

Book of the Week: Iran Modern - Empress of Art

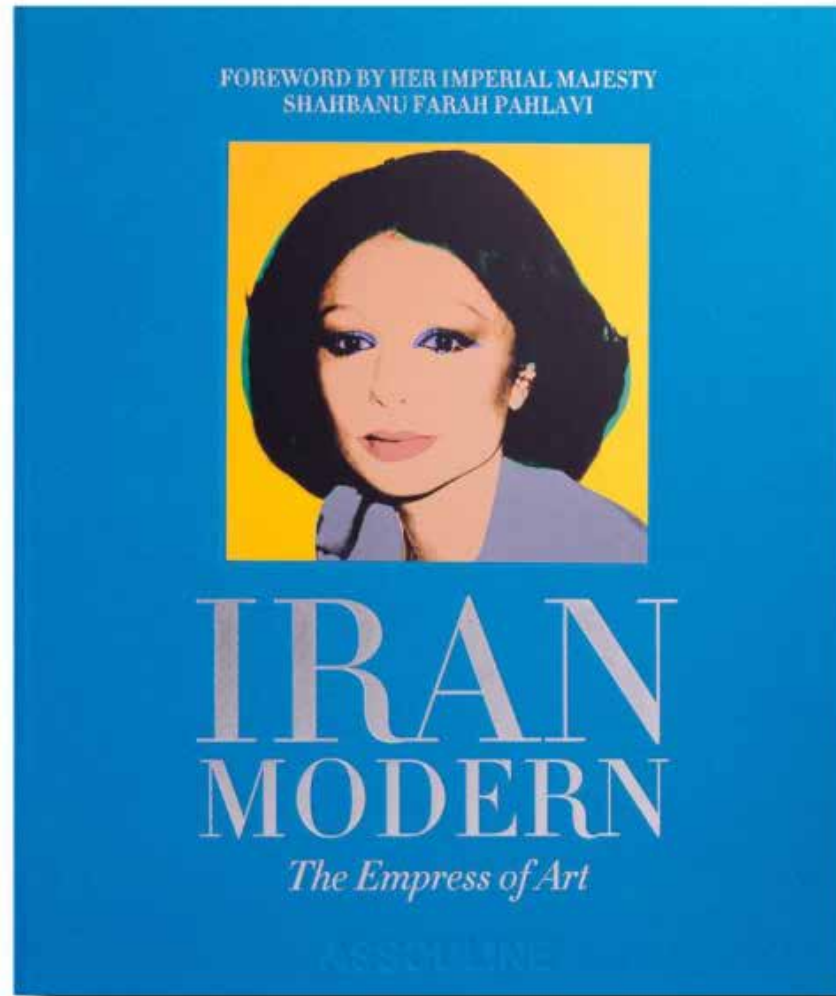
by Francesca Carington



The Empress Farah Pahlavi of Iran in 1969

From the late Sixties onward, Empress Farah Pahlavi of Iran amassed one of the world's greatest collections of modern art for her country. As she explains in the foreword to this richly produced book, they couldn't afford old foreign masterpieces, so started with the Impressionists and worked their way forwards. Thus began a cultural golden age in Iran - Andy Warhol and Elizabeth Taylor visited Tehran, while the Empress scouted out Henry Moore in his studio, met Salvador Dalí in Paris and Chagall in the South of France. She founded the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art and filled it with works by Max Ernst, Magritte, Renoir, Monet, Francis Bacon and Jackson Pollock.

It wasn't to last - the revolution in 1979 led to the exile of the imperial family, and the disappearance of the Empress's collection from public view and memory. Her story, and the story of these extraordinary artworks, is told here by Viola Raikhel-Bolot and Miranda Darling.



Iran Modern: Empress of Art, by Viola Raikhel-Bolot and Miranda Darling ([Assouline](#), £650)