

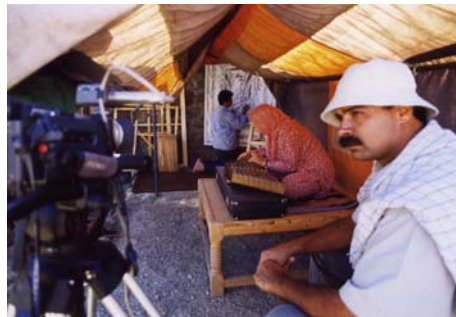
## *Mojtaba Mirtahmasb's Films in The Middle East Centre*

**St. Antony's College, University of Oxford**

**(Trinity Term 2006)**

Mojtaba Mirtahmasb was born in 1971 in the city of Kerman in Iran. He began to develop his artistic life between the years of 1992 and 1995 at the University of Art "Mojtame'-e Daneshgahiye Honar" in Tehran, preparing his BA degree in Visual Art and Handicrafts.

The University of Art, as the first intellectual and modern Art University following the Islamic Revolution of Iran and war between Iran and Iraq, was the best place for M. Mirtahmasb to meet other artists in different fields of Art, especially Visual Art such as Photography, Graphic Design, Painting, Sculpturing, Film making etc.



**The River Still has Fish, (documentary), 2002, © M.Mirtahmasb**

In the years 1992-95 he travelled a great deal around Iran and completed many small field research projects which constituted his BA thesis. With, on the one hand, a personal attraction to **Shiite Rituals and Ceremonies** and, on the other hand, experience at the University of Art and the preparation of his degree in the field of Handicrafts, he chose to work on "**Iranian Islamic Material Culture**". "Artistic Manifestations of Islamic Culture in the Mourning Accessories of Moharram" is the title of his BA thesis.

Beside his university research, M. Mirtahmasb has always shown his personal talent and creativity in the areas of **Photography and Cinematography**.

His academic training during four years at the University of Art, his personal curiosity and attraction to the Islamic Visual Art and Cinematography of Iran were the best reasons and potentials for him to direct the first films on his artistic C.V.

From 1996 to 1997 he directed nine documentary-fiction films on “**Islamic Art and Material Culture of Iranian Shiism**” under the global title of the “Art Stories Series”, introducing Iranian Traditional Handicrafts to the younger generations.

Here he showed us his personal enthusiasm for and interest in “The Art and Material Culture of Iran”, combined with his scientific knowledge and learning from his studies at the University of Art.

In this series he worked on subjects such as *‘Alam* (banner), *Qalamkâr* (calico making), *Minâ* (art of glazing, enamel work), *Ayeneh-kari* (mirror work on Islamic architecture), *Gachbori* (Islamic lime carving), *Kashikari* (Islamic tile work), *Qalamzani* (Islamic metal engraving), *Ptteh* (Islamic needle work) and *Mesgari* (copper work).

These series of films financed by Iranian the Islamic Art and Iran to the younger the reason why, in Mirtahmasb has one



were mostly Broadcasting to teach Material Culture of generations. This is most of his films, M. key child character

Banner, (documentary), The Children of Iran Series, 1996, © M.Mirtahmasb

who wants to learn about and understand the function and techniques of production of these traditional handicrafts. M. Mirtahmasb himself says that this period of his work forms the beginning of his Cinematography career, and that he enjoyed it. In 1997, during his military service in the army, he directed three video clips regarding **War** and **Martyrs**.

“*The Story of Khoramshahr*”, “*Motherland*” and “*Stars*” are his video clips of this period that won several national prizes. From 1998 until 2003 he produced and directed many short

films on different subjects. *Seday-e Dovom* (Back Vocal) and *Saz-e Mokhalef* (Off Beat) are two recent films that show us his personal inquiry into and contemplation of the contemporary situation of **Art, Youth** and **Gender** in Iran.

As he knows most producers in Iran, interviews and these people, and young people to show us new



of the artists and art through conducting talking directly to especially women in Tehran, he tries ways of **Life** in Iran.

**Visions** and new

*Back Vocal*, (documentary), 2004, © M.Mirtahmasb

M. Mirtahmasb is a member of the rare young post-revolutionary generation of Iranian artists, and his Cinematography C.V. numbers on it some of the big names in Iranian cinema of his time, on whose films he has participated, such as Kambozia Partovi (Iran is my Home), Mohsen Makhmalbaf (Kandehar) and Sediq Barmak (Osama). He decided to stay and live in Iran and continue to make documentaries and fiction films about **Art** and **Society** in contemporary Iran.



*Off Beat*, (documentary), 2003, © M.Mirtahmasb

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