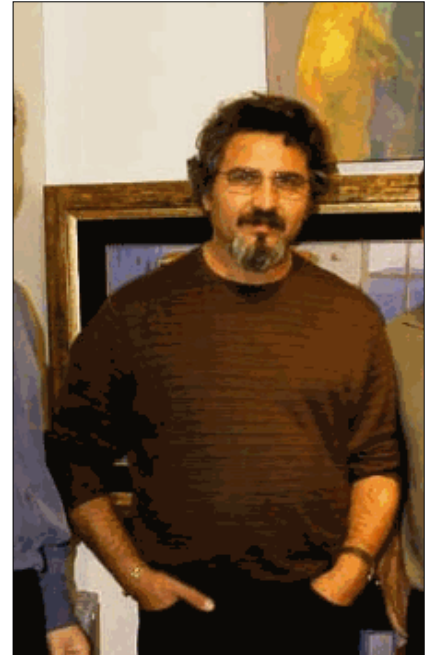


Hessam Abrishami

Born in the city of Shiraz, Iran in 1951, Hessam Abrishami was the son of middle class parents and one of eight brothers and sisters. He attended public schools in his home city of Shiraz through graduation from high school, after which he entered his country's military service where he served for two years.

It was not until he was 15 years of age that, through the inspiration and encouragement of a high school teacher who was himself an artist, Hessam discovered both his love of art and his own talent for painting. As a result he became almost obsessed with painting.



At age 17, Hessam received his first award for his painting. The next year he won top honours in painting in an all-country student competition in Iran. And, at age 19, he achieved first place honours in the "Iranian New Artists Competition." Many other national and international honours and recognitions followed thereafter.

After his military service, Hessam decided to go to Italy to study -- a place he considered "the centre of art in Europe." It was in Perugia, Italy where he studied and completed his Master's Degree in Fine Arts at the Accademi De Belle Arti "Pietro Vanucci." Although he pursued his first love in the area of portraiture by concentrating on realistic painting and special studies in anatomy, he also developed his talent further by studying widely in other styles including impressionism, surrealism, cubism, and modern art.

Hessam notes that he was influenced most in Italy by the artistic atmosphere in general and more specifically because "colours were bright and the atmosphere was quiet and relaxed." However, his subsequent return to his native Iran for a five-year period also had its effect on his work. There he found the country in a state of revolution; colours were darker, activity more frenetic, and there was less relaxation. It caused anger to come to the forefront. His paintings became less realistic, subjects were darker and there was more movement expressed -- all reflecting natural mood. His paintings were moving significantly away from realism.