In the past academic year a number of visitors and speakers came to the Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture. We were fortunate to host authors, filmmakers, scholars and musicians who deal with the Iranian world at our center. We were also busy with new publications which the center now directly oversees, as well as collaborations with other universities and foundations. New graduate students have also come to UC Irvine to study the Iranian world in various disciplines such as comparative literature, film, and history. In the seven years that the Center has been active Iranian Studies has grown tremendously, with students and faculty involved in research and study about Iran and beyond. Another wonderful addition to the Center has been the recordings of all events. These can be found at this link: http://sites.uci.edu/persianstudiesuci/
On Saturday, October 6, 2012 an international conference was dedicated to the Persian epic, entitled: *Shahnameh (The Book of Kings): Iran’s National Epic* at the Center for Persian Studies. Scholars from the US and Europe convened to discuss the different aspects of the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi. The first panel looked at the artistic production of the Shahnameh (Linda Komaroff, Alka Patel, Sonya Rhie Quintanilla); while the afternoon panel compared the Persian epic with its antecedent *Khoday-Namag* from the Sasanian period and other Zoroastrian and Classical sources (M. Rahim Shayegan, Yuhan S-D Vevaina, Charles Melville). The final panel looked at identity and nationalism from Iran and the Soviet and post-Soviet space to the US (Firuza Abdullaeva, Mahmoud Omidsalar, Ali Ansari).
Beyond the Bamiyan Buddhas

This was a two-day program at UCLA and UC Irvine. Showcasing the cutting-edge of international research on Afghanistan’s archaeology and history.

Fredrik Hiebert, National Geographic Society, Washington D.C. - “The Bronze Age of Afghanistan”

Phillipe Marquis, DAFA, Kabul “2002-2012 Ten Years of Archeological Activities in Afghanistan: A Travel through Cultures”

Llewelyn Morgan, Brasenose College, Oxford - “Hindu Kush: Boundary & Point of Encounter”

Touraj Daryaee, UC Irvine - “King Huvishka, Yima and the Bird: Observations on a Paradisaic State”

Jennifer Rose, Claremont Graduate University - “Above the Bamiyan Buddhas” “Mithra Rides in Judgment”

Alka Patel, UC Irvine - “Afghanistan’s Palimpsest Landscape: Buddhism and Islam in Material Culture”

Iranian Visual Culture Workshop

The visual culture forum at UC Irvine brought together visual artists and scholars who work on different aspects of Iranian visual culture in Iran and its Diaspora. The workshop held in April 2013, was a one-day event to chart out a terrain of work that can be fostered between practitioners and academics. Its them was cultural memory, trauma, and visual culture. Post-revolutionary Iranian society has been affected by drastic social change, revolutionary politics, a devastating war, the displacement of segments of population to exile, and the formation of diasporic communities. These experiences have been causes of tremendous trauma among Iranians in and out of Iran. Visual culture in various forms such as film, graphic art, street art, painting, performance, and digital art has reflected this trauma among Iranians. Forms of expression that have portrayed in such works have not only been representations of life but more importantly a vehicle to explore and untangle traumatic experiences of a people.
Asthma in Tehran (Tehran Asthma Files)

Iran and Iranian Studies face extraordinary challenges in coming decades. Complicated political and economic issue must be dealt with. Connectivity across generations, and between Iranians living around the world, will be a challenge. National problems - that need to be understood by the research community - will likely emerge from a tangle of cultural, social, political, economic, technological and ecological dynamics. New modes of interdisciplinary research and collaboration are thus called for. The Iranian Studies 2050 initiative of the Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies aims to cultivate new approaches to research and collaboration.

The first project advanced by IS-2050 is to understand Tehran as an “asthmatic space”, working within the collaborative structure provided by The Asthma Files project, an extensive effort to cultivate forms of research practice capable of addressing complex problems such as escalating asthma prevalence and environmental public health. The Asthma Files are based at Rensselaer Polytechnic, in Troy, New York.

Continued on page 5
The *Tehran Asthma Files* project was launched in May 2011 with a workshop hosted by the Center for Persian Studies and Culture, building on a prior collaboration with UCI’s Center for Ethnography. The workshop resulted in a plan to work collaboratively, drawing in researchers from across disciplines, to understand asthma patterns, care and governance in Tehran - as a way to understand how complex societal problems are being reflected and addressed in contemporary Iranian contexts. The Center for Persian Studies hosted another workshop to develop *Tehran Asthma Files* in May 2012 at UCI with plans to share results more broadly.

Asthma Files Workshop

**CENTER TALKS**

**Christopher de Bellaigue**, Journalist and Author

Born in London in 1971, Christopher de Bellaigue has worked as a journalist in the Middle East and South Asia since 1994. His first book, *In the Rose Garden of the Martyrs: A Memoir of Iran*, was shortlisted for the Royal Society of Literature Ondaatje Prize. His book *Rebel Land: Unraveling the Riddle of History in a Turkish Town* was shortlisted for the prestigious Orwell Book Prize for political writing. De Bellaigue has been a frequent contributor to The Economist, The New Yorker, Granta, Harper’s, and The New York Review of Books.
Bruce Lincoln, Caroline E. Haskell Distinguished Service Professor of the History of Religions in the Divinity school from the University of Chicago spoke on the role of the magi during the Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid period. The talk centered on the changing nature of the magi in terms of their function and work. While the magi were masters of ritual knowledge in the Zoroastrian tradition, Lincoln suggested that with the loss of imperial support they began to participate in vocations which the Greek sources associated with magic and magical practices. The talk was attended by students, public and faculty from History and Classics.
Farhang Foundation Lectures in Iranian Studies

Professor Hamid Naficy

Professor Naficy is currently Professor of Radio-Television-Film and the Al-Thani Professor in Communication; he is also Affiliated Faculty, Department of Art History, Interdisciplinary Ph.D. Program in Theater and Drama at Northwestern University.

Professor Naficy’s presence on the UCI campus enriched the community’s understanding of Iranian cinema. He delivered two talks “Writing the Social History of Iranian Pre-revolution Cinema” and “Writing the Social History of Iranian Post-revolution Cinema” as well as a film discussion. His lectures focused on the social history of Iranian cinema during the past century. The lectures were also an introduction to his four volume books on the same subject. He also led a film discussion after the screening of “This is not a film” produced by Jafar Panahi and Mojtaba Mirtahmasb.
Dr. Jason Sion Mokhtarian
Professor of Religious and Jewish Studies
Indiana University Bloomington
“The Talmud in Ancient Iran: The Rabbis and Persian Priests in a Judicial Context”

An Assistant Professor of Religious and Jewish Studies at Indiana University Bloomington, Jason Sion Mokhtarian is a scholar of ancient Judaism with a particular interest in the Jews of Persia in early and late antiquity. Dr. Mokhtarian's current research project examines the extent to which Sasanian Iran, as both a real historical force and imaginary interlocutor, played a role in the formation of Babylonian rabbinic identity and authority from the third through seventh centuries CE. By tracing the impact of ancient Iranian civilization on the Babylonian Talmud, Mokhtarian's research gauges the prospects and limits of the integration of Iranology into Talmudic Studies, two historically distinct disciplines. His talk at UC Irvine focused on the social and cultural interface between the Babylonian Rabbis and Zoroastrian priests in various judicial settings. At Indiana University, Dr. Mokhtarian teaches a wide range of courses in the history of Judaism and late antique religions, including "Introduction to Jewish History: From the Bible to Spanish Expulsion", "Sacred Books of the Jews", "Jews, Christians, and Others in Antiquity", and "Rabbinic Judaism: Literature and Beliefs". Dr. Mokhtarian received graduate degrees in Ancient Iranian Studies and Ancient Judaism from the University of Chicago and UCLA, and in 2006 was a Lady Davis Fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Continued on page 9
This presentation surveys the Georgian literary sources for the history of the Sasanian Empire and the larger Iranian Commonwealth. Chief among these written works are Georgian hagiographical and historiographical works produced between the fifth and ninth centuries. The texts are considered on multiple levels, including their literal content, the vocabulary and syntax, as well as their production and subsequent revision and transmission. While Georgian historiographical sources have often been dismissed as later monuments saturated that are more legend than history, I shall argue that they are, in fact, deep reservoirs of Iranian imagery and that the oldest compositions were deliberately patterned upon the Xwaday-namag.

Talinn Grigor (Ph.D., MIT, 2005) is an Associate Professor of modern and contemporary architecture in the Department of Fine Arts at Brandeis University. She spoke on the revival of architecture of ancient Persian among the Parsis in India and that of the Qajar and later the Pahlavi state in the nineteenth and twentieth century.
SAMUEL JORDAN CENTER
FOR PERSIAN STUDIES
AT UC IRVINE
PRESENTS
HOSSEIN OMOUMI
Maseeh Professor in Performing Arts
Claire Trevor School of the Arts—UCI
“Correlation between Traditional Iranian Architecture
and Classical Persian Music”
رابطه معماری سنتی و موسیقی کلاسیک ایرانی

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2013
6:30pm-8:30pm
HUMANITIES INSTRUCTIONAL, BUILDING 135
EVENT IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
This program will be held in Persian

Continued on page 11
Brent E. Huffman is an award-winning director, writer, and cinematographer of documentaries and television programs. His work ranges from documentaries aired on The Discovery Channel, The National Geographic Channel, NBC, CNN, PBS and Al Jazeera, to Sundance Film Festival premieres, to films made for the China Exploration and Research Society. He has also directed, produced, shot and edited short documentaries for online outlets like TIME, Salon, Huffington Post and PBS Arts. Huffman has been making social issue documentaries and environmental films for more than a decade in Asia, Africa and the Middle East. These films have gone on to win numerous awards including a Primetime Emmy, Best Conservation Film-Jackson Hole, Best Documentary-Fresno, three Cine Golden Eagle Awards, a College Emmy, a Student Academy Award and a Grand Jury Award at AFI’s SILVERDOCS. Huffman was also an editor of Julia Reichert’s and Steven Bognar’s Primetime Emmy winning PBS documentary series "A Lion in the House," about children battling cancer. Huffman is also a writer whose work has been featured in CNN, The Asia Society, Tricycle Magazine, Bust Magazine, The Wilson Quarterly, FRONTLINE and The China Digital Times. He recently completed a book about his experiences in China called "Life in the Heart of China: Diary from a Forbidden World." In 2009, Huffman covered Vortex 2, the world’s largest tornado research project for NBC and The Weather Channel. Most recently, he completed the award-winning documentary "The Colony" for Al Jazeera about China in Africa. He is currently working on a new documentary about the race to save an ancient Buddhist city in Logar province, Afghanistan.
The Director of the Center for Persian Studies, Dr. Nasrin Rahimieh was on sabbatical for two quarters and published a number of articles and served as a guest director of several important journals.


The Associate Director, Dr. Touraj Daryaee, organized the Shahnameh and Beyond the Buddha's of Bamiyan Conference at UC Irvine. He also published books and a number of articles.


Continued on page 13
Dr. Mazyar Lotfalian, Assistant Director  
Center for Persian Studies and Culture  

For the past academic year, Dr. Lotfalian has been involved in writing and organizing research workshops. In the summer of 2012, he organized an invited panel on media in Iran as part of an international conference on religion and media in Turkey. In the Fall of 2012, he participated in an invited roundtable at Stockholm University entitled, “Social Movement, Alternative Politics, and Political Dissent.” At UCI, he helped organize two important collaborative workshops on visual culture, and science and medicine in Iran. These two workshops have helped the center to collaborate with other scholars in various institutions such as MIT, UCLA, and RPI.

Dr. Lotfalian’s own writing on aesthetics and politics has continued. A recent article entitled, “Aestheticized Politics, Visual Culture, and Emergent Forms of Digital Practice”, is coming out in the International Journal of Communication.

Dr. Hossein Omoumi, Maseeh Professor in Persian Performing Arts  
Center for Persian Studies and Culture  

Dr. Omoumi has been working on a documentary film supported by National Endowment for the Arts and Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute under the title of “Classical Persian Music, Hossein Omoumi from Isfahan to Irvine”.