

European Artists in Iran During the Qajar Period

Abstract

During the Qajar epoch Iranian artists exhibited a great interest in European paintings of the Renaissance and Baroque periods and the Realism of the nineteenth century. One of the vital reasons for such curiosity was the presence of European artists in Iran, most of whom were sent by their governments to explore social, cultural, and political situation of Iran, gather visual information, and provide maps for military purposes. These European paintings and drawings were intended as visual reports and were intentionally accurate, detailed and realistic. Qajar monarchs and princes, who were directly in touch with European artists-travelers, commissioned Iranian royal artists to follow the western style of the descriptive rendering of objects and people. Moreover, royal artists lived at court and they probably met European artists and became familiar with European techniques of sketching, drawing and painting. As a result Iranian painting became more realistic during the Qajar era.