

World Handicrafts Day

Iran's crafts diversity stands out: *Minister*

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran boasts approximately 300 diverse handicraft fields, making it unique globally, according to the Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts. Speaking at a ceremony commemorating the Handicrafts Week (June 7 to 15) and World Handicrafts Day (June 10), Ezzatollah Zarghami stated, highlighted the late president's particular emphasis on handicrafts, saying, "The first step towards transformation in any field is a change in perspective. Initially, handicrafts were considered secondary in this ministry, but now their missions have become primary due to the transformation in perspective initiated by the late president." The ceremony coincided with the 60th anniversary of the establishment of the World Crafts Council, IRNA wrote. He added, "Today, with 3.5 billion people having visa waivers to enter the country, there have been improvements in handicrafts. However, we're still at the beginning of appreciating the di-

versity and value of this art." He continued, "Anyone aiming for handicraft exports faces no obstacles, as the president has resolved it. He did the same in tourism. I suggested that if we want Iranian tourism to flourish, we should reduce the strictness we have in visa issuance and make it unilateral, which he agreed to." Zarghami emphasized the late president's emphasis on handicrafts supply, noting, "For this reason, he ordered all governors to establish handicraft markets at the entrances of cities. Some have done it, but many have yet to do so." Deputy minister for handicrafts and traditional arts highlighted achievements, including facilitating temporary export of goods, revising export base prices, tax exemptions, focusing on the private sector and chambers of commerce, insuring 10,000 artisan families, adding 150,000 to employment, training 65,000 individuals through various programs, and achieving \$825 million in exports, among other initiatives of the Tourism

Ministry. Maryam Jalali addressed representatives and ministers from other departments, saying, "Handicrafts are not just one or a few hundred products; they are a cultural, social, economic, and political institution that, in recent days, has revitalized attention to the four dimensions of culture, society, economy, and policy, which couldn't have been achieved without the synergy of all sections." Director-General of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts of Tehran Province, Parham Janfeshan, who stated in another part of the event, "Comprehensive employment in the country with a family-centered economy, which is handicrafts, is achieved." He announced, "Handicrafts are a combination of art and industry, which is mainly influential in household employment and comprehensive employment in the country. Handicrafts are an important part of this ministry." He added, "The province may appear to be an industrial province, but it might be inter-



esting to know that there are 170 active handicraft fields in Tehran Province, and one-third of handicraft exports belong to this province. 15,000 registered artists in Tehran Province are active in handicrafts and traditional arts."

June 10 is designated as World Handicrafts Day, and to commemorate this occasion, 450 programs are being implemented in various provinces of the country during World Handicrafts Day and Handicrafts Week.

Iran's Minister of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Ezzatollah Zarghami speaks during the ceremony commemorating the World Handicrafts Day, on June 8, 2024 in Tehran. mcth.ir

'Memories of Nature' 25-year spiritual journey in landscape painting on display



By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

Adham Zargham's exhibition, 'Memories of Nature,' is currently underway across three galleries at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. Zargham, known for his stunning landscapes, uses his art to explore nature and highlight the divine power behind it. He believes that art can be a form of worship, praising the Creator through the depiction of natural beauty. His 66 years of life have led to a unique artistic approach that blends

imagination and reality, resulting in over 127 oil, pastel, and gouache paintings created over 25 years. Zargham's work is known for its direct and unmediated interaction with natural landscapes, blending imagination and reality. Zargham's art sessions, lasting 2 to 4 hours, took place directly in nature. The exhibition will run from May 15 to June 30. Iran Daily reporter conducted an exclusive interview with Zargham to know more about his style and technique. The full text of the interview follows:

IRAN DAILY: Please tell us about your educational and painting background.

ZARGHAM: I was born in 1958 in Abadan. In 1977, I entered the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran, majoring in Visual Arts with a focus on painting. I later earned my master's and doctorate in art research from the same university. Until the 1979 Islamic Revolution, we were focused solely on painting and learning. The Revolution, guided by late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, brought a spiritual perspective to our art, which influenced my approach to integrating this spiritual essence into my work. The 1979 Islamic Revolution in fact gave my painting a purpose.

Why did you choose natural landscapes for your work?

Nature allows for a deeper reflection on the elements of creation. Figurative painting focuses more on humans and earthly concerns. As Claude Monet once wished, to become one with nature, elements in

nature are wholly submissive to God. A tree, for example, follows its natural course of blooming and shedding leaves, while humans often resist and follow their own desires.

This exhibition showcases 25 years of your professional work in painting natural landscapes. How did it start?

When I turned 40, I prayed for my goal to transcend mere artistic im-

provement, hoping that painting would help me understand the greatness of God. In 1998, while teaching students in Laleh Park, I felt a sudden clarity, a revelation of nature in a new light. This resulted in a 50x50 cm painting that marked the beginning of my spiritual journey in landscape painting. This piece is now held in the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. Since then, I've continued to explore nature and create numerous landscape paintings.

How does your unique perspective on nature and painting influence your work?

In verse 44 of Chapter Al-Isra, God says, "The seven heavens, the Earth, and all those in them glorify Him...". Inspired by this verse, I sought to understand and praise the natural elements. I feel that every part of nature glorifies God, and understanding this language is fascinating and thrilling for me. This perspective influences my brushstrokes and color use, resulting in distinctive paintings.

