

## Original Research Article

## An Analysis of the Human image in Iran's Surrealist Posters\*

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### Abstract

**Problem statement:** The concept of the human image in Iran's surrealist posters and the recognition of the attitude of its designers from the perspective of ideation, has established the structure of the present study which is based on the assumption of creating new images of humans as a new way of communication with the audience.

**Research objective:** The purpose of this study is to examine the human image in Iranian surrealist posters and interpret the indicators of expression in their ideation.

**Research method:** Using the descriptive-analytical method to analyze the statistical population, this study examines the indicators of ideation in those Iranian surrealist posters that were created based on the human image in terms of structure and content, the most prominent examples of which were published between 1989 to 2019.

**Conclusion:** The findings indicate that the surrealistic use of human images has been the focus of Iranian artists since ancient times. Consequently, it can be considered that the impacts on modern visual expression in Iran's surrealistic posters are derived from this view of Iranian artists. The posters, which are often illustrated with various techniques and have a high visual appeal, have emerged in a dreamy way and an innovative combination of visual factors. Therefore, due to their conceptual nature, their understanding of the audience depends on the influence of the works on their inner feelings.

**Keywords:** *Human image, Surrealism, Poster, Iranian posters.*

### Introduction

With the expansion of human communication needs, the growth, and development of the poster as a visual medium began. In the modern era, the depiction of human beings or the use of oneself in surrealist posters to express ideas and concepts has been highly regarded, and artists have displayed their

mental themes more vividly. From the very beginning, graphic designers, especially in their posters, used painted images with human themes or pieces of human photos with different techniques.

The image of man has had many ups and downs since the birth of art until today. It is used in works of art sometimes in the form of a

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man hunting, or sometimes in the form of gods, sometimes as a representation of reality, and from the 20th century onwards, often abstract, surreal, or combined with other objects, with various tools and methods and in accordance with the social issues of the time. It should be said that in none of the historical periods, artists have not moved away from the personal, spiritual, and social forms of human images.

One of the most important and influential styles in the depiction of humans in the realm of poster design is surrealism, which was the product of the changes that happened after the First World War, social and political events, and the forgetting of Dadaism, beginning in France in 1924. "The statement of Surrealism was published by Andre Breton at the same time as Sigmund Freud, the Austrian psychoanalyst, presented the theories about the unconscious, dreams, regression, and repression that occupied European artists. Surrealism provided a poetic example of the liberation of the human soul and became the origin of new methods in the visual expression of imagination and dreams. The image of the surrealistic human connected with different branches such as literature, cinema, visual arts, etc., and attracted the audience's attention by using techniques such as paradox, humor, and surprise creation" (Bavand & Emamifar, 2016, 46).

In this study, by focusing on the human image in the surrealistic style, the importance of designing using this type of image and also the difference among these types of poster designs in Iran have been discussed. This study is interested in understanding the factors that led the designers of such posters to depict humans and the way they are represented in.

## Research Background

Due to the lack of coherent research related to the subject of this study, an attempt has been made to establish the elements for the analysis

of the human image in the studied posters by studying the backgrounds related to the subject, which include the following:

In the study titled "The Influence of Swiss Poster Making on the Design of Contemporary Iranian Poster", Afshar Mohajer and Shahami (2010) examined human gender in Iranian posters and introduced its artists in the present research.

The subject of the history of the formation of the surrealist poster by Barniket (2013) in the book "History of Poster", introduced surrealist designers and laid the groundwork for the theoretical foundations of the present research.

The book "History of Surrealism", by Breton (2013), deals with the formation of surrealism from the beginning to the 1950s in the form of a series of radio and press interviews. This study reviewed this book for the methods of the appearance of surrealism in visual works and their features.

In his master's thesis titled "Comparative Study of the Visual Structure of Posters with Social Themes From the Iranian Theater and Cinema From 2011 To 2017", Barzegar Nasri (2018), raised discussions about explicit and implicit connotations and based on that, criticized the posters of Iran's theater and cinema, which has also been effective in this research.

In the article "Surrealism, innovative way of absorbing audience to Cinema's Posters", Bavand and Emamifar (2016), briefly reviewed the history of the surrealist poster and discussed and divided the free mind of the artist and the characteristics of the surreal image in the poster into several thought categories with the perspective Burton.

"Encyclopedia of Art", by Pakbaz (2014), is a reference book that consists of a collection of articles on art and its history and was used for studying and referring to other sources. In addition, in the book "Iranian Painting; From Ancient Times to Today", Pakbaz (2017) also discussed Iranian painting, which has been useful in the categorization of surrealist figurative works of the present research. Khodamoradi's master's thesis (2016) with the

title “A Comparative Study of Figure Painting in Modern And Postmodern Art” presented the history of modern and postmodern art and paid attention to the history of human images before the birth of surrealism.

Dadashi's master's thesis (2014) under the title “Study of the Image of Man in the cultural posters of the Polish School”, analyzed the image of man in a collection of Polish posters and pointed to the artists who were active in this style before the birth of surrealism, which are also discussed in the present research. Also, Askari's Master's thesis (2016) titled “Anthropography in Iranian Posters” has stated the historical course of the use of human images, which is used to learn about the history of the use of human images in ancient times and the desire towards Surrealism. Moreover, Rafiei (1998) in the book “Pottery of Iran”, mentioned the use of human images in pottery works since ancient times.

The book “Film still Photography” by Adel (2002) is used in the formation of the theoretical foundations part of the study. It also helped in conveying the concept of a surreal work to the viewer.

Askari (2016) in his master's thesis, entitled “Anthropography in Iranian posters”, studied the human in Iranian posters, which was used in the concluding section on gender in Iranian posters.

Gardner (2014) in his book entitled “Art Through the Ages” comprehensively discussed the history of art, which helped in using the human image in visual works.

Among the other studied sources, we can refer to Hollis (2004) in the book “About the Graphic Design: A Concise History”, which deals with the category of symbolization of humans in Iran's surrealistic posters.

The article “Elements of Semiotics” (Barthes, 1967) was helpful in the analysis of posters and a better understanding of explicit and implicit connotations in surrealist works.

The article “Surrealism and the Politics of Eros” (Mahon, 2005) paid attention to the concepts of surrealism in visual works influenced by social and

political conditions with Eros metaphors, which was an inspiration in the critique of posters.

The research done by YingWu, Magritte, and Breton has also been used for a better understanding of surrealism in the criticism of posters.

## History of Using Human Images in Surrealist Posters

“The term surrealism was coined by Guillaume Apollinaire in the 1910s, and became popular in the 1920s, with the publication of the Surrealism Revolution journal, which Andre Breton was one of the founders of, and then with another work by Andre Breton entitled “The Manifesto of Surrealism” (Bavand & Emamifar, 2016, 47).

The conducted studies indicate three main reasons for poster designers to pay attention to the image of humans in the surrealist style, which can be listed as follows:

- a. Making the work familiar and acceptable.
  - b. Despite the resemblance of the form of the human image to reality, the viewer understands that its meaning is different from the initial understanding of the image. This causes the viewer to reconsider the objects and phenomena that seem completely real in the world around him.
  - c. Simultaneous presentation of several ideas for human design with different implementation methods. This type of concept presentation can communicate and identify with its special audience in a visual way and without any written description. Therefore, compared to other methods of conveying the concept and transferring the message to the viewer, it has more value” (Adel, 2002, 178).
- In his book “History of Surrealism”, Breton points to the evidence of many art historians that “before the 1920s were registered as the official date of the beginning of the Surrealism movement, there were works by painters with human images that had many similarities with this style” (Breton, 2013, 43). Reflecting on these works, it can be said that “the most indicative of these examples are the fantastical and quasi-human poster works of the 19th-century



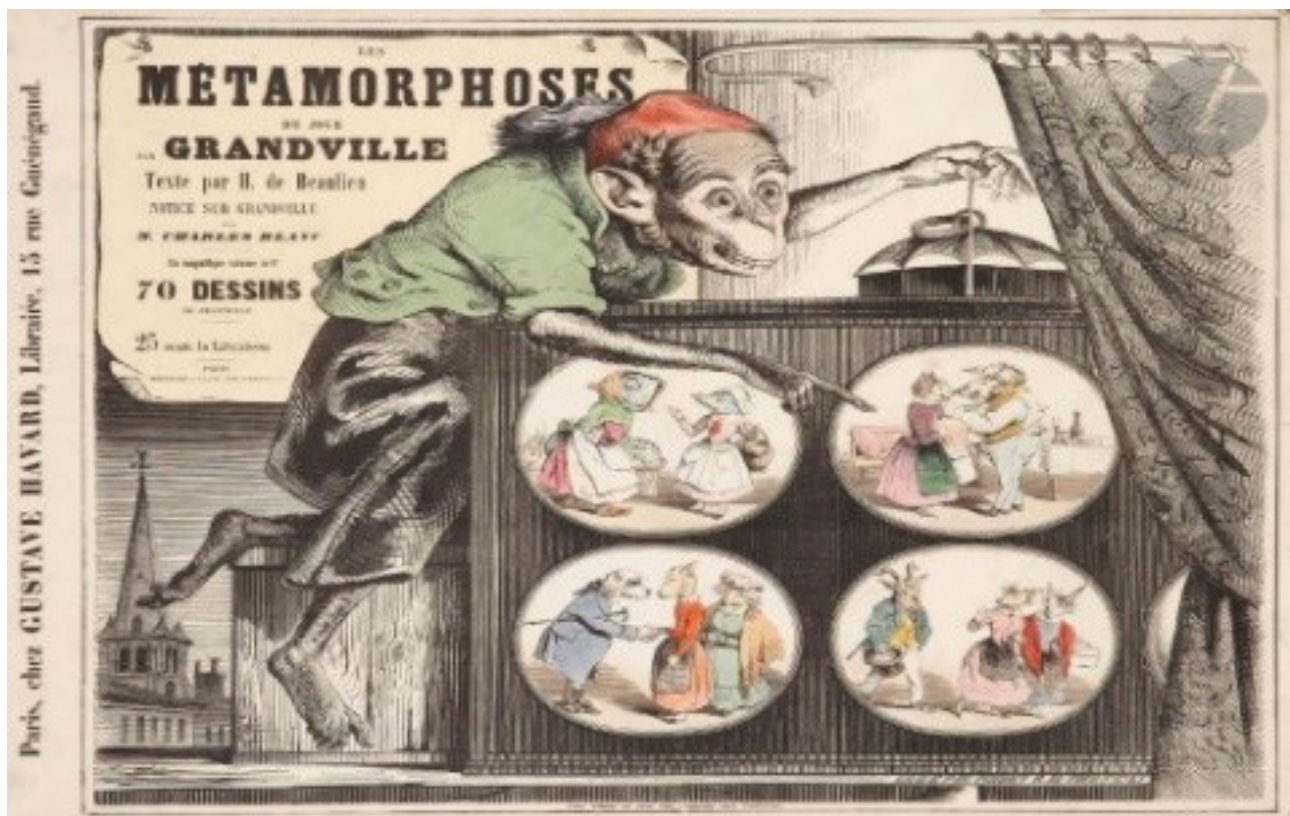


Fig.1.Grandville, poster, 1847.Source: [www. magazine.interencheres.com](http://www.magazine.interencheres.com).



Fig. 2. Ferdinand Lonell, Rouxel and Dubois poster, 1894. Source: [www.bicyclingart.com](http://www.bicyclingart.com).

French painters, “Grandville” and “Lonelle” (Figs. 1&2). These examples also included the “Tarot” works, which were famous and popular cards among the public, and in which humans are depicted in dreamy landscapes and visions beyond human imagination (ibid., 178).

In addition to this background, the “surrealist style in the 19th century can also be found in the advertising posters designed for bicycle companies. In these works, the tension and conflicts between man and machine in the modern era and the age of technology are evident. These works should be considered as achievements of avant-garde art in using the element of imagination and naive art” (Barzegar Nasri, 2018, 178).

“Another artist whose signs of surrealism can be found in his works before the birth of this style is Jack Beddington, who was the designer for the Shell Society” (Dadashi, 2014, 90).

In 1934, the Shell Max exhibitions displayed the posters of prominent British artists. “These posters are often inspired by the human image and are designed in a surreal way and with passion in color. This period is a direct and very close adaptation of the principles of the Surrealism movement, which is a translation of advertisements at the level of theatrical posters using human images. In the works of the second period, which began after the Second World War in 1945, one can find the distress and anxiety caused by the war. Human societies protested in expressing their difficult conditions and tried to achieve relative peace by using terrifying images of humans in print advertisements, cinema, and television. This was a kind of projection of the abnormal sediments of the human subconscious mind, which freed man to some extent from being crushed under the pressures of modern civilization mixed with industry. The most accurate interpretation that can be given of the surrealistic techniques of this period can be seen in the works of John Heartfield, who used the photomontage technique to show the prediction of war and violence between people. (Figs. 3)

His performance technique is a combination of Surrealism and Dadaism, and the reason for using such a combination of techniques is the content of his works, which shows the political power of his time” (Barniket, 2013, 181).

#### • History of using the human image in Iran

Traces of the use of the human image in Iran can be found in the images that pre-historic humans carved on the walls of caves and various objects. In this regard, Askari has mentioned “representations of animals and humans, circular and square shapes, motifs such as mountains, wavy water, sun, and moon” in his master’s thesis, which are among the most common ancient pictorial materials in Iran (Askari, 2016, 17). In these images, over time, creative features have emerged, among which we can mention the combined image of humans and animals in the reliefs of ancient Iran, such as Assyrian and Achaemenid reliefs (Fig. 4)

But most of the motifs that have high graphic characteristics can be found in prehistoric pottery. Although these motifs were imitations of nature in the early stages, they were not created solely to decorate pottery and each symbol had a specific



Figs. 3. John Heartfield, Photomontage, 1930. Source: www.johnheartfield.com.



Fig. 4. Slingshot hunting petroglyphs in Koohdasht, Lorestan, from about 8 thousand years BC. Source: Pakbaz, 2016, 16.



theme. "On the one hand, the ancient artist, by narrating his life situation and environment in these works, expressed the essential needs of his life, and on the other hand, he expressed the fears, hopes, and symbols that exist to ask for help from natural forces in his struggle to keep on living" (Mokhtar Masoumi, 2007, 9). Among other examples, we can mention the historical area of Silk in Kashan and its numerous pottery with human images. "Patterns on this terracotta have attracted the attention of designers because of their innovative graphic features" (Malek Shahmirzadi, 2012, 340).

### The Image of a Man in Iran's Realistic Posters

The realist poster in Iran, in turn, includes several currents, examples of which are social realism, socialist realism, magical realism, ugly realism, cubist realism, modern realism, extreme realism, etc. The creation of posters in a realistic manner intensified with the development of photo cameras and new photography techniques. "Apparently, the tendency towards realism is to imagine that the visual expression of announcements is more understandable for people" (Momayez, 2003, 86). Considering that the current study is mainly focused on surrealist posters, this category will be discussed in detail next.

### The human Image in Iran's Surrealist Posters

Surrealists in Iran, using various techniques, created an atmosphere that created an unbreakable bond with the audience. They did not consider this action as a modern movement, but they were determined to change the nature of our perception of what advertising is. By studying the history of Iranian graphic design, we can see that surreal advertising in Iranian society does not seek a specific audience, but affects all audiences of all ages and genders. In explaining this trend, it should be said that the surrealist style in Iran is the result of extensive ideas that represent authentic Islamic culture.

In Iran, the human image is one of the elements that has been the focus of artists in a wide range and many periods. In his book, Rafiei points out to Grishman who said that "the human image in Sialk is much older than Greece, and the human profile appeared in its evolved clay vessels in the 8th century BC" (Rafiei, 1998, 99). But in Iranian posters, we see the evolution of the human image over time, and therefore it has a special place. A large number of movie and advertising posters, etc., centered on the human image and in the Western style, are proof of this. In the 1970s, (the beginning of modern poster making) due to the facilities that were provided in the years 1960 to 1970, the art of poster making in Iran reached its peak. The opening of the intellectual development center for children and teenagers, the organization of television, the publication of books and magazines, and festivals, all pushed poster-making towards the Iranian culture, and thus the image of man became more diverse. In such posters, the graphic designers of Iran have sometimes drawn people in a completely realistic way and combined them with other images, sometimes using surrealist painting and illustration, and sometimes with the help of a symbol. In many of these posters, the human figure is distinguished and obvious, so these posters can be classified as figurative posters. In some other posters, symbols that symbolize humans are used, and in fact, the meaning of humans can be inferred without using human figures. Such posters are classified as conceptual posters, therefore, the ways of depicting people in Iranian surreal posters can be divided into two categories: figurative and conceptual" (Rakhshan, 2004, 129).

In this regard, Ruyin Pakbaz has referred to this topic in the book "Iranian Painting from Ancient Times to Today" and has stated that "all works of figuration that are not based on photography and photo editing techniques can be categorized as surrealist figurative works. Therefore, creating human images using visualization techniques in this category is very common. Visualization methods, which date back to very ancient times coinciding

with early human life, encompass a wide range of visual attractions that often have a significant impact on attracting the audience's attention. In Iran, human image for poster designers progressed after the popularity of the specific style of the Sarvari brothers and Talbarg. Their style was a kind of simple and realistic visualization that became popular in Iran after the Constitutional Revolution and through the "Melal-e Nasr" newspaper, and was influenced by Russian graphics" (Pakbaz, 2017, 83). "Although the hand-drawn design based on visualization is the oldest method of depicting humans in posters, this method continued even after the introduction of photography to Iran. In the early 1940s, despite the trend towards realism, less use was made of printing and photography techniques; during this time, the quality of printing and engraving in Iran was poor, and to maintain the quality of work execution, designers implemented their ideas with visualization techniques, which paved the way for contemporary designers' creativity and innovation in surrealist posters" (Bavand & Emamifar, 2016, 46). Recent works of some Iranian designers and their use of symbolic elements in posters attest to this fact. Although realism is itself an effective method in poster design, it should be noted that the basis of surrealist posters is based on symbolism, and with a focus on human images, it can be said that, as Hollis puts it, "the surrealist human image in Iranian posters is very reflective of societal attitudes, public concerns, and everyday life. Especially in cinema and theater posters, which represent the most important social issues, the human figure is exaggerated and at the same time mysterious and meaningful" (Hollis, 2004, 15).

One of the factors that should not be overlooked in the discussion of Iranian surrealist posters using human images is attention to gender.

### Gender in Iranian posters

One of the very important points in studying the methods of depicting humans in Iranian posters is attention to gender. Throughout history, graphic

designers have always used images of both men and women in their posters, although gender has not been addressed in many posters. In some of the early works of Iranian poster design, the tendency towards Western style and designers' unfamiliarity with aesthetics and visual literacy is noticeable in their blind imitation of some low-quality Western posters. However, we witness a transformation in this area in the second half of the 1940s, in which "some educated designers such as Morteza Momayez, Farshid Mesghali, Sadegh Barirani, and Ebrahim Haghighi, in addition to technical changes, presented valuable posters in terms of content and the use of visual elements" (Shahami & Afshar Mahajer, 2010, 71).

"It should be noted that in Iran, the use of images of men has been much more common, and initially, it was used in religious announcements. However, one of the best techniques, especially in surrealist poster design, is the use of an unspecified gender that does not address gender and is characterized by a general and conceptual theme. Because social posters should involve all members of society and not be limited to a specific group." (Haghighi, 2010, 204) "Although in some works, it cannot be said with certainty that the designer's goal was not to show a particular gender, but the result of the work is something that first evokes the image of a human in the mind of the audience. These posters, like symbolic posters, have been used creatively in character design, have had a fresher and more visually appealing feel, and in addition to better communication with the audience, have been more memorable in their minds and have been noticed by all members of society" (Askari, 2016, 31), (Figs. 5&6).

### Research Methodology

This research, using a descriptive-analytical method, studies Iranian posters from the years 1989 to 2019 that include significant examples of surrealist posters with a focus on human images. The statistical population consists of 13 surrealist

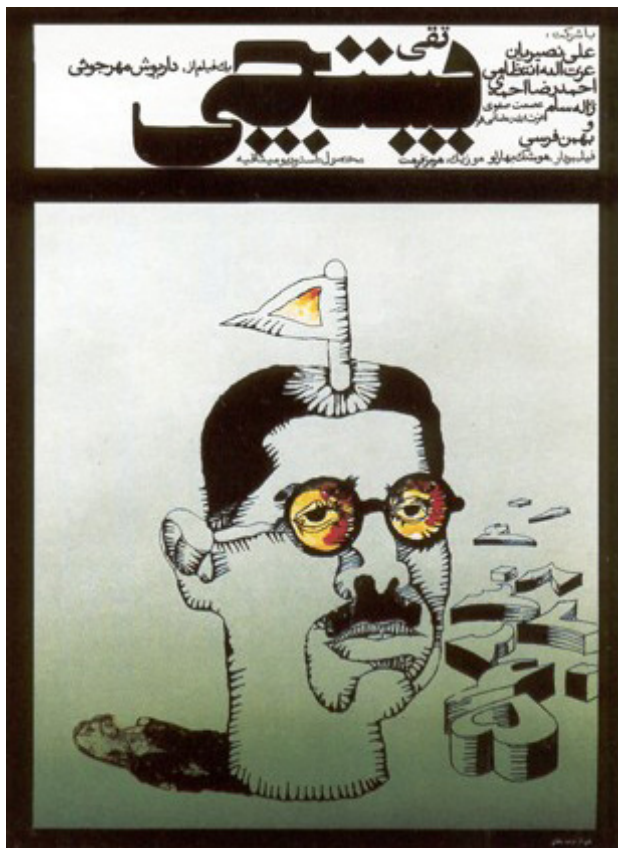


Fig. 5. Postman movie poster, by Farshid Moghali, 1972, surrealist, male image. Source: [www.graphic.ir](http://www.graphic.ir)



Fig. 6. Iran Today Design poster, by Morteza Mamiz, 2001, surrealist, unknown gender. Source: [www.graphic.ir](http://www.graphic.ir)

posters in Iran that have been selected for international festivals, and 5 of them have been analyzed in terms of both structural and content aspects. It should be noted that the use of human images in surrealist posters in the research period was mostly in the fields of theater, cinema, and exhibitions, and these posters have been printed.

#### • Characteristics of Surrealist Posters

The first characteristic of surrealist posters is mental freedom, which requires human freedom. The surrealist poster designer who uses human images should avoid dependence on a specific ideology as a refuge and focus on external results with sharp eyes. Bavand and Emamifar have pointed out in their article that “the surrealist poster should create a ‘pre-enjoyment’ in the audience. A type of release from mental tensions and readiness for future pleasures” (Bavand & Emamifar, 2016, 50). Changing the calculated perspective can influence the audience and keep them away from a sense of mundaneness and uniformity. Reviewing events and replacing them in a new situation without seeing an explanation alongside them is a solution that completely engages the audience’s mind.

In such posters, free association in creating the poster is very common. The use of techniques such as the subconscious mind (creativity), intellectual absence, strange phenomenon, lines and colorful shapes, image combination, photomontage, visualization, and its combination with printing art, solarization, sandwiching and superimposing in photography, role reversal, stamping, etc., are among the effective techniques in this field. According to the key opinions of Andre Breton, the main characteristics of surrealist posters can generally be stated as follows:

1. “Imposed thinking in the absence of any inhibitory element resulting from reason and outside the realm of any preconceived notion.
2. Belief in the existence of unknown forms of association, the power of collective dreaming, and disinterested thinking in an exceptional reality.
3. Elevating human emotions and putting the audience’s mind on a new path.



4. Combining “conscious” and “half-conscious” reality into a new and absolute reality that is understandable for the audience” (Breton, 2013, 282).

#### • Selection Criteria for Posters

Sample posters with a focus on humanistic and surrealistic themes among those that have been selected and printed for art festivals have been analyzed in terms of their structural and content elements.

The structural section refers to factors such as line and rhythm, shape and geometry, color, contrast, texture, and writing. The analysis of posters has focused on how these elements are combined to convey the intended message clearly.

The content part deals with perspective, signs, symbolic meanings, and the purpose of the work.

### Analysis of Works

#### • Film poster for “Taste of Cherry”

Message background: social, surrealistic

Poster designer: Abbas Kiarostami

#### - Structural part

The structural part of this poster focuses on the image of a human in the center of the poster, which is placed in an unconventional and surrealistic position within a yellow background. The main actor's face is cleverly placed in the shape of a tree, using a montage technique. The color yellow symbolizes thought in worldly life, creating a sense of weariness and fatigue in living, while also representing brightness. By placing red highlights on the yellow background, the poster suggests a change in time towards sunset or sunrise. The red filter color on the tree's highlight, which shows the man's face in silhouette, indicates the image's inquisitive and exploring nature. The placement of the human image (man) within a frame taken from the tree shape effectively conveys the designer's intended concept, which is derived from the film's subject matter. The writing elements in the poster, presented as parallel lines throughout the text, with a horizontal rhythm, not only emphasize the visual image of the human but also convey the designer's imaginative expression in the form of writing, reflecting the

designer's attention and understanding of the visual relationship between image and text in a balanced and floating composition.

The background of the poster is completely flat and without texture. The silhouetted tree and its branches and leaves create a rhythmic texture that reminds us of the reflection of light and shadow in water and mirrors.

The emphasis on the human eyes within the tree represents a searching window for meaning in life. In other words, the message of the poster is expressed in the man's eyes as a mysterious and meaningful message.

#### - Content part

The content part of this poster portrays a positive but still searching perspective. The poster hints that the taste of cherry can be rejuvenating, an invitation to life, and a reminder of the pleasures of life. The tree is a symbol of blossoming and returning to life, a foundation upon which the human image appears and seeks its purpose.

The symbols used in this poster are open eyes that seem to be looking at the sunset. It is a lament for the taste of cherry, for the taste of berries, for the setting sun, for the essence of life.

In terms of symbolic meaning, the combination of the human image on the tree and the actor's open gaze expresses the idea that the taste of cherry is a film that, if you look at it, looks at you, asks you questions, raises questions, and gives meaning to any feeling you might have. It is we who are looking for something in life.

Considering that this poster was designed by Kiarostami (the film's director), we are faced with a combination of the individual perspective of the designer and the director, as if that man (Mr. Badii), who is the main character in the film, is Kiarostami himself. According to the information and statements, this film is Kiarostami's most personal work, and he seeks to show the loneliness and acceptance of death. The color palette of yellow, red, orange, and brown, and the environment covered with existentialist and minimalist symbols,

shows the cutting off of life and the detachment of the viewer with lights.

And he is a kind of person instead of all people. (Fig. 7)

• **The Crowded Theater of Loneliness poster**

Background message: social, human, surrealistic

Poster designer: Sina Afshar

- **Structure part**

In the center of this poster, the image of a man's face with white eyes can be seen with an unusual train image covering the mouth. The technique used for this image is oil paint and digital software. The man's head is filled with scattered white papers. The title and other secondary textual elements are placed on the right side of the frame. The lines on the man's forehead and face indicate his old age. The warm and gray spots, white and bright blue colors in the background, and the human image represent loneliness, contemplation, and a painful

story. The central combination of the human image and other scattered elements in the poster, as well as the color spots, have a floating feeling. This is while the placement of the train on the face directs the composition toward the center. The Persian title of the poster has a wave-like form, and its non-Persian title is written in the Czech-Slovak language.

The content part of the poster portrays the idea of negative and painful visual content. The man's face represents a thoughtful and lonely human. The train symbolizes industry and modern technology, and its placement on the man's mouth reflects the suppression caused by the slavery of modern man against the industrial machine life and the symbol of modernity's victory over humans. This poster represents loneliness and the tiring life of the machine age. The man's life and mind are full of books and thoughts. The commotion surrounding him reminds us of the mental noise caused by the books he has read. The man is a book lover, but the weight of the train on his face signifies the destruction of his love and thoughts in the face of the industrial machine.

The content of this poster indicates the transfer of a philosophical message and the isolation derived from the modern era to the audience. This display is taken from the novel "The Unbearable Lightness of Being" by Milan Kundera (Fig. 8).

• **The Theater of the Moist House poster**

Background message: social, human, magical, comedic, surrealistic.

Poster designer: Sina Afshar.

- **Structure part**

The structure section of the poster features a statue-like hand in the center of the frame, with a human face represented behind it. The hand is placed in the middle of red headphones and has a gray background. The floating keys in space are secondary elements. The white color of the hand and face, along with the texture applied to it, is neutral and doubled due to the gray background color. The red color of the headphones symbolizes

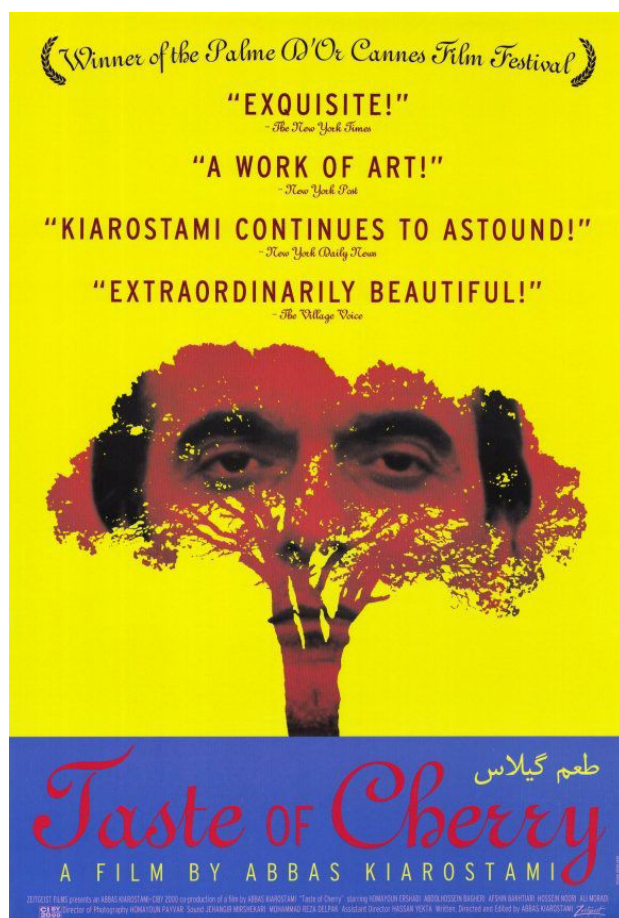


Fig. 7. Cherry flavor video. Source: www.amazon.com.



Fig. 8. The Crowded Theater of Loneliness. Source: [www.sinagraphic.com](http://www.sinagraphic.com).

excitement, anxiety, isolation, and magic. The balanced and focused combination of exaggeration and imagery in the final part of the title is one of the structural features of this work.

#### - Content part

The content section shows the scattered keys in contrast to the statue-like human figure, which conveys the message from the designer to the audience. The hand and the human face with closed eyes behind it symbolize the enslavement of humans in modern times, like a mannequin. The headphones signify the identity of the surrendered modern human against technology. However, the keys depict the path to human salvation in this way. The surrealistic idea of this poster suggests the distortion, confusion, and magical transformation of modern humans against modernity.

This poster aims to convey a feeling beyond reality and disorientation to the audience as if the



Fig. 9. The Theater of the Moist House. Source: [www.sinagraphic.com](http://www.sinagraphic.com).

original identity of humans is lost and confused, like a mannequin enslaved by the new era (Fig. 9).

#### • The Hamoon movie poster

Background message: social, surrealistic.

Poster designer: Ebrahim Haghighi.

#### - Structure part

The structure section of the poster features the main character of the movie, Hamoon, in silhouette at the top of the frame. The female character is seen with a thoughtful expression. The yellow color symbolizes spirituality and the sun is a source of light. An interesting point in this poster is the role placed above the woman's head, which is the same color drops that have been poured on Hamoon's face. The silhouettes of the man and the woman, with blue light at the bottom of the frame, convey a philosophical and mystical meaning.

The elements are in balance, and the composition of this poster is coherent and focused.



### - Content part

Although this poster has a mystical look, the colors poured on the image evoke a feeling of collapse and separation between the two main characters of the movie. The image of the man at the top of the frame, with an exaggerated size compared to the woman, and their association with decorative patterns in the form of leaves, flowers, and circular arcs, symbolize the mystical ascension. The woman's sitting position describes the rotational energy and vitality flowing within her soul.

This movie has a character-driven, profound mentality, and is captivating and impactful for the audience. The movie poster depicts the main character's struggle with himself. The flow of the mind represents his inner state. The turbulence in the poster space reflects the enlightening conflict between the materialistic and idealist tendencies, seeking salvation.

This poster aims to show the relationship

between the two movie characters and convey the existential and mystical concepts present in the movie's theme (Fig. 10)

### • Coffeehouse Painting Exhibition Poster

Background message: cultural-social, surrealistic.

Poster designer: Mostafa Asadollahi.

### - Structure part

The structure section of the image in the coffeehouse painting is a man with long hair, with his eyes cut off and multiplied in the facial space. In the background, there are also patterns of narrative coffeehouse paintings. The small triangles on the image, scattered in red, orange, and white colors, along with textual elements in the direction of the face, neck, and collar of the clothing, have made the man's face appear through a special combination. It is like a puzzle that has unconventionally portrayed the human face.

The warm and fiery colors of the coffeehouse painting in this poster, in conjunction with the white background, evoke excitement and emotion and are placed in a balanced and focused combination on the negative center of the poster.

The Nasta'liq calligraphy used in the title, in combination with other texts, has been effective in completing the combination of the human face.

### - Content part

The content section of the poster has a narrative aspect with martial, religious, and festive themes, and attention to the portrait of the hero from Ferdowsi's poetry (the human image like Rostam), along with elements taken from coffeehouse and tavern paintings, combined with modern art, are among the main features of this poster. The coffeehouse painting reflects the authentic reflection of the love and passion of artists, oppressed and deprived artists of the simple-hearted people in the alleyways and markets, those who, for centuries, sewed their eyes in the coffeehouses' dark roofs in the solitude of the mystics and the Hussainiyas, in every corner and nook, and broke their grief in the gatherings

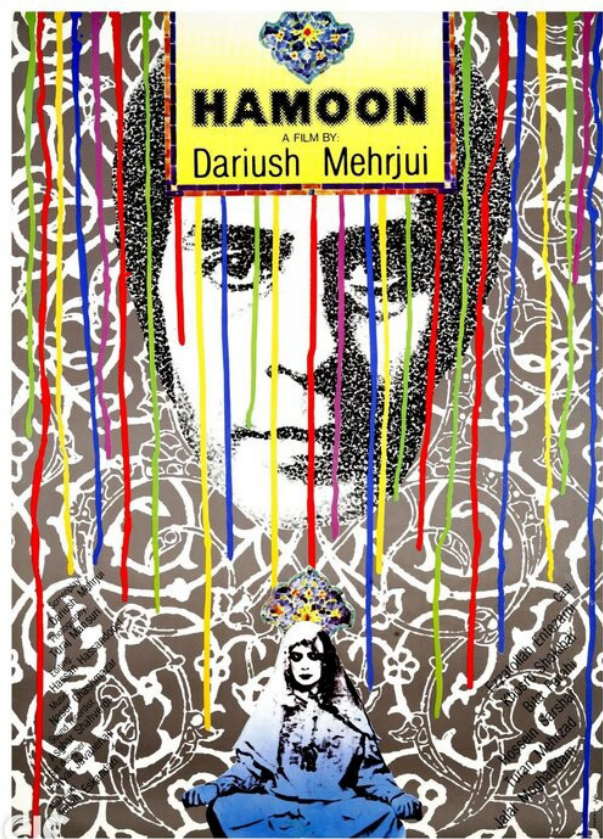


Fig. 10. The movie Hamoon. Source: www.farsiHub.com.

full of intimacy and affection. They played roles in praise of truths and manliness and told stories of deceit and corruption. The warm colors on the walls, reminiscent of dried blood of forgotten oppressions, in this poster, also indicate the same theme of coffeehouse painting through the spots on the face and the small scattered triangles on it.

The designer's goal in this poster is to immerse the audience in the world of coffeehouse paintings of the past. (Fig. 11)

## Conclusion

Research findings indicate that the use of human imagery in a surrealistic style from ancient times has been a focus for Iranian artists. The effects of this type of perspective can be seen in the modern faces of Iranian posters and can be attributed to the viewpoint of Iranian artists.

In general, the human image in Iranian surrealistic posters can be expressed in several ways:

1. The presentation of the human image is unitary



Fig. 11. Coffeehouse Painting Exhibition. Source: www.artreact.blogspot.com.

and has a particular cognitive beauty that is generated by the designer's thinking.

2. Iranian surrealistic posters with a focus on the human image are very dreamlike, illustrative, and created by using various techniques, often combining the human image with other objects, resulting in a new visual creation.

3. Quick communication with the general audience in Iranian surrealistic posters is somewhat difficult due to their conceptual nature. There are very complex concepts in them, especially symbols and symbols influenced by Islamic Iranian culture and social concerns of modern humanity. Therefore, it is not very evident that the use of the human image in posters with artistic, cultural, and social themes creates a faster connection with the audience and requires contemplation, but it engages the emotions of the audience and has a high visual appeal.

Iranian surrealistic posters illustrate the intersection of two different worlds, often designed to detach the audience from reality and to amaze them. In other words, surrealistic graphic designers in Iranian posters invite the audience to be a part of a game to solve puzzles.

It can be said that the perspective of Iranian graphic designers on surrealistic human imagery after the 1960s is influenced by the atmosphere of the new era and the freedom of creative thinking of the designer.

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