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On the Streets of Tehran

The Iranian presidential campaign of 2009 and its bloody aftermath do not fit the prevailing narrative of Iran as a “fundamentalist society.” That the Iranian society is capable of producing such a drama does not surprise us, although the results of the fraudulent election and the ensuing crackdown by the state have surprised many. Even as the ongoing drama in Iran has become a fascinating object of curiosity for the global media circuitry, Iranian society remains poorly understood. This panel offers a cultural studies perspective on Iran and the recent developments that have captured the global imagination: it places these developments in a historical perspective; it explains the social movement that sustains the presence of people on the streets; it addresses the contradictions that have produced such a movement; it details the creativity and resiliency of a people in the face of a state that is fraught with internal fissures.