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**Lecture: Female Iranian Ceramists: From the Beginning of Modernism to the Present Day**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Iran is an ancient center of pottery production in the Middle East and one in which women have always played a significant role as “makers”. With the advent of modern art and the proliferation of academic institutions and galleries in the 1970s, Iranian women for the first time started making ceramic works in a new context, endowing them with a modern aesthetic. After the Islamic Revolution, the artistic arena in Iran underwent drastic changes. With women accessing educational institutions in even greater numbers, women benefited from a new position alongside men. Themes and subjects such as war, gender inequality, climate change and female traditional symbols were now being addressed in their works. Despite all the limitations Iranian women have faced, their participation in the 1<sup>st</sup> Ceramics Biennial in Iran and other solo and group events over the past four decades as well as their role in the evolution of pictorial arts are of great significance. Today, a new generation of Iranian female ceramists are at the forefront of change in the field. Beyond pushing the boundaries of techniques and concepts, they are encroaching on the traditionally male field of ceramic sales and dominating ceramic competitions.

In my lecture I will present the most important events and artists in this field, as well as their achievements in Iran and the wider Middle East.