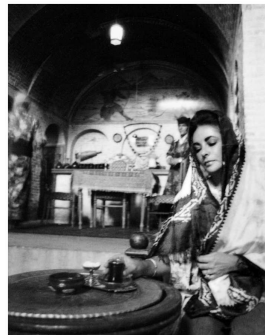


LACMA FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

EXHIBITION: ELIZABETH TAYLOR IN IRAN: PHOTOGRAPHS BY FIROOZ ZAHEDI
ON VIEW: FEBRUARY 26–JUNE 12, 2011
LOCATION: AHMANSON BUILDING, LEVEL 4

LACMA FEATURES A SELECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS FROM 1976 DOCUMENTING ELIZABETH TAYLOR'S ONLY VISIT TO IRAN



(IMAGE CAPTIONS ON PAGE 3)

(Los Angeles, February 1, 2011)—The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) presents *Elizabeth Taylor in Iran: Photographs by Firooz Zahedi*, featuring thirty-two images taken in 1976 during Elizabeth Taylor's first and only visit to Iran. Accompanying her was Firooz Zahedi, today a successful Hollywood photographer but then a recent art school graduate just learning his craft. Iran provided an exotic and engaging locale for Taylor, a tireless global wanderer still at the height of her fame. For Zahedi, who had left Iran as a child and only returned twice before, this was a reintroduction to his own country, which he experienced not only through the camera lens but through Taylor's eyes. This visit in 1976, prior to the Islamic Revolution, proved to be his last to the country of his birth.

Shown together here for the first time, Zahedi's vivid photographs document this remarkable journey—the pair traveled to the main tourist sites in Iran: ancient Persepolis, where the Tent City erected in 1971 for

the 2,500th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the Persian Empire was still standing; Shiraz—home of poetry and wine; and Isfahan—renowned for its beautiful tile-clad buildings.

Elizabeth Taylor says, "Seeing these photographs brings back fond memories of my visit to Iran, a country blessed with a rich and colorful culture that dates back many centuries." Grouped in narrative fashion, some of the photographs simply document the people and places of Iran—not all feature the actress as tourist. Taylor purchased a traditional tribal outfit in the Isfahan bazaar; dressed in this colorful costume and in full make-up, the film star posed as an Oriental odalisque, an especially suitable persona for one who was herself a male fantasy. Even wrapped in a chador and photographed in black and white, Taylor is never anonymous because of her iconic glance and recognizable eyes.

Though Zahedi was to photograph Taylor many times in the years following their 1976 visit to Iran, none are as personal, candid, or vivid as these unique images.

About Firooz Zahedi

Iranian-born Firooz Zahedi left Iran in 1959 and grew up in England and the United States. He started his photographic career in New York during the mid 1970s working with Andy Warhol and *Interview* magazine. A graduate of Georgetown University and the Corcoran School of Art, Zahedi first met and became friends with Elizabeth Taylor there in Washington DC, and in 1978 she took him to Hollywood as her personal photographer. Zahedi went on to build his career in Los Angeles focusing on fashionable portrait work for publications including *Vanity Fair*, *Town & Country*, *Esquire*, *In Style*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Glamour*, *Self*, and *Time* magazine as well as *Tatler*, *British GQ*, and French and Australian *Vogue*. His advertising work ranges from movie posters for Quentin Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* and *Jackie Brown* to clients such as L'Oreal, Nokia, and Coca Cola, as well as directing music videos and commercials, while exhibiting his fine art photography through galleries. Zahedi divides his time between homes in New York and Los Angeles.

Credit

This installation was made possible, in part, by LACMA's Art of the Middle East Council. Additional support was provided by The Icon Lab.

About LACMA

Since its inception in 1965, LACMA has been devoted to collecting works of art that span both history and geography and represent Los Angeles's uniquely diverse population. Today, the museum features particularly strong collections of Asian, Latin American, European, and American art, as well as a contemporary museum on its campus. With this expanded space for contemporary art, innovative collaborations with artists, and an ongoing Transformation project, LACMA is creating a truly modern lens through which to view its rich encyclopedic collection.

Location and Contact: 5905 Wilshire Boulevard (at Fairfax Avenue), Los Angeles, CA, 90036 | 323 857-6000 | lacma.org

Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday: noon-8 pm; Friday: noon-9 pm; Saturday, Sunday: 11 am-8 pm; closed Wednesday

General Admission: Adults: \$15; students 18+ with ID and senior citizens 62+: \$10

Free General Admission: Members; children 17 and under; after 5 pm weekdays for L.A. County residents; second Tuesday of every month; Target Free Holiday Mondays

Images (page 1)

(Left) Firooz Zahedi, *Wearing a chador at the Shah Cheragh Shrine*, Shiraz, 1976, © 2011 Firooz Zahedi

(Center) Firooz Zahedi, *Coffee House interior*, 1976, © 2011 Firooz Zahedi

(Right) Firooz Zahedi, *Dressed as an Odalisque*, 1976, © 2011 Firooz Zahedi

Press Contact: For additional information, contact LACMA Communications at press@lacma.org or 323 857-6522.

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