CALL FOR POSITION >

EARLY STAGE RESEARCHER 9

Wartime photography and portraiture in Khomeini’s and post-Khomeini Iran

INDIVIDUAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION >

A modern medium par excellence, photography made its way into the Middle East less than a decade after its invention in Europe in 1839. Initially restricted to court practice in Qajar Iran, it gradually permeated society and became an artistic and documentary genre per se, used and performed by society at large. Embedded into the images were visual patterns borrowed from an array of visual cultures, ranging from local to foreign imagery, classical (miniature painting) to contemporary (press) iconography, high to popular culture. The study of 19th-c. Iranian portraiture on glass plate led to the forging of the notion of ‘mixed aesthetics’ to define their artistic contribution (Gonzalez, 2012). After the Islamic revolution of 1979, and particularly during the Iran-Iraq conflict (1980-1988), war photography became the main, if not sole, mode of practising photography in Qajar Iran, it gradually permeated society and became an artistic and documentary genre per se, used and performed by society at large. Embedded into the images were visual patterns borrowed from an array of visual cultures, ranging from local to foreign imagery, classical (miniature painting) to contemporary (press) iconography, high to popular culture. The study of 19th-c. Iranian portraiture on glass plate led to the forging of the notion of ‘mixed aesthetics’ to define their artistic contribution (Gonzalez, 2012). After the Islamic revolution of 1979, and particularly during the Iran-Iraq conflict (1980-1988), war photography became the main, if not sole, mode of practising photography and was taught as such in the first schools of photography that opened in the country. About 75 professional and amateur photographers participated in the first major exhibition on the war organised at the Teheran Museum of Contemporary Art in 1981. The topic and composition of the images then produced, exhibited and eventually printed in the press are telling documents that can be used to study the representation of martyrdom, warfare, otherness and selfhood in late 20th-c. Iran. Some of these images were reproduced on walls and the murals used as propaganda by the regime. The reception nowadays of such imagery among artists – even participant artists – as well as within society at large can also be seen as a significant index of change in Iran. Present-day photography in Iran still represents an important medium to map controversial societal issues, but the modalities of its outreach have utterly changed. The sub-project will, therefore, compare the exhibition on war photography, its representations of Iranian society, its visual language and the conditions in which the show was produced and received, with the opportunities offered by digital media.

REQUIREMENTS >

Essential criteria:
- Postgraduate or Master level degree (or equivalent) in Middle Eastern Studies, Art history, History of photography or other similar domains
- Fluency in spoken and written English. A proof of the language proficiency (C1 level Cambridge Proficiency ; IELTS 7.0-8.0 or equivalent) has to be enclosed if English is not the native tongue
- Fluency in written Persian
- Commitment to collaborate in the general development of the project

Desirable criteria:
- Experience in working in an interdisciplinary team
- Experience in working with digital tools relevant to visual data management
- Some knowledge of French or commitment to learn it during the period of the grant
- Relevant MA thesis

APPLICATION FORM ON:
www.itn-mida.org

BENEFITS >

Successful candidates will receive an attractive salary, based on the Marie Curie Program regulations.

The ESR will be under the supervision of Prof. Mercedes Volait (InVisu) and co-supervision of Dr. Petra de Bruijn (Leiden University).

External tutor: Catherine David (Centre Pompidou).

The applicant is expected to develop his/her own research project within the framework of the position description.

The applicant will interact on a regular basis with the other project partners and cooperate with the other Early Stage Researchers where required. Additionally, travel abroad will be necessary.

Each applicant may apply for up to 3 Early Stage Researchers positions.

SECONDMENT >

- Centre Pompidou, Paris (Catherine David)
- Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam (Erdogan Aykaç)

Deadline: 1st of June
Candidatures received after the 1st of June will not be considered.
Starting date: ideally in September 2019

Eligibility criteria:
- no residence in France for more than 12 months in the 3 years immediately preceding the engagement date
- no PhD degree
- less than 4 years of research, Master excluded
- not restricted to EU citizens

Application file:
- copies of degree certificates (Master degree or equivalent)
- curriculum vitae
- list of publications (if applicable)
- reference letter
- 2-page research proposal
- short motivation letter