He uses this term to refer to pure  
abstraction, where shapes can be similar to common shapes and unnatural close shapes,  
only from imagination and association of meanings.

In this article, he makes a case for the necessity of changes in art, driven by actions of the  
artists who need to push and experiment with techniques and styles. He says that any  
individual has its method, skills and personal ideas about art, it is not good to restrict them  
by asking them to follow narrow artistic styles and that, therefore, any artistic technique,  
will face some changes based on the artist's exploration.

In this section, he mentions different artistic movements, such as Classicism, Surrealism,  
Romanticism, etc. He mentions them as examples of artistic movements that were not able  
to reach the full potential of modern art, that is, to develop and change art. He indicated that  
artistic movements are often too restricted by the rules and goals of their movements and  
that, therefore, art could not evolve freely.

In the second section, Ziapour discussed Impressionism and Cubism as two artistic styles  
he believed were better than previously mentioned movements, as they were allowing more  
freedom of expression to the artists and that therefore painting could develop with today's  
[1948] world. For him, modern painting is also a connection between what happened in the  
past and what will be in the future. When the alphabet did not exist, visual art was used as a  
form of communication. However, when writing was invented, art became an expression of

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<sup>196</sup> Sovare gheire tabie nazdik.

<sup>197</sup> Sovare gheire tabie door.

what was written. For Zaipour, the goal of artists and painters is to express their internal states, though never disconnecting for the social themes and issues of their time. He says that expressing their inner feelings while at the same time relating to social themes and issues was something very difficult for artists to do.

Although he was promoting modern art, he expressed appreciation for classical-ism and romanticism, as styles that tried to reach perfection in representation of nature and human emotions and although they aimed at technical perfection, they were limited in their visual themes. For him modern art reaches beyond natural elements and therefore is not restricted by visual elements. For him, staying too faithful to natural form restricts artistic expression. This is because artists focus on representing the natural form, rather than to express their internal intentions.

Finally, Ziapour, discussed the importance for artists of having 'strong technical skills' as well as knowledge and understanding of 'design and coloring,' as these were foundational to good paintings. Realist painters had a good understanding of these skills, however, they were limited to copying and redoing what their teachers and masters had taught them such as how to combine and use different colors. There were only a few artists who were able to go beyond what their teachers/masters had taught them and therefore go and created new forms of paintings and, therefore, by doing so, helped art to evolve.

He then gave the example of Impressionism and Fauvism, who pushed the boundaries of painting by inventing new ways of using colors. He also gave the example of Cubist and Fauvist artists who did not shy away from using Gray amongst other colors, even if most artists refrained from using it. Artists should use and 'deform' colors, so they can go beyond the representation of natural form and express their perceptions so that visual

elements become conceptual themes on their own. He explains that his theoretical point of view when it comes to painting is that the artist should focus on colors to create conceptual themes rather than try to represent the natural world. For example, instead of representing natural elements of spring, summer, autumn, and winter, artists should try to express the sensations of the seasons, in other words, how the seasons make them feel.

He concluded by saying that expression and the breaking of natural forms are at the core of modern art. He then gave examples of Fauvism and Cubism as artistic movements focusing on expression and deformation. This focus on the expression of color and breaking of form could only lead to the complete abstraction of form, which he saw as the ultimate achievement beyond the natural form. Most of the art movements till today, ignored the basic principles of painting and the specific beauty because painters are still forced themselves to employ the (natural elements) and (unnatural close elements). Then in continue, he explained about Impressionism and Cubism, which go beyond to reach to specific beauty but however, they are still on the restrictions.

In Ziapour's view, one of the brave steps of modern artists in painting was mixing the (decorative painting) with (pictorial painting) which was based on the normal requests and circle of tastes, however, later on; it goes forward to the deformation and abstraction.

Impressionism was the first style to move art in the right direction, where colors would be seen first, before the subject-matter. Because of that, the understanding of the principles of painting (focusing on visual elements) would be stronger. Cubism was one of the strongest movements which deformed shapes and made them vague, although they had rules of representations that were also limitations. Nevertheless, they valued personal expression, which was very important for Ziapour.

Ziapour, in the last section of his essay, described the goal in painting and what should a painter do in his contemporary time. Ziapour called for painters to create what he called more 'academic pieces' which are deeply expressive and conceptual, rather than simply copying nature, which new technologies, such as photography, can achieve. Therefore, after people move away from "Natural Forms" and "Unnatural Close Forms" in painting, they will be able to focus on the association between "Unnatural Far Forms" (nearly link to Pure Abstraction) in painting and their conceptual meaning,

In conclusion:

- A. Painters must concentrate on color and design, which are two kinds of unnatural far forms and composition.
- B. When painting becomes more strongly unnatural in its concept, then it will be stronger and of greater artistic value.
- C. Any kind of form, image, and theme, which is related to common nature, violates the skills of painting. The conceptual meaning of a painting should not be bound to the painting's subject-matter and predicate similarly to the normal texts; because, any visual element, such as line and color, form and composition, individually carried meaning and itself is a theme.
- D. Only by replacing natural forms and unnatural close forms with a focus on color combinations and attention to design, as aesthetic forms in them, can a painting be able to achieve excellence and improve painting.
- E. If painting contains the natural forms and unnatural close forms, then the artist should deliberately destroy these forms in a way that are not similar to nature.
- F. Painters should move their arts beyond pictorial painting, so they can create the specific beauty, based on pleasure harmonies and expressiveness, bringing the life

of their artistic designs. Both artists and people who are familiar with naturalistic art must now try to understand the beauty that is specific to painting, which comes from the appreciation of visual themes and visual elements in abstract art, rather than subject-matter.

- G. Till now, attaining beauty through painting was not possible and painting could not achieve its specific beauty. Moreover, as it was not 'independent' from practical aspects of art, such as narrative art based on literature.
- H. The beauty of painting is different from other arts and must be understood separately.
- I. No new method will appear in a vacuum. Art changes, movements are created within societies. Artistic changes happen within their own time, in other words, they are a product of their own time. Therefore, Ziapour means that his theory was also a product of its time in Iran.

### 5.2.2 Modern Art

Another important piece of writing by Ziapour was an article titled *Modern Art*<sup>198</sup> published in the fourth issue of the weekly magazine *Shahsavār*, in October 1950. This article is a transcript of a presentation Ziapour gave to the Giti art society. His talks, including this 1950 article, were later compiled and published in a book compilation back in 2003. This is where this particular article was taken.

In this writing, Ziapour attempted to define modern art. He talked about the importance of modern art and why people should pay attention to it. He used the article to articulate his vision of what modern art is. Firstly, he defined two discourses in modern art, which he described by asking two important questions. This article is an attempt at describing what modern art is.

- A. What is the goal of modern art?
- B. If the goal of modern art is correct, is it then possible to accomplish this goal using the artistic skills found and taught in Iran (1950)?

He tried to answer his first question: what the goal of modern art is.

- A- His first conclusions to this question were that modern art aimed to be different. It means that it wanted to create the things which previous art terms couldn't do well.

Ziapour was aware that his position would not be welcomed and would have detractors.

This is mostly since artistic found at the presentation was given taught in schools at the time, believed that naturalistic style could depict all topics in excellent ways. To support his claim, he looked at examples from various art forms, all of which believed by the artists to be able to perfectly express certain feelings. According to Ziapour, different critics of modern art in Iran criticized modern by saying that modern artists could not create anything with substance, or indeed better than realistic artists.

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<sup>198</sup> Tehrani, *Selection of Academic Talks*, 202-209.

However, he did not agree and gave the example of researchers and other intellectuals who would always try to push new boundaries, which would start in the past, would always lead to the future. For Ziapour, simply repeating what already existed was not enough. Although past generations left masterpieces that could be influential and important in today's time, they could not, however good, define the spirit of modern times. Therefore, he did not believe that contemporary artists could perfectly represent their times by using skills that had become redundant.

Ziapour explained that modern thinkers and artists would need modern reference or a modern template. By that, he meant that new ideas could not be represented or expressed using old ways or formats of painting. The contemporary time required a new format for art (modern template), which would harmonize with modern life.

In this article, Ziapour indicated that modern discourses on art needed 'sharp thoughts' and 'intense feelings' which would come from 'quick minds'. In other words, for him, to understand art and especially "modern art", the mind and feeling should be quick and intense. If not, the understanding of artwork will be unpleasant.

Paintings made in Iran at the time he wrote the article were not satisfying to him. He considered the type of art (representational and naturalistic) as unfit to define the 1960s in Iran. The question was: what, and in what manner, should they paint. To help answer this question, he wanted avant-garde artists to establish new ways of painting. Answering his core questions, Ziapour concluded that the goal of modern art was to create new ways to create art, ways that would be relevant to modern life in Iran in the 1950's.

B- Now the second discussion here is about purpose and action. Reading his article, it is obvious that Ziapour wanted artists to start exploring new ways of painting right away.

Paraphrasing him, he wanted people to stop discussing the need to paint in a modern way and do it. They needed to accomplish the goal of modern art. As with his previous writings, he once again used Cubism as an example of a new and modern way to paint, a new artistic format that transformed the way artists expressed and communicated feelings.

Based on this article, it is obvious that Ziapour was biased towards Cubism, or at least had a great appreciation for the artistic movement. More so than other artistic movements such as Impressionism, Fauvism, Academic Classic, and Realism, Ziapour was influenced by the coloring, designs, and themes of Cubism, because, as he said in this article, it can foster and entice the curious mind of the modern thinkers. When it comes to Cubism, Ziapour said that colorings are more profound, designs are more accurate and themes are more important and expressive. To understand modern art Ziapour indicated that we have to look closely at the artworks to assess if they were of their time. For him, it was important that avant-garde artists be bold and brave when painting and promoting modern art. It was essential for them to understand that changed and that nothing was certain or absolute.

The classic artists must not ignore modern artists and call them deviant, because both of them followed an excellence goal. Modern art was a great movement which established by the efforts of its pioneers. To evaluate the success of modern art, Ziapour said that we must evaluate their technical evolution and advance/promote new ways of expression even if the Iranian society of the 1950s was not yet enthusiastic about modern art.



### 5.2.3 The Concept of Modern Art

In the mid-1950s Ziapour gave a talk to the Fighting Cock Society. This talk was later published (1955) in the Post Tehran magazine (issue 546) and was titled *Modern Art Concept*.<sup>199</sup> Once again, in this article, he gives his explanation/interpretations of modern art. They are summarized very quickly here:

The art of painting is essentially the creation of innovative scenes of thoughts, intentions, and wishes, which are then represented by using strong technical skills. The modern artist should make an effort to use their skills in painting to create more expressive paintings. Once again, it indicated that modern artists should also be aligned with their period time. In fact, for Ziapour, modern art was not bound by any rules, except the rules artists have themselves created their artistic structures and ways of representation.

For Ziapour, the goal of modern art was to reveal the inner thoughts, which it could do more accurately, as it was not limited by any boundaries. By exploring modern art, artists will be able to work on topics that people don't usually pay attention to. For Ziapour, to be able to understand modern paintings, one must go beyond the natural close forms (naturalism) and be aware of the language of colors and composition. In other words, for Ziapour, modern art could be challenging, to both the artists and the audience. However, the goal of modern artists was not to make their paintings obscure and unclear.

Ziapour concluded by saying that modern artists should understand their time-periods, history, and environments, and how these influenced the society and people around them. On the other hand, the artist must concentrate and practice his skills by studying the psychological characteristic of colors, designs, and compositions.

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<sup>199</sup> Tehrani, *Selection of Academic Talks*, 238-241.

#### 5.2.4 Explanation of Comprehensive Plan

In 1993, Ziapour gave a talk at the second painting biennale of Tehran, held at the contemporary art museum of Tehran.<sup>200</sup> His talk was later published (2003) in a book compilation of Ziapour's artistic researches and talks.<sup>201</sup> The core of the text is on the aspects of national and local art. He also gave a comprehensive plan to represent identity in painting. He first defines what national identity is and how Iranian artists can be and remain Iranian on the global stage. He then expanded on the concepts of what is an artist, on imitation and the goal of artists. In his conclusion, he suggests how Iranian artists can explore native topics and which topics are suitable for them to paint.

At first, Ziapour started by describing what Iranian identity, which was, for him, defined by traditional aspects of culture. He encouraged artists to explore traditional and native themes and concepts in their paintings. This exploration of Iranian identity through traditional culture had been an important concept for him throughout the years. However, he emphasized that if the goal is to become global yet remain Iranian, one should not simply copy western artistic styles. For him, Iranian artists could become global by preserving their Iranian identity.

Ziapour also explains that how artists explore their identity is up to them. The representation of their identity is a conscious act that artists must go through. They, therefore, have a key role. Ziapour then continues by saying that artists, if they want to be modern Iranian artists, must pay attention to elements which are external to themselves, such as color and design in their paintings, and then also pay attention to elements which they find within themselves, such as their inner thoughts and inspirations. To be able to

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<sup>200</sup> Although it was identified as the second biennale, it was only the second after the Islamic Revolution. There was another biennale before 1978.

<sup>201</sup> Tehrani, *Selection of Academic Talks*, 361-366. روشنگری طرح جامع

communicate their ideas effectively, artists must bring together these internal and external elements. According to Ziapour, each society is trying to create its own identity. To do this, he recommends that people pay attention to their environments so they can extract what is specific to them. Yet at the same time, artists, as global artists, must be able to explore the world and its different identities, so they can then find new ways to think and represent their own identity.

This exploration of their environment is part of his comprehensive plan to express Iranian identity. By paying attention to their environment, artists will be able to take and paint with authentic Iranian colors and designs. By doing this, when artists represent Iran in different foreign biennales, people will be able to recognize and value their paintings for their Iranian identity.

Ziapour suggested that to achieve creativity and self-consciousness, artists must study and discover both foreign styles and native styles. Artists, as creators, must be subjective (personal ideas) and conceptual (artworks based on these ideas). To create their artworks, artists need to take their inspiration from their environments and then they have to have the skill to express their ideas based on these inspirations.

What Ziapour is trying to say here is that colors, brushstrokes, surfaces, and designs are instruments an artist will use to explore the content of an artwork. If an artist, by using his skills, inspirations, visual elements, etc., can achieve great art, then he or she will become an important figure in society. For Ziapour, two subject-matters were more important than others for artists trying to create 'authentic' Iranian art. First, would be the environmental art, which would be inspired by Iran's nature, regional colors and climate. The second was spiritual art, which would take as its inspiration the Islamic art of the past, including

historical mosques. For Zaipour, visual elements, particularly colors were meaningful in the creation of Iranian art, as they were taken from the natural and cultural environments of Iran. For example, the colors of ancient mosques, such as Yellow, Gray and Light Ochre were often used on ancient mosques, yet these were, according to him, inspired by Iran's warm climate. For him, these warm colors expressed a kind of spiritual feeling in combination with the Light Blue of mosques, like a gemstone. In conclusion, his conscious comprehensive plan was based on the idea that artists should look at what is new in western art, but then take as their sources of inspiration, their environments and, culture, both contemporary and historical.

#### **5.2.5 Conclusion:**

From the four texts, 'The abolition of theories of the past and modern schools from Primitive to Surrealism, 1948', 'Modern art 1950', 'The concept of modern art, 1955' and 'Explanation of comprehensive plan 1993', it is clear that Ziapour was interested in the evolution of modern art in Iran and taking action to promote it during 1940's and 50's. He emphasized on the formation of a potential modern art covered by techniques, skills and creative expression to achieve a beauty which is special and independent. He believed that modern art aims to invent new ways that are different from the past and it is an emergence of a new model associated with new times. If the modern Iranian artists acquire strong understanding of colors, designs, history and psychology, they would be self-conscious and will be able to create a strong scholarly painting. The characteristic of national and local traditional art can be suggested as a plan to introduce identity into a painting. To achieve this, artists would need to be inspired by their environmental and spiritual surroundings to create a modern and national form of art.

### 5.3 Section of Historic Ancient writings

#### 5.3.1 The Art of Painting and Sculpture in Iran from Ancient time to Islam era

Although Ziapour wrote extensively on modern art, he was also very interested in the ancient art of the region. In this book which was published in 1953,<sup>202</sup> Ziapour studied the motives, designs, and coloring of ancient art of Iran from prehistoric time 9000 years ago to Sassanid Empire 651Cce. The designs and paintings he highlighted in this book were taken from surviving samples of ceramic shards, metal pieces, textiles and stone engravings which belonged to the various people, ethnics, and folks in ancient Iran. He saw characteristics that were common to all periods, particularly when it comes to colors and figurative presentations. That is not to say, however, that ancient Iranian art remained the same throughout the years, as he also says differences in the art history of ancient Iran.

In the introduction of the book, Ziapour mentioned the wealth of ancient art in Iran, which could be a source of inspiration for artists of his time. He defined art, as phenomenon that carried a pleasant beauty and can be an influential force to bring changes in the social environment.

In his article titled '*The abolition of theories of the past and contemporary schools from Primitive to Surrealism*' published in 1948, he indicated that historic art should be the inspirational basis of the Iranian people. In this article, he reviewed different artistic terms and modern movements but indicated that to achieve self-recognition, Iranian modern artists must look within themselves and their past. For example, as generally, it is recognized that Ziapour himself was influenced by the art and the people of ancient Persian

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<sup>202</sup> , Jalil Ziapour, *فرقناشی و یکدگرینوایی و ایران زمین از گذشتن سببهای ار پوتاسیراسر اسلام*. [The art of painting and sculpture in Iran land from ancient time to Islam] (Tehran: Farhang va Honar, 1953), 224 Pages.

civilizations.<sup>203</sup> Indeed, as I will describe and analyze it accurately, in a later chapter, we can see these influences in both his decorative and figurative paintings. To study the core aspects of Iranian designs and motives, Ziapour discussed the geographical and regional specificities of the Iran Plateau. His book was not only an observation of artistic works but was an academic study based on several scholarly types of researches on the topic of ancient Persia.

In the different sections of the book, Ziapour reviewed Iran Plateau's various civilizations starting from the prehistoric time including the Akkadians, Babylonians, Ashurians, Hittites, Medes, Achaemenids, Parthians, and Sassanid. He assessed nearly 159 artifacts in his book, gave detailed interpretations and compared the work of the different ancient group of people to each other. Ziapour explained that he saw relations in the arts of the different time-periods. For example, the decorative and simplified styles of the prehistoric era continued during the Medes and Achaemenid empires. That is not to say that they were simply copying each other. For example, the Parthians followed the Achaemenids heavy decorative style, yet elaborated and made it even more magnificent by somehow employing more highlights in their stone engravings. [Figures 5.1 & 5.2]

In the book, Ziapour discussed many art forms and medium. In the prehistoric and Medes era, most of the artifacts were in ceramic, although he looked at a few stone engravings. However, in the Achaemenid era, he described a variety of huge stone engravings as well as the numerous ceramic artifacts. During the Parthian and Sassanid time-periods, some other artifacts were added to the study, such as metal trays, textiles, and rugs.

To describing the artworks, he focused mostly on colors, patterns, and subject matters.

He emphasizes the fact that ancient artists used geometric patterns in their designs as well

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<sup>203</sup> Keshmirshekan, *Contemporary Iranian Art*, 107.

as solid colors and symbolic motives, especially mountain goats, deer, horses, birds, anthropomorphic figures, birds and plants, especially 'wheat stems'. [Figures 5.3&5.4] For each time-period, he described important artifacts, describing their historical background and narrative, as well as the visual description.

The colors were often a combination of earthy colors, often with a Red, Yellow or Cream background with other colors added as decoration, such as Gray, Brown and Black., As mentioned by Ziapour, these artifacts, were used in the daily life, and were useful household tools, but they also had important commercial aspects.





Figure 5.1: Naghshe Rostam Engraving, Sassanid Era Achaemenids



Figure 5.2: Stone Engraving of Persepolis,



Figure 5.3: Susa, Sialk 4000 BCE, Symbolic Motives, Wheat, Goat and Plants.



Figure 5.4: Susa Sialk Ceramic Pot and motives with geometric patterns and symbolic motives. 4000BCE.

Resource of Images: Ziapour's Books.



### 5.3.2 Ancient Iranian Costumes in several dynasties.

Alongside his modern art activities and his art historical studies, Ziapour also researched the ancient costume of the Iranian people which were published in a series of books from 1964 to 1971. Some of these books were divided by dynasties/time-periods, but others were focusing on specific ethnic or identifiers, such as Zoroastrianism<sup>204</sup>, or a variety of clothing in Kurdish, Baluchi, Lur, Ghashghaie, Turkmans, Bandari and more of other Iranian ethnics<sup>205</sup>. With this series of books on costumes, it is obvious that Ziapour was very interested in costumes of the region, which he, again, saw them as 'Iranian'. In this series, he focused on the history of the costumes, their specific colors, components and characteristics. He believed that there are historical relations and influences of clothing, for each period till the contemporary time, which still would be seen in the clothing of some people, tribes, and nomads of Iran.

Here I will be reviewing two of his books on costumes, one titled "*The clothing of Iranian women since the oldest times*", published in 1968<sup>206</sup>, and one titled "*The Clothing of Iranian women since 14<sup>th</sup> centuries ago till the end of Qajar era*", published in 1970<sup>207</sup>.

Ziapour was trying to gain ethnological and anthropological information about the Aryan race and he believed that studying ancient costumes of the regions would help in that regard. He also looked at previous art historical and archaeological studies including studies of the earliest civilizations in the regions (13000-8000 BCE). He also looked at specific artifacts, such as the *Pazirik Rug* (500BCE) with its many representations of the

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<sup>204</sup> Jalil Ziapour, *جاءل خلاء پورپوشاک اشو زرتشت و مبدان*, [The clothing of prophet Zoroaster and the Clerics] (Tehran: Farhang va Honar, 1971), 255 pages.

<sup>205</sup> Jalil Ziapour, *جاءل خلاء پورپوشاک طلل ما. چاند شیدان و روسنیکان ایران*, [The clothing of Tribes, Nomads and Farmers of Iran] (Tehran: Farhang va Honar, 1967), 307 pages.

<sup>206</sup> Jalil Ziapour, *جاءل خلاء پورپوشاک زنن ایران ازکهنترین زمان*, [The clothing of Iranian women since the oldest times] (Tehran: Farhang va Honar, 1967), 221 pages.

<sup>207</sup> Jalil Ziapour, *جاءل خلاء پورپوشاک زنان طرلی از چاره قرن پیش اسالم تا اواخر دوره قاجاریه*, [The clothing of Iranian women since 14<sup>th</sup> centuries ago till the end of Qajar] (Tehran: Farhang va Honar, 1970), 429 pages.

clothing of people [Figure 5.5]. He also looked at representations from Persepolis, as well as cylindrical seals and stone engravings [Figure 5.6].

He also discussed gender, including women's way of dressing, and respected members of society and the family connector. They were guardians of holy fire, were responsible for pottery making and holding the family together. For Ziapour, it was obvious that women were important for the ancient civilization of the region. For example, he talked at length of *Anahita*, a mother/nature goddess of water and bounty who remained a major godhead in the regions for a century. He also described and discussed the dresses of Anahita as she was a very common representation in the region. The clothing style of Anahita documented from the statue samples in Iran ancient museum and Louvre Museum. [Figure 5.7]

Ziapour studied the position and status of women of ancient Iran, as well as their ways of dressing since he was looking for a native way of dressing that would be representative of Iran. In his paintings, he represented women wearing ancient long dresses and coats in a variety of colors which he studied and presented in this series of book.

Ziapour also pointed out that, the clothing of men and women in pre-modern Iran were all very similar and based on the same style and coloring. They wore long leather coats and felt hats made of sheep wool. Also, they wore a kind of wrinkled pants. Today, this type of clothing is still worn by some tribal people. [Figure 5.8]

As with other publications, Ziapour discussed colors. For clothing, he identified colors that were specific to the historical region, such as Red, Purple, and Blue. [Figure 5.9] He did not focus only on colors however, he also described embroidery and how it developed in the region. He indicated that throughout the dynasties, the clothing did not change much, only some changes were made base on their taste.

He did mention however that in the Sassanid and Parthian dynasties, there were some developments in the skill of textile weaving which continued to develop in later dynasties in the central cities of Iran such as Isfahan, Khurasan, Khuzestan, and Susa. Ziapour also mentioned the high quality of the textile in these cities during the 13th to 18th centuries CE and used the accounts of travelers such as Marco Polo, to support his claims. In the next decades from Seljuks onwards he then mentioned the very high quality of decorative skills of the textile makers who now used Pearl Embroidered and Brocade in a variety of colors. [Figure 5.10 & 5.11]

Ziapour discussed the variety of cultural conventions during the Safavid, Qajar, and Zand dynasties to the beginning of the Pahlavi time-period. These changes in the cultural conventions influenced the clothing style as well. For example, during the Qajar, women wore a black veil to cover their faces and whole bodies when they moved outside the house. However, inside the house women, especially richer Iranian women, often wore delicately embroidered or even had silk brocades added to their garments. [Figure 5.12 & 5.13]

Ziapour also described the differences in the regional ways of dressing and attributed these differences to the different climates of Iran. Due to changes in the climate (warm, cold, rainy, dry), some people preferred to wear long dresses while some others wore pants and coats. However, he also identified differences in the social and economic situations of the people to explain the regional differences in their clothing.

Therefore, in this series of books, we might say that Ziapour firstly aimed at the document and collect the different clothing designs of the region from Ancient time to his time, the Pahlavi. He emphasized colors and other decorative materials such as embroidery. He also explained the characteristics of these decorations and designs to show 'native' types of

dresses or the Iranian way of dressing from the past to the present. He was interested in reviving these ancient costumes as ethnic heritage. Later, he used these designs in his paintings and even gave courses on ancient costumes at the AL Zahra University of Tehran, the first university in Iran to give courses in the ancient costumes of the country.



Figure 5.5: Women Clothing, Paziric Rug, 500BCE, Achaemenid Parsi Era. Source of Images: Ziapour's Book Page 65.



Figure 5.6: Persepolis, Stone Engravings, 500 Bce, Takhte Jamshid, Iran. Source of Image: Ziapor's Book, page 51.





Figure 5.7: Anahita, Naghshe Rostam, Iran, Sassanid Era- Figure 5.8: Medes Woman, 550 BCE.



Figure 5.9: Textile, Sassanid era



Figure 5.10: Woman, Clothing in Safavid era

Resource of Images: Ziapour's Book pages: 53- 55-112&113



Figure 5.11: A Safavid Queen Painting      Figure 5.12: A Qajar Queen      Figure 5.13: Illustrated poem book of Hafez, 1430 BCE

Source of all Images: Ziapour's Book, Pages 137 to 173

### 5.3.3 The Coloring of Iranian Artworks from Ancient time to Safavid dynasty.

This book, published in 1974, is another text by Ziapour where he writes about ancient Iranian artworks.<sup>208</sup> In this writing Ziapour expanded on the topic of colors that were used in the artworks of several dynasties, from ancient Iran 3000 BCE to the Medes people (728-549 BCE), the Achaemenid dynasty (550-350 BCE), the Parthian Empire, the Sassanid Empire, (224-651 CCE) the Il-khanate (13th CCE) Hegira (15th CCE) and Safavid (16th - 18th CCE). Regardless of the period he discussed, he saw a link, and heritage between these ancient civilizations and the modern Iranian people. He usually referred to the region as the 'Iranian Plateau' and used terms such as 'ancient Iranian people' and 'our artists' when referring to artists and craftsmen of these historical times.

<sup>208</sup> Jalil Ziapour, *تجلی‌های رنگ آمیزی در آثار فرمای دره‌ها از کهن‌ترین زمان تا دوره صفویه*. [An introduction to coloring in artworks since the oldest times until the Safavid era] (Tehran: Farhang va Honar, 1974), 162 pages.

However, Ziapour saw these colors as the ‘authentic’/regional,<sup>209</sup> colors of Iran. He is looking for a relationship between these colors and the authentic characters of them which can explore an Iranian theme. For this reason, for this book, he chose specific artworks from each time-period dynasty based on their coloring combinations, rather than their subject matter. In this book, he looked at different periods, identified the colors most used, as well as the different symbols represented on the different artworks. He sometimes gave the symbolic meanings of the colors he identified, but not always. This book is more of a survey rather than an analytical text.

Reading this book, it is important to point out that Ziapour was very interested in the artworks of these times periods. It is obvious that he truly appreciated the historical artifacts of the region, all the way from the beginning of the historical period to the 18th century CE. He believed that artists during this time represented unique aspects of nature to create their pieces. He saw these representations of nature as related to the stories of human life. Furthermore, Zaipour was interested in the colors used at the time, which he associated with the environment (colors of nature) and with ethnic people of the Iran Plateau.

For example, he started his survey with the ancient people of the Iran Plateau and how they employed the Red and Yellow pottery, sometimes with Black decoration. These were the earliest signs of coloring in artifacts of the region. Ziapour believed that people’s environment and climate were very influential for the choices of colors used in their artworks. In other words, the colors used were a product of people experiencing their environments. Therefore, he emphasized on ethnicity and geography to explain people’s choices of colors.

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<sup>209</sup> In my analysis, somehow, regional, environmental and ethnicity colors of Iran. Typically, they inspired by geographical situation, climate, fruits, bird, plants and animals, life style of people and folkloric stories, decorative and mineral stones, seasons, nature, etc. These colors usually seen as: variety of colors in blue and dark blue, cream and beige, red and red purple, cinnamon brown and olive green, hina, golden yellow and etc.



He mentioned that for the ancient Iranian people (his term). Colors had different roles and usages, such as cosmetics and decoration of house furniture. He was so interested in colors, that he spent a lot of time explaining the different types of pigments (copper, silica, sulfur, lead, etc.) artists used at the time, including how to produce the pigment powder and how to mix them to create artworks.

In his book, he also included most, if not most of the regions of Iran, not just its capital or urban centers. For example, he included artworks from Kurdistan, Azerbaijan, Susa and, Sialk. The samples before 3000 BC were mostly in simple or dual colors and abstract motives of people, animals, and plants. The colors shades were more in light or dark tones of Turquoise Green. [Figures 5.14, 5.15 & 5.16]

As a whole, Ziapour in this book reviewed the coloring of the ancient art of the Iranian plateau, which he called Iranian art and 'our' art. He focused particularly on works and visual elements related to an ethnic coloring which he says as a defining Iranian theme in the artworks throughout the different eras he covered in the book. Most importantly he argued that there is a sort of hierarchy of coloring or a connection between the coloring from ancient times, through the Achaemenids and ending with the Safavid era.

He described what happened in the art of the region in case of color combinations. For example, he started by saying that early works were more monochromatic, or had colors that were more powerful than others, to become, more and more colorful, yet balanced, through time. Artifacts also become more varied. Although the book is not a complete survey of ancient art from the region, it is a good indicator of what Ziapour was interested in, and what he saw as the defining visual elements of 'Iranian' art. Because of this, it can help analyze his modern paintings.



Ziapour believed that there was a sort of continuation or evolution of coloring between different eras, starting from the Achaemenids and connected to other dynasties. Some dynasties, however, such as the Parthians were influenced by external forces, in this case, Greek Art. Reading this book, he paid particular attention to the Achaemenids, the Ill Khanates and the Safavids.

For the Achaemenids, Ziapour gave examples a variety of Achaemenid colors, particularly on enameled ceramic works. He identified two artworks -- Guard Soldiers [Figure 5-17] and Pazirik Felt [Figure 5-18], as having 'authentic, earth tone' colors, that is green, blue and ochre. He identified these colors as 'authentic' as they would continue to be influential in the remaining periods of the region.

Ill Khanates and Mughal periods were also important for him, as the artworks become increasingly complex. Ziapour, defined this time as a development of artistic views in a wide range of techniques and skills, particularly in painting. He brought various examples such as two paintings from the illustrated books of *Calila e Dimna* and *Baysonghor Shahnameh*. He appreciated various aspects of these paintings, including their color combination as well as the clothing of the different figures. [Figure 5.19]

He indicated that at this time, colors were now in harmony with one another, creating balanced artworks. The subject matters were often based on the literary stories and poems of "Shahnameh". Dark colors such as cinnamon brown and shades of black were used to outline the figures, while he emphasized the use of cream and golden yellow for the backgrounds. One of the favorite painters of Ziapour, from this era, was "Kamal Odin Behzad", whom Ziapour described as having created many brilliant pieces with a variety of deep colors and harmonized forms. Ziapour said that "Behzad", was the shiny star of 900

Hegira, and appreciated him as an artist who has made everything alive into his paintings. [Figure 5.20] Of the Safavid era, Ziapour emphasized more on the scenery pieces with decorative features. The colors appeared in a variety of symmetrical designs with a Cream base, coordinated with Dark Blue, Purple, Green Blue, Yellow, and Pink. During this time, four courses of art, feathered as industrial trade such as, gilding, ceramic enameling, carpet weaving and textile dying which were centralized in Isfahan and other cities. Ziapour mentioned Ultramarine Blue, as the most authentic color, of that time. However, artists at the time mastered color combinations, and Ultramarine appeared beside a variety of warm and cold colors, which was unique at the time. [Figure 5.20 & 5.21] In this book, Ziapour identified visual elements, mostly focusing on colors, including specific colors, but also their combinations, that he identified as ‘authentically’ Iranian. He looked at different periods, artists, and artifacts, identifying which ones, in his opinions, were more important and influential.

#### **5.3.4 Conclusion:**

By reviewing these three books of Ziapour in the topics of ancient historical studies such as, 'The art of painting and sculpture in Iran from ancient time to Islam era, 1953', 'Ancient Iranian costumes in several dynasties, two editions 1968 and 1970', and 'The coloring of Iranian artworks from ancient time to Safavid dynasty 1974.', it is recognized that Ziapour was interested to search and write about the ancient art of the region. His studies include several periods from prehistoric time to the first civilizations and empires such as Medes, Achaemenid to contemporary dynasties such as Qajar and Safavid. He chose highlighted works and samples, ceramics shards, metal pieces, textiles, paintings and engravings to saw the characteristics, coloring and figurative presentations. He described the differences, similarities, and connections of them together and notified the wealth of ancient arts that can be an inspiration for the modern artists of the time. In his ancient historical studies, he mostly focused on clothing and saw a link and heritage between these historic samples and modern Iranian people among the anthropology and ethnology, identities and ethnics. He appreciated the historical dressing of the region and was looking for an exploration of the Iranian theme which defines identification for native art.



Figure 5.14: Blue Polychrome Ceramic Pot, Susa, 2200 CE - Figure 5.15: Cream Ceramic, Azerbaijan, Iran, 2000 CE.

Source of Images : Ziapour's Book, Pages 10 & 12.

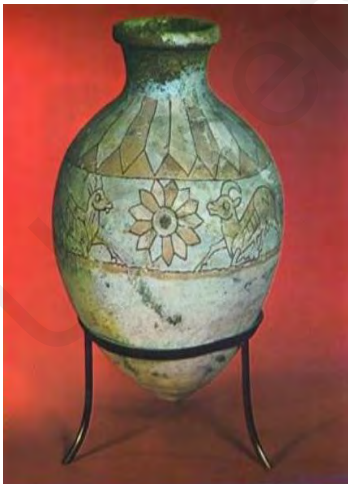


Figure 5.16: Patterned Cream, Ceramic Pot, Zivieh Kurdistan, 800 CE- Figure 5.17: Achaemenid Colored Enameled, Guard Solders, Susa, 500 CE- Figure 5.18: Paziric Felt, Earth Tone Colors, 500 CE.

Source of Images: Ziapour's Book, Pages: 25-34-36





Figure 5.19: Painting of Kamal al-Din Behzad, 1500 CE.



Figure 5.20: A Safavid, Patterned Carpet 1800

Source of Images: Ziapour's Book, Pages 139 & 173



Figure 5.21: A Safavid Enameled, Figurative Painted Wall Ceramic Tile, Isfahan, Iran, 1700 CE, Keeping in Victoria & Albert, Museum of London. Source of Image: Ziapour's Book, Page 146.

## Chapter 6/ Analysis

### 6.1 Introduction:

In this chapter, I looked at Ziapour's paintings from various dimensions. I analyze the selected artworks of him to explore the importance of them as integration of national identity and modern art aesthetics about different stages of his life. Ziapour's painting is constantly, influenced by his artistic activities, social and political changes of the time, his artistic and anthropological researches and philosophical views about the concepts of art and life. He created nearly 40 pieces of artworks such as paintings, drawings, and statues. As he was busier with the publications and his cultural administrative duties, he left few artworks, but those few artworks of him were important and innovative. Some of his paintings are keeping in private collections and some other is keeping in Contemporary Art Museum of Tehran. In this chapter, I analyze 8 paintings of Ziapour, which can support the main highlights of this dissertation. I divided his artworks into three different periods. At the first phase, from 1944 to 1950, he created nearly 12 paintings in pure modern styles, while carried Iranian subject matter. Most of these paintings, created from 1949 to 1950, which usually titled the Fighting Cock period works. I chose one of them for my analysis, titled: *Sepahsalar Mosque*. In phase 2, from 1953 to 1985, his paintings created in a personal style titled, 'private and national style' and mostly are figurative pieces. At this phase, he inspired by the Iranian tribal ethnicity and their symbolic visual elements for the creation of his modern paintings. For the analysis of this part, I selected four works of him titled: *Turkman Girl*, *Zeynab Khatun*, *Lur Girl*, and *The Nomads*. In phase 3, from 1991 to 1997, his paintings were still created in his personal and national style but nearer to pure abstraction, while still presenting Iranian characteristics. Which for this level of analysis I selected three works of him titled: *My Life*, *The World Within*, and *Me and Flight*.

## 6.2 Phase 1: Modern paintings with Iranian subject matter

In this phase, from 1944 to 1950, Ziapour created nearly 12 pieces of paintings mostly in Impressionism, Expressionism, Cubism and Abstract Cubism styles, using Iranian subject matter. 10 pieces of these paintings from 1949, dated when Ziapour returned from his education trip in Paris to Iran and established Fighting Cock Society and movement. From these series, there are few images left and there is limited information as they are keeping in private collections. For this section of the analysis, I chose one of his Cubism Abstract works which highlighted the main views of Ziapour works during that time on his life, characterized as modern Iranian. His works during this time were new experiences in combination style, using the elements and aesthetics of modern art, especially Cubism with Iranian theme and subject matter to the composition of his paintings.

The paintings of this level are as followed:

*Artist's Self Portrait*, 1944, Oil on Canvas, 50x70 cm, Impressionism.

*The Rise of Kaveh the Blacksmith*, 1944, Oil on Canvas, 100x70cm, Expressionism.

*Three Oriental Chess Players*, 1949, Oil on Canvas, 50x80 cm, Expressionism.

*A Girl in Red Skirt*, 1949, Oil on Canvas, 40x60 cm. *A rope*, 1949, Oil on Canvas, 60x80 cm, Abstract.

*Ant Riding*, 1949, Oil on Canvas, 40x60 cm, Expressionism.

*Lifeless Nature*, 1949, Oil on Canvas, 80x120 cm, Cubism.

*Public Bath*, 1949, Oil on Canvas, 80x120 cm, Cubism Abstract.

*Fighting Cock*, 1949, Graphic.

*Artist's Self Portrait*, 1949, Cubism Abstract.

*The Profiles of Modernist Campaigners*, 1949, Graphic.

*Sepahsalar Mosque*, 1949, Oil on Canvas, 80x120 cm, Cubism Abstract.





Figure 6.1: *Sepahsalar Mosque*, 1949, Oil on Canvas, 120×80 cm, Cubism Abstract, Contemporary Art Museum of Tehran.



### 6.2.1 Sepahsalar Mosque Painting

#### Visual Description:

The *Sepahsalar Mosque* painting is among the first works of art by Ziapour, which is in the style of Abstraction Cubism. Ziapour painted it after his return from Paris to Iran as I explained in previous chapter 4. This work was first presented in the 1949 Fighting Cock magazine, and then at the Apadana gallery group exhibition in the same year along with a number of his other works. The interpretation of this painting is important in many respects, both because it was done during the life of the Fighting Cock magazine and it was among the first works that were created with the visual elements of Iranian art and the elements of Cubism art. To depict this style of destruction at that time, he began an introduction to the development of a new and national style in painting in Iran. Ziapour used a theme of an old and historic mosque in his painting and then performed it with modern visual language with the Abstract Cubism painting technique.

This mosque, belonging to the Qajar era, was built in Tehran in 1897 and was first selected by Ziapour as a subject, and then, it was done in a different style with the common rules of Iranian painting at that time, different from Naturalism. As discussed above, Ziapour studied different contemporary arts in Paris. He got familiar with the art of Cubism and its style of painting at the Andre Lhote workshop. After he returned to Iran with his friends, he founded the Fighting Cock Society that aimed to make a difference in the arts and literature of Iran. This painting is one of the works created during Ziapour's Fighting Cock movement, and somehow, the desire to create a kind of transformation in the painting of that time transmits Iranian painting from Ziapour's viewpoint. But Cubism of Ziapour has a more educational purpose and has been raised by him to create his awareness and transformation in the art of painting in Iran.

During the creation of this painting, Ziapour published two of his most important artistic and critical essays, 'The Painting'<sup>210</sup> and 'The abolition of theories of past and contemporary schools from Primitive to Surrealism'<sup>211</sup> in the Fighting Cock magazine, which is an explanation of how this painting was created. With a different look at Ziapour's controversial theory, which we analyzed in the fifth chapter, of this study, together with a look at this painting, we can come to this point that this painting involves the use of Unnatural Forms to create an abnormal composition. In other words, Ziapour has broken the natural forms of painting with the use of motifs and colors that are far from abnormal forms and compositions and created a kind of painting without a natural image with vivid designs and colors. For Ziapour, this design of an Iranian historical mosque and its coloring and decoration, which include Iranian folk designs and colors, is a source of inspiration for the creation of his modern work, which he sometimes referred to as its impotence in his speeches.

As he argued that: "From the very beginning, I felt that the purpose and method of painting must be something beyond what now (1949), is prevalent with us."<sup>212</sup> He indicates that the style of Cubism in Iran is not something strange and the same geometric designs that exist in tiles, carpets, and motifs of the domes of the mosques bring us closer to Cubism, and this can be inspirational for creating a modern and national art for us.<sup>213</sup>

In this regard, Del Zendeh argued that: "In 1949, Ziapour considered Cubism as the first step in the path to the evolution of Iranian art, and his aim was to create a link between the

<sup>210</sup> Ziapour, "Painting,"

<sup>211</sup> Ziapour, "The abolition of theories of past,"

<sup>212</sup> Ziapour, "Painting," (۷۲۳۱) در نبرد ما رواج دارد.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., Hariri, *About Art and Literature*, 48. از هم‌ان‌اول حس می‌کردم که هدف هر روش نقاشی چیز آیینی‌باش‌یکه ظنک (۷۲۳۱) در نبرد ما رواج دارد. کجایم بم‌عنی من‌هی بودن ملت. وانگه من‌تص‌هر ما ورقتش‌های من‌دس‌یی‌ش‌از. Azadivar, *Interview with Jalil Ziapour*, 48. نوعی‌لی‌ت‌نگاره‌ای. بی‌نگاره‌ای نیستی‌ما و کارهای مدرن غریب بود که حس بم‌عن‌اش‌ی‌وه فی‌ال‌هی‌مل‌یکه با ح‌جم و س‌ط‌ح و خط‌ندس‌ی‌ان‌ج‌ام‌گی‌رد.

traditional Iranian paintings and modern paintings, which are reflected in the painting of SepahSalar Mosque during the Fighting Cock's run."<sup>214</sup>

Keshmirshekan has said that:

The painting of the Sepahsalar Mosque is a statement in the "combination of Cubism and local Iranian subjects."<sup>215</sup> In the creation of this style, he was inspired by the theoretical framework of his teacher, Andre Lhot and" instead of the simple imitation of Cubism; he had linked the painting to the traditional and geometric art of Iranian art"<sup>216</sup>, which in some way "evokes the transformation of the modern Iranian painting language."<sup>217</sup>

### Visual analysis of the painting:

This painting is a two-dimensional and flat, combination that contributed to the combination of Abstract Cubism to three-dimensional space representation. The visual elements in this painting are completely deformed and abnormal, with pure color spots, geometric surfaces, and curved and broken lines throughout the painting. Sometimes the levels are flattened to show the shape of the pillar and the minaret with the help of colored texture, and elsewhere they are completely flat. This composition has exposed the entire exterior of a mosque, a vivid and imaginary combination of geometric shapes and strands of lines and motifs. The smooth and broken lines are balanced alongside the curved lines, and rectangular surfaces alongside the semicircular and circular surfaces have created a balance. The color combination, while inspired by Iranian mosaic colors, has been combined with opaque gray, purple and brown tones and softens colored tones that induce

<sup>214</sup> Delzendeh, *The Evolutions of Iran's Pictorial Art*, 297. ضمیمه پورکشمیر، رلیله اولبری قیرگرفتین در مسجید کتیب کامل می دلت و تصور می کرد که مبلقش میوه های کتیبش نقاشی نگویای ایران راه خود را پیدا خوا کند و بدین نظر می رسد نگار دوره خروس چنگی ضلواء پوییه خصوص حمام عومدی و پس جد سه ساله زن مودا کوششش او درین مسجید ملت.

<sup>215</sup> Keshmirshekan, *Contemporary Iranian Art*, 82. او در تبدیلش میوه ای شیبی بکشمیرم نم می کند شدم و رنگ و لونی قی ازبیا. برخی موضوعات بومی را هم از خود.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 82-83. امده نظر می رسد اوبه جای بی روی ساده از آن سبک اولیه کشمیرم دست بایب میچیندی همان بیلهاد های بدسی. کشمیرم و فرسختی طریقی بود.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid., 83. تحول فنانقاشی نگرا.

more modern sensation, like Cubism. These colors include Saturated Blue, Turquoise, and Green, which are equilibrated with yellow, Golden, and Ocher, Gray and Violet colors are visible in some areas, and the appearance of stains, surfaces, and Black and Brown lines emphasize the balance of other colors. Therefore, the color combination in this painting by placing warm and cold colors together creates an intuitive balance in the painting. Also, a color passage technique has been used in some areas to create dynamic and visual orientation between surfaces. The traditional elements of the painting consist of lattice motifs, arabesque forms and calligraphy that are seen in some of the painting parts, such as the walls, pillars, and the mosque's minarets can be seen how they are summarized, and Ziapour presents them in the form of tapestries alongside the flat and smooth texture of the surfaces. It has been merged to create a hybrid environment. The lattice arches and steel lattice windows also clearly emphasized the traditional form of mosque architecture. At the bottom of the painting, there is a semi-circle shaped pond that is located in the courtyard of the mosque and shows the debris of the wall in the water, and along the pond, there are Beige and Ocher tiles with deformed and squared forms. The view in this painting is spherical and from every point that we start to see, the eye moves in different directions, and more emphasis is put on the middle of the painting, it begins to slightly tilt and leads to other parts of the painting. This eye movement has diminished the monotonic aspects of the lines and geometric parts by using curved and gable forms and colorful passages between them. The point that distinguishes this mosque from other works is that Ziapour has paid more attention to color and form and has moved the painting further to an uncertain and abstract level. The details and other elements of the painting have been removed in favor of color and form. Ziapour's paints, while they are vivid and clear, are also blended with dark tones to give a blur and opaque blend, creating a mild and thorough blend of colors.

Ziapour's paintings have similarities and differences with Persian art. For example, the composition of the painting depicts only the overall space of the mosque and the details of the painting are minimized. But on the contrary, in Iranian painting, each element of painting is emphasized with detail and the space inside and outside the building architecture is depicted simultaneously. The atmosphere of Naturalistic paintings and pictorial photography enhance the viewer's sight to the world of poetry. But in Ziapour's painting, there is a sense of speed, which is more about today's machine life, while in complexity, it is pursuing geometric coherence.

What is reinforced about the Cubist aspects of this painting, different feature is implemented in a new visual language. For example, natural shapes are deformed in the drawing and are in the form of angular lines, geometric surfaces and colored spots appear flat. While they create a distorted view, they induce an unusual geometric arrangement and balancing. The exterior of the mosque has been shown from several angles simultaneously, and the designs and walls of the mosque's tiled facade are in abstract form. Forms and surfaces are portrayed more formally and uncertainty and they tend to Abstraction. These features make Ziapour's painting closer to the style of Abstraction Cubism, and what we see in the painting is an emphasis on the external and physical aspects of the mosque's space, rather than addressing its details. From another point of view, the combination of forms and chevron lines with the especial coloring of the painting that Ziapour was inspired by ethnical and regional mosque is an Iranian feature. There are also abstract references to the decorative elements of the mosque's architecture, such as the steel windows, tiles and arabesque trceries, which are painted briefly and completely.

So, in the composition of this painting, Ziapour's Abstract Cubism is a combined technique that has been created with traditional Iranian visual elements and modern compositions. In

this painting, which is based on the works of Ziapour's Fighting Cock time, expresses the visual elements and concepts mentioned in his theory of modern art. Ziapour interprets its desire to make a difference in the art of painting of the 1970s. He moves form and color, the two abominable dichotomies in composition, towards abstraction. Using angular lines and gable arches and creating a colored passage between the levels, he creates a visual balance in the painting that has both Iranian and modern aesthetics.

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### 6.3 Phase 2, Personal style, (Figurative Paintings)

The personal style paintings of Ziapour, in a figurative style, created from 1953 to 1985, as around 11 pieces of paintings. They are generally influenced by the heritages of nomadic people and tribes around the different regions in Iran. The themes of these paintings usually emphasized the national, traditional and ethnic costumes, lifestyle, coloring, decorative artifacts, and folkloric stories. Besides that, in all series of Ziapoué's style of painting there is a geometric squared composition shaped as the netted divisions and grids in a tonal surface of the painting. This format for Ziapour, as he mentioned is remembering a symbolic/conceptual inspiration of Iranian decorative tiles as a historic and familiar artifact, a medium for freedom of transform in coloring and the basis of his philosophical view about the life and art. From 1953, when he was busier with his anthropological studies and his trip researches around different regions of Iran, as a result, he later published several books and also created some paintings in these themes. He inspired by them as he documented them and revived them in his paintings. For Ziapour this was a personal understanding and conceptualizing of national identity in his modern paintings. In these series of his paintings, the figures are native Iranian, the colors theme and space is Iranian while representing a particular modern aesthetic in the layered geometric composition. From these series of figurative paintings, as followed, I selected 5 of them for my analysis.

*Quchani Woman*, 1953, Oil on Canvas, 83×200 cm-  
*Amir and Bahar Flower*, 1955, Oil on Canvas, 120×190 cm-  
*Turkmen Girl*, 1956, Oil on Canvas, 80×180 cm-  
*Zeynab Khatun*, 1962, Oil on Canvas, 95×120 cm-  
*My man is binding Hina*, 1963, Oil on Canvas, 120×170 cm-  
*Baluchi Woman*, 1978, Oil on Canvas, 90×180 cm-  
*Bandari Woman*, 1979, Oil on Canvas, 70×160 cm-  
*Lur Girl*, 1982, Oil on Canvas, 92×180 cm-  
*The Nomads*, 1983, Oil on Canvas, 120×180 cm-  
*Sanandaj Kurdish Woman*, 1984, Oil on Canvas, 90×180 cm-  
*Anahita, the Beauty Goddess of Ancient Iran*, 1985, Oil on Canvas, 100×190 cm-



Figure 6.2: *Turkman Girl*, 1956, Oil on Canvas, 180×80 cm, Personal style, Contemporary Art Museum of Tehran.



### 6.3.1 Turkman Girl, Painting

#### Visual Description:

This painting is one of the first series of Ziapour's works that have been painted in his national and personal style. The significance of this painting is that it specifically shows the ethnicity and nation elements of Iran in modern composition. This style of painting is, in fact, a new step that Ziapour has taken in the next stage of his style of painting, which was localization and different from his previous painting styles as at this phase, after 1953, Ziapour was influenced by its anthropological journeys and explorations and was inspired by the tribal culture of the Iranian people. He then combined the structure of its paintings with local and non-local elements. The local elements of his paintings are mostly embroidered with women's figurines and tribal peoples with traditional attiring and decorations, especially dresses, coloring styles, and national decorative and nomadic objects, integrated with new specific layered and geometric spaces, lines, and forms which are aesthetically near to the Cubist techniques and different from previous paintings of him and other painters.

In fact, by this painting, Ziapour aimed to restore Iranian Turkmens' native values. This is because some of their traditional handicrafts and clothes, which are the ancient heritage of Iran, are in decline, and as a result of the environmental changes and modern living conditions, this heritage was forgotten. So Ziapour tried to implement this value in the style of its modern painting. He wanted to say that we can live up-to-date and modern while preserving our traditional heritage as well. This way of thinking may be an emphasis on protecting Iranian national identities and values, which, of course, can be a source of inspiration for the creation of modern work by a modern artist. He had repeatedly referred to this topic in his articles, which we reviewed in earlier chapters.

Here we see that the figure in Ziapour's painting, a Turkmen nomadic girl from Iran, wearing a traditional dress with a special decoration and color scheme, and in the background, there are decorative objects such as Gabbeh and Turkmen carpet. In the right hand of this girl, there is a carpeting comb, indicating that this girl is weaving a carpet. The Turkmen tribes live in Iran. They are people with their especial dresses that live mostly in the north and northeastern parts of Iran in the northwest of Khorasan and eastern Gorgan. They are Persian and speak the Turkmen dialect. As Ziapour points out, Turkmen women are famous for carpet weaving, and their dress consists of simple cuts and impressive decorations. Their garments include hats, simple-cut shirts, and trousers with traditional needlework, large scarves, wool socks, and shoes. The colors of their clothes are usually Black and Red and Violet, and sometimes decorated with floral patterns and they have needlework. The fabric of their dress is usually made of silk, velvet, and cotton.<sup>218</sup> Ziapour has abstractly used these elements in his painting and emphasized his conception of the form and the color in general, and he has personified them in modern composition.

Ziapour has traveled around Iran for his painting and has studied the formation of the Iranian dresses and their arts and handicrafts from the ancient times to the present day. As a result of his research, he has discovered a kind of continuity between past and present and found this kind of affinity both in culture and in the dress and decorative arts of the modern peoples of Iran. In his paintings, he portrays what he has studied in different periods in Iran, symbolically and conceptually so that in his paintings we travel to the past and reach today. He sees this affinity among all different ethnic groups in Iran, and even among some of them the artwork and their clothes are somewhat similar and common. These concepts for Ziapour are a kind of national identity that is transmitted to the viewer in the form of his

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<sup>218</sup> Ziapour, *The clothing of Tribes*, 200-215.



Linking to the discussions in chapter 5, Ziapour said in his research that in the northern areas of Iran, close to the Turkmen people of today, pottery works are obtained dating back to thousands of years ago with black forms and figures on a red background.<sup>222</sup> This concept can take us to the roots of pottery and its specific coloring in the area, just as Ziapour in his paintings transmitted this 'native sense' to the viewer using square tiles and ethnical colors of red and black. This dark-red or purple-red color was an ancient and sacred concept in ancient Iran, and other fabrics and other handicrafts that were decorated with this color were valuable. Also, dark red is used in the composition of the clothes of Anahita, the beautiful goddess of ancient Iran, and Sassanians and Parthians' women's dresses. Dark red was also used alongside other colors such as Purple and White in Iranian costumes, and in combination with the dress of many of today's Iranian tribes, these tones of colors are still seen. The semantic formation of this color lies in other directions with the nature and environment of the people of Iran. It can be a symbol of love, energy, and the color of blood or a beautiful color of sunset and sunrise in the plains.

### Visual Analysis:

The composition of this painting is figurative and geometric, and the elements of the painting are put in a square and tile-like shape, which is inspired by Iranian decorative tiles as mentioned above. In general, the space of this painting is influenced by dark colors that inspire the interior of the Turkmen tent. When we enter a Turkmen tent, we see a variety of red tones in the black background, which are used in their decorative works, such as rugs, carpets, gabbeh, and their attiring. The presence of red and light pink in this dark background has made a lively space. By seeing this painting, this kind of sense of originality and stability is induced to the viewer.

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<sup>222</sup> Ziapour, *The Art of Painting and Sculpture*, 18- 20.

The modern techniques of Ziapour in the composition of this work are such that each of these square tiles defines a different color scheme, so that each square has its characteristics, but in general they are all connected and propose one thing and they have created a sense of coherence in the entire painting space.

Ziapour has a modern composition of forms, integrated with a rectangular design of carpets and gabbehs in the background and combined with the square texture of the painting. There is made harmony with the repetition of squares. The diagonal form carpet behind the girl brings to the painting space a special shape and coloring. The combination of white and red colors with the texture of the carpet emphasizes the girl's figure and the gabbeh in the background. The girl's figure is in front and is inclined to the left and her look is facing down towards left. The girl's design is simply painted, without details, but it is very rhythmical and her face is similar to a Turkoman native girl. The girl's dress patterns are designed in a soft, curved shape and a simple linear form. These soft lines combine with geometric and angular lines of the squares in the background to create a visual balance and have helped shape the figure with Ziapour's special coloring which presents a modern aesthetic.

The dresses of Turkmen girl are painted in full detail. These designs are on the girl's hat and headband and the edge of her dress, and their embroidery details on the sleeves and pants and his shoes are detailed. The color combinations of the girl's dress are in the form of Dark Green, Red, Blue and Orange. We also see coin decoration that hangs around his collar. The Gray color of these coins together with the carpeting comb in the girls right-hand shows the metal material of them. The technique of Ziapour's coloring on a girl's dress is in a way as if the fabric of her dress looks like velvet, silk, and linen. The semi-woven carpet behind the girl is one of the original Turkmen carpets in Red and Black, with

motifs inspired by nature and comprised of Abstract and geometric shapes. The gabbeh that is located behind the carpet is a kind of carpet rug made up of craftsmanship of the Turkmens. It has a large texture and simple designs. So, we combine this painting with four different types of textures simultaneously for the smooth texture of square tiles, the texture under the gabbeh, soft texture of semi-woven carpet, and soft texture of the girls' clothing.

Therefore, in general, the drawing of a Turkmen girl is important in several ways. She shows the ethnical figure of an Iranian Turkmen girl as a respectable, valuable and effective creature in the community since she has a carpeting comb in her hand and is weaving a carpet. She is an artist and creates part of her future life by creating decorative and applicable works. Another point of Ziapour's emphasis is on the artistic and decorative effects he has given them, and in the composition of his work, they are specifically intended to be interpretable and this is a modern character. The native coloring and traditional costumes of the girl create a special effect on the space of the painting and there is a coherent atmosphere in the square tiles, which is Iranian, native and mythological and aesthetically modern and national. In other definition, it is an identity and culture and shows the native variety of Iran in a layered and geometric composition of harmonic tiles which is new and specific and presented a dimension space in the flat surface.

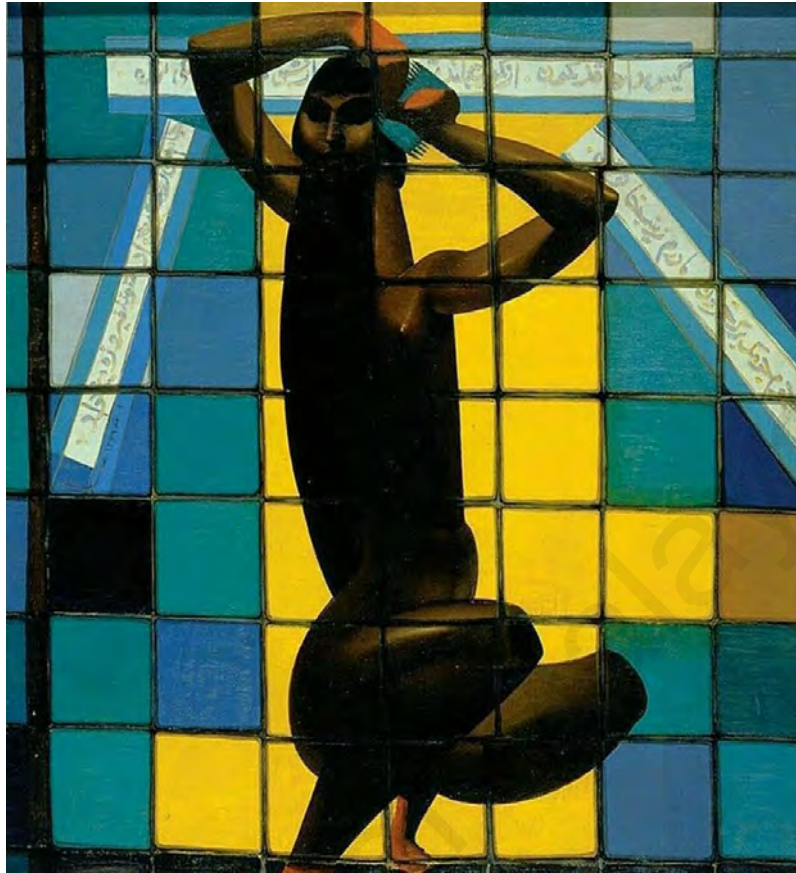


Figure 6.3: The *Zeynab Khatun*, 1962, Oil on Canvas, 95×120 Cm, personal style, Contemporary Art Museum of Tehran.

### 6.3.2 Zeynab Khatun, Painting

#### Visual Description:

Another important and influential work of Ziapour is *Zeynab Khatun* painting, painted in his national and special style. In 1962, this painting took place in the absence of Ziapour at the third Tehran Painting Biennale and received the gold medal. This painting depicts a girl who sits on her two legs in the area of Turquoise and Yellow tiles and combing her hair. In this painting we can see how playing with the light, space and colors are different in effect from earlier paintings of Ziapour, such as *Turkman Girl* and *Sepahsalar Mosque*. Here, the colors are more profound and there is more feeling of dimension in the space of the painting, while, it is presenting a simple and folkloric Iranian theme.

The roots of inspiration for Ziapour in the subject matter of this painting consist of various main characteristics: firstly, it was inspired by an Iranian folkloric poet named *Zeynab Khatun* and then created this figurative painting. Referring to one of the parts of this poem, Zeynab Khatun has a Turquoise comb and is combing her hair.

‘My mother, Zeynab Khatun, her hair as long as an arch, even longer than an arch, blacker than jet charcoal, to a bath she goes, wash her hair for hours, she needs a comb made of Turquoise.’<sup>223</sup>

The creation of this effect was due to certain social and political conditions in which Iran's art and poetry had entered the stage of Iranian modern nationalism as a kind of localization. At this time, as mentioned in chapter 3, modern Iranian artists, inspired by ethnical and traditional themes, began to create new compositions. This work is one of Ziapour's first works in this field. He has used his Persian folk theme and has advanced deformation of natural visual elements beyond traditional and original themes which is different from his previous and other artist's paintings.

Second, the inspirations and effects of using the Abstract Cubism technique in translucent colors are reflected in the geometric drawing of the painting, which can somehow reflect Ziapour's theories in 1949 on a modern and specific aesthetic on the painting. Thirdly, at the same time, his inspirations are also rooted in his anthropological research in the field of Iranian native culture. As discussed earlier in chapter 5, Ziapour in his ancient studies, pointed out to the mythological meaning of Anahita, as who has a valuable and respectable heritage in the history of ancient Iran and is a symbol for the goddess of water and

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<sup>223</sup> In Farsi: مادر من خاتون گیس داره قی کمهون / از کمهون لبین هترک / ل شوق مدشکی ترک / حم امی روزه می خواد / شون فی روزه می خواد.



abundance and blessings which now inspired in his figurative painting of *Khatun* and gain as a symbolic figure of a tribal woman.

Fourth, these symbolic themes, along with the Yellow and Blue composition of tiles, which are old and ancient, national Iranian handicrafts, also emphasize this issue. In a way, the color of the Turquoise Blue of the tiles is both water and sky and a blessing that induces a sense of cleanliness. On the other hand, the Yellow color denotes light and warmth and induces the energy of the Sun. The sum of all of these factors has created a pleasant sense of harmony, which is in harmony with the symbolic figure of Zeynab Khatun which presented a new sense of aesthetic in the painting.

As we discussed earlier in chapter 5, the harmony of coloring in historic Iranian artworks, throughout the hierarchy of coloring between Achaemenid's era to Ill khanate and Safavid era, was interesting for Ziapour, especially the way he emphasized on the ethnic colors of Green, Blue and Turquoise and using the Golden Yellow for the background coloring of painting. As it is seen in *the Khatun* painting, we see that Ziapour is not repeating his imitation from any specific painting but it is because his historic anthropological inspiration explored in the modern and Iranian composition of his painting.

In this case, Kalantari pointed out that: When we look at Ziapour's works, we find that the painter is revolutionary in every sense. He was able to create a new way. I think one of her outstanding works is *Zeynab Khatun*.<sup>224</sup>

Hosseini sees Zeynab Khatun as: One of the beautiful and heroic works of Ziapour, inspired by a folkloric poem in a tile-molded arrangement and is used in traditional culture, especially architectural decoration. Hosseini considers the originality of this work in the

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<sup>224</sup> Kalantari, "The Flagship", 225. قوتی بکار دای خلاء پور قوت میکی هم توج همیش و یک نقاشیه تمام عنان الهی ملت به. نظر چکی از کار دای بر چینه اش زیب خاتون ملت.

turquoise and the henna color of the shoulder and hand of *Zeynab Khatun*, which has induced an Iranian two-dimensional space in mosaic works and folk poetry.<sup>225</sup>

Yar Shater introduces *Zeynab Khatun* as: The first works of art that tend to include traditional folk poetry and figurative arts. In other words, the new regulation combines objects, decorations, and concepts that are closely linked to the past of Iran, and over time, the ancient way of life of Iran is linked to the new world. He considers this point of view a premise for the formation of the painting school of Saqakhaneh and introduces Ziapour alongside Hossein Kazemi and Mohsen Vaziri, the founders of this school.<sup>226</sup>

### Visual analysis of the painting:

As you can see, the composition of this painting consists of a square-shaped geometric grid dispersed throughout the painting. These compounds, as we have already mentioned, are the induction of Iranian decorative tiles, symbolically represented by Ziapour. These squared shapes are uniformly shaped, but they are used with different colors and different tones in the painting. They create a dynamic type of composition. At the top of the painting, and right and left behind the figure, there are three rectangular oblique strips, where Ziapour has written his desired poetry there. These oblique rectangles transmit light radius from the ceiling to the space of the tiles, which is itself induced by the interior of the bathroom architectural decoration. Here, the soft and free lines of *Zeynab Khatun*'s figure in the combination of smooth lines and tile grids of the painting have created an intuitive balance that is delightful. Looking at the figure of *Zeynab Khatun*, one can see lines of light reflected from behind her. The figure of *Zeynab Khatun* is designed specially and

<sup>225</sup> Mehdi Hosseini, "مهدی حسینی آن که میگزرا یادش هرود", [“The One will not be forgotten,”] *Farhang Ashti Newspaper*, no. 1634, January 2008, 5. پورده مش مور ونگرگذار هیب خاتون کعبه ساسی داتن دسی برده عی شگفته بود.

<sup>226</sup> Richard Ettinghausen and Ehsan Yar Shater, *اوج های و خشان فی ایران*, [The Brilliant Peaks of Iran's Art], Trans. Hormoz Abdollahi and Ruin Pakbaz, (Tehran: Agah, 2000), 377. در همان ن خستین ن جهان گان طین کتب سقاخن ملای دزا جاعل ضطه پور (۷۳۱۱-۷۳۱۱) حسینی کاظمی (۷۲۳۲-۷۲۱۱) ش (وم حسن و خیری نام برد. هیب خاتون) حدود ۷۲۲۱) ضواء پور از جمل ملولای بونکت طلب موقش طیه های ختیتی رانشان داد.

abstractly. The figure is seated on two legs and the legs are tilted to the right of the painting, but the face of the figure and her look are tilted to the left. The figure's face however, is painted in a simple style without ornament but is very illustrative and in a state of expression, which is a simple, figurative style of Ziapour, which is featured in most of this series of new works. His style is inspired by the simple and figurative style of ancient Iranian art, which is especially seen in the Achaemenid monuments engravings and figures of Persian people and later in the Parthian and Sassanid eras. But the other one is the creation of *Zeynab Khatun* hands, which are natural while they are abstract, especially and abnormally. The figure with both hands holds her shoulder on his head, but her right-hand angle is tilted toward another. It can be said that the form of the body of this figure is a space of time, a special form and time, which is exquisite and somewhat symbolic and abstract and presented a modern aesthetic.

In the colors of this painting, we can see how Ziapour used the combination of cool and warm colors to balance the ambiance of the painting. These colors include a variety of Blue shades, most of which are Turquoise and sometimes scattered around the figure in a Blue Violet tone. Next, to them, the Yellow color depicts the middle space of the painting behind the figure and it has made a special tone. The Henna colors on the hands of the figure together with Turquoise Blue of the comb in the figure's hands have created a complementary color combination, which is the Orange color at the bottom of the figure. Also, the Brown color of the body and Yellow and Orange colors, along with the Blue, Green and Turquoise colors of the tiles have created a balanced, cool and warm color mix that transmits a kind of Iranian feeling of environmental colors. This highlights Ziapour's special attention in identifying environmental colors and applying them to the composition of the painting ambiance. It is rooted in his research on regional colors in different parts of

Iran. He was inspired by these colors, and then with his look, he has sometimes made them brilliant and sometimes mild in the composition of the painting which is a modern representation. Another issue is the use of the Black color in the hair of the figure, and then Ziapour scattered this color on several levels of the tiles around the figure. Sometimes with the roundabouts and the surrounding lines of the tiles, he creates color solidity in the painting. These divergences and these colorful perceptions remind us of Ziapour's artistic and figurative interpretations of various Iranian artistic periods. Of course, his conception of inspirational and is induction of these native visual elements. They are for a new composition, not a mere repetition.

Zeynab Khatun painting is one of Ziapour's important and influential works, which has been formed by composing familiar things, yet is modern and Iranian. That is, this painting was made at a time when Ziapour was seeking to discover the original essence of Iranian subjects for the creation of works that are both modern, national, and at the same time simple and effective. Folkloric poetry of this painting, the inductive color and the elements that make up the painting all have created an intimate and Iranian combination that is yet fresh and dynamic with a modern aesthetic. At the same time, as of the cultural and artistic atmosphere of the Iranian society in the late 1950s, when Iranian art was moving toward domestication and modernization, Ziapour investigated the essence of the art of Iran from the ancient times to the contemporary era, thus to restore decorative, mythological and ethnicity concepts in his works. However, his personal and abstract personal perception of colors and designs is the deconstructive and personal style of his paintings in that era, even went beyond the Cubistic aesthetics.



Figure 6.4: The *Lur Girl*, 1982, Oil on Canvas, 92×180 Cm, Personal Style, Contemporary Art Museum of Tehran.

### 6.3.3 Lur Girl, Painting

#### Visual Description:

The *Lur Girl* painting is another of Ziapour's works belonging to his national and special style. This painting, in the general view of the figure, depicts the Iranian girl from Lur antecedents, who stands on a white tile and wears a traditional and colorful dress. However, this simple and figurative painting conceptually contains meaningful and deep themes that are rooted in ancient Iranian culture and national traditions, so that, with an overall look at these concepts, they bring familiar things to an Iranian onlooker very quickly.

This is a feature of the modern art of that era in Iran, especially in the 1950s, which is referred to as localization or Iranianization, and we see that in the year 1982 when this work was painted by Ziapour, at this time, he continued to paint this style. The other effects of his studies on ethnic culture in Iran and the traditional clothes of different ethnic groups are also observed in this painting. Ziapour, of course, has created a new performance with its insight and personal perception of the colors, the style of their clothes and their decorations, and this personal impression is induced to the viewer. So, by looking at this painting, while drawing a modern impression, we go back to our unconscious mind so that we can search for these concepts in 'Iranian native roots'. Therefore, in the first impression, we see Ziapour depicting a Persian girl from Lur folks. The Lur people, who are from the ancient inhabitants of Iran's plateau, have lived in the northern part of in large parts of western and southwestern Iran along the mountains of Lurestan, Iran, since the 9th millennium BCE. These people were linked to the Shusha and Persians and Achaemenid civilizations. As mentioned in chapter 5, Ziapour has mentioned the Lur people in his book and examined their metallic and clay artworks, which include various geometric and

abstract drawings of the human, plant, and animal designs.<sup>227</sup> The linear and figurative style of these ancient designs affects Ziapour and has been referred to as an inspirational source for modern Iranian artists. Another is the dress of this girl who shows a different kind of Luri traditional dresses, presented in a new and different design.

Ziapour, who has explored the history of Iranian traditional costumes from the earliest times to his contemporary period in his research, portrayed the results of his research in painting, and this time in the dress of a girl named Lur Girl. Ziapour, with the question of how this outfit is shaped and where it came from, has searched the background of this type of clothing in the ancient Iranian tribes. He started his career from the examples of clothing that came from the statue of Anahita, the goddess of motherhood in ancient Iran. She was a symbol of a valuable and respectable creature for the community and family. He then searched for the connection and the relation of this dress to the Persian women, those of Achaemenians, Parthians, and Sassanians. He examined the similarity of the clothing of the Lur women in contemporary times.<sup>228</sup>

In his book, he also described the design of the dress in full with the decorations, the color scheme and the designs in detail. As a result of this research, Ziapour concludes that changing the lifestyle of Lur people and their tendency towards urban life and modernism, the coverage of their ancient traditional clothing is also changing, and some of them have ignored these types of clothing over time.

Here Ziapour, with his conceptual conception of Lur tribe and a metaphoric girl wearing a traditional dress and a special color scheme, set his painting structure and placed it in a mosaic tile composition, an integration of modern and traditional national aspects.

These tiles, which exist in all of his series of Ziapour works in his national and special

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<sup>227</sup> Ziapour, *The Art of Painting and Sculpture*, 23-27.

<sup>228</sup> Ziapour, *The clothing of Iranian Women*, 62-80.





philosophical account of the life, meaning that human beings are surrounded by the logic of life, but this logic can be diversified by the practice of repetition and uniformity of its meaning. Ziapour has solved this repetition and monotony with the color theme and created a modern aesthetic. For example, in the tiling of white tiles that are behind the figure, he freely deployed several different colors with varying degrees, but they are different in tile composition.

For example, the darkest color tone, the beige color, is in the upper part and the left shoulder of the figure, where there is the signature of the painter, and then these tones are combined in other squares with other tones and create different levels of irregularity, which show white in the whole field. This subtle, unobtrusive shift in space is a modern technique where Ziapour has helped create a three-dimensional space in the painting by combining smooth surfaces and colorful passages. These color variations are also found in the composition of the girl's dress colors, creating a balance with the combination of Red, Green, and Violet colors. Regarding the facial features of the girl's figure, the first thing is the figure's face, which is plain, without shades of color and with no decoration, but the emotional state of the face is apparent, which seems a bit serious and sad. The skin of the face of the girl is dark tawny, and this tone of color on the skin of the hands and feet is slightly blended with Gray and Brown, tending to the darkness. As for the dress of the girl, mentioned earlier, Ziapour has tried to fully illustrate the components of a girl's dress, including headband, jacket, gown, and pants. In designing this outfit, he also mentions decorations and clothing details and even some ornamental jewelry. As you can see in the girl's headband, which is in white, there are Red covers that seem to be a simplified design of the flower. We see that in the girl's shawl and headband, two or three different colors of fabric are used in White, Brown and Black tones. Also, a kind of small gold jewelry is

decorated with a coin hanging from the girl's headband that is painted elegantly. The other thing to notice here is the difference in color between the white shawl and the white tone of the painting's background.

The white color of the shawl is brighter and, in the upside, down of the cloth, close to the girl's hair, it is combined with dark gray and it has become darker. It shows these different degrees of reflection of light. The same is true of the girl's dress, and it seems that the light point is on the right and somewhere behind the girl, and the shades on the right of the girl's dress are brighter. Other points are the girl's necklace and the decorations around the girl's skirt and dress, painted with some specialty and they are yet plain and simple. Regarding the coloring of the dress of the Lur Girl, it must be said that, based on what Ziapour himself described in his work and based on his anthropological research and his exploration of the coloring among Iranian people, the red color in the tone of dark purple has been one of the original Iranian colors that was respected and sanctified and used in paintings, handicrafts, and clothing from ancient times: the Achaemenid era, the Parthians and the Sasanians.

Also, the use of Green and Violet colors along with Crimson and White also indicates that Ziapour has used Iranian ethnic color schemes. Ziapour's coloring technique on this dress is such that the dress is a combination of Velvet, Silk, and Linen fabrics. Perhaps Ziapour's special design of this type of dress with embroideries and its color scheme is a kind of allegorical/symbolic look at his studies of the costumes of the mythical characters of Iranian women such as the goddess Anahita, or even covering the women of the Parthian and Sasanian era, such as 'Pourandokht and Azarmidokht'.<sup>230</sup> He might have seen in the clothes of today's women of Iranian and tried to characterize it and revive in his paintings.

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<sup>230</sup> Ziapour, *The Art of Painting and Sculpture*, Page 211., In Farsi: لباس پوراندخت و آزرمیدخت

Therefore, this painting of Ziapour, with its visual and special features, makes a simple and intimate connection with the viewers. The artistic and modern conception of Ziapour in the form of plain colors and combinations, and the tonal form and geometric surfaces of the painting are quickly and transmitted to the viewers. The combination of tiles with white, beige, and khaki sandy colors, along with the figure of the Lur Girl, who is wearing traditional clothes with Red, Green, and Violet colors, brings the viewer into an Iranian space inspired by the Iranian art. It also might provide identity, nationality, and culture as a work of art. This has been Ziapour's long wish. He had transmitted his findings in his artworks in symbolic ways, a kind of national Iranian, modern art.



Figure 6.5: *The Nomads*, 1983, Oil on Canvas, 3 Pictures, each 120 x 180 cm, Personal Style, Contemporary Art Museum of Tehran.

#### 6.3.4 The Nomads, Painting

##### Visual Description:

Amongst the most beautiful and the most impressive works of Ziapour's in the collection of the national and personal paintings is *The Nomads* painting. Ziapour in this three-part painting, on a large scale, tried to depict a corner of the Kurdish Quchani's nomadic life. He has implemented his conception of the customs of life, dresses, and decorative objects and the essence of the nomads' life abstractly and expressively in his paintings. So that by simply looking at this painting one sees a scene from the nomad's life and the environment and conditions of their lives. In this painting, we see the space of a vast plain that is full of nomadic tents that are held up in distance. In the foreground, we see a family gathering, each of which is busy doing something. One bakes bread, one is weaving a rug, and the other one is making dairy. This scene depicts the everyday life of a nomadic family, their activities and their tribal productions symbolically. In total, with the specific coloring and

specialization of Ziapur in square-shaped tiles, he has created a fascinating geometric composition in a variety of color schemes. It is national, modern and Iranian.

We see in this painting; space and composition are different from his previous figurative paintings. Here, there are more figures of people and space is more expressive and regional to show a live sense of an ethnicity life and once again Ziapour went beyond the Cubist aesthetics to inspire a dimensional space in a variety of layered and geometric divisions.

The portrayal of a corner of Kurdish nomadic life is a reflection of Ziapour's search and study on the subject of anthropology, since he has followed the search in the Kurdish people of Iran, one of the original Iranian tribes. Kurds are people whose background dates to the kingdom of the Medes dynasty in 678 BCE, and as Ziapour pointed out in his research, and we also referred to in chapter 5, there are left glazed 'potteries of these people'.<sup>231</sup> Gray, Brown and Blue Azure are the colors decorated with abstract plant and animal designs such as 'wheat, goats, and sheep'.<sup>232</sup> Also, their dressing style, which is remained from their old sculptures, has since been studied in the clothes of some of today's Iranian people, such as the Kurds and Lurs.<sup>233</sup> The effects of this kind of research are induced in Ziapour's painting.

These people lived in western Iran, and after the establishment of the Persian and Achaemenids kingdoms, they have lived under the decree of Iranian states during different periods of the Parthians and Sassanians and Seljuks and Safavid and today. Their population was scattered in different regions of Iran. Currently, the Kurds live in vast areas of western and northwestern Iran in different cities, and their lifestyles, dressing styles, and decorative arts and crafts have become very diverse. They are among the tribes whose

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<sup>231</sup> Ziapour, *The Art of Painting and Sculpture*, 28.

<sup>232</sup> Ziapour, *An Introduction to Coloring*, 23-28.

<sup>233</sup> Ziapour, *The Clothing of Iranian Women*, 48-60.

lifestyle has been influenced by modernism and urban life, but still retaining their traditional clothes, customs and handicrafts. The Kurds in Iran speak Farsi and Kurdish. They are living in different tribal groups and divisions. Their dressing style, ornamentation, and crafts are almost identical to each other, but each has its differences due to the type of environment and geographical conditions in which it is located. For example, the Quchani Kurds portrayed in Ziapour's painting have a different style of dressing and handicrafts. For instance, dresses for women in other parts and areas are usually tall and wrinkled, but Quchani Kurdish women's dresses are short, thin knitted tunic with simple shear and at the bottom, there are a variety of embroideries. There is also a combination of these vest dresses that have the same color and decorations. The color scheme is usually a combination of Brown, Red, Purple and Dark Blue tones that remind the natural environment of these people. Their shoes are very beautiful and look like traditional shoes, with a stylish and colorful woolen sock that adds to its beauty. But in their clothing composition, their scarves and shawls often have a much simpler base.<sup>234</sup>

As we can see, Ziapour depicts the arrangement and coloring of this outfit abstractly in the drawings, especially in the figure depicted on the left side of the painting. Of course, Ziapour finds out in his research that this native style of life is changing as a result of the effects of modern life, and maybe there is no longer any effect on those colors and decorative works, so recording this environment in his paintings is somehow a kind of 'revival of the cultural heritage' rooted in his 'native anthropology researches'. Seeing this painting somehow draws on the importance of the issue of 'nationality and the revival of the cultural heritage', and this is very important for Ziapour. He examines the roots of the arts and customs of Iranians in its research and then depicted these values in his paintings.

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<sup>234</sup> Ziapour, *The Clothing of Tribes*, 57-68.

soft and thoughtful look at art and they realize the simple and intuitive innovation art.<sup>235</sup>

According to Mojabi, The Painting of tents is an inspirational source of color, light

movement. This three-part illustration of tribal life is the most important work of Master Ziapour, which is the result of his anthropological research in Iran's desert and tribal regions, and the type of behavior-clothing and their rituals.<sup>236</sup>

### Visual Analysis:

The Nomads painting is a two-dimensional composition that depicts a three-dimensional space from the life of the nomadic landscapes in the plains. The composition of this painting is geometric and flat, and with the smooth combination of squares, the painting space is divided into several layers. Repeating these squares in the painting space together with the proper movement of colors, shapes and motif create a kind of coherence in the composition of the painting which is technical, both modern and Iranian. This painting is made up of three parts and consists of three vertical panels, and in each of the panels, there is Ziapour's signature at the bottom.

[illegible]

تابلو و سقمر بدت یز زنگی ظالمت یک که م هقاری زک الاسر ت اد لار ت <sup>236</sup> Ibid..13.

On the left side of the figure, we see a woman standing and is busy with a Mashk (goat skin as a container) to make dairy. Mashk is used by nomads traditionally to make dairy products. This figure is depicted with a special local area of its own. As noted, Ziapour, based on his studies, has drawn on the organization of this dress-decoration and its color scheme with an abstract and modern notation on female's figure. In the composition of this figure, in addition to decorations and special geometric combinations, we can see how Ziapour used the combination of complementary colors of Dark Orange, and Dark Blue in the color scheme. These Blue and Orange colors are scattered throughout the painting with varying degrees of darkness and brightness and sometimes strained to darker and darker browns. The curved and angled lines of the figure with the lattice surface combine the painting background and thus create a specific beauty in balance. We also see that these curved and angled lines are used to plot the lines around Mashk and the figurative hills of the painting.

In the middle panel, we see specific harmony between the elements and shapes. Three women who are baking bread, one of them, which is in the middle of the painting, is putting pieces of bread into the oven, and two others sitting next to the oven and the rug and they are likely to help each other make bread dough. Among them, there is a rectangular-shaped rug on the ground with a blue and orange blend and a linear and abstract zigzag pattern, and we see that three of the cooked breads are laid on this rug. The combination of the three seated women is simpler and with a combination of curved and angled lines and levels, and complementary colors in a dark blue and orange are in harmony with the geometric ground of the painting.

On the third panel on the right, we see a single figure sitting inside the tent and are weaving a rug. Her dress is also simple and geometric and consists of dark blue, orange and brown



colors. On the outside of the tent in the lower right corner of the painting, we see a black goat in a simple and abstract form. This goat is a good animal for the people of the tribal people of Iran, and its image has been symbolic of thousands of years ago on pottery mosaics from different parts of Iran.<sup>237</sup> Also, the wheat plant, which is a raw material for bread production, is achieved alongside the design of the goat is a national symbolic form in the 'ancient Persian land'. Therefore, most of the elements in the painting of the nomads are interacting with each other and are in a relationship with each other. From the accumulation and cooperation of humans to the combinations and ornaments and the coloring of traditional clothes, the habits of life, objects such as rugs and black tents are generally rooted in the anthropology and ancient Iranian history. These are national symbolic nomads which have continued to this day.

Along with these noble and tribal concepts, what is very important in the painting of the nomads is the play of color and light that Ziapour has combined in the combination of soft and angled lines and geometric combinations of square tiles. The color combination of this painting tends more to be a blur and it seems to be before sunrise or after sunset to the night. In my explanation, these colors, inspired by the ambient colors of the city of Quchan, brings to the viewer's mind a sense of the mid-desert climate. These shades of colors are seen in the brightest shades of Brown and Khaki Sandy dunes that surround most of the middle space of the painting and are surrounded by Gray, Green, and Dark Brown shades. In distance, they have come in Grey, Green and Dark Brown had reached the horizon line, which is Dark Blue. The same dark blue color of the sky, with a slight change, is used along with the brown and orange colors and has also been used in the color combination of figures and the rug. The darkest colors in the black shades in the black tents are also

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<sup>237</sup> As discussed in chapter 5, about the ancient ceramic pots in Iran and their symbolic figurative designs.

sparsely distributed on the surface of the figures, the goat, and some of the squares, and it is coherent with the other colors. In the meantime, the yellow-orange of the oven in the middle of the painting brings warmth throughout the painting, and the amber color of the figure bracelet appears on the left-hand side of the painting. These transparent colors are seen in some of the lower hills of the image in bright green and orange tones that the darkest colors are used in the same colors to make them the brightest and most transparent ones, creating a play with the colors and lights. This combination is pleasant in the eyes of the viewers.

As for the forms, most of the masses and shapes are in geometric and semi-geometric formats even in curved form or broken forms. For example, the curved-out lines of the figures composed of the various cone and cylindrical shapes. The objects like tents, shaped as geometric trapezoidal masses. In the squared surface of the painting, there is a relation between circular forms and rectangular forms of objects and figures and this harmony repeated all around the Painting. We see how the colored forms of tiles, masses, and shapes of the figures and objects, reinforced the flatness of painting to the 3D environmental space and reinforced Cubist techniques.

Therefore, *the Nomads* painting is a coherent, geometric and balanced composition in which color tones have been displaced in a variety of spaces so that they can be distinguished in a dark/bright atmosphere. Elements of the painting are rooted in the national identity of the Iranian people and a symbol of life, customs and traditions and the decorative objects and tribal color schemes of Iran. He has always been closely associated with their past and present. In fact, by using them in his painting, Ziapour has performed a modern artwork inspired by national and ethnicity national identity, which is very evocative and influential.

#### 6.4 Phase 3: Personal style (Pure Abstraction)

In this phase, from 1991 to 1997, Ziapour still painted in his private and national style but slightly, turned to a kind of pure abstraction. His paintings still connected to the visual national elements of Iranian ethnicity, tribal colors, and decorative aspects, but it is more simplified and conceptual. The Cubist aesthetics and layers of geometric compositions are more specified and conceptualized which Ziapour created them very abstract and mystical that although presented differently from his previous figurative paintings yet is very Iranian in the specifics of theme and coloring. Comparing this pure abstracted series with his previous figurative works we can explore the similarity between them, especially to the inspiration of ethnicity colors. A series of paintings in this part is closer to the philosophical, mystical and spiritual senses of the artist in that particular time of his life and coordinated with the new situation of the time in Iran when the modern art is going forward to conceptual national arts. There are three paintings left, from this level, which I placed all of them to my analysis.

The paintings are as followed:

*My Life*, 1991, Oil on Canvas, 82×160 cm-

*A Window to the Inside World*, 1994, Oil on Canvas, 120×150 cm-

*Flight in the Un knowns*, 1997, Oil on Canvas, 105×135 cm-



Figure 6.6 *My Life*, 1991, Oil on Canvas, 160 x 82 cm, Personal Style, Contemporary Art Museum of Tehran.

#### 6.4.1 My Life, Painting

##### Visual Description:

The painting *My Life* is another work by Ziapour from his national and personal style collection. Since 1991, Ziapour has become a purer abstract in his paintings. The painting of *My Life* is the first of the three most recent works of Ziapour that have been implemented in this style. In the compilation of this series of paintings, we also see the squared colored surfaces that are repeated in different colors. In this period, we see that Ziapour's paintings come from a figurative form, and moreover, they have been applied to the form of color and geometric compositions.

So far, there has been a little comment on this series of Ziapour's paintings, because these paintings are abstract, and the subject and concept of the paintings are completely conceptualized. That is, for example, one person might see his paintings as a kind of induction of the shape of the windows. Another person will see that abstract and geometric, and another will see it as an inspiration from the tiles. Therefore, this abstract painting, in addition to portraying the artist's inner expressions and challenges, attracts each viewer differently. To understand more of Ziapour's paintings, here are reviewed some of his articles and books so one could more easily get into the conceptual depth of his paintings and interpret them better. For example, in the essay *The Comprehensive Plan*, we analyzed in chapter 5, Ziapour talks about regional and native colors that can inspire new ideas in modern Iranian art. He has also offered ancient decorative artifacts and coloring of Iranian historic mosques as an inspirational source for the creation of modern works by Iranian artists. This would be a support to his interest in the ethnic group colorings of Iran, which give deeper knowledge about his paintings. As we talked about in the fifth chapter of Ziapour's archeological and anthropological exploration, he studied Persian colors from the

art of painting, traditional dresses and decorative and artworks of Iran from thousands of years ago and referred to them in his works. These explorations of colors for him, which came from the Iranian roots, are related to the nationalism sense of him to this painting which presented a modern aesthetic.

In an interview, he pointed out that to achieve more and better results besides my art of painting, I studied in the fields of the history of civilization, sociology, history of arts, stylistics, colors, the history of clothing, anthropology, etc. I also studied archeology and philosophy.<sup>238</sup>

And elsewhere he says that: "My works have been shaped by a review of the importance of the things from the past and the reminding of those precious things."<sup>239</sup> Ziapour used a variety of tribal nomadic colors with their simplicity and consistency and their particular impression in the combination of square tiles, which are ancient Iranian decorative arts. The presence of tribal and Persian dyes in his works is a striking national feature.

### Visual Analysis:

This painting is a vertical and geometric composition that consists of regular crossover formation of square surfaces and generally creates a chess-like texture. This texture, which is seen in most of Ziapour's paintings, is slightly different in this painting. It is diagonal in this painting, and if we look at it, it is oriented from the bottom right upwards, but in other Ziapour's paintings, this composition is straighter. On the other hand, the combination of these squares is no longer combined with the figurative painting and is perfectly smooth and is induced by the movement of color and light at various geometric layers of the painting. In some way, it is the induction of a Cubist three-dimensional space in a flat

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<sup>238</sup> Tehrani, *Selection of Academic Talks*, 295-298.

<sup>239</sup> Mojabi, *The Pioneers*, 24... نگارم به صورتبهرگیری از یادآورده فراموشندانید.

surface technique, which Ziapour created that differently. But how does this specific space be induced, it is in the way that when we look directly at the surface of the painting, we first see a flat division of the shape, but when we zoom in, we gradually see that the squares are in the form of a cube, especially in the left above, and there is an eye turning, and Ziapour has helped to create a dynamic image in the image without using the shadows and with the technique of changing the tonalities of the color. Again, if we look more precisely, we see the cubes behind and in the front squares that are created with shadows of color. Here we do not see other curved forms and angled lines that cut the squares. But balance and consistent lines have been created with color harmony indicated how Ziapour reinforced the Cubism.

In this painting's composition, we see simply squared shapes, abstracted geometric forms, and crossing lines and surfaces. In the lower right corner of the painting, there appears to be a dispersed geometric structure behind this space, which is in the form of trapezoidal cones and semicircles, and these forms are completely behind the lines of the squares. It seems that an abstract subject lies behind this space. On the right-side coloring combination, we see lighter color tones like different sandy shades in different tonalities of dark blue, green and olive green. There are warm Red, Brown and Yellow, dark and bright colors and monochromatic colors like White and Khaki, Pink and Gray. We see how Ziapour played with the light in the right corner. For example, the green cone form, when crossed the yellow square, turned lighter and the trapezoidal form also when crossed the white square, turned brighter.

In the middle of the painting, there is a row of dark red and a row of dark blue squares. On the left, there is a row of monochromatic colors with White, Cream, Beige, Yellow and Sandy Brown and Pink tonalities. In this section, the rows of squares are divided from the

middle to the dune, and with varying degrees of color saturation, they have induced the cube masses that helps to move the color and the eye. As a whole, the coloring has created a coherent warm and earthy color combination that creates harmoniously with colored passages gradually blending the colors on the left and right, reinforcing the modern aesthetic in the composition.

When comparing Ziapour's last works with previous works, we see that these compositions are slightly different and the traditional elements in them are more simplified and abstracted in their composition of paints. Concepts such as modernism and nationalism are still present in the context of Ziapour's works, but they can be interpreted differently from the previous works. His perception of the colors and forms of native and decorative elements of Iranian decorative arts, such as coloring themes of traditional costumes and tiles, divisions are still evident. His color combination is more powerful than before and more widely distributed on the flat surfaces of the squares. However, technically, the details of the designs are removed from the painting and the visibility in the painting is communicated more by moving the color and light and combining the lines and surfaces. This again reflects the importance of Ziapour's attachment to the color and design, and he takes us to the topics discussed in his theory. Ziapour has removed other details for the benefit of the design and color, which are two unusual and distant compositions. In his series of paintings, he has gone a lot to abstraction.

When we study this painting along with Ziapour's other paintings, we find a connection between their color combinations. If we put the Lur Girl painting next to this painting, we will feel the similarity of colors between the two. The roots of these colors lead us to Ziapour's anthropology studies, with the difference that the figures have been removed, and the colors and forms are more effectively native. Somehow, it may take us as an indulgence



to the colors and geometric patterns of Persian tiles and carpets and maybe it reminds us of the color tones of gemstones or natural and mineral dyes of Iranian regional colors.

In fact, at this stage, Ziapour has brought its ancient discoveries into a sort of mysticism. This kind of Ziapour's painting, while a modern composition is simple and intuitive, but very mystical and spiritual. So, it is both modern and traditional and also Iranian and national. According to its name, '*My Life*', it is clear that the mood of the individual and the deep and philosophical spirit of the artist in that period of his life are interconnected in the painting.



Figure 6.7: *A window to the inside world*. 1994, Oil on Canvas, 120 x 150 cm, Personal Style, Contemporary Art Museum of Tehran.

#### 6.4.2 A Window to the Inside World, Painting

##### Visual Description:

The painting of '*a window to the inside world*' is one of the last works of Ziapour in his national and personal style. In this painting, Ziapour has gone further towards visual abstraction and has traditionally implemented the painting in a modern way. In this painting, we see that the theme is Persian, and the native forms and colors in the composition of the square tiles create an abstract and national Iranian coherence, and since the name is '*a window to the inside world*', so through these familiar colors and forms the

viewers are directly invited by the artist to feel the artist's inner senses and perceptions.

This series of works by Ziapour was formed during his lifetime in the two decades after the Islamic Revolution in Iran. In the course of his work, in his visual form, he is more closely connected to the mystical elements of the Islamic art of Iran and conceptually interacts with the celestial and mystic and spiritual world. Of course, his geometric figurative style has changed and has been presented with an abstract approach.

The atmosphere of this painting, especially its theme and its composition, is important in many ways. First, by reviewing and reminding Ziapour's theory of the evolution of painting art in Iran, as discussed in the previous chapter, we can see how in this painting he used unusual and distant visual forms such as the lines and colors and forms for the composition of his paintings. On the other hand, we see that Ziapour was inspired by the pure elements in the surrounding nature, such as the desert landscape, the decorative elements, and the ethnicity and regional colors of Iran, and, with a simplified and abstract form of deformation, performed it differently in his paintings. That is to say, while he uses natural and environmental elements, he has, instead of the naturalization technique, induced a new sense to the viewer. He has gone beyond natural issues and, by interpreting himself as a feature of modern art, refers to a subject in his work, which, while simple and intuitive, is challenging, and goes beyond the ordinary to interpret and understand it. In this regard, we recall Ziapour's interpretation of Iranian art from ancient times to the end of the Safavid era, which was mentioned in the previous section. He explains here that the Iranian painters in this period used the true elements of nature, and, especially from the Ilkhani era, and in the paintings of Kamal al-Din Behzad, we see that the character of Iranianism is more formed and in the division of the geometric space of the painting, we see how colors and shapes are more powerful than the theme of nature itself. The presence of Brown and Black

colors along with Beige, Yellow and Golden colors on the background of the paintings of that period added a special harmony to painting and showed everything as alive. It indicates the progress of the artistic vision of that era, which continued until the Safavid era.

Ziapour's painting also inspires to the viewers the same sense. With the difference that in this modern painting, Ziapour has gone far from the natural depictions, and the purity of the earth's natural colors in the environment of Iran along with the shapes and lines of the facade, and the geometric division of space, have created a different conception. In another world, a kind of modern aesthetic integrated with Iranian themes.

This different view of Ziapour is in simple and apparent visualization, but we are guided for its interpretation of the historical and ethnological roots and the climate of its research in the field of tribal life and environmental characteristics of Iran. As Ziapour himself said in his discussions, he introduced these inducements to modern artists to bring their modern works closer to Iranian identity to create a 'national and modern character'. Another point is that the freedom of action for Ziapour is very important, and he stresses that every artist should create a different voice and depiction based on his/her idea. He must know the art of the world thus to be fluent in his technique and work and, given his environment, he must present a different effect from repetition and imitation, and these concepts are clearly seen in Ziapour's paintings, and they are contemporary and nationalistic, and this is, in fact, a development that he has sought to create in Iranian painting art from the time of the Fighting Cock Society and his artistic activities of that era. Ziapour, in an interview, said about his work that, this frame of my works has a kind of sacred and mystical insight and

He explained that: It is six months now that I'm working on the painting 'a window to the inside world'. "I have to find different subjects and create something solid in a solid color scheme - strong in composition and have strong visibility."<sup>241</sup>

<sup>240</sup> Monsef, "Interview with Jalil Ziapour," 23. در تلبوی شاره تجویزی کف نیستی در آن نیست. رنگ دایره ای ملتیغرم. ای درانی ملت قدرت گیری من در آن غل و م ملت. البته نه تمام ملت به پیش عارفان و دروگرایی و همه چیز در آن ملت متبانتحات سنگی سمل ای درانی ملت. و متعلق ملت بمن راحت و ملل دیده می شود ولی آن را متکیل ساخته ام.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid., 24. و مصلی رپی دکنم و س از م کاری است از نظر سلوب رنگ آهزی می حکم. درت کوی بین دی مهم حکم و استواری دی قوی و پیش قوی.

### Visual Analysis of the painting:

This painting is vertical and two-dimensional and at the surface of this painting of Ziapour, there are square shapes, inspired by Iranian decorative tiles. This repetition is smooth and formed by moving the colors and lights and tonalities on the flat surfaces of the squares. At first glance, we see several curved lines, which are in the form of skis and nesting in the center of the painting, and the cut lines and geometric surfaces of the squares. When we look more closely, we see that these lines are in front of the squares.

These forms, surround mostly the space in front of the painting, are the incitement of vestibules and entrances to Iranian mosques, or palaces and old buildings in the original Iranian architecture. These curves induce a philosophical concept of mysticism and the advent of spiritual inwardness. In fact, by reviewing part of Ziapour's essay on the spiritual inspirations of Iranian architectural space, we studied in the previous chapter, will go further into the theme of this painting. Creating these forms in a coherent geometric combination of tiles creates a kind of visual balance. Beyond these facet forms and the other side of the squares, we see a simple hinged linear space that brings the viewer closer to the plains and deserts. So, the overall space of the painting is divided into three parts, which is still two-dimensional and flat, and in another case, it creates an imaginary three-dimensional space. The first is the curved lines that look like one at the entrance of a space. Then, after that, the squares are tiles that, like the window with colored lights, direct the sight to the back of this space, the hill, and the sky. In general, these three spaces are interconnected, and the eye is rotating between them. You see from the outer space inside or outside the inner space, and this kind of composition has a mystical and sacred insight, and somehow directs the human spirit from the earth's space and this world to the spiritual space and the heavens and the galaxy.

Another point is the color scheme of the painting, which coincides with this space. In the color combination of the painting, a dark stream emerges without creating a bright shade, and the painting surfaces are tied together coherently. The left side of the painting is darker in color. These compounds include Green-Blue and Dark Blue, sometimes Persian Blue, which appears alongside Dark Red and Red-Brown, sometimes Gray and Black, darkened and saturated. Next, to these saturated colors, we see a Golden Yellow row or so-called amber whose tonality is from dark to the bright, from the bottom of the painting to the top. In general, in the harmony of the left side of the painting, we have a variety of different color combinations of cold and warm colors, both from the same family. The same colors continue from the bottom of the painting with a row of yellow squares, and the eyes are drawn to the right of the painting, and there the colors become brighter, such as very bright Pink, Green, and Blue to the Gray. As if the colors on the left tend more to the white, and in the middle of the painting they were completely white. This coloring and this space induce desert colors and forms and colors of the regional Iranian architecture, which, according to Ziapour, is completely depicted as a brilliant diamond in the heart of the desert and inspires a spiritual and mystical sense to a viewer.

Therefore, this painting by Ziapour from his national and personal collection is an Iranian and modern work of art. It is both oriental and supernatural, and it is also modern and innovative. The deformation of natural forms and the abstract composition of form and color are in connection with the modern art theory of Ziapour. The innovative composition and native theme of the painting are related to Ziapour's artistic vision of modern art, as he says the modern artist is looking for topics that few people pay attention to. Modern art goes to natural issues and he went beyond the Cubistic aesthetics and reinforced it to a more specific geometric and layered composition which is new, personal and artistic.

Native forms and colors in this painting are related to the personal perception of Ziapour from tribal and regional colorful Iranian paintings and his fundamental study in this field. The play of colors and lights and the displacement of colors in the geometric division of the painting are related to Ziapour's interpretation of the innovation in the art of painting from the era of Kamal al-Din Behzad, a revolutionary painter, to the flowering of decorative arts during the Safavid period as argued in the previous chapter. Therefore, with this interpretation, Ziapour, by studying ancient schools in the art of painting in Iran, and the art of painting is the world, has chosen innovative and good impressions and arranged their works in combination with their painters, which is a new and unrepeatable impression.





Figure 6.8: *A Flight in the Unknowns*, 1997, Oil on Canvas, 105 × 135, Personal Style, Contemporary Art Museum of Tehran.

### 6.4.3, A Flight in the Unknowns Painting

#### Visual Description:

This is another important and influential piece of art by Ziapour from his national and personal collections. This work is one of Ziapour's last works. He has also gone into abstraction in this work and has drawn the spiritual-philosophical thoughts and inner feelings in the forms and colors on canvas. This was shaped into a period of Ziapour's life, which has become even closer to the philosophy of life and the world of meaning. Based on the requirement of time and the need of his community, he created a modern work that, while being Iranian, has historical national and traditional elements in it, and it is also modern and close to the environment of the community. This is what his articles and lectures point to.

Traditionally national elements used in this painting are related to the ancient decorative arts and the historical Islamic architecture of Iran, such as the squared tiles and the repeated geometric divisions, as well as the colors that are close to the color of the Persian ethnic. Of course, Ziapour has painted them with his abstract and symbolic concepts and his impression is present in his paintings. The difference in the color combination of this painting is that he brings these color combinations closer to the depth of his philosophical belief. In this painting, the squares are different from the previous paintings by Ziapour. For example, in the painting *My Life*, the squares are repeated harmoniously and the colors in these squares have been shifted to varying degrees of lightness. Also, the combination of warm and complementary colors creates a wider color harmony. In the painting '*A Window to the Inside World*', the forms and lines and the composition of the colors are very regional, while the combination is far from the abnormal elements, but they invite the viewers to an abstract manner, an environment like the desert, along with the architectural elements. However, in the *Flight to the Unknowns*, this composition is different. The colors

are less interconnected and there is less tonality in the surface of the squares so that there seems to be less space between the surfaces of the squares. In the composition of the painting, there are three-square shaped geometric tiles in three colors of Blue, Dark Green and Red and they are disconnected with a semi-circle shape, thus they make both balance and a circular eye turn to this focal point. It is as though the artist is trying to focus his philosophical thought on these three squares and the colors of their constituent elements. In terms of modern aesthetics and techniques, we can refer to pure formality and geometric descriptions and combine smooth and uniform colors with gray-combined tones, which approach it to the Cubist composition, but in general, this Cubism is a different Cubism which Ziapour defined it with his attributes, such as being different, time orientation, and geometric abstraction, and more color influences. These later works of Ziapour have been interpreted less often, perhaps because he has moved away from thematic and figurative paintings, moving more towards the spiritual and inner thoughts of the artist and depicting a kind of visual abstraction.

Hosseini mentioned that:

In the painting, a flight to the unknowns, the circle icon is located on a blue, gray, dark blue, and little red background that represents the vitality and passion of life, and the squares aligned the image at the most sensitive distances. This is an invisible world of lines, colors, and symbols that have moved toward geometric abstraction.<sup>242</sup>

Ziapour thus said about his work:

The three colors of this painting have a special psychological meaning. The deep blue color depicts the depth of thought. The dirty green on this painting shows the immense enduring of the problems of life that are in one's mind and

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<sup>242</sup> Hosseini, "The one will not be forgotten," 5-6. در پردیس پرواز در شلن آینه هانم ای نظره روی زمین ای از رنگ آبی. خاکستری سرمه ای واکنشی قریب کفشان از نشاط و شور و زنگی سالت قریب گرفته و جمع های متنظمش بقصه را و حس استهن فواصل بیکدیگر پیوند می دهد.

the neighbor is in red, which means life is booming. This red color is, in fact, the way we deal with our life's problems.<sup>243</sup>

### Visual Analysis of the painting:

Flight in the unknowns is a vertical and two-dimensional composition. This composition is of a geometric and abstract type and is coordinated by dividing squared tiles and combining square and semicircular forms in the painting space. In a general view, we have a visually coherent and balanced atmosphere, in which there is a kind of movement of the eye while there is a still life dominant in the painting. With a closer look, we see a tiled flat background color in the background of the painting, which is light blue and slightly gray-tinted. The bigger square is dark blue in a darker, blackish brown, and slightly upright from the top left corner. It looks like the square is rising from the ground up. Here we see that the tile's background space is a stepping cut. In this area, there is another dark green color that is aligned with the surface of the tiles, with a blue square facing upwards. A smaller square is placed in red above the green square and adhered to it, and a circular linear form is tied to the surface of the tiles and cuts off the three squares. Visually, the matching of this semicircle on the squares creates a kind of balance and creates a dynamic type in this space. Conceptually, the shape of a circle means spirit and mysticism and spirituality, and it induces a sense of flight and motion, which is matched on squares. They are a symbol of the framework and rules of life in this world. The color combination of this painting is more than the combination of cool and opaque colors, such as gray-blue, deep blue and dark green, and there is just a warm red color, which in the upper left-hand corner of the painting, it had made a cool and warm colored blend. This red color passes through a semicircular linear path, like radiation, with saturated green and blue colors, and a small

<sup>243</sup> Monsef, "Interview with Jalil Ziapour," 28. سه رنگ بن‌نیل و معنی خاص روانی دارد. رنگ آبی عمیق عقابان‌نیش را نشان می‌دهد و در حقیقت روان‌رسانیش طین لریست؛ سبز چرکین‌یکه در طین‌نیل و وجود واد تاج بی حشک‌کالت‌زنگی لریست کبها فکرت‌وام لریست و با جوشش حیات مملو لریست.

touch of the color in the lower right corner of the painting. In the color space of this painting, there is no light exposure, but there is still a subtle color shift between the spaces of the tiles, which reduces the uniformity of the surface of the work. The painting space is generally a cool atmosphere, but this red color has given it special warmth.

This painting with the geometric composition of the squares and the circle's form in the blue-green and red color combination means that in the structures of one's life, with deep thought or new ideas overcome a lot of problems and have come to life with intellectual creativity. As for the art of painting, this life arises from the idea of innovation and while it harmonizes with the traditions and rules of life, it allows the practice of technique and the composition of a modern idea. With the same combination of tradition and modernism, a combination is created, which is national, rooted in identity and nationality, and is modern in harmony and has up-to-date features.

## 6.5 Conclusion:

As a result of the analysis in this chapter, it is concluded that Ziapour's paintings are very important and interpretive pieces from various dimensions. These paintings were influential to the formation of a particular painting style which characterized as modern and ethnicity concept, while presented in a modern aesthetics integrated with the themes which are closer to the folkloric culture of Iran and rooted in the anthropology of the region. In three phases of Ziapour's paintings, there are various connections between his cultural activities, political and social situation of his time, his modern theory and his research works. In phase one, especially from 1948 to 1949, his paintings created during Fighting Cock's era and publishing of his theory of art which explored the aim of Ziapour for the evolution in the art of painting in Iran. As Ziapour was interested in Cubism as a revolutionary term we see the integration of Cubism technique and Iranian subject matter in his paintings. From 1953 to 1997, alongside with his interest in his artistic researches and interest in anthropology, he created his style of painting. These paintings influenced by nomadic elements, Iranian ethnic colors and dynamic compositions of tile works and these influences give a national character to his paintings. His private style of paintings created as two types. Some of them based on figurative composition of nomadic people and folkloric stories which carried simplified free and expressive characteristics. Some other of his paintings, especially from 1991 to 1997 is more into the abstracted geometrics composed of fluent and brilliant colors and inspired artist's philosophical views. Ultimately, the paintings of Ziapour were important steps forward to the formation of a national and modern style of painting based on Iranian ethnicity and identity. Yet in the series of Ziapour's paintings, there is a connection between traditional and historic elements of Iranian heritage and contemporary art, presenting a modern and national art of painting.

### 6.5.1 How his paintings are Iranian, National, and Modern

In the first phase of his paintings, from 1944 to 1950, Ziapour, created his art pieces in modern styles as, Impressionism, Expressionism and Cubism Abstract. In his Fighting Cock era works, he influenced by the Cubism art movement and integrated that with the Iranian elements of his paintings. He used a particular geometric composition, in harmony and balance with the curved and angled lines and it is obvious that the subject matter of his paintings is conceptual and comes from his inner thoughts that, he went beyond the common topics of the society. He also used historical Iranian themes and subject matter for some of his paintings. For example, about his Expressionism Painting, '*Rise of Kaveh the Blacksmith*' 1944, that won a bronze medal, at VOKS, exhibition, he inspired by a literary story from 'Shahnameh', poem book and for his two of Cubism Abstract paintings, '*Public Bath*', 1949, and '*Sepahsalar Mosque*' 1950, he inspired by the aspects of local Iranian architecture and division of space. These artworks of Ziapour were categorized as the first integrations of Iranian theme and subject matter and modern art styles, particularly Cubism. From 1953 to 1985, Ziapour's paintings entered to a new phase that titled his 'personal and national' style of paintings. As I already explained in the analysis, these paintings created by the influences of his anthropological researches around the different regions of Iran and the lifestyle of ethnic group people. This exploration was based on his passionate search about Iran's art history, and its cultural heritage that gives a national character to his artworks. These series of his paintings was based on various views and characteristics:

- 1- These ethnic people live in a specific lifestyle, which is a kind of heritage and apart of the local culture of Iran. Therefore, presenting their unique aspects to the painting would bring them forward to the attention and emphasize the concept that they are united with the 'Iranian identity' and 'Iranian nation'.

- 2- Although the people in the cities encountered to the modernism approaches, and they can be modern, but the local people cannot be modern and must preserve their particular lifestyle.
- 3- Notifying, while criticizing the life situation of local ethnic people, that, if they, influenced by modernism trends, then their specific lifestyle will be change and their traditional heritage will be forgotten, but also, there should be a solution for them to face the modernism developments, while preserving their cultural traditions.

This is, however, at the same time during the years of 1950 and '60s in Iran, when a group of the modern painters in Iran, attracted to compose their paintings base on the subject matter of native people, their lifestyle and cultural heritage. Alongside by Ziapour, this character seen in the artworks of 'Pezeshknia', 'Hamidi', 'Kazemi', 'Esfandiari' and others, that they were expressing a kind of 'localization', or composing local Iranian scene, to their paintings in a 'fearlessly approach', while, the artworks for each one of those artists carried its specific characteristics and styles. The paintings mostly were defining Romanticism of 'national identity' and traditions as well as its integration to the modern art styles.

In that time, the art styles of the modern artists went through the changes, from Naturalism to Impressionism, Expressionism, Surrealism, and Cubism. The idea for them was to explore the conceptuality of the ethnic group of people in Iran, and that besides the differences in traditions, dialect and lifestyle they are making one Iranian Identity for the Iranian nation. It was the topic of the day, and the government also was working on rural development and to raise the quality of life for their regions and cities. Consequently, what makes it different about Ziapour's paintings would be that:

- A- The particular composition of squared patterns, remembering the 'Iranian tile works', at the background surface of his paintings, exploring traditional elements



for a modern composition that helps to the dynamism and transition of colors around the frame. It is also a national symbol of Iran's architecture.

- B- The specific explorations of the ethnic figures in his paintings, and symbolic presentation of their decorative artifacts, besides to the nomadic colors, which is simplified yet national and deeply conceptual, and bring the viewer closer to the historic, regional and folkloric themes of Iranian nation.
- C- His exploration that structured from his accurate studies and researches in the field of anthropology and ancient/traditional artifacts of Iran, for years and that, how he integrated them with modern art aesthetics into his paintings.
- D- The way that Ziapour presents his paintings in the technique and composition is modern as he created a new style of painting base on his personal exploration and inner concepts alongside the aspects of his modern art theory and his concept of Cubism.
- E- There are different ideas about his paintings. Some said that his artworks are pure Iranian; some other said that these are an integration of modern art style and Iranian art and some other said that these are a very personal type of works. I emphasized that; these are essential modern explorations of 'national Iranian identity' and 'local historic aspects', particularly, in relation to his Iranian historic art researches.

Consequently, it is obvious that Ziapour's painting are modern because of specific Cubistic geometric composition and Abstract style, Expressive subject matter, created by inner thoughts of the artist. They are national and Iranian because of using of native Iranian subject matter, historical, literary and Iranian elements of ethnicity people and their symbolic colors. His artworks are an integration of national Iranian identity and modern art aesthetics in particular relation with various social trends and aspects of his artistic life.

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