

# PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBITION

*within the CliMESD International Symposium*



## SILENT HYRCANIA

*Witnessing the Quiet Disappearance  
of Iran's Ancient Caspian Forests  
(25-50 Million Years Old,  
UNESCO World Heritage)*

*by*  
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**20 FEBRUARY 2026**

**Sala Sbriccoli - CASB | Piazza Oberdan, 4 | MC**

**The exhibition is open from 20 to 28 February.**

**FREE ENTRY**





# “Silent Hyrcania”

Witnessing the Quiet Disappearance of Iran’s Ancient Caspian Forests (25–50 Million Years Old, UNESCO World Heritage)

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I was born in Qaemshahr, a small city embraced by the Hyrcanian forests of northern Iran — ancient woodlands dating back \*\*25–50 million years and recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site. For centuries, these forests have sheltered extraordinary biodiversity, holding a living memory of the planet’s ecological past.

I have lived far from my birthplace — in Tehran, Aarhus, Denmark, and now Paris — yet my roots remain in the soil, mist, and fading birdsong of these woods.

“**Silent Hyrcania**” is the result of several years of documentary and personal photography (2021–2025), capturing landscapes in constant transformation. Heavy rains, unregulated tourism, logging, disappearing wetlands, and climate instability have left visible scars. In Spring 2025, motorboats cut through Bergestanak wetland waters, and sunlight poured through widening gaps in Rasht and Kootena forests, revealing both memory and loss.

By Autumn 2025, wildfires swept Mazandaran’s forests, exposing their fragility and the consequences of human intervention. Some images echo deeply personal memories of Jadeh Nezami (Military Road), first photographed 19 years ago, reconnecting past and present. In Winter 2026, I captured snow-dusted Kootena trees, a serene reminder of the forests’ fragile beauty.

These photographs are acts of testimony, not celebration. They document an urgent reality — how each decision, neglect, and human intervention leaves lasting scars on nature.

Through “**Silent Hyrcania**”, I hold space between memory and reality — between the forest I once knew and the one now struggling to survive. Above all, this project is my attempt to preserve a bond that time and distance cannot erase. I want to keep my roots in this fertile land, beneath ancient trees, amidst rain, mist, and sunlight that has nurtured these woods for 25–50 million years.

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**WINTER LANDSCAPES AND  
HUMAN PRESENCE IN MAZANDARAN**

## I. JANUARY 2026

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### *WINTER AND SNOW-COVERED TREES*



1. "NO ENTRY" INSCRIBED ON CONCRETE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FOREST ROAD KNOWN AS THE "MILITARY ROAD," RESTRICTING FURTHER PASSAGE.



**2. THE FOREST ROAD KNOWN AS THE "MILITARY ROAD," MAZANDARAN, IRAN.**



**3. LOCAL PEOPLE OF MAZANDARAN ENJOYING LUNCH IN THE FOREST.**



**4. SMOKE RISING FROM USED CHARCOAL AFTER A PICNIC.**



**5. FROZEN TREES COVERED IN SNOW – KOTENA, KARCHANK**



**6. A TRACTOR CLEARING SNOW AND ASSISTING VEHICLES STUCK IN  
HEAVY SNOWFALL – KOTENA, KARCHANK.**



**7. TALL, ANCIENT TREES BLANKETED IN SNOW – KOTENA, KARCHANK.**



**8. SNOW-COVERED TREES FADING INTO MIST.**



**9. SIAHROUD RIVER SURROUNDED BY SNOW-COVERED TREES – KOTENA, KARCHANK.**

## II. 2025

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### *A PROTECTED AREA TRANSFORMED*



**10. LEISURE BOATS CARRYING PASSENGERS ACROSS BEHESHTI LAKE – BORJESTANAK,  
SHIRGAH, MAZANDARAN.**



**11. HOUSES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENT AROUND THE LAKE,  
ACCOMPANIED BY INCREASING NOISE POLLUTION.**



**12. A SECTION OF THE NATURAL LAKESIDE CONVERTED INTO A PARKING AREA.**



**13. GRADUALLY EXTINGUISHING CHARCOAL AFTER USE IN KOTENA FOREST.**



**14. A RAIN-FORMED POND REFLECTING TREE ROOTS AND FOREST SHADOWS.**

III. 2021

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*RURAL LIFE AND COEXISTENCE WITH  
THE HYRCANIAN FOREST*



**15. A MAN BURNING DRY WOOD AND REMAINING TREE TRUNKS ON HIS PRIVATE BARREN LAND.**



**16. HERDERS BRINGING COWS AND SHEEP INTO THE FOREST FOR GRAZING.**



**17. A FAMILY SPENDING LEISURE TIME TOGETHER IN NATURE.**



**18. THE TRUNK OF AN ANCIENT TREE IN QADIKOLA WETLAND, QAEMSHAHR.**



**19. MY MOTHER IN THE FOREST AND WETLAND OF QADIKOLA, QAEMSHAHR.**



**20. MY MOTHER ON A ROAD LEADING TO THE FOREST, SEARCHING FOR WILD PLANTS.**



**21. A WOMAN PRAYING IN THE FOREST WITH HER FAMILY;  
A DARTBOARD HANGING FROM ANCIENT HYRCANIAN TREES.**





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