

Mahshid Modares
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The exhibition at the *Green Rice Gallery: Women of Iran- Citizens of the World* showcases examples of contemporary Iranian art in a variety of media, such as photography, painting, collage and film. This exhibit includes works by Mahnaz Hashemi, Niloufar Karimzadegan, Yasmin Mawaz-Khan, Soudabeh Memarzadeh, Mahshid Modares, and Priya; dedicated Iranian artists who live in Iran, San Jose, San Francisco and San Diego.

The collection of work presented here is a connection between the rich Iranian artistic and cultural heritage and a belief in art as an international dialogue. The artists exhibit an avant-garde movement among Iranian women who use influential tools such as art to share their progressive vision and significant role in the transformation of Iran and the whole world. As Priya states: "I stand for women being free to express their gifts of beauty, power and wisdom in any way that is most authentic to them. My colorful figures elicit an appreciation of the divine feminine and intend to awaken the goddess archetype within each of us."

These artists also honor Iranian traditional arts. This is evident in the evocative works of Mahshid Modares. In her *Termeh* Series, Mahshid studies Iranian textiles such as Termeh (a heavy brocaded fabric) and carpets as a homage to the exquisitely handcrafted products made by unknown Iranian women for centuries. Mahshid intends to translate the language of traditional textile design into the modern visual language.

The link between the past and the present is also depicted in Soudabeh Memarzadeh's pieces: "My paintings are inspired by my perception of everyday life, recent and childhood memories, distant lands and world history. I first divide these pieces, then reunite them as layers – entwined memories, sensations and emotions."

Mahnaz Hashemi's collages are the stories of young girls and boys wearing clothes made of flowers dancing in nature and sitting on the moon. Her characters invite the viewer to think about how tranquil and meaningful life could be. Niloufar Karimzadegan, however, questions the reality of the veiled woman and the experience of a woman living through a lifestyle of layers. Her new series is called *Under the Layers of Modesty*, a number of digital photographs incorporated with poems by Forough Farrokhzad, one of Iran's most influential contemporary women poets.

Yasmin Mawaz-Khan's videos represent an interest in exploring the human senses and perceptive capacities. She instills her work with textures, colors and digitally manipulated forms to invoke curiosity and maintain a sense of wonder in the world.

This group of artists presents a large contingent of Iranians who live, work and play on a global scale. Across continents, these women create and collaborate, furthering their ideals of cross-cultural community and awareness.