

# Iranian, Russian artists awarded at 'Patterns of Friendship' festival



Russian artist Maria Zhenkova stands next to her portrait of late Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi at the 'Patterns of Friendship' festival in Moscow, Russia. ● IRNA



The winners of the first joint painting festival between Iranian and Russian artists, titled 'Patterns of Friendship,' were awarded in a ceremony at the Academy of Watercolor and Fine Arts of Sergey Andriyaka in Moscow on Wednesday.

The festival, organized by the Iranian Embassy's Cultural Center and the Moscow academy, featured 100 works by Iranian artists and 100 works by Russian artists, as well as 40 works by prominent artists. The exhibition was held in the presence of

Russian artist Svetlana Zubareva (R) holds a certificate as she stands by her painting of the shrine of Lady Masoumeh (PBUH), with Iran's Ambassador to Moscow Kazem Jalali (C) and Masoud Ahmadvand, Cultural Attaché of the Iranian Embassy in Russia, in Moscow, Russia. ● IRNA

Kazem Jalali, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and some cultural figures and artists from both countries, IRNA wrote. According to the Cultural Attaché of the Iranian Embassy in Russia, Masoud Ahmad-

vand, more than 600 works were submitted to the festival's secretariat in Tehran and Moscow.

Ahmadvand said the exhibition of the selected works will remain open in Moscow for a month, and then they will be displayed in the cities of St. Petersburg and Kazan for a month. The works will then be sent to Iran and will be displayed for art lovers in the cities of Tehran, Isfahan, and Shiraz for a month.

The head of the Moscow the Academy of Watercolor and Fine Arts of Sergey Andriya-

ka, Vyacheslav Zhivakov, said the festival was a new beginning to strengthen the ties between the people of the two great countries of Russia and Iran.

"Before, we hosted exhibitions of artists' works that introduced the audience to the history and culture of Russia, but today we have this honor and it is our pleasure that in this academy we see and observe the works of Iranian painters," Zhivakov said.

The paintings displayed in the exhibition showed that Iran

and Russia have outstanding painters, Zhivakov added. The festival's winners were also awarded cash and non-cash prizes, including trips to Iran and Russia.

The top prize winners were Fatemeh Ashtiani from Iran, who painted a scene of St. Petersburg, and Svetlana Zubareva from Russia, who painted a scene of the shrine of Lady Masoumeh (PBUH). Both winners received a 2,000-euro prize.

Other winners included Pourya Zarshenas and Masoud Asadi-Karam from Iran,

who won a one-week tour of Moscow, and Olga Mikhaseva who won a one-week tour of Iran.

The festival was also addressed by the Iranian ambassador, who presented a special award to Maria Zhenkova, a Russian artist who painted a portrait of Ebrahim Raisi, the late Iranian president.

The Council of Muftis of Russia also honored an Iranian artist who painted a scene of the Moscow Mosque, and presented a gift to the artist from Ravil Gainutdin, the Grand Mufti of Russia.

## Environmental challenges on display at UN art exhibition in Iran



### Arts & Culture Desk

An art exhibition in Iran is raising awareness about global environmental challenges, including climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

The exhibition, titled 'Beyond the Canvas: Eyes on the Work of Nature,' features 36 artworks by 18 artists and is organized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Information Centre (UNIC) in Iran,

in partnership with Ech Art Gallery and Artunity, IRNA wrote. The exhibition aims to encourage viewers to think about their relationship with nature and their role in protecting it. The artworks are not only visually striking but also a call to action, urging visitors to become more aware of environmental challenges and work collectively towards sustainable solutions.

At the exhibition's opening ceremony, UN Resident Coordinator Stefan Priesner said the goal is to

raise public awareness about the severe environmental pressure on the planet.

Priesner noted that while the scope of environmental challenges is alarming, there are solutions to address the triple crises.

He emphasized the need for stronger commitment and more resources to guide humanity towards a sustainable future.

The exhibition runs from August 9 to 17 at the Ech Art Gallery in Tehran and is open daily.

## US hopes Gaza ...

In Tehran and other Iranian cities, daily activities continue as normal, indicating that despite a possible Iranian attack on Israel, a major war is not expected to break out.

Mehdi Rouhani, a businessman in Tehran, mentioned that business activities are proceeding without fear, and there is a general consensus among the public that Haniyeh was a respected guest of Iran, and Israel committed a war crime by targeting him—one that necessitates a response. Prominent human rights activist, Niloufar Taqvai, stated that had the international community imposed sanctions on Israel for its crimes, the Iranian public might have had differing opinions on retaliating against Israel. However, the United Nations and Western powers' leniency toward Israeli aggression against Iran has closed the door on avoiding conflict.

Before the Doha negotiations began on Thursday, Hamas had rejected some Israeli proposals regarding the practical implementation of the cease-fire and insisted

on including its own proposals in the agreement.

Since the Israeli aggression in Gaza, there has only been a week-long cease-fire in November 2023, after which mediation efforts have repeatedly stalled. At that time, Hamas had released dozens of Israeli prisoners in exchange for hundreds of Palestinians imprisoned in Israeli jails. A Hamas official stated that they continue consultations with mediators, having previously demanded the implementation of a proposal put forward by US President Joe Biden on May 31, rather than holding further talks. President Biden had suggested a phased plan that would begin with a six-week complete cease-fire, the release of some Israeli prisoners from Gaza, and an increase in humanitarian aid to the besieged area, followed by talks on a permanent end to the fighting.

Secretary of State Tony Blinken had recently informed several Middle Eastern counterparts that a cease-fire agreement in Gaza was of utmost importance

and that efforts must be made as continued tension is in no one's interest.

This latest mediation attempt comes at a time that Hamas's leader and cease-fire negotiator Haniyeh was assassinated in Tehran, escalating regional tensions. Western leaders have urged Tehran to refrain from attacking Israel in response to Haniyeh's assassination. This incident occurred just hours after the assassination of a senior Hezbollah commander, an ally of Hamas, in an Israeli attack in Beirut. A question arises: Will progress in the Gaza cease-fire talks reduce the intensity of Iran's retaliatory attacks? Biden hopes that the prospects of a cease-fire will temper Iran's anger. However, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani has stated that Tehran rejects Western demands to refrain from taking strong action against Israel, which violated its sovereignty. Last week, Iran's mission to the United Nations expressed hope that retaliatory actions would not undermine a potential cease-fire in Gaza.