

Re: The Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Postdoctoral Fellowship in Iranian Studies

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Dear Hiring Committee members,

I am writing to express my enthusiastic interest in the Postdoctoral Fellowship in Iranian Studies at the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute at the University of Toronto.

With a Ph.D. in Communication from the University of Tehran (2019) and my current status as a fifth-year Ph.D. Candidate (ABD) in Communication, New Media, and Cultural Studies at McMaster University, which I anticipate completing my dissertation by the end of the Winter semester in 2025; I am eager to contribute to and advance my research within your distinguished program.

My academic journey has been deeply rooted in feminist media studies, social and digital activism, sexuality, and the critical examination of marginalized bodies. In addition to my doctoral work, I am also completing a Graduate Diploma (Ph.D.) in Gender and Social Justice at McMaster University.

My research program employs a critical interpretive approach to studying digital and emerging media cultures, with a focus on activism, particularly within the realms of feminism, gender, and social media platforms. My doctoral dissertation, titled "*Social Media, Street Activism, and Networked Feminism: Negotiating the Political Female Body in the Iranian Context*," investigates how Iranian women utilize social media for platform activism and distinct forms of street activism. This analysis delves into how they express their agency and resist Iranian governmental regulations and patriarchal power structures that control female bodies with rigidity. This work has provided me with invaluable insights into the intersection of technology, activism, and gender dynamics. Additionally, I have published my research on feminism, sexuality and digital activism in esteemed journals and publications, further establishing my expertise in this field.

The Postdoctoral Fellowship represents a critical opportunity for me to refine and finalize my dissertation for publication. I am confident that the resources and collaborative environment at the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute will be instrumental in advancing my research and contributing to the field. The institute's interdisciplinary approach and commitment to innovative scholarship resonate with my academic objectives. I am particularly interested in contributing to Dr. Mohammad Tavakoli-Targhi's Cinema Iranica project and engaging with the institute's vibrant research community.

Having engaged in diverse interdisciplinary research projects, I am well-prepared to significantly contribute to the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute as a postdoc fellow. My research in feminist

media, queer studies, and digital culture has culminated in eight peer-reviewed journal articles, four book chapters, and one public scholarship commentary. I was also honored with the 2020 International Research Excellence Award from the Image Research Network, shared with Dr. Dilyana Mincheva.

My dedication to broadening the reach of academic knowledge is evident in my efforts to engage with audiences beyond academia. I am a strong advocate for the democratization of education and have shared my expertise in feminist and gender studies on platforms such as CP24, 630 CHED, New Canadian Media, and the Pink Talk podcast. My goal is to make complex concepts more accessible to a wider audience while fostering inclusivity and understanding in media and gender studies.

In addition to my research and media presence, I have gained valuable experience through my teaching career as a sessional instructor and teaching assistant at McMaster University. These experiences have equipped me with the skills to create and present compelling educational content. Moreover, my extensive involvement with the Pulse Lab, where I served as coordinator of the Social Media and Activism Research Group (SMARG) for the past three years, has deepened my understanding of the intersection between culture and media through organizing and hosting numerous speakers and facilitating rich conversations on the subject matter.

Additionally, my involvement as a Research Assistant in the interdisciplinary project titled Mac M3 (Monitor My Mobility) research project has equipped me with skills in team leadership, interdisciplinary collaboration, and enhancing my ability to foster effective group dynamics and problem-solving.

I am excited about the prospect of joining the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute and contributing to its dynamic academic environment. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss how my background, research interests, and interdisciplinary approach align with the goals of your program.

Thank you for considering my application.

I will be looking forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely yours,

Nilloofar Hooman