**Layla S. Diba**

**Short Resume**

**2010**

Layla S. Diba began her career as art advisor to The Private Secretariat of the Shahbanou of Iran and was subsequently named the first woman museum director in Iran. She held the post of Director and Chief Curator of the Negarestan Museum of 18th and 19th century Iranian Art from its inception in 1975 until 1978. Under her leadership, the holdings of the museum increased from a few hundred items to more than three thousand artworks. After moving to the United States in 1979, she obtained her Doctorate in Islamic Art from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University and acted as advisor to museums, corporations and foundations. She is a Trustee of the Encyclopedia Iranica and Soudavar Memorial Foundations and a member of the Academic Advisory Committee of the Iran Heritage Foundation. She is also a member of the Visiting Committee of the Islamic Department of the Metropolitan Museum; of The Friends of Islamic Art; and of the Collections Committee of the Harvard Art Museum’s Department of Islamic and Later Asian art.

Among her outstanding accomplishments as Hagop Kevorkian Curator of Islamic Art at the Brooklyn Museum of Art for ten years, Dr. Diba organized the groundbreaking exhibition *Royal Persian Paintings: The Qajar Epoch (1785-1925)* (1999). The exhibition has defined the field of 19th century Iranian and later Asian Art and the accompanying publication has become a standard reference work for the period.

Dr Diba has written and lectured extensively on Persian painting. Most recently, she has focused on Modern Middle Eastern and Iranian Art, developing new approaches to introducing this field to American and European audiences. She has curated exhibitions at the Lehmann-Maupin and Leila Taghinia Milani Heller Galleries in New York. In 2004 she served on the advisory panel of the Islamic World Arts Initiative of the Doris Duke Foundation. In 2006 she served as Islamic Art Curator for the Cultural Development Master Plan of the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi and now sits on the Guggenheim Museum’s Asian Art Council. In 2009, Dr. Diba served as scholar-in-residence at Shangri La, Doris Duke’s former home in Honolulu Hawaii, to review their collections of later Persian art.

Her current publications include the *Qumish: Turkoman Silver Ornaments from the Marshall and Marilyn Wolf Collection* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, forthcoming) and *Selseleh/Zelzeleh: Movers and Shakers of Contemporary Iranian Art*, Leila Taghinia Milani Gallery, New York 2009. Dr. Diba’s recent public speaking engagements include the keynote speech at the Victoria and Albert Museum’s Conference on Qajar Textiles, the prestigious Calderwood Annual Lecture on Islamic Art at The Harvard Art Museum: *The Power of Images: Qajar Photography and its Influence on Modern Iranian Art,* as well as The Metropolitan Museum of Art’s Annemarie Schimmel Memorial Lecture *Selseleh: Artistic Lineages in Persian Painting*. In Fall 2010 she is co-chairing a colloquium on Art of Modern Iran with Melissa Chiu, Director of Asia Society. Dr. Diba is also a collector of Persian and Islamic art and a benefactor and advocate for numerous Persian cultural causes.