

Niavaran hosts exhibition on mosques



IRNA - In commemoration of the World Mosque Day (August 21), a collection of artworks from the Niavaran Cultural-Historical Complex are on display in an exhibition titled 'Mosque, Ornate for Art and Architecture' at the museum.

Among the works on view is a painting by Ja'far Petgar, created using oil painting technique, depicting Imam Mosque of Isfahan.

The exhibition also features engravings portraying the Dome of Sol-taniyeh, a series of dome installations representing mosques such as the Jama Masjid Agra and Mumbai's Jama Masjid, presented as a gift to Pahlavi II by the Armenian-Indian community, the seashell-made Al-Aqsa Mosque, and Jama Masjid in Hyderabad.

Decorative boxes with the Taj Mahal motif, an image of the kaaba, a collection of photographs of Mosque of Suleyman Pasha in Egypt, and Iranian mosque images including the Blue Mosque in Tabriz and Imam Mosque in Isfahan, taken from Pascal Coste's travel book to Iran, are also on display.

The exhibition is open to visitors from August 22 to September 1.

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Iran's Dramatic Arts Center joins WMO for first time

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Dramatic Arts Center became a member of the World Mime Organization (WMO) for the first time, coinciding with the second edition of the Pantomime International Theatre Festival in Zanjan. Simultaneously with the Iranian pantomime festival and the 125th anniversary of the legendary mime

artist Marcel Marceau's birth, and the 225th anniversary of the birth of Étienne Decroux (master of pantomime Jean-Louis Barrault), Iran's Dramatic Arts Center secured two seats, marking its first membership in the world organization, IRNA wrote. The World Mime Organization commenced its activities on March 22, 2011, coinciding with the birthday of French

artist Marceau. Since 2017, it has collaborated with the International Theatre Institute (ITI) to form a physical theatre group. Marceau visited Iran in 1973, performing some of his most exquisite theatrical pieces, including his famous character 'Bip the Clown,' at Tehran's Vahdat Hall. The organization holds specialized mime conferences and combined conferences

(encompassing mime and other performing arts). Annually, the international body collaborates with theater centers worldwide to provide workshops and masterclasses, offering training to aspiring mime artists. Member countries of WMO span four continents, with the organization headquartered in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia.

Iranian director joins jury in Austria

Arts & Culture Desk

An Iranian filmmaker and producer Mohammad-Mehdi Asgarpour was chosen to serve on the jury panel for the 11th Film Festival Kitzbühel, taking place in Kitzbühel, Austria.

The festival, which commenced on August 21, is set to run until August 27, according to ISNA.

The Kitzbühel festival has a distinctive emphasis on identifying emerging talents in the industry.

The event is dedicated to the promotion and advancement of both local and international talents. Attendees at the festival are afforded the opportunity to showcase their creations to a diverse array of audiences.

Founded in 2013, the Kitzbühel festival holds the distinction of being listed by the International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF).

Asgarpour, has made contributions to the Iranian film landscape, participating as a jury member or as the Vice President of FIAPF in numerous international festivals in recent years.

He recently served as a jury member at the 19th Golden Apricot Yerevan International Film Festival in Armenia.



● IRNA

Iran to retrieve 17,000 historical artifacts from US

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran is planned to retrieve some 17,000 cultural and historical artifacts from the United States in the coming months.

Iran has over 20,000 pieces of artifacts stored in museums abroad. Of those, 3,500 are slated to return to the country in the first phase of a repatriation process, followed by a substantial 17,000 artifacts in the second phase, IRNA reported. Iranian government, which has successfully brought 30

artifacts back to Iran over the past two years, is negotiating to have all these treasures returned to the country by the end of the Iranian calendar year (March 20, 2024). The retrieved artifacts include valuable pieces from France and England, such as a stone relief from the Sassanid dynasty (224 to 651 AD). The restoration of these artifacts aligns with Iran's commitment to preserving its rich cultural heritage. Iran has a total of 829 museums scattered across the coun-

try, consisting of 262 museums under the ministry of cultural heritage, 323 museums managed by other institutions, 209 private museums, and 37 collaborative museums. Formulating a 10-year plan for the global registration of tangible and intangible heritage with the aim of systematically and methodically listing cultural works and elements in the global registry are among the measures outlined in a specific strategy and roadmap for the global registrations of Iran. This strategy serves the nation-

al interests and the cultural affinity of Iran with neighboring countries. Currently, there are 200 cases under consideration in this regard. The increase of 53 museums in the country includes 10 museums affiliated with ministries, 26 private museums, and 17 non-affiliated museums, bringing the total number of museums in the country to 829. This comprises 262 affiliated museums, 323 non-affiliated museums, 209 private museums, and 37 participatory museums.

British Museum missing more than 1500 priceless objects

More than 1,500 objects from the British Museum are believed to have been stolen or destroyed by a single thief who went undetected for years, The Telegraph can disclose.

The total value of artefacts now known to be missing runs into millions of pounds, it was understood.

Staff are shocked at the scale of the losses, which were unearthed during an internal investigation into a senior curator at the museum who was dismissed in July.

The museum has so far refused to make public the number of items that were stolen, or to release photographs or descriptions of them. However, sources have confirmed to The Telegraph that the true

number is well over 1,000 and "closer to 2,000".

The sheer number of missing objects, some of which are 3,500 years old, helps to explain why the museum was so reluctant to share all of its information with the public.

As well as being deeply embarrassing for the museum, it appears increasingly likely that it might never know exactly what has been stolen because of gaps in its inventory.

The latest revelation will further intensify calls for Hartwig Fischer, the British Museum director, to resign immediately rather than wait until 2024. He announced in July that he was going to "pass on the leadership" next year.

Staff also believe that the position of Jonathan Wil-

liams, the deputy director, is now untenable. He was personally warned about the thefts in February 2021.

Martin Henig, a leading expert on Roman art at the University of Oxford, said the scale of the losses was "horrifying".

He said: "This is the worst case that I've come across like this because it involves not just selling the odd object, but also destruction. This is totally unforgivable."

He added that the loss of so many objects was a huge blow to historians because "although they're small, they were particularly valued in antiquity and they tell us more than sculpture about life in the past. They were very intimate items".

One museum source said



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the evidence is worse for the directorate than had been realised until now, and that its handling of the case can only be described as "negligent and incompetent".

Challenging the British Museum's official line that it had taken immediate action when the thefts were discovered, they claimed

that evidence presented to them was actually ignored. As The Telegraph reported last week, an antiquities expert had told the museum three years ago that items from its collection were being offered for sale on eBay.

One Roman object, valued at £25,000 to £50,000 by dealers, was offered for

just £40.

One source said: "The directorate has been banned from the investigation and has nothing to do with it... That the museum's own management is banned from having any involvement with this investigation is extraordinary. That goes to show that the trustees have apparently lost all trust in the directorate."

Until now, the museum has only said that an unspecified number of objects dating from 1,500BC to the 19th century, and comprising jewellery made of gold, semi-precious stones and glass, had been stolen or damaged. It also disclosed that a member of staff - since identified as Peter Higgs, its curator of Mediterranean cultures - had been

sacked. Higgs, who had worked at the British Museum for more than 30 years, has denied any wrongdoing, according to his family.

The thefts are being investigated by police. No arrests have been made.

An independent review led by Sir Nigel Boardman, a former trustee, and Chief Constable Lucy D'Orsi, of the British Transport Police, will "provide recommendations regarding future security" and "kickstart - and support - a vigorous programme to recover the missing items".

A British Museum spokesman said: "This is all now subject to a police investigation as well as the independent review. We cannot comment further."