

# Reflecting Peace and Violence in the Visual Arts: A Comparative Study of Artworks from Iran and Malaysia



# WHY IRAN AND MALAYSIA

- Both Asian and influenced by Eastern cultural conventions
- Both Islamic countries
- Long history of economic and cultural communication
- Personal privileges (An Iranian art historian living in Malaysia)

# CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Peace is not an absence of conflict/ It is conflict transformation

But in *Art*?

# Reality vs Imagination



# Arts' contribution to peacebuilding

- Communication
- Bearing witness
- Empathy
- Healing

Art For Peace

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graph TD; A[Art For Peace] --> B[Peace]; A --> C[Violence]; B --> D["Direct peace, Natural beauty, Friendship"]; C --> E["War, injustice, environment"]
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Peace

Direct peace, Natural beauty, Friendship

Violence

War, injustice, environment

# List of wars involving Iran/ Malaysia

## List of wars involving Iran

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This list is **incomplete**; you can help by [adding missing items](#). (August 2013)

This is a **list of wars involving the Islamic Republic of Iran** and its predecessor states. It is an unfinished historical

Conflict	Iran (and allies)	Opponents	Results
			<b>Median Empire (678–549 BC)</b>
Assyrian invasions of Media (the 10th – the late 7th centuries BC)	Medes	Assyrian Empire	Defeat
Median invasion of Assyria (the late 7th century BC)	Medes Scythians Other Iranian peoples	Assyrian Empire	Victory
Scythian invasion of Media (624–597 BC)	Median Kingdom	Scythians	Victory

## List of wars involving Malaysia

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This is a list of wars involving **Malaysia**.

- Malaysia victory
- Malaysia defeat
- Ongoing

List  [ [edit](#) ]

Conflict	Combatant 1	Combatant 2
<b>Federation of Malaya ( 1957–1966)</b>		
Malayan Emergency (1948–1960)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span><span></span></span> United Kingdom</li> <li><span><span></span></span> <b>Malaya</b></li> <li><span><span></span></span> Australia</li> <li><span><span></span></span> New Zealand</li> <li><span><span></span></span> Fiji</li> <li><span><span></span></span> Southern Rhodesia</li> <li><span><span></span></span> Rhodesia and Nyasaland</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span><span></span></span> Malayan Communist Party</li> <li><span><span></span></span> Malayan National Liberation Army</li> </ul>

# TWO SCULPTURES

- Ahad Hosseini (Iran/1944)

War, political prisoners, poverty, injustice, racism, high population

- Raja Shahrman (Malaysia/1967)

War, freedom, religious leadership, greed



# AHAD HOSSEINI

- Misery Around the World including a collection of 12 episodes: Ignorance, War, Chains of Misery, The Miserable, Hunger, Political Prisoner, Cup of Divination, Population growth, Racial Discrimination, 5 Monsters of Death, Anxiety and Autumn of Life (Azerbaijan Museum)



انسان و نادانی

**Human and Ignorance**

Late 1970s



پنج هیولای  
مرگ

Five Death  
Monsters

Late 1970s



جام جهان نما  
Cup of Divination  
Late 1970s



- Regarding the smile on the old man's lips, Hosseini believes that he intended a dual state of hope and despair. On the one hand, we are hopeful and happy about the future of mankind and the creation of peace and friendship, and on the other hand, we are worried about the failure of peace and reconciliation and the occurrence of violence and conflict.

# RAJA SHAHRIMAN

- Metal Sculptures
- Human life/ Physical and Psychological aspects
- Expressionism & Surrealism
- Dynamic figures



## 'Irama Abad ke 21' (Music of the 21st century)

- twisted and ragged
- Fragments of bomb and bullet symbolize violence and destruction. Rows of saw form bullets seems to cut life and tearing parts of human's body, symbolize man's aggressive, egoistical nature, and greed for power while semi-abstract figures intertwined with bullets represent self-destruction.”
- human nature itself rather than literal phenomenon or act of war
- the parrot is the symbol of talkative and mindless people who their nonsense propaganda leads to chaos and violence



TAKHTA PEREBUTAN  
(THRONE STRUGGLE), 1997





## Khalifah

121cm (H) x 48cm x 70cm, Metal-forged & fabricated, 2009

- 'Khalifah' translates to mean leader of man. It symbolizes a warrior who fight's to save earth. He struggles not only with others but with himself as it is man's nature to conquer and destroy. His struggle is to free man from this destructive nature. His body is broken but yet he stands tall. He bravely overcomes obstacles that come in his path. He wins in this struggle; the obstacles he overcomes are depicted as broken metal strewn around him. The bird he carries is symbolic of what he fights for – hope for mankind.

# APPROACHES

- Propaganda
- Criticism of Politics
- Multiculturalism
- War
- Environment
- Peace

# Propaganda



## تابلوی «جنایت علیه بشریت» به نمایش در خواهد آمد

به مناسبت فرارسیدن یوم‌الله ۱۳ آبان، تابلوی نقاشی جنایت علیه بشریت اثر حبیب‌الله صادقی در رواق فرهنگستان هنر به نمایش عمومی درخواهد آمد.



به گزارش ایکننا به نقل از روابط عمومی انجمن هنرهای تجسمی بنیاد فرهنگی روایت فتح، به مناسبت فرارسیدن یوم‌الله ۱۳ آبان و تسخیر لانه جاسوسی آمریکا، تابلوی نقاشی جنایت علیه بشریت اثر حبیب‌الله صادقی در رواق فرهنگستان هنر به نمایش عمومی درخواهد آمد.

حبیب‌الله صادقی؛ نقاش معاصر ایرانی، متولد ۱۳۳۶ در تهران است. او فارغ‌التحصیل رشته نقاشی از دانشکده هنرهای زیبای دانشگاه تهران است و دارنده مدرک کارشناسی ارشد نقاشی و دکترای پژوهش هنر از دانشگاه تربیت مدرس است.

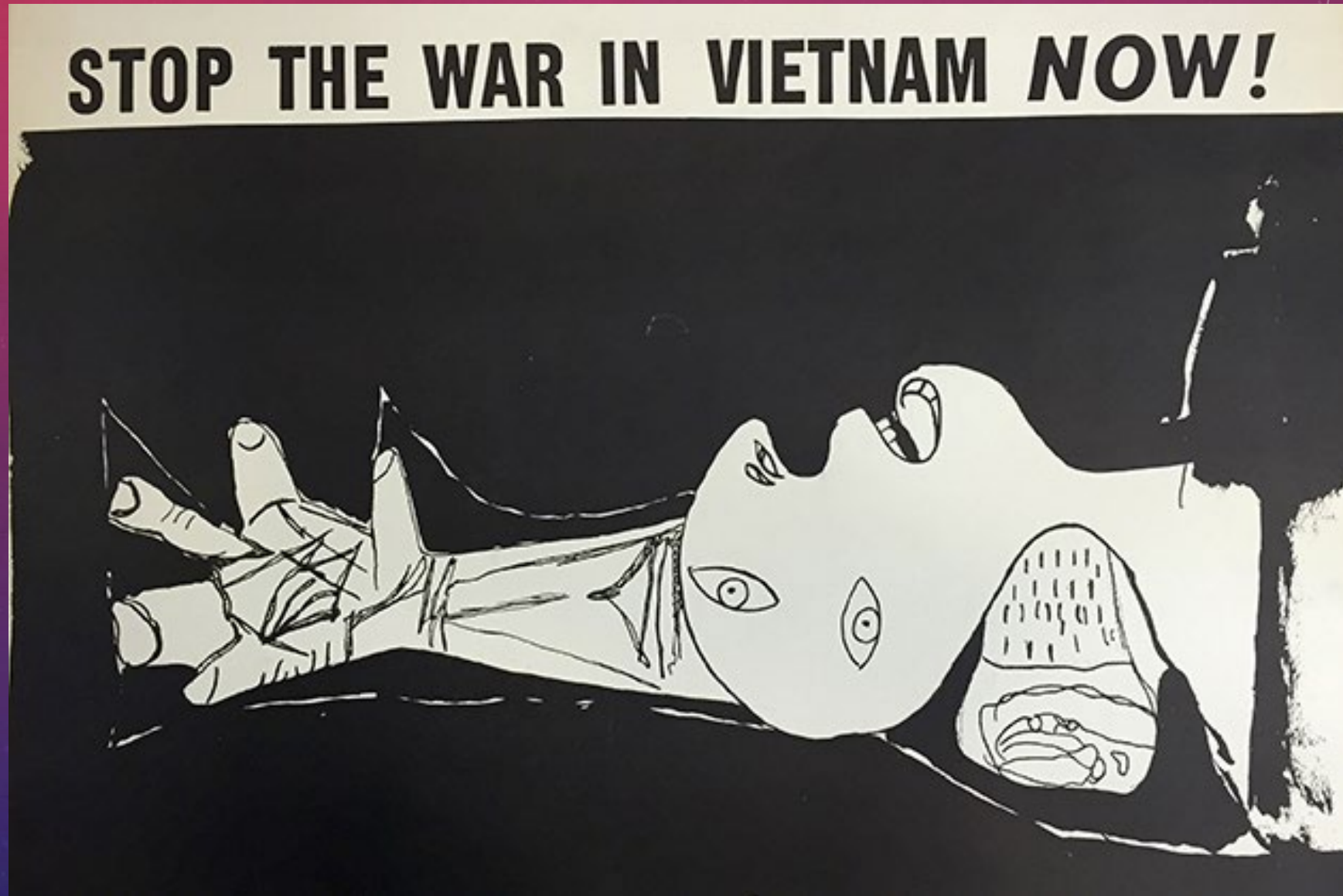


Martyrdom, Habibollah Sadeghi



Mostafa Goodarzi  
Bitter Jeremiad of Bosnia

# CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT





Alireza Espahbod ,  
Rooster, 1994





Nicky Nodjoui, *Invasive Personality*, 2015. Oil on canvas. 65 x 85 inches



- “Shhh!,” a self-portrait by Ahmad Fuad Osman



Fahmi Reza creating his clown portrayal of Prime Minister Najib Razak

# Multiculturalism

- Malaysia: Malay, Chinese, Indian/ One Malaysia
- Iran: Long history of different ethnic groups articulated in one nation







Telegram: @ajalimnani

# War



Bayu Utomo Radjikin, Man of War, 1990s



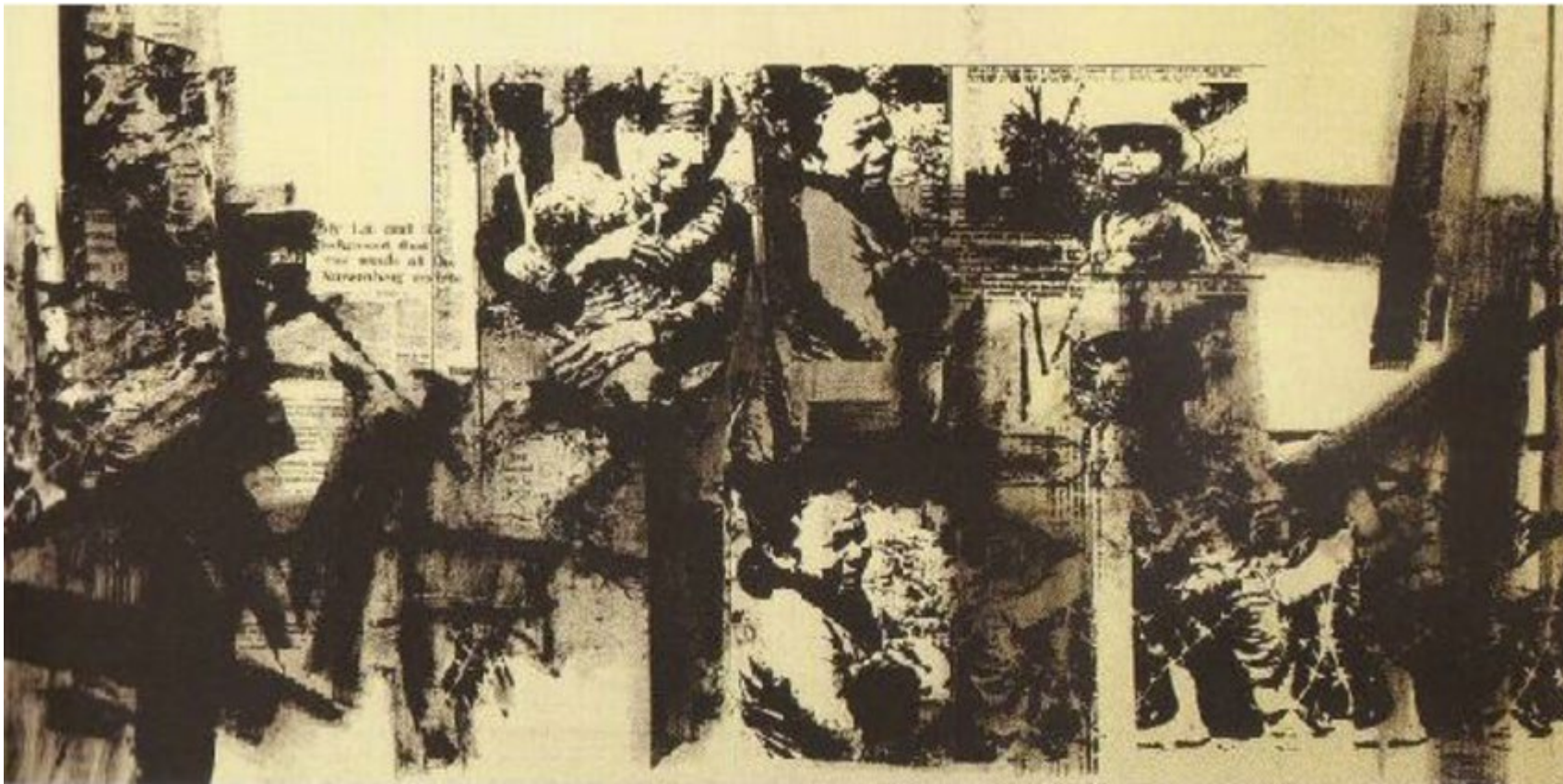


# Nirmala Shanmughalingham

- Apartheid, bombing, refugees, and environmental issues
- Worldwide political and societal violence
- Bombing Vietnam and Libya.
- Environmental problems/ worldwide view/ from her native land Malaysia to Tsunami in Southern Asia
- Postmodern contribution: photographs and newspaper prints of Documentary photography in the contexts of mixed media and montage works resulted to photographic silkscreens and collage
- In her work titled as “ Friends in Need”/ 1986 she criticizes the U.S and the U.K joint bombing Libya causing the death of some civilians using caricature, collage, and puppets from the shadow theatre. She has applied Wayang Kulit demon/demoness characters compared to the then the U.S President Ronald Reagan and the British Prime minister Margaret Thatcher allied in their political and martial collaboration in bombing Libya.



Friends in Need, 1986



- In her works “Vietnam” (1981), Nirmala represent women’s and children’s sufferings of bombing Vietnam using silkscreen on canvas. Suzan Sontag suggests: “Essentially the camera makes everyone a tourist in other people's reality, and eventually in one's own. "Referring to Sontag’s assertion about photography Nirmala by using a mixed media with the help of strokes of paint- maybe influenced by Franz Klein- is trying to go beyond the photos and being just a tourist watching the events; both herself and her audience and instead establishing a context of better understanding, perceiving, feeling, and sympathizing. The black brush stokes heighten the sense of movement and motion.
- As Möller argues narrowing photographic representation of certain groups of victims such as women and children is focusing on the dignity of victims rather than the sum of that society. This can be applied to Nirmala’s work when we consider that in a multiple choice of the photographs other suffered people from the same violence namely men are absent.

# Lida Sherafatmand

- Peace and anti-war
- Florecensicm

"Don't be stonemen, act for peace" 100 x 80 cm Acrylics on canvas 2002





Khosrow Hassanzadeh

# Environment



- NIRMALA SHANMUGHALINGAM, "KENYATAAN 3" (STATEMENT 3) (1975-79), MIXED MEDIA, 128 X 53CM.



Ali Faramarzi  
Invasion from the Deserts series, 2016  
acrylic on canvas

# Peace







Lida Sherafatmand,  
Working for Peace



Dialogue Between  
Civilizations, Saeed Gholami,  
2000



Mothers Love  
Farah Notash



Dove and Rose  
(From the  
collection  
'Green Peace')  
Farah Notash



- Standing in Solidarity, Wan Jamila a.k.a. ARTJAMILA, 2020

# CONCLUSION

Artist's commitment to the  
human society:

crossing time, history, and  
geographical borders/  
internal and external  
communication



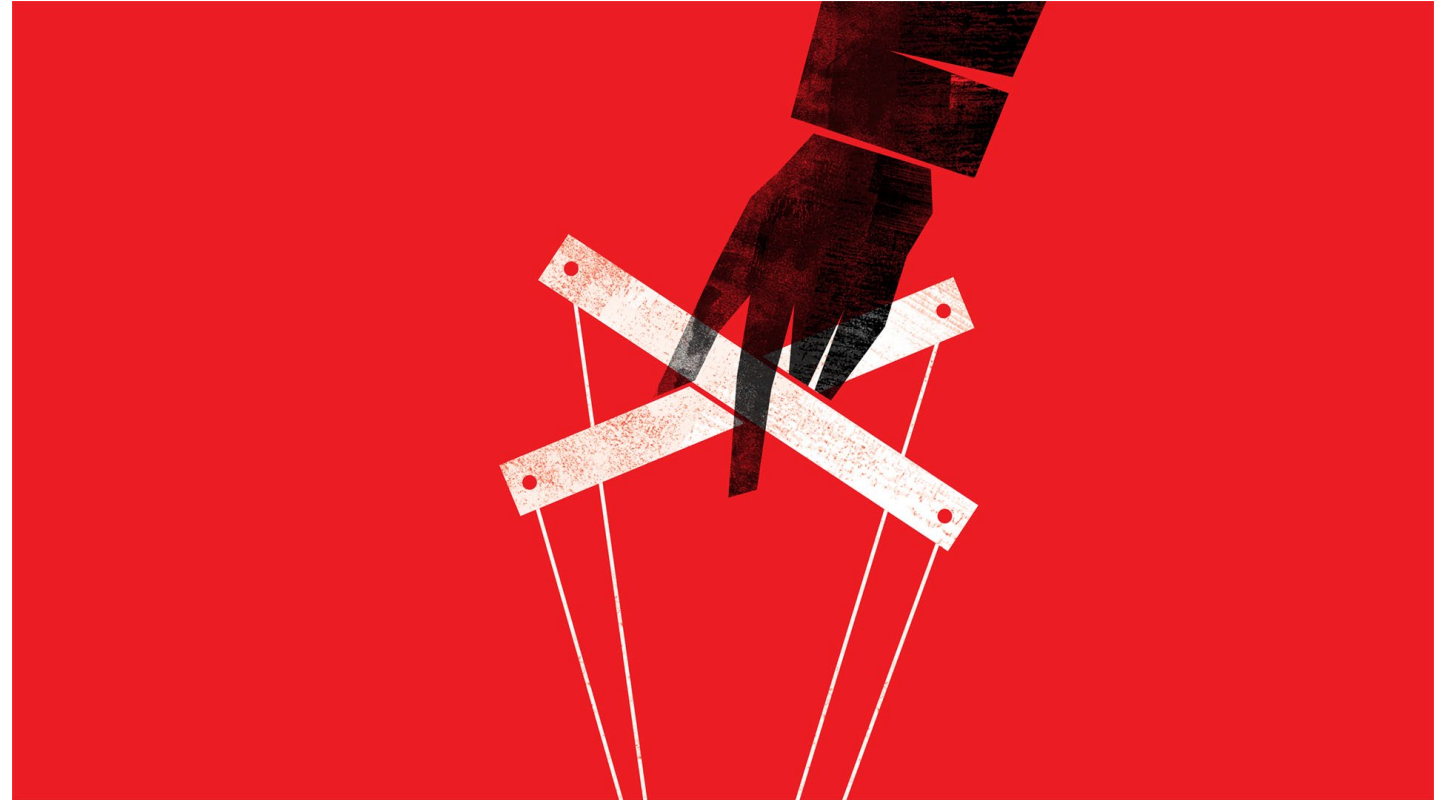
# Modernity and Tradition

- The combination of tradition and modernity may be seen in the creation of these works in both countries, though the superiority of modernity is felt more in Malaysian paintings and sculptures



# Propaganda

- Government propaganda is an institutionalized subject in Iran and more artists in this field depend on the government, but this approach is less seen in Malaysia.





# Multiculturalism

- The focus on different ethnic groups and the need for intercultural dialogue is more visible in Malaysian works of art rather than Iran.



# Environment

- The attention paid to preserving the environment as one of the symbols of the prevention of violence against nature is slightly more visible in Malaysian works of art than in Iran. The local concerns related to their own climate is vivid.



# Criticism of Politics

- Criticism of governmental policies in Iran is clearly more in the works of Iranian artists, particularly those living outside of Iran than in Malaysia. Indeed, the focus on fundamental human rights among the works of Iranians is clearly more than that of Malaysian artists.



# LAST WORD

- All these works show that in every society two elements of **social** and **personal** origin continue to have a significant influence on the creation of works of art. The **number** of artists involved in war and peace is far greater in **Iran** than in **Malaysia**. It may have something to do with the history of civilization and urbanization in Iran and its geopolitical position, which has suffered invasions and wars far more than Malaysia. However, with a personal review, one should note that if an artist lives in a relatively peaceful country and is less susceptible to war and invasion, he/she always deserves considerable attention due to his/her attention to the issue of war and peace in the world.



*Thank you*