

## Iran's 'A Poetess' awarded at US film festival



**MEHR** - Directed by Iranian filmmaker Saeed Dashti, the short film 'A Poetess' was awarded at the World Music & Independent Film Festival (WMIFF) in Washington D.C., the U.S.

Amir Jafari, Sahra Fathi, Linda Kiani, and Nima Shabannejad are the cast of Dashti's short film.

The film has already won the Best Foreign Film Award from the jury in the California Women's Film Festival. 'A Poetess' depicts the life of Sara. Considering arguments and issues with her husband, Sara is hesitant to choose immigration or staying in her country. By realizing the truth about her husband, she makes up her mind and plans for a new future.

## Paris museum to mark 50th anniversary of Picasso's death

**AP** - Fifty years after the death of Pablo Picasso, British designer Paul Smith has taken over the Musée National Picasso-Paris to celebrate the renowned artist.

The result is three floors of colourful rooms, making the painter's work pop even more. "This is perhaps one of the most radical rooms that seem to be expected since there is the theme of the stripe that we know well from [Paul Smith's] socks or jumpers," Musée National Picasso-Paris director Cécile Debray said, explaining one element of the takeover.

The series of Vogue Paris covers that Picasso drew are hung in a room where the original covers are the wallpaper. "[Smith's] vision is often tinged with a great deal of humour and a form of distance and lightness," Debray added.

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# Foreign preachers at Iran Qur'anic expo seek to promote Islamic culture worldwide



Sadeq Dehqan  
Staff Writer

**EXCLUSIVE**

The students of this institute are mainly selected from countries with Muslim communities. Num Patan from Thailand is one of the students of the institute. In the Thai pavilion, the 44-year-old told Iran Daily about Qur'anic and Islamic activities in his country in the holy month of Ramadan. "Although Thailand is not an Islamic country, Muslims are the biggest religious minority in the country and account for almost 10 percent of its population. Although Muslims are scattered in

Thailand, most Muslims live in the south in the areas bordering Malaysia," he said.

Num said he lives with a Muslim family in a small town near Bangkok. He said he has been interested in religious teachings since childhood. The student said he is a Shia Muslim and has come to Iran to boost his knowledge about Shia Islam.

"I became interested in Shia Islam because of good and moral characteristics of Imam Ali (the first Shia Imam)," he said.

He said Al-Mustafa International University is a center of Islamic sciences for foreign seminary students, adding that most of them are students from African and southeast Asian countries.

"I have been studying in

Iran for nearly 20 years. Presently, I am completing the final stages of my doctorate in the field of interpretation of Qur'anic sciences. Students in this center are dispatched to their hometowns or other places as ambassadors of Islamic culture and education to disseminate religious sciences. After completing my education I will return to my country and set up a department at the Thai University for teaching religious sciences. Recently, scholars and clerics who have studied in Iran published a translated copy of the Qur'an in the Thai language, which will help promote the teachings of the holy book," he said.

Mohammad Ouedraogo is a Qur'anic preacher from Burkina Faso who has

been studying in the field of interpretation of the Qur'an. He said his country has a population of 22 million, 70 percent of whom are Muslim.

"Our country is not ruled on the basis of religious foundations," he said. But everyone with any religion and belief is free to propagate their religious ideas, and no one has the right to stop them. Muslims constitute the main population of the country. Hence, a spiritual atmosphere prevails there in the month of Ramadan. During this month, people participate in sessions related to the interpretation of the Qur'an and help the needy."

"I have learned many things in Iran. This is the first time that I am taking part in this Qur'anic

exhibition. Attending this exhibition was a very good experience for me to familiarize myself with Qur'anic activities," he added. Sana Sidi was another Qur'anic student in the pavilion of Burkina Faso who told Iran Daily about his presence at the expo.

"I taught Qur'anic sciences in my country for two years," he said. "I came to Iran to complete a master's degree in the Qur'anic field and plan to return to my country next year and continue to teach interpretation of the Qur'an and disseminate Islamic culture. I also want to make more people familiar with different aspects of Islam and the Qur'an."

The 30th Tehran International Qur'an Exhibition is showcasing paintings,

verses and teachings of the Holy Qur'an, as well as calligraphy and illumination artworks. More than 20 countries are presenting their works.

Rare manuscripts and books related to the Qur'an as well as interpretations of the holy book are also showcased. Publishers from several countries have brought their newly-printed copies of the Qur'an.

The expo is the most significant exhibition of its kind in the Muslim world, which also hosts world-renowned Qur'an reciters.

It is organized annually by the Iranian Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance during Ramadan, with the aim of promoting Qur'anic concepts and developing Qur'anic activities.

## 'Leila's Brothers,' a controversial Iranian film



### Arts & Culture Desk

'Leila's Brothers,' the third feature film made by Saeed Roustaei, has been one of the most controversial films in the Iranian cinema industry.

The cinematic production has been widely criticized for its harsh political, social and moral themes, as well as its illegal distribution on online platforms.

The film was premiered at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival and won the FIPRESCI Prize, the International Film Critics Award.

Prior to being screened at Cannes Film Festival, the film had not received a screening

license. On June 20, 2022, the Cinema Organization of Iran confiscated it because the film did not implement "even one" of the necessary modifications.

On March 16, 2023, some sources announced the release of the film in France, followed by screening the illegal version of the film in Iran. The film's producer Javad Norouzbeigi considered watching the illegal version "immoral" and noted that the film would be rebroadcast as a mini-series.

With his film, 'Life and a Day,' Roustaei created a new genre in Iranian cinema. He devoted meticulous attention to poverty, leading to other social problems such as

addiction, which were well displayed in both 'Life and a Day' and 'Just 6.5'. On the other hand, this theme and its cinematography influenced other filmmakers, and we witnessed a kind of streamlining by Roustaei, who appeared as a highly influential filmmaker alongside Mohammad-Hossein Mahdavian.

In the following, the most important challenging dimensions of the film have been analyzed.

Perhaps the greatest amount of analysis and interpretation does not target its artistic aspects, but rather, it concerns its political aspects. Some film critics are of the idea that the film is an exaggeration and is targeted for foreign film festivals. However, others believe that it mirrors Iranian political, social and economic society.

A number of critics, though, have attempted to give meaning to the clothes and colors in the film. For instance, some interpreted Leila's red scarf as related to Maryam Rajavi, the notorious MKO leader.

The film follows both social and individual themes in its narrative drama. The individual theme of greed, which is crystallized in

the 80-year-old father of the family, with the brilliant performance of Saeed Poursamimi, is one of the most important themes of the film, in which the filmmaker was able to dramatize and convey its bitterness.

The director's concept is to show the lower strata of society. On the one hand, he is more familiar with this class; according to his statements, he has lived with them for years; on the other hand, the lower class can be more sympathetic and create more sympathy.

The social theme of the film is the inflamed economic conditions of the country, where, on the one hand, unemployment and class differences are still among the most important problems of the society, and, on the other hand, currency fluctuations have disturbed the peace and increased the anxiety of almost all people struggling to keep their heads above water. Conversely, economic turbulences not only cause them to progress, but also cause their downfall.

One of the most strident criticisms is directed toward showing disrespect to parents. Some of the film's critics boycotted watching the film due to its explicit opposition



to religious and moral teachings. The disrespect for parents, which is shown in the climactic scene of Leila slapping her father, is the main reason for critics calling the film "immoral". In view of Qur'anic teachings, to treat our parents with the utmost respect, these critics have regarded 'Leila's Brother' as non-religious and transgressive. Other critics argue that watching the film is "immoral" due to its illegal distribution on online platforms.