

# Pushing pixels, boundaries in Iran's digital art movement



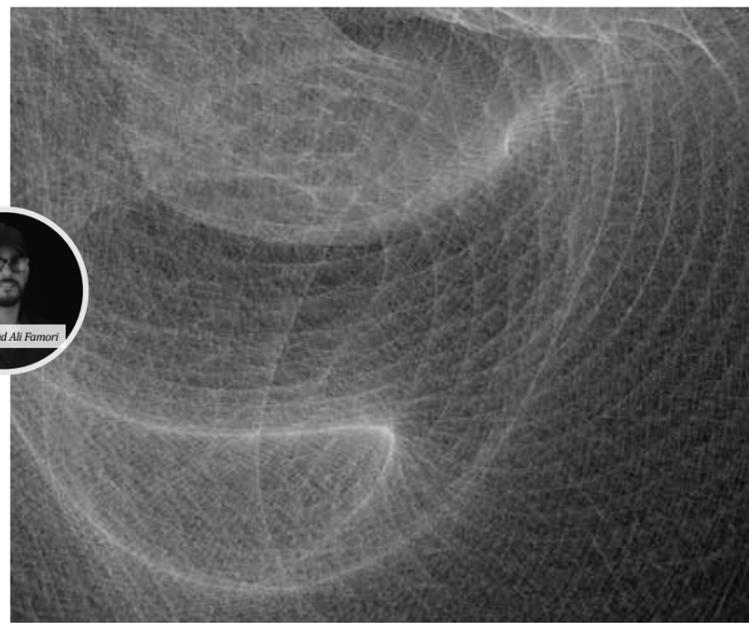
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## INTERVIEW EXCLUSIVE

Mohammad Ali Famori stands at the forefront of Iran's digital art movement, blending ancient philosophy with contemporary code. As an acclaimed digital artist, curator, and founder of the influential Platform 101, Famori has reshaped how glitch and video art are perceived both in Iran and globally. From pioneering black-and-white glitch aesthetics to leading Iran's presence at Expo 2025 in Japan, his work challenges norms while opening new creative horizons. In this exclusive interview with Iran Daily, Famori reflects on the origins of his practice, the conceptual force behind "error," and the ongoing mission to elevate Iranian digital art on the world stage. Famori is a prominent Iranian digital artist, curator, and cultural manager

with over a decade of experience in the global art scene. Since 2006, he has participated in more than 50 international exhibitions, including the Penne Art Biennale (Italy), Glitch Art Brazil, Athens Digital Arts Festival (Greece), and Expo 2025 (Japan). His acclaimed video piece 'Infinite Realms' is in the permanent collection of the CAM Museum in Naples. Famori's 2016 solo show 'Hypnotic Zone' at Seyhoun Gallery blended sacred and visionary themes with new media. He has earned major accolades, including first prize at Iran's National Digital Arts Festival (2019) and a Silver Medallion at the 2000 Shankar Festival in New Delhi. In 2011, he founded Famori Studio, exploring geometry and fractals in design and media. In 2018, he launched Platform 101, a nonprofit institution advancing digital art in Iran. Its debut project, '101 Photos by 101 Artists: Decisive Moment,' marked Iran's first photo exhibition tour, paying tribute to Henri Cartier-Bresson. Famori authored the influential 2019 'Manifesto of Iranian Glitch Art,' promot-

ing black-and-white glitch aesthetics and conceptual depth over decoration. This led to pioneering glitch exhibitions across Iran and abroad, including 'Glitch: Pixel Language' (2020), Iran's first glitch group show; 'Pixel Aesthetics' (2021); and 'Glitch Art Is Dead' in the US (2022). Platform 101 gained global recognition through its 2023 partnership with Glitch.art.br and its participation in The Wrong Biennale 2023-24, showcasing Iranian artists internationally. In 2024, it hosted 'Geometry of Creation' at E1 Gallery, Iran's largest video art exhibition, featuring 44 artists from 12 countries. In 2025, the platform presented 'Hidden Geometry & Glitch Art' and represented Iran at Expo 2025 with 'Patagoram' (Infinite Realms), a projection-mapping piece merging Iranian knotwork with glitch art. Platform 101 continues to elevate Iranian digital art, fostering global dialogue and innovation in contemporary media.



Mohammad Ali Famori

**IRAN DAILY: You've worked across various areas of digital art. What led you to focus specifically on glitch art and video art?**

**FAMORI:** From the very beginning of my artistic journey, I saw digital art as the only medium that imposes no limitations on the artist, not in the process of creation, nor in distribution, nor in exhibition or reproduction. Glitch art, as a key genre within digital arts, played a key global role precisely because of its anti-capitalist roots and the nature of its formation and presentation. Glitch, with its focus on digital errors and disruptions, gave me the opportunity to challenge traditional artistic norms and explore aesthetics within instability and chaos. For me, this medium is a metaphor for the contemporary human condition, living in the tension between order and disorder. Glitch art invites viewers to interact with it through their subconscious. During this interaction, viewers instinctively fill in the lost or corrupted parts of the image according to their own visual capacities. Glitch thus offers audiences a chance to engage with the artwork on their own aesthetic terms.

**Where did the first spark for the 'Platform 101' come from? Was there a particular moment or event that triggered the final decision?**

The idea for Platform 101 emerged in 2017 while I was collaborating with Tehran magazine. At the time, I noticed that Iranian digital artists lacked a cohesive space to showcase their conceptual work. The true turning point came in the summer of 2018, with the touring exhibition 'Decisive Moment' held across six galleries in Tehran and Isfahan. That project demonstrated that digital art could move from the periphery to the center of contemporary Iranian art. It strengthened my resolve to launch Platform 101 as a space dedicated to nurturing this growing movement.

**Why did you choose the name "101" for the platform? Is there a specific meaning behind it?**

The name "101" draws on three core concepts: It symbolizes the range from 0 to 100, together forming 101 degrees from black to white. This black-and-white spectrum is the visual hallmark of all exhibitions curated by Platform 101.

**You wrote the manifesto for Iranian**

**glitch art. In your view, what makes glitch art distinct from other branches of digital art?**

Unlike other branches of digital art, glitch art embraces error, not as a flaw but as the core of its aesthetic language. It uses those errors to critique systems of digital control. This quality makes glitch a powerful tool for expressing themes like instability, resistance, and technological critique, setting it apart from other digital mediums. The 'Glitch: Pixel Language' manifesto also known as the Manifesto of Iranian Glitch Art, is a unique innovation in the Asian art scene. I wrote it in 2019 as a conceptual foundation for a namesake exhibition at Bavan Gallery. The manifesto emphasizes the removal of color from glitch video art to create black-and-white works that focus on structural and formal elements. While glitch art began as a rebellious, anti-capitalist movement, over time its visual elements, especially colorful distortions, became more mainstream. By eliminating color, we redirected both artists and viewers toward a more formalist and conceptually rich engagement with glitch aesthetics.

**Glitch art is often associated with visual errors. In your perspective, how do these "errors" become a powerful visual language?**

In glitch art, errors aren't merely flaws, they're intentional disruptions that reveal hidden layers of the image's essence. In 'Glitch: Pixel Language,' I explore three foundational concepts: Decay, interruption, and disintegration of pixels. These elements allow for a new reading of the image. For instance, in the project 'Hidden Geometry,' we intentionally distorted fractal codes to create a piece that reflected the balance between mathematical order and chaos in nature. These errors can act as metaphors for instability in life or society, turning glitch into a po-

tent visual language that compels viewers to reflect.

**How did your involvement with generative coding and tools like Touch Designer come about? Do you participate in the programming side yourself?**

As a curator and concept developer, I mainly focus on artistic statements and conceptual frameworks. However, I collaborate closely with professional programmers like Arash Masoum. My interest in generative coding began with interactive projects. Using Touch Designer for the Japan Expo 2025 project deepened that connection, there, we combined fractal code with immersive sound to create a multi-sensory experience. Occasionally, I do participate in programming to more precisely implement my artistic vision.

**Tell us more about how the 'Infinite Realms' project was selected for Japan Expo 2025. How did the idea evolve, and what challenges did you face?**

We submitted the 'Infinite Realms' projection mapping proposal in response to the open call by Japan Expo 2025 Osaka-Kansai, themed Designing Future Society for Our Lives. The project was accepted and is scheduled to be displayed on one of Osaka's iconic structures, the 'Shining Hat'. The piece explores the essence and fractal geometry of parallel and unknown dimensions, where infinite structures exist at every level. I directed the project, and the visuals were entirely generated through creative coding by Arash Masoum using Touch Designer. The sound design and composition were handled by Ehsan Masoudian and Reza Famori. Our goal was to create a work that carried both an Eastern identity and a universal language. The main challenge was translating abstract concepts into a form that could be grasped by an inter-

national audience without sacrificing authenticity. We spent months fine-tuning the synchronization of sound and image for the projection mapping. Being the only Iranian team added pressure, but it also motivated us to deliver something flawless and deeply resonant.

**What kind of feedback did you receive from the Japan Expo 2025 jury and international institutions? Why do you think your project resonated with them?**

The expo jury was genuinely surprised by the integration of tradition and technology in our project. 'Infinite Realms' wasn't just a visual display—it was a narrative exploration of cultural reflection through digital art. The projection mapping piece will be featured in the 'Shining Hat' program alongside global digital art giants like Maxin10sity, Ava Animation, and Michiyuki Ishita. Its inclusion signals a new horizon for Iranian artists to collaborate on an international scale in the realm of generative coding and digital creation.

**Platform 101 is the only Iranian team in the projection mapping section. What kind of responsibility or pressure does that put on you and your team?**

It's a tremendous responsibility. We have to represent Iranian digital art on a global stage while creating a work that can hold its own against major international studios like teamLab. But we've turned that pressure into motivation—to deliver a project that meets and exceeds global standards.

**How would you assess the current infrastructure for digital art in Iran? Have you seen any changes in recent years?**

Digital art in Iran is growing, and there's an increasing interest among the younger generation. Spaces like Rischee29 Art Gallery and the Dayhim Art Society have opened doors for showcasing video art.

That said, lack of financial support and specialized academic training remain major challenges. The rise of NFTs in recent years has been promising, but we still need more foundational infrastructure.

**Why do you think many Iranian galleries and collectors remain hesitant about digital art?**

There are two main reasons: **Fear of reproducibility:** Gallery owners often struggle with how to classify and sell a digital work as an "original." **Lack of technical understanding:** Many still don't grasp the distinctions between video art, generative art, and NFTs.

This distrust largely stems from unfamiliarity with the potential and mechanics of digital media.

**What steps need to be taken for digital art to be recognized as a serious movement in Iran's art scene?**

Establishing a national digital archive to document and preserve digital works. Hosting festivals, exhibitions, and auctions dedicated to digital mediums. Creating international residency programs to connect artists with cutting-edge technologies. Training specialized curators in digital art to bridge the gap between artists and audiences.

**How do your collaborations with international artists typically begin? Are they mostly exhibition-based or more extensive?**

My collaborations go well beyond exhibitions. They include workshops, residencies, and joint projects. Over the past six years, we've invited around 30 international digital artists through the publication of three different artistic statements, which have directly led to recent exhibitions by Platform 101.

**Where do you see the future of digital art heading, particularly in areas**

**like the metaverse, AI art, or NFTs?**

Globally, digital art is clearly moving toward platforms like the metaverse, artificial intelligence, and NFTs. The challenge lies in the speed and capacity to adopt these technologies. These tools are democratizing art creation and distribution, offering unprecedented opportunities for artists. Our participation in events such as the Wrong Biennale in Spain, the 'Glitch Art Is Dead' festival in the US, the Glitch Art Brazil Festival (where Iran's glitch scene was showcased), and the re-staging of 'The Language of Pixels' exhibit in Italy by curator Antonio Zimarino are examples of this momentum.

**What are your future plans for developing Platform 101?**

Yes, we plan to grow Platform 101 through international partnerships and establish branches in other countries. One major initiative is launching a gallery space for Platform 101 in the metaverse, both for educational purposes and digital exhibitions. We're also working on forming long-term alliances with similar festivals worldwide to create sustained global engagement.

**Which global artists have inspired you most? What's the most influential project you've seen?**

Albrecht Dürer and Michelangelo have had the greatest influence on my work. Among 20th-century artists, Nam June Paik, the pioneer of video art, has always fascinated me. I also draw deep inspiration from the poetic expression in Bill Viola's video installations.

**When creating, what inspires you most, nature, technology, literature?**

In fractal-based work, my primary inspiration comes from classical Iranian mathematics and literature. For instance, in the project 'Hypnotic Zone,' all the visuals were inspired by the poetry of Hafiz.

**What's been the biggest challenge in your professional journey, and how did you overcome it?**

In the early years, the biggest hurdle was the widespread reluctance, even among avant-garde circles, to accept glitch as a "serious" art form. I overcame this by organizing repeated exhibitions at respected Tehran galleries and gaining international exposure for Iranian digital artists. Over time, that mindset began to shift.

