

# INVESTIGATION OF WOMAN IDENTITY IN IRAN CONTEMPORARY PORTRAIT ART

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## ABSTRACT

Portraits that value the human face as an identity have been a subject of art, in which various emotions are expressed. Portraits with artistic identity serve as a bridge from the past to the present. The expressionist art movement, which influenced the portrait art, depicts itself with great enthusiasm in the portraits of the Iranian artist. At the same time, these artists portrayed the trauma, melancholy and loneliness of their self. It is also possible to see that the mysterious spirit of the portrait comes to the fore as a subject and an element in a creative image with different feelings and emotions, especially in the paintings of women artists. In contemporary Iranian art, although women face problems such as pain, violence and gender discrimination in a patriarchal society, their presence in art activities and art biennials is an indication that women have an important role in the field of painting. While the works originally created focused on social issues such as gender inequalities and identity politics, aesthetically, the works of female artists of this period were created with careful visual considerations. This research examines the art understanding and features of Iranian portrait art. Accordingly, a rich literature review on the portraits of women in the paintings of Iranian contemporary women artists and her contributions to Iranian painting were examined. In addition, the functional features and importance of portraits in the works of these artists have been tried to be emphasized with this research.

**Keywords:** Iranian art, Portraits of women, Middle East, Mysterious Sufferings, contemporary art

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## Introduction

In the history of contemporary art, the female artist has assumed a new identity. Portraits and female bodies are seen more intensely in contemporary paintings. This is an indication of the heightened importance of individuality and the enormous psychological power that pervades these works. On the other hand, it is possible to see the image of woman in painting as a source of pleasure. Akbulut (2012), thinks that painting is not only a visual object, a creation, but also a source of pleasure, apart from what it wants to convey (p.XIII). The 20th century art movement emerged in Germany against the positivism, naturalism and impressionism movements in an environment of political instability and economic depression. This movement, which also influenced Iranian art, caused the artists to highlight violence, pessimism and extraordinariness in their works. Most artifacts are irritating and have a harsh effect at first glance. This movement has influenced many types of art, especially painting. The lines are quite harsh and sharp, and the colors are exaggerated. Originality is in the most efficient image and at the same time, criticism is made with the harshest language and ease. Portrait and still life genres were among the first genres that Iranian artists tried with pleasure to experiment, learn by experience and in these two ways to understand the representational image. The history of still life in Iranian art is uncertain, but portrait painting has a long history. For example, portraits of Iranian political and historical figures can be traced back to Persian and Parthian times. Portrait art was somewhat marginalized not only during the modernization of Iran but also in the modern period in general. In the various portraits of the New Trend, the painter abandons the conflict of resemblance and tends towards simplification. Modernists tied the portrait less to the concept of man and to the subject's individuality, and sought more qualities for collective identities in their portraits. It should be noted that modern artists have experienced portrait art at the beginning of their research and from the first generation and some of these works have remarkable features and characteristics. After the 1979 Iranian revolution, all cultural values were turned upside down, and it also affected the understanding and development of art. This interaction inevitably affected the art of the porter and imposed restrictions on the works of the artists. These changes have triggered the re-emergence of this movement, such as the Saggahaneh movement in Iran, and also the beginning of a new art movement. During the Revolutionary years, the portrait art re-evolved, and portraiture seemed essential to expressing feelings and beliefs. But during this period, the individuality of faces in the form of Symbolic portraits declined and personality traits increased. Since the mid-seventies, we see that with the wave of pluralism in contemporary art, portrait art has come to the fore in figurative painting and a new understanding has begun to emerge. It is also possible to see that the mysterious spirit of the portrait in Iranian painting comes to the fore as a subject and an element in a creative image with different feelings and emotions. The chosen body concept and portraits of women are just like the examples of artists such as Freud, Bacon, Seville and Tuymans, aims to create an intellectual language about the body and portrait in contemporary painting by making use of the traditional perception system. The aim of the research is to examine the works of women painters who play an important role in Iranian contemporary art. This research, by looking at the historical development of the portrait, tried to follow the historical process of the female figure and portrait as an art image in the works of male and female artists in Iranian contemporary art. Afterwards, it aims to investigate the portraits of women in the works of famous contemporary Iranian women painters such as Sonia Balassanian, Şirin Neşat, Rozirta Sheref Jahan, Saghar Pezeshkiyan, Shohreh Mehran, Rana Farnood, Elaheh Heydari, Afarin Sajedi, related to portrait art. In the last part of the research, the hidden feelings of the researcher in the inner world of expressive portraits and the painting "Tranquility I", "Tranquility II", "Tranquility III" from the "Mysterious Pains II" series will be reviewed.

### Portrait Studies in Iranian Contemporary Art

In order to examine the portrait art in Iranian contemporary art, it is necessary to examine the art movements before and after the Iranian revolution. Last 43 years ago, Iran has been under a strong western influence in the field of art due to the prevalence of cultural globalization. Some reactions have emerged against this western influence such as; "acceptance", "resistance", and a mixture of these two thoughts are not included. The first of these is the victory of global culture. The second is the fight against globalization. The third is the hope of inclusion in globalization (Mohammadrizi, M ;Masume, T & Abdollahi H, 2014, p.89). These three paradigms have been repeated in every age, causing the emergence and shaping of three approaches in art. The art that started with the revolution has some features apart from the art of the previous period. The art of this period was indifferent to the art of modernism and demanded that its promotion in culture and art centers be abandoned. On the other hand, by paying attention to traditional and national arts, realism and folk art were given importance. At the end of the 1980s, in this environment where Western art can be easily introduced, this introduced art has had an impact on the emergence of different art trends in Iranian contemporary art. In this case, Iranian contemporary painting was more influenced by European modern art styles (Guderzi, 2017 H.ş, p.172). With the establishment of the Islamic government in Iran, almost all the arts that were feminine in form - including dance, singing, ballet, fashion - were

either completely abandoned or restricted. This marginalization and repression manifests itself in dark or protestant contemporary works of art in post-revolutionary Iran (Issa, 2001: 26). Women are portrayed in these works in a bold and militant manner, which is a kind of protest against their social oppression. With the introduction of hijab in the country, the issue of hijab and chador formed a large part of the work of critical female artists (Grigor, 2014:212-216). Hijab and chador in the works of some Iranian women artists abroad, become a symbol to show religious strictures and female self-destruction (Amirsadeghi, 2009:100).

Armenian artist Sonia Balasanyan was one of the first artists to draw the attention of Western audiences to the chador. The artist in his series "Black Days" portrays women in hijab and black veils in an atmosphere full of fear. Nahid Haghighat, a contemporary Iranian female artist known for her Printmaking, focuses on portraits of sad, hopeless and lonely women in her works. In his Aquatint works, artist portrayed Iranian women in a dark and sad atmosphere, fearing being watched and longing for freedom (Daftari, 2014:40). The portraits of women covered in black and sometimes faded are perhaps the representation of the slowly disappearing freedom and happiness. More precisely, these works show that the gloomy life stories of Iranian women (Figur 1).



**Figure 1.** Nahid Haghighat, Monoprint, 28 x38 cm. <http://arthibition.net/fa/product/show/27677/Untitled>

Women artists who continue their art life in the country; by the addressing the marginalized female identity, they have mostly focused on the distorted, repressed and painful portraits of women (Eigner, 2015:180). Between the years after the Iranian Revolution (1979-2014), Iranian contemporary art began to be exhibited in the ever-evolving art markets outside of Europe and America. The wealthy states of the Gulf created markets for the works of regional artists. The museums of these countries have grown and held international exhibitions such as the Sharjah Biennial, Art Dubai and Christie's (Keshmirshakan, 2011, p.76).

### **Examining the Image of Women in the Works of Contemporary Iranian Male and Female Artists**

Despite the fact that Middle Eastern countries have a rich culture, they do not show a very positive approach to the fact that women are seen as an art image in their artistic identity or in their works of art. As mentioned earlier, although the art movements and understanding after the Iranian revolution brought restrictions, it has also had a positive effect on Iranian art. Especially in the works of women artists, this effect is seen in the female figures and portraits used as a rebellion against power, pessimism and marginalization. The female image, which takes place in the works of male artists as well as Iranian female artists, has been exhibited with very different visual approaches. More precisely, the identity of woman is given meaning depending on the gender of the artist. The findings show that the female image in Iranian male paintings has a system of descriptive, iconic and stereotypical indicators of the ideal woman. However, Iranian female painters have an explanatory, non-stereotypical and interpretive view of the real characteristics and conditions of women. On the other hand, the

reference to Iranian women in male painting is a semantic, allegorical and mythical reference. Male artists depict not being a woman, but feminine traits and implicit and subjective meanings of being a woman, such as beauty and tenderness. But in women's painting, the representation of the image of a woman is based on the feminine experience. Female painters try to express the dilemmas of the bio-world of women, but men artists, regardless of these conditions, depict women in an imaginary space. Unlike male painters, female painters do not portray themselves as mythical and idealistic creatures in their paintings. Instead, they try to use strategies to distort stereotypes in women's paintings and create an image of women. It is possible to see the concrete example of this idea in the self-portrait work of Iranian female artist Sonia Balassanian. We are faced with a brave Anatolian woman who has survived and is an iconic witness to her own destruction. In the artist's self-portrait collage works, we mostly see the repetitions of Persian words such as stoning and rape (Figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Sonia Balassanian, Self Portrait, Franklin Furance Gallery. New York. 1983. <https://www.soniabalassanian.com/collages-self-portraits/> Date of Access: 28.01.2022

In these works of Balassanian, it is also possible to see the overlapping of traditional Persian legal certificates and multiple fingerprint signatures. This kind of artistic approach; reminds of the famous contemporary Iranian feminist artist Şirin Neşat's photographic works "Women of God" (Figure 3).

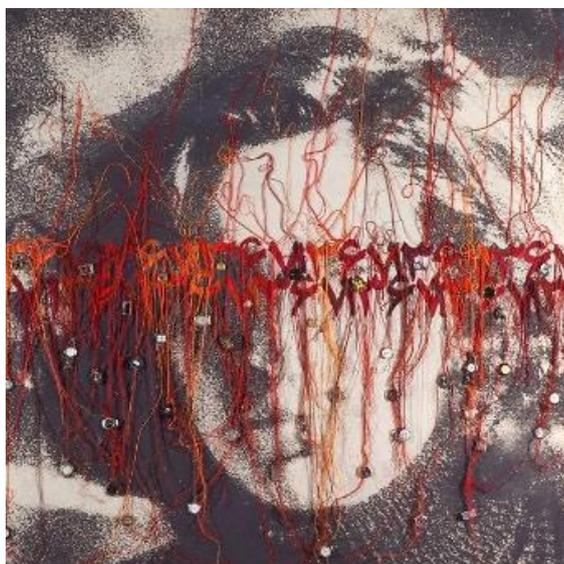


**Figure 3.** Şirin Neşat, Women of God, Photograph. <https://www.achtzig.com/2018/03/shirin-neshat-in-der-neuen-galerie-frauen-zwischen-orient-und-okzident/> Date of Access: 15.01.2021

Rozita Sarafjahan is one of the most important female artists that can be given as an example in Iranian art after 2005. It is possible to see the features of the post-modern style in his works in the 6th Sense Collection (Figure 4). The artist, who lives in a patriarchal society, has discussed and criticized the issue of gender in his works by revealing this situation. The artist, who uses different tools as the characteristics of contemporary art to reveal his own thought, used digital printing, stitches and threads hanging from these stitches on his canvases. The artist pointed out the troubles and sufferings of people who lived at that time, including himself, by drawing his own photograph and, turning to history, bullets, knives and other war tools in detail on his canvases (pointing to the Iran-Iraq war). The bullets coming out of the barrel on his canvases, the broken glass of the windows, the scattered and tangled ropes in his canvases tell that the bad results of the wars in history (especially the Iran-Iraq war) can never be repaired so that the pain. So that the pain and the sadness left behind will always be remembered it.

It is seen that the name of the said collection belonging to the artist comes from the Iran-Iraq wars of the 1980s, experienced by the third generation artists, including herself, and the number 6 in the collection comes from here.

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**Figure 4.** Rozirta Sheref Jahan, Untitled, Digital Printing and Sewing on Canvas, 201. <https://herfeh-honarmand.com/blog> . Date of Access: 01.06.2021

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The artist emphasizes the history of the most important events in his life, with various numbers, with the expressionist color flows on the black and white portrait. Iranian male painters often present full-length pictures of women, while female painters paint busts, incomplete and fragmentary pictures of female bodies. The full-length drawings of female figures surprisingly emphasize the feeling of being surrounded by the male artist and the perfection of a woman. However, the fragmented female body in women's paintings shows the multi-layered meaning and the difficulty of recognizing it. In the works of Iranian male painters, the passive female image (full-length with a matte look) is accompanied by a representation of the general condition of the body in dance and humor. In these works, the female beauty is shown with emphasis on raised lips and very long hair. In contrast, female painters depict women with short hair and do not emphasize the stature of women, undramatic images of women. In addition, female painters, unlike male painters, portray women without make-up or with distorted and unsightly make-up. It is possible to see this kind of approach in the work of Saghar Pezeshkiyan, a female artist in Iranian contemporary art, on the dull and unaesthetic female figure (Figure 5).

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**Figure 5.** Saghar Pezeshkiyan, Untitled, oil painting on canvas, 100 x 50cm, 2009. <https://herfeh-honarmand.com/blog> . Date of Access: 03.11.2021

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The artist distorts the female body proportions, making the woman look taller and like the characters in cartoons. The thoughtful and yet upright woman emphasizes that she does not have to make herself popular with the society with her daily blue-toned dress. The presence of the two-dimensional yellow color in the background probably represents the woman's place in a dangerous world. The bony, masculine body and facial structure of the woman, and her stagnant and worried facial expression are also noteworthy. Thus, according to the researches, the art of painting in Iran, Male painters often portray women in formal and local costumes. Unlike female painters, women are shown in informal clothes and mostly in home clothes, just like in the example of Pezeshkiyan's Painting or the female figure in Shohreh Mehran's painting (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Shohreh Mehran, "Wind", oil painting on canvas, Tehran, Iran, 2020. <https://galleryinfo.ir/Event/fa/11959#lg=1&slide=0>. Date of Access: 04.02.2021

Apparently, Female painters depict women in informal situations and in costumes such as home wear. An image that lacks masculine beauty and is close to the lived experience of women. Female painters show men trying to break false visual stereotypes towards women in their thinking. They resist subjectification and, by applying new visual strategies to painting, create gaps in the reproduction of the dominant male mentality in culture. As a result, the image of women as a modifier in different historical and social contexts can help us to understand them more deeply. According to the sociological theories of theorists such as Michel Foucault, Michel Dosserto and John Fisk, it can be concluded that confronting the exercise of power in society leads to the use of the strategy of resistance. According to this theory, Michel Foucault deals with the subjectivation process of women in male painting and the strategies to resist this subjectification in female painting. According to Foucault, the form of power exerts its power on the immediate daily life that gives identity to the individual. This power is the kind that makes people the subject (Foucault, 2006, p. 348). On the other hand, according to Naklin (1992), one area of power and resistance strategy is women confronting the dominant discourse of men. Feminist art, which was born in the 1960s as an important act of women's resurrection, By influencing the Middle East countries, it succeeded in continuing its footprints to Iranian contemporary art. The result of this rebellion is seen in the paintings of all Iranian women artists given as examples. Looking at the manifesto of the feminist movement, female artists had aim to fight against the privatization of women in the dominant male discourse. In addition, awareness in society can cause great changes. This view expresses itself in a good visual in the field of art and especially in the works of Iranian women artists. According to Naraghi (2007), Women's awareness of the dominance of masculine visual culture manifested itself in various forms of resistance. In this way, feminist art displayed lived, emotional and emotional experiences with unprecedented honesty and reflected a deliberate attempt to achieve a feminine form and language (p. 45). We can see this style of approach in the works of many contemporary female painters. Most of the introduced artists are aware of this issue and have expressed their protest in the form of paintings, but in the case of women, this type of protest is mostly considered to be the use of women. According to Korsmeyer (2004); Feminists believe that there is a big difference between the works of male and female painters in depicting women. Looking at Iranian art; the use of the female image also shows awareness in the works of male and female painters. We also see that certain rules appear in describing women, depending on Iran's cultural assets and religious beliefs. Contrary to the history of European painting, which has always had women's naked bodies in Iranian painting history, nude images of women were not depicted,

except for a few cases in Safavid and Qajar palace paintings (Ekhtiar, 1999). In fact, Iranian painting is a clear example of paintings that emphasize the perfection and beauty of the face, without emphasizing the sexual organs of the body. Although this still exists as a cultural prohibition in Iran's contemporary visual culture and painting; it is possible to come across nude female figures within certain limits. This kind of approach is seen in the self-portrait work of Iranian female artist Rana Farnood (Figure 7).

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**Figure 7.** Rana Farnood, Self-Portrait, Mixed media on canvas, 100 x 70 cm, 2016. <https://herfeh-honarmand.com/blog> Date of Access: 06.01.2021

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As a result, it can be said that the painting of Iranian women is an arena for confronting the masculine mentality and, according to Foucault, it is a struggle against the subjectification of women. Iranian women painters are trying to shape the visual patterns that men have about women. They resist subjectivation and create gaps in the reproduction of the culture's dominant male mentality by applying new visual strategies to painting.

### **Anatolian Woman Portraits in the researcher's paintings**

With the great changes that Western art witnessed after the 19th century, the concern of the artists was to show the truth in society; it's an extremely ugly and dark-looking reality. It is possible to think that Marcel Proust's sentence "Happiness is good for the body, but it is sadness that develops the strength of the mind" is a summary of the reality faced by modern man. This interpretation of happiness, the joy that springs from consciousness, in the works of philosophers such as Nietzsche and Michel Foucault, tried with all her might to expose the violence under the skin of the city. Jill Deleuze tells us the hysterical smile of painter and model, confronts us with the animalized figure, and calls violence an integral part of the artist's work, even where Francis Bacon deals with the logic of emotion in her work. Women painters also used art as a tool to protest the approach of governments and politics, depicting poverty, famine, and war. On the other hand; in the modern world, the presence of women in the art of painting has taken on special states that are full of spaces of frustration, depression, violence, stress, lack of security, and its use of tools. One of the biggest reasons for the emergence of sadness and sadness in works of art is the absence of happiness. But a lack of happiness doesn't necessarily produce grief. The artist who turns to the dark space is, in itself, in search of light. The artist who covers crying faces in photography is looking for the lost smiles of her subjects. This search, although it goes through the path of darkness and sorrow, but can seek mental happiness. The motivation to work even in such a sad atmosphere stems from the pleasure that the artist seeks, but this pleasure, according to Jill Deleuze, may be violent pleasure, it is unlikely to make the audience happy. Therefore, contemporary art, which is based on the events and concerns of the artist and today's people, is sadder than a joyful expression for modern people. Nowadays, the traumas that suddenly experienced by humanity in the world brought great responsibility to the art world and also emphasized the social value of art once again. According to Berger (2018), "indifference is the danger that art constantly faces" (p.419). In other words, the fact that art has a critical side as well as the well-known and acclaimed concept of beauty shows that although it is not

tolerated, it does not remain indifferent. Art is not always kind, and sometimes it can be exclusionary. According to Berger:

"Art is always exclusionary - it has to do this in order to maintain the calm in which it can be heard. However, this exclusion can easily lead to indifference, which leads to a decrease in energy. Thus, the need for art to be revived cyclically arises" (Berger, 2018:419).



**Figure 8.** Ghorbanzadeh, P. "Mysterious Suffering II" series, "Tranquility I". Mixed Media on Canvas. 120 X 100 Cm. 2019. Photograph of the Researcher.

It is possible to see loneliness, sadness, anger, fear, crushed and bruised freedom, beaten hearts and yet peaceful and innocent Anatolian women portraits in the painting samples of the researcher's "Mysterious Pains II" series (Figure 8). We should think of these mysterious bodies as a resurrection story, especially of the difficult life of Anatolian women. In the painting of women artists who are under the influence of today's events, warm colors, bright and bright spaces of the palaces have been replaced by cold and dark colors, intertwined and depressive figures and faces. Traces of young princes and golden palaces no longer appear in art. Bodies always remain mysterious. Throughout art history, artists have always dealt with certain or uncertain mystery; in the giants created by Mehmet Siyah Kalem, in Monalza's mysterious gaze and smile, in Malevich's deep spiritual feelings, in Mondrian's upright and cold bodies, in Caspar David Friedrich's mysterious atmospheric paintings or in Fernand Khnopff's half-human and half-animal bodies. etc. We see many more works like these in the history of art (Ghorbanzadeh.D, 2017, p.550). A wide and open space for different artistic tastes was created in Iranian painting in the early 1970s. Considering the historical situation of women, who, as expected, are a reminder of the do's and don'ts that society imposes on women, women artists have sought a new identity in their works instead of the stereotypical, mythical and decorative representations of women. Thus, in this period, in pursuit of female identity, they constructed the deconstruction of past images and the "reality of being" and portrayed the reality of "being a woman". In this period, painters created abstract figures with modern textures and techniques by combining elements of daily life with traditional elements and even elements taken from legend. In today's Iranian art, although the number of female painters is increasing, they express themselves more successfully in contemporary art activities. Although the footprints of social discrimination are felt in today's Iranian art, there is a resurgence against it by female artists. Trying to portray everyday life with all its difficulties, women painters rebel against the selfish taste of male domination. Thus, we should think that the portraits of women in 21st century Iranian art are generally a reflection of the artist's mood and cultural pressure. The abstracted Anatolian woman portrait found in the work of the Iranian contemporary female artist, Elaheh Heydari; is a visual story of a melancholy woman trapped in blue tones of repressed emotions (Figure 9). It can be seen in this painting, reminiscent of Picasso's blue period paintings, which describe the lonelines, sadnes and expectation of women very simply with simplified lines.



**Figure 9.** Elaheh Heydari, Oil Painting on Canvas, 90 x 90 cm, 2006. <https://herfeh-honarmand.com/blog> Date of Access: 01.12.2021

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In the classical paganism world, female body focuses on perfect beauty, while this view continues in an image through the image of Madonna in Christianity, other concepts such as innocence and sadness are also seen in it. After the beginning of the modernization period, with all the concepts being turned upside down, there has been a change in the meaning of the human and especially the female figure in art. Modern art has added meanings such as exposure to violence, objectification and alienation to the female figure. Exposing the bodies to violence has caused the human spirit to be crushed more. Suffering and inner fragmentation have always manifested themselves in different Visuals by artists in art. Looking at the Anatolian culture; we see that women face problems such as pain, violence and gender discrimination in a patriarchal society. These negative factors sometimes manifested themselves in bruised bodies, painful looks and beaten portraits, as seen in Aferin Sajedi's work "The Eyes"(Figure 10).



**Figure 10.** Aferin Sajedi, "The Eyes", Oil Painting on Canvas, 2009. <https://bayanbox.ir/view/3375957048067203554/photo-2016-07-03-11-24-34.jpg> Date of Access: 07.01.2021

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The woman who displays her beautiful body gives a harsh message to her audience by not hiding her expressive pain in her portrait. Her silent eyes, which almost represent darkness, tell a deep and painful life story. While the harmony of cold and warm colors gives peace on the one hand, on the other hand it highlights the ruthlessness of violence by emphasizing the warmth of blood in the woman's portrait. Although this painting is thought to be the image of the silent scream of an Iranian contemporary woman; it is also the cry of all women who have been subjected to violence. In the painting "Tranquility II", the researcher exhibits the same stillness and silence; It is possible to see the pain and sadness in the soul's body mold with an expressionism approach (Figure 11). According to Teber (2013) "In these works of the Expressionists, there is no safe shelter to protect either the body or the soul anymore; a transcendent homelessness and intense sadness emerged as a radical reaction to these events" (p.310). Immortal unhappiness that takes shelter under an innocent smile; shows up with the mysterious gaze of the woman. This is the artist's effort to reveal the hidden truth behind the painful smile. Klee (2006) defines the emotions in his portrait paintings as follows; "Pictures of cute or serious, soothing or scary, sad or laughing look at us, more or less maintaining tension. From humor they reach pain and watch us in all the diversity of the psycho-physinomic dimension" (p. 28).

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**Figure 11.** Ghorbanzadeh, P. "Gizemli Acilar II" Serisinden, "Tranquility II ". Mixed Media on Canvas. 120 X 100 Cm. 2019.  
Photograph of the Researcher

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Incorporating intuition in a work of art is considered a better approach because analysis is useless. Because, as Berger (2018) said: "If these pictures are pleasing, one should sincerely enjoy this pleasure; what we accept, like, may be what the artist meant, but May not (p.52). These portraits are an indication of the extent to which the artist was inspired by the religious traditions of his country and the unfair oppression of women. In these paintings, by transitioning from closed thoughts to freedom, despite all the mysterious pain; the display of calmness and peace in mimics makes the female figure appear stronger. These works, which show bodies covered with unreal textures, proportional appearances of figures and an expressionist approach in general, also emphasizes that the artist is a successful designer and draftsman. In these paintings, the artist also takes into account the mood of the figure in her portraits, which she creates by using line and color freely, without depending on realism. As an Anatolian woman painter, the artist, who made her mental state felt in her works, tried to reflect her calmness and anger with her random brush strokes and the colors that she used (Figure 12).



**Figure 12.** Ghorbanzadeh, P. "Mysterious Sorrows II" series, "Tranquility III ". Mixed Media on Canvas. 120 X 100 Cm. 2019.

Photograph of the Researcher

Women artists usually tell their own life stories and cultures in the female figures that they draw. Thus, we see that the difficulties experienced, discrimination, loneliness, violence and natural life are reflected in their work. In the work named "Tranquility III", some oppressive traditions and prohibitions that women live in society are presented with the woman's stance of loneliness. The synthesis and intellectual dimension related to the body and the portrait in the studied female body samples constitute the basic dynamic of the paint language. The bodies in the "Mysterious Sorrows II" series scream their pain in silence instead of fake smiles. But this shout, is a silent and secret cry, not as expressive as Bacon's or Edvard Munch's. The bodies and portraits of the researcher that emerged under this series show the visually of emotional pain. Sometimes we see portraits that speak with body language that are silent with sad eyes, and sometimes we can see wounded and rusted bodies that tell thousands of stories with brave eyes that stand upright. They have undergone yet another transformation, as their bodies become rusty, repulsive, and sometimes full of stone-like texture. The mysterious peace in the body and in the portraits is actually the mysterious pain under the body. These calm bodies are like a hidden piece of fire under the embers. These portraits are perhaps emotions death, loneliness, rebellion, abandonment, injustice, despair and ect. This portraits, it is the invisible and tangible face of painful feelings. Portraits of women representing these sufferings; It is possible to see pale, resistant and injured bodies as facial expressions trying to convey a message. The female body and portraits in the paintings of the researcher contain the point of view of an art understanding with anti-naturalist and anti-aesthetic subjectivity against realism and idealism. The purpose of the artist is to express the trapped hidden feelings of an Anatolian woman in her inner world, through monochrome color, line, texture, plane and mass, with unique technical and artistic approaches. The result was see bodies that looked unreal and engulfed the entire body, looking like stone, metal and earth. Perhaps the most striking feature of these emerging figures is their high narration and expressive style. These portraits are the concrete life story of women in Anatolian culture and the representation of a daily person living in a certain climate buried in eternity. It is possible to say that the expressionist brush strokes and rusted metal textures used in these paintings are all mixed with the breathing of the skin and then polished with it, by hearing the scream of silence from the body language. Three-dimensional portraits that complete a two-dimensional background are the message of this contrast created by the artist. In other words, it is possible to think that these paintings were actually created as an aspect of Anatolian culture. Thus, the portraits of women that emerged in the light of these thoughts become an example of an Anatolian woman's painful life story. Female bodies, which seem devoid of fantasy, romance, exoticism and even eroticism, once again emphasize that humanity is a regardless of gender and an emotional being.

### Conclusion

20th century of art; has been to seek the values below the quality art belonging to all places, times and understandings. On the other hand, only to express their inner selves, to pursue the essence rather than the reality and to reveal the invisible rather than the visible. In the post-modern world, the meaning of the female figure has turned to much different places with the opposition of new ideas to the concept that has become commonplace and the emergence of movements such as feminism. This point of view has revealed various strategies to include

women in the art world. Thus, throughout the history of art, the body and especially the female body and its portraits have been used for various purposes. Conceptual art approaches offered by modernity have also influenced Middle Eastern art and contemporary Iranian art. Especially these new art movements; managed to break away from the stereotypical traditional approaches and patriarchal thinking of women artists. As a result of this unique artistic understanding and movement, it is possible to see the rebirth of humanistic art with modern approaches. We also see that women artists occupy an important place in this new art approach. In today's Iranian art, although women face problems such as pain, violence and gender discrimination in a patriarchal society, their presence in art activities and art biennials is an indication that women have an important place in the field of painting. While the works originally created focused on social issues such as gender inequalities and identity politics, aesthetically, the works of female artists of this period were created with careful visual considerations. Finally, it can be concluded that female painters avoid subjectivity in non-theatrical situations where the female image is realistic and culturally clear in their works. However, naturalistic representations in the works of women painters are also lyrical, legendary and decorative. This research shows that women are rethinking and constructing their female identities. For example; female image in the works of artists such as Sonia Balassanian, Şirin Neşat, Rozirta Sheref Jahan is the symbol of a suspended, fragmented, restless and inflamed world. In the paintings of Saghar Pezeshkiyan and Shohreh Mehran's world is shown that loneliness, isolation and oppression. In the painting of Rana Farnood and Elaheh Heydari's image of a world is that shown sad and scared. Also, it can be seen the image of a suffering and disturbed woman in the paintings of Afarin Sajedi and Parvin Ghorbanzadeh. These studies are examples of the rethinking female identity. As a result of the research; it has been seen that the paintings of women artists are a story of revolt of existing oppressive ideas, independent of traditional Iranian painting. In addition, the portraits of women in the works of Iranian contemporary women artists are considered as concrete indicators and visual signs of the modern approach in connection with Iranian pictorial traditions. In other words, it is possible to think that these paintings were actually created as an aspect of Anatolian culture.

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# İRAN ÇAĞDAŞ PORTRE SANATINDA KADIN KİMLİĞİNİN İRDELENMESİ

Parvin Ghorbanzadeh Dizaji

## ÖZ

İnsan yüzüne kimlik niteliğinde önem yükleyen portreler; çeşitli duyguların dışı vurulduğu bir sanat konusu olmuştur. Sanatsal kimliğe bürünen portreler; zaman yolculuğunun önemli misafiri görünerek, geçmişten günümüze köprü vazifesi yapmaktadır. Portre sanatını etkisi altına alan dışavurumcu sanat akımı; İran sanatçısının portrelerinde büyük bir coşkuyla kendini betimlerken; aynı zamanda benliğinin geçirdiği travma, melankoli ve yalnızlık halini de resimlemiştir. Özellikle kadın sanatçıların resimlerinde, portrenin gizemli ruha sahipliği farklı hisler ve duygularla ön plana çıkmıştır. Günümüz İran sanat anlayışında; kadınların, ataerkil bir toplumda acı, şiddet ve cinsiyet ayrımcılığı gibi sorunlarla karşı karşıya kalmalarına rağmen, sanat faaliyetlerinde ve sanat bienallerinde var olmaları, kadınların resim alanında önemli bir yere sahip olduklarının bir göstergesidir. Bu araştırma İran portre sanatının sanat anlayışını ve özelliklerini incelemektedir. Bu doğrultuda, İranlı çağdaş kadın sanatçıların resimlerinde yer alan kadın portreleri ve İran çağdaş resim sanatına katkıları üzerine geniş bir literatür taraması yapılmıştır. Ayrıca sanatçıların eserlerinde portrelerin işlevsel özellikleri ele alınmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İran sanatı, kadın portreleri, ortadoğu, gizemli acılar, çağdaş sanat