



# NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

## Persian Visions: Contemporary Iranian Photography

September 2 - November 22, 2008

Opening Reception and Gallery Talk: September 5, 7 pm

Gallery Talk and Slide Show by Carol and Gary Graham: September 13, 1 pm

Artini: Thicker Than Water, September 18, 5:30-9 pm

Curator's Gallery Talk by Gary Hallman: October 3, 7 pm

Persian Vision Tour and Discussion with Gary Hallman: October 4, 12 pm

Missoula, MT / June 17, 2008 / Missoula Art Museum (MAM) / *Persian Visions: Contemporary Photography from Iran*, is an exhibition of more than 60 works of photography and video installations by 20 of Iran's most celebrated photographers. *Persian Visions* is a gathering of personal perspectives, with the view of contemporary Iran filtered through private, individual sensibilities even when addressing public concerns. Organized by the University of Minnesota, in conjunction with the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Iran, and circulated by International Arts & Artists, Washington, DC.

Iran has distinguished itself with the spectacular quality and international presence of its film and visual art. Given the backdrop of attention increasingly focused on the art and culture of Iran, and now on the political crisis in that part of the world, an exhibition of this kind is most timely. The perspective of these artists contradicts the way many foreign photographers use the medium—which is to represent Iran and its people as purely exotic.

In expressing their many different visions of their world, the contributors offer a look at both private and public realms. Such is the art of Shokoufeh Alidousti, whose self-portraits and family photographs explore both cultural and female identity. Esmail Abbasi draws on Persian literature for his subject matter with contemporary notes on the present circumstances in Iran. Shahrar Tavakoli focuses on his family history through a series of portraits capturing the subtleties and mood of the Iranian family. In Koroush Adim's *Revelation* series, the images in the exhibition that feature the veil acknowledge this sign of culture, and yet the "revelation" is anything but simple. In Shahrokh Ja'fari's work, his use of unusual spatial rendering of the veiled figure in effect serve as a demand that the viewer look harder and think harder about what can be shown through the visual.

The artists represented in *Persian Visions* cannot entirely surmount the physical and cultural distance between Iran and the United States, but nevertheless this exhibition builds a visual bridge that allows for differences even as it leads viewers to become aware of other ways of being and seeing.

*Persian Visions* was developed by Hamid Severi for the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, Iran, and Gary Hallman of the Regis Center for Art, University of Minnesota and toured by International Arts & Artists, Washington, D.C. This exhibition is supported in part by grants from the ILEX Foundation; the University of Minnesota McKnight Arts and Humanities Endowment; and the Department of Art, the Regis Center for Art, University of Minnesota.

Contact: For more information please contact the Missoula Art Museum at 406-728-0447, visit the MAM website at [www.missoulaartmuseum.org](http://www.missoulaartmuseum.org) or contact Stephen Glueckert, Curator of Exhibitions, [stevegl@missoulaartmuseum.org](mailto:stevegl@missoulaartmuseum.org), 406.728.0447 x226

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**About MAM:** FREE EXPRESSION / FREE ADMISSION. MAM educates, challenges and inspires the community through contemporary art. MAM preserves our emerging cultural heritage through the development and conservation of its art collection. Founded in 1975 and accredited by the American Association of Museums since 1987, MAM showcases diverse and thought-provoking contemporary artwork from local and international artists. Gallery Hours: Tues-Fri, 11AM-5PM, Sat, 10AM-5PM. Office hours: Mon-Fri, 9AM-5PM.

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