

With the Support of the *Jahangir and Eleanor Amuzegar Chair in Iranian Studies* &
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Bilingual Lecture Series on Iran

present

Iranian Women Writing Transnationally

A panel in Persian



Authors on the panel include:

Mahnaz Attarha
Mehrnosh Mazarei
Sheida Mohamadi
Paxima Mojavezi
Gina Nahai
Mahdokht Sanati
Sholeh Wolpe

Panel moderated by Dr. Nasrin Rahimieh, Professor of Comparative Literature,
University of California, Irvine

Sunday, December 6, 2015

4:00 PM

121 Dodd Hall

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Mahnaz Attarha is an award-winning novelist. She has four published books titled *Raghsi-Chonin* "Such A Dance", *Senj-o-Senobar* "Cicada & Poplar", *Maa* "We", and *Ye-Kare-Taro-Tamiz* "A Neat Action", which is a newly published collection of short stories. Her second novel *Senj-o-Senobar* was a finalist for the Yalda, Peka and Golshiri award in 2004 and won the Isfahan Literary Award. Attarha began writing as a reporter at *Talash* magazine at the age of 17. At the age of 20 she became a reporter at the *Shekar-o-Tabiat* "Nature and Hunting" magazine, the first Iranian magazine focused on nature and environmental concerns. Attarha is the first woman who worked as an environmental journalist in Iran. She was demoted to a type-writing position after the revolution and was forced to leave Tehran and reside in Boushehr, a small city south of Iran, where she published her first novella. Her connection to nature is evident both in her writings as well as her life. As part of a green belt project in Shiraz, Attarha has managed the plantation of 5000 trees. She has also worked as a landscape designer in several public projects in Shiraz. Attarha currently resides in Los Angeles and is working on her upcoming novel, *Kazhmir*, an intimate narrative about the impact of war on the lives of women.



Mehrnoosh Mazarei was born and raised in Iran. She moved to Southern California in November 1979. Ms. Mazarei has published four short story collections in Persian. *A Stranger in My Room*, a collection of her selected short stories, published in Iran in 2004, was nominated two times for best first short story book of the year. The title story, "A Stranger in My Bed," has been reviewed as an outstanding Modernist story in the "Short Story in Iran". Another story, "Sangam," was selected and anthologized as one of the ten best short stories published in that year. Mazarei co-founded and co-edited *Forough*, the first Persian magazine dedicated to women's literature, between 1989 and 1991. Mazarei's stories have been published in Iranian, American, English, Arabic, German, Turkish and Canadian anthologies, magazines and literary websites including [Narrative Magazine \(USA\)](#), [The Literary Review \(USA\)](#), [West Cost Line](#) (Canada), [Alef today](#) (Syria) and [Roadside Curiosities. Stories About American Pop Culture](#) (Leipzig University).



Sheida Mohamadi, poet, fiction writer and journalist, was born in Tehran, Iran. She will be the first Poet in Residence at the Jordan Center for Persian Studies at the University of California, Irvine for the 2015-2016 academic year. She was a Poet in Residence at University of Maryland in 2010. Sheida has been a member of Pen Center USA since 2010. She has published four books. Her first book, a work of lyrical prose titled, *Mahtab Delash ra Goshud, Banu! (The Moonlight Opened its Heart, Lady!)*, was published in 2001 and her second, a novel titled *Afsaneh-ye Baba Leila (The Legend of Baba Leila)* was published in 2005. Her third book, *Aks-e Fowri-ye Eshqabazi (The Snapshot of Lovemaking)* is a collection of poems published in 2007. Sheida's next collection of poems, *Yavashhaye Ghermez (Crimson whispers)* will be published 2015. Her poems have been translated into different languages, including English, French, Arabic, Czech, Germany, Turkish, Kurdish and Swedish. Sheida Mohamadi was recognized as one of the most notable contemporary Persian writers of 2010 by the Encyclopedia Britannica (Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year 2010, page 268). She also edited and wrote for the women's page (Safheh-ye Zanan) of Iran newspaper in 2002-2003 and at Farhangestan-e Honar Monthly Review in 2003, both in Tehran, Iran.



Paxima Mojavezi, born in Tehran, Iran, received her doctorate in Sociology of Literature from Panjab University, India. She completed her Master of Philosophy in Sociology of Literature at Delhi University. She has written several articles in relation to Persian literature with a particular focus on the new voice of female Iranian writers. In addition to sociology and literature, she also has a background in media and mass communication. She completed her B.A and M.A in Mass communication and Journalism at Azad University, Tehran, Iran. She then pursued a journalism career in Persian language media and newspapers in Iran and abroad. Her first book, *The Other Side*

of *Sadeq Hedayat's Coin*, an analytical study of love in Hedayat's short stories, was published in 2000 and is now in its eighth reprint. Her first work of fiction, a collection of short stories titled *Hallucination's Design*, was followed by another collection titled *I Will Become the Sky*, which includes 13 forbidden love stories. The story, "Forty-Eight Steps," received the Golshiri Foundation Award and was translated and published in *Words Without Borders* literary website in 2013. Two more books are in progress; one about India and the other a new collection of her short stories.



Gina Nahai is a best-selling author, columnist, and professor of Creative Writing at USC. Her novels have been translated into eighteen languages, and have been finalists for the Orange Award, the IMPAC Award, the Harold J. Ribalow Award, and the Jewish Book Council's Fiction Award. She is the winner of the Los Angeles Arts Council Award, the Persian Heritage Foundation's Award, The Simon Rockower Award, and the Phi Kappa Phi Award. Her writings have appeared in numerous national and international publications, as well as in a number of literary and academic journals and anthologies. She writes a monthly column for the Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles, and is a three-time finalist for an LA Press Club award. Nahai holds BA and Master's degrees in International Relations from UCLA, and a Master of Professional Writing from USC. Her latest novel, *The Luminous Heat of Jonah S.*, was a finalist for the Jewish Book Council's fiction award in 2014.



Mahdokht Sanati holds degrees in early childhood education and social and psychological counseling. She is an award winning children's writer and translator. Her more recent publications include *Women of Shadow & Light* and *Letters, Writings, and Remembrances*, a three-volume work on the life of Sedigheh Dowlatabadi. Sanati co-founded the Society for the Protecting the Rights of the Child in Iran in 1994. As a social activist, she has acted as Director of Organization for Rural Women's Education in Iran, Director of Association In Support of Children's Rights in Iran, and most recently as President of the Iranian Children's Right Society in Southern California.



Sholeh Wolpé is an Iranian-born poet, playwright and literary translator. A recipient of the 2014 PEN/Heim, 2013 Midwest Book Award, and 2010 Lois Roth Persian Translation prize, Sholeh's work, according to *Terrain Journal*, "transcends the boundaries of language, gender, ethnicity and nationality." Wolpé is the author of four collections of poetry and three books of translations, and is the editor of three anthologies. Her upcoming book, *Attar's Conference of the Birds*, will be released by W.W. Norton in 2017. Sholeh lives in Los Angeles.



Nasrin Rahimieh is Howard Baskerville Professor of Humanities and Professor of Comparative Literature at University of California, Irvine. She served as Maseeh Chair and Director of the Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture from 2006 to 2014. She was Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Alberta, Canada (1999-2002) and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities at McMaster University, Canada (2003-2006). She was elected and served as President of the International Society for Iranian Studies 2006-2008. Her teaching and research are focused on modern Persian literature, the literature of Iranian exile and diaspora, contemporary Iranian women's writing, and postrevolutionary Iranian cinema. Among her publications are *Oriental Responses to the West* (Brill 1990), *Missing Persians: Discovering Voices in Iranian Cultural History* (Syracuse 2001), *Forugh Farrokhzad, Poet Of Modern Iran: Iconic Woman And Feminine Pioneer Of New Persian Poetry* (2010) co-edited with Dominic Parviz Brookshaw. Her English translation of the late Taghi Modarressi's last novel, *The Virgin of Solitude*, was published in 2008 by Syracuse University Press. Her monograph, *Iranian Culture: Representation and Identity* was released by Routledge on September 9, 2015.