

Iran's Oskouei picked for Polish festival jury



ISNA – Iranian documentary filmmaker Mehrdad Oskouei participated as a jury member in the 20th Millennium Docs Against Gravity Film Festival in Poland.

The festival, which took place from May 12 to 21, is the largest documentary film festival in Poland, simultaneously held in seven cities.

An acclaimed Iranian filmmaker and photographer, Oskouei has gained recognition for his exceptional contributions to the fields. His works have been showcased at numerous national and international festivals, where he has received multiple awards. Notably, his documentary feature film, 'Sunless Shadows,' earned him the prestigious Best Director Award at the 32nd International Documentary Film Festival in Amsterdam.

In addition to 'Sunless Shadows,' Oskouei has produced an impressive body of work. Some of his notable creations include 'Starless Dreams,' 'The Last Days of Winter,' 'Days Without Calendar,' 'Nose, Iranian Style,' 'Maryam Island,' and 'Behind the Veil.' These films showcase Oskouei's distinctive style and storytelling prowess, captivating audiences around the world.

Iran to hold tourism, culture, history, civilization confab

IBNA – In a collaborative effort between Lorestan University, Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz, and the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Department in Lorestan Province, a national conference focusing on tourism, culture, history, and civilization is set to take place on October 22.

The conference will specifically dedicate a section to tourism, highlighting crucial topics such as tourism management and economy, biodiversity-based economic models, the role of e-commerce in tourism development, strategic tourism management, tourism marketing management, and entrepreneurship in the tourism sector.

Researchers and scholars interested in participating in the conference are encouraged to submit their papers by October 12, ensuring their valuable contributions are considered for inclusion.

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 ● Editorial Dept. Tel: +98 21 88913453
 ● Editorial Dept. Fax: +98 21 88930684
 ● ICPI Publisher: +98 21 88548892, 5
 ● Advertising Dept. Tel & Email: +98 21 88500617 - irandaily@iranagahiha.com
 ● Website: www.irandaily.ir
 newspaper.irandaily.ir
 irandaily@icpi.ir
 Iran Cultural & Press Institute

Address: #22, Hosseini-Rad Alley, South of Shahid Mottahari St., Vali-e Asr Ave., Tehran, Iran

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Iran, epitome of cultural diversity, peaceful coexistence of religions



Cultural diversity ensures that all individuals and groups can exercise their cultural rights, rooted in human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran stands as an emblematic representation of cultural diversity, harmonious coexistence of religions, and a source of peace and tolerance, as emphasized by Ali Darabi, Iran's deputy tourism minister.

Darabi explicated on the subject during the ceremony titled 'Commemorating Cultural Diversity,' held at Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center.

He articulated, "We inhabit a world where over 10,000 distinct human communities coexist across more than 200 countries. Cultural diversity ensures that all individuals and groups can exercise their cultural rights, rooted in human rights and fundamental freedoms."

The essence of cultural diversity entails affording equal opportunities to all cultures, facilitating their equitable collaboration, and eliminating discrimination and inequality in all forms.

Darabi augmented his statement by highlighting

that while human societies share several cultural traits, they simultaneously possess varying degrees of heterogeneity, both within themselves and in comparison to others.

This rich diversity and plurality should be safeguarded and supported, resembling the preservation and endorsement of "biodiversity." It is a collective human heritage, a treasure brimming with the experiences, wisdom, and conduct of all individuals.

The deputy minister emphasized that embracing pluralism, encompassing the acceptance of others and respecting the plurality of cultures, holds enormous significance within nations, inter-ethnic relations, and international affairs. It encompasses the right to enjoy one's own culture, freedom to express faith and partake in religious ceremonies, the liberty to employ one's own language, and the opportunity to engage in cultural life.

Darabi underscored that cultural diversity serves as

a valuable defense against cultural assimilation, exemplifying actions undertaken by the United States and some Western nations through the "importation of Western values and democracy" into other regions of the world.

He clarified that Iran's cultural policy revolves around honoring cultural diversity, providing equal opportunities for social and cultural groups to participate in cultural life, and supporting marginalized or endangered cultures.

Furthermore, Darabi highlighted that Iran has long been a melting pot of diverse cultures, serving as a symbol of 7,000 years of cultural history, peaceful coexistence of religions, dialogue, tolerance, and peace.

He pointed out notable instances, such as the inclusion of Iranian Armenian churches in the world registry in 2008 and the recognition of the pilgrimage ritual of Thaddeus Church by the Islamic Republic of Iran as an intangible cultural site in 2020. These

acts exemplify Iran's commitment to globalizing cultural diversity.

The deputy minister explained that cultural diversity in Iran signifies a unifying force, promoting national unity, solidarity, and stability while thwarting ethnic conflicts. Throughout human history, cultural diversity has remained a conspicuous characteristic of Iranian society, embodying its cultural dynamism. Iran encompasses an amalgamation of ethnicities and regions, each possessing unique traits shaped by climate, history, beliefs, and lifestyle.

"The enduring phenomenon of statehood and the necessity of coexistence spanning several millennia have culminated in the formation of a shared cultural heritage that defines the elements of Iranian national identity," remarked Darabi. This identity manifests through ancient rituals, traditions, and customs, serving as a cohesive bond uniting all Iranians. Notable symbols embody-

ing this identity include Nowruz (Persian New Year), Yalda Night, Ferdowsi's 'Shahnameh,' Hafez, Sa'di, and Rumi, which resonate deeply with the Iranian populace.

Regarding the global declaration on cultural diversity by UNESCO, Darabi expressed that it constitutes a "common human heritage" capable of replacing conflict, violence, and war with dialogue, peace, tolerance, and respectful coexistence among diverse cultures.

He accentuated the influential role of contemporary media and social networks, referring to them as unrivaled super media. Radio, television, press, non-governmental organizations, and reference groups can spearhead the expansion of cultural diversity.

In conclusion, Darabi emphasized that cultural diversity strives to foster dialogue, development, and the celebration of cultural differences. He regarded it as an opportunity for renewal, social progress, and global living in the present era.

60% of Iran's calligraphy students are women



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In accordance with data released by the Iran Calligraphers Association, 60 percent of students studying the art of calligraphy in Iran are women, as declared by the association's deputy head.

Notably, a total of 49,025 individuals have successfully completed their education in various dis-

ciplines of calligraphy, as conveyed by Ali-Ashraf Sandoq-Abadi, IRNA reported.

Furthermore, there has been a significant rise in the number of female calligraphy instructors in recent years, leading to a forecast that numerous calligraphy positions will soon be occupied by women.

Addressing the presentation of calligraphy works

in art auctions, he highlighted the presence of the only calligraphy auction in Iran, known as 'Rain Auction,' catering to the specialized domain of traditional art of calligraphy. It is imperative to strengthen such art auctions and place greater emphasis on the field of art economics within the calligraphy sector. While painting and calligrams,

which boast more extensive recognition and prosperity, dominate these events, traditional calligraphy works have not garnered significant attention. The association boasts an extensive network of 360 branches nationwide and an additional 17 branches overseas, fostering the teaching, promotion, and advancement of the art of calligraphy.