

## Analysis of Published Critiques in Sukhan Monthly Magazine on the Subject of Paintings and their Effect on Iran's Modern Painting Flow from 1943 to 1959

Homa Noor Alizadeh<sup>a</sup>, Ali Akbar Jahangard<sup>b\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*Master's of Research Art, Non-Profit Art Institute Higher Education, Shiraz, Iran*

<sup>b</sup>*Assistant Professor, Faculty of Art and Architecture, Islamic Azad University, Shiraz, Iran*

Received 05 March 2022; revised 25 June 2022; accepted 03 July 2022

---

### Research Article

---

#### Abstract

The press is one of the most important means of communication due to the rapid reflection of society's news and developments. Following the modernization policies in the Pahlavi era, intellectuals have made fundamental changes in the needs of the Iranian community, especially in the cultural sphere. The publication of art magazines from 1941 to 1978 had an essential role in the cultural revival of society. The authors of these magazines and publications made a significant impact on public opinion through their content and writings. Therefore, the range of such magazines is an essential source of information and various approaches of this period. One of these publications was "Sukhan" Monthly Magazine, established by Parviz Natel Khanlari in June 1943. In the present study, the main issue is focused on how and what influence Sukhan Magazine has on artistic developments, especially on the modernization and expansion of Iranian painting. In terms of purpose, this research is in the category of basic research, and in terms of method, it is based on the descriptive-analytical method. According to the primary purpose of the journal, which is research on visual arts and the introduction of typical painting in Europe and the United States, the results show that the Sukhan Monthly Magazine had been influential in the process of holding exhibitions of paintings and the introduction of modern Iranian painting from the beginning and had a growing trend in that area.

**Keywords:** Sukhan Monthly Magazine; Contemporary Iranian Painting; Content Analysis; Pahlavi Era

---

---

\* Corresponding author. Tel: +98-9375013563.

E-mail address: [ali.jahangard@gmail.com](mailto:ali.jahangard@gmail.com)

## 1. Introduction

In the history of contemporary Iran and in its political, social and cultural developments, the influence of publications and magazines can not be ignored. The number of such publications may have been small from the beginning especially, in the field of literature and art, but this important issue has been their factor of influence. Sukhan Monthly Magazine is one of the first magazines established in 1943 by Parviz Khanlari in the Iranian Art Society. It underwent fundamental changes and transformations during more than four decades of its activity until 1975. Sukhan journal was first published as an Teacher Training Graduates Association Organization, and after 1946 it became an independent and specialized monthly magazine in the fields of literature, education and society, focusing on intellectuals, university professors, teachers, school officials and students (Abrahamian; 1983: 343). Evidence shows that this publication had a significant impact on the modernization and developments of contemporary Iranian art. Dr. Khanlari mentions Bahar (Spring) as the first "literary magazine", which appeared in 1902 under the direction of his almost only colleague, Yusuf Ektisamel, whose articles included biographies of famous literary works and translations of European poetry, short stories, and ethical and sociological content (Avery; 2008: 846). The role and position of Sukhan is very exceptional in the process of modernization of Iranian art, that of course, it has not been much considered so far. Significantly, the part of this publication and its efforts has not been much considered in the texts and research on the history of contemporary Iranian art.

In this research, one of the most critical issues is the large volume of data that must be evaluated and analyzed effectively; due to the long-term activity of Sukhan Monthly Magazine, the main focus of this research was exclusively on articles published in the field of painting. On the other hand, given many published articles in the field of painting, it would be impossible to analyze all of them in one text. Therefore, due to the large volume of information and the need to preserve it, research about these issues will be published in two articles. In the first part, the first ten volumes of the journal are examined as prominent examples. These ten volumes include 118 issues that have been published over 16 years. The total number of articles published during the first ten periods on the painting is 93 articles, all of which have been reviewed. During the same period, 53 domestic and foreign painting exhibitions were held, which this subject concerns the activities of the magazine and the articles published in it. The upward trend of opening and holding domestic painting exhibitions are directly related to the publication of painting articles, sponsorships, and critiques in the journal. Therefore, this subject has been addressed in this study both quantitatively and qualitatively.

One of the critical goals of this research is the alignment of published articles in the journal with modernity in the field of art; this goal is vital because Sukhan had introduced itself as a promoter of new ideas from the beginning. In other words, a more detailed study of the type and manner of the impact of Sukhan's painting articles on the flow of modern Iranian painting has been considered as the primary goal. For this purpose, first, the topic and objectives of the authors are identified. Then the specific data of the articles of each period are put together in a diagram to achieve the results. With the help of these diagrams, the ascending and descending trend of publishing domestic and foreign articles domestic and foreign exhibitions of artists in each decade are determined separately according to the influential factors (political, social, and economic currents in the society). Also, Attempts have been made to provide a picture of political and social developments and, accordingly, artistic developments based on the data and analysis. Through these surveys, data, and information on the tables of each decade, the influence of political and social tendencies of the Sukhan Monthly Magazine on modernist Iranian painting will be identified, which was reflected in

the articles. Due to the high volume of the studied samples, an attempt has been made to briefly present a descriptive report of each article. This matter has made it possible by referring to the journal and its articles with the cooperation of the archives of the National Documents and Library Organization of Fars province. This publication is archived in general volumes, and therefore, the page numbers in several periods are presented in general and in one format.

## **2. Research Methodology**

Content analysis is one of the exceptional cases in observational research and historical documentary research. This method has been followed scientifically through the analytical study of publications since the twentieth century and spread to various other scientific fields. This method has different definitions in multiple sources: "Content analysis is a method for objective, quantitative and systematic study of communication products of the obvious content of the message to achieve interpretation" (Ghaedi, Golshani, 2016: 3). The research method in this article is based on a goal of a theoretical-fundamental type, and it is based on the implementation as descriptive-analytical type. All information is collected in a library style, through document reading and to refer to the volume of the available archive in the National Library of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Fars Center. In this study, a general analysis of the extent of influences and main goals in Sokhan Magazine will review by surveying the process of published articles and the current socio-political situation.

## **3. Literature Review**

To determine the research background, it should mention that a specific background that has a significant alignment with the objectives of the present research and is focused on the studied sample, i.e., Sukhan Monthly Magazine, has not been published yet. Other studies have focused on the performance and articles of other publications that can be considered in harmony with the present article. These sample studies include:

Content analysis of quarterly journal of ganjineh asnad articles, Rezaei Sharifabadi, Saeed: Mehdizadeh, Farghdan, Journal of National Library and Information Studies, (2009). In this research, the authors' tendencies of articles have shown that research priority is adjustment and processing unit in the thematic axis of archival studies; then, there are background units of archives, information, and evaluation. Analytical list of articles in the Journal of Art and People 1963-1978, Scientific Documentation Center, Parvaneh, Movahed (1986), in this article, the crucial contents of 1084 articles related to the sixteen periods of this journal have been provided to the readers as an abstract. This study aims to identify the sources of research on the history of architecture and urban planning in the Persian language and eliminate its shortcomings. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of Fine Arts Journals during the 12 years, Bemanian, Mohammad Reza: Yeganeh, Mansour: Naderi, Seyed Majid: Fine Arts Magazine, (2008). Also, in this study, the authors have evaluated all articles in this journal. They considered the growth process of quantitative and qualitative articles of the journal is ascending. They express the decline of historical research and the rise of content analysis.

Classification of articles thematically and their relations to social conditions and artistic developments:

A review of painting articles and classification of journal's authors' information during the years 1943-1959:

### 3.1. First Year 1943-1944

The first period of the magazine started in 1943 and continues to 1944. In this period, authors have discussed more the familiarity and definition of art for the audience by their articles. The four essays written by Parviz Khanlari are thematically descriptive in articles. These articles deal with the relationship between art and the artist. Also, an article introduces the style of a French painter. In this period of publication of the journal, the approach of articles is descriptive, and it only describes artistic works and currents. The titles of the articles and the names of their authors are as follows:

- i. Art and artist; Parviz Natel Khanlari: No. 3, August 1943.
- ii. Art and artist; Parviz Natel Khanlari; No. 4 and 5: September and August 1943.
- iii. Art and ethics; Parviz Natel Khanlari: No. 6; November 1943.
- iv. Art and life; Parviz Natel Khanlari: No. 7 and 8; February and March 1943.
- v. Paul Gauguin, French painter; Abdullah Faryar: No. 7 and 8; February and March 1943.

### 3.2. Second Year 1944-1945

The second period of publishing the magazine starts from January 1944. During this period, the editors and writers claim that the country lags behind today due to political and social issues in scientific, literary, and artistic matters. They were eager to eliminate the deficiency. "Unsolved political and social issues have prevented our country from progressing. During this time, other countries advanced more than us. Now we have no choice but to be diligent and hurry." (Khanlari, second year, 1944: 2) In this period, five articles about painting have been written and published. Two articles have introduced foreign painters in the category of descriptive articles. One article has introduced a new style and method of painting. Also, an article has compared the style of painting in the past and the present. For the first time, a report from a foreign exhibition is included in this period, which is in the category of news articles. The description of the "Autumn 1945 Painting Exhibition in Paris" had been brought to the attention of art-loving audiences due to the importance of the works and art samples. The title and author of the articles are as follows:

- i. Ilya Repin; Anonymous author: No. 3; March 1944.
- ii. Claude Monet; Abdullah Faryar: No. 4; April 1945.
- iii. Old and new paintings; Reza Jorjani: No. 5; May 1945.
- iv. Cubist style in painting; Anonymous author: No. 10; November 1945.
- v. Painting Exhibition in the Fall of 1945 in Paris; Anonymous author: No. 10; November 1945.

### 3.3. Third Year 1946

This period, after a two-year break, has started with the same style and way of the magazine by the authors since April 1946. The main goals of the magazine's editor are rushing to the future and magnifying and popularizing science and art, eliminating and compensating defects and backwardness of culture, and finally harmonizing with today's world of science and art. "They may criticize us that in this turmoil of the world, which has also disturbed the work of our country, there is no point in talking about science and art. But we do not accept this objection. Progress in spiritual matters is related to the social and economic situation, so we must first reform social affairs so that progress can be made in other areas as well." (Khanlari, 3rd Year, 1945: 4) The authors of this period are still trying to present the subject of their articles in the same style as the previous periods.

The articles have only the aspect of awareness and descriptive mode. A notable event in this period, which is considered the beginning of a great movement, is the holding of the Iranian Fine Arts Exhibition in April 1946. It seems to be an important event for both the magazine and the audience, especially the art community. The articles of this period reach nine articles with a slight difference in number. Five domestic articles and two foreign articles, one foreign exhibition report, and one domestic exhibition report are the author's works of this period. Of these statistics, two articles are in the category of news-analytical articles. Five articles have also dealt with the class of art analytically. An article is also in the variety of descriptive articles.

- i. Iranian Fine Arts Exhibition; Reza Jorjani: No. 1; April 1946.
- ii. Iranian painting; Translated by Parviz Behnam: No.1; April 1946.
- iii. Painting in England; Translated by Abdullah Faryar: No.2; May 1946.
- iv. Delacrova; Translated by Reza Jorjani: No.3; June 1946.
- v. Freedom of Art; Parviz Khanlari: No.4; October 1946.
- vi. Sassanid Art; Moore Ganshtern: Translated by Sadegh Hedayat: No.5; November 1946.
- vii. Autumn Painting Exhibition in Paris; Unknown Author: No.6 and 7; December and January 1946.
- viii. The influence of Islamic Art; Elie Faure, translated by Parviz Behnam: No.6 and 7; December and January 1946.
- ix. Artistic Anatomy; Nematullah Kayhani: No.8 and 9; May and June 1947.

During this period, Parviz Natel Khanlari seems to have reflected the effects of the socio-political conditions and rapid developments of that period in his article entitled "Freedom of Art". This article can be considered critical to Iran's social and political conditions in those years.

### 3.4. Fourth Year 1952-1953

During this period, after a six-year hiatus (1946-1952), the publication has been republished since December 1952. It was still loyal to its previous goals, including creating a new culture. Khanlari has explicitly expressed that: "Sukhan" deals with literature, knowledge, and art as before and has nothing to do with politics of the day. But this does not mean that the Good and Bad Magazine writers look at the situation with one eye and turn away from the world and what is in it. The authors of the magazine mention society's political and social status in their writings. Still, they aim to inform their compatriots about the various manifestations of thought and interests of other nations, be aware of different and new ways in each of the literary and artistic art in the world today and establish a new and worthy cultural foundation. The articles published in this period primarily introduce foreign artists and their art style. In the fourth edition of the magazine, ten years after its first volume, we are witnessing the number of art articles increasing, which was predictable. Although most of the articles are adaptations of foreign articles related to foreign artists and their style, they can significantly impact young artists. "The brief establishment of social freedoms and direct contact with the manifestation of Western culture created an opportunity for artistic innovation. Familiarity with the expert's works and lifestyles of modern art aroused the thought of breaking free from the constraints of traditional art among Iranian young artists" (Pakbaz, 1999). During this period, several exhibitions have been organized every two months. The most critical points are the exhibitions organized by the cultural associations of Iran and the United States, Iran and France, and Iran and the Soviet Union. The first painting exhibition with a modernist approach to art was opened in Iran-Soviet Union Cultural Association in 1945. (Khalili, 2006: 24). Also, in this period, two items are considerable: first, the non-publication of domestic articles and second, the publication of "Ehsan Yarshater" articles, which introduce foreign artists and, more importantly,

painting styles published regularly in each volume. There are 12 articles related to painting, most of which are descriptive, and several news articles have been published as exhibition reports. Exhibition reports have studied the works of painters in terms of artistic style and the effects of Western painting. Finally, the authors of 10 articles on non-Iranian topics have published five reports on the establishment of domestic exhibitions, which are:

- i. Renaissance and Leonardo da Vinci's intellectual and artistic ingenuity; Ehsan Naraghi: No. 3 February 1952.
- ii. Japanese Painting; Hassan Ghaemian: No.4; March 1952.
- iii. Michael Angelo; Ehsan Yarshater: No.5; April 1953.
- iv. Van Gogh the Painter; Ehsan Yarshater: No.6; May 1953.
- v. Paul Gauguin; Ehsan Yarshater: No.7; June 1953.
- vi. Paul Cézanne; Ehsan Yarshater: No.8. July 1953.
- vii. Impressionism the beginning of the movement; Ehsan Yarshater: No.9; September 1953.
- viii. Impressionism in painting Principles of Impressionism; Ehsan Yarshater: No.10; October 1953.
- ix. Impressionism Impressionist Painters; Ehsan Yarshater: No.11; November 1953.
- x. Impressionism Impressionist Painters; Hassan Yarshater: No.12; December 1953.
- xi. Painting Exhibition in Mehregan Club; Ehsan Yar Shater No.6; May 1953.
- xii. Painting Exhibitions Associations of Iran and France, Iran and the Soviet Union; Ehsan Yarshater: No.8; July 1953.

### 3.5. Fifth Year 1953- 1954

The fifth volume of the magazine has been published since January 1953, and during these years, it has gained a proper position among young artists. In the first issue of this period, Parviz Natel Khanlari states that for the first time in the art section of the magazine, we will publish colorful and beautiful examples of painting masterpieces at the request of readers. As evident from the title of the articles, it seems that since the fourth period, the approach of articles has become more diverse, and articles are descriptive, translated, news, and even critical. In this period, we are facing an increase in articles, and a total of 12 articles about painting have been published. Of these articles, seven articles are descriptive, two articles are news, two articles are critical, and one article is a report. In 1952 and 1953, the field of internal political developments under the influence of the whole situation had caused the emergence of several political currents such as the national movement, religious-political forces, and the Tudeh Party. The social and political problem of the country is not in a favorable condition, and it has been criticized. Since the publication had relative freedom in recent years, these criticisms have been expressed by its authors to their audiences.

- i. George Sora and the New Impressionist Method; Ehsan Yarshater: No. 2; February 1953.
- ii. The Image of Animals in Sassanid Art; Parviz Behnam: No. 2; March 1953.
- iii. George Sora and the New Impressionist Method; Ehsan Yarshater: No. 3; March 1953.
- iv. Henry Matisse; Ehsan Yarshater: No.4; April 1954.
- v. Methodism; Ehsan Yarshater: No.6; July 1954.
- vi. Familiar and Foreign Art; Sukhan: No.7; August 1954.
- vii. Developments in Indian Art; Translated by Hassan Honarmandi: No. 7; August 1954.
- viii. A Journey into the World of New Painting; Mohammad Saeedi: No. 9; October 1954.
- ix. Painting of Prehistoric People; Translated by Fathullah Mujtaba'i: No. 9; October 1954.
- x. Is It Possible to Enjoy a New Painting?; Ehsan Yarshater: No. 11; December 1954.
- xi. Is It Possible to Enjoy a New Painting?; Ehsan Yarshater: No. 12; January 1954.

- xii. Spring Exhibitions; Ehsan Yarshater: No. 4; April 1954.

### 3.6. Sixth Year, March 1954- 1955

After the coup d'état of August 28, 1953, the activities of intellectuals expanded due to the social and political conditions and the effects of the coupon society and, on the other hand, due to the modernization policies of the government. In this decade, the government's actions towards modernization took a more severe form, and accordingly, it created more space to develop modernism in Iranian art. "The Iranian artist in the first years of the emergence of modern painting, while examining a new artistic language, also, is experiencing his living conditions and two-way relations with architecture, modern urban planning and the culture embedded in it." (Del Zande, 2017, 238). In the continuation of the magazine's activity, we observe the continuation of the same movement and new method that has found its way between artists and painters. The magazine authors have also dealt with different angles with their articles and writings. Ehsan Yar Shater is also an active writer in this period. In this period, the article "Is It Possible to Enjoy a New Painting?" has a more practical and analytical perspective than before and discusses this issue regularly in each case.

Yarshater began his collaboration with the magazine in 1953 and published several articles (12 articles) about painters and new European painting styles. These articles are purposeful and respond to the need of Iranian artists. Yar Shater considers the contemporary painters and their path so important and worth considering. Parviz Khanlari has also studied the history of Iranian painting in this period. Analytical and critical articles are increasingly dealing with new and modern painting. Also, the publication of descriptive essays continues. In this period, the number of articles has increased compared to all periods. Seventeen articles have been published in this period. Of these, ten domestic and seven foreign articles about art, especially painting, are statistically significant. In addition to the articles, the report of two exhibitions in the form of news has also been held in this period. The title and author of the articles are:

- i. A brief overview of the history of painting in Iran; Parviz Natel Khanlari, No. 1; March 1954.
- ii. Is It Possible to Enjoy a New Painting?; Ehsan Yarshater, No. 2; April 1955.
- iii. A brief overview of the history of painting in Iran; Parviz Natel Khanlari, No. 2; April 1955.
- iv. Is It Possible to Enjoy a New Painting?; Ehsan Yarshater, No. 3; May 1955.
- v. Is It Possible to Enjoy a New Painting?; Ehsan Yarshater, No. 5; July 1955
- vi. Is It Possible to Enjoy a New Painting?; Ehsan Yarshater, No. 6; August 1955.
- vii. Congenital Artists; Parviz Marzban, No. 6; August 1955.
- viii. Flowers in old and new paintings; Translated by Hamid Enayat, No. 7; September 1955.
- ix. A child, an artist who is unaware of himself; Anonymous Author, No. 7; September 1955.
- x. About Japanese painting; Anonymous Author, No. 8; October 1955
- xi. Art and Beauty, Somerset Maugham; Translated by Majid Masoudi, No. 8; October 1955.
- xii. New Art - New Painting; Parviz Marzban, No. 9; November 1955.
- xiii. Photographic and painting relationships; Houshang Alam, No. 9; November 1955.
- xiv. Drawing in painting; Anonymous, No. 9; November 1955.
- xv. Book picture art; Ismail Asadi, No. 10; December 1955.
- xvi. International Representative Images; Translation, H. A., No. 11; January 1955.
- xvii. Is it possible to enjoy a new painting?; Ehsan Yarshater, No. 12; February 1955.

In this period, articles have different approaches, and the authors have turned to the discussion of new art and painting. These issues indicate that developments are occurring around the art of painting and artists. Although most of the articles are adaptations of foreign articles and represent new artists and styles in Europe, this is a result of the impact of the articles and their role in encouraging young artists in the country, in which the magazine made this decision in this decade. Another critical point is the significant growth in the number of exhibitions organized by the cultural associations of Iran and the United States, Iran and the Soviet Union, and Iran and France, which have been interpreted and analyzed by authors from different angles. Opponents of modernist painting, meanwhile, have voiced their criticism against the magazine's authors. "When an artistic movement takes place in the civilized world and lasts for more than half a century and attracts great critics and art critics, it becomes more or less generally accepted, it is undoubtedly worthy of the attention of those who love art. Therefore, when we come across shapes in a new painting that looks like nothing definite but show a lot of things if we object that "this is not like," we are wrong because many of the works of new painters in showing parts of our inner life are true and more agreeable. As a result, it is a long-standing tradition to stick to the habit and fight in a new way. If one wants to keep pace with the spiritual journey of the world and not be unaware of the new ways that have taken root in our century, one must look at contemporary art by open eyes and receptive mind" (Yarshater, The sixth period, 1067).

### 3.7. Seventh Year 1956

The seventh volume of the magazine and its first issue was published in April 1956. During the period of publication of this magazine, according to the authors of Sukhan, several publications were created, all of which more or less imitated Sukhan magazine, but none of these magazines were able to continue. "Some of them had political motives and used literature and art as excuses." (Editor, seventh year, First Volume, 3) In this period, the authors' painting articles and introducing new methods in painting that are emerging among artists also expose that method to discussion and criticism. Each chapter is dedicated to presenting the art of countries that have not yet addressed it. During this period, the number of domestic and foreign articles has decreased, and most of the articles have dealt with the same thematic matter in the same style as the first periods. In this period, four articles have been published; three of them were foreign articles, one of them was a domestic article, and one of them was a domestic exhibition. During this period, the magazine published pictures of famous paintings in color for its readers. The reflection of social issues, which was one of the magazine's goals, has become more prominent in this period. The titles of the published articles are as follows:

- i. Beauty and Art; Ehsan Yarshater; No. 4; July 1956.
- ii. Government, Iranian Painter in India; Issa Behnam, No. 10; February 1956.
- iii. Author and Painter; Anonymous Author, No. 10; February 1956.
- iv. Ingenuity, Art, Inspiration; Aldus Huxley, translated by Jalal Nematollahi: No. 12; April 1957.

### 3.8. Eighth Year 1957

During this period, which started in 1957, the magazine only published foreign articles, and there is no domestic article from the authors. However, during these years, young people have shown activity in painting with a modernist orientation or the western painting path. Exhibitions of young artists in recent years and the efforts and excitement of gallery owners in organizing painting



exhibitions and introducing the works of young painters in recent years are influential in the development of emerging painting. "Although these young painters have not yet found a definite path, their work nevertheless promises a very bright future in the field of art, which is now re-valued, and their more mature and original works can be expected." (Emami, Sukhan, 1957, No. 2; 201) The influential author of this period is a person with the artistic name of "Researcher" who since 1957 (eighth period), had published articles entitled "History of Painting in the West" (24 articles) for the magazine's audiences in each period and introduces European painting methods in a descriptive and interpretive way. In these articles, the author deals with the personal life of the artist, the personality and spirit of the artist, and the style and manner of the painter and his views on painting, so that the reader gains complete knowledge of the painter and his style of painting along with his portfolio. "Reza Seyed Hosseini", another author of the magazine in 1958 of the ninth period, according to the policies of this period of the magazine, had published translations of well-known critics related to the "conditions of innovation in art". In these articles, the author states the circumstances in which artists, by accepting these circumstances innovation would be taken as a positive value. The author must write such articles because, as mentioned in this period, the modern painting was still considered rejected and unacceptable by many people. Eleven articles on painting have been published in this period. Six of these articles are foreign articles and one domestic article, ten domestic exhibitions, one foreign exhibition, and one exhibition of Iranian artists held abroad. Foreign articles have descriptively and analytically dealt with the history of painting in the West and introduced artists. The title and author of the articles are as follows:

- i. Artist and Community; Thomas Mann, translated by Sirus Parham, No. 3, July 1957.
- ii. My Master Picasso; Cyrus Zaka, No. 5; September 1957.
- iii. What art lovers want from an Artist; Andre Moroa, translated by Zahra Khanlari, No. 6; October 1957.
- iv. History of painting in the West; Researcher, No. 7; November 1957.
- v. History of painting in the West; Researcher, No. 8; December 1957.
- vi. Knowledge and Art; Parviz Natel Khanlari, No. 9; January 1957.
- vii. History of painting in the West; Researcher, No. 9; January 1957.
- viii. Author's Copyright, Parviz Natel Khanlari, No. 10; February 1957.
- ix. History of painting in the West; Researcher, No. 10; February 1957.
- x. History of Painting in the West, Pajohand, No. 11 and 12; March 1957.
- xi. Success of a young Iranian Artist, Anonymous Author, No. 11 and 12; March 1957.

### 3.9. Ninth Year 1958

In this period, according to the routine of previous periods, in each issue, while discussing the art of painting and the great masters of this art, an example of these works has been published for the readers. In the previous period, foreign articles increased significantly, but domestic articles reached their maximum in this period. This matter shows that writers are on the same path as painters and find it necessary to write these articles. In addition, this matter can be considered in parallel with current nationalism in the government of this period. "A new way of painting has reached Iran and gained followers over the years. Exhibitions that have been held around the country in recent years have often shown that some artists have embraced new styles and sought to find a way through them" (Yarshater, 1958, ninth year, No. 1;83). Through the efforts of the Fine Arts Administration, a national exhibition is held every two years in Tehran at the same time as the Venice World Biennale, for modernist painters, sculptors, and designers to participate. In the last seven years of the magazine, Ehsan Yarshater says about the importance of this issue: "With this

event, we can pave the way for the development and advancement of national arts of painting, sculpture, and design, and make a valuable and effective share in the World of Biennale. Without a doubt, we can keep pace with the advances of the world today by this development in the field of art." The result of the authors' activity in this period is 14 articles, two of them are domestic articles, ten of them are foreign articles which are thematically in the category of descriptive-analytical articles, one is a report on exhibitions of Iranian artists abroad, and two of them are related to domestic exhibitions that are descriptively analytical. Descriptions of two foreign exhibitions have also been published. The titles and authors of the articles are as follows:

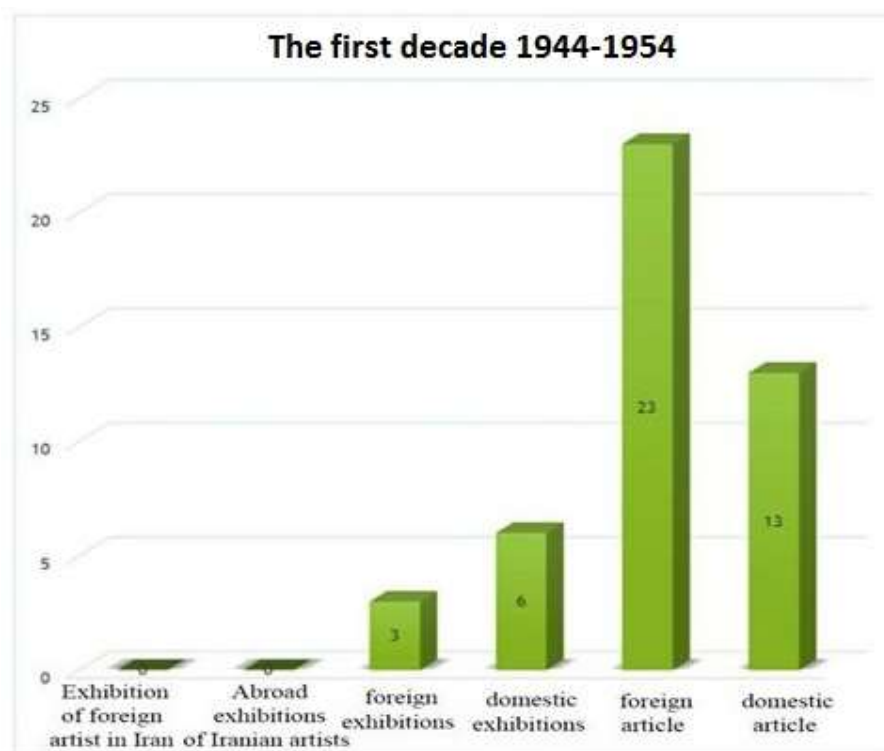
- i. History of Painting in the West of Flemish Art, Researcher Author, No. 1, April 1958.
- ii. "Biennale" Painting and Sculpture Exhibition in Abyaz Palace, Ehsan Yarshater, No. 1, April 1958.
- iii. History of Painting in the West of Flemish Art, Researcher Author, No. 2, May 1958.
- iv. Conditions of Innovation in Art 1, Gabriel Marcel, translated by Seyed Reza Hosseini, No. 3, June 1958.
- v. History of painting in the west of the Flemish style, Researcher Author, No. 3, June 1958.
- vi. History of painting in the west of the German style, Researcher Author, No. 4, July 1958.
- vii. Conditions of Innovation in Art 2, Gabriel Marcel, Researcher Author, No. 4, July 1958.
- viii. About Tehran Biennale, Rassam Arjangi, No. 4, July 1958.
- ix. History of painting in the west of the Dutch style, author of Pajohand, No. 6, September 1958.
- x. History of painting in the west of the Dutch style, Researcher Author, No. 7, November 1958.
- xi. History of painting in the west of the Dutch style, Researcher Author, No. 8, December 1958.
- xii. History of Painting in the West of the Spanish Style, Researcher Author, No. 9, January 1958.
- xiii. History of Painting in the West of the Italian Style, Researcher Author, No. 10, February 1958.
- xiv. History of painting in the west of the French style, Researcher Author, No. 11 and 12, March 1958.

### 3.10. Tenth Year 1959

In this period, which started in April 1959, the authors have published fewer articles than in the previous period, and the publication of foreign articles is superior. These articles introduce artistic methods and analyze them in more detail. Another considerable matter is the remarkable enhancement in domestic exhibitions by artists. During this period, several exhibitions have been held, and artists' works have been exhibited. Another issue related to painting and its influence on it is that the Office of Fine Arts of the whole country has decided to participate in this year's "Biennial" in Paris and invited young painters to send their paintings to judge by the jury. This decision and event, which marks an important event for painters, is an opportunity for artists to introduce Iranian Art to universal art scholars and critics. Finally, the authors' activity in this period is three foreign articles one domestic article, which are descriptive. The report of 6 foreign exhibitions, 16 domestic exhibitions, and two foreign artists in Iran are also included in the journal. The titles of the published articles are as follows:

- i. History of Painting in the West, French-style; Researcher Author, No. 1; April 1959.
- ii. History of Painting in the West; Researcher Author, No.2; May 1959.

- iii. The Origin of Iranian painting; Rene Grosse: Translated by N., No.3; May 1959.
- iv. History of Painting in the West, Researcher Author, No.11 and 12; February and March 1959.



**Fig 1** General Activity Process of Sokhan Monthly Magazine in the first part

#### **4. Overview of the Essential Activities of the First and Second Decade (1943-1959) of Sukhan Magazine and its Relationship with Social and Artistic Conditions**

In the early years of its publication, the authors published numerous articles and reports about the establishment of painting exhibitions. By examining the articles of this period and the statistics that can be seen from the tables, the authors first began to publish articles that describe and identify art generally. Also, in the thematic axis of articles, priority is given to publishing foreign articles and foreign artists. This crucial initial approach of the journal is partly related to society's social and political developments at that time and is connected to it. Descriptions are the basis for other discussions that will be more important. The first exhibition report of the magazine is related to an exhibition entitled "Western Painting and Sculpture Exhibition". After this report, in the next period, in 1946, we observed the most prominent artistic event, namely the "opening of the Fine Arts Exhibition of Iran". In 1952, another painting exhibition was held in Mehregan Club. Due to the existence of few and stable artistic publications at this time, the role of Sukhan Magazine cannot be ignored in orienting the Iranian art space at that time. The opening of painting exhibitions in these years is influenced by the current that the Sukhan Magazine and its currents have caused. Especially, report articles on foreign exhibitions have significantly been involved and influential on this matter. According to the general policies of Sukhan Magazine, "the creation of such exhibitions helps to promote art and encourage artists and familiarize art lovers with the works of Iranian

painters, and is undoubtedly effective in promoting this art and the development of the recent movement in Iranian painting." In addition to reviewing the general flow of the exhibition, the authors have introduced their styles, painters, principles, and methods in detail in these reports. Authors who have published influential and purposeful artistic articles related to painting are Parviz Khanlari, Ehsan Yarshater, Reza Jorjani.

After publishing several articles about art and its description, as well as its role in society and people's lives, Parviz Khanlari states in the seventh and eighth volumes: "People like to get news about the lives of great artists because they think that there is a connection between their lives and their beautiful works" (Khanlari, Sukhan, 1953, No. 7 and; 8365). Connected to this matter, "Abdullah Faryar" publishes foreign articles in the first volume of the magazine to deal with the life and works of these artists. The great issue is that critical discussions began in the second period of the magazine, which is related to social developments and fundamental approaches of the political and social spheres. From the first volume, an article entitled "we must harmonize with the world" was published by Parviz Khanlari, who believes that the country lags behind the world today in terms of scientific and literary affairs and what is called culture, we should seek to eliminate it. Following this discussion, the editor points to socio-political causes that have inhibited progress. Some have also criticized the magazine for publishing imaginary and intellectual developments as an extremist magazine. They criticized the literature and art of others as patriotic and detrimental to the preservation of our nation. This time, the magazine responds to these criticisms: "Our writers are well aware that nothing in today's world is separate from politics, but to enter politics and strive in this way, there are many parties, factions, and presses that criticize each other and we respect everyone as long as these efforts are sincere and pure, intending to serve the country and advance the work and reforming things, even though the path taken by each sect is different." (Sukhan, Khanlari, 1952, No. 1; 2). Khanlari, with knowledge of these conditions and circumstances, that relative calmness reigns in society, considers the continuation of the magazine as the only right way, and his most important goal is to try and hurry to eliminate the lags. "We must accept the culture of today's world inevitably, and imitation and adaptation are the basis of cultural progress and this matter is not shameful" (Khanlari, Sukhan, second year, 1944, p. 3).

The opening of the "Fine Arts Exhibition of Iran" under the auspices of the Association of Cultural Relations between Iran and the Soviet Union is the first step taken to introduce Iranian artists. According to Reza Jorjani, the magazine's critic and author of art issues, this exhibition can follow the same autumn exhibition of French painters, because Jorjani explicitly states that: For many years, French painters, in autumn, have been exhibiting and judging their works in a unique hall in Paris. Even the smallest cities in Europe now have a painting museum. Painters who can not afford to arrange the exhibition space, with the permission of the municipalities, sell their paintings at significant intersections under small tents." (Jorjani, Sukhan, Third Year, 1946, No. 1;25) Elsewhere, he states that: During these years, there was not an effort to develop fine arts, especially painting, and the problem with discussing art is the lack of encouragement of artists and the promotion of fine arts, however, the Ministry of Culture should provide a suitable place to establish a painting museum as soon as possible. Another important issue that he points out is the allocation of funds for the purchase of exquisite paintings by professors and the establishment of an annual exhibition to showcase new works" (Ibid.) The preparation that Jorjani has announced should be considered to promote and expand the work of the country's painters and the prosperity of the art market.

As developments in the social, political, and economic spheres are occurring, Parviz Khanlari, by knowing these conditions and on the other hand of the conflict that arose between the defenders of

the old style and the proponents of modernity in this period, published an article entitled "Freedom of Art". Believing that these changes and transformations require effort, he states: "I think that in art, as in society, freedom strives, it requires courage, and the seeker of freedom must be able to stand on his own feet. Do not choose what is easy, but go for the difficulties, the difficulties that have few seekers. A free artist is one who, with self-confidence, can clear his mind of what others have given him; And for the first time, he is commissioned to know and teach the world" (Sukhan, Khanlari, Third Period, No. 4; 244). Khanlari's opinions on freedom of the arts were later criticized by some, especially several members of parliament, forcing Khanlari to publish a defense of himself and the magazine. During these years, Sukhan Magazine, due to the existing open and democratic space, begins its activities by dealing with European artistic and literary issues. The magazine introduces the great painters of the world. It shows the methods and actions that each of them had taken in the development of new painting, and at the same time deals with the existing issues of the society parallel with the goals of modernization. The coverage of foreign exhibitions has created an opportunity to develop and open the first art exhibitions and galleries. As shown from Fig 1, in this decade, the magazine's main priority and the authors' main priority is to publish painting articles and describe the report related to foreign exhibitions. Along with them, domestic painting articles have an ascending trend.

## **5. Performance and Policies of Sukhan Magazine and its Relationship with the Current of Modernization in Contemporary Iranian Art and Painting**

Undoubtedly, Sukhan is one of the most influential cultural media in its period which has been effective on the process of modernization and cultural conditions in Iran at that time. As far as, some researchers believe that "the political views of intellectual class were reflected on Sukhan magazine" (Abrahamian;1983;343). Sukhan is a magazine that devotes some of its pages to criticism and discussion on the general principles and laws of art at the very beginning of its publication. This publication aims to express the purpose of various fields of art for those with admire art and establish the principles of artistic evaluation and criticism. In short, in the first decade, the magazine's articles are more to get acquainted with the works of art and common painting styles of other nations. In the second decade, there is a relatively more significant focus on the flow of art inside Iran and the growing trend of modernity. According to the authors, familiarity with the modernity and art of other nations "not only is not harmful and does not conflict with nationality but also has enormous benefits. The authors believe that if a nation profited by basics and principles of science and art, it is because of familiarity with the arts and interests of other nations that it can develop its interests and by combining the factors and components that each has acquired from somewhere and learned from an ethnic group and create an exquisite collection in every technique" (Editor's Express, 1953, No. 7;491). In the same years, the government is trying to find a political policy appropriate to the situation of the Iranian people and sees the most crucial element in the modernization of Iran.

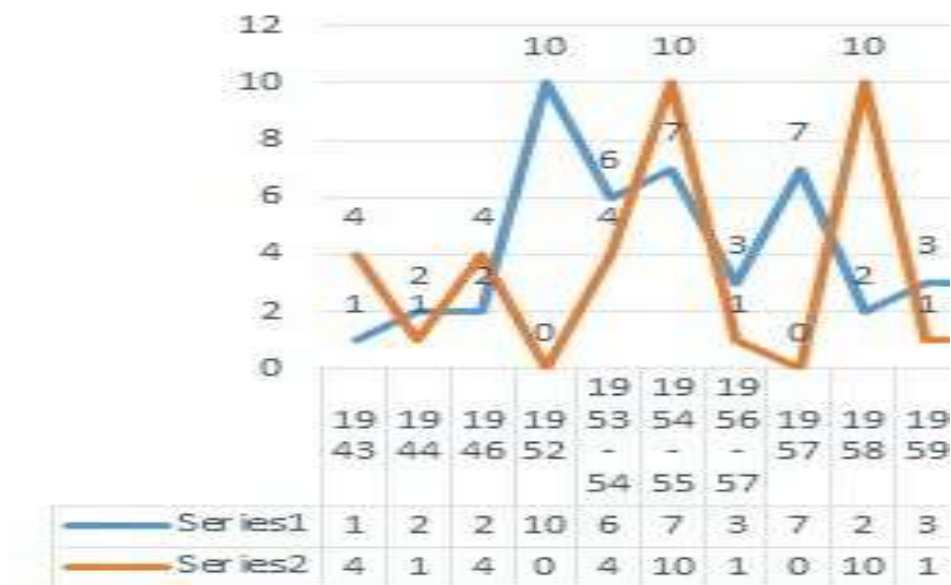
On the other hand, the Iranian political system is trying to become a member of the United Nations. In this regard, efforts are being made to move towards democracy based on reason and thinking, after countless instabilities and successive changes in the past decades, to maintain peace and tranquility. The government also intends to be more in touch with other countries to develop and progress in foreign relations.

Another policy that is being talked about in the country these days is creating national unity. In this regard, Parviz Khanlari has made suggestions to eliminate these differences, which are: "Holding congresses with the participation of different countries to acquaint thinkers and their

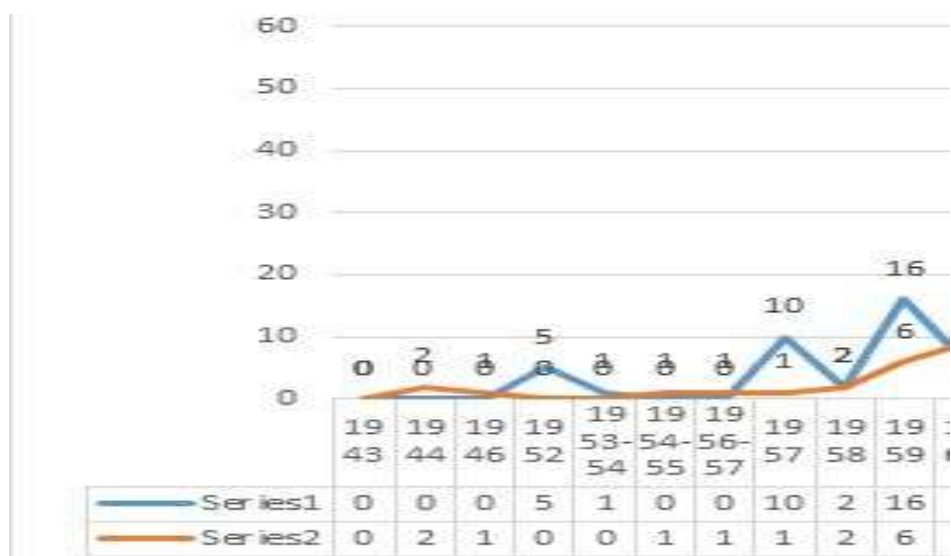
relationship with each other, communication of cultural delegations with other countries to get acquainted with each other's thoughts, customs and intellectual works and establishment of cultural relations associations for the exchange of books and the press" (Khanlari, Sokhan, Third period, No. 8 and 9; 524). Khanlari believes that these measures significantly impact the development and evolution of culture and bring substantial benefits. The causes of these developments are primarily affected by the internal needs of society and secondly by the modernist ideas and currents of thought of the new generation that emerged in the first Pahlavi period. Modernist theorists believed that Third World societies, which they interpreted as traditional societies, would inevitably have to begin the process of modernization in the direction taken by the West. It was stated that: "creating fundamental changes in the cultural foundations and existing values of society and creating a kind of cultural transformation that can lead to the creation of modern man, was a priority" (Fawzi, 2000; 5). Accordingly, new ideas and studies and recent research by the country's intellectuals are expanding, the significant effects of which can be seen in the coming years.

The field of culture and art, especially the visual arts, was one of the most dynamic fields affected by modernity in Iran. In the meantime, painting can be considered one of the pioneers of modernity in Iranian culture, which was developed by the support of the government structure and publications such as Sukhan Magazine and accelerated advancement in this field. During these years, in addition to exhibitions organized by the government and associations, gallery owners also supported new paintings by holding numerous painting exhibitions and introducing young painters, domestic and abroad. "With the expansion of the field of activity of modern painters, the attention of government institutions was drawn to the current of contemporary painting. Especially by honoring the artists' works in cultural associations, government institutions found this artistic movement as a suitable platform for the introduction of national art and, at the same time, modernization (Hosseini Rad, 2011: 6).

"Undoubtedly, holding biennials played an effective role in the development of painting and sculpture and the introduction of works by Iranian artists" (Pakbaz, 1999: 893). The role of cultural associations created by Iranian intellectuals and the embassies of other countries in Tehran to support modernization policies should not be underestimated because these associations are places where young painters can easily display their new works away from the opposition. Introducing artists and collecting and preserving works of art, arranging and determining and allocating annual prizes for art disciplines, organizing art exhibitions, and organizing yearly congresses to discuss art are among the goals of these associations. We see these supports and effects in the writings of the magazine's artists. As mentioned, through connections with other countries, it became possible for painters to participate in foreign exhibitions and achieve significant success, which has been reflected even in foreign magazines. In the meantime, Sukhan Magazine reported all these efforts supported to the audiences and appreciates them. Young painters in other countries and exhibitions abroad and foreign painters who have participated in domestic exhibitions are also supported by the magazine. The analysis of their exhibitions for the audience is done accurately. In total, seven painting articles published by the magazine are dedicated to domestic exhibitions, while 36 domestic exhibitions by artists have been held in various galleries and associations. Also, seven foreign exhibitions have been saved by foreign artists in the country. Domestic exhibitions have been a slow and gradual process since the beginning of the publication. In the following periods, this trend has increased along with the publication of foreign exhibitions. Also, the process of publishing domestic and foreign articles in different periods is shown.



**Fig 2** The process of domestic and foreign articles from 1943 to 1959.



**Fig 3** The process of holding domestic and foreign exhibitions from 1943 to 1959

Parallel to policies for the support of new arts in the cultural structure of Iran, after holding the exhibitions and considering them, it was time to open the "Biennials" by the Department of Fine Arts. This is done every two years to be an important opportunity for young painters to present their work to the public and judges, and, on the other hand, for painters to be able to keep pace with the progress of world art. The position of Sukhan Magazine in the face of such an event from the previous decade is clear. As in several articles, including the article of the Iranian Fine Arts

Exhibition in the first volume of the third period by Reza Jorjani, he wanted to allocate a specific place for the display of works of art by modern artists; In other articles, such as the article about "Biennials" exhibition of paintings and sculptures in the White House by Ehsan Yarshater in the first volume of the ninth period, he wanted the promotion and development of visual arts and painting. He considered the way of progress in the field of culture and art. "Undoubtedly, with the transformation that the implementation of this goal brings, these national arts can be recognized with their special importance and value and keep pace with the progress of the world in the field of art today" (Sukhan, Seventh Year, 1957: 8). Foreign judges are also used in these biennials, and this shows the closeness of the styles and methods of domestic artists with foreign works. Sukhan Magazine's position on this important event in visual arts, especially painting, is supportive, and it aligns this with its policies and goals. Of course, the formation of such events and currents can be considered the result of the previous efforts of the magazine. Finally, the first Tehran Biennial was opened in 1958 in an ample exhibition space that displayed a range of various experimental approaches (Kashmir Shekan; 2017: 78) Ehsan Yarshater, as a critic and reporter of this biennial, has analyzed and interpreted it. At the end of the exhibition, Yarshater stated: "The Biennial Exhibition is, above all, the herald of the good news that new painting in Iran has passed its primitive period and is a movement that has attracted many talented and lively talents. What should be wished is that the new Iranian painters and sculptors do not lose their strength in their glorious endeavors and that their motivators continue to increase their support" (Yarshater, 1958: 83).

The alignment of Sukhan Magazine's policies with the process of modernizing, promoting, and developing had drawn criticism from various groups and strata; the magazine's approach and response to these criticisms are as straightforward as before within the framework of the goals that were set, "If no ethnic group interferes in our internal affairs if we remain in the same manner that we have behaved in the last thirty or forty years if we do not enter the path of civilization and progress, and if the country is not liberated, the danger of extinction is hovering over our heads." (Sukhan, Minavi, 1954: 819). By efforts of the Office of International Relations and Publications of Fine Arts of the country, biennials are held to support the flow of new paintings. The proposal to establish a "National Education Organization" under the leadership of the Shah to promote education and raise the level of national knowledge and research to modernize the social method and support it is reflected in the magazine, in 1958, in an article entitled: "Our responsibility in educating youth" by Mahmoud Sanaei. Holding biennials giving awards and art scholarships, and providing the possibility of communication with international art associations for artists to participate in exhibitions was on the agenda of this foundation. During these years, the magazine has always dedicated a part of its pages to introducing the favorite and intellectual works of different world nations. These popular Western articles and paintings are beneficial for those who are more or less dealing with painting and are not unfamiliar with the changes in painting style. During this period, the authors have published numerous articles that deal with both foreign artists and their style and domestic art and artists. These articles have found their fans among the people, and the authors respond to this support according to their interests and expectations. All the activities and approaches of the magazine and writers in this decade, according to the titles of the articles published in the mentioned periods and also according to the developments after the coup d'etat of August 28, 1953, are connected to the modernization policies of the government. At the forefront of these policies is a move toward modern and progressive society.



## 6. Conclusion

It seems that Sukhan Magazine has a special place in the modernization process in Iranian culture and art from 1943 to 1975. From the very beginning, Sukhan Monthly Magazine introduces itself as a promoter of new ideas and new methods in literature and art. It is considered by a group of science and art enthusiasts. One of the aspects and results of this research indicate the alignment of the paintings of Sukhan Monthly Magazine with the current of a modern painting of the Second Pahlavi period from 1943 to 1975 and even the influence of these articles on that trend. Thus, based on the central question of this research, Sukhan Monthly Magazine, in this period, like many other magazines, according to the prevailing political and cultural currents, has not been separated from the changes and developments of the society and, in addition, has accompanied the modernization policies of the community. In the first part of this article, it became clear that the painting articles of Sukhan Monthly Magazine, with a conscious approach and a predetermined policy, had become a respondent to one of the needs of Iranian society despite many criticisms and objections, that took a current position in publishing painting articles and supporting exhibitions of modern artists, art circles and providing suitable hospitality for raising a generation of young contemporary artists. The lack of art publications at that time and the extent of the media's influence is itself an essential reason for this claim. Sukhan Monthly Magazine left a lasting impact in promoting and supporting modern Iranian painting and gained significant achievements for young painters by providing the opportunity for discussions between artists and critics, reflecting domestic and foreign art events, publishing critiques before and after each art event. In general, by examining the subject and content of the articles and their adaptation to the socio-political and economic situation, as well as according to the obtained statistics, it was clear that every time that will be passed of the magazine's publication and activity, its approach, and trend in introducing and supporting the modernist painting flow and also, existing modernization policies and its promotion in society have been growing. The development of the policy of modernity in the field of visual arts, especially painting, is connected to the planning and goals of the magazine in the first decade of its activity. Considering the type of materials and articles published in the magazine in the first decade, it seems that the developments in the field of visual arts, especially the holding of events such as the Tehran Painting Biennial, have not been unaffected by the magazine's performance. Undoubtedly, due to the pioneering role of this publication in the field of visual arts and painting and articles published in the social conditions of those years, an extraordinary scope of influence can be considered for it.

## References

- Abrahamian, E. (1983). *Iran between two revolutions*. Published by Princeton University Press.
- Avery, P. (2008). *The Cambridge history of Iran*. Volume 7, From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic, Cambridge University Press.
- Del Zandeh, S. (2017). *Iranian artistic visual developments*. Nazar Publication, Second Edition, Tehran.
- Fawzi, Y. (2000). Religious Leaders and Modernization in Iran in the Second Pahlavi Period. *Matin research journal*, (9), Tehran.
- Kashmir Shekan, H. (2017). *Research in Contemporary Iranian Art*. Nazar Publication, Tehran.
- Khalili, M. (2006). Modern Iranian Art Movement. *Journal of Visual Arts Studies*, (26), Tehran.
- Minavi, M. (1955). Danger announcement. *Sukhan Magazine*, (11), 813-819, Tehran.

- Natel Khanlari, P. (1943-1959). *Sukhan magazine*. First to Tenth Periods, Tehran.<sup>†</sup>
- Natel Khanlari, P. (1947). Freedom of art. *Sukhan Magazine*, (4), 241-244, Tehran.
- Natel Khanlari, P. (1948). Common culture. *Sukhan Magazine*, (3), 521-526, Tehran.
- Pakbaz, R. (1999). *Iranian painting from ancient times to the present day*. Zarrin and Simin Publications, Seventh Edition, Tehran.
- Pakbaz, R., & Emdadian, Y. (2003). *Pioneers of Modern Iranian Art*. Museum Publication, Contemporary arts and the development of the visual arts, Tehran.
- Qaedi, M. R., & Golshani, A. (2016). *Content analysis method from quantitative to qualitative*. (23), Tehran.
- Yar Shater, E. (1956). Is it possible to enjoy a new painting? *Sukhan Magazine*, (6-7), 1052-7106, Tehran.
- Yar Shater, E. (1959). Biennial exhibition painting and sculpture in the White House. *Sukhan Magazine*, (1), 82-84, Tehran.

---

<sup>†</sup> . The author is referring here to the critique of modernist painting by the proponents of representative painting, and especially by the followers of the Kamal al- Mulk School because the criterion of similarity has been one of the basic criteria in painting.