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**CAFAM Together With SoCiArts Productions Present
Exploring The Other: Contemporary Iran
Through The Lens Of Iason Athanasiadis**

Los Angeles, California, January 12, 2009— SoCiArts Productions co-produces the upcoming exhibition of *Exploring the Other: Contemporary Iran Through the lens of Iason Athanasiadis* as the community partner of CAFAM. The exhibition is scheduled for January 25 through March 29, 2009.

As the 30th anniversary of the Islamic Revolution approaches, *Exploring the Other* offers an alternative narrative of the country famously included in the "Axis of Evil" by President George W. Bush. Through the vivid photography of international photojournalist Iason Athanasiadis, visitors will experience an Iran rarely seen in Western media: a land of paradox in its landscape, sacred rituals, and social customs. Iran's numerous contradictions are revealed in stunning color and black and white photography: the snow-capped Elburz mountains; the vast Kavir Desert; traditional Islamic wedding rituals; a Tehran designer's first fashion show. Due to the post-revolution baby boom—today, nearly 70% of Iran's population is under 30—Iran's social fabric has become a mosaic of old and new as traditional culture is reinterpreted by a generation that is both enamored with global pop culture and passionate about its ancient Persian roots.

By approaching Iran from aesthetic and social viewpoints, *Exploring the Other* takes the focus off Iran's politicians and realigns it squarely on the country and its people. Athanasiadis' photographs challenge the conventional media narrative told about Iran and challenges visitors to question how media information is presented (and filtered).

"Iason's perspective on Iran is as fresh as CAFAM's idea of curating an exhibition that has rarely been seen in a U.S. museum within the past 30 years," said Bitam Shafipour, managing director and founder of SoCiArts Productions. "It's wonderful to be able to introduce the American audience to contemporary Iranian culture and provide them the opportunity to have their own view and judgment on the current events related to Iran, instead of solely depending on the mainstream media".

Exploring the Other will be supported by a wealth of educational programming including lectures, book and poetry readings, film screenings, musical performances, and workshops—designed to provide visitors with a meaningful and more complete understanding of Iran. For more information about this program, please visit:

www.sociarts.com/exploringtheother.

About Iason Athanasiadis

Writer, photographer and television producer, Iason Athanasiadis has been covering the Middle East, Central Asia, and the southeast Mediterranean since 1999. He earned degrees in Arabic and Modern Middle Eastern Studies at Oxford University (BA) as well as Persian and Contemporary Iranian Studies at Tehran's School of International Studies (MA). Athanasiadis lived in Iran from 2004-2007, covering conflicts in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Lebanon for the international media including the Times, the Christian Science Monitor, American Prospect, British Journalism Review and the South China Morning Post. He covered the 2003 invasion of Iraq from Qatar for al-Jazeera, the 2004 Athens Olympics for BBC World, and the 2006 Israeli-Hizbullah war in Lebanon as a freelancer. At the same time, his photography has been featured in solo exhibitions in Germany, Greece, Iran, and the United States, and his work published in Der Spiegel and the Los Angeles Times, among other newspapers and magazines. A native of Greece, Athanasiadis was a 2008 Nieman fellow at Harvard University. He is an Aristotle Onassis Foundation scholar and has lectured on Iran at Berkeley, Dartmouth, Harvard, MIT, Stanford, Yale and other universities www.iason.ws.

About CAFAM

The Craft and Folk Art Museum (CAFAM) champions cultural understanding by encouraging curiosity about our diverse world through the universal lens of art. Our exhibits and programs serve as a catalyst for the exploration of art and ideas that reflect our ever-changing community. The museum is guided by the conviction that its programming should bridge local and global cultures, and inspire a sense of inquiry and creativity within all people. Located on Los Angeles' prestigious Museum Row, CAFAM acts as a catalyst for cultural understanding and unity in one of the most diverse cities in the world. Our original exhibitions and public programs are developed in close collaboration with community cultural groups to ensure authentic expression. For more info visit: www.cafam.org.

About SoCiArts Productions

SoCiArts is a grassroots, virtual community dedicated to artists from around the globe to share their work, blog their ideas and send their message out to a broader audiences. SoCiArts believes that artists are architects of life; they know how to break the old conservative boundaries and build remarkable new ideas. SoCiArts encourages artists to create a positive impact in the world through art by sharing their work in this forum and elevate their society, community, family and audience to a higher level of consciousness. For more info visit: www.sociarts.com.