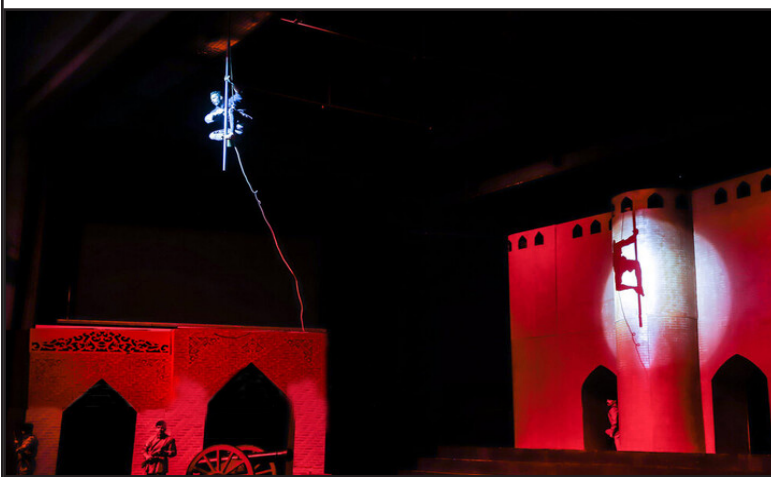


'Sattar Khan' Sets Attendance Record in Tabriz



TEHRAN -- The historical theater play 'Sattar Khan' has set a new attendance record, drawing over 18,000 viewers across 16 performances in Iran's East Azarbaijan Province.

Due to overwhelming public demand, three additional shows have also been scheduled for January 4-5 at the Khavaran Hall in Tabriz city.

The epic production, directed by Yaghoob Seddiq Jamali, features 300 performers from

East Azarbaijan Province.

The show began its run on December 23 and has achieved unprecedented success for a theatrical production with a historical/epic theme.

The historical play depicts Sattar Khan, the legendary freedom fighter who played a pivotal role in the Constitutional Revolution in the early 1900s.

He was born in East Azarbaijan Province.

Ammar Film Festival Concludes in Tehran

TEHRAN -- The closing ceremony of the 15th edition of the Ammar Film Festival was held at Tehran's the Artistic Sect of the Islamic Republic on Thursday night with the participation of families of martyrs and war veterans.

The 15th edition of the Ammar Popular Film Festival was inaugurated during a ceremony at Bahman Cinema in Tehran.

The event brought together cultural officials, artists, and families of martyrs, as well as several Lebanese families.



During the ceremony, awards were presented to winners in categories such as music videos, screenplays, animation, film productions, television programs, and digital content.

The Ammar Popular Film Festival was established in 2010 by a number of Iranian revolutionary figures to honor film and art products promoting topics such as resistance and revolution. It was named after Ammar Yasir, a close companion of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

How Persian Art Influenced British Design

LONDON (The National) -- The influence of Islamic art on the designer William Morris seems so obvious that once you see it, you can't unsee it. Though Morris's designs are synonymous with Britishness -- his leafy designs grace tea towels across the UK -- a new exhibition at London's William Morris Gallery reveals the profound impact of the Middle East on the designer and the studio he led throughout the late 19th century.

"Morris's interest in Islamic art has always been a footnote but never fully understood," says Rowan Bain, the gallery's curator, who put together William Morris and Art from the Islamic World with Qaisra M Khan, a curator at the Khalili Collections. "We're trying to look at Islamic objects he owned to draw links between them and his designs and to broaden our understanding of the quintessentially British designer."

Morris set up an important design workshop in the 1860s that revived artisanal skills during a time of pervasive mechanization. Eventually known as the Arts and Crafts movement, it was part of a wider desire to look back to pre-industrial Britain, such as the Pre-Raphaelite painters and writers, who drew inspiration from medieval Europe, or the fascination with the Gothic in design and architecture (such as the ornate Palace of Westminster, completed in 1876).

In Morris's Art and Crafts designs, patterns were inspired by the seasons and the natural world; crafts such as tapestries and embroidery were re-employed; and technical skills were celebrated as forging a more honest relationship between maker and object.

But a closer look at the works with another set of references in mind and a different world opens up the interlocking, vegetal patterns are also typical of Ottoman tilework; the frilled flowers hark back to Persian textiles; and the refusal of difference between art and design re-

verberates with a similar blurred distinction in the Islamic world. Though Morris never travelled to the Middle East, the patient curatorship of Bain and Khan shows the depth of his interest, both as a collector and a student of these crafts.

The exhibition takes place in the sizeable East London mansion that was Morris's home as a teenager. The curators juxtapose various examples of Morris's design with Persian and Ottoman objects that he and others in the UK collected, underlining both the prevalence of Middle Eastern design and the direct inspiration they furnished.

His well-known "flowerpot" motif, a repeating pattern of white vases opening onto bouquets with interlocking branches and stems, hangs next to a Damascene tile panel from the 17th century that Morris owned -- whose white pot and arching branches are clear antecedents.

For the "dove and rose" pattern, made later in his life when he was experimenting with more lavish material, he looked to the use of animals in Iran and Italy, incorporating the beasts into the pattern woven into rich silk.

"You can see the influence even in the choice of flowers," says Bain. "If you look at his 'medway' textile and wallpaper, it uses a smaller and freer type of tulip that would have been typical to Turkey at the time. It's not a Dutch tulip but something more wild."

Throughout, one can also see the genius of Morris's originality: he was not creating mere copies, but continuations of the ideas behind the designs. The bright palette of the Iznik pottery is darkened for England's wintery clime, and he often dislodges Islamic art's symmetrical organization and moves away from framing devices. It is cultural appreciation rather than appropriation, which is perhaps how it flew under the radar for so long.

In his lifetime, Morris's involvement in the arts of the Islamic world was well-known. He had a sizeable collection of



metalwork, rugs and textiles from Persia and the Ottoman Empire, which he mixed in his own decor with European and British objects. He helped advise the South Kensington Museum -- which later became the V&A -- on its acquisitions of objects from the Middle East, including the Ardabil Carpet, now one of its stand-out items.

He used these objects and textiles not just for decoration but as objects of study, keeping them in drawers to look at their patterns and unpicking their needlework to learn how they were constructed. In the 1880s, when he began producing carpets, he turned to Persia and Turkey to understand their hand-knotted technique. And the show reveals his appreciation to be profound.

When Morris died, his coffin was covered with a textile from Ottoman Turkey in the 16th century -- a beautiful velvet and silk brocade of smoky, elegant tulip-like forms reaching upwards. The curators also include two books that Morris (along with other artists) illuminated in gilded, fantastical patterns -- the Shahnameh and the Rubaiyat by Omar Khayyam.

Morris's daughter May, whose Islamic-inspired patterns are also in the exhibition, recalls listening to Morris read

the newly published French translation of the Shahnameh at night to the family.

Like all groundbreaking exhibitions, William Morris and Art from the Islamic World opens more questions than it answers. Cultural revisionism has mostly focused on reinstating under-acknowledged artists and influences into the narrative of art history. But Morris has always been about more than art. He saw his works as embedded in society -- not just because he created widely used items like furniture and wallpaper -- but because he also looked to the economic and social framework that produces culture, which he viewed through his deeply rooted socialism.

While the curators gesture towards the larger legacy of Islamic design, particularly in the accompanying publication (Tulips and Peacocks: William Morris and Art from the Islamic World), it remains unclear how the public received these influences.

While this exhibition is a step in the right direction to understanding the point, more work needs to be done to appreciate the interlocking cultural histories whose legacy, in middle-class notebooks, throw cushions and the tiles of innumerable Victorian hallways, continues to form the UK's visual landscape.

Latest From Iranian Cinema

TEHRAN -- The first official image of Amir Norouzi in the feature film '1968' has been unveiled.

Directed by Amir-Mehdi Pourvaziri and produced by Iraj Mohammadi, the movie is currently in its final stages of production.

Co-written by Javad Ketabi and Davoud Ganjavi, '1968' is preparing to debut at the upcoming Fajr International Film Festival, gearing up for submission to the festival's secretariat.

Amir Norouzi takes on the lead role in this project, which marks the second cinematic production by the Imam Rouhollah Cultural and Arts Institute.

After the success of his popular comedy films 'Confiscation' and 'Dog's Band', renowned director Mehran Ahmadi is back with his third feature film, 'Leech'.

Ahmadi will both direct and produce this new project, continuing his journey in Iranian cinema.

The film has recently received its production permit and is now entering the filming phase.

Fans of Ahmadi's previous works

are eagerly anticipating this next chapter, as the director is known for his humorous role in the Iranian TV series 'Capital'.

Soon, Elnaz Shakerdoust and Mehran Modiri will take on the leading roles in the feature film 'Clingsy'.

According to the project's public relations team, the screenplay for 'Clingsy', directed and produced by Hatef Alimardani, was granted a production permit some time ago.

With the addition of Modiri and Shakerdoust to the cast, the film has officially entered its pre-production phase.

Filming is scheduled to begin in early February in Tehran, and additional well-known cast members will be revealed soon.

This marks Alimardani's tenth film, following the success of his previous works such as 'For the Sake of Pounce', 'Dying in September', 'The Nameless Alley', 'Seven Months Pregnant', 'Dear Mother' and 'Star Game'.

Alimardani also wrote the screenplay for this new project.

Relocation of Capital Revives Old Debate



TEHRAN -- Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian has reignited discussions about relocating the capital from Tehran to a coastal city, citing economic inefficiencies and regional disparities.

"One of the reasons that has led us to consider changing the capital is the imbalance between resources and expenditures in Tehran," he said in a meeting with representatives from the central

region of Semnan.

Tehran, home to over 9 million residents, has long struggled with overpopulation, traffic congestion, air pollution, and resource mismanagement. Pezeshkian argued that moving the capital closer to the Persian Gulf would streamline economic operations.

"Transporting raw materials from the south to the center, processing them, and then returning

them south for export drains our competitive capacity. We must shift the country's economic and political center to the south and closer to the sea," he said.

Previous Iranian administrations have explored various iterations of the idea. However, financial constraints and political inertia have consistently stalled progress.

It gained traction during the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, mainly over concerns about Tehran's vulnerability to earthquakes. President Hassan Rouhani revisited it in the mid-2010s, citing the city's unsustainable growth and environmental challenges.

Relocating the capital would require massive investment and pose logistical challenges, while potentially harming Tehran's economy. It seems unlikely, therefore, that Pezeshkian follows his remarks with actions that his predecessors avoided in less challenging times.

Picture of the Day



The autumn wildlife census of Khuzestan province was carried out for 15 days and nights with the participation of 70 experts, environmentalists and eco friends.

Photo by Mizan Online