Abstract

After his enthronement in 1941, Mohammad Reza Shah, the second Pahlavi king, began advocating and endorsing Western modernist ideologies and principles, and the king’s aim was to expose the social and cultural hemisphere of the Iranian society to a set of new currents that would result in the country’s advancement and progression. The strengthened Iranian-Western relations of the time created a diverse range of opportunities and possibilities for modern art introduction to the Iranian art venue. However, in comparison to the previous eras, women were not invisible. The author aims to study the reaction and approach of Iranian artists, especially Iranian female artists, to this new exposure. In this regard, certain questions are set to be answered through this research: 1- How was modernism introduced to the Iranian art venue?, 2- How did Iranian artists, specifically female artists, approach modernism?, and 3- How did Mohammad Reza Shah’s modernizing attempts give exposure to female artists? To answer the former questions, the author aims to use the qualitative descriptive-analytical research method through the study of historical and theoretical literary works in English and Persian and recorded visual documents of the said period collected from libraries in Tehran and other open resources.

Keywords: Contemporary Art, Modernity, Neo-traditionalism, Pahlavi-era, Women