



## Background/Press Kit

### "Six Weeks of Iranian Art" Festival

Toronto September 21-November 2, 2012

The second *Six Weeks of Iranian Art* festival is returning Toronto with an even bigger dream of aiding and representing Canadian-Iranian artists in this multicultural landscape – showcasing more headlining stars and empowering emerging artists at Toronto's historic Downtown. This fall Toronto's *Queen Gallery* will be home to over 150 artists, performers and exhibitors.

As a visible growing minority in Canada with more than 150,000 Iranian-Canadians in the country the need for cultural preservation and progression has become a clear ambition in the Iranian community. *Six Weeks of Iranian Art* is an invitation from the ever-growing Iranian community in Toronto to all Canadians to come and be inspired, intrigued, and amazed by an innovating and thought provoking festival. From visual arts to captivating theatre, music and film, this 6 week festival aims to cast the spotlight on Iranian artists while embracing our rich multicultural community. From September 21, 2012 to November 2, 2012 internationally renowned, award winning artists, among emerging young talents will take part in a number of exhibits and performances. With overwhelming success in 2007, this non-for-profit festival is sure to become the next cultural sensation of our city.

### **Queen Gallery, 382 Queen Street East, Toronto M5A 1T1**

Housed in a refurbished brownstone in Queen Street East, the Queen Gallery offers a distinctive space where the boundaries of different media are greeted, embraced and sometimes challenged. Since opening its doors three years ago the Queen Gallery has represented contemporary local artists as well as international artists from around the world. Gallery owner Mahrokh Ahankah's highest pride and joy is the fact that Queen Gallery has evolved into a portal for introducing artists to the supportive cultures and communities of Toronto. "In our quest of discovering original contemporary voices we have succeeded to encourage and introduce an exciting number of Iranian-Canadian artists, said Mahrokh.

### *Theme : Art of the Minute – Minute of the Art*

The theme of the 2012 festival "Art of the Minute – Minute of the Art" was selected as a tribute to the creative process.. The *Minute of the Art* captures the moment in the creative process that transforms an ordinary endeavour to a timeless work of art. For every masterpiece there is a true moment of creation when the work is no longer ordinary but extraordinary and forever timeless – that is the *Minute of the Art*. The life-long journey of every artist to master that creative peak, is the '*Art of the Minute*'- the devotion and hard work that artists put into every minute of a life-long journey to master a craft. Six Weeks of Iranian Art will celebrate the journey of artists as well as showcasing masterpieces.

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#### **Six Weeks Of Iranian Art**

382 Queen Street East, Toronto, M5A 1T1, ON, Tel. (416) 361-6045, Fax. (416) 955-0732

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## **six weeks of Iranian art**

### *Program Highlights*

#### **Exhibitions**

The 2012 festival will host four main exhibits.

##### ***Backdrop to the Future***

**September 21<sup>st</sup>-October 3<sup>rd</sup>**

This exhibition showcases the work of Iranian masters of visual art who have influenced contemporary Iranian and international art and inspired and nurtured generations of younger artists. Among the masters exhibited will be the works of Mohsen Vaziri Moghadam, the father of Iranian modern art and internationally renowned painter who has been recognized in international art circles from 1958 to the present. The octogenarian Vaziri is scheduled to be at the festival himself. Vaziri and other masters will be at the festival networking events and offering on site tutorials.

##### ***A Burst in the Fog,***

**September 21<sup>st</sup>- October 17<sup>th</sup>**

This exhibit features the newest creations of the festival's five founding artists<sup>1</sup> in the fields of painting, sculpture, photography and graphic design as well as the creations of a guest artist selected by the founding five to be honoured for his/her contribution to art.

##### ***Mystic Train***

**October 5<sup>th</sup> – October 17<sup>th</sup>**

This exhibition will showcase paintings, photographs, sculptures and graphic designs created by eight talented women, including Montreal's Ronak Kordestani and the award winning sculptor Mansoureh Feizi from Tehran. These women have all been born after the 1979 revolution and their art reflects the turmoil of change, eight years of Iraq-Iran war and a quest for identity..

##### ***Flying Colours- The Juried Group Exhibit***

**October 19<sup>th</sup> October 31<sup>st</sup>**

The last exhibit in the 2012 festival showcases the works selected for special recognition by a seven person jury composed of art critics, Julie Oakes and Marcel Jerou together with the five founding artists. The scope of the competition covers visual art, documentary and film.

#### **A Tribute to Ghobad Shiva, World Master Graphic Designer**

##### **September 28th**

In 2011 the World Master Organizing Committee inducted Iranian graphic designer, Ghobad Shiva, into the ranks of world masters. We will showcase the best of Shiva's award winning illustrations, posters, logos, designs and publications produced over the several decades in this exhibit and pay tribute to the man who is scheduled to be in attendance.

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<sup>1</sup> Pooyan Tabatabaei – photojournalist, Mahmood Meraji- painter, Ali Kamran- Graphic Designer, Mohsen Vasiri Moghadam- painter and sculptor, Mehrad Meraji - Painter



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### **Short films, animation and documentary      Thursdays October 4th, 11th and 13th**

While the Iranian film industry came under popular international spot light in 2012 with two Oscar nominations for Farhadi's *Separation*, Iranian directors and films have been well recognized within international film circles. Iran-based 'Image of the Year' festival is the focal point for Iranian photographers, animators and documentary film makers, many of whom have won international awards. We are very pleased to announce that the film and documentary content of the 2012 Six weeks of Iranian Art festival has been developed in collaboration with the Iran-based 'Image of the year' festival. For the past five years Image of the Year Festival has taken its exhibits international and displayed in Brazil and France to great acclaim. Highlights of their exhibits will come to Toronto for the first time as part of our festival.

We have planned three nights of dedicated performances. On Thursday October 4<sup>th</sup> we will showcase selected short films. True to the theme of the festival many of the short films will be one minute in length and bring with them a ray of exciting topics ranging from national legends to comedy. On the 11<sup>th</sup> we will screen documentaries including recent Iranian documentaries that have attracted international interest, such as *Upside Down* and *I don't like painting* giving special focus to Canadian-Iranian directors. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, we will screen our jury's pick of the shorts and documentaries submitted to the festival's open competition.

### **Music, Theatre and Literature**

The intimate Queen Gallery space will be opened for four musical performances involving Iranian music or artists. Toronto's own Araz Salek will give a solo performance of traditional Iranina music on the Taar. From traditional and folk music to classical and pop music the line-up for this upcoming festival is sure to be a crowd pleaser, as headlining stars come together with emerging young musicians.

Six Weeks.of Iranian Art brings you samplings of literature from theatrical performances and play reading to a festival of monologues and an evening with poets on stage.

### **Workshops**

Throughout the six week festival aspiring artists and patrons will also get a chance to participate in seven interactive workshops that will allow people to observe and interact with some of the most respected local and visiting masters in the country and the world while getting a chance to create their own artwork. The workshops are designed to give a glimpse into the *Minute of Art* and inspire the next generation of masters.

<u>Interactive Workshop</u>	<u>Lead Artist</u>
Photography	Pooyan Tabatabaei
graphic	Ali Kamran
Painting	Mahmoud Meraji
Literature	Syavash Shabanpour

### **Dusk to dawn Projections**

During the six weeks there will be continuous projection of selected exhibits from dusk to dawn on a large screen visible from Queen Street. Queen Gallery has used this innovative approach in the past to take art to the public with great success and good reception from the local community.

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### ***Organizing Committee***

The Organizing Committee of the Six Weeks of Iranian Art festival is composed of a group of Canadian-Iranians, artists, business leaders, professionals and community builders, dedicated to ensuring that the growing Canadian-Iranian community finds its place in multi-cultural Canada. Showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Iran and work of thriving artists from Iran and within the diaspora is an excellent vehicle for cultural dialogue and a way for the Canadian-Iranian community to participate in the vibrant cultural life of Canada. Committee Members are:

### **Pooyan Tabatabaei, Photojournalist**

#### **Festival Curator and art director**

With more than a decade of experience in photojournalism in Canada, University background in Art and Management, Pooyan Tabatabaei has contributed to push the boundaries in Canadian Visual Art by achieving international prestigious awards and receiving many nominations. While his photojournalistic images have been published in numerous international magazines and dailies, his artistic visionary has been appreciated by the art society and he has chosen to be a curator for the international festivals and exhibitions.

### **Mahmoud Meraji – Fine Art Artist**

The remarkable career of artist Mahmoud Meraji extends beyond his completed works of art. Highly renowned as a painter, Meraji is also a master of portraiture. Over the course of more than 30 years, he has pushed the boundaries of traditional painting in remarkable ways in both Canada and Iran, achieving many prestigious international awards. During the last decade Meraji has taught and collaborated with the Canadian Iranian community.

### **Ali Kamran - Graphic designer**

Ali Kamran has been involved in design industry as a graphic designer and art director since 1997. His posters for the theatrical shows brought local and international recognition for him. From 2006 Ali Kamran continued his art journey in Canada and numerous Canadian festivals, Music albums and theatre posters flourished by his style.

### **Levon Haftvan , Stage director and Actor**

Levon Haftvan, artistic director of Lemaz Productions & Artists Management, is a stage director, actor, dramaturg and producer from Canada. He works with various International performing arts festivals and venues as artistic adviser. Haftvan holds directing degrees from University of Tehran and Russian Academy of Theatrical Arts. He is fluent in Farsi, Armenian, Russian and English languages. During the last ten years, Lemaz Productions & Artists Management, has produced many theatre performances and helped Canadian performing artists to participate in International events.

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### **Dr. Shahrzad Rahbar, industry executive and community builder**

With two decades of executive experience in the gas industry in Canada, Shahrzad Rahbar has contributed to building a strong and efficient economy in Canada, and in shaping energy and innovation policy. She has also been recognized as a community builder for her role in launching a major new coalition for sustainable community energy solutions. An art lover herself, Shahrzad is passionate about building a cultural presence for the Canadian Iranian Community.

### **Mahrokh Ahankhah - Architect ,Queen Gallery's owner and director**

With more than a decade of experience in architecture while working as an Architect in Canada, Mahrokh Ahankhah took a bold step above and beyond her designated and expected job description and established Queen Gallery!

Queen Gallery is Mahrokh Ahankhah's flag ship of diversity & innovation, which sailed beyond merely showcasing numerous international artists. She has taken upon herself to pursue the sacred task of converting mundane events into exciting cultural ones, transforming the corpses of spaces to lively, ambient ones accented by various artistic approaches!

### **Behnaz Rahbar , Director of the "new vision productions Inc."**

With the background of Nursing, Behnaz Rahabr has dedicated her life to service for patients in health care system of Canada for more than a decade. With a background of management and as a director of the New Vision Productions Inc. she has produced and supported many art events such as theatrical shows, visual exhibitions and short films in Canada in last 6 years.