

THE MAKING OF CONTINUUM

Continuum: Artist Relief for Iran
Background Information | July 2026

MEDIA ENQUIRIES
info@duranartprojects.com
iranartistrelief.org

This document provides background information on the conception, development, and organizational structure of Continuum: Artist Relief for Iran. It is intended to accompany the official Press Release and Fact Sheet.

INTRODUCTION

Continuum: Artist Relief for Iran was developed over a period of several months in response to the circumstances facing artists living and working across Iran during the recent conflict. While the initiative ultimately took the form of an international online platform bringing together more than 200 artists and over 500 original artworks, it did not begin with that ambition. It evolved gradually through conversations with artists, galleries, and colleagues, with each stage of its development shaped by a single guiding question: what form of support would be most meaningful under the circumstances?

The following background provides an overview of the decisions that informed the structure of the initiative and the collaborative process through which it was realised.

RECOGNIZING THE NEED

The initial concept for Continuum emerged through ongoing conversations between the curatorial team and artists living across Iran during the conflict. As exhibitions were postponed or cancelled, galleries temporarily closed, and opportunities to exhibit and sell work diminished, many artists faced an immediate loss of income and growing uncertainty about their ability to continue their practice.

These conversations made clear that the most urgent challenge was not simply one of visibility, but of economic continuity. While exhibitions and cultural programming would eventually return, many artists required immediate opportunities to sustain their practice during an extended period of instability.

This recognition fundamentally changed the direction of the project. Rather than organising another exhibition or publishing a conventional catalogue, the initiative was reimagined as a platform capable of creating direct economic support while maintaining international visibility for artists living and working across Iran.

FROM A SMALL PROPOSAL TO A NATIONAL INITIATIVE

The project was initially conceived on a much smaller scale. The original intention was to assemble a modest presentation of works by a limited number of artists drawn from the curators' existing professional network and to share that material with colleagues and supporters abroad.

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As discussions continued, however, it became apparent that the circumstances affecting artists extended far beyond those immediate relationships. Restricting participation to a small group would exclude many artists facing similar challenges throughout the country.

In response, Duran Art Projects developed an open invitation that was circulated through artists' own professional networks across Iran. Rather than relying on a public call, the initiative expanded organically through peer-to-peer recommendations, allowing information about the project to reach artists working in numerous cities throughout the country. Priority was given to emerging and early-career artists whose exhibitions had been cancelled, whose professional activities had been significantly disrupted, or whose livelihoods had been directly affected by the conflict.

WORKING WITH GALLERIES ACROSS IRAN

As the initiative expanded, it became clear that many participating artists were represented by commercial galleries. Rather than bypassing these existing relationships, Duran Art Projects invited galleries throughout Iran to participate directly in the initiative.

Participating galleries were asked to nominate artists from their programmes and, where possible, voluntarily waive their customary sales commissions so that artists could receive the full proceeds from every sale. In return, galleries are recognised throughout the platform as official Iranian Gallery Partners, acknowledging both their continued representation of participating artists and their contribution to the initiative.

This collaborative approach enabled artists, galleries, and an international network of cultural partners to work toward a shared objective while preserving the professional relationships that already existed within Iran's contemporary art ecosystem.

CURATORIAL SELECTION

Participation in Continuum followed an invitation process rather than an open public submission. Works proposed by artists and participating galleries were reviewed by the curatorial team to ensure that the collection reflected the quality, diversity, and breadth of contemporary artistic practice across Iran.

The resulting selection includes artists from cities throughout the country working across painting, photography, printmaking, drawing, mixed media, sculpture, and installation. While the initiative embraces a broad range of artistic approaches, practical considerations also informed the final selection. Given the logistical realities of international shipping during a period of regional instability, emphasis was placed on works that could be transported safely and efficiently. As a result, the majority of works included in the platform are two-dimensional or otherwise suitable for secure international shipment.

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BUILDING AN ACCESSIBLE MODEL

Accessibility informed both the structure of the platform and the pricing of the collection.

Artworks are organised into three price categories ranging from under US\$500 to US\$5,000. This structure was developed to encourage participation from a broad range of collectors while remaining consistent with the market position of the emerging and early-career artists represented in the initiative. Limiting prices to US\$5,000 also reinforces the project's primary objective: creating realistic opportunities for acquisition rather than presenting an aspirational commercial catalogue.

The financial model follows the same principle. Duran Art Projects receives no commission from artwork sales, and participating galleries voluntarily waive their commissions. As a result, one hundred percent of every sale is transferred directly to the artist. Every element of the initiative's financial structure was designed to maximise direct support for participating artists.

WHY ONLY ARTISTS LIVING IN IRAN?

From its inception, Continuum was intended to respond to the circumstances facing artists living and working inside Iran. While Iranian artists throughout the global diaspora continue to make significant contributions to contemporary art, the initiative was developed specifically to address the immediate conditions affecting practitioners whose professional and economic lives had been disrupted within the country itself.

For this reason, participation is limited to artists residing in Iran.

WHY "CONTINUUM"

The title Continuum reflects the central curatorial philosophy underpinning the initiative. Rather than understanding conflict as a moment in which artistic practice is suspended, the project is grounded in the belief that cultural production continues despite periods of disruption and that artists should remain visible participants in public and cultural life.

The initiative therefore seeks not only to respond to a particular historical moment, but to support the longer continuity of artistic practice. The broader theoretical framework informing this approach is explored in the accompanying curatorial essays.

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CURATORIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Continuum also reflects Duran Art Projects' broader understanding of curatorial practice.

The initiative is founded on the belief that curating extends beyond the organisation of exhibitions within institutional spaces. At moments when artists face exceptional social, political, or economic challenges, curatorial practice can also involve building the structures that enable artists to continue producing, exhibiting, and sustaining their work.

Presented as the inaugural major initiative of Duran Art Projects, Continuum embodies this understanding of curatorial responsibility, positioning curatorial practice not only as a means of interpreting art but also as a form of cultural stewardship and collective action.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For additional materials relating to Continuum: Artist Relief for Iran, please refer to:

- Press Release
- Fact Sheet
- Curator Biographies
- Curatorial Essays
- About Duran Art Projects
- Media Assets