

# The Impact of Social and Cultural Events on Contemporary Iranian Painting (1980-2000)\*

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**Abstract:** *Artworks in different fields like painting, sculpturing, architecture, cinema and literature are approval of this claim that since artists live in a society they cannot be regardless toward social, political and cultural events of their own community. Iranian Community has experienced aspects of crucial alters from political ones to social ones. This society has begun to change from a traditional society toward a semi modern society. The most important event in 50 years in Iran's history is 1979 Islamic revolution, which had a broad influence on many aspects of Iranian community. After 1979 revolution Iran has experienced war against Iraq, and this war caused severe conflicts for eight years. After the war, gradually Iran began to take part in world relations. These changes are surveyed by sociologists. Different approaches to society like sociology of art, sociology of religion, sociology of science can illuminate various aspects of sociology. Sociology of art focuses on the context while defining it. There are two main approaches which explain how to analyze artworks. First one is shaping approach and the other one reflection approach. Victoria Alexandre, well-known sociologist who has interpretations on these approaches, consider that Reflection Theory is one of the most important approaches in sociology of art. This theory in fact is a sight of the Representation Theory. This theory considers art as a mirror which can show the society and its structures. Considering artworks and specifically painting, this question arises that how social context modify artists approaches to their artworks. This study focuses on Iranian contemporary painting, some samples of artworks selected and by analyzing them, main questions of this research seems to get an answer. The results obtained from this study suggests that, in accordance to events in Iranian community, transformations in artworks are recognized. The concept of these works are representation of social events besides some interpretations of events. In other words this representation varies from socio-political themes to personal experiences, individuality and identity. Considering that some painters depict their ideas in somehow realistic ways while others prefer personal styles. Regarding this subject, there are few and rare researches which address and compare sociological analysis of this approach, Reflection theory. This research tries to explain how artists effect by socio-cultural events, with a focus on 1980-2000 by an analytical method.*

**Key Words:** *Sociology of Art, Reflection Theory, Iran's Contemporary History, Iranian Painting*

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Art in every society has an intertwined relation with norms, policies and the culture of that community, therefore it is claimed that anticipating the cultural relationships of a society in a specific time is possible. Iran's today society is a result of various transitions through the past. As a result of encountering other cultures mostly west culture, this community has changed from a traditional community to a modern one. Islamic revolution in 1979 was a turning point for great changes in Iran. Pahlavi dynasty under Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi replaced with an Islamic republic under the Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Like any other field, culture and arts has changed; particularly in painting abstract approaches had ignored to make social commitment in art, but this flow did not resist long; few years later artists came back to styles which were popular before Islamic revolution and gradually experienced new styles. In revolutionary atmosphere a group of painters depicted their ideologies in their paintings. Artists felt responsible for showing cultural, revolutionary and religious themes as subjects of the artworks. This situation became acute by the beginning of Iraq- Iran war in 1980. After a decade and simultaneous to the end of war, by formation of new intellectual and ideological thought, human resources development became essential. Gradually public opinion toward various cultural and social activities became extreme and by beginning of the reconstruction period, huge opportunities in arts prepared as well as economy and culture. Artists began to express freely their individuality and personal concerns rather than ideological thought. In other words painters coordinated themselves according to transformations, not only on a national scale but also on a global scale. This research tries to study and analyse artworks which represent and reflect their age. Considering theories which try to define changes in society, like Reflection Theory. By foreseeing Social and

cultural events between 1980 and 2000, certain artworks has introduced and then the relation between social and cultural changes with artists' approaches has examined. In order to achieve this, artworks by Hossein Khosrojerdi, Nosratollah Moslemian, Aydin Aghdashloo, Kazem Chalipa, Habibollah Sadeghi has surveyed. The aim of this study, is an effort about understanding social basis, and the way artworks are entwined with social events, furthermore understanding reasons which underlie the evolution of art in Iranian contemporary community.

### 1.1 Sociology

Sociology is a science concerned to observe and analyse relationships among individuals within a society. Life of a community which encompasses organizations, networks and institutions. Literally the word sociology is derived from the Latin stem "socio" meaning member, friend, or ally and the Greek suffix "logy" means "study of". The Latin roots of the word are useful for directing attention at the particular way sociologists understand human behaviour. Society is known as the status and condition of people whom live under common law. The society is gathering of people who live all together and conjoined with each other by particular laws and social commitments. «Sociology is a scientific study of a group of people who sociologists try to define and explain how people live and how they interact between different groups» (Cohen, 2014: 13). Different majors of sociology like sociology of religion, sociology of philosophy, sociology of science and sociology of art, are products of sociological reflections of a 21st century man. Each one of these categories is constructed as a system with particular subjects and aims of that specified major. Auguste Comte<sup>1</sup>, David Émile Durkheim<sup>2</sup>, Karl Heinrich Marx<sup>3</sup>, Karl Emil Maximilian "Max" Weber<sup>4</sup> are known as founders of sociology.

Auguste Comte was first one who used the term to describe a new way of looking at society. Comte believed in positivism philosophy. He claimed that it is necessary to give social sciences a dignity same as experimental sciences. That means humanities should use experimental research tool. Comte's perspective is that human communities pass through divine, philosophic and scientific levels. «The new social science which Comte tried to initiate, first named social physics, but since he assumed that this term might had approached by a statistician, Adolphe Quetelet<sup>5</sup>. Comte is the first philosopher of science who used the term sociology. The social science defined by Comte should follow the pattern of Natural science not only in experimental methods and epistemological foundations but also in functions for humankind» (Cozer, 2014: 24).

Karl Heinrich Marx is founder of Marxism, Socialism and scientific communism. Considering his revolutionary beliefs he condemned by capitalist beliefs in Paris. In Brussels he created a network to support workers named communist correspondence committee which began to recruitment all around Europe. In 1847, one of the most revolutionary and scientific manifesto about workers right and relation between works- workers- capitals- employers in The Communism Manifesto has announced. This manifestation was the first official and worldwide declaration of modern theory of socialism which has published by Marx and Friedrich Engels. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century more than anyone, Marxist philosophers stablished sociology of art and literature. Marxism is not only political theory or philosophical one, in fact it is one of the most achievements in the context of sociology of art and aesthetics. Great theorists like Eugen Berthold Friedrich Brecht<sup>6</sup>, Jean Baudrillard<sup>7</sup>, Jean-François Lyotard<sup>8</sup>, Walter Benjamin<sup>9</sup>, Fredric Jameson<sup>10</sup> etc. who are pioneers in art and aesthetics had Marxists beliefs. Doctrines as socialist-realism and critical realism reveals this point. Marxism defines the value of art or the artworks due to its socio-political value. He believes artworks accompanied by socio-political aspects play an important role in class struggle and the freedom of humankind. The reason is the relation between substructure and superstructure. Marxist like Marx believed that substructure will shape superstructure. In fact «Marx never defined art and beauty systematically and the longest text which has written about surveying an artwork is a chapter from the book "holy family" in which encompasses stories about the secrets of Paris<sup>11</sup> by Eugène Sue<sup>12</sup>. Art in Marx's perspective is a certain way of describing the social awareness. This particular aspect is a cause of the comparative separation of the artist mind from the level of social awareness of his time» (Ahmadi, 2010, 185). From Marx perspective, artist as well as other producers, produces a commodity considering his/her ability and this commodity should be along the Marxism philosophy.

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<sup>1</sup>. (1857- 1798)

<sup>2</sup>.(1858- 1917)

<sup>3</sup>. (1818- 1883)

<sup>4</sup>.(1864- 1920)

<sup>5</sup>.( 1874- 1976)

<sup>6</sup>.(1898 –1956)

<sup>7</sup>.(1929 –2007)

<sup>8</sup>.(1924 –1998)

<sup>9</sup>. (1892 –1940)

<sup>10</sup>.(1934)

<sup>11</sup>. *Les Mystères de Paris*

<sup>12</sup>.(1804 –1857)

## 1.2 Sociology of Art

Sociology of art is subfield of sociology that concerns with various aspects like studying artworks, artists, viewers and art policies. «The relationship between art and politics, art and religion, art and ideology, art and technology developments and etc. in detail or general are subjects have the capacity to be discussed»(Ramin, 2010: 57). Society affect artists and of course this influence reveals in different forms. One of the ways of studying art, is a sociological viewpoint toward art. As it is mentioned, looking art from sociological perspective is not restricted and it has aspects of economics, anthropology, law and cultural studies. Sociological interpretation of cultural achievement is a result of the penetration of sociological imagination in this age. «This age was not eternal and would not continue either, besides the results also are not the last words» (Hauser, 1984: 14). Sociology of art reminds man that in analysing and defining a phenomenon called art, context is significant. The aim of sociology of art is presenting a proper and reasonable image of relationship between art and society. In this case social reasons that change art are examined and studied. Victoria Alexandre<sup>13</sup> believes there are four significant methods in sociology «Positivist, interpretive, critical and postmodernist research» (Alexandre, 2014: 36). Sociology of art for analysing art has adopted 2 approaches. «In sociology of art there are two trends. The first approach represents the relation between art and society and the second one regards art as a society» (Ravadrad, 2012: 9). The relevance between art and society, survey by two approaches. A: Shaping approach B: Reflection approach.

## 1.3 Shaping Approach

In this approach the impact of artworks on the contemporary communities is surveyed. Artworks form manners, values and changes of social values; at the same time they influence on ideas and notions. In this approach art is superior to the society and the artist is the person who can institutionalized new ideology by presenting his/her artwork. In other words art is an important language to influence on society. «According to shaping approach, art can form ideas and thoughts in people's mind. The shaping approach contains a huge group of theories which unites in the idea that art models society» (Alexandre, 2014: 35).

## 1.4 Reflection Approaches

Undeniably Plato has introduced the most important arguments about representation, like Mimesis theory. «The universe that we experience daily is illusion or a set of pure examples of represents in the mirror or shadows on walls and the real world is the world of ideas». (Farhadpour, 1996: 267). But what is known as the imitation theory, is highly based on Stuart Hall's<sup>14</sup> theories, who is an important figure of cultural studies. He states trilogy of concepts, objects and signs in the language system and believes that a set of processes connect these categories.

Art interacts with different aspects of life. Art influences on society and also is affected by it. Art relies on the time which is created in. «Existence of an artwork relates to characteristics of a period of time, a social group or a person, the artwork is found in communities with different human relations. To evaluate how deep art roots in society it is necessary to specify these two factors in relation to artistic attitude in a particular society»(Duvignaud<sup>15</sup>, 2000: 76). He states that when artists understand a concept from a community they reflect social events directly or indirectly as a symbol. (Duvignaud, 2000: 78). Reflection approaches, regards art as a mirror which reflects the society and its alterations. In fact the reflection theory, is a parade of the Theory of Imitation. By analysing all social symbols that are crystalline in the work of art and by consideration of the developments in artworks, it can be deduced that how much an artwork roots in a community.

Reflection studies, is a basis of attributive analyse, surveying contemporary or historic documents. The manuscript indicates written ones. «The samples of artistic documents contain stories, poems, and even visual and audio ones such as painting. The privilege of manuscript analysis is the opportunity to compare the past and present; so old artworks can give clues from past times» (Alexandre, 2014: 73). Scholars who follow reflection studies are able to begin from different theoretical assumptions and use various investigative techniques. Humankind can demonstrate the life, inner and outer reality by art. Artworks in various fields such as painting, sculpturing, architecture, cinema and literature admit former claim. Well-known commentators in sociology of art and reflection approaches had various studies about it, but generally three theoretician are known as founders of sociology of art and Reflection approach. «Arnold Hauser, Georg Lucach and Lucian Goldman are originator who had surveyed in this issue. The common point is the reflected relation between society and art, although they had disagreement in details» (Ravadrad, 2012: 10). Alexander indicates that there are five research strategies in this approach. These strategies listed as below: Interpretive analysis, Content analysis, Structural Semiotics, Understanding ceremonial rituals and joined method (Ravadrad, 2012: 10). Recognizing some points in these methods are clear: in interpretive analysis, researcher chooses some artworks to extract the meaning, so they survey them in details; in this way it is shown that how elements in paintings reflect particular aspects of a society. In content analysis, researcher chooses a sample while codifying variables in order to study further. Discovering

<sup>13</sup>. (1965)

<sup>14</sup>. (1932-2014)

<sup>15</sup>. (1921 –2007)

contrasts to achieve a meaning or detect set of similar patterns and inner conflicts of a community are structural semiotics characteristics which scholar can benefit from this approach (Alexandre, 2014: 60).

## 2. IRAN'S CONTEMPORARY HISTORY:

### 2.1 Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic (1979)

Most dramatic changes in Iranian government happened in 1979, when Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi<sup>16</sup> was overthrown and replaced by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini<sup>17</sup>. The first remarkable demonstrations to overthrow Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi began in January 1978. Until the triumph of the protesters in 1979, Shah fled Iran in January 1979 after strikes and demonstrations paralyzed the country, and on February 1, 1979 Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Tehran from exile. The last collapse of the Pahlavi dynasty occurred shortly after on February 11 when rebel troops overwhelmed troops loyal to the Shah in armed street fighting. Iran officially became an Islamic Republic on April 1, 1979 when Iranians approved a national referendum to make it so. Khomeini served as leader of the revolution or as Supreme Leader of Iran from 1979 to his death in 1989. Another event that had a long-term impact was the Iran hostage crisis, where Iranian students seized US embassy staff (1979–1981), this events followed by an eight year war.

In the middle of political and social crisis the Iraqi army invaded Iran at Khuzestan, precipitating the Iran–Iraq War. The eight-year-long Iraq- Iran War (September 1980 – August 1988) was the most important international event for the first decade of the Islamic Republic. It helped to strengthen the revolution although it cost Iran much in lives and treasure. This unexpected war, caused disintegration of people's lives in different aspects. It is necessary to mention that the strategy against the enemy, based on Islam, people and the homeland, formed in the first years of the war. «During war warriors and militia fighters turned into a full-scale military force named Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Incidence of war was a reason for the development and expansion of the government. Later Ministry of Economy legislated rationing for fundamental goods until the end of war» (Abrahamian, 2011: 308).

### 2.2 First Cabinet after the War (1989-1997)

Until 1970 urban population growth, rural depopulation and increased oil revenues, formed stratification and position of the middle class as: experts, government employees and intellectuals. But Islamic revolution altered characteristics of Iranian society particularly stratification structure. Ayatollah Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani<sup>18</sup> organized first cabinet after the war. He later founded Executives of Construction Party. As president, Rafsanjani was credited with spurring Iran's reconstruction after the 1980-88 war with Iraq. One of revolution's aim was constructing and improvement of living conditions in faraway parts of Iran. However, his reconstruction efforts failed to reach the rural or war zones where they were most needed. Gradually he became somehow unpopular for rural, veteran, and working class populations. Post war decade described as economy first policy, also as well as economy in social and cultural aspects there were some improvements. That is to say partly due to his economic reforms during his tenure and his support for human rights Rafsanjani's presidency became significant. «rebuilding the remaining ruins of war in various fields, development and implement of huge national plans to gain economic expansion, serious engagement with foreign countries particularly European union, recognition of Iraq as the invader of war were important events in these years»(Bahrani, 2011: 125).

### 2.3 Iran's Reform Era

Seyyed Mohammad Khatami<sup>19</sup> became president on 23 May 1997. He had an unexpected triumph. Khatami had run on a platform of liberalization and reform. He delivered the cabinet at the time when the relation between Iran and European Union was not in ideal condition and European ambassadors had left Iran. Furthermore fights and conflict in neighbour countries was also a reason which could accelerate unrest in the region. This election and Khatami's peaceful attitude toward past policies had a great effect on saving Iran from bad situation. Democracy and participation of Iranians in the political decision-making process was promising for young generation. «Freedom reputation was his only property. He began his champion with different subjects such as expansion of civil society, curing the bad economy, substituting dialogue among civilizations with clash of civilizations. He highlighted a society that appreciates personal freedom, freedom of speech, women's right, political pluralism and the most important domination of the law» (Abrahamian, 2011: 324). Along with economic growth government helped improve the efforts to increase book sales in wide range of fields. Infrastructure and social freedoms resulted in appearing new intellectual and cultural movements in community. Subjects like the relationship between religion and modernity, religion and government, the history of revolution, war, religious intellectuality, etc. became popular in bookstores despite the fact they were not common years ago.

## 3. ART IN IRAN:

<sup>16</sup>. (1919-1980) known as Mohammad Reza Shah. He was the Shah of Iran from 16 September 1941 until his overthrow by the Iranian Revolution on 11 February 1979.

<sup>17</sup>. (1902-1989) He was the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the leader of the 1979 Iranian Revolution

<sup>18</sup>. (1934-2017)He was the fourth President of Iran from 1989 until 1997

<sup>19</sup>. (1943) He served as the fifth President of Iran from 1997 to 2005.

### 3.1 Pre- Revolution Art

To begin with, Persian Constitutional Revolution opened the way for great social and cultural changes heralding the modern era. In art and particularly in painting it might be stated that Kamal-ol-Molk (Mohammad Ghaffari) well-known painter of Qajar dynasty set out for Europe to improve his art, he adapted some of their artworks. When Kamal-ol-Molk returned Iran he established Sanaye Mostazrafeh Art School, known as Kamal-ol-Molk Art School, pursued his artistic career and stabilized a new style in Iranian art. «by establishing Sanaye Mostazrafeh school the old art learning tradition abolished but in fact there was not a great change in Iranian painting(unlike great changes in literature). In other words fine arts school was an incomplete adaptation of western art education system. The result of this process has seen 30 years later in college of fine arts in University of Tehran and 20 years later in decorative arts faculty (Tehran University of Art)»(Pakbaz, 2015: 185). Gaining social freedom and escalation of World War II to this country prepared a foundation for advent of the modernism. But conflict between modernity and tradition brought by the arrival of modernity resulted in inconsistency in art. Also Benchmarking from western art and at the same time being proud of Iranian heritage could intensify these contradictions. In fact there was no way to prevent modernity from affecting Iranian society. Gradually some painters were fully copying Impressionist and Russian social realist as well as Cubist and Expressionist artworks, while some other began to free themselves from traditional norms. Gradually these new approaches appeared among traditional painters and even artworks became popular for governments officials. Thus an attitude toward modernism began, however constantly there were artists who aimed to revenue the past traditional art but the consequent of the efforts benefited modernist painters. The artists who were trying to work same as western artists presented artworks like a joyful and colourful game along with too much sound and colour and news, so they could fascinate all aspects in art atmosphere. This passion and excitement resulted in establishing studios and art schools and centres operated by artists who experienced western art first-hand. «there were significant factors which could support artworks creation like: quintet biennales, government support growth (exp. ministry of culture), establishment of new art centres (exp. fine arts faculty and some public and private faculties), establishment of galleries and artistic groups (exp. Iran's hall, group of freelance painters and sculptures, Naghsh hall, Persepolis, Seyhoun, etc.), presentation of Iranian artworks in international exhibitions in foreign countries and exhibition of foreign artworks in Iran, building new museums (exp. Tehran museum of contemporary art, national museum of Iran), establishing public educational art teaching system in different levels, consideration of well-known publications toward reportage of art events and exhibitions and furthermore holding art sales as a result of urban growth»(Mojabi, 2016: 158).



Fig.1. Gholamhossein Nami, Mixed Media, 1979(Mojabi, 2016, 485)



Fig.2. Sirak Melkonian, Untitled, 1977,(Mojabi, 2016, 483)



Fig.3. Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, Geometry of hope, 1976, (Mojabi, 2016, 468)

In 1960 and 1970 however Pahlavi dynasty imagined that there is no trouble in ordinary life of Iranians, administration of the country brought anger for people. They began to protest methods of running the country. In this period some art centres to sync with modernism started their activity including Shiraz Arts Festival and Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults. Considering their written policies, sometimes artworks produced in contrast to government. That is to say in result of the expanding art activities, presenting artworks on various points even those with harsh criticism was unavoidable. For example «The little Black Fish» by Samad Behrangi<sup>20</sup> published in 1967 by Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults publishing centre but the concept was critical. Modern painting in Iran has lost the audiences among people although it had quality taking into account of visual criteria. Avant-garde artists who create artworks did not pay attention to the traditional context of the community. As a consequence considering the distance between artists, intellectuals and ordinary people, they became the only consumer of their artworks. (Fig.1, 2, 3)

<sup>20</sup>. (1939 - 1967) an Iranian teacher, social critic, folklorist and short story writer. He is famous for his children's books, particularly The Little Black Fish. Influenced by predominantly leftist ideologies that were common among the Iranian intelligentsia of his era.

### 3.2 Post-revolution Painting

#### First Decade after Revolution

(17th of Shahrivar<sup>21</sup>) along with disclosure of Pahlavi suppression, middle class strikes and demonstrations resulted in Islamic revolution. Following that in the fields of visual arts, critical art turned into revolution art. This alteration occurred in all fields of art as literature, music and painting. Some artists tried to depict the battle and further Iraq's war with Iran and the responses to the horrors. Artworks in this period are full of figures and statues which resembles common concepts in a tense atmosphere of a revolution and its consequences. Different themes like religious, ethnic, political and social displays which could best convey messages to the community. (Fig 4, 5) Considering modern approaches in art styles before the Islamic revolution, these questions arise that how artists responded to social events and these tendencies? Whether ideological thought could influence on artists or not? By surveying these transformations in artists' artworks key factors which indicate the relationship between art and society can be judged.



Fig4. Mural at Tehran University, Hannibal Alkhas, Niloufar Ghaderinejad, **Masoud Sadedin**, 1980, ([u-in-u.com](http://u-in-u.com))



Fig.5. Farah Notash, 17 th Shahrivar, 1979, ([u-in-u.com](http://u-in-u.com))



Fig.6. Hannibal Alkhas, 1979,  
(<https://hannibalalkhas.org/product/>)

It is noticeable that University of Tehran was an important centre. Many of revolutionary painters started and continued artworks from this university. These kind of paintings became prevalence since 1977. As a reaction against society tensions, artists inspired from traditional myths and religious symbols, like other revolutions; also; similar to what Picasso did in Guernica in forms of national myths of Spain, or artists in Latin America like Diego Rivera, David Alfaro Siqueiros, etc. who enlist patriotic myths to create scene of philanthropic among people in their community. This analogy highlights the impact of all these artists on forms and styles used Iranian painters. As a sample, murals in college of fine arts at University of Tehran painted by Hannibal Alkhas, Niloufar Ghaderinejad, **Masoud Sadedin** is a representative of artist's attempt in that period. (Fig.4) As Peter Chelkowski states, «The Revolution in Iran was an event of universal significance in the modern history of the Middle East. It was not just a back ward-looking fundamentalist phenomenon but also a modern one, yet one whose message steeped in localized imagery demanding an idealized return to the past»(Keshmirshakan, 2006: 131). So it is not weird that a synthesis of traditional and the modern gradually emerge in revolution art which demonstrates itself in Neotraditionalist style. After 1979 revolution, Iranians experienced great changes in cultural and social life. These changes ranged from social, political and cultural experiences to the world of art, and particularly in painting the resulted in fading modern trends. Official institutions did not support modern approaches any more, thus some artists tend following national arts, traditional arts and realist styles. Social and religious commitment, narrating and message oriented artworks were the most significant characteristics of these works which were popular among people. These works were readable for ordinary people because in terms of forms, concept and performance it was close to what citizens' experiences. The realism and expression of last years were synthetized by symbolism, surrealism and revolutionary romanticism; in order to depict concepts like: pain, struggle, sacrifice, the victory of Muslim people, honouring veterans, martyrs and their families. (Fig. 5, 6) «Important element

<sup>21</sup>. Known as Black Friday; is the name given to 8 September 1978 because of the shootings in Jaleh Square in Tehran.

of content in revolution art in Iran are: 1. Political, social and psychological elements derived from revolution events and Iraq-Iran war. 2. History and religious myths. 3. Elements of conscience and Islamic ideology. 4. Humanism that is common in revolutions» (Rahnavaard, 2009: 14).



Fig7. Hossein Khosrojerdi, Hayyi ala l-falah (Come to salvation [part of the call to prayer]), 1977, (Oriental Imagination, 2009, 106)



Fig.8.Kazem Chalipa, ruz-i buzurg(The Great Day), 1984, (Oriental Imagination, 2009, 160)



Fig.9.Mostafa Goudarzi, Bombardment, 1986, (Oriental Imagination, 2010,



Fig.10.Habibollah Sadeghi, Tashyi-i qulub( Funeral of Hearts), 1983, (sadeghi.gallery/fa)



Fig11.Hossein Khosrojerdi, Fly, 1985, (Oriental Imagination, 2009, 85)



Fig .12. Nosratollah Moslemian, War collection, 1989, (Moslemian, 2006, 15)



Fig 13. Aydin Aghdashloo, Years of snow and fire, 1979, (www.aghdashloo.com)

Accordingly, by illustrating of anecdotes, religious traditions, religious literature, visually using brilliant colors, multi part compositions, halos, flying flags and states of epiphany, characteristics of this period's paintings were formed in establishing a style with revolutionary- Islamic identity. For instance in Fig. 7, 8, 9, 10; Symbolism is evident, the way they are dressed, or especially from the red Tulip flower, which is known as a symbol of the martyrs in Iran in Fig7. In figure6 the Mother is standing and raising the hand to God and showing the pain for the lost son; In other words this approach is common in other artworks but gradually after revolution artist do not have to display the eternal struggle between good and bad, instead artist has critical view toward revolution and later failure in achieving goals is depicted as closed wings. (Fig.11)

### The second decade (1990-2000)

In period of relative peace in country, the social atmosphere brought a renewed interest for displaying artworks, also critics started to write about artworks and evaluate particular painting skills and techniques of past and present

artists. Ideological and political topics faded and instead topics like identity became attractive; concerns which were truly free and personal. In this period various artistic groups started to hold art exhibitions. Some artists, were active before revolution, whom were less willing to take part in exhibitions because of the ideological atmosphere of revolution and war. Some of them were absent in that critical period and when they came back to Iran, they felt free to express their art. These artists are mostly graduated from foreign countries' universities and today they have chairs at universities. Besides, some painters spent their peak years of activity in period of the revolution and war; but not all of them resisted on their past method; some of them followed ideological concepts while others took distance from their past and experienced new approaches which were not the same as former style. The first Biennale of painting held in 1991, two years after the presidency of Hashemi Rafsanjani. During eight years of his presidency, four biennales were held, beside in that period the municipality by constitution of cultural centres started to support an art they were looking for. «transformations in visual society was due to mobilization of resources such as economic resources (formation of art fairs), political resources (atmosphere of free speech and dialog and exchange ideas), cultural resources (giving credit to the language of conversation and cultural diversity), communication resources (book publication growth, new media like satellite, electronic medias and the effort to communicate to audiences) » (Nilghaz, 2011: 55).

To be specified about samples of artworks Fig. 10 and Fig.13 can be described. Moslemian is among artists who used to depict the tension and government's oppression in form of social realism and expressionism in 1970s. Anticipate a coming revolution in following years. On the other hand he accompanied by few artists to show their works at their homes when there was no a place to appreciate art. Further the style and theme of paintings altered and changed into personal concerns. Individuality became a concern for artists and ten years later they could display their artworks in galleries, places where gradually increased in number.

Fig 13, 14: Copied paintings of remarkable works of predecessors that have been doodled with colours on faces or beautiful miniatures but crumpled and entwined; Aghdashloo's paintings illustrates kind of tension and permanent thinking of gradual doom. This theme continued in the next decade artworks and artist by using traditional Iranian painting and placing them in a kind of suppression, being crushed in a suspended situation conveys the apocalyptic look at beautiful objects that have a kind of foretelling about their fates death, furthermore; war, destruction and devastation of values are concepts of his works.

It is necessary to remind Duvignaud's perspective here. He states that painters' reaction of varies from direct reactions to indirect reactions, in other words arts do not show society events directly. He continues that arts reflect what they receive whether clearly or unclear in forms of symbols.



Fig.14. Aydin Aghdashloo, 2000, www.aghdashloo.com.com (



Fig.15. Nosratollah Moslemian, Untitled, 1996, (Moslemian, 2006, 64)



Fig 16. Kazem Chalipa, Untitled,2001, (Oriental Imagination,2009, 153)



Fig.18. Mostafa Goodarzi, Untitled,(keshmirshekan, 1996, 145)



Fig.19. Hossein Khosrojerdi, the Experience, 1995, (Oriental Imagination, 2009,



Fig.17. Habibollah Sadeshi, East Phantom, 1990s, (sadeghi.gallery/fa)



#### 4. CONCLUSION:

It can presumably agree that the purpose for studying artworks is to gain an understanding of artists' activities, these presented works reflect the society and living conditions. This reflection in visual arts and particularly painting is figurative and nonfigurative. Figurative Artworks deliver more elements to examine the signs of reflection. This reflection is not restricted to representation in details, but the aim is displaying deep relation between art, production and its creation in the centre of a community. The reflection approach is practical in sociology of art which follows the idea that art is a mirror of a community which represents its transformation and structures. Society designate art, in other words society shapes and forms art. Before the Islamic revolution in Iran, most of the artworks had characteristics of modernism, artworks which were popular before did no longer found any audiences among people; but by occurrence of the revolution in 1979, where autocratic monarchy replaced by an Islamic Republic, the commitment revolutionary art established and was dominant till the end of Iraq- Iran war. After the takeover by the Islamic government, museums and galleries enjoyed less latitude than they had in earlier years. Rafsanjani's administration concentrated on policy of rebuilding and reinforcing the economy with no dramatic break with the ideology of the revolution. In 1997, Khatami era led to the encouragement of cultural and economic liberalization. By formation of a new discursive space, interacting to the contemporary world and universal relations, artists instead of depicting ideological themes, displayed the inner world and individuality. That is to say artists' obsession became more personal and resulted in diversity artwork and experiencing new methods of art creation. To the end, social, political and economic resources became a driving force to produce culture, idea and art in Iranian painting.

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