

Theatrical play 'The Semicolon' lies between imagination and reality



Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian theatrical production 'The Semicolon,' co-written and co-directed by Diba Saman and Amir Safiri, straddles the boundary between imagination and reality. Currently, the play is captivating audiences at Tehran's City Theater's Qashqaei Hall until June 27.

Discussing the genesis of the performance, Safiri revealed, "While we were engaged in another production, a spontaneous dialogue delivered by Diba Saman, an actress in the play, fascinated me. I encouraged her to continue improvising. Subsequently, I decided to join her since I was meant to act in this documentary-style play myself. However, I soon realized that it would present challenges. Hence, drawing from that very improvisation, we embarked on the writing process, undergoing numerous rewrites until it eventually transformed into the captivating spectacle witnessed on stage these evenings."

Saman described 'The Semicolon' as a non-linear monodrama, unfolding in a unique manner. Its non-linear structure is rooted in several factors. Notably, the recent passing of my mother prompted a flood of memories, with a swift succession of events we had experienced from childhood until her final moments, as her hands intertwined with mine. These recollections, characterized by flashes of both flashbacks and flash-forwards, were etched vividly in my mind. Moreover, this intentional non-linearity is intertwined with the play's essence. The central character delves into every aspect and event of their life, leaving the audience uncertain of their state of existence. In essence, viewers are left pondering whether the character is alive or deceased. Amid discussions about the stage design, Safiri highlighted the unique amalgamation of expressionistic, surrealistic, and realistic elements within the performance.

He emphasized the team's dedication to crafting an expressionistic stage design that employs a symphony of lighting, effects, animation, and motion graphics, aiming to transport the audience into a realm where they feel as if they are walking on clouds. Yet, as the performance unfolds, these artistic embellishments gradually fade away, giving rise to a metamorphosis of the show into a hyperrealistic masterpiece. Upon exiting the theater, Safiri urged spectators to pause and engage in introspection. He emphasized the importance of reflecting on the play's themes, drawing connections, and arriving at a personal conclusion. Safiri expressed his desire for the audience to depart the theater, their thoughts thoroughly provoked and engaged.

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Iran's 'The Miracle of Bonasan' highly welcomed by Japanese viewers

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Iranian film 'The Miracle of Bonasan,' directed by Habib Ahmadzadeh, received a warm reception during its screening at the Japanese Embassy in Tehran. The film was shown with Japanese audio and Persian subtitles, and was attended by Japanese guests and cineastes.

According to the ILNA news agency, at the beginning of the screening, Kazutoshi Aikawa, the Japanese Ambassador to Tehran, greeted the audience and expressed, "I had heard fascinating and innovative descriptions of this film from various sources, including discussions with Peyman Saadat, the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Japan. This led to the opportunity for us to gather Japanese guests, Iranian artists, and chemical warfare veterans at our embassy to watch this film, which depicts the devastating aftermath of the

atomic bombing of Hiroshima and the chemical bombing of the Iranian people."

Following the screening, the Japanese envoy remarked, "I am delighted to have witnessed this film, which is a testament to humanity and peace. The film's exceptional presentation of comprehensive information has deeply moved me. Moreover, witnessing the profound human suffering depicted in the film has had a lasting impact on me. Going forward, I will not only strive as a diplomat but also as a human being to promote the perspectives and values conveyed in this film, and to help showcase 'The Miracle of Bonasan' in various settings, including in my own country, Japan."

Directed by Habib Ahmadzadeh, 'The Miracle of Bonasan' has already competed in the Eastern Vista category, Panorama of Films from Asian and Islamic Countries, at the 38th Fajr International Film Festival.



This joint Iranian-Japanese production has taken the production crew to Iran, Japan, Austria, and Iraq. The film tells the story of a genie who must compose a melody with the assistance of four humans in order to

create a human miracle and symphony, or face eternal expulsion from the Solar System. The cast of the film includes renowned actors such as Parviz Parastui, Shisoku Tesuya, Gerhard Freylinger,

Noriyuki Asakura, and Mahmoud Bonakdar. Ahmadzadeh, a seasoned film director and screenwriter, has collaborated with notable Iranian directors such as Ebrahim Hatamikia, Khosro Sinai, and

Kiumars Pourahmad. Since making his directorial debut in 1997, Ahmadzadeh has also directed several documentaries, including 'The Last Arrow of Arash,' 'Live Wave,' and 'The World's Best Statue.'



Khong Ajar, largest bas-relief of Parthian era requires urgent consideration

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Nestled near the city of Izeh, Khong Ajar stands as one of Iran's most renowned ancient artifacts. This priceless bas-relief, initially utilized by the Elamites, holds historical significance. It showcases an intriguing portrayal of Baar'aam, which was a distinctive ceremony resembling the iconic rituals for meeting the kings of the time during important occasions. Almost 2,000 years later, these ceremonies witnessed at the ancient site of Persepolis.

On one side of the bas-relief, which immediately catches the eye of every observer, lies a depiction of Elamite King, seated, as a procession of dignitaries presents itself before him. This particular ceremony, Baar'aam, represents the conferral of power upon a local Elamite ruler who has journeyed to this region. Accompanying the powerful King of Ilam are three figures, one of whom appears to be a monk or a religious person. The ceremony seems to involve the release of two doves into flight, symbolizing the transfer of power.

The imposing presence and unique hairstyle of the Elamite man evoke a sense of ancient Iranian history, reminiscent of the famous Elamite statue, known as Shami statue, discovered near Izeh, currently preserved in the National Museum of Iran. The name "Khong Ajar" translates to "the vast plain of the snake," reflecting the surrounding village's name. This area holds a wealth of ancient treasures and demands heightened protection, which has sadly been overlooked. Recent incidents, such as unautho-

rized excavations near this remarkable artifact, have exposed the lack of proper care. Furthermore, unauthorized construction near the site, utilizing water diverted from the nearby dried riverbed, poses a risk of land subsidence. Perhaps the most distressing aspect is the absence of any conservation or restoration efforts for this ancient masterpiece. The Tourism Ministry has taken minimal action, merely placing a protective cover over the artifact to shield it from the sun and rain. However, a comparison of old and recent photo-



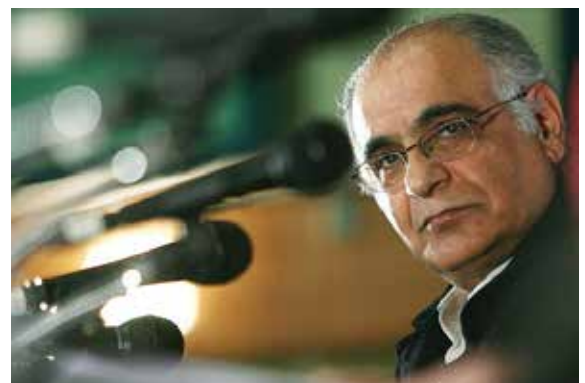
graphs reveals a disheartening truth: the artwork on the stone is gradually fading away. Khong Ajar stands as a testament to Iran's rich cultural heritage, yet it faces neglect and imminent deterioration. The urgent need for proper conservation and safeguarding measures cannot be understated. It is crucial for

authorities, both national and local, to recognize the importance of preserving this extraordinary ancient artifact for future generations. By taking proactive steps to protect Khong Ajar, we can ensure that this invaluable piece of history continues to captivate and inspire visitors, serving as a bridge between the past and the present.

Iran's Moradi Kermani nominated for Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award

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Iran's Institute for Research on the History of



Children's Literature nominated bestselling writer Hushang Moradi Kermani for the Astrid Lindgren

Memorial Award (ALMA) in 2024. The award, administered by the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs, was established in 2002 to commemorate Swedish writer Astrid Lindgren and to promote children's and youths' literature from around the world. It is the world's largest award for children's and youths' literature, and the second-largest literature prize in the world. The prize, five million Swedish kronor in cash, is awarded to one or more re-

ipients including authors, illustrators, storytellers and promoters of reading. Alireza Goldouzian, Ali-Asghar Seyyedabadi, and Nader Mousavi were also announced as recipients of the 2024 ALMA on behalf of Children's Book Council of Iran. Iran's nominations for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award are selected separately every year by the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA), the Iranian Association of Writers for Children and

Youth, the Children's Book Council of Iran and the Institute for Research on History of Children's Literature. Moradi Kermani has been nominated for the award several times. However, he failed to win the honor. Moradi Kermani is mostly known as a children's writer, but his works also appeal to adults. He is the author of numerous bestsellers such as 'You're No Stranger Here,' 'The Water Urn' and 'A Sweet Jam'. Most of his works have been translat-

ed into English, German, French, Spanish, Dutch, Arabic, Armenian, Turkish and several other languages. "Hushang Moradi Kermani is the writer for those children and youths whose voices are heard in their society; from those children who work in the carpet weaving workshops to those who enjoy the minimum educational facilities in their schools in the remote rural areas," the Institute for Research on the History of Children's Literature wrote.