

Navigating change in museums

LACMA

Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts

ASU School
of Art
Arizona State University

Linda Komaroff & Arvin Maghsoudlou | **The Intersection of Past and Present in Iranian Art**

The interplay between past and present as a mode of political and social expression is a significant and enduring feature of Iranian art. Accordingly, this lecture surveys the artistic traditions of the Iranian world to illuminate embedded ideas of identity, faith, history and culture. It selectively examines a wide range of artworks – including paintings, ceramics, metalwork and illustrated manuscripts – produced and used by diverse communities across Iran’s historical and cultural sphere, extending from Central Asia in the east to Mesopotamia in the west, and spanning from antiquity to the present day. The recurring themes to be highlighted, such as kingship, are those that Iranian artists have continually rediscovered, reinterpreted and repurposed over time, producing works that are both artistically innovative and culturally and politically meaningful. While the past was initially visualized through the lens of the present, by the second half of the twentieth century, the present itself began to be rendered anachronistically, often as a form of barely disguised social commentary. Ultimately, the lecture aims to reveal the remarkable diversity of Iran’s artistic heritage by viewing it through a temporal viewpoint and emphasizing the persistent and inescapable presence of the past in Iranian society.



Linda Komaroff is Curator and Department Head of Art of the Middle East at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, where she has worked since 1995. During her long curatorial career, she has helped to double the size of the museum’s collection of Islamic art, including the acquisition of an eighteenth-century reception room from Damascus. In 2006, she began to acquire and exhibit contemporary art from the Middle East, positioning LACMA’s collection at the forefront of American museums. She has curated major international loan exhibitions of both historical Islamic art and contemporary Middle East Art at LACMA as well as guest curated exhibitions at museums in Qatar and Saudi Arabia. She is also the author or editor of several books and has written numerous articles and book chapters on various aspects of Islamic art, with a special interest in Iran. She has taught at Hamilton College, NYU, UCLA, and ASU.



Arvin Maghsoudlou is the Gramian-Emrani Family Curatorial Fellow in Ancient Iranian Art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), holding a PhD in Art History from Southern Methodist University. He specializes in the art of late antique Iran, with a particular interest in materiality, sensory studies and technical art history. Maghsoudlou was previously the Andrew W. Mellon Fellow at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where he advanced his research on late antique Iranian silver vessels. He has taught multiple courses on the art of Iran, ancient West Asia and the Islamic world, and his recent and forthcoming publications address a range of topics, including silver vessels, rock reliefs, sensory experiences in late antique Iran and the use of AI in art history education.

WHAT

The ASU-LACMA Navigating Change in Museums lecture series looks at diversity in museum practices. This series is free and open to the public

WHEN

Thursday, April 2
1 to 2 p.m. MST

WHERE

[Zoom](#)

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Moderator:

Amanda Cachia
Professor of Practice,
Museum Studies
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