



The British Institute of Persian Studies: Annual Persian Art Lecture
Dr Richard McClary (University of York) will give a lecture on
“The rediscovery of mina’i wares and the fiction of completion: 13th century polychrome Iranian ceramics and their reception in the 20th century”

British Academy
10 Carlton House Terrace
London, SW1Y 5AH
6-8pm
10th June 2019
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Mina'i wares were unknown prior to the late nineteenth century, but by 1940 numerous seemingly complete vessels had been published, displayed, and collected across Europe, North American, and beyond. These wares mark the birth of Persian miniature painting, and feature a wide array of techniques and figural scenes. As virtually all extant examples have been recovered from an archaeological context, and the main element of the decoration is applied over the top of the glaze,

most well known pieces experienced major repairs and restoration in the early twentieth century. This lecture is divided into two parts. First, the painting style and most common images are examined. Narrative scenes and common motifs, primarily on fragmentary but unrestored pieces from a wide range of collections, will be shown. This is followed by an examination of the process of rediscovery, display, publication and restoration that led to mina'i wares being relatively well known, yet still

somewhat poorly understood by the middle of the twentieth century. A particular focus is on the collecting practices of Calouste Gulbenkian, one of the earliest collectors of these wares, and his is the only collection that remains intact and with a full archive of the documents related to the acquisition of the material.

The lecture is free to attend and those wishing to attend should email the Executive Officer. There will be a drinks reception following the talk and donations are gladly accepted on the night.