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## The Analysis of War Reflections in Kazem Chalipa's Paintings According to Panofsky Case Study: Three Works on the Theme of Mother/ Woman

Minoo Khany\*

Christophe Balay\*\*

Mostafa Goudarzi\*\*\*

### Abstract

In Iranian art history, Kazem Chalipa is recorded as one of the pioneer Iranian artists who are known as painters of Islamic Revolution. He has been a painting student of Hannibal Alkhas at Tehran University Faculty of Fine Arts and under his supervision he learned and gained experience. Since being grown up in a religious family, with the advent of the revolutionary movements, he joined the artists who believed in committed social art and created works influenced by the society. These artists artistically returned to the society the sense they have received from; the path that continued during the years of Iran-Iraq war and then after.

In this paper, the artist's viewpoints about Islamic Revolution and Sacred Defense paintings are discussed. Then, among twelve works of his which have reflections of Iran-Iraq war, three works focusing on the role of women/mother are analyzed. These studies showed that Chalipa is an ethnographer. He uses a variety of symbols. Signs of Ghahve Khaneh (Coffee House) Art can be clearly traced in his works and women/mothers are the subjects of many of his works. Chalipa has painted them in different ages: young, adult and aged and has tried to depict them with their ethnic garments while his main intention is to emphasize the role of women and their protective spirit and role in contemporary social events, particularly in Islamic Revolution and Sacred Defense.

### Keywords

Kazem Chalipa, Painting, Sacred Defense, 8-year Iraqi war against Iran.

\*. Ph. D. in Arts. Faculty of Arts and Architecture, Islamic Azad University-North Tehran Branch. khanyminoo@gmail.com

\*\* Ph. D. in Iranian Literature, Assitant profeseeor of Universty INALCO. Paris.cbalay@inalco.fr.

\*\*\* Ph. D. in Contemporary Art. Faculty of Fine arts, University of Tehran. goudarzi40@gmail.com.

## Preface

The Iraq-Iran war that was imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran in September, 1980, is considered as one of the longest wars in the 20th century by some experts. Other than the political and social effects and consequences of the 8-year war (known as the Imposed war or the Holy Defense) on the structure of the post-revolution Iranian society, it resulted in some changes and shifts in the fields of culture and art. Photography, poetry, painting, and music were the first to be influenced by the war, later stories and performing arts underwent changes, and then the cinema, with the latter providing opportunities to create films on the subject of the 8-year war.

Some of the contemporary Iranian artists who in the pre-revolution era had been moving alongside the people and creating works of art on the subject of revolution, were again accompanying the people during the Holy Defense. Paintings in various sizes could be seen in different places like mosques, schools, or even the strongholds in the war fronts; or in the houses of people whose children had been fighting against the enemy and defending their homeland courageously. Many of these artists were students who had religious approaches. They had been trained by teachers and masters like Hannibal Alkhas who insisted on figurative painting inspired by the society they live in<sup>1</sup>. One of the first artists who used this approach is Kazem Chalipa.

When reviewing Chalipa's works, it can be seen clearly that the 8-year war has been reflected in them. In fact, what is interesting is that after the breakout of the war and being influenced by it, Chalipa created works of art that directly reflected the confrontation. Reviewing his 12 works that pointed directly to the war makes it clear that he has paid special attention to women/mothers in his works. Therefore out of these 12 works of art, 3 works have been chosen for detailed analyses; Isar (or Sacrifice), Moqavemat (or Resistance), Kavir (or Desert), in which women/mothers have been placed at the center of attention. Here is the hypothesis of the research: with the creation of the female figure, Chalipa intends to

point to the social role of women in contemporary social events, including the Revolution and the Holy Defense.

## Research background

Based on what the author of this research has found, the reflection of war in Chalipa's works has not been discussed or analyzed in any publication or research. Yet in some books like Revolutionary art<sup>2</sup> (or The Revolution's Painting: The Faithful Social Religious Art), the main subjects and features of Chalipa's works have been briefly discussed and talked about.

## Research Methodology

The research methodology of the article is content analysis of the artist's works through Erwin Panofsky's<sup>3</sup>(1862 Germany-1968 New Jersey) method of iconology. The research data has been gathered through field studies (interviewing the artist) and library researches.

## Kazem Chalipa

Kazem Chalipa was born in Tehran, Nezam Abad district, in 1957, in a family of 7. His father, Hassan Esmailzadeh, was a famous coffeehouse painter, and his mother was a housewife. Therefore Chalipa got familiar with painting and his father's painting style, which was based on traditional and religious subjects like Shahnameh's epics and the Event of Ashura.

He started his studies in Navvab Safavi primary school and in 1972 he went to Visual Arts High school in Tonekabon Street in Tehran. Chalipa was also trained by famous painting masters like Asghar Mohammadi and Mahmoud Farshchian. In 1976 he got accepted in universities entrance exam and started his studies in architecture in the University of Tehran's Faculty of Fine Arts. A little while later he found out he was more interested in canvases and paints than in architecture. As a result, he continued his studies in Painting, under the supervision of professors like Majid Mehregan, Habibollah Ayatollahi, Hannibal Alkhas, and Javad Hamidi. In 1995, he got his MA in Painting from Tarbiat

Modarres University and in 2011 he defended his PhD dissertation on coffeehouse painting in Shahed University's Faculty of Arts.

In his second year of BA studies, revolutionary activities and movements in Iran were at their pick, with universities being one of the important centers of such activities. In that period, Hannibal Alkhas, a professor of the Fine Arts Faculty pioneered in painting techniques based on noble traditions and painting contents based on national and religious traditions. In other words, when modernist approaches, especially expressionism and futurism, were highly popular among Iranian artists, Alkhas stood against what he considered as baseless and imported modernism.

The revolutionary atmosphere of universities and the figurative painting made students interested in paintings which depicted man in different situations. Meanwhile, there were religious and irreligious groups who were politically active in universities. Coming from a religious family, Chalipa had a religious approach which was reflected in his works since the very beginning. Chalipa's first work with a revolutionary approach is an unnamed painting on the burial of Gholamreza Takhti, the Iranian wrestling champion whose reason of death is a still subject to doubt.

As part of his assignments<sup>4</sup> for the second year of his BA studies, Chalipa painted the burial ceremony of Takhti and in his painting 3 clergymen with red turbans are shown burying the national hero. Red turbans in this picture depict the revolutionary attitude of the clergymen. This painting, along with works of Habibollah Sadeqi and Hossein Khosrojerdi who were both Chalipa's classmates, was put on display in the first painting gallery which was held in Hosseinieh Ershad a short while after the victory of the revolution. It was held in the same place where Dr Ali Shariati made speeches.

Chalipa and other artists<sup>5</sup>, whose works were at display in Hosseinieh Ershad, later founded an art group called Salman which not only was focused on art but also concentrated on revolution and their

religious ideals. The group was called the same up until the establishment of the »Art and Islamic Thought Center«. Hosseinieh Ershad's painting gallery was later held in other cities including Qom, Isfahan, Shiraz, Mashhad, and Rasht, and got popular among those who showed no interest in painting prior to the revolution (Chalipa, 2009).

Pursuing their revolutionary goals, Chalipa and some of his friends were doing political and religious activities in the basement of the house of a friend, whose father was a general of Shah's army. They printed leaflets and posters and stuck them up on walls in the streets at nights. When the Imposed War broke out, Chalipa and other artists from the Art Center began to create works on the subject of war (Chalipa, 2009).

Chalipa points out to the idealist view towards making a work of art during those days. »The enemy had attacked our country and Basijis spontaneously defended the country, standing up against the enemy's assaults and as a result we did not lose even one single span of our land [...]. We felt responsible to support the soldiers who fought at the war. So the artists from the center, who went to the fighting front, continued their cultural fight when they got back, and thus they made a lot of paintings on the subject of the Holy Defense. When looking back at works which were created in those years, I wonder how we had been able to do all those works. We worked nonstop for 15 hours a day with a bright spirit. We did not feel the difficulties and intensity of the work we were doing. We made paintings and drawing for long hours without getting tired at all. Now when I look back at that period, I feel like a swimmer who has reached the shore after a long swim in a huge sea, wondering over his power and abilities that made him able to do so. We did all the massive works with the energy that God bestowed on us and thus we never felt tired« (Chalipa, 2001: 26).

Chalipa is one of the artists who have continued to work on the subjects of religion, revolution, and the Holy Defense till today. He believes it is not important which technique he uses in his paintings,

as it is reflecting the subject that is of significance. «We can use expressionist techniques and methods, or the surrealist ones, because it's the 'content' that matters. The important thing is to work on the post-revolution content (Chalipa, 1999: 87).

Gaining experience through time and using different forms and symbols made Chalipa able to promote his own special visual language. He believes painting and literature must reflect whatever the author or painter feels committed to. This is why he is still making paintings with religious subjects and on resistance and the 8-year war. He has also created some works on other social events including the passing of Imam Khomeini and also about Iranians' solidarity with the Palestinian people. He set on display some of his works on the subject of revolution, including a painting on Martyr Sayyed Morteza Avini, in a painting gallery which was held by the Martyrs Museum, in order to display portrait of the martyrs of the revolution and war. He was also inspired by the revolutionary movement in the Arab world and thus created works of arts on the issue, including the Liberation (2011) or the Palm Trees collection (2011-2014).

Analyzing 3 works of Chalipa which focus on women In every war, different social sections and phenomena are affected as it influences the whole social life, political system, and social structure and conscience. Wars affect fates and directly or indirectly have an effect on all genders, classes, professions, and values of the society. This relationship which varies in strength depending on the scale of importance and sensitivity of the war, is very strong when it comes to arts. Artists are inspired by what happen and exist around them. War brings about a lot of events and issues which may be the cause for creation of a lot of works of art. In fact, wars entail extreme changes and shifts in the normal lifestyle of the people and this provides an opportunity and inspiration for the artist to start a new work. »Basically wars happen in the same situation where mankind is described in. Mankind is the basic element of an artist's imagination. It is a natural reaction from an artist to pay attention to

mankind and his reaction towards difficult situations like war. It is because from war rises all the pains of mankind and it feature whatever a work of art needs in order to be created« (Darvish, 2012). Chalipa, whose artistic mindset and sensitivity towards his surroundings was formed prior to the revolution, began to make paintings inspired by the imposed war after Iraq invaded Iran, and this tendency in him continued even after the war. Among his paintings, there are 12 works that are recognized to be inspired by the war: Marzbanane Dashte Shaqayeq 1980 (or the Border Guards of poppy field), Jangavaran Jebheye Noor 1980 (or the Fighters of the Light War Front), Isar 1981 (or Sacrifice), Talayedaran Noor (or the Pioneers of Light)1982, Khoon Bar Shamshir Pirooz Ast (or Blood Wins over Sword) 1983, Moqavemat (or Resistance) 1983, Mooshhaye Sekkeh Khar (or Coin-eater Mice)1984, Kavir (or Desert) 1984, Basiji 1985, Mohajeran (or Immigrants) 1986, Zendegi (or Life) 1986, and Didar 1995 (or Meeting); (Fig. 1 to 12).



Fig. 1. Marzbanane Dashte Shaqayeq (or The Border Guards of poppy field), 1980, 170\*240 cm. Source: Tajasomi.ir.



Fig. 2. Jangavarān Jebheye Noor (or the Fighters of the Light War Front), 1980, 70\*200 cm. Source: Tajasomi.ir.



Fig. 4. Talayedaran Noor (or the Pioneers of Light)  
1982, 120\*170 cm. Source: Tajasomi.ir.



Fig. 5. Khoon Bar Shamshir Pirooz Ast (or Blood Wins over Sword)  
1983, 200\*160 cm. Source: Tajasomi.ir.



Fig. 3. Isar (or Sacrifice), 1981, 200\*300 cm. Source: Tajasomi.ir.



Fig. 6. Moqavemat (or Resistance) 1983, 120\*100 cm.  
Source: Tajasomi.ir.



Fig. 7. Mooshayeh Sekkeh Khar (or Coin-eater Mice) 1984, 150\*200 cm. Source: Tajasomi.ir.



Fig. 8. Kavir (or Desert) 1984, 160\*130 cm. Source: Tajasomi.ir.



Fig.9. Basiji 1985, 200\*180 cm. Source: Tajasomi.ir.

has used realist or realist-symbolic approaches in his works. The realism however has not prevented him from using symbolism and creating symbolic works. He has used plants and nature as symbols a lot; tulips, cedar trees, wheat fields, poppy fields, and palm trees, to name a few. When reflecting the war in his paintings, he has used revolutionary symbols like Kaffieh or headbands. In two of his paintings, *Life and Blood Wins against the Sword*, he has used tanks as symbols, and in *Sacrifice* he has used sword as a symbol of war. We can also see *Qoran* (painted in one color), as a religious symbol, and the *Iranian flag* (with three colors), as a national symbol, in some of his paintings. Horse, mouse, and swallow are some of the animals Chalipa used in his paintings as symbols to express himself in a better and clearer way. He also has used natural symbols like the moon and the sun. To Chalipa, the subject of the paintings on revolution and the Holy Defense is of high significance. This includes the objects or events that are illustrated in the painting and it conveys a lot of important information (Jensen, 2005: 25). The subjects of Chalipa's paintings which reflect the war include: Martyrs, the presence of popular forces in war fronts, the role of Imam Khomeini, women, soldiers, war opportunists, the war refugees, life after the war, and the missing martyrs. This shows the



Fig. 11. Zendegi (or Life) 1986, 140\*100 cm. Source: Tajasomi.ir.



Fig. 12. Didar (or Meeting), 1995, 150\*200 cm. Source: Tajasomi.ir.

used natural elements in his paintings, like shedding light on objects, yet this realism does not reflect the reality. The main colors used in these works are red, white, black, ochre, grey, and green.

Despite following realist approaches in his paintings, Chalipa uses signs and symbols to express himself more clearly and precisely.

«A symbol is a sign which represents an idea, an object, a concept and other things, and its appearance is related to what it refers to» (Cooper, 2007: 3). There are different types of symbols, symbols taken from plants and animals, or religious, natural, and military symbols. Some of them are universal symbols, and some are specific to a nation or ethnicity.

Chalipa's paintings are generally figurative and he



Fig. 10. Mohajeran (or Immigrants) 1986, 180\*80 cm. Source: Tajasomi.ir.

The dates in which the paintings were created show us that all of them except for Didar were created during the years of the war. The technique used in all of these paintings is oil paint on canvas. The artist has

works of art that belong to a specific era have some shared specific features –in quality and the symbols used- and are influenced by the time in which they were created. Analyzing Chalipa's works show the significance he gives to the role of women in his paintings. Even when he is depicting war refugees or reflecting martyrs, he points to the crucial role of women. These paintings have been analyzed through Panofsky's iconology approach. This approach considers the meaning of the subject of the work of art in the first place. In other words this approach prioritizes content over form and shape. Panofsky has distinguished 3 levels of reading works in iconology. The first level or the primary or natural subject matter is the most basic level of understanding that consists of perception of the work's pure form. The second level which is the iconographical analysis, gives an understanding of the subject matter. In this level the context is the basis of the picture. The third level is about the intrinsic meaning or content of the painting and takes the time, place, cultures and traditions into account. It is in fact a synthetic analysis that considers different resources that include cultural traditions, contemporary contexts, historical texts and cultures, artistic backgrounds, etc. (Adams, 2015: 51).

### Sacrifice

Based on Panofsky's first level of reading a painting, here are the parts and elements that can be read in Sacrifice: a woman with a black chador and white scarf, standing in the middle of the painting with her hands up in the air –reminding us of praying- and a martyr on her hands. Right behind her we see a saint whose face is covered by a halo of light. He is wearing a green cloak with a white garment under it. The saint is riding a horse, with a Qoran in one hand and a sword in the other. In the background there are two rows of beheaded men wearing white garments, standing with their hands on their chest, as if they are waiting for their master to command. Above the head of the white-wearing men and on the arch of the ceiling we see the word Allah is written,

with rays of light, diffusing out of it and reaching the painting's frame. In the bottom of the picture and on two sides of the woman, we see hanged men in blood in the background. In the foreground and before the woman's foot on the right, we see armed soldiers wearing red clothes and marching ahead. On the left, there are rows of big red tulips. Inside the first tulip there is baby fetus. In the middle, we see a prayer mat on a black background, as if waiting for someone to come and pray on it. And finally, the whole picture is inside an embowed frame similar to the façade of a mosque or shrine. The arch is framed by some verses of Qoran written in Thuluth that is a script variety of Islamic calligraphy.

The second level of iconology analyzes the substructure of the picture. Here are some points about this picture derived at the second level of analysis: the picture is divided into 2 sections of red and white colors at the middle. The upper half of the picture that symbolizes Imam Hossein and his companions is in white and reminds us of paradise. The bottom half of the picture where the soldiers and tulips are is painted in red and represents the concepts of martyrdom, revolution, and war. The color white is a symbol of peace, purity, friendship, and tranquility, and red is the color of martyrdom.

Sacrifice is one of the most important and famous paintings of Chalipa, which was published as posters and set on the walls of government offices, mosques, schools, camps, barracks, bunkers, and houses. Using signs and symbols in his painting, Chalipa has mingled the event of Karbala and the Iranian revolution together. He pictured a mother who sacrificed his son for Islam and the country, referring to the sacrifice made by mothers who sent their sons to the war fronts, without having hope for their return.

The third level of iconological method gives us an intrinsic understanding and a synthetic analysis of the picture. The upper half of the picture, where we see a horse and its rider, is derived from coffeehouse painting that Chalipa knows very well. This part of the painting reminds us of the epic of Ashura and

the saint on the horse is Imam Hossein. It is actually a complete picture of what Chalipa had formerly painted in *Ya Qmare Bani Hashem* painting (1980); (Fig. 13). The figure who is riding the horse and whose face is covered by a halo of light is moving ahead in an embowed frame. This clearly shows the painter's familiarity with coffeehouse painting. Other



Fig. 13. *Ya Qmare Bani Hashem*, 1980, 150\*280 cm. Source: Tajasomi.ir.

than using horses and horse riders holding swords, Chalipa uses elements like beheaded bodies, tulips, and soldiers, without observing perspective rules. The bottom half of the painting reminds us of the armed soldiers who fought in the imposed war. The reason these two events are reflected alongside each other in this painting is that Iranian soldiers had a strong devotion to Imam Hossein. They took Imam Hossein as their role model and were his true followers. A lot of operations, barracks, and garrisons were named after Imam Hossein. The soldiers also

wore headbands on which Imam Hossein's name was written.

One of the symbols Chalipa used in this painting is the white horse that represents purity, reason, innocence, life, and light (Cooper, 2007: 20). To Shia Muslims, whether artists or ordinary people, it represents Imam Hossein's horse. This painting by itself illustrates the status and path of the martyrs. The Quran and the sword in the hands of the saint reflects Jihad, sacrifice, and seeking forgiveness through the Holy Book.

In the last plan of the painting we see rows of beheaded bodies covered in white shrouds that symbolize those martyred for the sake of Islam, whether in Ashura or in the Iranian revolution. In *Blood Wins against the Sword*, beheaded bodies can be seen all over the painting, like waves of people wrapped in shrouds. These waves have engulfed a tank and it is as if the tank is drowning. The wrapped-in-shrouds bodies can be seen in Chalipa's other work, *Resistance*, in which they look like wheat fields symbolizing life and blessing.

In the paintings that focus on women, Chalipa reflects on the earthly and heavenly sides to women's personality. *Sacrifice*, *Desert*, and *the Coin-eater Mice* reflect the heavenly sides of the female personality, whereas in *Shahrivar 17th* (1980); (Fig. 14), *Fighters of the Light War Front*, *Resistance*, and *Immigrants*, the painter reflected on the earthly features. In these paintings Chalipa points to the presence of women in social events and emphasizes on the role of women in the revolution and the Holy Defense. In *Resistance* and *Immigrants*, he depicts women who are dealing with the calamities of war. Yet he shows women standing strongly against these crises, with proud faces and strong hands in *Resistance*, and with sturdy steps in *Immigrants*.

In *Sacrifice*, the woman represents the motherland. The artist has painted the woman right in the middle of the painting and above her head we see verses of Quran written in Thuluth, intending to clarify the concept of her figure. Putting the woman in the middle of the painting and the first plan emphasizes



Fig. 14. 17 Shahrivar (or 6 September), 1980, 80\*140 cm. Source: Tajasomi.ir

the importance of existence and spirituality of women, and also their role in the revolution and the war. The woman in this painting looks middle-aged and it seems the experiences of life and its sufferings made her appear older than her age, giving her the look of a supportive woman with a strong spirit. This is the same woman who as Imam Khomeini says, helps men to ascend.

In this painting the woman is holding her martyred son on her hands. She has sacrificed her whole existence for her beliefs. The mother's hands that are up holding the son's body resemble praying hands. We see a praying mat before the woman's foot, implying that her prayers are with her son. The body of the son is painted like a Qoran Holder, emphasizing that the martyrs' hearts are lit with the light of Qoran as they stepped into a holy path. With the fetus inside the tulip, Chalipa intended to depict a new generation who will replace their parents and follow their path.

The calm mother in Sacrifice is replaced in the Coin-eater Mice with an angry mother protesting against the profiteers and forestallers who, during

the war, made the conditions more difficult for the people. This painting that was created in 1984 in a time when the country's economic problems were at their pick, is actually the artist's protest against a group of profiteers and forestallers who were piling up money in their underground networks in a time that the country was facing economic sanctions and people were fighting in the war fronts and getting martyred to defend their country. Chalipa cleverly chose mouse as a symbol in this painting. He depicts the forestallers as human beings with the heads of mice, reflecting their cowardice, hatred, animosity, slyness, and miscreancy (Jobs, 1991: 139). So using mouse as a symbol clearly depicts the features and characteristics of those people.

One of the most outstanding features of this painting is its symmetry which as the artist states, is «a defining element of oriental arts that has a certain place in traditional arts, architecture, and mosques. In fact two factors led to the symmetry in this painting: the first was my own wish to imply an absolute and metaphysical sense, and the second was that the subject required symmetry» (2007: 31).

«Sacrifice is one of the most famous works of Chalipa that is in oil paint and 2\*3 meters in dimension. It can be considered as one of the major works of Iran's arts. It is an absolutely Iranian work of art based on composition, symmetry, and the oriental and especially Iranian perspective. The frame of the façade is decorated with verses of Qoran in Thuluth in the style of Master Kaboli Khansar. In this painting, monotheism has been depicted harmonically since its beginning, in a way that the distance between the peace of the white and grey section and the sharp and vibrant red section is not felt», said Hossein Khosrojerdi who was Kazem Chalipa's classmate during high school and university (1999: 95).

### Resistance

One of the other paintings by Chalipa that is going to be analyzed in this article is Resistance. Considering the first level of Panofsky's iconology, these elements in the painting are of significance: in the first plan and right at the center of the painting, there is a woman whose face and clothes make her look like women in Southern Iran. She is holding a baby and is looking down. The baby who is half-naked has rested his head on the mother's chest and wrapped his hands around her neck, looking into the distance. In the mother's hand there is a date and she is giving it to her child. Behind the woman on the right, two soldiers are walking, and in a close distance there are two domes and a minaret. Next to them there is a burned palm grove and all the palm trees lost their heads, except for the first one which is in shape of a star. The grove's soil is red and this red color extends over to the first plan and makes red the woman's right hand, the soldiers behind her, and the rows of men wrapped in shrouds on the woman's left. Close to the woman and on the right of the picture we see long leaves of a tulip. When the red color of the grove reaches the tulip, it circles around it like the waves of a pond. The row of men wrapped in shrouds extends to the end of the painting, and parallel to the row is a wheat field with a golden color. At the end of the wheat field, there is a man wearing a southern-style

white garment, plowing the land, and next to him there are three ships moving on the waves. In the last plan of the painting the red sun is setting.

The second level of Panofsky's iconology analysis is in line with what the painter said about making this work. According to Chalipa, he owes one of his friends called Mohammad Noorani for making this painting who inspired him by taking him to a village near Darkhoyn. Chalipa believes that if it wasn't for Mohammad Noorani, he would have never started the creation of this work (1996: 16).

It is said that there was a close relationship between the fighters and the artists of the Art Center. The artists went to the war fronts and settled in the Iranian Revolutionary Guards headquarters in Abadan to get some inspiration from what was happening in those places. The fighters also went to the Art Center when they returned from the fronts, and narrated their memories for the artists.

In one of Chalipa's visits to Abadan, Noorani took him to a place where there were no traces of war and destruction (ibid). In this trip three men got on a Jeep and moved toward Darkhoyn. When they reach there, they see a green land, »as if it was a piece of heaven« (ibid). A few Arab farmers reached them and showed a lot of respect for Noorani, inviting them to rest by a riverside and treated them with some bread and yogurt» (ibid). According to Noorani »many of the farmers were in low spirits, not wanting to work on their farms. But when they saw members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards are both farming on lands and fighting at the fronts, they returned to their lands to work. We all started to plow the land«.

Based on the third level of Panofsky's iconology, we should consider the time, place and the cultural roots of the painting's creation. It seems that the green region was full of the signs of life; and because of being located near the ruins of Khorramshahr, it looked so beautiful and joyful to Chalipa that on his way back, he was developing the parts and colors of Resistance in his mind; the burnt city of Khorramshahr, its central mosque, the mysterious and warm colors of that afternoon, the appearance and the hope in the

face of the white-wearing man who was plowing the land, and a woman whose sufferings reminds of Lady Zainab, the sister of Imam Hossein; a woman in whose face Chalipa reflected the sufferings of the women in Karbala (ibid).

The data collected about this painting led us towards the painter's intentions behind the creation of the work. »I made different drawings to be able to reflect all these concepts. The building, the picture and its composition, the harmony of colors, and the woman's face were very important to me. That is why I put the woman at the center of the picture and drew a curved line from the bottom left of the picture up onto the back of the woman's head, which implies the continuation of the movement. On one side of the painting is the Central Mosque of Khorramshahr and on the other side I painted Arvand River; both having a pivotal role in war and the memories of war. Now that I look at the painting, I feel as if Resistance is not just a painting to me. It is a life that I have distanced from for quite a long time. I have even distanced from Mohammad Noorani«, (Ibid) said Chalipa about Resistance. The woman is the axis of the painting and we see a simple and realist picture of her with a clearly humanist view; a woman in whose face and strong hands one can see pride and rigor. The woman is a typical woman of the southern Iran, with the same way of wearing a headband and same modesty, holding his baby in the same way women in southern Iran do.

This realism can be seen in other works of Chalipa too. For example Immigrants is a realist, narrative painting. In this painting a woman is emigrating from her city along with her children in order to save their lives from the dangers of war. She has put a small burden on her head and is taking her dick in her arms; without any one to support her, without any man. Her son is sad and his head is down. He has a bundle on one hand and a pot with a green plant on the other. The older daughter is carrying her younger sister on her back with difficulty. None of the three figures have any footwear, indicating they had no time to spend on wearing shoes. The flames of war

can be seen in the background of the painting and the tanks are lining up before the displaced people. The sky is gloomy and people are migrating carrying burdens on their heads.

Immigrants is very realistic and is in fact very similar to a picture taken by the war photographer, Saeed Sadeqi, in 1981, which has the same title as the painting. In this painting too, the woman is in the first plan and at the center of the work. Most of the colors used in this painting are dark and cold, with dark and light blue overriding the other colors. Chalipa has painted the girl's skirt, the mother's pants, and the sky with dark blue, emphasizing on their gloomy spirit. Other dominant colors are green and black which fill the painting's space with coldness and bitterness. The boy's pants and the bundle on his hand, the cloth in which the girl is carrying her sister, and the bundle on the mother's head are all white, showing their purity and innocence. The pot in the boy's hand is a symbol of life and the plant inside it is a sign of hope and life. This is a view that Chalipa stresses on in his other paintings too; like the painting Life.

In Resistance, we see the colors black, red, and ochre. The woman's dress is black that is common among women in southern Iran. All around the fighters and the men who are wrapped in shrouds is red, pointing to the martyrdom of people during the revolution and in the war. But the ochre color of the wheat field is full of life and hope, especially as it mingles with the indigo color of the horizon and the white color of the river.

The other important element in Resistance is Chalipa's ethnographic view that can be seen in his other works on war. The Border Guards of Poppy Field reflects this view as well. In this painting Chalipa has painted several armed men, showing that people from different groups and ethnicities fought in the war against the enemy. That is why in this painting we see a man wearing the uniform of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, another man wearing the army's uniform, and three other men in Kurdish, Baluchi, and urban clothing. He has also paid attention to the age factor and painted people

of different ages fighting for their country. This attention to ethnicities can rarely be seen in works of other painters. For example in Habibollah Sadeqi's works, women are depicted whether with their face behind veils or not showing any traces of belonging to a specific region. In Nasser Palangi's works too women seem to have similar faces that resemble the faces of typical women in Iranian paintings, with wide eyes, arched eyebrows, etc. Another artist who has painted women in his paintings on war is Mostafa Goudarzi. Although the women painted by him are different in appearance and age, they do not imply any kind of belonging to a specific region.

The small gateway that we see in Resistance, opens a view to the palm trees and the ruined city of Khorramshahr. But more than the ruins and destruction, we see the golden wheat field in the background of this section of the painting. This means hope and life never gave in to hopelessness and disappointment, even amid the war. Chalipa who had seen destruction, evacuated houses, burnt trees, burnt cars, and burnt streets on his way to Darkhoyn, painted a green area full of hope and reconstruction. In his other painting, Life, Chalipa depicted life after the war. There we see a tank left from the period of war which reflects the effects of war on the life of people even after it ended. But the painter narrates the whole story in a golden wheat field where the wheat stalks are moving by a soft breeze. Of course, it is very important to point to the palm tree which is often seen as a symbol in works inspired by the imposed war. The palm tree is a sign of happiness, fame, and victory, as it never loses its leaves. In Christianity too, it is a symbol of immortality, blessing of God, martyr winning against death, and the Paradise. The branches of palm trees are symbols of victory, glory, resurrection, and winning against death and sin (Cooper, 2007: 362-3). The tree is one of the oldest and most sacred trees. Its name has been repeated in Qoran for 42 times and Muslims consider its fruit as a heavenly fruit. In cities in south west and south east of Iran, there are vast groves of palm trees, including Khorramshahr and other cities affected by

the war. That is why during the war and after it the tree has been considered as a symbol of resistance and defense. Chalipa has used this symbol in the Border Guards of poppy field, life, and the collection of palm trees paintings that pictures beheaded palm trees symbolizing the martyrs, which he created in recent years.

### Desert

When reading the first level of this painting, the painter's interest in depicting the role of women is vivid. There is a middle-aged woman in the first plan, standing on a pathway in a village with mud houses. Like the woman in Sacrifice, she is wearing a white scarf and black chador. Her face is peaceful and her eyes are closed and she is holding a basket of poppy flowers and red tulips. Among the flowers there is a daffodil with its petals shedding light like a candle. On the left, there is a door opening a view to the world outside where we see some Cypress trees. The sky is cloudy and the mud houses behind the woman with their closed doors and windows imply the peace in the village.

Considering the painting's substructure based on Panofsky's analysis, we can point to Iranian symbols related to martyrdom and resistance of Iranian soldiers during the eight years of the war. The poppy flower that is a symbol of liberation and sorrow, symbolizes martyrs in Iranian literature and culture (Cooper 2007: 229) and tulip that is a symbol of perfect love (ibid: 322), symbolizes martyrs in Iranian culture. Cypress tree has been a very important symbol in visual arts before and after the revolution, particularly after the eight-year war. The always green trees like cypress are symbols of immortality and life after death in many Mediterranean and Asian countries.

In the third level of Panofsky's iconology, one must give a synthetic analysis. Therefore we first point to Tulip and poppy flower. Considering the concepts implied by symbols like tulip and poppy flower, it can be said that the main subject of this painting is martyrdom and the role of women in war. In this

painting the woman is holding her martyred sons in her arms. The painter has tried to express the feelings of a mother towards those who were martyred to defend their country. He shows that the loss of her children has made her old and weak. The tulip and poppy flowers point both to the martyrs and the mothers' worries during the war. The black color of the woman's chador shows her sorrow for the loss of her children. And the white color of her scarf with the light on it clearly shows the purity of the mother who is like an angel, just like mothers of martyrs.

Chalipa depicts the pivotal role of women during the revolution and war by painting the picture of a suffering mother. This woman can help men to ascend, and this is what many Iranian women did during the Imposed War. They tolerantly and graciously sent their children to the war fronts; something that is not possible without sacrifice and dedication. Unlike Chalipa's other paintings, Shahrivar 17th, Resistance, Sacrifice, and the Coin-eater Mice, in which the woman is holding a baby

or man in his arms, here the woman has a basket full of red flowers, symbolizing the martyrs of the revolution and war. This kind of artistic expression is directly related to the language and intention of the artist. It shows Chalipa has gained a lot of experience in a short time and therefore his visual language is more symbolic than narrative.

Chalipa emphasizes on elements like martyrs and their mothers through using symbolic elements like daffodils, poppy flowers, tulips, and Cypress trees, and also through the form and expression on the women's faces, shedding light on the daffodil petals, and the cloudy sky. The simplicity of the painting's background implies human dignity and lack of a sense of belonging to worldly materials. It is as if the wooden door and the cypress are signs of immortality and life after death; it is a path in the heart of the desert to the garden of liberation, and can be a symbol of paradise and immortality of martyrs (Table 1&2).

Table 1. The effects of works of Chalipa Adjust. Source: author

| Name                                | Subject  | Style            | Symbols                           | Colors                  |
|-------------------------------------|--|------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| The Border Guards of poppy field    | The presence of the various segments in the war / following of the revolution leader | Realist          | Cedar, Tank                       | Red and Green           |
| The Fighters of the Light War Front | The presence of peopel in Revolution Islamic   | Realist          | Guns                              | Red, Black, White       |
| Sacrifice                           | Martyr / Role of Imam Hussein during war   | Symbolic         | Tulips, Sword, Qoran              | White, Red              |
| The Pioneers of Light               | The presence of the various segments in the war/ Martyr                              | Realist-Symbolic | Anemone, kaffiyeh, bandanna, guns | Green                   |
| Blood Wins over Sword               | Martyr   | Symbolic         | Tank                              | White                   |
| Resistance                          | Life in War  | Realist-Symbolic | Palm, wheat fields, the sun,      | Red, Okr, Black         |
| Desert                              | Martyrs and them Mother  | Symbolic         | Tulips, Palm, Anemone             | Red, Okr, Black         |
| Coin-eater Mice                     | Martyrs and profiteers and hoarders in time of war                                   | Symbolic         | Flag, mice                        | Blue, White, Black      |
| Basiji                              | Popular Forces   | Realist          | Traffic Light                     | Black                   |
| Immigrants                          | War Refugees   | Realist          |                                   |                         |
| Life                                | Life after War   | Realist          | Wheat fields, Palm, Tank          | Okr, White, Green, blue |
| Meeting                             | Martys   | Realist-Symbolic | Qoran, Candel                     | Black, White, Blue      |

Table 2. The effects of works of Chalipa Adjust. Source: author.

| Name       | The First Level  | The Second Level  | The Third Level  |
|------------|--|---|--|
| Sacrifice  | In first level, here are the parts and elements that can be read: woman, martyr, saint, men hanged, Armed fighters dressed in red.   | In des second level, that can point «understanding of the subject»: Imam Hossein and his companions, armed fighters and red flowers.  | In the third level, is about the intrinsic meaning or content of the painting and synthetic analysis: the role of horse and man retrieved Coffeeshouse painting.   |
| Resistance | In this word, the first level is: a women in Southern Iran, a baby, a date in hand of woman, armed fighters, Dome and Minarets, men hanged, wheat fields, a farmer, the sun in red.  | In the second level, there is a fighter that was the reason of creation of this work.   | In the third level takes time and place and synthetic analysis: Big green piece that was full of signs of life, Burnt City Khorramshahr and its central mosque, the mysterious and warm colors of that afternoon, the appearance and the hope in the face of the white-wearing man who was plowing the land, and a woman whose sufferings reminds of Lady Zainab, the sister of Imam Hossein; a woman in whose face Chalipa reflected the sufferings of the women in Karbala |
| Desert     | In the first level, here can be read the painter’s interest in depicting the role of women is vivid in the first plan that is wearing a white scarf and black chador. There are a basket of poppy flowers and red tulips, some Cypress, the cloudy sky and mud houses. | In the second level, considering the painting’s substructure based on Panofsky’s analysis, we can point to Iranian symbols related to martyrdom and resistance of Iranian soldiers during the eight years of the war. The anemone and Cypress are symbol of immortality and life after death. | In the third level, we can read the symbols of tulips and anemone; the martyr et woman are in the place of motherland.   |

### Conclusion

In this article Chalipa’s ideas and opinions on paintings related to the revolution and the Holy Defense have been discussed, along with some of his paintings. It can be concluded that to him »subject« and »social commitment« have a lot of importance in painting and thus painters may use any style as long as it helps them express what they mean and clarify the subject.

Chalipa got familiar with paints and canvas through his father and he knows coffeeshouse painting very well. Therefore we can see signs and elements of Coffeeshouse painting in his works, especially those related to the Imposed War.

Reviewing Chalipa’s works makes it clear that he has an ethnographic view in his paintings and thus the figures he painted (male or female) belong to different age or ethnicity groups. For instance in the Pioneers of the Light he has painted 4 men of different ages or in Border Guards of Poppy Field there are four fighters, one from the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, another from the army, and the other two from Balouch and Kurd ethnicities. Or the features he considers for the woman in Resistance make it clear that she is from southern Iran.

This was the hypothesis of the research: Chalipa intends to stress on the social presence of women in contemporary social events in Iran. The hypothesis was proved by reviewing 8 paintings by Chalipa in which the main figures were women. The painter tried to depict the social activities and presence of women who

have always supported men and accompanied them in all situations (whether in their personal life or in social and political events); and he did it through putting the female figure in the first plan of his paintings and using simple and routine spaces. He wanted to show women raising and supporting great men who defended their country, pointing to women's participation and contributions during the eight years of war and the revolution. In *Immigrants* we see a rural woman with every feature a rural woman has in face or in clothing. So in this painting the painter was less concerned to depict the heavenly features of women. Same is true about *Resistance* in which Chalipa again puts the female figure in the first plan and tries to show more realistic features of women. In other works like *Sacrifice* or *Desert* however he intends to show the heavenly aspect of the female personality and her spiritual importance for the country's social events. In the *Coin-Eater Mice* we see woman as a suffering mother sitting by the body of her martyred son. Here the woman's presence is symbolic and emotional.

### Endnote

1. Hannibal Alkhas, (who was born in Iran in 1930 and died in the US in 2010) insists on the same point in most of his interviews.
2. Goudarzi Dibadj, M. (2008). *Revolutionary art: The Faithful Social Religious Art in Iran* (2008). Tehran: Academy of Arts.
3. He was a member of the Warburg Group that was founded in Germany in 1921 by Aby Warburg, art historian. This collective group of researchers who attended the appearance of iconology approach to works of art.
4. Like Hossein Khosrojerdi, Habib-ollah Sadeghi, Morteza Katouzian, Hossein Sadi, Naser Palangi.
5. Including Hossein Khosrojerdi, Habibollah Sadeqi, George Davoodzadeh, Morteza Katoozian, Hossein Sadri, Nasser Palangi, and Hassan Mohammadi

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