

Iran's 'The Old Bachelor' wins Rotterdam's Grand Prix



Arts & Culture Desk

The Iranian film 'The Old Bachelor', directed by Oktay Baraheni, grabbed the Grand Prix at the 53rd International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR).

Competing in the Big Screen Competition, 'The Old Bachelor' earned the title of Best Film in its category.

The festival, renowned as one of Europe's significant cinematic events, runs from January 25 to February 4 in the city of Rotterdam, showcasing a diverse selection of independent and creative films of global quality.

Oktay Baraheni, in his second directorial venture, wrote the screenplay for 'The Old Bachelor' himself. The film received financial backing from investors Arsalan Baraheni and Amirhossein Abdollahi. The international poster design for the film was created by Hanif Sarvari and Fatemeh Hassanvand.

Starring prominent actors Leila Hatami, Hamed Behdad, and Mohammad Reza Golzar, 'The Old Bachelor' premiered on January 30 and will continue its screenings until the festival concludes on February 4.

The IFFR plays a crucial role in providing a platform for independent and creative films, solidifying its reputation as a significant cinematic celebration in Europe.

Visual arts drive force behind promotion of related art forms: *Minister*



Iran's Culture Minister Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili visits the 16th Fajr Visual Arts Festival in Tehran on February 2, 2024. farhang.gov.ir

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Iran's Culture Minister Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili called visual arts as the

drive force behind the development all other similar categories of art as he visited the 16th Fajr Visual Arts Festival in Tehran on

Friday. "Whenever the visual arts thrive and prosper, all related arts originating from and connected to the visual

realm will also be elevated. Esmaeili extended gratitude to all the artists of visual arts who curated a "one-of-a-kind festival."

"The number of artworks has more than doubled compared to previous periods, with renowned artists participating in the competitive sections. New and exquisite works have been publicly exhibited at the Fajr visual festival. I invite everyone to admire these creations," he told reporters.

The minister hailed the festival for putting on display works that deals with "day-to-day concerns" including the Israeli ongoing war on the Gaza Strip.

"Visual artists, as exemplified in this exhibition, have focused on day-to-day concerns and issues, including their attention to the situation in Gaza, which has been portrayed through innovative art forms. Furthermore, I saw valuable artworks addressing youths, population growth,

and the overall progress of the nation," Esmaeili said. The culture minister also pointed to the increase in awards and funds for the Fajr Visual Arts Festival saying: "Last year, we expanded the number of awards. God willing, despite the challenges we face this year, we will try to honor the selected artists in the best way possible."

Speaking about plans to provide more support to young artists, the minister said, "This year, with a commendable initiative taken, we will offer special support to visual arts associations. Further details will be announced soon."

In response to a question about the timing of the Fajr Visual Arts Festival and its overlap with other festivals like Fajr theater and film, Esmaeili said, some of our Fajr festivals, such as music, fashion, and clothing, are scheduled with a gap of 10 days from the Fajr period. Our colleagues should address this issue," he said.

Iran adds Barm Alvan Wetland to Ramsar Convention List

Social Desk

Iranian Department of Environment (DOE) successfully registered the Barm Alvan Wetland in the southern Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province under the Ramsar Convention, expanding the protection of Iranian wetlands to 26 sites covered by this international environmental treaty.

Arezoo Ashrafizadeh, the director of the Wetlands Conservation and Restoration Office at the Iranian Department of Environment, announced that Barm Alvan Wetland is a distinctive long-lasting lake with brackish shores, span-

ning 20 hectares. She highlighted its unique location surrounded by almond and oak trees in the Zagros mountain range and its rare biodiversity. The Barm Alvan Lake, situated near the protected zone of the Tang-e-Sulak watershed, plays a crucial role in water storage to support the wildlife within and around the protected area, she added.

Ashrafizadeh pointed out that Barm Alvan Wetland boasts 170 species of birds, mammals, fishes, reptiles, amphibians, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV), and flowering plants. The Ramsar Convention, an intergovernmental treaty

adopted in 1971 in Iran's northern city of Ramsar, focuses on the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands. It currently covers 2,412 sites spanning over 254,000 hectares in 171 countries.

The Director-General of the Department of Environment in Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad, Eslam Javedan-Kherad, emphasized the convention's emphasis on the reasonable conservation and utilization of wetlands, particularly in providing habitats for aquatic birds and fauna.

Javedan-Kherad highlighted the broader perspective of the convention, encom-



passing all aspects of protection and sustainable utilization of wetlands, recognizing them as ecosystems crucial for biodiversity conservation and human well-being.

By registering Barm Alvan Wetland under the Ramsar Convention, Javedan-Kherad stated that it opens avenues for allocating additional funds for

necessary infrastructure development in the region. This registration can also enhance accessibility to wetlands, establish educational centers for informing the public and tourists, and utilize the allocated funds to protect and improve these valuable natural reserves.

Javedan-Kherad concluded that the funds result-

ing from the registration of wetlands in the Ramsar Convention could be utilized for scientific research, regular monitoring to observe and control wetland conditions, constructing natural habitats for wildlife protection, and promoting public awareness about the importance of preserving natural resources.

Iran culture event draws visitors in Qatar amid AFC Asian Cup



Arts & Culture Desk

Qatar has planned various cultural events on the sidelines of the AFC Asian Cup 2023 to spice up the football tournament with festivals including the "Hello Asia" campaign.

Hello Asia aims to acquaint Qataris as well as football fans visiting the tiny Persian Gulf nations for the major sports event with the culture, art, and customs of

the participating countries including Iran. As part of the initiative, the "Cultural Month of Iran in Qatar" has been organized. The highlight of Iran's cultural involvement in Qatar's Hello Asia is its pavilion set up by the country's culture center in the northern city of Lusail for a month which attracts a large number of visitors from various nations. The pavilion offers pro-

grams to introduce the Iran's culture, art, and customs, complemented by performances of traditional Iranian music and shows. Additionally, visitors have the opportunity to explore and purchase Iranian handicrafts and cultural products, which have received great acclaim. The pavilion itself boasts a unique decoration, featuring the design of the Azadi Square tower on the right

side. The distinctive touch adds an attractive and proud ambiance to the cultural event. In front of the tower, there is a stage where local shows and Iranian music performances take place. Throughout the month-long sports competition, visitors are always greeted by the symbol of the capital of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Another notable aspect of pavilion is the presence of a group of Iranian artists, in-

cluding three music bands, as well as artists involved in Iranian and Islamic handicrafts and fashion. They showcase a diverse range of programs, captivating the audience. Among the popular programs at the Iran pavilion are the live performances of traditional Iranian music by the artistic band 'Soroosh-e Mowlana' and the showcasing of clothing representing different ethnicities of Iran.