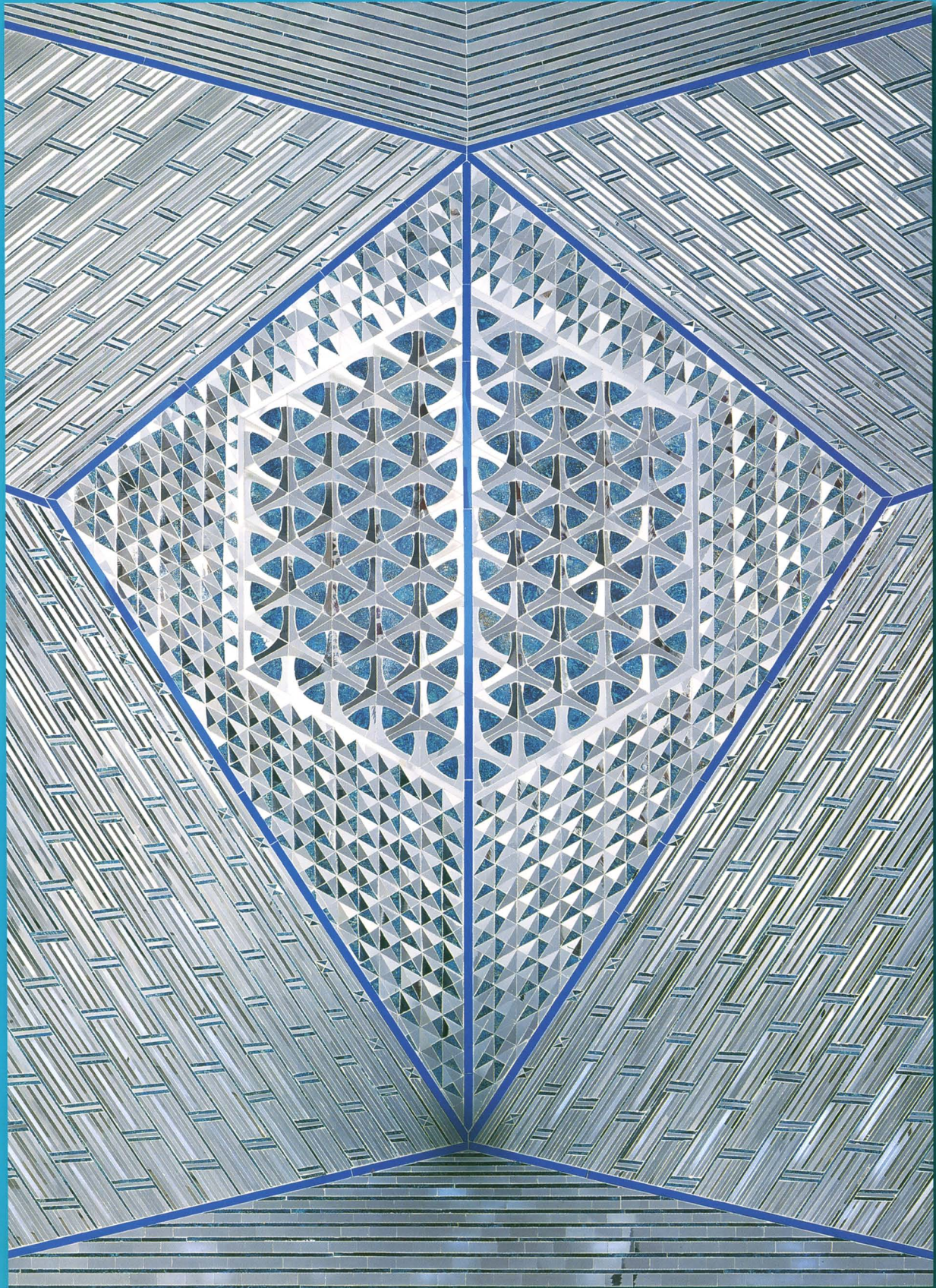
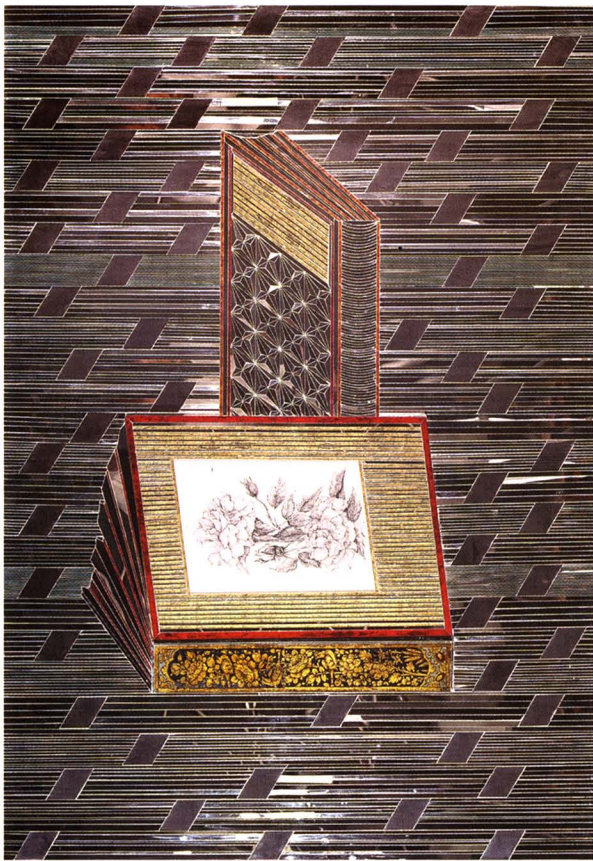


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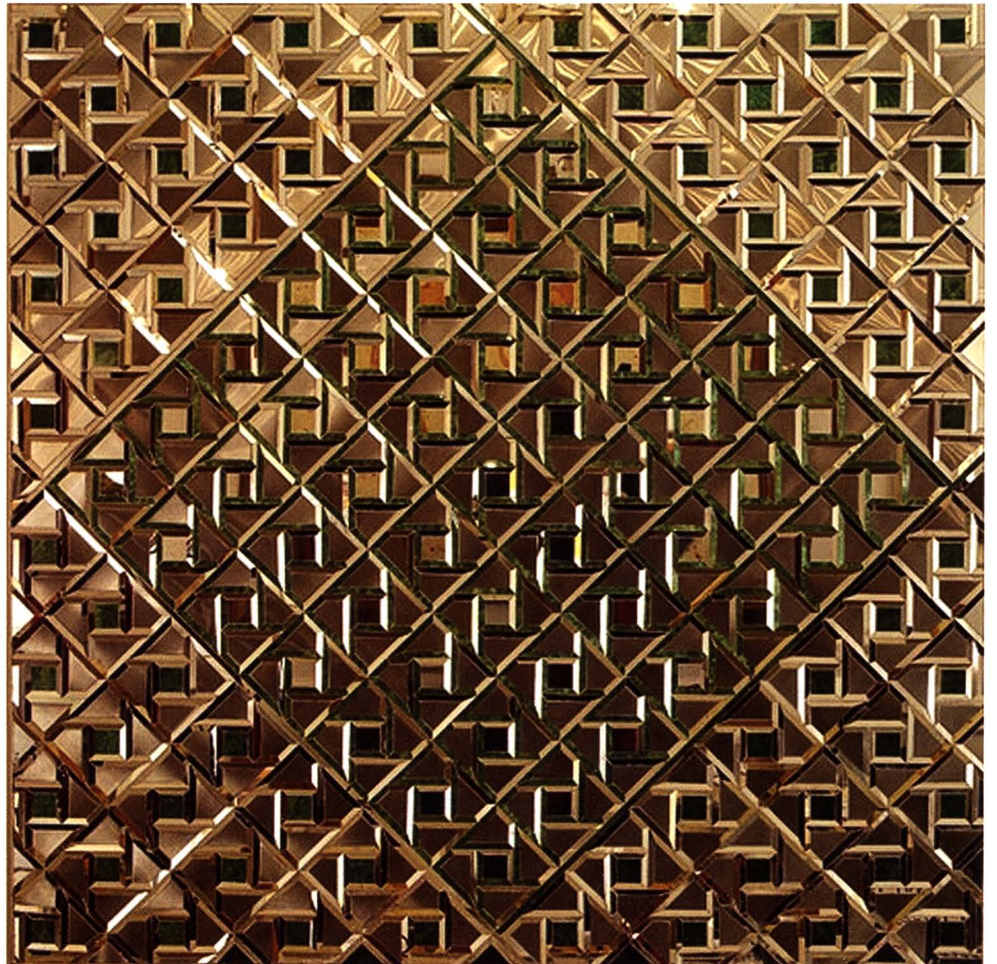




Pl. 1. Monir Farmanfarmaian, *Poetry Books* (1970), mirror, old and new reverse-glass painting and plaster on wood, 68 3/4" x 47". Private Collection, Tehran. Photo: Courtesy The Third Line Gallery, Dubai.

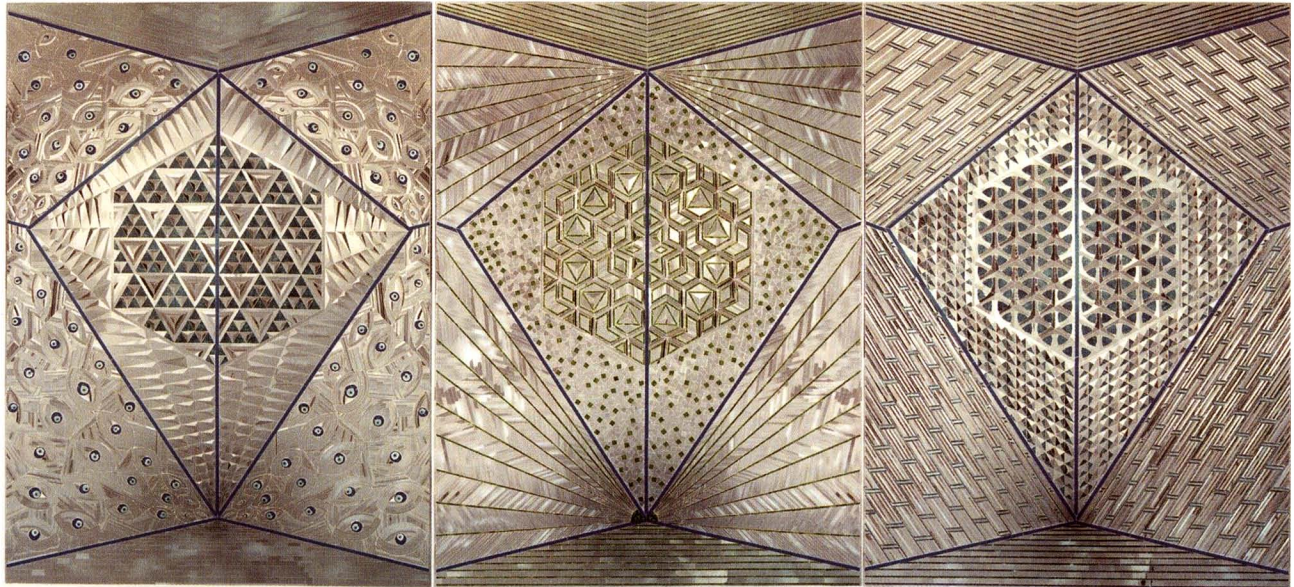
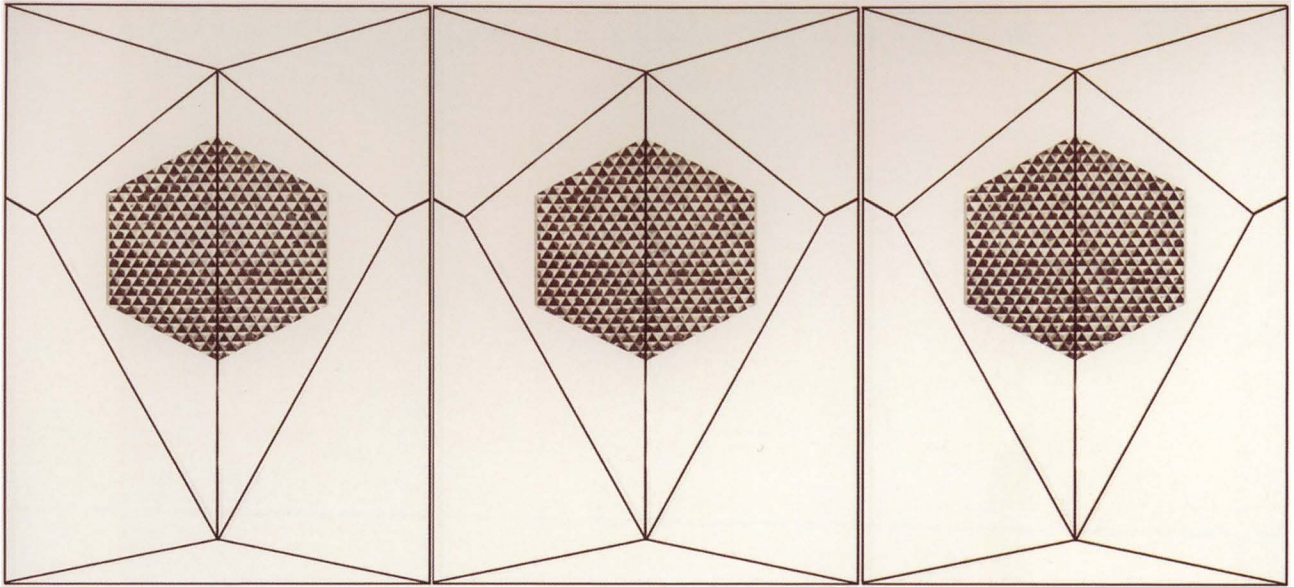


Pl. 2. Monir Farmanfarmaian, *Jewels* (1974), mirror, silver bedouin jewellery, reverse-glass painting, plaster on wood, 39 3/8" x 39 3/8". Central Bank Collection, Tehran. Photo: Courtesy The Third Line Gallery, Dubai.

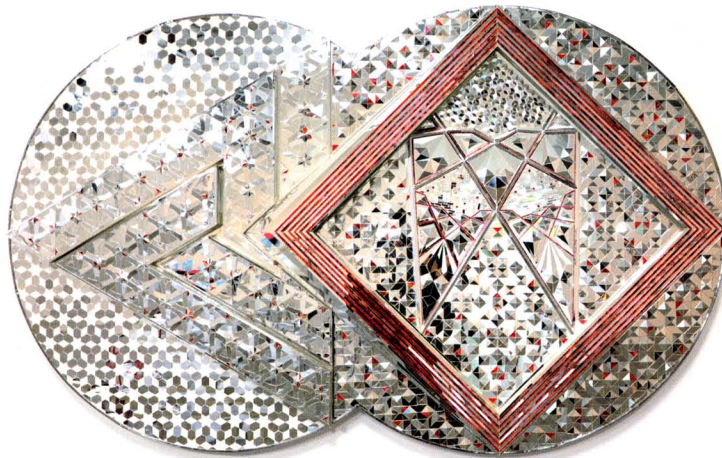


Pl. 3. Monir Farmanfarmaian, *Geometry of Hope* (1975), mirror mosaic and reverse-glass painting, 50 3/8" x 50 3/8". Photo: Courtesy The Third Line Gallery, Dubai.





Pl. 4. Monir Farmanfarmaian, *Variations on the Hexagon* (installation 2006), mirror, reverse-glass painting, amulets, aluminum and plaster on wood, six panels, 72" x 51 1/4" each. Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Photo: Courtesy The Third Line Gallery, Dubai.

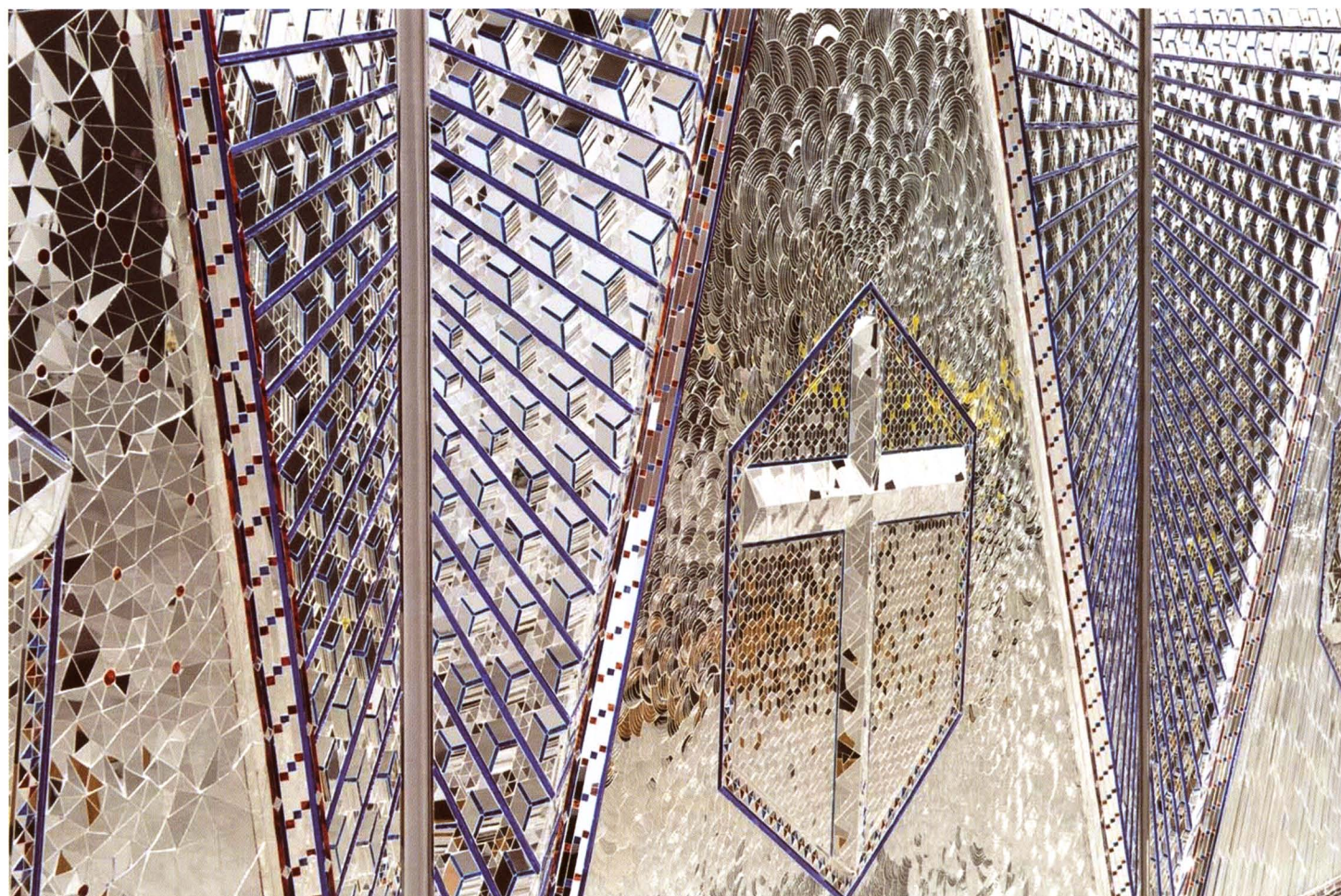


Pl. 5. Monir Farmanfarmaian, *Square and Triangle* (2010), mirror, reverse-glass painting and plaster on wood, 39 1/4" x 62 3/4". Photo: Courtesy The Third Line Gallery, Dubai.





Pl. 6a. Monir Farmanfarmaian, *Lightning for Neda* (2009), Mirror mosaic; reverse-painted glass, plaster on wood, six panels, 117 3/4" x 78 1/2" each. Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane. Photo: Courtesy The Third Line Gallery, Dubai.



Pl. 6b. Monir Farmanfarmaian, detail of *Lightning for Neda* (2009), Mirror mosaic; reverse-painted glass, plaster on wood, six panels, 117 3/4" x 78 1/2" each. Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane. Photo: Courtesy The Third Line Gallery, Dubai.



# MONIR SHAHROUDY FARMANFARMAIAN

## EMPOWERED BY AMERICAN ART: AN ARTIST'S JOURNEY

By Donna Stein

At the age of eighty-eight, Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian is one of Iran's most inspired and innovative living artists (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> Her distinctive work, a synthesis of Persian elements and avant-garde ideas that bring East and West together inside the frame, has drawn the attention of international critics, curators, and collectors. Farmanfarmaian is the first contemporary artist to combine geometric design, reverse-glass painting, and mirror mosaic techniques from traditional Persian palatial, sacred, and folk art. Used together, these elements have coalesced in the development of a uniquely beautiful, post-modern, multicultural aesthetic. Simple geometric figures such as the triangle, circle, and hexagon create the basis of her abstract symbolic vocabulary and provide the structural skeleton for compositions that seem to have infinite potential. Farmanfarmaian adheres to the Islamic laws of balance and unity to define spatial relationships, and through repetition, she constructs harmonious cycles without a beginning or an end. She applies geometric patterns with a minimalist twist, relying on instinct and intuition after many years of studying geometry, Sufi cosmology, the arcane symbolism of shapes, and how the universe is expressed through points, lines, and angles. Color and a sense of the environment are introduced through light reflection and refraction. Her wall and free-standing sculptures explore the possibility of extending the beauty of these traditional configurations into the third dimension.

Born in 1924 in Qazvin, a small city some 130 miles northwest of Tehran, Monir Shahroudy was descended from a long line of ayatollahs and traders on her father's side and the Ottoman aristocracy on her mother's. Her early years were idyllic, spent in a beautiful house surrounded by gardens. Painted images of flowers, nightingales, and other birds ornamented the ceilings, doors, and stained-glass window frames of their home. Her father was a leader of Qazvin's political and intellectual life and an advocate for a modern role for women and secular education, having started the first school for girls. He also had artistic talent; he designed and methodically plotted carpet patterns based on garden themes that were then woven to his specifications.

When her father was elected to Parliament as a representative from Qazvin in 1932, the family moved to Tehran, into a house filled with plaster portrait busts of the old kings and great poets. Monir attended a Zoroastrian school for girls who were the



Fig. 1. Monir Farmanfarmaian in her studio, New York City (2000). Photo: Courtesy The Third Line Gallery, Dubai.

daughters of free thinkers from every religion and ethnic background. Mischievous and playful, traits she has retained her whole life, Monir was not much of a student, but she was good with her hands and excelled in art, especially drawing. From a young age she enjoyed doing all kinds of needlework—sewing, knitting, crocheting, embroidery, and lace-making. While in high school, she took drawing lessons from a private tutor who had traveled and studied in Europe. Because there



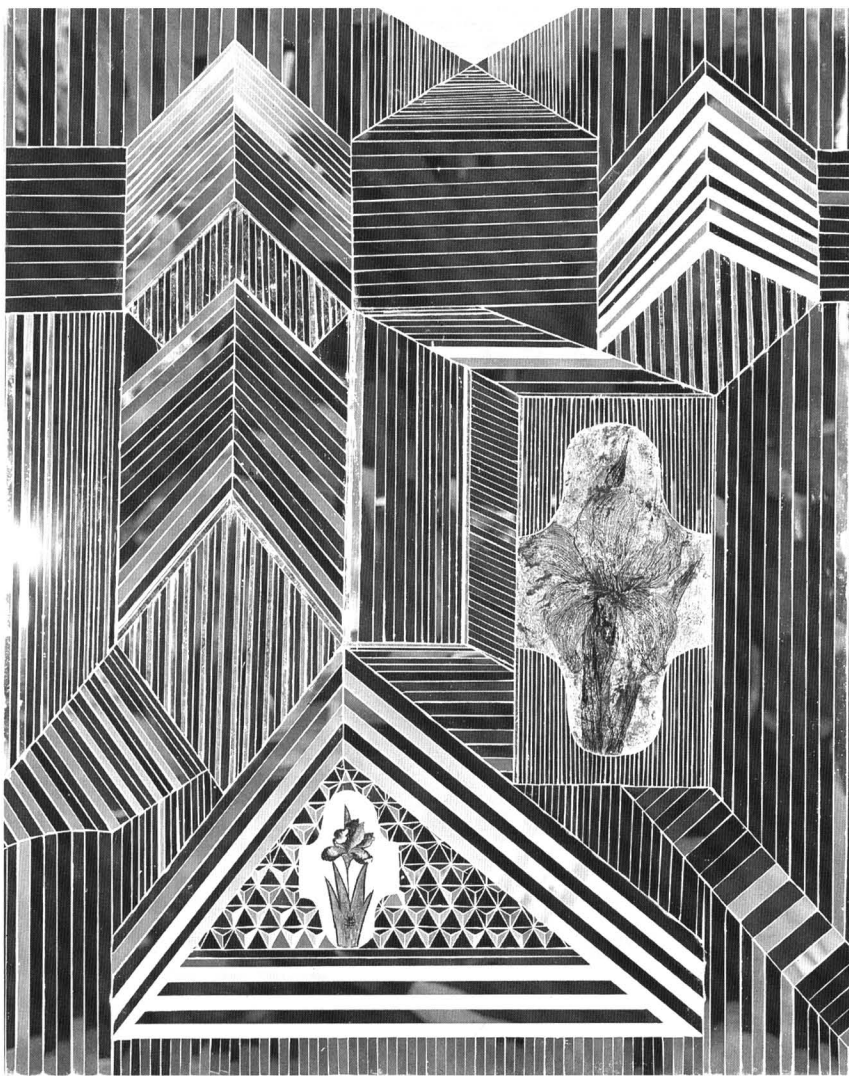


Fig. 2. Monir Farmanfarmaian, *Iris* (1973), mirror, old and new reverse-glass painting, plaster on wood, 47" x 30 1/2". Private collection. Photo: Courtesy The Third Line Gallery, Dubai.

were no art books in Iran, she learned by copying postcards of western landscapes, still-lives, and portraits, using colored pencils. She attended the Fine Arts College at Tehran University for a semester before realizing that, if she was to become an artist, she needed to see and study real paintings, not just postcard images, and that would mean going abroad. Her favorite teacher, a French woman, introduced her to the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist artists, and Monir's dream was to continue her education in Paris; but that was not to be.

Because World War II was raging, she could not go to Paris. Instead, she landed in New York City, far from the sources of her art and inspiration. During two distinct periods in her creative life—totaling thirty-eight years—she would live in this city. Her first extended stay on U.S. soil was by default. After an adventurous trip via India that took several months because of the war in the Pacific, she arrived in Los Angeles in February 1945.<sup>2</sup> Almost immediately, she boarded a cross-country train headed to New York City, where she remained for a dozen years, until 1957.

Finally able to see art firsthand, Monir eagerly visited museums, galleries, and artists' studios in New York. During the summer of 1945 she attended classes at Cornell University, and that fall she enrolled as a fashion illustration major at Parsons School of Design. It was there she began to understand that her distinctive preference for brilliant, clear colors was inextricably linked to her Iranian heritage. Later, she took evening classes at the Art Students League to be able to retain her student status and receive financial support from her family. Monir became immersed in the artistic life of the city. Through her American sponsor, the writer and Iranian scholar Donald Wilber, she met Arthur Upham Pope, the prominent historian of Iranian art and architecture. Their friendship opened doors to a circle of art historians and curators at the Metropolitan Museum of Art that began a lifelong association, which led, most recently, to commissions for a mirror mosaic for the museum's contemporary art collection entitled *Flight of the Dolphin* (2010), and a fountain for its Islamic Galleries.

In 1950, she married the Iranian painter, Manoucher Yekta. Typical of the time, Monir's role as the wife of an artist who aspired to be an important painter made it impossible for her to satisfy her own passion to live as an artist. She was appreciated for her "exotic beauty," but like so many women artists before her, she had to sublimate her own dreams and ambitions. Assuming the traditional role of wife—and soon also of mother—she promoted her husband's career by entertaining, with style, various acquaintances of artistic influence who crossed their path.

She visited the Museum of Modern Art often. Through a chance meeting there with Abe Chanin, an influential educator at the museum, Monir was introduced to the Eighth Street Club, a private and informal gathering of diverse vanguard artists who met for social and intellectual stimulation. At these meetings, influential tastemakers presented the latest ideas and lectured about modern art and philosophy. She got to know the progressive artists Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning, Mark Rothko, Joan Mitchell, Louise Nevelson, Frederick Kiesler, and Larry Rivers, and the architect Philip Johnson, among others. Their socializing often continued nearby at the Cedar Bar. She observed their passion for experimentation with new materials and forms, though she later admitted: "They were exciting times, but half the time I didn't really understand what they were talking about." Chanin mentored Monir, explaining to her "everything from art history and aesthetic theory" and keeping her up to date on "personal rivalries" and the latest art-world gossip. Chanin also introduced her to Alexander Liberman, the editorial director of Condé Nast, who gave Monir her first



freelance job—a pen and ink drawing of six brassieres for *Glamour* magazine. Through Chanin she met the collectors Bernard and Becky Reis and the artists Barnett Newman and Alexander Calder, who gave her a small metal sculpture of a seal when she visited his studio. She also met important dealers, including Sidney Janis, Leo Castelli, Robert Hill and Sam Koontz.

From Monir's first visit on her honeymoon, the Woodstock art community became an important social and artistic milieu for her. During several summers there she made enduring friendships. Throughout the summer of 1951, when her daughter Nima was nine months old, Monir's family shared a small cottage with friends at Byrdcliffe Arts Colony, a utopian community established in 1902 by Jane and Ralph Radcliffe Whitehead and subsequently run by their son, writer Peter Whitehead.

Perhaps the most significant friendship artistically was with her closest Woodstock neighbors, Milton Avery and his wife Sally Michel. Every morning Avery appeared with his sketchbook and for exactly two hours would draw as Monir did her chores and cared for Nima. Although he never showed her his drawings, his daily practice may have reinforced her own joy in drawing. She began a lifelong practice of sketching from life—landscapes, flowers, and nudes when she had a captive model.

It was the beginning of an easy habit that would follow me the rest of my life, like a loyal seeing-eye dog: a sketchbook, a bottle of ink, three pens and sometimes a brush. I found that I could look at a flower very carefully and trust my hand to follow in a spontaneous line from the top of the page to the bottom. The anatomy was true. The dance of thin lines and the thicker lines captures the tissue of petals, the tease and flounce and swirl of their skirts, and the certainty of deep rhythms in the shape of all plants.<sup>3</sup>

Drawn in ink with pen or brush, or colored pencil, her flowers follow a typically Persian tradition from the Safavid period (1501-1736), with finely observed portraits of flowers evoking personality and gesture.

To support herself and Nima following her divorce in 1953, Monir became a freelance fashion illustrator, creating dress and textile designs for magazine editors and agents. Supportive Woodstock friends introduced her to the art director of Bonwit Teller, where she was offered a full-time job doing fashion layouts. One of her co-workers there was Andy Warhol, whom she admired for his talent and whimsy. (After losing touch for many years, they would be reunited by Nima, who moved to New York after college and found a job as a writer for *Interview*, the magazine Warhol helped found in 1969.)

Shortly before Monir was set to leave for Tehran in early 1957, Milton Avery asked her to pose for him one last time. He painted a large portrait for himself and a smaller version for her to remember him by.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps her greatest legacy from Avery was his teaching her to make monotypes.

Returning to Tehran via Paris in February 1957, she married Abolbasha Farmanfarmaian, a brilliant young lawyer

educated at the University of Chicago and Columbia University with a princely birthright from the Qajar Dynasty (1785-1925). Their honeymoon to Abadan and Isfahan awakened her taste for the history and beauty of ancient Persia. She became a tourist in her own country, and subsequent travels throughout Iran inspired her to learn about and collect examples of its prolific cultural heritage. A fascination with tribal and folk artistic traditions led her to rethink the past and conceive a new path for her art.

With the support of her husband, Farmanfarmaian returned to creating art and began experimenting with the monotype technique in a new rooftop studio. By the following year, she was able to show a group of abstract monotypes at the Venice Biennale. The encouragement garnered from her American friends also helped her find a path to incorporate art into her daily life. "I loved gardening, and so flowers were among my earliest inspirations," she recalled.<sup>5</sup> The result was more than one hundred monotypes of flowers that made up her first solo exhibition at Tehran University in 1963.

A visit to Shah Cheragh Shrine in Shiraz with American minimalists Robert Morris and Marcia Hafif, an artist of Iranian descent she first met in Tehran in the early 1960s,<sup>6</sup> proved to be a turning point in her art practice. "Imagine stepping inside the center of a diamond and staring at the sun," is the way Farmanfarmaian explained the experience.<sup>7</sup> They sat for hours in the high-domed hall observing the tiny mirror mosaics that covered every inch of the grand room, transforming the architectural interior into a light performance, "...all movement and fluid light, all solids fractured and dissolved in brilliance, in space, in prayer."<sup>8</sup>

Farmanfarmaian's response was a new determination to incorporate mirror mosaics into her art. She immediately began using mirror mosaic techniques with the help of master craftsman Hajji Ostad Mohammad Navid, whose technical expertise matched her ambition and design abilities. The first series of these bas-reliefs incorporated fragments of Qajar paintings on glass, blending the old and the new. These were exhibited in 1973 in Tehran at the Iran-America Society, and included artworks like *Poetry Books* (1970; Pl. 1) and *Iris*es (1973; Fig. 2).<sup>9</sup> In her memoir Monir explained her initial working method with Hajji Ostad:

I gave him patterns on paper—stars, triangles, strips and crescents—and asked him to cut 20 of these, 100 of those...I also gave him some of the abstract paintings behind glass I had done and asked him to cut those in pieces. The mirror ...was unusually fine, specially made in Belgium for the Iranian market, and half the gauge of the thinnest mirror found in America.<sup>10</sup>

Working together, Farmanfarmaian and Hajji Ostad devised a contemporary way of preparing the plywood backing with an epoxy and sand mixture to hold the plaster, which was also mixed with Elmer's glue. To their surprise it was easy to handle, did not have a strong smell, and was a stable foundation for the cut pieces of mirror and reverse-painted glass. The elemental forms found in Farmanfarmaian's works refer to the spiritual geometries of Islamic architecture.





Fig. 3. Monir Farmanfarmaian, Apartment reception area , Park Avenue, New York City (1983), reverse-glass painting and mirror, 197" x 138".  
Photo: Courtesy The Third Line Gallery, Dubai.

Mosaics in these buildings are designed to conform to the mystical tenets of Sufism, which suggests that all of the forms can be connected with spiritual attributes.

*Jewels*, a transitional work from 1974 (Pl. 2), no longer includes bits and pieces of older Qajar artworks, but still retains the realistic reference to a jewel box and its contents with some added pieces of actual tribal jewelry. By the mid 1970s, Farmanfarmaian would stop using figurative elements and began working in a purely abstract manner. *Geometry of Hope* (1975; Pl. 3) exemplifies the best of these works. The four foot square panel is composed of green reverse-painted glass and mirrored pieces in a complex pattern of squares and triangles on different levels. A raised outline of squares creates a lattice across the surface, with smaller squares inside each unit delineated by other raised lines that separate the triangular elements. This elegant but simple repeated composition that distills mathematical logic from traditional designs already reveals Farmanfarmaian's facility with complex geometries.

Based on her deep and very personal understanding of the value of seeing and studying actual artworks, Farmanfarmaian conceived of establishing a museum that would provide these opportunities for others in her country, and especially for its artists.<sup>11</sup> In 1970, on a visit to see Nima in New York, Farmanfarmaian explored the possibility of bringing important artworks to Tehran for the benefit of her students. Among the artists she consulted was Frank Stella, whose studio she visited on Jones Street in Greenwich Village. They spent an afternoon together discussing her project and non-figurative abstraction. He invited her to accompany him that evening to an opening at the Museum of Modern Art. When the after-dinner speeches started, she realized he was the evening's honoree. That day marked the beginning of a very special friendship.

The seventies were an important decade for Farmanfarmaian in many respects. In 1974, a door opened when her brother-in-law, during a business trip to New York, showed one of her mirror mosaics to his business associate, David Rockefeller, who, in turn, showed it to MoMA curator Dorothy



Miller. Soon after, Nima took the piece to Jacques Kaplan, who offered Farmanfarmaian her first solo exhibition in the U.S., which opened the following April at the Jacques Kaplan/Mario Ravagnan Gallery in New York (where I first met the artist). Many of her artist friends attended the opening.<sup>12</sup> Dorothy Miller bought a piece for the Chase Manhattan Bank Collection and recommended Farmanfarmaian's geometric abstractions to gallerist Denise René, who later showed her work in her Paris and New York galleries.<sup>13</sup>

Nima arranged for Andy Warhol and Bob Colacello to travel to Tehran for ten days in July 1976 to photograph the Empress of Iran for a silkscreen portrait series and to see the Crown Jewels. On Bastille Day, July 14, the Farmanfarmaians hosted a luncheon garden party in Warhol's honor that turned into a press event. Warhol presented Monir with a Marilyn Monroe silkscreen print, and she gave him one of her mirrored balls. Although he didn't say much, Warhol was very attentive and had his ever-present camera at the ready.<sup>14</sup> Also that year, when Louise Nevelson, her friend from the Art Students League and the Eighth Street Club, was in Tehran to lecture at the Iran-America Society (IAS), Farmanfarmaian hosted a gala dinner that included Nevelson's dealer from Pace Gallery, Arnold Glimcher, as a guest. About six months later, Glimcher contacted Farmanfarmaian to say that Lucas Samaras, another of his artists, would be visiting Tehran in May 1977 for an exhibit of his work at the IAS and a lecture about his art and a recent film, "Self." Samaras visited Farmanfarmaian's home several times, and she took him to Shemshak, a ski resort in the nearby Elborz Mountains, and into the surrounding countryside. Their mutual interest in the potential of mirrors and their reflection and refraction of imagery opened an artistic dialogue and solidified their friendship. Videographer/photographer Hermine Freed arrived in Tehran a few weeks later, also to lecture at the IAS. Freed would become one of Farmanfarmaian's closest friends during her second stay in New York.

Following the Iranian Revolution of January 1979, Farmanfarmaian once again found herself in New York, this time as a refugee. She and her husband had come to the U.S. the previous month for a Christmas and New Year's visit with their daughters. (Nima, now married, was living in New York City, and her sister Zahra was a student at Bennington College in Vermont.) Thus began Farmanfarmaian's second extended stay in America. She and her husband had no idea how long their exile would last or if they

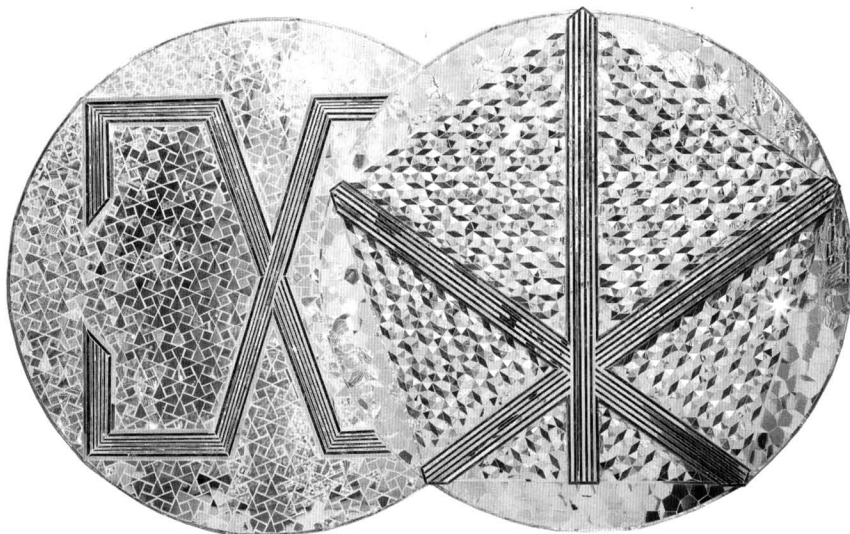


Fig. 4. Monir Farmanfarmaian, *Square and Pentagon* (2008), mirror, reverse-glass painting and plaster on wood, 39 3/8" x 63". Photo: Courtesy The Third Line Gallery, Dubai.



Fig. 5. Monir Farmanfarmaian, *Nonagon* (2008), mirror, plaster and natural glue on wood, 39 1/4" diameter of a circle. Photo: Courtesy The Third Line Gallery, Dubai.

would ever return home, and, in fact, he never did. During what became more than a quarter century as an unwilling exile, Farmanfarmaian was deeply affected by the agony associated with the confiscation of her own art and extensive collections, not to mention her separation from family, friends,





Fig. 6. Monir Farmanfarmaian, *Cube Within Cubes* (Geometric Cube Statue) (2008), mirror, reverse-glass painting on plexiglass, 23 5/8" x 23 5/8" x 23 5/8". Photo: Courtesy The Third Line Gallery, Dubai.

the privileged life she had enjoyed, and the country she loved.

A commission for the new airport in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, got Farmanfarmaian creating again, and by 1981 she had set up a studio and was doing some commercial textile designs. While completing an important site-specific reverse-glass painting and mirror mosaic installation in 1983 for the entry of a Park Avenue apartment building (Fig. 3), she discovered the difficulties of working in her chosen medium in the U.S. She had to devise a simple repeat pattern for the wall to compensate for the lack of skilled workers in mirror mosaic techniques and the difficulty of cutting the thicker gauge mirrored glass available in New York. What brought her to an

even deeper appreciation of Hajji Ostad's wizardry was that "[i]t took a firm of architects many expensive hours of computer time to calculate how to extend my design in the space."<sup>15</sup> In 1988, she designed a bold composition based on a triangle and square motif for a dramatic stained glass window commissioned for the 36th floor of the Dag Hammarskjöld Tower in New York City. During the twenty-five-year hiatus as a political refugee in New York, however, Farmanfarmaian seldom showed her work and was disappointed that she no longer had the technical support needed to continue her explorations in mirror mosaics. Eventually, she carved out a small area in her living room for a studio and quietly worked on autobiographical assemblages she called "my memory boxes."

A year after her beloved husband's death, and with great trepidation, she traveled to Iran in the winter of 1992, to explore the possibility that as a woman alone she could live as an artist under the Islamic regime. A decade passed before she visited Tehran again in 2002. She went back in 2004 to purchase an apartment and re-establish a studio and workshop. Finally, in 2005, following the release of her memoir, *A Mirror Garden*, she returned home permanently. She found a few of her old workers and some others trained in the now-dying art of mirror mosaic, and with a refreshed vision she began to create anew. In a recent exhibition catalog, Farmanfarmaian wrote about her commitment to perpetuating the Persian artisan tradition:

Mirror-works, the geometric design of forms, reverse-glass paintings and many other artistic creations do not belong only to museums or the rich; you can find them everywhere, they are part of our living artistic experience and they each have an ancient history behind them. But mirrors speak to contemporary human beings as well. No wonder it is equally present in ancient myths and in modern psychology. Many artists today use mirrors in their works. However, in the Persian culture, a mirror is not solely a surface to reflect light, but it is a metaphor for light itself—emanating, refracted and scattered. Statues and structures erected for religious ceremonies make ample use of mirrors—in commemorative statues for those passed-away young, the entrance and reception rooms of palaces, prayer halls, and sanctuaries of mosques. I have made use of mirrors in many of my works, along with the exquisite bird and flower designs found around the country.... Some of the arts that gained popularity in Iran, like reverse-glass painting, are not purely Iranian crafts, but the delicate taste of Iranian artists have made them native. These artisans have willingly and playfully taken those elements that have found a way into our popular culture and add to the richness of artistic creation throughout the world. This is how I define my role vis-à-vis the arts of Iran—offering a new way of looking at ancient aesthetic elements of this land using tools that are not limited to a particular geography.<sup>16</sup>



*Variations on the Hexagon* (2006; front cover and Pl. 4), a major commission for the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, reveals a mature artist at the apex of her creativity. Here the artist has eschewed the symmetry and simplicity that defined her first series of artworks, realized in the 1970s, in favor of more complex and colorful compositions such as *Square and Pentagon* (2008; Fig. 4), *Square and Triangle* (2010; Pl. 5), and *Nonagon* (2008; Fig. 5), a complex wall relief employing only mirror mosaic to visualize the overlapping lines that compose the nine-sided figure whose touch points mark the edge of an imaginary circle. While religious piety is not her motivation, the results of her efforts contain meanings that literally and spiritually connect to her Islamic faith. Sculptures like *Cube within Cube* (2008; Fig. 6) explore the possibility of extending the beauty of these traditional geometries into the third dimension. They illustrate her artistic legacy in the science of Pythagorean mathematics and her singular approach to geometric form as she moves from two to three dimensions. *Lightning for Neda* (2009; Pls. 6a and 6b), commissioned for the Sixth Asia Pacific Triennial at the Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane, Australia, uses the same design vocabulary and techniques of mosaic relief in mirror, reverse-painted glass and stucco. Repeating patterns are generated from a single unit like a hexagon. Forms are combined, duplicated, repeated, interlaced, and managed in intricate combinations to create spatial order, rhythm, movement and light. The artist exuberantly orchestrates the geometric motifs into six space-revealing tableaux, one for each of the six virtues of generosity, self-discipline, patience, determination, insight, and compassion. Here, for the first time, Farmanfarmaian makes a sly political reference in the title by remembering the murder of Neda Agha-Soltan, a young woman who was peacefully protesting the election results in Tehran.

Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian's mirror mosaics dazzle the eye. At the same time, their geometry and decorative roots hold deeply layered references to Persian cultural history as well as its exquisite refined modern aesthetic. As her grandson Aziz has observed, "She arrives at higher math through pure aesthetics. Meditating on her work is like taking a shortcut to infinity."<sup>17</sup> ●

**Donna Stein** is an art historian, curator and essayist. She is currently Associate Director of The Wende Museum and Archive of the Cold War in Culver City, California.

#### Notes

1. A version of this essay was originally written in conjunction with a text by the author for Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian's self-titled monograph, edited by Hans Ulrich Obrist and Karen Marta (Dubai: Third Line and Damiani Editore, 2011).
2. All dates and information noted in this article about her life not otherwise referenced were established and confirmed in conversation with the artist on June 19, 2010.
3. Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian and Zara Houshman, *A Mirror Garden* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 115. Anyone wishing to know more about this fascinating artist should read this autobiographical account of her eventful life.
4. The portrait is currently owned by the artist's daughter Zahra.
5. Rose Issa and James Parry, "Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian: The Rebirth of an Iranian Legend and the Story of her Mirror Mosaics," *Canvas* IV, 5 (Sept./Oct. 2008): 142.
6. Marcia Hafif stayed at the Farmanfarmaian's home for a week on her first trip to Iran in c.1962–63.
7. Marisa Mazria Katz, "Cosmic Geometry: The Life and Work of Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian," *Vogue Daily*, October 19, 2011, <http://www.vogue.com/culture/article/cosmic-geometry-the-life-and-work-of-monir-shahroudy-farmanfarmaian/>.
8. Farmanfarmaian and Houshman, *A Mirror Garden*, 186.
9. The Iran-America Society (IAS) was founded in the 1950s to promote understanding between the people of Iran and the people of the United States of America.
10. Farmanfarmaian and Houshman, *A Mirror Garden*, 187-88.
11. Farmanfarmaian later learned that the Queen, Farah Diba, had been working on a similar plan independently, which resulted in the opening of the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art in October 1977.
12. Monir knew that I had been hired in February 1975 as an art advisor to the Secretariat of Her Majesty Queen Farah of Iran, and when I introduced myself to her at this exhibition, she made sure to present me to other Iranian artists at the opening, including Ghasem Hajizadeh and Marco Gregorian. Although I had traveled to Iran in 1973 and 1974, I had little knowledge of contemporary Iranian art and found it difficult to contextualize Monir's art at that time.
13. René visited Tehran the following year and saw the artist's most recent work on exhibit at the Iran-America Society, which led to Farmanfarmaian's first exhibit in Paris in March 1977 at the Galerie Denise René, followed by a show in her New York gallery that November. When Monir asked me to write the introduction for the Paris exhibition brochure, I interviewed her for the first time in early 1977.
14. The previous night Warhol had attended the opening of the exhibit *Selected Graphics from the Private Collection of Farah Pahlavi, Her Imperial Majesty, The Shahbanou of Iran* at the Negarestan Museum, curated by this author.
15. Farmanfarmaian and Houshman, *A Mirror Garden*, 193.
16. Monir Farmanfarmaian, "A Fresh Look at the Art of Iranian Artisans," *Selected Works of Monir Farmanfarmaian, 1979-2008* (Tehran, Nazar Research and Cultural Institute, 2008), 140.
17. Obrist and Marta, *Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian*, 147