PL 53 Portrait of Hartel Jami
C. 1526–1534 [Herat, Afghanistan]
Painting attributed to Behzad [1460–1535?]
Geneva, Aga Khan Trust for Culture, M 192

This image shows Hartel Jami, the last great lyric poet of traditional Iran, in a kneeling position. It offers a curious contrast between the highly detailed face, the realism of which even includes his squinting eyes, and the rest of the body, which is simplified and almost featureless. The figure is placed against a rather garish blue background. The cartouches containing the title and identity of the painter are larger than usual. The face lends itself to psychological analysis and reveals the painter's talent, whether it is Behzad or not.

PL 54 Young man dressed in the European style
Second quarter of the seventeenth century [Safavids, Iran]
Style of Isfahan
Geneva, Museum of Art and History, Pozzi collection, inv. no. 15936

The pose is Persian but the clothing, and in particular the small, poorly executed biret, could hardly be more European. It is difficult to know whether this is a representation of a local courtier dressed in a foreign style or a European imitating local manners. Although the artist has genuine talent, the subject lacks authenticity, even though it does reveal a certain interest for art originating in the West.
This painting, later often imitated, is a curious blend of traditional poses and detail from the Muslim world with new techniques of representation inspired by Italy. The conventional approach to the beard and the figure's gesture do not mar the overall realism conveying the character of a great sovereign.