PRESS RELEASE

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MAGIC OF PERSIA CONTEMPORARY ART PRIZE

FINALISTS OF LEADING IRANIAN ART PRIZE
TO BE SHOWN AT ROYAL COLLEGE OF ART DURING
LONDON FRIEZE WEEK

Monday 10th – Saturday 15th October 2011
PRESS PREVIEW: Wednesday 12 October 2011, 11am - 1:30pm
Admission: Free
Opening Hours: 10am – 8pm

Works by 8 of the most promising Iranian contemporary artists will be on free public exhibition at the prestigious Royal College of Art in London during London's Frieze Week from October 10–15, 2011. The exhibition concludes with a charity auction of the exhibited works conducted by Christie's; directly followed by an announcement revealing the MOP CAP 2011 Winner. This unique Prize was established in 2008 by Magic of Persia (MOP) as part of their efforts to nurture and develop Iranian cultural practitioners of the arts outside of Iran. Proceeds from the auction of Finalists' works are dedicated to sustaining the Magic of Persia Contemporary Art Prize (MOP CAP).

MOP CAP is a global search to identify the most talented emerging Iranian artists and provide an international platform for their careers. Selected from over 100 nominees, the Finalists were chosen from a shortlist of 25 who were exhibited at Traffic, Dubai during March 2011. The winner will be selected by a revered judging panel whose members include leading figures from the Iranian and International art scenes:

Zaha Hadid – Founding Partner, Zaha Hadid Architects
Ramin and Rokni Haerizadeh - Artists
Shirazeh Houshiary- Artist
Ali Khadra (Chair) – Publisher & Editor in Chief, Canvas Magazine
Idris Khan - Artist
Abaseh Mirvali – President, Mirvali Projects
Mohammad Mottahedan – Art Patron
Hans Ulrich Obtrist – Co-Director of Exhibitions and Programmes, and Director of International Projects, Serpentine Gallery, London

The MOP CAP winner will be awarded a solo exhibition at a leading gallery in London in 2012. For MOP CAP 2011, the winner's prize has been generously sponsored by **Mr Farbod Dowlatshahi.**

The Finalists

NIYAZ AZADIKHAH (B.1984)
Line 1
2010
Video Animation
Edition 3 of 3 + 2 AP

SHAHRZAD CHANGALVAEE (B.1983)
Motherland # 4
2010
Lambda print on metallic paper, mounted between acrylic glass and aluminium
95 x 145 cm
Edition 2 of 5 + 1 AP

MEHDI FARHADIAN (B.1980)
Plague
2011
Acrylic on canvas
200x250 cm

ARASH FAYEZ (B. 1984)
Ramblings of a Flâneur 2011
10.7 x 8.8 cm (23.5 x 23.5 cm framed)
Digital photography, Pigmented inkjet on Hahnemühle Photo Rag Baryta Paper, 315 gsm
Edition 5 of 5 + 1 AP

BABAK GOLKAR (B.1977)
Blue Gold (from the "Impositions" series)
2011
186 x 122 cm
Persian carpet (silk and wool) and Ultramarine Blue acrylic paint

DARIUSH NEHDARAN (B. 1984)
The Life of the Shadows
2011
105 x 70Cm
Digital photograph
Edition 1 of 5

HESAM RAHMANIAN (B.1980)
Ahmadinejad (Green)
2011
Dice in a wooden frame
135 x115 cm

SHIRIN SABAHI (B. 1984)
Swede Home
1966/1973/1975/2009
DV PAL colour video with sound, English voice over by Jan Edman, converted from 8mm film

NOTES TO EDITORS:
PROGRAMME OF EVENTS:
Wednesday 12th October 11am – 1:30pm - Morning Private Preview for press (with judges and artists in attendance)
Saturday 15th October 6pm – 9:15pm - VIP cocktail reception, Auction by Christie's & Announcement of MOP CAP Winner

MOP CAP - THE VISION
The Magic of Persia Contemporary Art Prize (MOP CAP) is a global search for the next generation of contemporary Iranian artists; the majority of whom have had very limited exposure to the international art scene. The central goal of the prize is to provide an opportunity for gifted artists to gain international exposure, and through doing this, make a notable contribution to the long-term advancement of Iranian art and culture worldwide.

The first of its kind, MOP CAP aims to identify the most talented contemporary Iranian artists in the categories of Painting, Sculpture, Photography and New Media.

MOP CAP - THE PROCESS
The prize is open to Iranian artists living and working both inside and outside of Iran; and in order to be considered, applicants must be nominated. The nomination panel is comprised of carefully selected gallerists, curators, artists, and critics who are familiar with the Iranian art scene. It is the role of these experts to nominate up to two artists that they feel merit the award.

Nominees who meet the entry criteria are required to submit images of their work , as well as a biography and artist's statement. These are then viewed online by the MOP CAP judging panel, who select a shortlist of 25 artists.

The shortlisted artists' works are exhibited at a space in Dubai the following March, where the judging panel meet to establish 5 - 10 Finalists. This coincides with Art Dubai, and once the Finalists are announced, the exhibition is opened to the public.

The works of the Finalists are subsequently exhibited in London at the Royal College of Art (RCA) in October 2011 to coincide with the Frieze Art Fair. Here, the judges reconvene to deliberate on the Prize Winner. On the final night of the exhibition, an auction of all of the Finalists' works is conducted by Christie's, with the proceeds dedicated to sustaining the Magic of Persia Contemporary Art Prize.

Following the auction, the Prize Winner is announced and awarded a solo-exhibition in an exhibition space at a leading gallery in London.

MAGIC OF PERSIA
Magic of Persia, promotes contemporary and classical Persian culture, and provides a platform to nurture and develop Iranian cultural practitioners of the arts outside of Iran.

This is accomplished by:

a. providing a platform and infrastructure for these practitioners to showcase their vision and create bridges of communication between this culture and the world at large.

b. promoting cultural exchange, debate, and collaboration with like-minded international institutions such as British Museum, Saatchi Gallery and Victoria and Albert Museum through solo and group exhibitions, film promotion, educational workshops, scholarships and art residencies.

Magic of Persia is a privately-funded, non-political, non-religious organisation (registered as a non-profit charity in the UK, charity reg. no. 1104066).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE SUCCESSES OF MOP CAP TO DATE

Evidence of just how highly esteemed the prize has become in a short space of time, as well as the astoundingly positive and life changing impact it has, can be seen in the remarkable success of Mahmoud Bakhshi, the 2009 MOP CAP winner who was awarded a solo exhibition at Saatchi Gallery. In addition, Bakhshi's work was acquired by the Tate Modern in London and is currently represented by Galerie Thaddaeus Ropac in Paris.

It is becoming more and more apparent with every new development, both in the world of contemporary Iranian art and the doors which MOP CAP is opening for these artists, that the prize could not have been more necessary or come at a better time.
With 90 percent of the artists applying from inside Iran and an average of 100 applicants every other year, the challenges that MOP CAP has faced to achieve so much in so little time from a London-based office are truly notable. What sets this prize and its organisers aside however, is the fundamental understanding that these challenges in themselves illustrate how crucial and necessary the prize is in allowing these voices to be heard and continue to be heard.

For information on Magic of Persia, visit: **www.magicofpersia.com** & *for extended biographies please visit:* **www.mopcap.com**