

Persian Arts: The chariots of heaven

Iran has one of the most prolific art heritages in world history and has been rich in many media, including painting, architecture, music, literature, calligraphy, etc. Due to Iran's geography, Iranian

arts have been influenced by the techniques of neighboring civilizations at different times. Islamic arts have highly impressed the arts of Iran, specifically Persian architecture, ghoghnos.net

wrote. Iranian arts and crafts are truly ancient. Evidence of a painted-pottery civilization around Susa has been dated to 5,000 BCE, and Persian rock art dates back

to the early 2nd millennium BCE. Iranian rock reliefs are mostly located in Kermanshah Province, and they belong to the Elamite and Sassanid eras. Persian rock art has been a common medium

of art, used to glorify the king and proclaim Persian control over the territory. For instance, the Bisotoun rock relief and inscription, made around 500 BCE for Darius the Great, is reflecting the power

of the Achaemenid Empire. Iranian modern art is also rooted in the art of ancient Persia. In the following, you will read more about Persian arts and Iranian artistic genres.

Painting and miniature



A Persian miniature by Hossein Behzad
[wikimedia.org](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hossein_Behzad_-_A_Persian_miniature.jpg)

The history of Persian painting goes back to ancient times. Several painted images of animals and hunting scenes (dating back to 5,000 years ago) have been discovered in the caves of Lorestan, Semnan, and Fars provinces. From the historical viewpoint, the most significant evolution in Persian painting art has been the adoption of Chinese designs and coloring, which were mixed with conceptions of Persian art designs. After the emergence of Islam and the Baghdad School of painting, Iranian artists began decorating books. This art of illumination made its path of progression under the Seljuk, Mogul, and Timurid reigns.

Master Hossein Behzad, the greatest painter of the Herat School, expanded the delicate art of miniature. Master Reza Abbasi founded the Safavid School of Art and altered the Persian art characteristics of painting.

The most elegant examples of this school can be seen in the Safavid palaces of Chehel Sotoun and Ali Qapou in Isfahan. Iranian artworks of the Qajar period (1789-1925 CE) show a combination of the classic European arts and the Safavid miniature techniques. Master Kamal al-Molk is the most prominent painting artist of the Qajar era. Master Mahmoud Far-

shchian is a contemporary miniature artist who is proudly introducing this magnificent art of Persia to the world.

Persian architecture shows great variety in artistic and structural features. It is one of the Persian arts which have made their way through various dynasties, and it is still dynamic and alive. Persian architecture managed to survive, renovate, and innovate itself despite the invasions and cultural shocks. Highly influenced by Islamic architecture, it has manifested its inventiveness, specifically in vault and dome construction. Several architectural palaces and mosques of Iran are UNESCO World Heritage sites.

One of the most stunning and famous Persian arts is tiling. This remarkable Iranian art of decoration has carried on most of the Persian art characteristics of architecture. This art of Persia offers two types of techniques: marquetry tiling and seven-color tiling. Seven-color tile work is performed by designers who draw Persian art patterns on a tile with seven colors (red, pink, blue, turquoise, yellow, black, and purple) and then bake it in a kiln to make their masterpieces ready to be used on buildings. Enameled brick making is the art of ancient Persia, dating back to 3,500 years ago.

Persian rugs

The most famous Persian art known to the world is carpet weaving. This art has its roots in Iranian arts and culture and their nationalized feelings. Rug weaving is severely attached to Iranian myths and philosophies. When the Iranian people began to know themselves as a nation, they started creating life images reflected mostly through the excellent art of Persia carpets. Carpet weavers combine graceful Persian art de-

signs with countless colors to create these artworks. The patterns used in carpet weaving are almost the same as the designs and patterns applied in the construction of Persian gardens. The same philosophy and geometrics are used, and they both want to reach a holy goal: Giving the inspiration that we need to make the world a better place. As one of the most stunning arts of Iran, the Persian carpet is heaven under your feet.



Persian rugs
carpettino.com



Mina-kari
IRNA

Persian handicrafts

As the most applicable Persian arts, Iran handicrafts manifest every region's culture and art. Iranian crafts such as *mina-kari* (covering metal objects by glazing colors), *khatam-kari* (inlaid work), *qalam-zani* (metal engraving) and *termeh-bafi* (weaving a type of luxurious handwoven fabric) are world famous as the most popular Iran souvenirs.

By using Persian art designs, handicrafts manifest the art of ancient Persia. You can trace Persian art patterns, including paisley and *golva-morgh* (flower and birds), on many Iranian artworks and handicrafts. Handmade arts of the country are mostly made of wood, copper, brass, bone, silver, gold, pottery, ceramic, and clothes.

Persian literature and music

Literature reflects a nation's thoughts and philosophies being verbalized. Understanding a nation's literature is a key to the way they comprehend and feel the world. Persian literature dates back as far as history can tell us. Poems and texts from ancient times manifest Iranian's decent taste and talent in verbal arts. Noble Persian poets such as Ferdowsi, Sa'adi, Hafez, Khayyam (translated into English by Edward FitzGerald), Attar, Sanaie, etc., dedicate a new point of view in poetry and thought. Poetry and music are two intermingled Iranian arts, beautifully complementing each other. Music is a medium describing the spirit, world-

view, and feelings of each nation. Iranian music is the voice of Persian literature that passes the flesh and reaches out to the soul. It reflects the love, sorrow, internal, and external struggles of this nation. Archaeological pieces of evidence prove that musical instruments have been a major part of Iranian productions since at least 3,000 BCE. This precious Persian art is mostly known for its unique stringed instruments. Some Iranian instruments were invented by Iranians and some were adjusted to be used in the Persian *dastgaah* (Persian music system) such as *taar*, *setar*, *tambour*, *kamancheh*, *santour* (dulcimer), *tonbak*, *daf*, and *ney*.



The Divan of Hafez
roozaneh.net

Persian calligraphy



Calligraphy is one of the most reputed and famous Persian arts because some Iranian arts seem imperfect without being enriched by decorative calligraphy. This art of Persia was mainly applied to inscriptions at the entrances of mosques, shrines, and for writing religious texts. The major tools used in Iranian calligraphy are *qalam*

ney (pen), *qalam tarash* (pen sharpener), *morakkab* (ink), *davaat* ink container, *liqeh* (silky ink-controller). Although calligraphy is the art of ancient Persia, modern calligraphic movements are currently practiced by a number of famous artists who use Persian calligraphy and Rumi's poetry in dress designing.

Persian calligraphy
IRNA

Cinema



A scene from an Iranian movie, Damascus Time, directed by Ebrahim Hatamikia
fa.nody.ir

The cinema industry was brought to Iran in the late 19th century during the Qajar era. Since then, Iran has been finding its path as one of the leading movie producers in the region and the world. Iranian cinema has been appreciated in many festivals of the world, including the Academy Awards, Cannes Film Festival, and the Berlin International Film Festival.