



***Letter of Recommendation For Quentin Arnoux's Application for
Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Graduate Scholarships***

Through this letter, I have the great pleasure of introducing Mr Quentin Arnoux, who, in June 2021, successfully defended his master's thesis under my supervision. I had the great joy of supervising this dissertation, and today, I submit my recommendation for Quentin's application for Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Graduate Scholarships.

I have known Quentin since September 2017, when he regularly participated in my courses, the only ones on the "extra-European" arts, focusing on Persian arts. Quentin was a very motivated student, entirely eager to discover Persian culture. He was actively present in the courses, participated in discussions, asked some ingenious questions and eventually presented two excellent essays on his BA and MA thesis. He also began travelling to Iran, learning Persian in Geneva and eventually took a 13th-month stay in Tehran to perfect his Persian at the famous Dehkhoda Institute from Tehran University.

While in Iran, he travelled to several artistic and archaeological sites, took excellent photographs and developed his network with Iranian artists and academia. All these achievements will hugely contribute to the academic vision of Persian art history he chose for his career.

I have already observed his academic ambition in his MA master's thesis. It is essential to underline that Quentin's thesis was the first academic work written at UNIGE on 17th-century Iranian art. It offered a new extra-European perspective in university studies in Geneva and was eventually awarded by the Prix Ardit for the best MA thesis in the University.

With close collaboration with the Museum of Art and History, Quentin's essay highlighted Geneva's unique and excellent collection of Persian art, which contains masterpieces between the 14th and 19th centuries.

The subject of Quentin's Master's thesis was ambitious and innovative. He not only chose to work on an un-explored collection but also put his hand on a mid-17th-century *Shahnama* (Book of Kings) by analyzing its 21 illustrations and examining the idea of attributing them to Mu'in Mussavir, the famous Isfahani artist, active between 1632 and 1697, mainly known for his single-leaf paintings and drawings.

The merit of Quentin's work is not only in extending the current state of research on the artist but that he also undertook to use Persian written sources not yet translated into Western languages. Working directly on the manuscript and studying Persian sources makes this work an extraordinary piece of research that relies on first-hand sources and shows its author's intellectual capacity for developing valuable arguments.

Quentin conducted solid and efficient research by scrupulously analyzing the Geneva manuscript. Having the ability to read Persian and thus interpret the colophon of the manuscript, Quentin shed light on the scribe of the manuscript. He even presented a larger corpus of his career, including his epigraphs on some Iranian monuments in Isfahan and some provincial cities such as Damavand. Thus, Quentin's Master's thesis presents to us both the artistic manner, the art and the hand of the master Mu'in Musavvir, and his network and his collaboration with other artists.

For his rigorous methodology to guide the analysis of the manuscript's images with convincing results, and for his personal investments in learning Persian by going to Dekhoda Institute in Iran or taking courses dedicated explicitly to calligraphy in the Islamic world at the Sorbonne University, Quentin Arnoux and his academic ambition and seriousness deserve collective approval and encouragement.

I unreservedly recommend Quentin Arnoux's application for your Graduate Scholarships. His eagerness, enthusiasm and intellectual capacity will make him one of your most prolific Ph.D. candidates, contributing to Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali's legacy in Iranian art studies.

I am entirely at your disposal for further information,

With my best regards,

Dr Negar Habibi

Geneva, September 4, 2023

