



## Taq Kasra, SOAS University of London

### **Celebrating Persian Architecture Bridges Cultural Divides**

So often, human beings focus on the differences that divide us rather than the commonality that unites us. We have different languages and manners of dress. We hold different cultural and ethical values. We perceive the world in different ways based on where we are from and the experiences we've had. However, we share a love and respect for art and architecture.

### **Architecture Bridges Cross-Cultural Divides**

Cultures are too often divided among generic lines. We understand things as "Western" or "Eastern," and "Modern" or "Ancient." However, when it comes to art and architecture, these generalities dissolve.

Architecture opens up our minds to [cross-cultural understanding](#). Humanity has constructed roads, walls, bridges, homes, and places of religious and cultural significance for thousands of years. While cultures create these structures in different ways, they all exist to meet common human needs. So, by studying architecture, we can begin to understand each other.

For many young people and westerners, it's hard to imagine what Iraq was like in decades past. The formally diverse and tolerant cultural paradise of Mosul has been the target of violent extremism. Individuals of all cultural backgrounds have been targeted by ISIS (Daesh), and the country now faces an uphill battle in [rebuilding its once thriving society](#).

## **Film and Media Play Important Roles in Building Unity**

The images of violence and destruction in Iraq dominate the media. This has contributed to even greater fear and cultural misunderstanding. While some media outlets, including [CNN](#), have owned up to their divisive impact, it's up to artists and humanitarians like Lady Jamileh Kharrazi to remind the next generation that all of us come from common origins.

Violence and oppression should never be ignored. However, when it comes to Iraq, it's easy to believe that things have always been as they are. Nothing can be farther from the truth. The art and architecture of Iraq reminds us of the [beautiful, peaceful, culturally-accepting place Iraq once was](#) and give us hope for what it can be again.

## **Taq Kasra: Ancient Persian Monument Stands for Hope**

Taq Kasra is an architectural wonder from the pre-Islamic era in Iraq. It is a great palace built in the third century that also became a [sacred site](#) for Muslims in the centuries that followed. It is also home to the world's largest brickwork vault, a token of human achievement. However, due to natural decay, lack of maintenance, and the [targeting of archaeological sites by Islamic extremists](#), Taq Kasra is threatened with destruction.

Now, humanitarians are raising awareness of this priceless piece of ancient archaeology to fight for its preservation. The new film, [Taq Kasra: Wonder of Architecture](#), documents the palace's history and influence. Poets, artists, scholars, and archaeologists from around the world have been impacted by the majesty of Taq Kasra. Even if the walls of the palace eventually fall, the film will preserve the monument's legacy as a symbol of cultural unity and human achievement.

(Fundraising Campaign) : [www.taqqasra.com](http://www.taqqasra.com) — First ever documentary film about the palace of Persian kings TAQ KASRA, the world's largest brickwork vault. Directed by Pejman Akbarzadeh. The monument is now in Al-Madain area in Iraq. Taq-i Kasra is the symbol of Persian empire in Sasanian era (3rd century AD- 6th century AD).