

## Iranian 'Squad of Girls' honored at Indian festival



Iranian film 'Squad of Girls', produced by the Farabi Cinema Foundation, was awarded at the 6th Innovative International Film Festival held in Bengaluru from October 12 to 15.

According to reports from ILNA, this international festival, marking its sixth successful year, showcased the film, directed by Monir Qeidi, as well as 'No Prior Appointment' directed by Behrouz Shoeibi.

Last year, the festival celebrated Iranian cinema by naming 'Romanticism of Emad and Touba,' directed by Mehdi Sabbaghzadeh, as the Best Cultural Impact Movie Award.

The Innovative International Film Festival provides a unique platform where independent and popular commercial films share the spotlight, and audiences at regional, national, and international levels, aiming to garner recognition and audience appreciation.

## Glasgow museum says its £3m Rodin sculpture is missing

A statue by the French sculptor Auguste Rodin, part of his famous Les Bourgeois de Calais group, is currently "unlocated" in Glasgow's art collections, museum officials said.

The plaster sculpture, bought by Glasgow Museums from the artist in 1901, was exhibited in Kelvingrove Park from 25 June to 30 September 1949, according to Glasgow Life, the organisation in charge of many of the Scottish city's cultural venues. But since then, it seems to have been lost, the Guardian wrote.

According to the Comité Rodin, which maintains a catalogue of the artist's works around the world, the two-metre sculpture represents Jean d'Aire, one of the figures in the Calais group.

Its director, Jérôme le Blay, told AFP that the disappearance was "regrettable, but must be put into the context of the times", as plaster works did not arouse much interest in the 1940s. The value of the work today would be around €3.5m (£3m), he estimated.

The bronze statues of the six Bourgeois de Calais, celebrating the sacrifice of local dignitaries during a siege of the northern French town by English armies during the hundred years war, were commissioned by the municipality and unveiled in 1895. Numerous bronze and plaster versions of the statue exist around the world.

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# 'Shut down' of Palestinian voices goes on



Adania Shibli, Palestinian author whose novel 'Minor Detail' has won the LiBeraturpreis  
 ● HARTWIG KLAPPERT

### Social Desk

In 1984, Edward Said, a distinguished Palestinian-American scholar provided a thought-provoking reflection on Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon. In his essay, Said posited that the Israeli war had a deliberate aim: "To reduce the Palestinian existence as much as possible." He further argued that Palestinians were being denied the "permission to narrate," implying that their voices and stories were systematically suppressed. Said cautioned against the existence of "a disciplinary communications apparatus" in the West, which tended to both overlook "most of the basic things that might present Israel in a bad light," and punish "those who try to tell the truth." Alarmingly, Said's words continue to resonate nearly four decades later.

On Friday, October 13, 2023, Litprom, the organization responsible for the LiBeraturpreis book award, made the decision to cancel the celebration honoring the Palestinian author Adania Shibli at the Frankfurt Book Fair. The LiBeraturpreis annually recognizes the exceptional literary contributions of women authors from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The cancellation followed the October 7 Hamas operation against Israel. In addition, a public discussion with Shibli and her book's German translator scheduled at the fair was also canceled. Juergen Boos, Frankfurt Book Fair's director, who is also the president of Litprom, sided with Israel and announced his decision "to make Jewish and Israeli voices especially visible at the book fair" via the fair's Instagram account. Adania Shibli who di-

vides her time between Berlin and Al-Quds had been due to receive the prize for her novel, 'Minor Detail' at the fair. The novel is an account of the 1949 war, in which clashes between Arabs and Jews saw hundreds of thousands of Palestinians driven from their homes. Shibli's book makes reference to well-documented events related to the rape of a Bedouin girl in 1949 by an Israeli army unit. However, the Frankfurt Book Fair's alignment with Israel has not been without consequences, as it has faced significant backlash. The Malaysian government, for instance, expressed its dissatisfaction with the fair and announced a complete boycott, as reported by Reuters. "The ministry will not compromise with Israel's violence in Palestine, which clearly violates international laws and

human rights," Malaysia's education ministry said in a statement late on Monday. Additionally, the fair received criticism in the form of an open letter published on Monday morning, signed by over 1,000 writers and publishers. The letter denounced Litprom's decision to cancel the award celebration, as detailed by the Los Angeles Times. Wallace Shawn, Colm Tóibín, Eileen Myles, Hari Kunzru, Hisham Matar and hundreds of other writers and publishers signed the letter. Resonating Said's analysis of the communications apparatus in the West, the letter criticizes the fair's attempts to suppress a Palestinian voice. "At a time when the fair has issued a statement saying it wants to make Israeli voices 'especially visible at the fair,' they are closing out the space

for a Palestinian voice," the letter reads. The signatories believe that the Frankfurt Book Fair has "a responsibility to be creating spaces for Palestinian writers to share their thoughts, feelings, reflections on literature through these terrible, cruel times, not shutting them down." Yet, it seems that the apparatus has remained intact, and while the Western media talk a lot about Palestinians, they do it without them. "Editorial boards and columnists seem to have been quite consumed with talking about the Palestinians, often in condescending and even racist ways - yet they somehow did not feel the need to hear much from Palestinians themselves," wrote Maha Nassar, an associate professor in the School of Middle Eastern and North African Studies at the University of Arizona, in 2020.

## Iran, Tajikistan ink cinematic MoU

Iran and Tajikistan signed a cinematic memorandum of understanding (MoU), paving the way for further collaboration in the field of cinema. The agreement was inked during a signing ceremony held alongside the first Dushanbe International Film Festival, "Taj Somon," attended by prominent figures from both countries, IRNA wrote. The cooperative document includes collaborative initiatives, such as the screening of cinematographic works, joint film productions, the exchange of experiences

and technical expertise, and participation in cinematic events, said Deputy Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance and head of the Cinema Organization of Iran Mohammad Khazaie. The agreement underscores the commitment of both nations to reinforce their cultural ties through the medium of cinema, including the production of feature films, documentaries, short films, and animations inspired by shared historical, cultural, and traditional themes. Furthermore, the agreement fosters mutual participation in film festivals

and guarantees the safeguarding of copyright for important cinematic works, emphasizing the creation of strong bonds of friendship and mutual benefit based on equality, respect, and shared interests. Khazaie stated, "Since my appointment to the Cinema Organization of Iran, I have made it a top priority to expand regional cooperation with neighboring countries, especially those with whom we share historical, cultural, linguistic, and traditional ties. I firmly believe that the development of cultural and cinematic relations



with these countries, particularly our neighbors, can yield fruitful results." Khazaie also emphasized the potential of both Iran and Tajikistan in various cinematic fields, highlighting their shared cultural framework. He stressed the import-

ant role of cinema in enhancing human and cultural connections, underscoring its significance as a valuable instrument for public diplomacy. Tajikistan's head of cinematic affairs, Mohammad Saeid Shahian, celebrated the historic

significance of cinematic collaboration with Iran during the event. He remarked, "Today is a momentous day for us. Iran's cinema enjoys global prestige, and this collaboration will contribute to the growth of the film industries in both countries." Shahian further emphasized the shared cultural roots between the two nations, adding that the cities of Isfahan, Mashhad, Neishabur, and Hamedan, signify the deep ties between the two countries. He concluded by expressing his optimism about the cinematic memoranda's potential to yield substantial benefits for both nations.