



TREASURE TROVE IN TEHRAN

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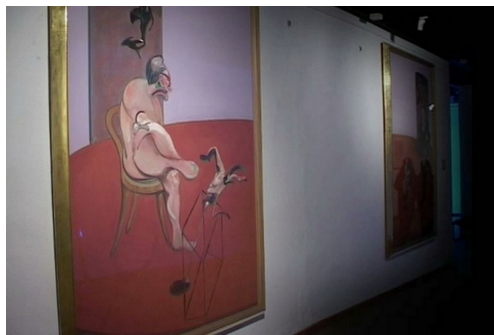
Tehran's Museum of Contemporary Art possesses a treasure trove of major masterpieces of the 20th century, outlawed paintings which remain locked in the museum's vault in the basement: Picassos, Kandinskys, Miro, Warhols but also works by Monet, Pissarro, Toulouse-Lautrec, Jackson Pollock

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Assembled during the waning years of the shah's regime, largely instigated by Farah Diba, who commissioned her cousin, the architect Kamran Diba, to design a new contemporary art museum for Tehran and fill it with notable works of contemporary Iranian art, and also international works that would allow the city to take its place among the leading centers of culture in the world. This treasure has been exhibited only once, in 2005, under president Khatami. The paintings have « survived » the turmoils of history thanks to the dedication of the Museum's guardian who has worked there since the opening in 1977.

At the eve of the 30th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, the amazing story of Teheran's Contemporary Art Museum, appears like a mirror of Iranian society during the final days of the Shah's regime. It is also a testimony of the extraordinary interest of the young generation for culture from "the four corners of the earth" - and their refusal to accept only art sanctioned by Islamic ideology.

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