



Curtains down on Haqiqat Cinema

Iran's rich history, diversity contribute to documentary cinema: *Minister*

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Abbas Salehi said Iran's long, uninterrupted history and vast cultural and climatic diversity give documentary-makers an unrivalled range of subjects, at the closing ceremony of the 19th Cinema Verite (Haqiqat Cinema) international documentary film festival at Vahdat Hall on December 16.

Salehi thanked filmmakers who documented the conflict "despite difficulties", saying they preserved collective memory under pressure and left records "for us and the world". Their work, he said, showed an Iran that does not "yield" or "bow", urging unity and restraint so as not to cloud what he called a "sacred unity", IRNA

reported.

Invoking veteran filmmaker Mohammadreza Aslani, Salehi said Iran's subject depth is unrivalled. "From the standpoint of subjects, few countries have such capacity," he said, calling the claim no exaggeration.

He pointed to Iran's ancient history as a generator of endless narratives, noting research by the late Kamran Fani on glass from the Achaemenid era as an example of how even a single material can anchor compelling films.

Beyond history, Salehi cited Iran's varied geography and ethnography, with its micro-cultures, literatures, rituals and layered identities, from traditional to modern, as an engine for story-building.

Positioned at a global and geographic crossroads, Iran has expe-



rienced repeated shocks over the past 150 years, he said, including the recent conflict, sharpening the

urgency of documentation. Head of the Cinema Organization of Iran Raed Faridzadeh framed

documentary cinema as more than record-keeping, describing it as a phenomenological practice that fuses "now", memory and foresight. The past year, he said, delivered on an ambition for the genre to secure a stronger foothold within Iran's image industry, with the festival showcasing pluralism and "multi-voiced" work that energized audiences and rights-holders. Festival Secretary Mohammad Hamidi-Moqaddam said the six-day festival convened a new generation of filmmakers from across Iran alongside established voices, creating productive friction and exchange.

The breadth of national and international entries, he said, reinforced Cinema Verite's standing as one of the region's most authentic documentary platforms.

He characterized Iranian docu-

mentary cinema as a "national asset" capable of extending its reach beyond borders through co-production and regional partnerships, citing joint work produced in Gaza amid crisis as proof that new pathways can amplify diverse voices. The festival also placed emphasis on documentary photography, hosting workshops to address skills gaps.

A dedicated "Iran" section honored history and culture while reflecting the 12-day war. Screenings attended by families of those killed paid tribute to victims, organizers said, framing solidarity as a through-line of the program.

The evening concluded with awards across national and international competitions, the Shahid Avini Prize, the Iran section and student documentaries.

'Just a Fist' wins best screenplay at Turkey's Göbeklitepe festival

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Iranian short film 'Just a Fist' won the Best Screenplay Award at the fourth Göbeklitepe International Film Festival in Şanlıurfa, southern Turkey, festival organizers said, marking a regional breakthrough for independent Iranian cinema rooted in social storytelling.

Written and directed by Iranian filmmaker Mostafa Yeganeh, the film prevailed in the international competition as the festival wrapped up in the historic Anatolian city, which hosts the UNESCO-listed Göbeklitepe archaeological site, ILNA reported.

The jury cited the work's disciplined narra-

tive architecture, humane characterization and socially alert perspective. The festival, named after one of the world's oldest known ritual sites, has positioned itself as a fast-rising cultural platform linking cinema with ancient heritage, cultural identity and cross-border dialogue.

Its curators aim to brand Şanlıurfa as a regional cultural and cinematic hub, leveraging the city's deep historical capital to attract filmmakers working in arthouse, independent and documentary formats.

'Just a Fist' centers on a detainee being escorted to court by a soldier along with the evidence of an alleged crime. During the journey, the accused makes an unusual re-



quest that disrupts the expected trajectory of events, steering the story towards a morally charged and socially resonant turn.

Unreleased Shajarian recordings from 2014 European concert unveiled

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Iran unveiled two previously unreleased albums drawn from the final European concert of Mohammad Reza Shajarian, the towering master of Persian classical vocal music, at a ceremony held at Tehran's Museum of Contemporary Art on December 17.

The albums, 'Sar dar Gariban' (Head Bowed in Contemplation) and Bang-e Dohol (The Beat of the Drum), capture Shajarian's last live performances in Europe in 2014 and were presented during a special program titled 'An Enduring Keepsake,' giving audiences first access to rare, lesser-heard

a career spanning more than half a century, Shajarian recorded about 60 albums, performed extensively at home and abroad, and lent his voice to film scores including 'Delshodegan' (The Heartbroken). He was an accomplished calligrapher in the Nasta'liq script, chaired Iran's Music House high council, founded the Shahnaz ensemble, and established cultural ventures ranging from Delavaz to the Bam Art Garden.

He received the Aga Khan Foundation's "Godfather of Music" award, earned two Grammy nominations, and was named by the Asia Society as the most celebrated figure in Iranian classical music. In 2010,

First Imam Khomeini World Award concludes in Tehran

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The first edition of the Imam Khomeini World Award reached its final stage on Wednesday with a closing ceremony in Tehran, marking the culmination of a long-delayed international initiative aimed at recognizing individuals and institutions that have contributed to the promotion of the intellectual legacy and values of Imam Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Defined in its official statute as the Islamic Republic's highest distinction for advancing the name and path of Imam Khomeini, the award is designed to highlight his thought across a wide spectrum, including justice, spirituality, resistance, dignity and service to society. The prize seeks to frame Imam Khomeini's legacy as a living, globally relevant discourse

rather than a purely historical reference, IRNA reported.

The award's implementation follows more than a decade of institutional suspension. Initially proposed by the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization and formally approved by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution in 2013, the project remained dormant due to structural and executive constraints. Revised statutes adopted in 2023 clarified its governance, scope and evaluative mechanisms, enabling the inaugural operational round to proceed and conclude in 2025.

Structurally, the award is overseen by a high-level policymaking council, with the secretariat housed at the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization. The secretariat manages international correspondence, submission intake, coordination with advisory

bodies and the logistical execution of the ceremony. The scientific dimension of the award is supervised by an academic committee chaired by Mahmoud Vaezi, a professor at the University of Tehran.

Substantively, the prize is conferred in two principal categories. The theoretical section honors outstanding scholarly and research works addressing Imam Khomeini's intellectual system, while the practical section recognizes influential social and political initiatives that have operationalized his ideas at scale. Evaluation criteria prioritize intellectual rigor, societal impact and the capacity to inspire institution-building processes.

The award's thematic architecture spans ten specialized working groups, covering fields such as Imam Khomeini's intellectual framework and

practical conduct, Islamic ethics and spirituality, justice and human dignity, Islamic civilization and progress, interfaith dialogue, people-centered governance, resistance to oppression and racism, just peace and collective security, religion-based lifestyles, and the promotion of women's roles within a family-oriented social model.

From a geographical standpoint, the award is explicitly defined as global, with no national or disciplinary boundaries.

Functionally, the Imam Khomeini World Award operates both as a reference point for scholarly engagement with his thought and as a cultural diplomacy instrument.

Plans are in place to develop a comprehensive platform to host academic dialogues, multilingual resources and educational programs, with the stated aim of fostering deeper, evidence-based and systematic understanding of Imam Khomeini's legacy in contemporary global debates.



material from the late singer's closing years, IRNA reported.

The recordings were released by Delavaz, the label he founded, and revive what organizers described as the "fervor" of Iranian vocal music shaped by five decades of his distinctive sound.

Shajarian, was born in Mashhad on September 23, 1940, and died on October 8, 2020, aged 80, after a prolonged illness. He was buried in Tus, in Iran's northeastern Khorasan Razavi Province. Across

Canada's Vancouver Sun listed him among the year's most significant musical artists worldwide, later ranking him among the world's top 50 voices.

Shajarian was also revered for his Qur'anic recitation, notably the supplication 'Rabbana,' (Our Lord) which became emblematic for generations. In his later years, he introduced several newly designed instruments, including the Sorahi and Shahrashoub, unveiling them publicly in Tehran in 2011.