



Lecturing at the Art University of Isfahan in 2010.  
Photo by: Dr. Reza Vatankhah

# Teaching Conservation in Iran

## آموزش حفاظت در ایران

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## Introduction

There has been much focus in the news on the horrific destruction of monuments and other cultural artifacts in the Middle East by ISIS in Syria and the Taliban in Afghanistan. However, these acts do not represent the majority of the population's attitude towards their cultural heritage. In fact, Iran has several well established and respected conservation training programs to safeguard and preserve their artistic and cultural heritage. Collectively, these programs graduate dozens of conservators each year.

Behrooz Salimnejad, the Senior Conservator of Furniture and Woodwork at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, originally from Tabriz, Iran, has given several workshops at Isfahan Arts University and Tabriz University of Islamic Arts. The workshops included a range of conservation topics, but focused primarily on gilding conservation.



Conservation students in lecture hall at Art University of Isfahan.  
Photo by: Dr. Reza Vatankhah



Behrooz Salimnejad with Dr. Razani and conservation students in Tabriz Islamic Art University. Photo by Masoud Karami

## Art University of Isfahan

Established in 1977, the Conservation School of the Art University of Isfahan is the first Iranian educational institution in this field. The main objective of this school is to train conservation professionals to preserve and safeguard cultural and historic artifacts and monuments. The School is located in two historic houses of *David* and *Sukias* in the old neighborhood of *Jolfa* in Isfahan. The School has a specialized library, Photo Lab, X-Ray Lab, Metallographic Lab, Chemistry Lab, and conservation workshops for painting, metal, paper, textile, glass, ceramics, wood, and ivory and bone.

## Tabriz Islamic Art University

Tabriz Islamic Art University was established in 1999. The University's aim is to train professionals in various Islamic Art fields including conservation. Today the university has more than 1500 students enrolled in different disciplines in undergraduate and graduate levels including Design, Architecture, Islamic Arts, Persian Carpet, Multimedia, and Conservation.

The author traveled twice to Tabriz Islamic Art University, first in 2012 and then again in 2014. An upcoming gilding conservation session is scheduled for the fall of 2016.



Gardens of historic Sukias mansion 1501-1736AD. The mansion houses the conservation department.  
Photo by Behrooz Salimnejad



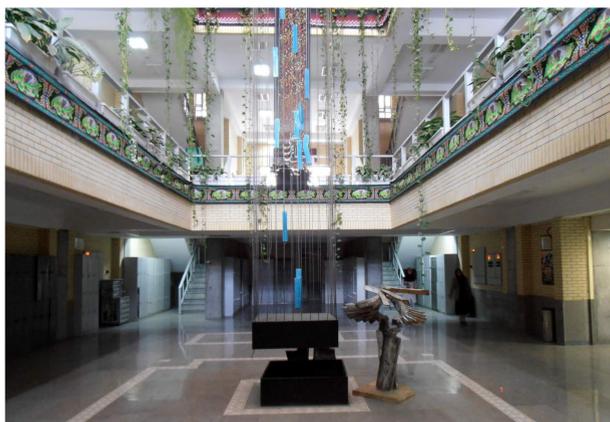
Former Conservation Scientist Dr. Reza Vatankhah (left) and the current Conservation Scientist (right) in the analytical lab of the Art University of Isfahan. Photo by Behrooz Salimnejad



Wall paintings in Sukias house depicting Dutch traders and Iranian elite. Photo by Behrooz Salimnejad



Main campus of the University in Southern Tabriz.  
Photo by Behrooz Salimnejad



Conservation department of the Tabriz Islamic Art University. Photo by Behrooz Salimnejad



Behrooz Salimnejad during lecture / demonstration of gilding techniques to Tabriz Islamic Arts University conservation students. Photo by Dr. Mehdi Razani

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