

Safa Mahmoudian

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Academic Education

- 05/2014–10/2021 University of Vienna, Faculty of Historical and Cultural Studies
DPhil. in Art History
Thesis: *Palace Gardens in Lower Mesopotamia from the Eighth to Eleventh Centuries* (summa cum laude, awarded the 2022 Grete Mostny Dissertation Prize)
Supervisors: Univ.-Prof. Dr. Basema Hamarneh; Prof. Dr. Mehrdad Qayyoomi.
External examiners: Prof. Dr. Haedeh Laleh; Prof. Dr. Anna Caiozzo
- 09/2008–02/2012 Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran
Department of Architectural History and Conservation
MA in Iranian Architectural Studies
Thesis: *The Story of Fadan Mādī: Life, Architecture and Urban Spaces along a Water Channel in Safavid Isfahan* (summa cum laude)
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Mehrdad Qayyoomi
- 02/2002–09/2006 Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran
Faculty of Architecture and Urban Planning
BA in Architecture
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Academic Work

- since 05/2024 University of Vienna, Department of Near Eastern Studies
Principal Investigator of the FWF-funded project “Travelling Gardens: Palace Gardens and Cultural Interactions between Khorasan and Lower Mesopotamia, 8th–12th Centuries” (ESP 670-G)
- 10/2022–07/2023 University of Oxford, Khalili Research Centre for the Art and Material Culture of the Middle East
Barakat Postdoctoral Fellow
- 04/2022–10/2022 Institute of Iranian Studies, Austrian Academy of Sciences
Post-Doc-Track Fellow
- 12/2017–02/2021 University of Vienna, Department of Art History
Doctoral Fellow of the Austrian Academy of Sciences
- 10/2018–03/2019, University of Vienna, Department of Art History
10/2016–12/2017 University Teaching Assistant at the professorship for Islamic Art History
- 05/2015–10/2016, University of Vienna, Department of Art History
10/2014–01/2015 Project Assistant for architectural drawings in the FWF-funded project “Centre and Periphery Islamic Architecture in Ottoman Macedonia, 1383–1520” (P26406-G21)
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University Teaching

- 10/2018–02/2019 Department of Art History, University of Vienna
Lecturer, course taught: Abbasidischer Palastbau und persische Bautraditionen (Abbasid palaces and Persian architectural traditions)

03/2017–02/2017	Department of Art History, University of Vienna Lecturer, courses taught: Palast, Moschee, Basar: Architektur unter den Safawiden im Iran, 16.-18. Jh. (Palace, mosque, bazar: architecture during the Safavid period in Iran, 16th-18th c.); Palastbau Traditionen in Westasien in frühislamischer Zeit (Palace architecture in Western Asia during the early Islamic periods)
01/2013–01/2014	Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Azad University of Sharekord, Iran Lecturer, courses taught: Theoretical Principles of Architecture; Introduction to Modern Architecture
09/2013–01/2014	Faculty of Civil Engineering, University of Shahrekord, Iran Lecturer, courses taught: Principles of Architectural Design; Principles of Urban Design
09/2013–01/2014	Faculty of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Payām Nūr University of Sharekord, Iran Lecturer, courses taught: Introduction to Islamic Architecture; Introduction to Urban and Architectural Design

Work as Architect

04/2012–12/2012	Zandīgān Studio, Tehran, Iran Design competition: Shams Tabrīzī's Tomb in Khoy Project for the modernization of the Friday Mosque of Semnan
07/2007–12/2007	Abnīya Sāzān Alburz Studio, Tehran, Iran Pilgrimage Terminal in the international Imam Khomeini Airport in Tehran.
06/2006–06/2007	Razmgah & Azarmi Construction Site Office, Tehran, Iran

Academic Publications (* Peer-Reviewed)

Books

- * 2024. *Palace Gardens in Lower Mesopotamia: 8th to 11th Centuries*. *Edinburgh Studies in Islamic Art series*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press (details [here](#))
- * 2017. *Dāstān Mādī Fadan: Mi 'mārī wa Zindigī wa Shahr dar Kinār Jūy dar Isfahān Şafawī* (The Story of Fadan Mādī: Life, Architecture and Urban Spaces along a Canal in Safavid Isfahan). Tehran: Rawzana.

Articles

- * 2023. 'The Fourfold Garden of Balkuwārā Palace, Revisited'. In *Jardins d'Orient. Entre Usages Sociaux, Pratiques, Politiques, et Mémoire du Passé*. Edited by Anna Caiozzo and Harit Joshi. Jardins et Société 6. Valenciennes: Presses Universitaires de Valenciennes, 85–113. ISBN-13 978-2-36424-097-1
- * 2021. 'Bahw in the Architectural Vocabulary of Third/Ninth and Fourth/Tenth Century Mesopotamia'. *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 111:153–94.
- with Amirhusayn Karimi. 2018. 'Mi 'mārī Ruzgār Şafawīyān (Architecture during the Safavid period)'. In *Majmū 'a-yi Hunar dar Tamaddun-i Islāmī. Mi 'mārī*, vol. 2. Edited by Mehrdad Qayyoomi Bidhendi. Tehran: Samt, 257–77.
- with Mehrdad Qayyoomi Bidhendi. 2017. 'The Norm of Mādī: Water Management System in Safavid Isfahan'. In *Beiträge zur Islamischen Kunst und Archäologie*, vol. 5. Edited by Markus Ritter, Ilse Sturkenboom, and Fernando Valdéz Fernández, 5:57–69. Wiesbaden: Dr. Ludwig Reichert Verlag.

* with Mehrdad Qayyoomi Bidhendi. 2013. ‘Hanjār Mādī: Nizām Mudīrīyat Āb dar Iṣfahān Ṣafawī (The Norm of Mādī: Water Management System in Safavid Isfahan)’. *Research & Scientific Journal of Architecture and Urban Planning/ Nāma-yi Mi ‘mārī wa Shahrāsāzī* 5/10:141–53.

Encyclopaedia Articles

* 2024 (forthcoming). ‘Samarra’. *Dā’irat al-Ma’ārif Buzurg Islāmī/ Encyclopaedia Islamica*. Edited by Kazem Musavi Bojnurdi, Wilferd Madelung, Farhad Daftary. The Centre for the Great Islamic Encyclopaedia/ Brill.

Book Reviews

2022. ‘Rante, Rocco, Djamal Mirzaakhmedov: *The Oasis of Bukhara. Population, Depopulation and Settlement Evolution*. Vol. 1. Edited by Marcus Milwright, Mariam Rosser-Owen, and Lorenz Korn. *Art and Archaeology of the Islamic World*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2019’. *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 112:538.

Conference Papers

‘Travelling tents: light structures in Medieval palace gardens of Khorasan and lower Mesopotamia’, in Production, Transmission & Interpretation Conference, York, March 2024

‘The Caliphal Palace of Samarra and its Riverside Garden: New Perspectives’, in Islamic Archaeology Day 2023, London, March 2023

‘The Riverine Landscape of the Tigris in Samarra and Baghdad from the Eighth to Eleventh Centuries’, in 34th Colloquium of Deutscher Orientalistentag, Berlin, September 2022

‘Henry Viollet and the Riverside Garden of the Caliphal Palace of Samarra’, Workshop on “Dans l’objectif d’Henry Viollet Les monuments islamiques à travers un fonds d’archives inexploré (1904-1913)”, Paris, June 2022

‘Concepts of Royal Garden Architecture in Lower Mesopotamia from the 8th to 11th Centuries, Based on Textual and Archaeological Evidence’, Workshop on Abbasid architecture in Iraq, Department of Archaeology, University of al-Qadisiyah, Iraq, June 2020

‘The Fourfold Garden of Balkuwārā Palace, Revisited’, 12th Colloquium on Garden Studies, Erfurt, November 2019

‘How to Integrate the Textual and Archaeological Evidence of Early Islamic Garden Architecture’, 14th Colloquium of the Ernst Herzfeld Society, Strasbourg, July 2018

‘Where is the Throne Hall in the Abbasid Palaces of Samarra?’, Workshop on ‘Le cadre de vie des élites Jardins et pouvoir’ in Congrès du gis Moyen-Orient et mondes Musulmans, Paris, July 2017

‘Gardens of Samarra: The Interrelation of Forms and Functions as Revealed in Abbasid Court Poetry’, Workshop on ‘The genius in Islamic art: Historical explorations in topological aesthetics’, Vienna, November 2016

‘A Ph.D. Project: Concepts of Royal Garden Architecture from Mesopotamia to the Indus in the 9th to 13th Centuries, based on Textual and Archaeological Evidence’, 10th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (ICAANE), Vienna, April 2016

‘Fadan Mādī: Architecture Along a Water Channel in Safavid Isfahan’, 10th Colloquium of the Ernst Herzfeld Society, Hamburg, July 2014

‘Urban Culture and Mādī (traditional water channel)’, International Conference on “Traditional Knowledge for Water Resources Management”, Yazd, Iran, March 2012

Invited Lectures

‘The Riverside Garden of the Caliphal Palace of Samarra’, KRC, March 2023

‘Garten, Paradeisos, Chahārbāgh: Palastgärten im islamischen Westasien’, in the Theological Course’s (theologische Kurse) special programme on Islamic art and architecture, Vienna, May 2019

‘*Birka* (pool) and *Bahw* (Hall of the Throne) in Abbasid Gardens of Samarra’, Department of Art History, University of Vienna, May 2017

Organising Conferences and Exhibitions

Lead co-organiser of the exhibition “auf dem Weg zur islamischen Kunst: Friedrich Sarre in Westasien”, 7 June–6 July 2017, Department of Art History, University of Vienna

Co-organiser of “14th colloquium of the Ernst Herzfeld society: Reassessing Nineteenth-century Art in Islamic Countries”, July 2017, Department of Art History, University of Vienna

Awards

2023 Marie Skłodowska-Curie Seal of Excellence with a score of 88.20%

2022 Grete Mostny Dissertation Prize, Faculty of Historical and Cultural Studies, University of Vienna

Funding and Grants

ESPRIT Fellowship of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), Institute for Near Eastern Studies, University of Vienna (May 2024–May 2027)

Barakat Publication Grant (The Barakat Trust’s Award Programme 2023) for the forthcoming book, titled *Palace Gardens in Lower Mesopotamia: 8th to 11th Centuries*

Barakat Postdoctoral Fellowship, Khalili Research Centre, Oxford (October 2022–July 2023)

Post-Doc-Track Fellowship of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Iranian Studies, Vienna (April–October 2022)

Wrap-up Scholarship of the Doctoral School of Historical and Cultural Studies, University of Vienna (May–August 2021)

Publication Grant of the Vienna Doctoral School of Historical and Cultural Studies, October 2020

Doctoral fellowship of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, University of Vienna (December 2017–February 2021)

Awarded fully-funded participation in a three-week workshop on Garden and Landscape Studies at Dumbarton Oaks, Harvard University (Washington, DC; 13 May–2 June 2018); sadly, I was unable to take part because the Consulate of the US Embassy in Vienna denied my visa due to a presidential travel ban.

Best mark from more than 3500 architects in the official registration exam for architects in Iran, 2010

Memberships

10/2024–present	Representative for the mid-level commission of the Department of Near Eastern Studies, University of Vienna
2014–present	Ernst Herzfeld Society for Studies in Islamic Art and Architecture
10/2023–present	Co-chair of the Ernst Herzfeld Award committee, Ernst Herzfeld Society for Studies in Islamic Art and Archaeology (with Mattia Guidetti)
07/2020–07/2022	Ernst Herzfeld Award committee, Ernst Herzfeld Society for Studies in Islamic Art and Archaeology
2020–present	Historian of Islamic Art Association

Language Skills

Persian:	native speaker
German:	fluent in speaking, reading, writing
English:	fluent in speaking, reading, writing
Arabic:	fluent in reading. Speaking and writing school knowledge