

Abstract

Saqqakhaneh – Between Tradition and Avantgarde. Modern Art in Iran in the 1960s and 1970s.

(Arbeitstitel)

In my PhD dissertation I concentrate on the Iranian art movement *Saqqakhaneh*, which was founded in the 1960s. Folklore and religious elements of folk art and modern means of creative expression inspired the artists to develop their own, Persian artistic language. They did not comprise of a certain group who atoned their aims and creative intentions in a manifest, *Saqqakhaneh* artists rather sought common aesthetic expression based on Shiite iconography. Some of the painters, such as Hossein Zenderoudi and Faramaz Pialaram based their work on Persian calligraphy to achieve abstract-expressive or geometric-abstract artistic language. Through the protection of the empress Farah Diba, *Saqqakhaneh* emerged to an officially acclaimed style. The *Saqqakhaneh* artists aimed at creating a modern artistic language, which was deeply rooted in their local culture. The 'Iranization' became one of the key factors towards the construction of a national visual identity. Often modern artists are underestimated through national or international perspective because it is frequently supposed that this was all an imitation of western modern art. In my dissertation I research the artistic quality of the artist group *Saqqakhaneh*, which takes an ambivalent position between avantgarde and medium for the legitimation of power of the Pahlavi-monarchy to carve out their meaning for a global and regional art history. On the basis of aesthetic criteria innovation becomes considerably important. The works of the artists will be in the center of my research they shall be examined on the basis of the formal aesthetic method of art history and samples of cultural transfer.