



The Art and Material Culture of Iranian Shi'ism: Iconography and Religious Devotion in Shi'i Islam (International Library of Iranian Studies)

By Pedram Khosronejad

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Shi'i Islam has been the official religion of Iran from the Safavids (1501-1732) to the present day. The Shi'i world experience has provided a rich artistic tradition, encompassing painting, sculpture, and the production of artifacts and performance, which has helped to embed Shi'i identity in Iran as part of its national narrative. In what areas of material culture has Iranian Shi'ism manifested itself through objects or buildings that are unique within the overall culture of Islam? To what extent is the art and architecture of Iran from the Safavid period onwards identifiably Shi'i? What does this say about the relationship of nation, state, and faith in Iran? Here, leading experts trace the material heritage of Iranian Shi'ism within each of its political, religious, and cultural dimensions.

This book is published by I.B. Tauris in association with the Iran Heritage Foundation.

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Editorial Review

Review

'Even many knowledgeable Islamic scholars are not aware of the richness of visual religious representation in Shi'i Islam. This book provides rare glimpses into this fascinating art, which, unlike in the Sunni world, is rich in the portrayal of human figures. One important focus of the book is the exploration of the enormous store of imagery surrounding the martyrdom of Imam Hoseyn, and rituals commemorating this central religious event. The international scope of the scholarship gives this book enormous richness. It should open many eyes to the complexity, beauty and meaning reflected in Shi'i art.' - Professor William O. Beeman, Department Chairperson, Department of Anthropology, University of Minnesota; 'This book provides a window onto the intersection of art and religious practice in Iran. Students of Iranian history of the past thousand years will find interesting explanations of common visual forms within the context of Shi'ism. However, unlike many books on historical subjects, this volume connects the material manifestations of Shi'ism with contemporary practice. Given the centrality of Shi'ism to modern Iranian politics and society, such a multidisciplinary approach will lead to a deeper understanding of the ways in which Shi'ism influences daily life today and the extent to which Shi'i traditions of the past inform those of the present.' - Sheila Canby, Patti Cadby Birch Curator in Charge, Department of Islamic Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

About the Author

Pedram Khosronejad is Goli Rais Larizadeh Research Fellow at the School of Philosophical, Anthropological and Film Studies at the University of St. Andrews.

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