



## ZIAPOUR, JALIL

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**ZIAPOUR, JALIL** (Jalil Žiā'pur, b. [Anzali](#), 5 Ordibehešt 1299 Š./25 April 1920; d. Tehran 30 Ādar 1378 Š./21 December 1999; [Figure 1](#)), painter and scholar.

Ziapour was the eldest child of eight born to Shaikh Ḥasan Ziapour, a shoemaker from [Bandar Anzali](#). Upon graduating from high school, Jalil moved to Tehran to pursue an education in art. In 1938, he gained admittance into the Honarestān-e Musiqi, which was under the directorship of [Ġolām-Ḥosayn Minbāšīān](#), and studied composition with the Belgian instructors (Ziapour, 1989, p. 76). However, soon after the famed musician 'Ali-Naqi Vaziri took over the school administration and instituted a new curriculum, Ziapour abandoned his music studies and joined the newly established Tehran University's School of Fine Arts (Honarkada-ye Honarhā-ye Zibā; Diba, p. 50), at a time when the resident French instructors' impressionist precepts had already begun to emphasize the necessity of avoiding constraints set by classic realistic art (Pākbāz, p. 14). It was there that Ziapour produced his first expressionist painting titled *Qiām-e Kāva-ye ahangar* ([Kaveh's](#) uprising; Daftari, 2013, p. 41, n. 16) and came to believe that traditional Iranian fine arts had become sterile and reached a dead-end, and their mindless reproduction for market had created a retrogressive environment of decadence (Ziapour, 1989, p. 78). In 1945, he graduated from the university summa cum laude. A recipient of Iran's first-degree medal of cultural honor upon graduation, he was sent by the Ministry of Culture to France to pursue a graduate degree at the École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts (Ziapour, 1989, p. 77).

In 1948, upon returning to Tehran, Ziapour opened his own atelier on Takt-e



Jamšid Avenue. In 1949, along with a group of like-minded artists, which included the writer Qolām-Ḥosayn Qarib, the playwright Ḥasan Širvāni, and musician Morteżā Ḥannāneh, he co-founded *Ḳorus Jangi* (The fighting cock), a literary and art society. The society's name was suggested by Qolām-Ḥosayn Qarib, and its logo of a Cubist-style rooster (Sadeq Hedayat, and poet [Manuchehr Sheybani](#)). *Ḳorus Jangi* also published an eponymous journal, with Sheybani as its first poetry editor. The first issue of the journal aptly included “*Ḳorus miḵʿānad*” (The rooster sings), a poem by Nima Youshij, the generally acclaimed founder of “new poetry” whose battle against classical poetry went side by side with modernist painters’ efforts (Ziapour, 1989, pp. 80-82; see also [ART IN IRAN xi. POST-QAJAR](#)). Although the avant-garde practices of the first generation of modernists were often condemned and belittled by official academic painters (Āḡdāšlu, p. 69), theoretical discussions on modern arts by Ziapour and his colleagues further advanced their influence in the country’s cultural circles. Although some of Ziapour’s theoretical discussions—including his analogy of traditional use of geometric patterns in Perso-Islamic decorative and tile-making arts to that of modern Cubist styles—proved contentious and were generally disregarded by critics in Iran (Boqrāṭi, 2006, p. 69), his main influence was in his achievement of bringing art discussions out of closed intellectual circles into the public arena by setting the trend of writing art criticism in magazines and newspapers, and by his pioneering of live-broadcasted radio talk shows on visual arts (Boqrāṭi, 2013, p. 11).

Between 1948 and 1949, five issues of *Ḳorus jangi* were published, but opposition from traditionalists in art and poetry circles resulted in the questioning of the Minister of Culture before a parliamentary hearing, and a subsequent official interrogation of Ziapour himself (Şāber Tehrāni, p. 59). With *Ḳorus jangi* shut down, Ziapour started another magazine, *Kavir*, followed by *Panja Ḳorus*, both of which were short-lived (Pākbāz, pp. 14-16). In 1951, when *Ḳorus jangi* was once again allowed to publish, Ziapour left its editorial staff following disagreements with the radical poet [Hushang Irani](#) (Ṭāhbāz, p. 7).

Despite being extremely influential in advocating a modern approach to art, Ziapour’s own works lacked a discernible artistic technique and failed in creating a solid connection to the known Cubist styles (Boqrāṭi, 2006, p. 66). Figurative images of villagers in traditional clothing, hybridized with ceramic, tile-like square compartments appeared as a recurrent motif in his paintings (CLOTHING xxv. Clothing of the Baḳtīārīs and other Lori speaking tribes). It is



only after 1990s and in his later years that Ziapour's works shifted towards a more geometrically abstract representation (Zan-e Kord-e Qučāni of Jalil Ziapour." href="/uploads/files/Jalil-Ziapour/ziapour-jalil-fig5.jpg">Figure 5) won him the first prize at Tehran's Second Biennale (Ḥosayni, p. 4).

As the decades-old struggle between modernists and traditionalist came to an end in favor of the latter (Ziapour, 1976, p. 35), Ziapour's influence as a consequential artist came to a end, and he primarily focused on his work at the Anthropology Museum in Abyaz Palace, Tehran, and his anthropological studies on Iranian nomadic tribes, villagers, and folkloric culture, specifically the garments and clothing used in rural areas. In 1999, he passed away of heart failure at the age of 79 in Tehran, and was buried in Behešt-e Zahrā cemetery, artists' division. In his lifetime, he wrote 28 books on Iranian history and contemporary art, including 11 books on Iranian traditional garments and folk costumes (Mir-'Emādi, p. 120).

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