



FACULTIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEHRAN II. FACULTY OF FINE ARTS

FACULTIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEHRAN

ii. Faculty of Fine Arts

Like most other faculties of the University of Tehran, the Faculty of Fine Arts was created by integrating already existing institutions (see EDUCATION xvii). In 1940, on the initiative of Esmā'īl Mer'āt, the minister of education, who was also in charge of administering Tehran University, a College of Fine Arts (Honarkada-ye honarhā-ye zībā) was formed by merging the School of Applied Arts and Crafts (Madrassa-ye šanāye' wa pīša wa honar), which had been founded by the famous painter Moḥammad Ġaffārī Kamāl-al-Molk (q.v.; Maḥbūbī, *Mo'assasāt* I, pp. 415-16), with the School of Architecture (Madrassa-ye 'ālī-e me'mārī). The new Faculty was temporarily housed in the old theological school, Madrasa-ye Marvī, in central Tehran and a year later transferred to the basement of the newly built Faculty of Engineering (Dāneškada-ye fannī), while its designated building was being constructed on the main university campus. It finally moved to its present premises in 1949.

The first director of the Honarkada was André Godard (q.v.), the French archaeologist and architect (Marefat, pp. 105-8). He established the curriculum



and recruited the teaching staff, including ‘Alī- Moḥammad Ḥaydariān, Abu’l-Ḥasan Forūḡī (q.v.), and Ḥasan-‘Alī Wazīrī, former students of Kamāl-al-Molk; Moḥsen Forūḡī (q.v.), Faṭḥ-Allāh ‘Obbādī, Moḥsen Moqaddam, and Yevgīnā Āftāndīlīān, graduates of the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris; and the Armenian engineer and architect Kāčīk Bābloyān. The French architects Roland Dubrulle and Maxime Siroux, and the Swiss architect Alexandre Moser, who had all been recruited to plan and supervise the construction of the main buildings of Tehran University volunteered to teach gratis at the Honarkada and taught there until 1945. Asad-Allāh Qahramānpūr, the director of the secretariat (*ra’īse daftar*), also played an important part in the establishment of the college.

The Honarkada was closely modeled on the École des Beaux-Arts, and the syllabus and projects taught there were translated into Persian and used in teaching (Marefat, p. 106). However, it must also be borne in mind that Godard and his colleagues at the college, notably Moḥsen Forūḡī and Siroux were also profoundly attached to traditional Persian forms of architecture: “[W]hat distinguishes them from the generations that followed them was their awareness of the Persian building heritage” (Marefat, p. 104). The curriculum was planned in two parts, each taking two years and leading to a bachelor’s degree. Teaching and practical work were done in studios, each directed by a single professor. The three workshops in architecture led by Dubrulle, Siroux, and Moḥsen Forūḡī were particularly important because of their outstanding teachers. In painting there were two studios, one directed by Ḥaydariān, and the other by ‘Obbādī. In sculpture there was initially one workshop with only one student, under the supervision of the well-known sculptor Abu’l-Ḥasan Ṣadiqī, another student of Kamāl-al-Molk.

In 1327 Š./1948 the Parliament granted the request of the University of Tehran that the Honarkada be included in its system of faculties (*dāneškadas*), and the college’s name was subsequently changed from *honarkada* to *dāneškada*. In the following year, Godard resigned his post as dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts and returned to France. His successor, Moḥsen Forūḡī, held the post until 1962. During his term in office Forūḡī expanded the faculty’s teaching staff, recruiting some of the distinguished alumni of the School. He also upgraded the architectural curriculum, which was recognized as equivalent to a six-year degree in engineering (*mohandesī*). Forūḡī was succeeded by Hušang Sayḥūn, another eminent architect. In his six years as dean, he introduced four new disciplines: urban planning, music, sculpture, and drama. Prominent members of the international artistic community were invited to the Faculty of Fine Arts



as guest-lecturers; numerous arts exhibitions were held, and well-known contemporary masters of Persian art joined the staff as part-time instructors.

In 1963 the system of higher education in Persia underwent radical changes (see Maḥbūbī Ardakanī, p. 65). Following the American pattern, a semester system was introduced and the curriculum was based on course units divided into compulsory courses and elective options. With the introduction of departments at the Faculty of Fine Arts, the system of students tutored by individual professors in studios was abandoned. They now had a choice of a major subject (e.g., architecture, painting) and a number of optional ancillary courses such as history of art and perspective. The new departments were often subdivided into sections; for example, the Department of Plastic Arts (Gorūh-e honarhā-ye tajassomī) had specialized sections on painting, graphic arts, industrial design, and art instruction.

In 1968 Fażl-Allāh Rezā, the newly appointed president of the University of Tehran, undertook to complete the restructuring of the university system, bringing in many new teachers to replace the older staff. His appointee as dean of the Faculty of Fine Arts was Moḥammad-Amīn Mirfendereskī, a Faculty of Fine Arts alumnus in architecture who had completed post-graduate studies in Italy. However, the new dean was unable to deal simultaneously with the complex curricular changes and the large intake of rather inexperienced staff. Maḥdī Kawṭar, who replaced him in 1971, was more successful in directing the restructuring process, but on the whole the reorganization resulted in lowering educational standards, especially in the field of architecture. Kawṭar had also studied in Italy, and it could be said that under the direction of these last two deans before the Islamic Revolution, “the dominant cultural force in Iranian schools of architecture and engineering shifted from French domination to an Anglo-American bias with some Italian influence” (Ardalān, p. 353).

By 1979, a total of 1,948 students had graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts, among them many contemporary leading figures in music, the cinema, painting, and architecture. After The Revolution of 1979 the Faculty of Fine Arts, like other faculties, lost a number of its prominent teachers. Its music department was closed down and music teaching did not resume until 1991. However, some departments were expanded, and postgraduate courses in industrial design and graphics were established.



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