

Artist Resources - Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian (Iranian, 1924 – 2019)



Farmanfarmaian in her Tehran studio, 1975
Photograph: artist's family/Haines Gallery

Farmanfarmaian at the [Third Line Gallery in Tehran](#)

Farmanfarmaian at the [Haines Gallery in San Francisco](#)

“It has unlimited possibility, hexagon patterns...[they] fit to the pentagon, the heptagon. All these things are connected to each other,” Farmanfarmaian tells curator and critic Hans Ulrich Obrist in a 2010 [video interview](#) at the Serpentine Gallery. “The pattern of the hexagon geometry of Islamic art is connected with tile work, metalwork, carpet, plasterwork. Everything is geometric design in Iranian art.”

The Guggenheim presented Farmanfarmaian’s first solo show in the U.S. in 2015.

[Infinite Possibility: Mirror Works and Drawings, 1974-2014](#) brought together late sculptures not seen in public since the 1970s and new geometric drawings, a medium at the core of the artist’s practice. [Read her conversation](#) with Suzanne Cotter about the goals and inspirations for the exhibition.

[Interview Magazine](#) spoke with Farmanfarmaian on the occasion of her exhibition at the Guggenheim. “Today, I find that geometry has meaning from the start. It goes from triangle, to square, pentagon, hexagon, all the way up to 12, which is the zodiac—the 12 months of the year.”

The 2016 documentary [MONIR](#) chronicles her life and artistic practice, exploring how she became one of Iran’s most important contemporary artist. [Watch](#) Leyla Fakhr, producer of the documentary, and Sunny Rahbar, Director of the Third Line Gallery, discuss the artist’s importance and influence at a panel following a screening of the film at the Dubai International Film Festival. [Hyperallergic](#) also discussed the film in an intimate profile.

In 2017, Iran opened it’s first museum [dedicated to a female artist](#), in honor of Farmanfarmaian. The [Monir Museum](#) houses 51 works including mirror mosaics, abstract paintings, and reverse-glass sculptures.

The Irish Museum of Modern Art produced a major traveling retrospective of Farmanfarmaian’s work in 2018. [Sunset Sunrise](#) focused on the integration of two cultures, American and Iranian, that defined her work. [Watch curator Rachel Thomas tour the galleries.](#)

[Artists and critics remember](#) Farmanfarmaian’s creativity and cultural impact as an outstanding female voice and leader of contemporary art in Iran.

Iranian artist [Shrin Neshat reflects on her friendship with Farmanfarmaian](#) and the perpetual influence of the elder artist in a touching 2019 tribute.



Farmanfarmaian, 2013
Photo: David Heald/Guggenheim

On View July 1 – October 4, 2020



Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian (Iranian, 1922-2019)

Nonagon & Decagon, 2009

Mirror, reverse painted glass, and plaster on wood

Private Collection; L2020:61.1

Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian bridged cultural and creative divides to become a leader in contemporary art in Iran and one of the most important female artists of her generation. Included in the first group of Iranian artists allowed to study in the United States following WWII, she traveled to New York in 1945 and spent a formative decade as a fashion illustrator, developing close friendships with American modernists such as Willem de Kooning, Joan Mitchell, and Andy Warhol, among others. Upon her return to Iran in 1957, she began incorporating traditional craft techniques from indigenous jewelry and textile design, and experimenting with the mirror mosaics and reverse-glass paintings for which she is best known. Following an exile in New York sparked by the 1979 Islamic Revolution, she reestablished her studio in Tehran in the 1990s and returned to her sculptural practice, hiring local craftsmen to execute her elaborate three-dimensional designs. Geometry was central to her work, beloved as a vehicle with unlimited possibilities, capable of communicating both visual and spatial experiences. Farmanfarmaian also cherished geometry for its aesthetic connection to Islamic architecture and decoration. “All my inspiration has come from Iran,” she reflected in 2017. “It has always been my first love.”