

[A "Free Lance" And Diplomat: S. G. W. Benjamin and the Promotion of Persian Art for the American Nation - 11/1 Seminar at the MHS](#)

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[A "Free Lance" And Diplomat: S. G. W. Benjamin and the Promotion of Persian Art for the American Nation](#)

Author: Roxanne Goldberg, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Comment: Ross Barrett, Boston University; Farshid Emami, Rice University

Tuesday, November 1

5:00 PM

with an in-person reception at 4:30 PM

Free, Hybrid Event - hosted by the Massachusetts Historical Society

[Register](#)

When the first U.S. diplomat to Iran, S. G. W. Benjamin, returned to the United States in 1885, he urged Americans to study Persian art. Through lectures and publications, he made the case that Persian art was the ideal model for American artists developing a national school of art appropriate for the modern age. Analysis of Benjamin's writing, sketchbooks, and the objects he sold to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, reveals that his theories about and sale of Persian art were supported by the new academic disciplines of sociology and anthropology; postbellum doctrines of individualism; and debates over the forms appropriate for a modern American art with the capacity for moral uplift.

[The Dina G. Malgeri Modern American Society & Culture Seminar](#) invites you to join the conversation in person or online on **Tuesday, November 1 at 5:00 PM**. The seminar brings together a diverse group of scholars and interested members of the public to workshop a pre-circulated paper. After brief remarks from the author and an assigned commentator, the discussion is opened to the floor. All are encouraged to ask questions, provide feedback on the circulated essay, and discuss the topic at hand. Our sessions are free and open to everyone.

Register above to attend, and you will receive a confirmation message with instructions for attending the session. Please check your junk mail if you do not see this message, or contact the MHS for assistance.

Subscribers for the current year may now [log in](#) through our portal to access the paper for this session. All others who register will receive the paper by email the day before the seminar.

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