

# Malayer, manifestation of Iran's rich art and architecture



Noushijan Hill  
visitiran.ir



A grape garden in Malayer  
IRNA

## Iranica Desk

The city of Malayer in western Hamedan Province is a manifestation of Iran's rich art and architecture, and is known as the city of the Medes. The Medes were ancient Persian people who mostly inhabited an area

known as Media between western and northern Iran, and spoke the Median language. Around the 11th century B.C., they occupied the mountainous region of northwestern Iran and the northeastern and eastern region of Mesopotamia, located in Hamedan (Ecbatana).

According to IRNA, 360 historical monuments and works have been identified in Malayer. More than 240 of them have been registered on the country's National Heritage List.

Noushijan Hill is located 15km northwest of Malayer. There are ancient temples and a castle on top of that hill. The historic site is estimated to be nearly 3,000 years old. The 40-meter high castle or fortress has several rooms, a reception hall full of columns, impenetrable walls, and a secret tunnel. There are also two temples there; a western temple and a central temple. Archaeologists have carried out extensive excavations at this ancient site. Their research indicates

that Noushijan Hill was inhabited in the era of the Medes, the Achaemenid era, and the Sassanid period. Silver coins have also been found at this site by archaeologists—the earliest examples of coins in human civilization.

## Malayer theme park

Malayer's Mini World Complex is a theme park which attracts a large number of domestic and foreign tourists and has turned into a tourist hub in western Iran. It is considered a miniature park, which displays scores of national and international historical monuments such as the Hafez Tomb, Persepolis, Eiffel Tower, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, and the Great Wall of China. These monuments

are built on a small scale and make it possible to travel to different parts of the world in a very short period of time, or, as some say, tourists can travel around the world in 80 minutes by visiting this theme park. Malayer's Mini World Park is also known as the Park of Nations. Dozens of other miniature versions of major historical monuments are being designed and constructed in the complex. The Municipality of Malayer says efforts are underway to complete the construction of the tourist site. Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Ezzatollah Zarghami toured Malayer's Mini World in late December, calling it an exemplary theme park on a

world scale. "The theme park, entertainment, and tourism complex in Malayer can undoubtedly be a very good model for other countries," Zarghami said during his visit. Malayer also has a reputation for rug weaving and wood carving. Many people in the city are involved in the production of wooden handicrafts and traditional furniture. Artisans use the wood of beech, walnut and plane trees to make different products such as traditional, classic, steel and sofa furniture. Other products are dining tables, desks, all kinds of chairs, beds and decorative woodwork. Malayer is also famous in Iran as a hub of grape cultivation.



Malayer's Mini World Complex  
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## Story of an orphanage turned into a museum

### Iranica Desk

The Kerman Museum of Contemporary Art (San'ati Museum) has been recognized as the second best visual museum in Iran, after the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. The museum houses a spectacular collection of contemporary Iranian and international art. It displays works by artists such as Kamal-ol-Molk, Parviz Tanavoli, Sohrab Sepehri, Ali Akbar Yasemi, Wassily Kandinsky, Tom Phillips, Auguste

Rodin, and Henry Moore. Apart from its artistic value, the museum is reminiscent of selflessness and philanthropic spirit of a benefactor named Ali-Akbar San'ati. Over 100 years ago, San'ati decided to build an orphanage in Kerman to alleviate the plight of homeless children and orphans. San'ati did his utmost to construct the orphanage. He had to sell half of his house to fund the construction of the project. The orphanage was not re-

stricted to providing children with food and a place to sleep. The orphanage was in fact a school, where literature, ethics, religious lessons and agriculture were taught. As a result, it gained such a high status that ordinary families were encouraged to send their children there to receive an education. Saeed was one of the kids who lived in the orphanage. He was born in Kerman in 1916 and lost his father at the age of four. His mother was forced to send him to the orphanage when he

was seven years old. His talent for painting was evident in childhood. Discovering Saeed's talent, Ali-Akbar San'ati sent him to the Kamal-ol-Molk School in Tehran where he learned painting with master painters Abolhassan Sediqi, Ali-Mohammad Heydarian, Hossein Khan Sheikhi and Ali Rokhsar. He is remembered as one of the greatest contemporary Iranian artists who created more than 1,000 paintings and 400 sculptures. He is also known

for depicting morality and affliction of people in his works. As a sign of gratitude for the director of the orphanage, Saeed changed his name to Ali-Akbar (after Ali-Akbar San'ati). Children like Saeed who had no custodian at the orphanage shared the family name of San'ati (the surname of the founder of the orphanage) to avoid registration problems at school. He later returned to the orphanage in Kerman to teach children. Children were kept and edu-

cated at the orphanage until the mid-1970s. At that time, Homayoun, the custodian of the orphanage and grandson of Ali-Akbar San'ati, decided to modernize it. Consequently, a new building was constructed close to the old structure and children were transferred there. Homayoun, who was interested in art, turned the old building into a museum, which is now known as the Kerman Museum of Contemporary Art (San'ati Museum).



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