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Iran Daily cartoonist awarded at 6th Int'l Book Cartoon Biennial



Iranian cartoonist Mohammad Ali Rajabi stands by his work during an award ceremony for the 6th International Book Cartoon Biennial in Tehran on November 4, 2024.
● IRAN DAILY

By Sadeq Dehqan
Staff writer

Mohammad Ali Rajabi, a renowned cartoonist for

Iran Daily, clinched the top prize in the "Book, Palestine, and Gaza Resistance" category at the 6th International Book Cartoon Biennial, thanks to his striking illustration of a Zionist worm attempting to ravage a book bound in the shape of the Gaza map, only to be thwarted by its unbreakable spirit.

The closing ceremony of the biennial was held on November 4 at Central Library of Tehran's City Park, attended by art enthusiasts and officials, where the winners of the competition were announced.

The biennial, organized by Iran Public Libraries Foundation, focuses on the role of books in today's world and the universal language of arts and cartoons in promoting book reading.

Massoud Shojai Tabatabai, the secretary of the biennial, said at the ceremony, "This year's festival has seen significant growth in terms of quantity and quality, and more than 2,000 works from 74 countries participated in the festival, with Iran having the largest share of submitted works with 300 participants." He added, "The special event of this year's biennial is related to the section of Book, Palestine, and Gaza Resistance, which, considering the conflicts that have taken place in Gaza over the past year, the Public Libraries Foundation considered it its duty to dedicate a part of the biennial to this topic, and we hope we have been able to fulfill our mission in this regard."

In this festival, which was held with the participation of 650 artists from 74 countries, the cartoonists' works were judged in the categories of "Book, Child, and Family", "Book, Leisure, Happiness,

and Peace", "Book, Digital Age, and Artificial Intelligence", "Book, Library, and Business", "Book, Library, and Cultural and Social Hub", and "Book, Library, and Important Social Events". The special category of the biennial was dedicated to the topic "Book, Palestine, and Gaza Resistance".

All the works were judged in two sections, professional and beginner (Iranian artists who have not participated in domestic and international competitions), by three foreign and four Iranian jurors, and finally, the top works were selected.

In an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, Rajabi noted, "Given the diverse array of international submissions this year, the festival is poised to make a significant impact on promoting a culture of reading and resistance."

Regarding the role of cartoons in media advertising and cultural discourse, he elaborated, "Cartoons possess a univer-

sal language that transcends linguistic and cultural barriers, communicating complex ideas through visual storytelling. By conveying messages without relying on written or spoken language, cartoons can resonate with audiences of all languages and nationalities, thereby exerting considerable influence on disseminating ideas, including the promotion of reading and the concept of resistance."

Regarding his work in the category of Book and Gaza, he explained, "I depicted the topic of Palestine as a large book, parts of which have been eaten away by the Zionist worm, and the book binding I drew in the shape of a map of Gaza, which the worm, as a symbol of the Zionist regime, was unable to destroy the book binding and was left with a broken tooth and helpless."

Regarding his background, he said, "As a press cartoonist, I have 26 years of

cooperation with various newspapers and news agencies, including Iran Daily, Al-Vefagh, Fars News Agency, Tasnim, and several news websites, and since most of my cartoons, especially those published in Iran Daily, are related to Palestine and the Resistance Front, I am known as the cartoonist of the Resistance Front."

Elena Rostamian, a 10-year-old winner from Fars Province, Jahrom said, "I have been active in cartooning for two years, and I participated in this festival with a cartoon about protecting children from the virtual space. In my work, I drew a boy protecting his book from online stickers."

She also shared that six months earlier, she had competed in an Egyptian cartoon contest with a piece focused on protecting children from the impact of war, and her work was singled out for recognition with an award.

Artists from 11 countries to join Iranian cultural heritage festival for first time

Arts & Culture Desk

The third International Multimedia Festival of Cultural Heritage will welcome artists from 11 countries for the first time. The festival's secretary, Alireza Tabesh, said that these artists will showcase their works in a non-competitive section. Tabesh explained that the foreign artworks will be displayed in three sections: Film, documentary, and photography. He said that the documentary 'Stones

and Bricks', a joint production between Iran and Italy, will be screened on November 6. Another film, 'Melody', a joint production between Iran and Tajikistan, will be shown on November 7. Tabesh also announced that a restored classic foreign film will be screened on November 6. In addition, several documentaries about Iranian culture made by foreign filmmakers will be shown on November 7. These documentaries include "Travel

to Iran' from Serbia, 'Introducing Tabriz' from Turkey, 'Hafez Shirazi' from Bosnia, and two documentaries about Iran from Russia and China.

In the photography section, works by artists from Armenia, Spain, Russia, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, and China have been accepted and will be exhibited from November 5 to 8. Tabesh also mentioned that this year's festival has a special section for the Shiraz Prize. The festival has 13 national sections, including radio, television, music, and poetry, as well as sections for cinema, digital heritage, ideas and experiences, performing arts, photography, film script, documentary, short film, and heritage preservation.

The secretary announced that a total of 4,451 works have been submitted to the festival, and 40 winners will be announced in the national sections. The festival will take place in Shiraz from November 5 to 8, after being held in Yazd and Qazvin in previous years.



'Melody' wins Best Music Award at Turkish festival

The Iranian-Tajik film 'Melody', directed by Behrouz Sebt Rasoul, won the Best Music Award at the İzmir International Film and Music Festival in Turkey. According to ISNA, Fuad Samaei received the award for his music composition for 'Melody' at the festival, IRNA reported.

'Melody', a joint production between Iran and Tajikistan, has been selected to represent Tajik cinema in the Best International Film category at the 97th Academy Awards.

The film, released in 2023, has been internationally distributed by Dreamlab Films France, managed by Nasrin Mirshab. Prior to this award, it has been screened at several international film festivals, including the 54th Goa Film Festival, the 21st Chennai Film Festival, the 24th Keswick Film Festival in the UK, the 42nd Fajr International Film Festival, and the Zurich Iranian Film Festival.

The film, written by Behrouz Sebt Ra-

soul, tells a poetic story about a young composer who wants to create a song for children using the sounds of birds. The İzmir International Film and Music Festival is a specialized festival that focuses on the relationship between film and music. The festival includes an international competition (10-12 films) and a national competition, as well as several non-competitive sections.

The 4th Izmir International Film and Music Festival was held in Turkey from October 30 to November 3.



US election and ...

The Islamic Republic of Iran is a strategic issue for the American political system, and if there is a difference between Republicans and Democrats, it is one of tactics. These tactical differences are significant and can create problems or opportunities for Iran. For instance, Democrats generally tend to form coalitions and seek global consensus to exert political and economic pressure when faced with a challenge, while

Republicans often resort to tougher methods and are more impatient in achieving their goals. However, the more important reality is that the Islamic Republic is not a major player in the US election and is not considered a major issue. American society is more concerned with economic issues, welfare, immigration, and other domestic concerns. In US national security documents, China is considered a potential threat,

while Russia is seen as an actual threat. Therefore, whichever candidate becomes president, they will likely focus on managing or containing China and try to eliminate or weaken Russia's influence in international relations. Notably, the US uses its national security documents, think tanks, and media to create a narrative around certain issues. For example, there has been talk of an "anti-American axis" comprising

China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea. While this axis does not exist in reality, the US deliberately highlights such narratives to serve its interests. Iran occupies a unique geopolitical position, with rich resources, particularly in the energy sector. It has a diverse society and is a key player in West Asia, and it is also an archenemy of the Israeli regime. The country has faced accusations of terrorism and human rights abuses from Western countries.

As a result, Iran is a complex issue with various dimensions, and American policymakers may adopt different policies toward Iran depending on the importance they assign to each of these aspects. Therefore, the nature of the relationship between the US and Iran will be defined by the next US president's stance on issues like Israel, energy resources, human rights, terrorism, and developments in West Asia.