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Painting life's bonds

by MARYAM KHARAZMI

ALI Akbar Safaeian is undoubtedly an artist who feels the pressures of life and the bonds that tie us down. And the 26-year-old painter clearly puts it across through the women he creates on his canvasses — all tied up with twisting herbs and plants.

Both the women and plants look very alive and seem to be struggling to get free from the chains of life.

"Isn't this what life is all about?" asked Safaeian at the opening of his seventh exhibition being held at the Inter-Continental Hotel.

Safaeian firmly believes that each and every one of us is tied down in life and that we are all trying to fight for existence and freedom.

But the artist feels his work is neither surrealistic nor fantastic.

"My work is based on realism and gnosticism. I get my inspiration from life and everything that I see happening around me," he said.

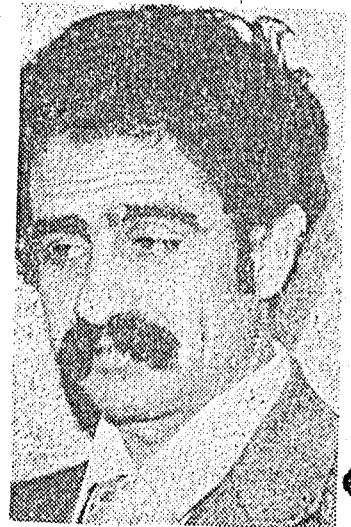
Safaeian paints women, slender and lovely, plants in all shapes and sizes and gardens of paradise. His modern imaginative paintings show us the present world as one big confusion, and a hope for a future paradise.

He emphasises human relationships, as he sees them, in one beautiful canvas which he calls "Togetherness," and in another "From Surrender to Protest."

The first is a colourful painting showing two contented women close together in a garden, their bodies covered with leaves and shapely plants.

"From Surrender to Protest" again shows two women, one tied down and screaming to get free, while the other, also tied down, sits calmly but somewhat helpless.

"I choose women as the main characters in my work because I find them interesting, specially their naked bodies," Safaeian



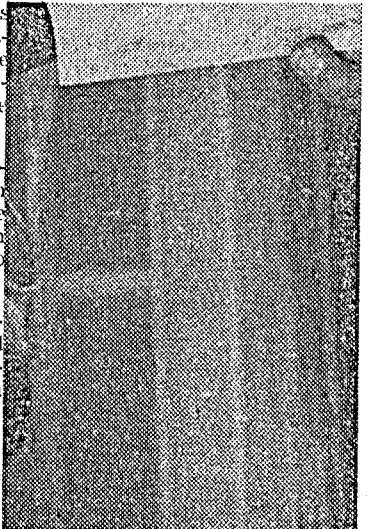
SAFAEIAN



NUDE — The plants, fruits and herbs winding round the woman's form, an intrinsic part of the whole composition, are typical of the painter's current work.



HEAD STUDY — "I choose women as the main characters in my paintings because I find them interesting."



Survival in the film world. For proof of his theory, he offered the example of another relic of the gangster-movie era. "He won some awards and then he came so dignified that he lost touch with reality."