

# Iran to review Oscar submission choices



## Arts & Culture Desk

Iran has convened its Oscar selection committee under the House of Cinema, the country's main film guild, after several years of government oversight. The panel is tasked with choosing Iran's entry for the Best International Feature Film category at the 2025 Academy Awards, IRNA reported. The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has set Oct. 1, 2024, as the deadline for submissions. Eligible films must have been screened for at least seven days in Iran between Oct. 1, 2023, and Sept. 30, 2024. The move restores majority control of the committee to the House of Cinema, which had long pushed for a stronger voice for filmmakers and industry professionals in the process. Speculation has already begun over the films most likely to be consid-

ered. Among the frontrunners are 'The Old Bachelor' by Oktay Baraheni, 'Woman and Child' by Saeed Roustayi, 'Guardian of the Field' by Seyed Mohammadreza Kheradmandan, 'In the Form of Love' by Siavash As'adi, and 'Cause of Death: Unknown' by Ali Zarnegar. All five have met the eligibility criteria and drawn critical attention at home and abroad. 'In the Form of Love' has screened in competition at six international festivals, winning As'adi a special jury award at the 24th Ojai Film Festival in California and earning newcomer Saina Rouhani a best actress prize at Italy's 21st Salento International Film Festival. Zarnegar's 'Cause of Death: Unknown' has collected awards in New York, Zurich, Shanghai and Hof, including the audience award at the Iranian Film Festival New York.

Baraheni's 'The Old Bachelor' has also been a festival regular, with stops in Rotterdam, Transylvania and Galway. It took best foreign film at Galway, best film at London Breeze in the UK and best actor honors in Transylvania. Critics have praised its "technical polish" and strong performances. While narrative features often dominate Oscar submissions, Iranian critics note that several documentaries also had notable festival runs and box office exposure this year, raising the prospect of wider debate inside the selection committee. The House of Cinema last held control of the Oscar process in the mid-2010s. Since then, the Farabi Cinema Foundation, a state-backed body, oversaw nominations. Industry insiders say the return to a guild-led structure signals a push for greater transparency and more artist-driven choices.

## Animation 'Juliet and the King' takes home first int'l prize



### Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Ashkan Rahgozar's animated feature 'Juliet and the King' claimed its first international award at the Palm Springs International Animation Festival, according to Hoorakhsh Studios. The film secured the specialized Streamtacular Award during the festival's closing ceremony. The prize recognizes animated works that have gained significant online traction and demonstrated strong influence across digital media platforms. Rahgozar's latest project marks a fantasy reimagining of the historical relationship between Qajar dynasty ruler Naser al-Din Shah and French actress Juliet. The an-

imated feature weaves together history and imagination to explore their complex connection. "Winning this award launches a journey we began with hope and passion," Rahgozar said in response to the recognition. The director expressed satisfaction that 'Juliet and the King' attracted attention during its second international screening. The Palm Springs International Animation Festival stands among America's most respected independent animation events. The festival showcases "artistic excellence and innovation" while bringing together "filmmakers, artists, and animation enthusiasts to experience groundbreaking storytelling." Hoorakhsh Studios, which pro-

duced the film, announced the award through its public relations department. The company has established itself as a leading animation house in Iran under Rahgozar's direction. Rahgozar, born April 12, 1986, founded and leads Hoorakhsh Studios as chief executive. His previous work includes 'The Last Fiction,' which gained international recognition between 2008 and 2017. The Streamtacular Award specifically honors films that break through in the digital space. Winners demonstrate exceptional audience engagement and impact across modern media platforms. 'Juliet and the King' will screen at multiple festivals before its general release. The film represents the first poetic fantasy adaptation of this particular historical story. Festival organizers typically announce awards across more than 30 categories during their annual event. The 2024 edition "screened hundreds of animation films and awarded winners in more than 30 categories." Rahgozar previously served on jury panels at other festivals, including the Thessaloniki Animation Festival in Greece.

## Iranian student teams win 11 medals at FIRA 2025 robotics in S. Korea



### Social Desk

Iranian student and school teams captured five golds, four silvers and two bronzes at the 30th FIRA World Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Championships held in Busan, South Korea, the country's vice presidency for science and technology said on Sunday. The weeklong competition, which ran alongside the International Symposium on Robotics and AI, brought together leading teams from across the globe to showcase their latest break-

throughs, IRNA reported. Iran's delegation, supported by the vice presidency, highlighted its "creativity and skill" by standing on the podium in several categories, from autonomous driving to aerial robotics. Among the top prizes, the Negaresh Rastajou student team won the high-speed aerial drones league, while Salam Dibaji Robotics clinched the under-19 sports robots title. The Hades team triumphed in the urban autonomous vehicles league, and Iranian squads swept both youth and adult

divisions of the innovation and business league. Other Iranian groups also placed in the autonomous vehicles, business innovation and under-19 sports leagues, taking home silver and bronze medals. The FIRA 2025 championships, staged from Aug. 11 to Aug. 17, drew hundreds of teams from around the world. Organizers said the event offered a stage for "cutting-edge" advances in robotics and AI, while giving young engineers a chance to pit their designs against the best in the field.

## Five Iranian films set to compete at Armenia's Fresco festival



Five Iranian films will compete at the 11th Fresco International Festival of Modern Art and Spiritual Films, which runs from August 18 to September 5, 2025, in Yerevan, Armenia. The annual event showcases spiritual and humanitarian cinema from around the world while fostering open discussions about contemporary social issues. The festival serves as an opportunity for cultural

dialogue and reassessment of spiritual heritage, bringing together filmmakers from different nations. The Iranian entries include 'The Sunset of Green Snails,' directed by Mohammad Hasani. Director Bahar Dorabadi will present 'The Quarantine Redemption.' Three additional Iranian productions round out the country's representation are 'Dot,' 'The Legend of Nanuk Mountain' by director Mohammadreza Moradi, and 'Winner.' The Fresco festival has been running annually since 2014, making this year's edition the 11th installment of the competition. Armenia's capital will host screenings and related events throughout the nearly three-week festival period. The competition focuses specifically on works that explore moral and spiritual themes, setting it apart from mainstream international film festivals.

## Iran, Armenia eye ...

So far, two parliamentary delegations from Iran have visited Armenia. The Iran-Armenia Parliamentary Friendship Group, in addition to its visit with the first vice president, also held talks with Armenia's national security chief, the heads of key parliamentary committees, and the ministers of infrastructure and economy. These meetings underscored the expansion of parliamentary relations and highlighted broader cooperation in political, economic, and commercial spheres. As for the recent peace agreement

between Armenia and Azerbaijan, it must be stressed that no deal should lead to changes in regional borders. Iran has repeatedly declared its opposition to any geopolitical or territorial shifts in the region. The Iran-Armenia border is a strategic frontier, a point emphasized on numerous occasions by Iran's Leader. Relations between Iran and Armenia rest on a solid historical and cultural foundation. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Armenia emerged as one of the newly independent countries sharing a bor-

der with Iran—one that also enjoys many cultural commonalities. For Tehran, the Armenian frontier is both historic and strategic, and territorial links with Yerevan must never be severed. Foreign forces will not be allowed to gain a foothold in the region. This principle has been repeatedly underscored by Iranian officials, and Armenian leaders themselves have made clear—both in telephone conversations and public statements—that they, too, will not allow geopolitical changes that could put regional interests at risk.