

June 12, 2025

Dear Committee Members for the EOM Dissertation Fellowship,

I am writing a letter of support for Ms. Leila Moslemi-Mehni who is applying for the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Dissertation Completion Fellowship for 2025-2026. Leila is currently enrolled as a PhD candidate in the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto, under the supervision of Professor Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi. Leila specializes in the field of Iranian Art and Art History in the modern period and her PhD dissertation focuses on the 'Visual Public Sphere of the Late Qajar (1848-1925) and Early Pahlavi (1925-1945) Periods.'

I have known Leila for the past seven years as her curatorial mentor and academic advisor and have been serving as a member of her PhD thesis committee since the start of her doctorate in 2020. This year, Leila successfully passed her PhD thesis supervisory committee meeting in April and is in the final stage of writing her dissertation. She is planning to submit a complete draft of her thesis at the end of the summer or early Fall 2025 and has made excellent progress thus far.

Leila is an intelligent, articulate, and hardworking individual and her writing and research skills are at an advanced level. As a research assistant at the prestigious Tavakoli archive, Leila has a vast visual archive of Iranian historical materials at her disposal for her research and is writing a truly unique and original PhD thesis that is most enjoyable to read. Because of her deep interest and commitment to Iranian visual and material culture and history, Leila has been able to provide a balanced and nuanced approach to the material by analyzing political caricatures from Iran's best-known modern newspapers and journal magazines through the lenses of socio-political history and visual analysis.

Leila is a diligent, organized, and deeply engaged PhD candidate with a passion for learning and research and wishes to finish her PhD as soon as possible in order to pursue her career goals as a university lecturer and museum curator. She is also an active member of student and academic life at U of T and has helped organize many lectures, symposia and events in Iranian studies and continues to volunteer at ROM when she has time.

Leila is a warm, outgoing, polite, and mature individual who is dedicated to finishing her PhD dissertation this year and would greatly benefit from receiving the EOM Dissertation Completion Fellowship to help her carry out her writing goals. I am fully supportive of her application and will continue to work with Leila to ensure she finishes her thesis in a timely manner.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions about Leila's work or her application.

Sincerely,



Dr Fahmida Suleman
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