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+98 21 84711225  
208, Khorramshahr Ave., Tehran, Iran  
+98 21 88548892-5  
+98 21 88500601/irandaily@iranagahiha.com  
www.irandaily.ir/newspaper.irandaily.ir  
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# ‘Iranian Garden’ reveals through watercolor dreams

By Sadeq Dehqan  
Staff writer

## INTERVIEW

The ‘Iranian Garden’ is a painting exhibition that has recently unveiled a spellbinding collection of watercolor works by Mohammad Ali Saeedi at Tehran’s White Line Gallery.

The show features 15 paintings of varying dimensions, crafted with watercolor and mixed media, each offering a window into a world suspended between reality and imagination. In this series, Saeedi weaves the distinctive motifs of Iranian architecture with light, color, and a lyrical sensibility, drawing viewers into the enchanting and mysterious beauty of Persian gardens.

The exhibition remains open to art lovers until November 3 at White Line Gallery, Tehran.

Iran Daily caught up with Mohammad Ali Saeedi amid his exhibition. The full interview follows.

**IRAN DAILY:** Could you share your artistic background and what drew you to painting?

**MOHAMMAD ALI SAEEDI:** I was born in 1980 in Tehran. I hold a master’s degree in graphic design and am also a university lecturer. My fascination with painting began in childhood. My father was a collector, and our home was brimming with stamp albums. I would spend hours leafing through them, ab-

sorbed by the intricate patterns and designs. In those moments, an artistic sensibility quietly took root in me. From early on, I gravitated toward calligraphy, which I pursued rigorously, eventually mastering it. Photography and painting soon followed. Once I began painting, I became so enthralled that, despite being an energetic child, I would remain home for hours, absorbed in my artworks. This passion guided my educational and professional path, binding my career and life to painting.

Since turning professional at the age of 25, I have created 15 series of paintings on various themes, each comprising approximately 100 to 200 works. My art has been showcased in over 10 solo exhibitions and more than 80 group exhibitions.

**Can you tell us how the ‘Iranian Garden’ series came about?**

In addition to painting and photography, I have explored cinema, gaining experience in screenwriting, cinematography, and editing. These cinematic experiences shaped my narrative approach to art. At one point, I began writing a feature-length screenplay set in a village. The process deeply imprinted the story’s frames onto my subconscious. I would revisit each frame in my mind repeatedly, until the only way to quiet that mental imagery was to start painting those locations. Of course, on the canvas, these settings



MOHAMMAD ALI SAEEDI

took on the hues of imagination, rendered in various colors. The foundational inspiration came from Iranian gardens, and the works in effect portray locations and compositions drawn from Persian spatial aesthetics.

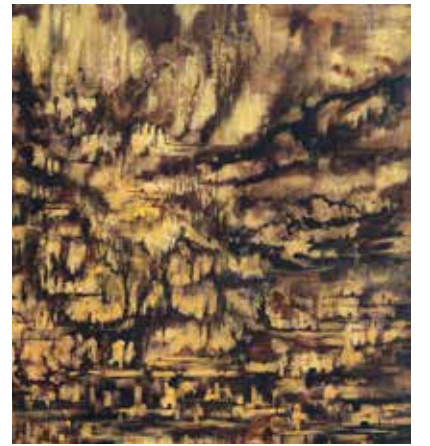
**From a technical perspective, how do your works take shape on the canvas?**

I begin each piece on canvas with a watercolor draft, exploring color combinations and spatial arrangements within that medium. I also work with acrylics in a watercolor-like fashion, seeking to create subtle variations of hue through-

out the painting. In each composition, I render Iranian spaces with distinct colors and designs, giving the series a rich and varied visual language.

**In these Iranian gardens, the presence of humans seems almost absent. Why is that?**

These paintings depict personal spaces within urban settings, often without traditional perspective. They represent locations from cities, as well as imagined spaces, offering expansive, open views of urban landscapes. While people could exist in these vistas, they remain unseen, allowing the architecture and atmosphere itself to tell the story.



## Iranian documentary ‘Gene Hodge’ picked for UK’s Lift-Off festival



### Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian filmmaker Alireza Jamali Akhawan’s documentary ‘Gene Hodge’ was officially selected for the 10th edition of the Lift-Off

Global Network Film Festival in Iver, UK. The festival, renowned for spotlighting emerging independent filmmakers, will run from December 1 to 15, 2025. ‘Gene Hodge’ is

scheduled to screen on November 3, 2025, ILNA reported. The documentary follows a five-year-old boy who collects trash to support his family, only to face a life-altering accident. The film’s international distribution is managed by Solmaz Etemad. The production team includes director of photography Masoud Ebrahimi Kashaf, editor Ameneh Azad, and project consultant Ali Herati. Established in 2011, the Lift-Off Global Network aims to provide a platform for independent filmmakers to showcase their work to global audiences. The Iver festival is one of several international events organized by the network, which also includes festivals in cities such as Los Angeles, New York, and Tokyo.

## Iran, Iraq hold talks on fighting flood, drought

### Social Desk

Iranian and Iraqi water officials met in Baghdad on Monday to discuss joint strategies to combat rising droughts and floods driven by climate change.

“We need practical cooperation to manage water scarcity and flood risks,” Mohammad Hajrasouliha, Director of Tehran’s UNESCO-affiliated Regional Centre on Urban Water Management, said after talks with Iraq’s Minister of Water Resources, Aoun Diab Abdullah, IRNA reported.

The meeting sets the stage for an international workshop on ‘Integrated Flood Management’ scheduled for November 6–8 in Baghdad. The event will gather regional experts to exchange knowledge and coordinate responses to extreme weather events affecting both countries.

Further discussions are planned for the 14th Governing Board meeting of the Regional Centre in Tehran on December 3, where Abdullah is expected to attend.

In a related initiative, Iranian Energy Minister Abbas Aliabadi, speaking at the 5th Con-



ference of Ministers Responsible for Water of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Jeddah, called for reviving traditional water systems, including qanats and cisterns, using modern science.

“Fair and careful management of water is a moral and religious obligation for present and future generations,” he said.

Iran and Iraq, both facing worsening water stress, are seeking to move beyond technical cooperation toward coordinated regional policies that combine scientific planning with local knowledge.

Hajrasouliha said the talks were “an important step toward shared responsibility and practical solutions for water management” across the region.

## Ifs & buts of...

Accordingly, some in the United States argue that, in the post-October 7 landscape, weakening the Axis of Resistance—led by the Islamic Republic of Iran—is a prerequisite for establishing any new regional order. President Donald Trump, echoing this belief, has pursued a strategy of “coercive diplomacy” toward Tehran—an approach that helps explain recent strikes on Iran’s nuclear facilities. Yet history offers a cautionary tale. Before

the 2003 invasion of Iraq, American neo-conservatives made a similar argument: that removing Saddam Hussein would usher in stability and peace across the region. Reality proved otherwise. The war and its aftermath gave rise to extremist groups like ISIS, and led to failed states in Iraq and Syria. The ensuing chaos forced the US to scale back its military presence, with President Barack Obama ultimately fulfilling his 2008 campaign promise to withdraw American troops from Iraq.

For that reason, skepticism about the consequences of weakening Iran is well-founded. Diminishing Tehran’s influence could, paradoxically, fuel greater instability, much as it did in Iraq after 2003. In fact, the region’s dynamics make it impossible for an external power like the United States to impose order based on its own terms. Perhaps recognizing this, the Trump administration over the past year has sought to pay more attention to the views of Arab states, especially members of the Persian Gulf Co-

operation Council. The signing of a defense pact with Qatar is the latest indication of this approach. Trump has repeatedly stated that the voices of Arab nations must be heard. No doubt, attracting Arab investment remains a clear priority for his administration, but he also understands that ignoring America’s Arab allies is unsustainable in the long run. Still, the prevailing sentiment across the region is that the pro-Israel lobby in Washington remains the main obstacle to a balanced Middle East policy. As long as this powerful

lobby can shape US decision-making, hopes for a stable and inclusive regional order will remain dim.

Thus, it can be concluded that Washington faces yet another rocky and arduous road in its quest to establish a security order in the Middle East—particularly given that its primary preoccupation is containing China. Any large-scale, long-term military presence in the Middle East aimed at establishing a new order could benefit China and diminishes American focus on the Indo-Pacific region.