

Tehran, Beijing mull expansion of cultural ties in high-level arts meeting

Social Desk

Abdolreza Rahmani-Fazli, Iran's ambassador to China, met with Zhou Qingfu, president of the National Academy of Arts of China, discussed new pathways for strengthening cultural and artistic collaboration between the two nations. Rahmani-Fazli highlighted the long-standing cultural ties between Iran and China and called for the implementation of the memorandum of understanding signed last year between the two academies of arts. He stressed that art serves as the "spirit" animating political and economic cooperation, underscoring the need to deepen cultural exchanges.

Addressing global challenges, the am-

bassador noted that emerging movements with shallow historical roots are attempting to impose Western idealism while eroding Eastern identity and civilization. He expressed confidence that the ancient civilizations of Iran and China, through cooperation, can effectively respond to these trends.

Rahmani-Fazli introduced the initiative "Art Builds Bridges", proposed by Iran's Academy of Arts, as a framework for collaboration. The project, aligned with China's Belt and Road Initiative and the revival of the Silk Road schemes, aims to facilitate artistic exchanges among countries along the route through the establishment of a joint Iran-China secretariat. Planned activities include co-productions in cinema, biennial ex-

hibitions, translation of art books, and webinars showcasing cultural identity. Zhou also welcomed the proposal, stressing that cultural exchange and civilizational dialogue have always played a vital role in bilateral relations. He praised the "Art Builds Bridges" initiative and affirmed China's readiness to support efforts that expand cultural and artistic cooperation.

During the meeting, attended by Iran's cultural attaché in China, both sides discussed translation of classical works into Persian and Chinese, joint academic seminars, exchange of research delegations, specialized exhibitions of academy artists, and collaboration in digital preservation of artistic and historical heritage.



Abdolreza Rahmani-Fazli, Iran's ambassador to China shakes hands with Zhou Qingfu, president of the National Academy of Arts of China on December 10, 2025.

● IRIB

Iranian Rumi-inspired art exhibition opens in Turkey



Arts & Culture Desk

An exhibition showcasing selected masterpieces of Iranian calligraphy, miniature painting, and illumination has opened at the Karatay Municipality Cultural Center in the Turkish city of Konya, south of the capital Ankara. The event marks the final stage of the cultural program "Gems from the Masnavi" and is part of the 2025 Iran-Turkey Cultural Year, IRNA reported.

The exhibition presents works by distinguished Iranian artists, including calligraphers of master and superlative ranks, alongside outstanding examples of miniature painting and illumination. The collection fea-

tures diverse styles such as Nasta'liq, Shekasteh Nasta'liq, and Siah-Mashq, offering international visitors a vivid glimpse into the richness of Iran's traditional arts.

The opening ceremony was hosted by Karatay Municipality and attended by Ghasem Nazemi, Iran's cultural counselor in Turkey; Hasan Kilca, mayor of Karatay; and Alireza Behboudi, representative of the Iranian Cultural Office.

Created under the artistic supervision of Hamidreza Jamshidi, the works highlight the spiritual and humanistic messages of Rumi's Masnavi through the medium of calligraphy. "Konya, as the city of Rumi, is the best place to present arts inspired

by his teachings," said Nazemi at the ceremony, emphasizing the exhibition's role in strengthening cultural ties between nations. Mayor Kilca added that the event reflects "unity, tolerance, and Rumi's spiritual messages introduced to the world through art."

The exhibition coincides with Shab-e Orous ("Night of Ascension"), a commemoration cherished by followers of Rumi as the moment of union with the Divine rather than a day of mourning. Organized by the Art Division of Jihad-e Daneshgahi, Alhoda International Cultural Institute, and the Iranian Cultural Office in Turkey, the exhibition will remain open to the public until December 17.

Afghanistan secures UNESCO recognition for Behzad's miniature painting style



Arts & Culture Desk

At the 20th Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, held at the Red Fort in New Delhi, Afghanistan successfully inscribed Behzad's style of miniature painting on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Afghanistan had submitted the nomination in 2021,

highlighting the legacy of Kamal al-Din Behzad (1455-1535), the celebrated Persian painter born in Herat, then the capital of the Timurid Empire and a major cultural center of Iran.

Iran had previously achieved multinational recognition for Persian miniature painting in 2020, jointly inscribed with Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan during the 15th Session of the Committee. Iranian officials have noted

that while Afghanistan may highlight the Herat school of miniature painting, Behzad's legacy is deeply tied to Iran's cultural heritage. Alireza Izadi, the director general of Iran's Office for the Registration of Historical Works, had earlier stated that such nominations should involve dialogue and mutual consent, citing the precedent of the joint registration of the musical instrument rebab with Afghanistan.

Miniature painting, known for its intricate detail and narrative richness, reached its zenith under Behzad's direction. His hallmark style combined geometric architecture with open spaces, dynamic compositions, and individualized character portrayals. Works such as The Seduction of Yusuf (1488) remain iconic examples of his artistry.

Iranian authorities have not yet issued an official response to Afghanistan's inscription of Behzad's miniature style under its name.

'Black Rabbit, White Rabbit' wins top honor at Chinese film festival

Arts & Culture Desk

At the closing ceremony of the Hainan International Film Festival, held on China's Hainan Island, Iranian filmmaker Shahram Mokri's "Black Rabbit, White Rabbit" was awarded the prestigious Golden Coconut for Best Film.

The honor was presented by renowned artistic director Marco Müller and jury president Juliette Binoche, the acclaimed French actress, according to ISNA.

Mokri, who was attending the Red Sea Film Festival in Saudi Arabia at the time, sent a message of gratitude that was read aloud by Amir Esbati, representing the film's team at the ceremony. Esbati expressed joy at the jury's recognition, calling the award a significant achievement for the production group. Just days earlier, the film had also been recognized in the festival's "Emerging Talents" section, winning the Best Talent Award.

Mokri, an acclaimed Iranian filmmaker, directed "Black Rabbit, White Rabbit", a joint production between Tajikistan and the United Arab Emirates. Featuring a distinguished ensemble of Tajik actors, the film had already made waves at the Busan and Indian



film festivals before securing screenings at London and Chicago.

Produced with the support of Tajik-film Studio in Tajikistan, the project was shot in both Tajik and Persian. The cast includes Babak Karimi, Hasti Mohamayi, Kubriya Dilyubova, and Bejan Dulyatov. The screenplay was co-written by Mokri and Nasim Ahmadvard, with Negar Eskandarfard serving as producer.

"Three seemingly unrelated stories woven together into a mysterious whole, marked by meticulously choreographed long takes, dark humor, and flashes of magical realism that embody Mokri's playful meta-cinematic puzzle," reads the film's synopsis. Distributed internationally by

DreamLab Films, "Black Rabbit, White Rabbit" has also been selected by Tajikistan as its official submission for the Best International Feature category at the Academy Awards.

This marks Mokri's fourth feature film. His debut, Fish & Cat (2013), won the Special Orizzonti Award at the Venice Film Festival. He followed with Invasion (2017), which premiered at Berlinale, and Careless Crime (2020), screened in Venice and awarded the Jury Prize at the Chicago International Film Festival.

The film is set for a screening tour across China following the festival. It will continue its festival journey, competing next at the Kerala International Film Festival in India.