

Celebrating triumphs, resilience in Iranian arts, culture

The current Persian calendar year, spanning from March 20, 2024, to March 21, 2025, was a significant period for Iran's cultural and

artistic landscape. It was marked by the loss of notable artists and a vibrant display of Iranian creativity on both national and inter-

national platforms. From film festivals to art exhibitions, this year showcased the resilience and dynamism of Iranian art. The following

reviews the most important cultural and artistic events of the year, reflecting on the challenges and triumphs that shaped the year.

Loss of prominent artists

The Iranian art community faced profound sorrow with the passing of several influential figures. The film industry mourned the loss of celebrated actors such as Reza Davoodnejad, Zari Khoshkam, and Zhaleh Olov, as well as notable directors like Saeed Rad and Pari Saberi. Also, the voice of beloved dubbing artists, including Manouchehr Valizadeh and Iraj Rezaei, was silenced. The literary world also grieved the death of great poet Mohammad Ali Bahmani. These losses left an indelible mark on the cultural fabric of Iran, prompting reflections on the importance of preserving the legacy of these artists.

National Music Document

On January 30, 2024, the Supreme Cultural Revolution Council approved the National Music Document, a strategic framework aimed at developing and organizing the music sector in Iran. This document was officially announced by the President on March 2, 2024, and its unveiling ceremony took place on June 15, 2024, attended by Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaeili. The National Music Document aims to clarify the true position of music in cultural governance and promote a cohesive and effective policymaking approach in the music sector. This project reflects a commitment to enhancing the role of music as a cultural asset and facilitating its growth both nationally and internationally.

'Eye to Eye' exhibition at TMOCA

Amidst these losses, the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art (TMOCA) launched a significant exhibition titled 'Eye to Eye' in late June 2024. Running until January 15, 2025, the exhibition showcased the works of 120 Iranian and international artists, drawing over 2,000 visitors. The event not only celebrated the museum's hidden collection but also highlighted the importance of contemporary art in fostering dialogue and understanding within society. It became one of the most well-received exhibitions in recent years, offering a platform for artistic expression and community engagement.



Iran's presence at 60th Venice Biennale

In April 2024, Iran made a strong showing at the 60th Venice Biennale with a pavilion themed "Art without Border." This global art event, which took place from April 20 to November 24, 2024, attracted participation from 95 countries, marking a significant post-pandemic resurgence in international art engagement. The Iranian pavilion, curated by the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, featured renowned artists such as Abdolhamid Qadirian, Gholamali Taheri, and Kazem Chalipa. This participation not only showcased the richness of Iranian contemporary art but also fostered cultural exchanges on a global scale.



Auction houses and sales of Iranian art

In the first half of the Persian year, Tehran's Auction house emerged as the leading venue for Iranian art sales, achieving approximately \$3.2 million in revenue. Following closely were Christie's and Sotheby's, with sales of \$1.3 million and \$1.2 million, respectively. However, there was a notable decline of around 26% in Tehran's auction revenue compared to the previous year. While Christie's experienced an increase in sales, Sotheby's faced a decline. The dynamic landscape of art sales reflects the complexities of the market, influenced by economic factors and shifting consumer interests. Cities such as Tehran, London, Dubai, Paris, and New York were the most successful in selling Iranian artworks during this period. Although Tehran remained a frontrunner, it faced a significant decrease in sales compared to the previous year. London also saw its sales halved, while Dubai experienced a 27% growth. This fluctuation in sales illustrates the evolving nature of the art market and its response to global economic conditions.

Picasso exhibition at TMOCA



On March 12, 2025, the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art unveiled a rare exhibition featuring 66 works by the legendary artist Pablo Picasso. Titled 'Picasso in Tehran,' the exhibition offered an unprecedented opportunity for visitors to explore the evolution of Picasso's artistic career. The showcase included prints, paintings, sculptures, and artist books, highlighting Picasso's profound influence on modernist movements, including those in Iran. Running until May 21, 2025, the exhibition strategically coincided with the Nowruz holiday, attracting a diverse audience eager to engage with the richness of Picasso's legacy.

Oscar win for Iranian animation



In a remarkable achievement for Iranian cinema, the animated short film 'In the Shadow of Cypress,' co-directed by Hossein Molayemi and Shirin Sohani, won the Oscar for Best Animated Short Film at the 97th Academy Awards held on March 2, 2025. This film, produced by the Iranian Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, became the first Iranian animated short to win an Oscar, marking a significant milestone in the country's cinematic history. With this victory, Iran celebrated its third Oscar win, following the success of Asghar Farhadi's films 'A Separation' and 'The Salesman.'

Fajr Film Festival



The 43rd Fajr Film Festival, held during a transitional period between two administrations, was marked by notable changes. While it faced criticisms regarding its organization, the festival saw the return of the People's Simorgh award after a three-year hiatus, awarded to the film 'Peshmerga' by Ali Ghaffari. This return was a significant development, emphasizing the importance of audience engagement in evaluating cinematic works. Despite challenges, the festival remains a vital cultural event that continues to promote Iranian cinema both nationally and internationally.