

Fajr Visual Arts Festival celebrates unity, creativity over competition

Winners announced

Arts & Culture Desk

The 17th Fajr Visual Arts Festival concluded on February 22 with a closing ceremony at Tehran's Vahdat Hall, marking the end of a restructured, non-competitive edition aimed at fostering artistic unity.

The event was attended by prominent figures, including Nadereh Rezaei, Deputy Culture Minister for Artistic Affairs, Vice President for Women and Family Affairs, Zahra Behrouz-Azar, and artists and cultural officials, Tasnim reported.

This year's festival, which ran simultaneously in Tehran and 31 provincial centers, featured exhibitions under the theme 'My Homeland'. A symbolic performance by artist Bahareh Jahandooost opened the evening, honoring the ancient cypress tree, the festival's emblem.

Festival Secretary General Bahram Kalhornia highlighted the event's non-competitive nature, focusing on collaboration over rivalry.

"We aimed to cultivate friendship, diversity of thought, and a sense of unity," he said, emphasizing the importance of community over individual accolades.

The ceremony honored outstanding women artists, with Fatemeh Rah-

manian (Fars), Maryam Kashi (South Khorasan), Tayebeh Zahedi (Ilam), and Farzaneh Nassiri (Zanjan) receiving recognition in the 'My Homeland' section.

Top artistic directors were also awarded, including Abouzar Norouzi Nejad (Hormozgan), Fatemeh Parinejad (Mazandaran), and Mohammad Javad Zare (Fars).

Also, Rouzbeh Habibian from Kermanshah, Fatemeh Ebrahimi from Bushehr, Behdad Najafi Asadollahi from Tehran, Hamid Behjat from West Azarbaijan, Mehdi Jafari from Kerman, and Ali Soltani from Qom were honored as outstanding artistic directors deserving of special commendation. In the Visual Arts Contributors section, Ali Bakhtiari was recognized for his podcast, and Ruyin Pakbaz for authorship. Other honorees included Mohammad Taghi Faramarzi (translation), Zirzamin Dastan Gallery, and Nazar Publishing.

A moment of international solidarity was marked by Baha Abdul-Hussein Majid from Iraq's Visual Arts Association, who praised the festival's inclusivity and called for cultural exchange among neighboring nations.

The evening also celebrated master artists in various disciplines, including Masoud Zende-Rouh Kermani



(photography), Mohammadreza Zabihollahzadeh (sculpture), Ali Rezaeian (calligraphy), Fathollah Ziarati (ceramics), and

Ahmad Vakili (painting). Rezaei closed the event, expressing gratitude to the organizers and partic-

ipants. "This festival sets the stage for future achievements in Iran's vibrant visual arts scene," she said.

Iran-Indonesia Film Week underway in Jakarta celebrating 75 years of diplomatic ties

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The Iran-Indonesia Film Week, being held under the theme 'Peace and Friendship,' is underway in Jakarta, marking the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two nations.

The five-day event, running through February 25, will showcase four Iranian and four Indonesian films across cultural centers, universities, and schools in Jakarta, Mehr News Agency reported.

Featured Iranian films include the dramas 'In the Arms of the Tree' and 'Romanticism of Emad and Tooba', alongside the animated titles 'Loupetou' and 'Dolphin Boy'.

The opening ceremony was attended by Indonesia's Minister of Culture, Fadli Zon, Iran's Ambassador to Indonesia, Mohammad Boroujerdi, and Hamidreza Jafarian, head of Iran's Soureh Cinema Organization. The event is organized in collaboration with Indonesia's Ministry of Culture, Iran's Cultural Counselor in Indonesia, and the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization.



Speaking at the inauguration, Iran's Cultural Attaché to Indonesia, Mohammadreza Ebrahimi, stressed Iran-Indonesia Film Week is not just a celebration of cinema but a bridge bringing the people of both nations closer through film, music, and shared cultural values." Ebrahimi emphasized the deep-rooted connections between the two countries, adding, "Both Iran and Indonesia, with their ancient civilizations and rich histories, share common values in

religious, cultural, and social spheres." He also underscored Iran's global reputation in cinema, noting, "Iranian cinema is known for its humanistic, artistic, and thought-provoking narratives, earning it worldwide recognition." Commenting on Indonesia's film industry, he said, "In recent years, Indonesian cinema has seen remarkable growth, presenting both local and global stories with artistic depth and emotional resonance."

Tehran Int'l Book Fair to be held from May 7 to 17

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The 36th Tehran International Book Fair will take place from May 7 to 17, 2025, at the Imam Khomeini Mosalla, following a decision by the event's Policy Council. According to IRNA, Ebrahim Heidari, spokesperson and deputy director of the fair, announced that the council finalized the location after reviewing expert reports on potential venues. The Imam Kho-

meini Mosalla was chosen to host the prestigious cultural event, continuing its legacy as Iran's leading book fair.

Heidari emphasized the significance of the Tehran International Book Fair, calling it "a national heritage and cultural event that not only invigorates the country's literary scene but also draws international attention from cultural figures and enthusiasts worldwide."



He stressed the responsibility of cultural institutions and collaborating organizations to ensure the fair is organized to the highest standards.

Iranian film 'Alone Together' to compete at Polish, Turkish festivals

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The Iranian short film 'Alone Together', written and directed by Omid Mirzaei, has been officially selected to compete at the 28th International Film Festival Zoom-Zblizenia in Poland and the 20th Labour International Film Festival in Turkey. Produced by Saeed Khani in collaboration with the Rafsanjan Youth Cinema Society, 'Alone Together' continues its successful festival run, adding two more events to its growing list of accolades, Mehr News Agency reported.

The International Film Festival Zoom-Zblizenia, set to take place from March 3 to 9, 2025, in Poland, is recognized as one of the most significant platforms for independent cinema in the country. Known for spotlighting bold and artistically ambitious works, ZOOM emphasizes originality and the promotion

of independent filmmaking. Meanwhile, Turkey's Labour International Film Festival—also known as the Turkish Labour Film Festival—will host its 20th edition from May 2 to 11, 2025. Founded in 2006, the festival not only showcases films but also organizes workshops and cultural programs, focusing on themes surrounding labor and social justice.

'Alone Together' has already carved out an impressive festival circuit, having won the honorary award at the 47th LUCAS International Festival for Young Film Lovers in Germany, Best Editing at the 41st Tehran International Short Film Festival, and Best Short Film at the 23rd Hafez Awards. It also earned Best Directing and Editing honors at the 70th Reggio Film Festival and received nominations at the 43rd Fajr Film Festival and the ISFA Awards. The film has previously been fea-



tured at major festivals, including the 23rd Reggio Film Festival in Italy, the 20th Vues d'Afrique International Film Festival in Canada, and Germany's renowned Oldenburg International Film Festival. Set on a cold winter night, 'Alone Together' follows the tense moments at a remote checkpoint when officers grow suspicious of a bus full of passengers. Among them is a young boy traveling alone, drawing the attention of police, the driver, and fellow passengers, leading to an emotional unraveling of hidden truths.