

Call for Submissions:
Art Iran 2 Curatorial Competition and Exhibition

Craft Contemporary

5814 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90036

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 22, 2025

CONTACT
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Farhang Foundation and Craft Contemporary launch open call for Art Iran 2 Curatorial Competition and Exhibition

LOS ANGELES – July 15, 2025 – Following the resounding success of the inaugural **Art Iran** competition and the critically acclaimed exhibition ***Art Iran: Falling Into Language***, held at the Craft Contemporary from January 27 to May 5, 2024, **Farhang Foundation** and **Craft Contemporary** are proud to announce the **Art Iran 2 Curatorial Competition and Exhibition**.

We invite curators and arts professionals with demonstrated experience in developing focused, thematic group exhibitions, preferably with a concentration on Iranian art and culture, to submit proposals for this second edition. The selected exhibition will be presented at Craft Contemporary in Los Angeles from **May 21, 2027 - November 14, 2027**.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Proposals should spotlight **Iranian culture and heritage**, interpreted through the lens of **contemporary Iranian art**. Curators are encouraged to propose innovative, cohesive exhibitions that explore timely, resonant themes grounded in Iranian identity, artistic expression, or sociocultural commentary.

The Craft Contemporary gallery space is approximately **2,200 square feet**, and the total available **curatorial budget is \$55,000**. This includes all curatorial fees, artist honoraria, exhibition production, installation, shipping, fine art insurance, public programming, and catalog development. **A minimum of 10% of the total budget must be dedicated to artist fees.**

ROUND 1: SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

To be considered, applicants must submit the following materials in a **single PDF document** by **November 17, 2025**, to ArtIran@Farhang.org

- **A current CV/resumé**
- **A one-page proposal** (in English) including:
 - A concise description of the exhibition concept
 - A preliminary list of artists and media
 - An outline of ideas for public programming accompanying the exhibition.

Media may include painting, ceramics, design, drawing, textiles, assemblage, printmaking, and sculpture. **Photography and video art are not eligible for this competition.**

Selections for the second round will prioritize:

- Artistic excellence
- Conceptual coherence
- Inclusion of emerging and diverse artists
- Balanced representation of genre/s

ROUND 2: EXPANDED PROPOSALS

Applicants selected to proceed to Round 2 will be notified by **January 19, 2026**, and invited to submit a comprehensive proposal by **May 18, 2026**.

Round 2 proposals must include:

- Confirmed list of artists and artwork samples/images
- Plans for a scholarly exhibition catalog, including proposed essay contributors
- Detailed budget breakdown
- Programming outline (minimum of 5 public events)
- Any additional information that will aid in evaluating the vision and feasibility.

Finalists will be invited to present their proposals virtually to the jury in July of 2026.

INSTITUTIONAL VISION

Craft Contemporary's new curatorial project is an innovative exhibition series that reimagines Craft by connecting it to the broader story of humanity. **Art Iran 2** takes inspiration from the elemental theme of air, as a subtle thread that connects voice, memory, and craft. Air here is considered in its most poetic and everyday forms, breath, breeze, song, and story.

“Our past collaborations with Farhang Foundation on exhibitions like *Focus Iran* and *Art Iran: Falling Into Language* have highlighted the profound impact of uplifting underrepresented voices through dynamic contemporary art practices,” said **Rody N. López, Executive Director of Craft Contemporary**. “We are proud to continue this meaningful partnership with Farhang Foundation and to further explore the power of craft as a conduit for cultural expression and connection.”

“We are thrilled to build upon the tremendous momentum of the inaugural Art Iran exhibition and to once again collaborate with Craft Contemporary on this meaningful initiative,” said **Alireza Ardekani, CEO of Farhang Foundation**. “Art Iran 2 offers a unique opportunity for curators to engage deeply with the richness and complexity of Iranian culture, both past and present. Through this open call, we aim to amplify diverse voices and creative visions that explore Iranian heritage in fresh, thought-provoking ways. We believe contemporary art has the power to foster dialogue, challenge perceptions, and bridge cultural divides, and we are proud to provide a platform where those conversations can begin. We are also deeply grateful to the magnificent members of our jury, whose expertise, generosity, and dedication lend immeasurable value to this endeavor.”

SELECTION CRITERIA

All proposals will be evaluated by a panel of distinguished jurors based on:

- Relevance to Iranian culture and heritage
- Curatorial vision and creativity
- Feasibility and production clarity
- Engagement potential through public programming

For additional information or questions, please contact: ArtIran@Farhang.org

ART IRAN 2 - JURY



Ladan Akbarnia

Ladan Akbarnia brings over 20 years of curatorial and research expertise in the arts of the Islamic world, with a focus on Iran, Central Asia, and South Asia. She will begin her new role as Head of Curatorial and Professor of Islamic World Collections at the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge in September 2025, following key positions at The San Diego Museum of Art, The British Museum, the Brooklyn Museum, and the Iran Heritage Foundation. At SDMA, she organized the major NEH-, NEA-, and Getty-funded exhibition *Wonders of Creation: Art, Science, and Innovation in the Islamic World* (2024–2025). At the British Museum, she was a lead curator of the Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic World. She has taught Islamic art history at Smith and Wheaton Colleges and consulted for the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. Ladan holds advanced degrees from UCLA and Harvard, and has published widely on topics including Iranian and East Asian exchanges, Sufism, and contemporary Middle Eastern art. At the Fitzwilliam, she will lead curatorial research on Islamic art and material culture.



Naz Cuguoğlu

Naz Cuguoğlu works as a curator of contemporary art at the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco, where her work explores themes of intersectional identities and diasporic experiences. In 2024, she was appointed to co-curate the inaugural American Pavilion at the 15th Gwangju Biennale and received the Andy Warhol Foundation's Curatorial Research Fellowship Grant and the AAMC Propel Award. Her curatorial experience includes exhibitions and programs at documenta fifteen, 15th Istanbul Biennial, Taiwan Pavilion at the 60th Venice Biennale, 4th Istanbul Design Biennial, Fondazione Sandretto Re Rebaudengo, and Haus der Kulturen der Welt. She has previously held roles at institutions such as KADIST, The Wattis Institute, de Young Museum, and SFMOMA. Her writings have appeared in *Art Asia Pacific*, *Hyperallergic*, and *Nka: Journal of Contemporary African Art*. As a co-founder of Collective Çukurcuma, she experiments with collaborative curatorial practices through reading groups and international exhibitions.

ART IRAN 2 - JURY



Fereshteh Daftari

Fereshteh Daftari is a curator and scholar who received her Ph.D. in Art History from Columbia University (1988). During her tenure at the Museum of Modern Art in New York (1988 - 2009), she curated a number of international exhibitions including *Without Boundary: Seventeen Ways of Looking* (2006). Her curatorial work in the field of Iranian modernism includes *Between Word and Image* at New York University's Grey Art Gallery in 2002, and *Iran Modern* at the Asia Society Museum in New York in 2013. She has also focused on contemporary art. *Action Now*, the first exhibition of contemporary Iranian performance art, was held in Paris (2012); *Safar/Voyage: Contemporary Works by Arab, Iranian, and Turkish Artists* at the University of British Columbia's Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver (2013); and *Rebel, Jester, Mystic, Poet: Contemporary Persians* at the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto (2017). Dr. Daftari has published widely and her most recent book is titled *Persia Reframed: Iranian Visions of Modern and Contemporary Art* (London: I.B. Tauris/Bloomsbury, 2019).



Frida Cano

Frida Cano is a Mexican visual artist and Senior Curator at Craft Contemporary in Los Angeles. She is the creator of *Arttextum*, *Tejido de agentes culturales inspirados en Latinoamérica*, a research-based art project that maps metaphorical relationships between cultural producers, likening artists to rivers, venues to mountains, and theory to climate. From 2012 to 2020, *Arttextum* collaborated with Spain's Ministry of Culture. Cano holds a BFA from La Esmeralda, National Center for the Arts in Mexico City, and an MFA in Exhibition and Museum Studies from the San Francisco Art Institute. Her exhibitions and talks span Mexico, the U.S., Germany, Japan, Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Spain. She has worked with institutions including SPACE Collection, Centro de la Imagen, Kurimanzutto Gallery, Walter and McBean Galleries, and Marciano Art Foundation. Her awards include the Endesa Scholarship (Spain), the Jumex Foundation, and Fulbright-Comexus. She is co-author of *Geografía artística de Arttextum –El mundo que también habitamos* (2019) and serves on the board of Blue Roof in Los Angeles.

ART IRAN 2 - JURY



Shulamit Nazarian

Shulamit Nazarian was born in Iran and immigrated to the US in 1979. She studied architecture at Pratt Institute in NYC.

In 2006 she began curating art exhibitions out of her personal residence. In 2012, Nazarian opened her first permanent gallery in Venice Beach, CA. The gallery originally focused on presentations by artists from the Middle East, and then expanded to a global program of artists.

In 2017, Nazarian opened a new gallery in Hollywood, located on La Brea at Melrose. In 2019, she founded the Shulamit Nazarian Foundation, which supports artists building cultural bridges between the Middle East and the West through contemporary art. Her foundation has collaborated with institutions such as MCA Chicago.

Shulamit Nazarian is a member of the board of The Art Dealers Association of America (ADAA), the Center of Contemporary Art (CCA) in Tel Aviv-Yafo, and the Artis Contemporary Israeli Art Fund.



Shirin Neshat

Shirin Neshat is an Iranian-born artist and filmmaker living in New York. In 2022, Neshat was the subject of a comprehensive installation of her photographs and video works, "Land of Dreams" at The Museum of Contemporary Art Toronto, which travelled to SITE Santa Fe, New Mexico. In 2019, Neshat was the subject of a retrospective exhibition, "Shirin Neshat: I Will Greet the Sun Again" at The Broad, Los Angeles, which traveled to The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth. She has mounted numerous solo exhibitions at museums internationally, including: AROS Aarhus Art Museum, Copenhagen; Musée de l'Elysée, Lausanne, Switzerland; National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia; Glenstone Museum, Potomac, Maryland; Kunstraum Dornbirn, Dornbirn, Austria; Kunsthalle Tübingen, Tübingen, Germany; Museo Correr, Venice, Italy; the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C.; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; the Serpentine Gallery, London; Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin; and the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal. A major retrospective of her work was exhibited at the Detroit Institute of Arts in 2013. Neshat was awarded the Golden Lion Award, the First International Prize at the 48th Biennale di Venezia (1999), the Hiroshima Freedom Prize (2005), the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize (2006), and the Praemium Imperiale Prize (2017). In 2009, Neshat directed her first feature-length film, *Women Without Men*, which received the Silver Lion Award for "Best Director" at the 66th Venice International Film Festival. She is co-author of *Geografía artística de Arttextum –El mundo que también habitamos* (2019) and serves on the board of Blue Roof in Los Angeles.

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Ed Schad

Ed Schad is Curator and Publications Manager at The Broad in Los Angeles, where his curated exhibitions include *Mickalene Thomas: All About Love*, *William Kentridge: In Praise of Shadows*, *Takashi Murakami: Stepping on the Tail of a Rainbow*, and *Shirin Neshat: I Will Greet the Sun Again*. Ed's writing has been included in *Art Review*, *Frieze*, *Modern Painters*, *Flash Art*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The L.A. Weekly*, *Gagosian Quarterly*, *Truthdig*, and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. In addition, he has contributed essays to dozens of mono-graphic catalogs, including on the work of Robert Irwin, Natalie Frank, Roy Dowell, Enrique Martinez Celaya, Sterling Ruby, and Kaz Oshiro. His first collection of poetry – *Letters Apart*, a collaboration with the painter Liat Yossifor – was published in Spring, 2023 by University of La Verne, and his poems have been published in the *Blue Collar Review*, *Suturo*, and *The Nonconformist*. In 2021, he became a fellow of The Los Angeles Institute for the Humanities at USC.

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ABOUT CRAFT CONTEMPORARY

Craft Contemporary is a non-collecting art museum whose purpose is to reveal the potential of craft to educate, captivate, provoke, and empower. The museum achieves this mission by exhibiting contemporary art made from craft media and processes, offering creative opportunities for making, supporting craft artists who take traditional craft techniques in new and surprising directions, prioritizing the presentation of work by culturally diverse and underrecognized artists, and fostering collaboration between artists and the public. Craft Contemporary cultivates an environment for people in Los Angeles to deepen their relationship to art, creativity, and one another. For more information, visit **craftcontemporary.org**



ABOUT FARHANG FOUNDATION

Farhang Foundation is a member-supported nonpolitical, nonreligious, and not-for-profit organization dedicated to celebrating and promoting the richness of Iranian art and culture for the betterment of society as a whole. With a singular mission at its core, the Foundation strives to preserve, nurture, and share the diverse heritage of Iran with the global community. Through steadfast commitment, the Foundation supports a wide array of academic, artistic, and cultural programs and initiatives, fostering collaborative partnerships with esteemed universities, renowned museums, and the vibrant world of performing arts. These partnerships enable the Foundation to cultivate a deeper understanding and appreciation of the multifaceted aspects of Iranian culture and promote cross-cultural dialogue. For more information visit **Farhang.org**