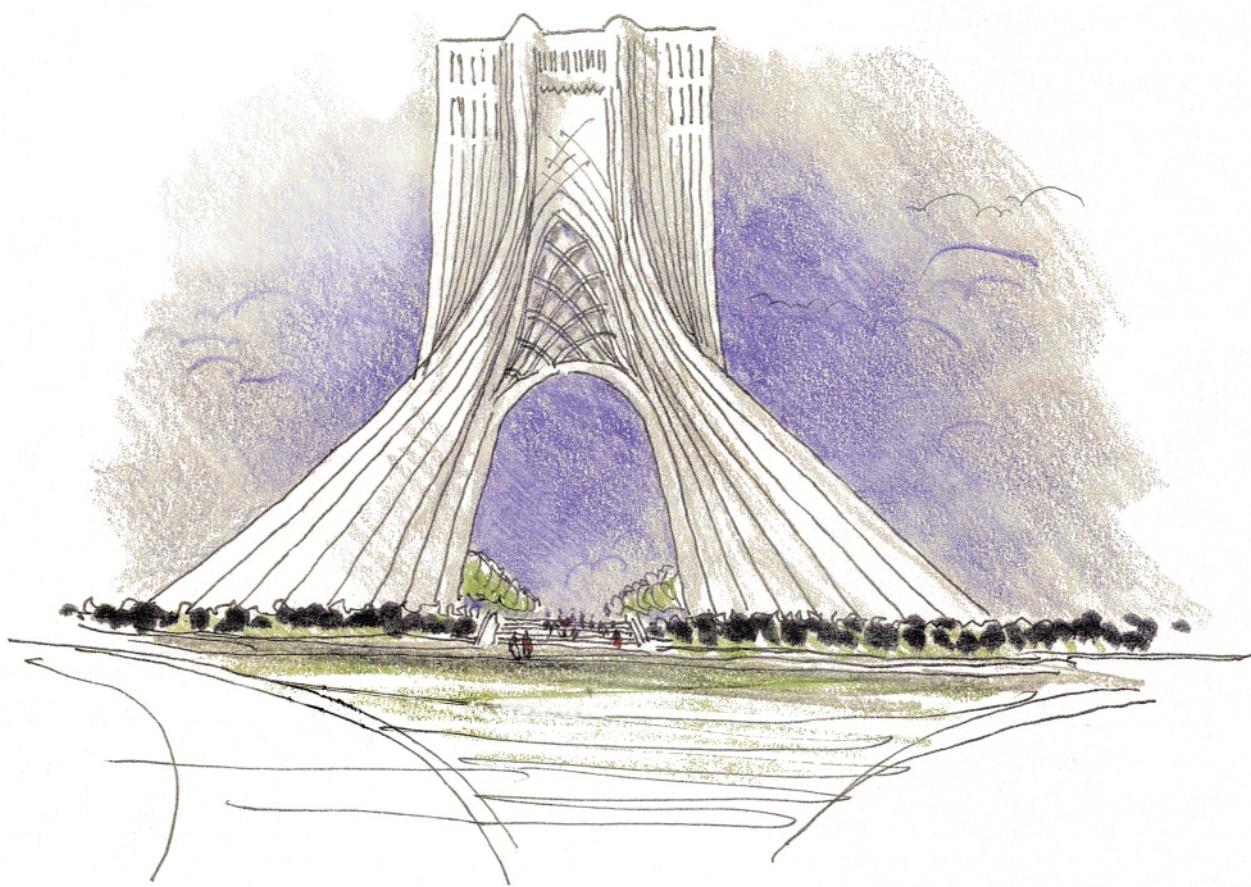


## Ralph Rapson - In & Around Tehran

2013-03-26



[Azadi Tower](#), in Tehran, Iran, designed by Hossein Amanat, 1971

Color sketch by [Ralph Rapson](#), from [Ralph Rapson Sketches and Drawings from Around the World](#), courtesy of the [Afton Press](#).

*"A former Iranian graduate student of mine was a member of the Shah's inner circle. He had been given the commission to design a new arts college in Tehran and asked me to be his associate. I visited Iran several times, preparing preliminary designs for the project. The last trip happened shortly before the Shah fled into exile in 1979."*

*"En route from the airport to the city center, my car would always pass an impressive modern monument to the Shah's accomplishments. But this was mostly window dressing as much of Tehran was not modernized. The capital I recall was a city of contrasts, a maze of beautiful gardens, heavily trafficked streets, low-quality housing, and covered bazaars loaded with fascinating goods: jewelry, rugs, fabrics.*



*A traditional small village in Iran with wind scoop towers used to passively cool buildings*

*Color sketch by [Ralph Rapson](#), from [Ralph Rapson Sketches and Drawings from Around the World](#), courtesy of the [Afton Press](#).*

*"I was invited to give a lecture at an international gathering of architects sponsored by the Shah and his wife, a patron of the arts. I spent a glamourous, fascinating evening at a party at one of the Shah's homes—a fabulous place constructed of a series of domes, one of which opened, allowing the stars to reflect the interior pools below.*

*"The Iranian people were friendly, and I often wandered around small villages to watch craftsmen working. Although we did not speak the sema language, we could always communicate." – Ralph Rapson*

[Contribute your sketch for consideration.](#)

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Source: Architecture Week People & Places Blog