The Beauty of the Mundane: Snapshots of Daily Life in Iran in Towns and Cities
photos by Arman Azimi

Western visual portrayals of Iran are dominated by two tropes: one is that of bearded men and veiled women, supposedly representative of the specter of Islamic fundamentalism; the other is that of urban, "westernized" youth, accompanied by expressions of surprise at how "modern" and how much "like us" Iranians really are. Chronicling the photographer's visit to Iran in the summer of 2013, the pictures in this collection seek to move beyond the narrow confines of such a dichotomy by displaying images that would resonate more closely with the many ordinary Iranians who are not readily subject to the Western gaze. Some of the photos in the collection are of historical sites in the cities of Tehran and Esfahan; most however, concern daily life in the picturesque town of Khansar. This exhibit attempts, in a modest way, to evoke the flavor of life in a town that is fast becoming subject to the homogenizing effects of capitalist modernity, and to add greater depth to the visual landscape of Iran by paying tribute to a town and its people who are deemed unworthy of inclusion in Iran's visual or historical record.

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