



Sportsmen of Varzesh-e bstni in traditional costume, Iran

Date
1959

Primary Maker
Paul Almasy

Medium
Vintage ferrotyped gelatin silver print

Description
Pahlevani and zourkhaneh rituals is the name inscribed by UNESCO for varzesh-e bstni ("heroic sport") or varzesh-e bstni ("ancient sport"), a traditional system of athletics originally used to train warriors in Iran (Persia) and adjacent lands. It combines martial arts, calisthenics, strength training and music. Recognized by UNESCO as the world's longest-running form of such training, it fuses elements of pre-Islamic Persian culture (particularly Zoroastrianism, Mithraism and Gnosticism) with the spirituality of Shia Islam and sufism. Practiced in a domed structure called the zurkhaneh, training sessions consist mainly of ritual gymnastic movements and climax with the core of combat practice, a form of submission-grappling called koshti pahlavni.

Dimensions

Sheet: 11 3/4 x 9 1/4 in. (29.8 x 23.5 cm) Image: 11 3/4 x 9 1/4 in. (29.8 x 23.5 cm)