

Iranian antiquities to be showcased in China for one year

ILNA – The ‘Grandeur of Iran’ exhibition, featuring a diverse collection of historical and Islamic ancient artifacts, including the golden goblet, Sasanian silver plates, and pieces from the Persepolis, will be displayed in various museums across China for a year.

Hadi Mirzaei, the director general of the General Office of Museums in the Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts, announced the show, stating that the exhibition will begin on January 11, 2024, at the Forbidden City Palace Museum in Beijing.

Mirzaei disclosed that the exhibition will showcase 211 cultural artifacts from different historical and Islamic periods in Iran, along with five reconstructed pieces from selected items in the National Museum of Iran, Golestan Province, Gilan Province, and Fars Province.

Following evaluation by the ministry’s high expert committee, the selected items received temporary export approval after signing contracts with the host museum. The artifacts were then carefully packaged and prepared for transportation under the supervision of conservation and restoration experts.

Mirzaei added that starting from January 12, 2025, the exhibition will travel to various museums in Shanghai, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Xi’an, and Urumqi, concluding its one-year journey on January 12, 2025.

Plus, an agreement has been reached for a reciprocal exhibition of selected Chinese cultural and civilizational works in the National Museum of Iran after the conclusion of the Iranian exhibition.

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Soheil Rafiei depicting theatrical exploration of human anger and evolution



Mahdieh Qazvinian
Staff writer

Iran’s young playwright Soheil Rafiei, the creative mind behind the innovative play ‘Jahesh Yakhteh’, (literally meaning ‘reaching to a higher level’) explained his unique approach to storytelling and the underlying questions that led to his latest dramatic production. The play draws inspiration from the biblical tale of Adam and Eve, exploring the repercussions of consuming the forbidden fruit. The narrative unfolds in a world where particles and elements discuss the lasting impact of human existence. Rafiei raises the critical question, “What happens when anything deviates from its original form?” In an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, Rafiei expressed his motivation behind the play, stating, “If there is an issue plaguing the world today, it is human anger. The excessive brutality beyond human limits leads to the question: What could be the cause? It led me back to the early days of humanity, where anger was

sparked by the consumption of a simple apple, perhaps intensifying with each passing day.”

The play, which runs from December 26 to January 2 at Arghavan Hall in Tehran, features four main characters representing different aspects of the narrative: The first character is a human embryo refusing living and evolving; the second is Jesus’ love for God; the third is Beethoven’s symphony notes, and the last character is an unnamed Embryo evolving into a quasi-human.

Rafiei elaborates on the play’s title, stating that it revolves around a character named “human embryo”, representing the evolution from a fetus to a quasi-human, a higher stage in the hierarchy. The play explores the concept of transformation and ascension to a higher state.

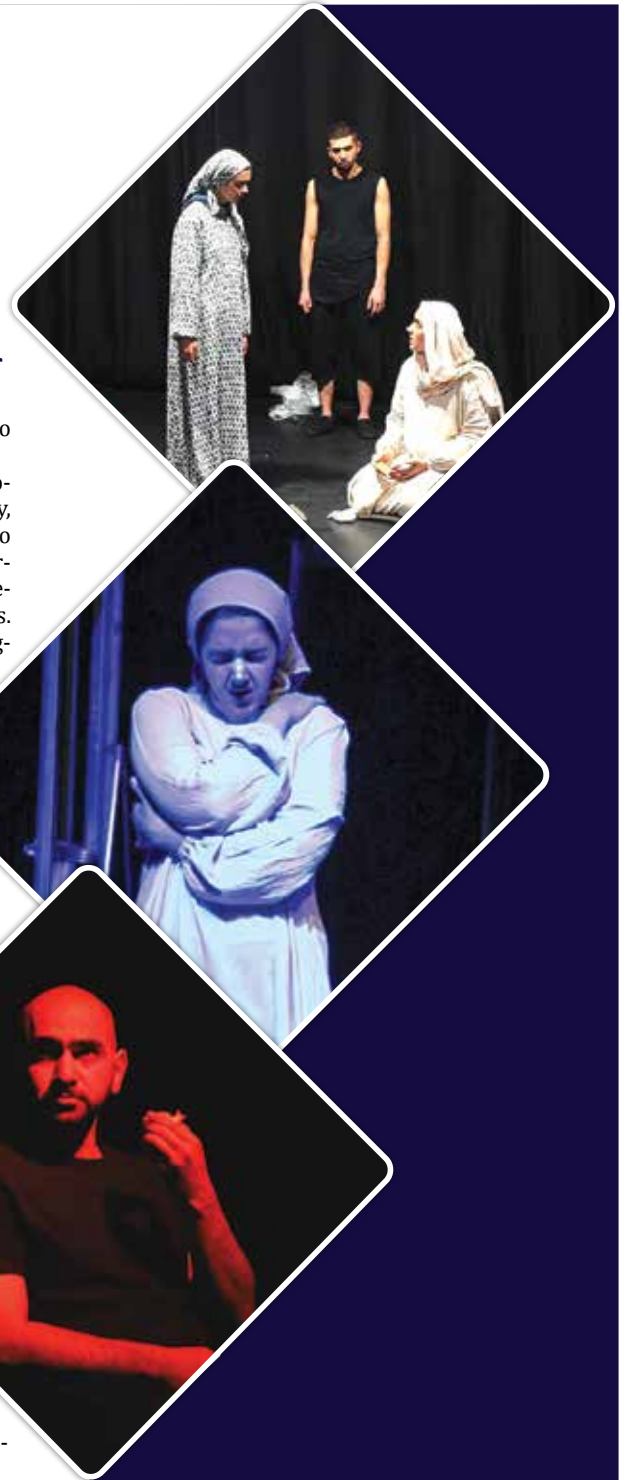
A member of the audience described a particularly impactful scene where the character of Jesus’ love reflects on the crucifixion, portraying the resilience of faith in the face of ignorance and superstition. The mythological tale unfolds as the sun and moon converge,

symbolizing the reaction to the death of Jesus.

Rafiei emphasizes the profound message of the play, showcasing Jesus’ ability to transcend pain and suffering through grace, ultimately soaring into the heavens. Rafiei, one of Iran’s youngest theater directors, believes that art should serve as a mirror to society.

He emphasizes that his artistic expression is not merely entertainment but a reflection of the world he observes. The artwork addresses the widespread issue of anger in today’s youth, encouraging the audience to control

their anger before it controls them. Despite lacking formal academic credentials, Rafiei improved his skills under the guidance of various directors.



Despite 29% growth, 2023 cinema could not return to pre-pandemic era



Despite a notable 29% growth in box office revenue compared to 2022, the 2023 cinema struggled to return to the pre-COVID era, causing concerns about this year’s screenings and their financial outcomes, according to industry observers. In a year marked by a final box office tally of \$33.4 billion, 2023 cinema

faced challenges in matching the pre-pandemic figures of \$42.3 billion from 2019. Several analytical firms predict that 2024 may bring further worries, indicating a need for a 26% increase in sales to reach pre-COVID levels. Key factors contributing to the challenges include a wide scale strike by screenwriters and

actors, impacting not only North American revenues but also global cinema figures. This strike, coupled with the significant success of two major releases – ‘Oppenheimer’ and ‘Barbie’ – created a dramatic change in the industry. The widespread impact of the strike extended beyond the North American market, affecting

both large and small international film festivals. It disrupted the natural evaluation of films’ true worth at the box office and prompted delays in the release of certain films.

The success of ‘Oppenheimer’ and ‘Barbie’ rapidly propelled these films to global fame, collectively grossing \$2.4 billion, contributing to over 7% of the total sales for the year. This success, however, may be viewed as an exception, as 2024 is unlikely to witness a lineup of blockbuster films and renowned directors comparable to 2023.

Despite the challenges, certain genres such as animation, horror, and action films gained popularity, garnering high audience satisfaction and positive reviews. However, with fewer crowd-pleasing films scheduled for 2024, concerns about the sus-

tainability of cinema’s return to its pre-COVID glory persist.

The loss of several prominent filmmakers in 2023, including William Friedkin, Alan Arkin, Ron Cephas Jones, Angus Cloud, Matthew Perry, Ryan O’Neal, and Michael Gambon, further underscored the challenges faced by the industry.

While 2023 witnessed a significant growth in post-pandemic box office numbers and showcased high-quality productions, the issues of discrimination and consumerism within the film industry continue to impede the long-awaited return to stability and tranquility along the cinematic shore. The impacts of these issues are expected to extend into 2024, potentially reshaping the global cinema landscape and influencing its intrinsic value.

Iran’s ‘Sampo’ to be screened in Bulgaria’s festival

ISNA – Marzieh Riahi’s Iranian short film, ‘Sampo’, is set to represent Iran at the 16th Sofia MENAR Film Festival in Bulgaria.

The festival, showcasing cinema from the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa, is scheduled to take place from January 12 to January 28.

The 14-minute film, revolves around a mother involved in arranging funerals and parties, while her daughter holds a different perspective on her mother’s profession. The cast includes Linda Kiani, Maryam Boubani, Hilda Kordbache, and Hannan Azizi.

The short film has already been showcased at international events, including the Nickel Independent Film Festival in Canada, the Port Townsend Film Festival in the US, and the prestigious Palm Beach International Film Festival in the US.

Sofia MENAR Film Festival, initiated in 2009 and held annually in the Bulgarian capital, Sofia, is recognized as one of the prominent cultural events in the Balkans, featuring the best cinematic works from the specified regions.

