This talk is part of a larger book project that explores the history of Iran’s Armenian women from the beginning of Naser al-Din Shah’s reign in 1848 to the 1979 fall of the Pahlavi dynasty. As the first scholarly study of its kind, it analyzes the shifting relationship between Iran’s central nodes of power (absolute monarchy and patriarchy) and its Armenian female subjects (ethnic minorities and women) in Qajar and Pahlavi Iran. In this talk, they employ pictorial representations of Armenian women to demonstrate their impact on the processes, strategies, and anxieties of modernization by examining two pictorial spheres redolent of the entangled relationship between modernization and women’s visibility and representation: satirical cartoons (1920–58) and costume exhibition (1972–76).

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Talinn Grigor is Professor and Chair of the Art History Program in the Department of Art and Art History at the University of California, Davis. Her books include Building Iran: Modernism, Architecture, and National Heritage Under the Pahlavi Monarchs (2009), Contemporary Iranian Art: From the Street to the Studio (2014), and The Persian Revival: The Imperialism of the Copy in Iranian and Parsi Architecture (2021).

Vartan Gregorian (1934–2021) was a brilliant educator, humanitarian, and friend after whom NAASR’s headquarters building is named. Born in Tabriz, Iran, he received his secondary education Collège Arménien in Beirut Lebanon, and he graduated from and received a PhD in history and humanities from Stanford University. After an academic career spanning two decades, including a period as Tarzian Professor of Armenian and Caucasian History at the University of Pennsylvania, Gregorian served as President of The New York Public Library, President of Brown University, and President of Carnegie Corporation of New York.