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TREES OF MY HOMELAND
A COLLECTION OF CONTEMPORARY ART FROM IRAN
Opens October 5 through November 14, 2013
Celebrating the Grand Opening of Tara Gallery
Located at 1202B Montana Ave., Santa Monica, CA 90403

Los Angeles, CA – September 5, 2013 – TREES OF MY HOMELAND, an exhibition of contemporary Iranian paintings that provides a vibrant and nostalgic view of motherland trees, will go on display from October 5 through November 14, 2013.

Kicking off the grand opening of Tara Gallery in Los Angeles – sponsored by the American Foundation for Contemporary Iranian Art (AFCIA), a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and supporting contemporary Iranian art – TREES OF MY HOMELAND is curated by veteran art expert and Tara Gallery director, Homa Taraji. In cooperation with the Golestan Gallery in Tehran, this show features 12 artists living and working in Iran today and is intended to introduce their work to the American public. The show runs from October 5 through November 14, 2013 at the Tara Gallery in Los Angeles, with the grand opening reception of the gallery on Saturday, October 5, 2013 from 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.

Since 2007, the field of Iranian modern and contemporary art has grown exponentially on the international art market. Iranian artists have dominated auctions organized by leading auction houses such as Christie’s, Sotheby’s, and Bonhams, selling at record highs. This has propelled Iranian artists to an international level and collecting their art is now a very attractive investment.

“The timing is right to bring contemporary Iranian art to the attention of international audiences, especially here in Los Angeles, home to the largest population of Iranians in Diaspora, to demonstrate that despite the repression of women and art, Iranian artists of both genders have flourished,” said Homa Taraji, director of Tara Gallery and co-founder of the American Foundation for Contemporary Iranian Art (AFCIA).

“Alongside the nuclear controversy, an art scene flourishes in Iran. Collectors are taking notice: Prices of Iranian contemporary art have jumped and they’re likely to keep going up for another five or 10 years. Now Westerners are getting in on the action. Many pieces of Iranian contemporary art have more than doubled in value over the past few years, thanks to heavy bidding by the Middle East’s super-rich. Though the prices are still low by Western standards, rarely topping $1 million, they look set to keep climbing for another five or 10 years as more Westerners join the action.” – Daniel Grant, The Wall Street Journal – May 2010

Some of the artists featured in TREES OF MY HOMELAND include:
Hossein Khosrojerdi participated in the Venice Biennial in 2003 and is the recipient of several international awards. He portrays characters with no identity, struggling to maintain their Persian identity in contradiction with the imposed Islamic rules. He offers a tree in place of an olive branch to maintain peace.

Yaghoob Ammamehpitch was a student of art at Tehran University and Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris. He has been an instrumental figure in many art movements in Iran including the establishment of the Society of Iranian Painters. He is an art teacher, juror, and member of selection committees for art biennales in Iran. He has a unique style in capturing the transient life of nature.

Bita Vakili is a prominent artist featured in international art exhibitions and auctions. She painted trees that she saw through her window. “Her work has a ‘simple complexity’ that makes the viewer feel serene and challenged at the same time,” says Dr. Firouz Naderi, a NASA executive and art collector.

Ahmad Vakili captures the simple presence of nature in his work. He is an art teacher who takes his students into nature to capture its essential beauty.

There are many other exceptional pieces in this exhibition by the 12 artists featured, reflecting the rich beauty and texture of nature in their homeland.

All pieces are available for purchase and proceeds will benefit the American Foundation for Contemporary Iranian Art (AFCIA). The artists are:
• Firouzeh Amini
• Yaghoob Ammamehpitch
• Hamidreza Andarz
• Mohsen Azizi
• Elika Ebrahimi
• Pooneh Jafarinejad
• Mahvash Jourabchi
• Hossein Khosrowjerdi
• Ghasem Mohammadi
• Ahmad Vakili
• Bita Vakili
• Arman Yaghoobpour

Ms. Taraji is available in Los Angeles for interviews. Photos of the artists’ works are available upon request.

About TARA GALLERY

Established in 2013, Tara Gallery is an art gallery with focus on contemporary Iranian art. It is sponsored by the American Foundation of Contemporary Iranian Art (AFCIA, www.afcia.org) and is located at 1202B Montana Avenue, Santa Monica, CA 90403, Phone: 310.489.2417. Hours are Tuesday through Saturday 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m., Sunday 11:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Mondays by appointment. For more information on the exhibit call 310.489.2417. More info at www.taragallery.org.

About HOMA TARAJI

Homa Taraji is the director of Tara Gallery, a contemporary art gallery in Santa Monica, primarily representing Iranian art. She has been a curator of contemporary Iranian art in the United States since 2002 and has organized several successful exhibitions in Los Angeles, New York, Houston and Boston. She has established working relationships with art galleries, collectors, and a broad range of artists whose work she represents in the U.S. Taraji is co-founder and president of the American Foundation for Contemporary Iranian Art (AFCIA) (www.afcia.org), a non-profit organization for promotion of contemporary Iranian art in the U.S. Taraji is a senior engineer at the Aerospace Corporation in El Segundo, CA, where she develops and manages domestic and international customers for space systems technology. Prior to Aerospace, Taraji was the Manager of Information Systems at the Getty Museum. Before that, she held the position of IT Senior Manager at Ernst & Young Management Consulting. She was with General Electric Information Services as a project manager of financial applications in New York and Los Angeles. She started her career as a software engineer at NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena working on Voyager mission to Jupiter and Saturn. Homa Taraji holds a B.S. degree in Physics and an M.S. in Electronics from Tehran University and an M.S. in Computer Science from the University of Southern California. She has been the recipient of NASA Group Achievement Award, Goddard Trophy, Milstar Recognition Award, and several GE technical awards.