

● HOSSEIN NAGHIZADEH/IRAN DAILY



Exhibition 'Read the Headlines Again' shows global double standard on Gaza war

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INTERVIEW

The Iranian Artists Forum in Tehran recently hosted a graphic photo exhibition focusing on Gaza, presenting a unique perspective on the Gaza war and the atrocities committed by Zionists. The exhibition, titled 'Read the Headlines Again,' ran from May 17 to May 24, showcasing graphic photo collections by Afsaneh Ghorbani and Zeinab Zandpoor.

This exhibition examined significant documentary photos from the Gaza war, replacing the covers of popular global magazines without changing their original headlines. The alignment between selected magazine headlines and the Gaza war photos, contrasting with the original magazine images, enhanced the impact of the works.

Iran Daily reporter conducted an exclusive interview with curators of the event Ghorbani and Zandpoor to discuss the showcased graphic works and the exhibition's goals and details. The following is the full text of the interview:

IRAN DAILY: Please explain how the exhibition was conceived?

ZEINAB ZANDPOOR: After the events of October 7 (the first day of Operation Al-Aqsa Storm) and the military actions by Hamas against Zionists in response to the regime's crimes against Palestinians and the desecration of Al-Aqsa Mosque, a design and brainstorming event titled 'Palestine and My Role' was held in Tehran in November. Many art graduates gathered to brainstorm ideas on this subject. Over a few days, we worked around the clock at a single location, and everyone contributed ideas in various forms. The initial idea for this exhibition took shape during those early days. It took about six months to produce the works, and at the beginning of the Persian New Year, we started designing and setting up the exhibition. The production team was a trio, including a graphic designer named Alireza Nakhaei who handled the graphic work.

What were each of your roles in producing the exhibition works?

AFSANEH GHORBANI: Zandpoor and I reviewed and examined important photos from the Gaza war and simul-

taneously reviewed key international magazines. We matched photos with magazine covers and headlines that resonated most. We then handed this to the graphic designer to execute.

Could you elaborate on the work process and details, for instance which magazines and content were selected and how many pieces were produced?

GHORBANI: We selected various important and popular magazines, such as Life, Time, National Geographic, and even magazines on cars, sports, architecture, fashion, and entertainment. These magazines covered 14 different themes. We chose photos from the Gaza war that matched the form, content, and visual style of the original magazine covers and headlines. In total, we selected photos and headlines from 59 magazine issues, resulting in 67 designed magazine covers. In fact, we didn't change the magazine layouts and headlines, only the photos.

ZANDPOOR: Some photos are not related to Gaza. For example, some works involved food or literature magazines. We displayed the original and designed versions side by side. For instance, an orig-

inal magazine might feature an American novelist and poet with a headline about "fighting through writing." Next to it, we placed three designed covers with three Palestinian poets and novelists who died in the conflict.

Did you want to highlight contrasts with these works?

ZANDPOOR: Yes, that's correct. The headline and picture on the cover of the original magazine show a lavish table with hot food, while on the other side, there's a photo from Gaza showing a broken, empty table. Another magazine has a headline and picture about the importance of global water health, but in contrast, Gaza has no clean water. We wanted to show these dualities and double standards in the world and highlight these contradictions. It's true that one part of the world talks about human rights, but in another part, people are living in war.

Why did you choose 'Read the Headlines Again' as the title of the exhibition?

BAGHERI: Because we believe the most important elements in the works are the headlines. Thus, we've kept the original magazine layouts but changed the pic-

tures only.

ZANDPOOR: The most crucial parts of both the original and designed magazines are the headlines. The headlines are the common link between the original and redesigned magazines, and they create the contradictions. The headlines connect the images and convey the message. In some magazines, there were so many headlines that they distracted from the main one. So, we removed the unrelated and peripheral headlines and replaced them with 'Read the Headlines Again.'

How did the audience react to these works, and what feedback did you receive?

BAGHERI: The public response exceeded our expectations, and the exhibition was extended by a few days. The impact of the works was greater than we thought; sometimes, the audience made comparisons and understood aspects we hadn't noticed. The double standards in the world were particularly interesting to the audience, especially since the works covered various topics, appealing to a wide range of viewers.

Given the international headlines, have you received global feedback,

and do you plan to take the exhibition abroad?

ZANDPOOR: Yes, since the content and headlines are mostly in English, we've been in talks to hold the exhibition in other countries. Preparations are underway for exhibitions in Turkey, Iraq, Syria, and even Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We hope to organize the exhibition abroad soon.

How effective can art events be in supporting the people of Gaza?

BAGHERI: If artistic expressions convey the right message, they can be very impactful. If our works help highlight the events and crimes happening in Gaza by the Zionists, then we've achieved our goal. Many visitors told us they had seen these photos in the news before, but the exhibition made them see the deeper dimensions. It seems that the combination of photos and headlines enhanced the impact.

ZANDPOOR: Many of these images depict harsh realities, and the artworks deepen their impact. Similar photos and events happen in Gaza and other parts of the world. Artists can draw attention to these issues and fulfill their artistic duty regarding global issues.

