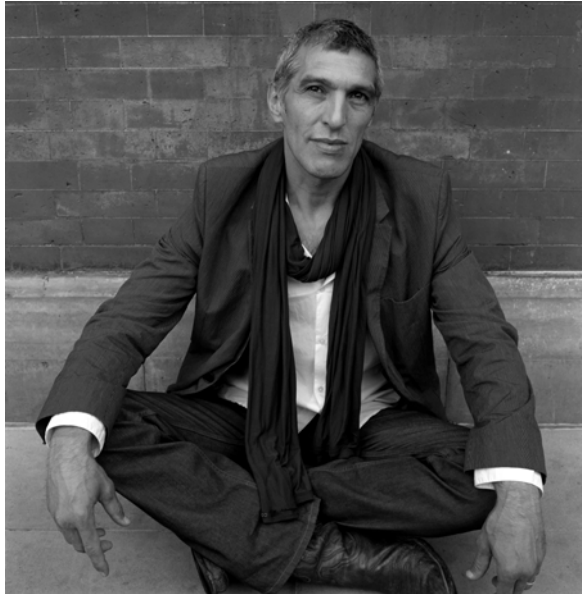


KHOSROW HASSANZADEH

Iranian, born 1963



Hassanzadeh is one of the artist's of the moment; in 2009 alone his works have been widely shown across Iran and exhibited at The British Museum, The 53rd Venice Biennale and the Chelsea Art Museum in New York. Born in Tehran into a traditional family of fruit sellers, in 1979 he became a revolutionary and Badiji soldier fighting the war on drugs near Afghanistan. He returned to Tehran completely disillusioned and in 1989 took up studies at the Faculty of Painting at Tehran's Mojtama's-e-Honar University.

Hassanzadeh's inspiration for the *Ya Ali Madad* series was taken from the prayers of Pahlavan wrestlers before a match. In this series, the artist expands his fascination with the Qajar period heroes. The works combine painting and printing techniques and are executed with highly charged acrylic colours and silkscreen on canvas.

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Ali is the first Imam in the Shia tradition, a strong and humble man, famous for helping the poor. He is the Imam of the Pahlavan and they revere his sword, the Khyber. In Iran, when people need help they say "Ya Ali Madad." The text at the top of the paintings, is a dancing, whirling calligraphy that repeats over and over, 'Ali, Ali, Ali'. Hassanzadeh explains that "I wanted the letters that I painted around them to move like a dervish, to dance across the canvas. I found myself moving like a dervish in a circle as I was painting."

The screen print is taken from an old photo of the Pahlavan holding hands, while on either side of them there is a court intellectual, a Dervish, a General and Mullah. The Pahlavan represent many aspects of Iranian culture that have been lost today. In the *Ya Ali Madad* series Hassanzadeh wants to remind people of their beauty, strength and honour.

Brief Biography

Hassanzadeh lives in Tehran, where he works as an actor and visual artist. Between 1989 and 1991, he studied painting at Mojtama-e-Honar University. From 1995, while he was studying Persian Literature at Azad University, he also received private training from the artist Aydeen Aghdashlou.

Hassanzadeh first gained international recognition with *War* (1998), a grim and trenchant diary of his own experiences as a volunteer soldier during the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988). In *Ashura* (2000) a 'women-friendly' interpretation of the most revered Shiite religious ceremony, he depicted chador-clad women engulfed by religious iconography. *Chador* (2001) and *Prostitutes* (2002) continued his exploration of sociological themes particular to Iran's hyper-gendered urban landscape. In *Terrorist* (2004) the artist questions the concept of 'terrorism' in international politics by portraying himself, his mother and sisters as 'terrorists'.

Khosrow Hassanzadeh has had solo shows in Amsterdam, Beirut, Dubai, London, Phnom Penh, and Tehran. It was his solo exhibition at Diorama Arts in London in 1999, which first introduced his work to public institutions. His work is now held by The British Museum, the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, the World Bank and the Tropenmuseum in the Netherlands.