

## THE NEXT DESIGN HUB

TEHRAN IS NO LONGER SHROUDED IN MYSTERY. HERE THE IRANIAN CAPITAL'S INSIDERS SHARE SOME OF ITS SECRETS

### THE CREATIVE DUO

Dividing their time between Iran and LA, Mehrdad Mohammadzadeh and Paulette Ghahremanian, the couple behind creative agency Studio Shizaru have seen Tehran's scene change from inside and out: 'Art and design are no longer exclusive to the elite.' They're the designers behind ZEEEN, an all-Iranian concept store, and BOOM! restaurant, *pictured*, a multicoloured amalgam of traditional and contemporary Persian cuisine and design. It's not all new, though. 'We're seeing many heritage buildings being re-purposed,' they note. 'Lolagar Alley now hosts the on-trend Reera Café and Aaran Gallery, and will soon be home to a new hotel we're working on.' ➤



## WORD OF MOUTH



ROUHI CAFE



BOOMI



PEJMAN FOUNDATION

### THE NEXT DESIGN HUB

#### ► THE ART AFICIONADO

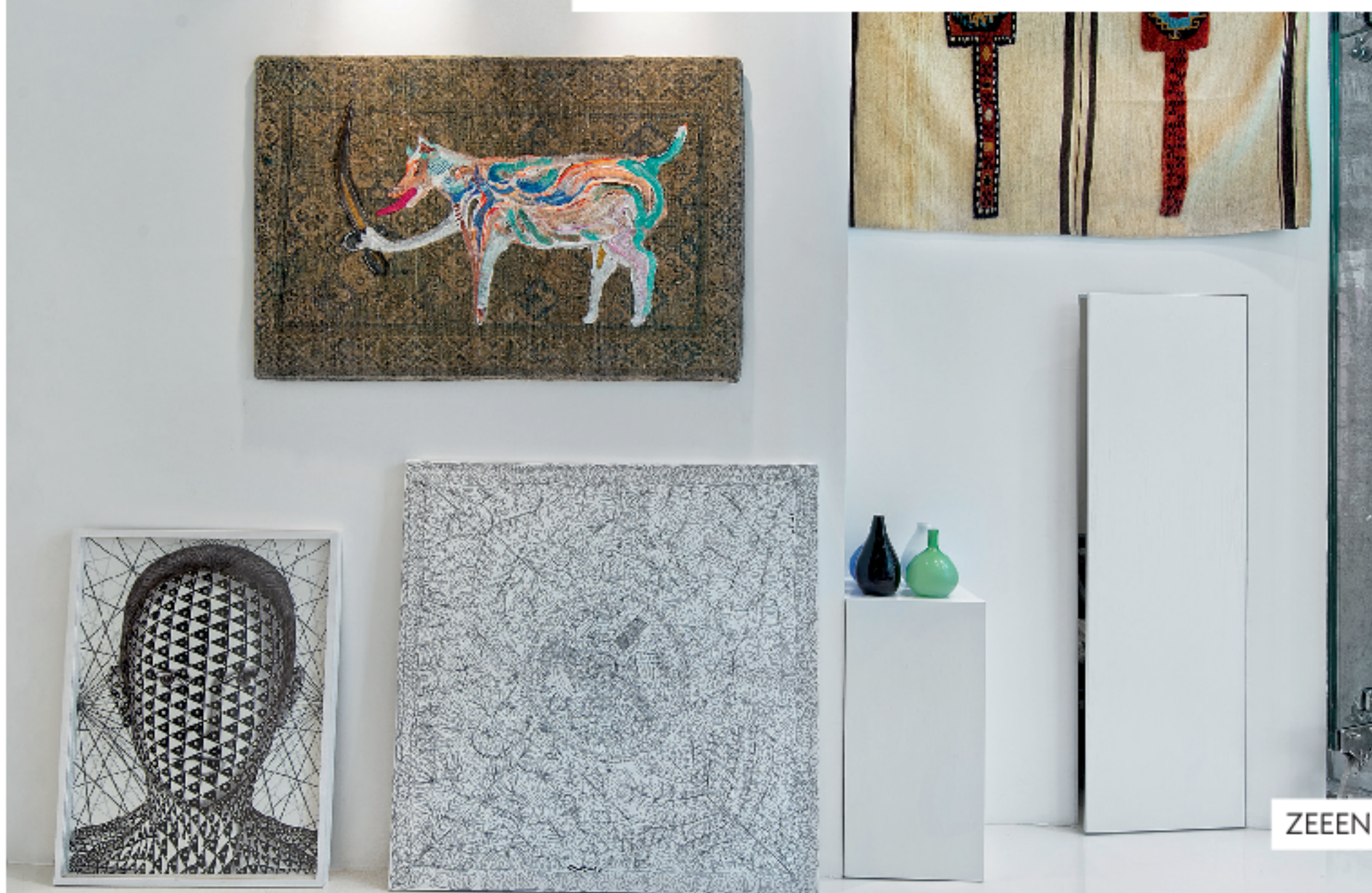
The founder of Pejman Foundation, gallerist Hamidreza Pejman is responsible for some of the most exciting developments in Tehran. Currently in the works is the renovation of Argo Factory, a former bottling plant transformed into a space for Iranian and global contemporary art. Nearby sister project Kandovan hosts artists from countries including Algeria and Germany, while galleries such as Dastan's Basement and Sazmanab showcase recent works by Iranian artists. For a primer on Iran's cultural scene, Hamidreza suggests seeing Negarestan Garden, the Carpet Museum and Masoudieh Palace.

#### THE INTERIORS EXPERT

For her book *Behind Closed Curtains: Interior Design in Iran*, German-born Lena Späth peeks inside some of Iran's most beautiful homes. She's seen Tehran blossom: 'Galleries sprang up like mushrooms and cafés turned from smoky dark rooms into gorgeously designed spaces.' Case in point: Rouhi Café, where elements of a traditional teahouse – tiled counter, stained-glass windows – complement exposed-brick walls and vintage furniture. And in ritzy Elahiyeh, restaurants such as Divan and Hestooran take it up a notch. To bring a piece home, she recommends Manouchehri Street for quirky antiques, Jomeh Bazaar for handicrafts and Fafa Coral Island for homewares. 'Tehran's famously young society is moving forward, left and right. Who knows what will happen next?' CHRIS SCHALKX



HESTOORAN



ZEEEN



DASTAN'S BASEMENT