

Coffeehouse painting, founder of iconography in today's concept

Morteza Afshari

Department of Islamic Art, Faculty of Art
Shahed University, Tehran, Iran

Abstract

Coffeehouse painting is one branch of Iranian painting and its history goes back to Qajar Era. This branch of painting affected by Iranian painting and aesthetic specifications of Qajar Era Painting has possessed specific position in iconography in today's concept. Hence, the main movement in field of formation of iconography in Iran can be considered as the effort of these painters. Choosing Shiite religion as formal religion of Iran on Safavid Era and promotion of religious literature and religious interest of people in religious contents in Qajar Era played effective role in field of considering iconography seriously in Iran.

Keywords: icon, iconography, coffeehouse painting, vitrai, imams, dervish screen, lithography, Qajar, coffeehouse.

Introduction

One of the most important effects of religious art in field of iconography can be attributed to works of coffeehouse painters. Iconography was emerged in Iranian art in its current concept with works of these artists. Although it seems that illustration of Imams has long history, no work was created similar to coffeehouse works even in Safavid Era with public trend for Shiite contents because of formal concentration of Shiite religion. Although iconography of Imam Ali (PBUH) and Imam Hussein and Imam Hassan (PBUH) and the events of life of Prophet Mohammad were begun in Safavid Era, it is clear that the peak of the works related to history of Islam and Shiite and iconography is attributed to Qajar Era, whether in terms of promotion or variety. These works are created since the time that Iran was in the limbo between paintings of Safavid Era and westernized works according to the time and the promotion of painting and public artists selected different way to express their emotions hidden in their heart in this age.

If it is said that heresy in portrait and iconography is promoted in Iran since Safavid Era, it is wrong; although it could be mentioned surely that Safavids used to pay specific attention to rich tragedies and used to encourage iconographers and painters of religious paintings.

After rest from Ottoman, Shah Ismail Safavid made decision to punish Uzbeks. He created wonderful enthusiasm for war and homeland worshiping among people and made Charismatic commanders and apparitors for exotic show in the way. These groups displayed oppression and innocence of Imam Hussein (PBUH) and other victims of Karbala using trumpets and drums, and singing plaintive songs and called people to punish Uzbek oppressors who were cruel and villain like Moavia, Yazid and Shemr in their opinion. In this passion play, painting screens and the icons related to Ashura were also used. The screen readers used to display wide screens of imaging Ashura and Karbala event in most bloody form in squares of villages. Also, apparitors used to describe the scenes with pain and burning and then, they used to ask people to be along with the big Sufi Army and punish same types of Karbala murderers.

The most important causes for formation of these works include expansion of poets and proses and literary contents related to Imams. Books such as "Roza Al-Shohada" by Molla Mohammad Hussein VaezKashefi and various papers about Ashura Event are special references to express events of Islam and Shiite History. In addition to written references, movable and oral literary works can't be also neglected. Presence of narrators of epic and religious events made many painting screens, especially dervish screen, relied on narration of the narrators and storytellers.

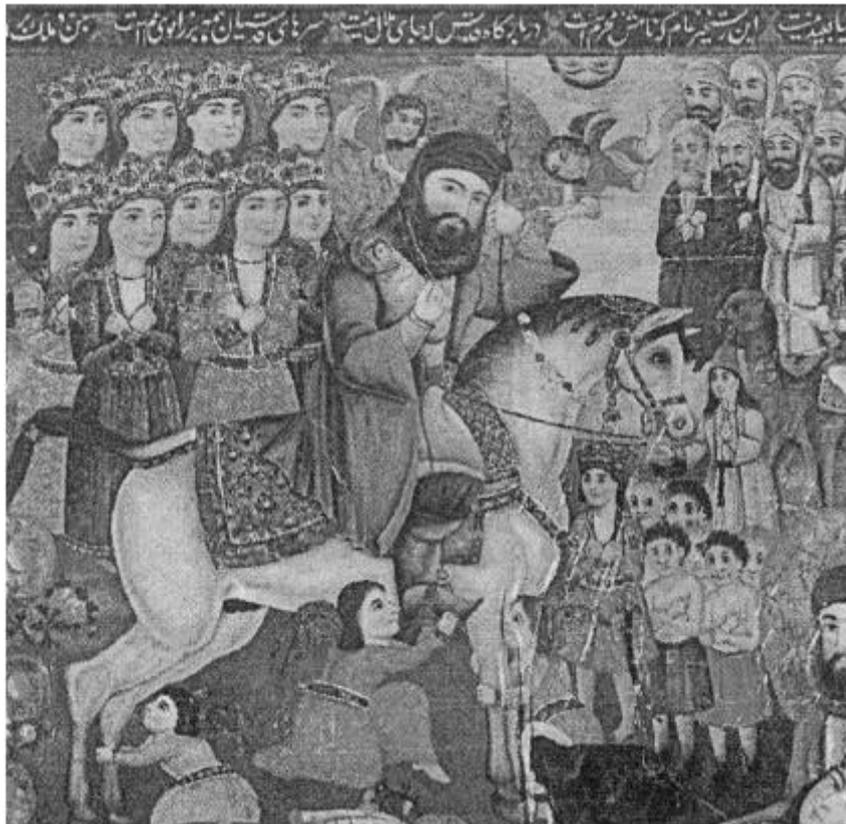


Figure 1: Ghollar Aghasi, Hussein, growing up of Hazrat Muslem by Imam Hussein (PBUH), oil paint on 171×110.5 canvas, no date, Collection of Reza Abbasi Museum, coffeehouse painting, Hadi Seif, 1990, Ministry of Culture and Higher Education

At the same time, scripts such as passion play could also affect formation of iconography significantly. Such effects on iconography art made this art gain its position gradually and gain unique features across the world. Also, iconography can be also attributed to coffeehouse style in level of the best Christian icons. On the other hand, implementation domain of these works is to extended and types of implementation styles and contents have various divisions.

Types of these works are counted as follows:

- 1- Coffeehouse painting
- 2- Dervish screen
- 3- Vitrai
- 4- Mural
- 5- Book painting
- 6- Painting on instruments that is itself divided to 3 groups:
 - a) Painting on flag and cloth
 - b) Painting on vehicles
 - c) Painting on furniture

Types of implementation of these works are also divided to several groups as follows:

- 1- Oil paint on canvas or cloth

- 2- Painting on tile
- 3- Lithography
- 4- Vitrai
- 5- Painting on plaster (wall) and wood
- 6- Painting style of engraving on objects
- 7- Sewing painting style
- 8- Painting style of print and Calico
- 9- Direct painting on cloth



Figure 2: Bolukifar Abbas, HazratAbolfazl (PBUH), oil paint on canvas, love and Ashura exhibition

Types of icons based on content are also worked in different forms as follows:

- 1- Individual icons: related to imams individually like portraits of Imam Ali (PBUH) and Imam Hussein (PBUH)
- 2- Collective icons: they are observed mainly in topical form in different types of painting and the main themes are associated with events and stories about life of Imams and Prophets. The main contents in these works include life and wars of Imam Ali (PBUH), The Prophet's Ascension, Ashura Disaster, 5-imam icon, Imam Ali Icon

and Husseinain Icon, Qadir Khom Event, Aamen Ahoo, the day of resurrection, Hazrat Suleiman's Shrine, life story of Hazrat Ysusuf (PBUH), slaughter of Ismail, etc.

Now, after counting types of painting in terms of form, color and content, each type is separately described.



Figure 3: no date, a part of passion play, oil paint, late Safavid Era, 7.5×2m, Mashhad History Museum, Astan Qods Razavi

Coffeeshouse painting

In contemporary history, two important branches of oral and dramatic forms of art (painting and storytelling) were created under the title of coffeeshouse. Both groups of storytellers and painters were raised from ordinary people and they used to follow a kind of protection of religious thoughts and beliefs of people in their works. Such attitude in world of religious arts can be regarded as the early origin of pop art type.

Painting screens of this school used to be worked usually in large dimensions and by order of owners of coffeeshouse. Because of large size of work and creation of special equipment, the implementation was also by oil paint. Hence, the trend for overall volume processing and trend for almost realistic processing is tangible in these works.

In coffeeshouse painting, due to illustrative characters and according to position and content of work, human elements include two main groups of saints and Ashqya (those appointed by the saints and Imams as first degree individuals). Although presence of women and children and borderline characters and even heavenly creatures is observable in the works, axial and main character in these works are imams and saints of God and the artists have attempted to represent their position by drawing their icons.

In these works, saints of God are people with medium height and balanced body organs in terms of fitness and there are no differences between body of one Imam with another one and the tangible factors are their beards or clothing. Factors such as weak or bended muscles as a sign of ageing are not appeared in their icons. In terms of drawing the

gestures and motions, the artists have attempted to create calmness and placidity in combination with solidity and strength.

Face of saints in coffeehouse painting is always drawn from tripartite facade. Faces are rounded, eyes are big and eyebrows are arched and with suitable distance from eyes, noses are thin and lips are small with a mild smile on icon. Mouth is always closed and there is no effect of lines of facial muscles showing inner feelings.

Creating common physical appearance in face of saints and imams refers to paying attention to show the position of imams by artist more than physical appearance and this is achieved through decoration and simplification of the portraits.

Considering a special kind of common symbolism in color of coffeehouse paintings, creating white and bright skin for them with dark beards, eyes and eyebrows with no intention to show inner feelings, existence of a kind of penciling around face and body and overall volume processing in body and face and use of scattered halo of light are main characteristics of these paintings.

The difference and the factor for identification of characters can be determined based on content of event. Narrative aspect is clear in these works. Another factor for identification of these works is changes in clothing or use of name of characters beside their illustrations. Total use of principles dominated on these paintings for artists of this school is a natural issue.

Dervish screen

Dervish screen is to high extent similar to coffeehouse paintings in terms of implementation method. These works as paintings for screen readers used to be protected and maintained by them. These screens used to be hanged in walls of streets or squares in mourning days, especially days of Moharram Mourning and the screen readers used to tell story of the painting on screen with help of their assistants. There is not exact date for screen reading; although it seems that it dates back to Safavid Era.

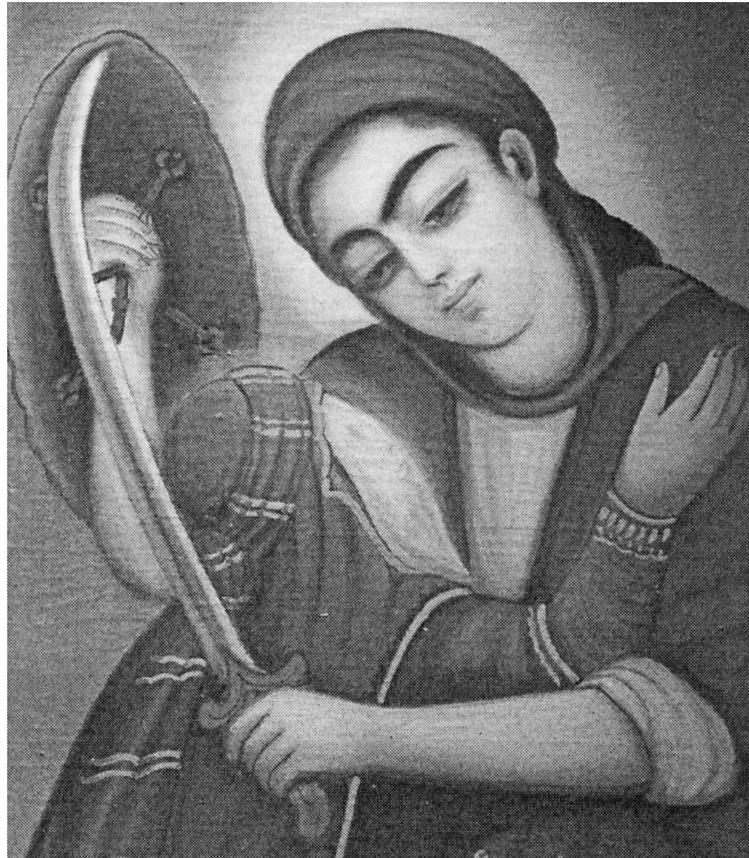


Figure 4: Bolukifar Abbas, Hazrat Ghasem (PBUH), oil paint, Love and Ashura Exhibition

Dimensions of dervish screen are larger than coffeehouse painting and the contents and themes are also usually drawn in horizontal direction. This action can increase the power of movement of master (Morshed) and kid master (Bache Morshed) from one side of screen to another side and can also ease access to description of components of screen based on its height.

Scenes of dervish screen are not worked in direct proportion and sequentially and various contents and different historical events are sometimes worked in compacted form on the screen. Hence, they are strongly depended on narration of the storyteller.

Because of large dimensions and repetitive use of them and also to ease transporting them, the screens used always to be maintained as scroll.

Painting style and implementation and the instruments used on dervish screen are similar to coffeehouse painting and the main difference is in no use of frame. The axis and orientation of dervish screens has been usually Ashura Epic and two main contents are usually the main boards of these screens: one of them is the scene of fight of Hazrat Abbas (PBUH) and the other one is the scene of martyrdom of Hazrat Ali Akbar (PBUH). Other events like scenes of heaven and hell, stories of Sultan Qeis, poisoning Imam Reza (PBUH) by Ma'moon and others scenes used to be drawn in compacted form on screens.

The drawing and iconography style and coloring style in dervish screen is similar to coffeehouse painting; although less processing is done in dervish screen and the works in them is simpler than coffeehouse painting.



Figure 5: Ismail zadeh Hassan, Ashura Event, oil paint, personal collection

Vitrai painting

The most important works with icons of saints of God are vitrai paintings. This art was again promoted after long time about second half of 12th century. Because of their special application, vitrai works are shrines, pelican houses, mourning houses, gyms (Zoorkhaneh), transportation vehicles and flags and the special flags of mourning groups and even houses. Several important factors in this type of painting have given special characteristics to these works. On one hand, fragility of glass has limited dimensions of these works and on the other hand, as the vitrai works used to be applied by door to door dervishes in old times, their transporting capability was so important and hence, small dimensions seemed suitable. Important factor to select glass for painting was the elegance and spirituality created by this work and on the other hand, the ability to touch icons was provided for ordinary people in these works without damaging the painting.

The vitrai style is in form of upside down motif that could make the work hard for artists. Icons in these works are simple because of painting in restricted dimensions and lack of ability to have various structures. Generally, icons in these works are in tripartite façade with black and mass beards and mass eyebrows and big eyes.

In vitrai paintings, using accessories is observable with different excuses and sometimes, using foil and silk on back of the glass are used to show light halos or clothes. Colors are vivid and volume processing methods and coloring and penciling are simple and similar to coffeehouse painting and dervish screen. Compositions are simple and include one main board and several secondary boards worked in smaller size and the most important factor to

create harmony in combination is provided by uniform drawing method of icons and penciling in most works.



Figure 6: no number, Imam Ali (PBUH), second half of 13th century, Vitrai painting museum

Lithography

Book illustration tradition has been existed from long ago in Islamic world and its antiquity dates back to an era before Qajar Era. However familiarity with the printing industry and duplication of books was promoted in Qajar Era and reached its peak point with emphasizing religious contents, especially with peak of passion plays and promotion of writing passion prose and with beautiful illustrations from unknown artists. In addition to passion play prose, various books are also illustrated using lithography.

Lithography was promoted in Iran following books published in India by 1225 A.H in Kolkata and it seems that it was brought to Tabriz for the first time by Mirza Saleh Tabrizi. In lithography, the illustrations are usually drawn upside down and with combined materials containing soap or oil on stone or metal plate. This kind of stone is called slate and is a smooth stone, on which the motifs and images are drawn in upside down direction. The motifs and lines used to be drawn with oil ink that was resistant against acid. Then, after that the texts and images are dried, the slate with dimensions about 30×40cm used to be placed

inside a copper dish with pitchy walls and then, salt essence and acid used to be poured on it. After a few hours, the motifs and letters used to remain in bold form and other parts of stone used to be melted. After washing the stone, the plate used to be prepared for lithography by turpentine and the printing process used to be started through pouring ink by roll.

In Iran, using upside down writing method, the artists used to engrave the text on starched paper using ink and the paper and then used to turn the paper back on the slate and transfer the motifs on it through pressing it and other steps used to go ahead as usual. To edit the printed motif on slate, mirror was an instrument to use. Because of importance of religious books and necessity to print and promote them, the most lithography books were related to religious topics, especially Quran and Ethical Books, Islamic and Juridical books. The earliest religious books of lithography include "Ghomri" (Golzar Husseini) called as "Kanz Al-Masael" work of Mirza Mohammad taghi Taji Darbandi (known as Ghomri) about Ashura in Turkish language.

Book paintings have provided conditions for exact implementation in manuscripts and printed works because of their small size compared to other types of painting and also because of collaboration with proses and writing. Because of lack of presence of storyteller and screen reader to explain the illustrations, there was no necessity to combine several contents in a single screen and the events used to be drawn independently with various pictures in a book. In addition to compositions, book paintings contain icons and individual and collective portraits of saints of God.

Variety can be abundantly observed in gestures and motions of illustrations in books. Continuity in principles of painting and iconography in these works with other types of painting such as dervish screen and coffeehouse painting is obvious. In lithography paintings, because of different types of instruments and materials and size and omission of color, other visual elements such as line and texture are important. Simplification method in drawing figures, using penciling and use and effect of old painting principles is evident in these works.



Figure 7: no number, Imam Hussein (PBUH) and Hazrat Ali Asghar (PBUH), Sultan of Karbala, Jaber Anasori, Tehran: Zarin and Simin, 2003

Mural (painting on wall)

Another type of dynamic and original religious art can be found on walls of shrines, mourning places and Hosseinieh as painting on pieces of tile or on surface of plaster, lime and wood. This type of painting is not limited to a special place.

The earliest religious murals with date and related to Ashura Event include motifs on Monument of Shrine of Zaid Isfahan that seems it is worked on 1097 A.H.

Painting on tile: seven colors

The most important examples of painting on tile are works in Moaven Ul-Molk Tekyeh. The destroyed works of Moshir Shirzad Hosseinieh are also the most important works of painting on tile. This type of painting needed no screen reader and storyteller despite coffeehouse painting or dervish screen and their themes used to be determined based on the environment and the application. Role of environment was vital to use special materials and the application of these works was also very important in field of their formation type.

Painting on tile was usually on seven-color tiles and this has long history in Iranian Painting and Architecture. These tiles were constructed in form of scrapbooks and their approximate dimensions were not lower than 15cm. in this method, the tiles with early white glaze are baked in the oven and after primary baking, motifs are drawn on the tiles based on the proportion and after that, its turn for penciling and coloring. In coloring step, colors must be selected in such manner that they can be stable against different types of light of the day. The colors are in glaze type and final baking is vital and the entire tile should be heated uniformly. The early glaze can make the color material be absorbed by the tile. Compositional material of glaze also contains no compound such as oil paint. Use of various types of color in this method caused using the term "seven-color" for it.

The method of painting on plaster, lime and wood is also done in Iran using tempera style on dried plaster. The bed layer in mural of Qajar Era was usually plastered and in cases that it was exposed to humidity, lime layer was applied. Paintings of this type may be exposed to corrosion over the time more than painting on tile because of less difference.

Similar to other types of painting, these works have various contents. However, the important issue is that the contents and themes of mural painting used to be determined according to the use of place. For example, in mourning places like Moaven Ul-Molk Tekyeh and for purpose of mourning, the works are mainly related to this content or on entrance of the pelican houses (Saghakhaneh), mainly portrait of Hazrat Abolfazl used to be drawn.

The painting style of icons and the manner of behavior of artists with drawing icons in these works is similar to other types of painting. However, because of special equipment of coloring and dimensions and especially in painting on tile, the processing is simple. Existence of accessories, especially marginalizing with decorative motifs, has been important in these works. Colors in these works have been mainly vivid colors and have been used with penciling around icons and also, paying attention to colorful symbols has been depended on information of artists about this issue. The works of painting on plaster in Gilan and Deylaman Bakaa has been significantly affected by Islamic Old Painting and the icons are generally refined.

Painting on various instruments

The main instruments used for painting have been vehicles and the religious paintings used to be worked on body of these vehicles and were just related to iconography. Painting works were usually based on oil paint; although some vitrai paintings might be also observed in front of vehicles such as carriage.

Painting works were on different instruments such as fighting weapons, blade handle or objects such as pen case, boxes, mirror frames and cover of books. Even sport instruments and the objects used in Zoorkhaneh or special flags of mourning included religious painting and symbols and icons in some cases.

The working type on these instruments was directly depended on the material and use of the instrument. On wooden arrow was mostly implemented by oil paint and on metal instruments, the style was sometimes engraving icon or image on metal such as mourning signs and implementing them on instruments such as boxes and pen cases or books using

painting or using instruments like oil paint and finally, the motifs used to be covered by a protection layer as varnish.



Figure 8: no number, charity member, Haji Ali Ashpaz, 31, disaster of Karbala, 1302 A.H, place: Hosseinieh of Agha Sayed Hussein, Langerud

Painting on cloth has not been promoted as much as other types and various religious contents used to be worked on them. These cloths were mostly used in mourning days and were usually as decorative elements of mourning places.

The painting style was sometimes as sewing on cloth or in fork of calico printing or direct painting using paint on cloth with no starching. The contents and themes on cloths and flags were mostly simple and in addition, they sometimes included religious symbols or icons. There is also another type of iconography that is different in terms of context and implementation. Although this type is not on instruments, it can be also classified in no certain group in terms of volume and size of works.

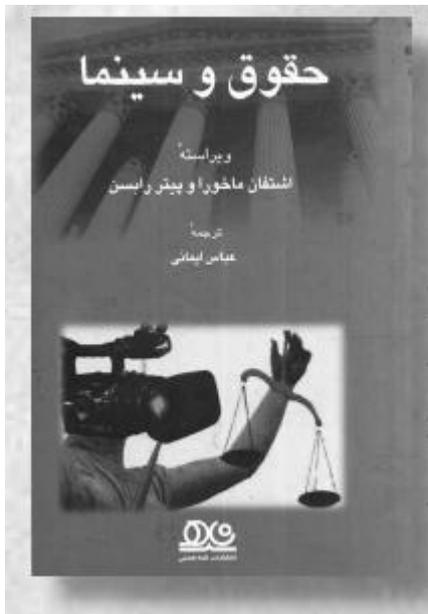
Nail painting is a method that the iconographers raise their nail on the thick paper and implement motifs with the pressure of nail and apparently with no use of direct drawing. In this type of painting, a part of work seems ingrown and a part seems bold and highlighted because of the groove create on the work.

Conclusion

In the investigation about issues and volume of coffeehouse painting and size of works about religious works, especially Imams, it could be found that coffeehouse painters have caused creation of iconography in Iranian Painting. Although some cases are also existed in works of Safavid Era, maybe the early bases of some collective icons are created by that age. However, the certain period of iconography and formation of coffeehouse painting is Qajar Era and along with expansion of religious literature and contents. Also, it has been promoted in many different branches including painting on cloth or canvas, which is known as coffeehouse painting, dervish screens, vitrai and mural and lithography.

Main contents of coffeehouses about icons are divided to two main parts including individual and group icons and the major part of individual icons is related to Imam Ali (PBUH). In next steps, icons of Imam Hussein (PBUH), Hazrat Abbas (PBUH) and Hazrat Ali Akbar have

possessed next positions. However, group icons are along with description of events and sometimes, there are several religious characters in a work.



Stephen Makhura

Trans: A., Imani

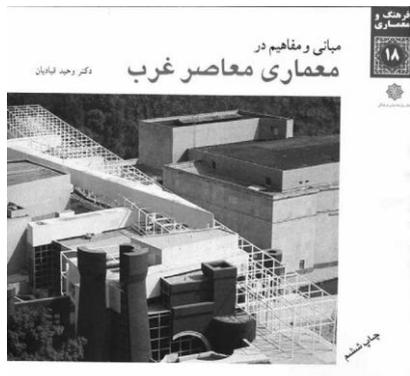
Hasti Press, 2007

If the gravity point of law is considered as human and the surrounding area of human, cinema is created by man and in relation with man and the surrounding environment. The legal concepts and phenomena in context of history and society have binding and important presence and are the main and natural characteristics of human life. This issue can be observed clearly in legal movies. These movies and their variety show that the difficulties of human have no limit and no one can be free from domain of disputes of opinions. In fact, such movies try to show integration of trial with wealth, power, politics and fame and extend view of audiences about explicit and practical function of law. If these movies are translated adequately, they can analyze the basic and challenging role of court lawyer in American society and can also present characteristics of a good and bad lawyer among their contents.

In this work, the author has presented a selection of new studies about law and cinema in different legal fields. He tries to investigate the position and effect of legal movies on public perception in relation with law and legal trial procedure and can also evaluate the causes and process of evolution of wide expanded contents in writing of legal and cinema issues.

Stephen Makhura has presented the book under these titles:

Review of Evolution of Criminal Trial movies of America (1920-2000); Nicole Rafter, Her or Offender?; Cinema lawyers and achieving justice; Stave Greenfield, two photos of movie "Fear Cape" with two different interpretations (1962-1991); Jerald J Sine, law and epics in John Ford Movies; Michael Bonke, historical fields, aesthetics and ideological fields in court movies and social issue as a description of public culture of the U.S; Math Kuzina, ideas of court justice; Jessica Selby, law in movies, promotion of Hollywood court exhibition; Stephen Makhura and Stephen Alibris, why trial in presence of jury is similar to movie and not novel; Phil Mayer, adaptation of novel "Modern Law": filmmaking of novels of John Grisham; Peter Robson and boundary and limits of using law in movies; GeyAzibun.



The basis and concepts in Arabic Contemporary Architecture GhobadianVahid

Center for Cultural Researches

The present study is trying to move along with time. The important steps taken toward information can be a content of the truth that is against passiveness of thought and old ideas. However, this effort is searching a wide and multipurpose attitude; an attitude to the current societies that can make it difficult to get the theory of architecture without social base of human civilization. In modern architecture, modern thoughts are existed. The theorists and historians of history and contemporary architecture, from Bene Vale to Norberg, Jencks and Curtis have introduced some screens of architecture related to other principles and fields of human civilization. Architecture is nothing other than human civilization and maybe the best manifestation for it is the events of the date and aesthetics and inexistence of it should be searched in social powers and movements.

The book tends to discriminate basis and concepts, based on which these monuments are created. This is because; the relationship of people with Western Architecture has had always physical aspect and the clear issue has been just forms and photos of western monuments. The emphasis of the author is on thinking infrastructures in today's architecture and the inspiration sources, since the author believes that the condition for promotion of Iranian architecture and entering to thinking domain in cultural domain of the country and being recognized in field of international architecture is depended on same focus.

It is true that the concepts and basis are not certain, but the advantage of recognizing them is becoming familiar with some thoughts beyond beautiful pictures and creation of questions about contemporary basis of Iran and maybe its thinking principles.

The main discussion of this book is focused on evolutions of Western architecture over the 100 yaers and the study tends to find the origins or emergence of the evolutions. In first chapter, the author investigates modern architecture and in chapter 2, the author has investigated post-modern architecture.

In field of modern architecture, the author has firstly referred to modernity and thinking foundations and its social crystallization. In following, the author refers to the direct consequences of modern age and modern architecture. Through dividing it to 3

Primary, Transcendent and later periods, the author has investigated thinking fields, architectural designs and indicator architectures of each period.

In regard with post-modern discussion, philosophy of this period is firstly discussed and then, different styles of architecture are investigated. In chapter 1, the author believes that investigation of modern architecture is imperfect regardless of modernity thinking fields and the evolutions caused by it such humanism, knowledge orientation and industrial revolution. The evolutions have had fundamental role in progress of modern thought and the modern world and in fact, modern architecture is physical fruit of 4 recent decades.

However, changes created in field of architecture and during latest decade of 20th century in West have led to decline of pillars of the only global style in main part of 20th century that is modern architecture. Evolutions have their roots in fundamental thinking and social changes and the change in attitude to self and the world in West. The changes are begun with criticisms of Niche about modernity and are expanded by thinkers like Freud, Heidegger, Derrida and Deleuze and Lyotard. In chapter 2, similar to chapter 1, the author has emphasized philosophy and the physical manifestation of it in architecture.

In last chapter of the book, 3 tables are presented. In table 1, source of inspiration, objectives and key words in styles of contemporary architecture in West are presented and try to make reader familiar with objectives and general principles of styles. Table 2 refers to architects of different architecture styles in West and table 3 refers to the ideas and at the end of the book, the references in field of modernity, post-modern and contemporary west architecture are presented.