

Children's paintings on display in Tehran

Arts & Culture Desk

IRNA – Starting from Friday, the Iran Artists Forum will be the venue for an engaging and thought-provoking painting exhibition titled 'Stairway.'

The exhibition, organized by the Association of Iranian Painters (AIP), showcases an array of captivating artworks created by children. This unique project revolves around the theme of childhood, exploring various aspects such as children's artistic expression, education, playful activities, and the role of museums.

The event spans across multiple galleries, including Bahar, Tabestan, Paez, Zemestan, Momayyez, and Mirmiran, each hosting a diverse range of artworks that captivate the imagination.

Beyond the visual display, the exhibition will feature five specialized meetings, a research exhibition, exhibition of installations, workshops, and interactive games, all aimed at providing a holistic and immersive experience for visitors.

Iran visual artist Kashian dies at 81



Arts & Culture Desk

ISNA – Prominent Iranian visual artist, renowned for his ability in painting and calligraphy, died at the age of 81. He was hospitalized for over a month due to a stroke.

After completing his high school education, he went on to successfully graduate from the Iranian Calligraphers Association in 1976. Notably, he had the privilege of being a student under the guidance of Mahmoud Farshchian, one of Iran's greatest miniature painters.

In recognition of his artistic achievements, he was bestowed with the Second Grade Art Diploma by the High Council of Culture and Art in 1979. By 2001, he had amassed an impressive four decades of experience in the realm of art, actively participating in a wide array of artistic pursuits, including miniature painting and calligraphy. Throughout his illustrious career, he showcased his masterpieces in nearly 60 domestic and international exhibitions, leaving an indelible mark on the art world.

His remarkable talent was acknowledged at the inaugural International Biennale Exhibition of Algeria, where he was awarded the prestigious silver medal for his captivating paintings. Moreover, he published a book titled 'Ink Drawings' in Tehran during the year 1985, showcasing his exceptional skills and artistic vision.

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 ● Advertising Dept. Tel & Email: +98 21 88500617 - irandaily@iranagahiha.com
 ● Website: www.irandaily.ir
 newspaper.irandaily.ir
 irandaily@icpi.ir
 Email: irandaily@icpi.ir
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Persian language courses held in five Russian cities

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The 15th iteration of the Persian language training course for Russian nationals took place across five cities in Russia, namely, Moscow, Ural, Kazan, Saratov, and North Ossetia.

The course, overseen by the Iranian Cultural Attaché Masoud Ahmadvand, included supplementary instruction for a group exceeding 120 participants enrolled in introductory, intermediate, and advanced levels, as reported by IRNA.

During the course's closing ceremony on Thursday, the ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Moscow emphasized the pivotal role that mutual understanding plays in fostering the comprehensive development of Iran-Russia relations.

Expressing his delight at the presence of language enthusiasts and their engagement with the Persian language, culture, and civilization, Kazem Jalali underscored the significance of the language's inherent beauty in facilitating the commendable progress achieved by the students of Persian.



He further emphasized the need for Iran and Russia, as neighboring nations with developing relations, to cultivate a deeper understanding of one another, highlighting that this heightened mutual understanding can undoubtedly be achieved through the avenues of culture and language.

Addressing Russian students studying Persian, the Iranian envoy stated, "Through acquiring proficiency in the Persian lan-

guage, you can assume an influential role in strengthening ties between the nations of Iran and Russia." Ahmadvand, who also serves as a representative of the Sa'di Foundation in Russia, provided detailed explanations during the ceremony regarding the diverse Persian language courses offered, the historical background of Persian language instruction in cultural centers, and the support extended to Iranian centers at 19 universi-

ties throughout Russia. Additionally, he highlighted the establishment of four language training courses, supported by the foundation, at prominent educational institutions such as Ural Federal University, Kazan Federal University, Saratov State University, and North Ossetian State University. Acknowledging the interest displayed by the students of Persian in mastering the language, Ahmadvand expressed op-

timism that the desire and enthusiasm for learning Persian among the Russian population would continue to grow, particularly with the development of economic and trade relations between the two countries. He further expressed hope that this increased interest in language acquisition would contribute to the expansion and harmonious convergence of the realms of economy and culture between Iran and Russia.

Contemporary Iranian literature in dire need of national myths

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The presence of myths in literature is a phenomenon that transcends time and geography, as evidenced by literary works from the most remote tribes to the most advanced countries. These works provide valuable insights into the culture, spirituality, psychology, and social characteristics of a nation throughout a historical period.

However, despite the significance of myths in literature, many contemporary writers and poets have largely abandoned their use for various reasons. This abandonment has resulted in significant damage to Iran's literary works. The allure and endurance of these works have de-

creased, while their form and content have become increasingly similar.

It is clear that the absence of myths in contemporary literature has led to a reduction in its appeal and impact. Consequently, it is crucial to recognize the importance of incorporating myths into literary works, both to enhance their aesthetic qualities and to preserve Iran's cultural heritage. By doing so, lasting literary works can be created that reflect the essence of a society and transcend time.

Abolqassem Esmailpour, a distinguished scholar in mythology, translation, writing, and ancient languages at Shahid Beheshti University, believes that a noticeable shift toward realism, that took place in the advent of the 20th century, resulted in myths gradually evanescent from Iranian literature.

The following is Esmailpour's thoughts that he has shared with an Iranian daily on the need to bring back national myths to contemporary literature:

It is undeniable that a return to national myths is

vital, and it falls upon poets, writers, and critics to draw public attention and encourage fellow artists to engage with this significant issue. Nevertheless, one obstacle hindering the use of myths in contemporary Iranian literature is the limited history of Iranian mythology when compared to other nations. Although Iran boasts several thousand-year-old myths, the science of mythology in the country only dates back to 1971, which explains the relative unfamiliarity of writers and poets with it, resulting in numerous challenges.

The art of myth-making deserves more attention than the mere re-narration of ancient myths. While mythology involves re-telling old tales, myth-making requires the creation and adaptation of modern myths that reflect the current social landscape and enrich literature accordingly.

To embark on myth-making, certain prerequisites must be met; firstly, poets and writers must delve into the study of myth collections and gain a comprehensive understanding of the symbology, decoding, and storytelling aspects

inherent in myths. Secondly, they must familiarize themselves with the utilization of myths, specifically by drawing upon the roots of a myth and contemporizing it to generate fresh and pertinent mythical narratives. This method has been successfully employed by renowned contemporary authors around the world, who have crafted new characters that resonate with the mindset of 21st-century individuals.

One of the critical drawbacks of literature is its inability to globalize. Iranian literature, by nature, remains deeply rooted in local culture and traditions. Incorporating national myths into literary works serves to further bolster cultural identity and imbue a sense of individuality.

By utilizing myths within their works, writers and poets are able to leave an indelible mark on readers across the globe, with distinctive Iranian characteristics shining through. Failing to incorporate myths runs the risk of falling into the trap of repetition, leading to monotonous literary works lacking in nuance or depth. The use of myths in Iranian

poetry can be traced back to the era of Ferdowsi (940-1019) and beyond. In addition to penning epic poetry, Ferdowsi is also recognized as a great myth-making poet, having made significant contributions to this genre.

Among contemporary Iranian poets, Sohrab Sepehri stands out as one who skillfully incorporates mythical elements into his works. His poems, including 'Behind the Seas,' have been translated by Spanish poet, writer, and translator Clara Janés, creating a stir across Europe. Through rich symbolism and allusions to various myths, Sepehri paints a vivid picture of a mythical city conjured from his own imagination.

While contemporary Iranian literature has made some strides in employing myths, our relatively late start in mythology has impeded the creation of significant works based on myths to the extent seen in other countries. Nonetheless, there is much potential for Iranian writers and poets to tap into their cultural heritage, drawing inspiration from national myths to enrich their literary works.

