

# Curtains down on Islamic Revolution Art Week

## Chavoshi picked as 'Artist of the Year'

### Arts & Culture Desk

Iranian organizers at the closing ceremony of the 12th Islamic Revolution Art Week named Mohsen Chavoshi as the Islamic Revolution Artist of the Year for last Iranian calendar year which ended March 2026.

The ceremony, staged on Thursday evening by the Art Bureau in Tehran, drew senior cultural officials, artists and large crowds. Chavoshi was selected for his two works 'Alaj' (Remedy) and 'Hasbi Allah' (God is sufficient for me), produced during recent conflict periods, which organizers said resonated widely and reinforced themes of national solidarity, IRNA reported.

Other nominees included Ali Mirfattah, Soroush Moghadam and Maryam Sha'bani. Audience members repeatedly chanted Chavoshi's name during the announcement segment, marking strong public backing for the award.

The program featured performances, poetry readings and vi-

sual tributes, including the stage production "Sacred Union" directed by Alireza Tajik, musical pieces by Gholamreza Sanatgar, and narrated media segments recounting cultural activity during recent wartime conditions. In the closing moments, attendees joined in a collective rendition of 'Alaj'.

In a social media message following the announcement, Culture Minister Abbas Salehi congratulated Chavoshi, saying epic music and devotional chants had advanced alongside national defense efforts and helped bolster public morale.

### Mirfattah turns to canvas to depict resistance

Among the shortlisted figures, Mirfattah's trajectory has drawn renewed attention, marking a shift from print journalism to visual storytelling rooted in themes of resistance. A former writer, critic and graphic designer at the early issues of the magazine Soureh under the editorship of Morteza Avini, he later



A large crowd waves Iranian flags and holds placards during the closing ceremony of the 12th Islamic Revolution Art Week, organized by the Art Bureau in the open spaces of Vali Asr Square in Tehran on April 16, 2026.

● ELAHE JAVAN/MOJ NEWS AGENCY

continued in journalism before turning decisively to painting in recent years.

Between 2022 and 2024, Mirfattah staged several exhibitions distinguished by a singular aesthetic. In 2025, following a 12-day war period, he produced a series of works aligned with public sentiment, including a volunteer initiative to paint portraits of fallen figures on Tehran's walls, embedding their memory into the urban landscape.

His output over the year extended to commemorative and topical subjects, from murals depicting victims of attacks to portraits of regional figures and national athletes. Recent works also addressed contemporary



global themes, showing a broadened visual language that merges political commentary with minimalist composition.

The annual event coincides with the anniversary of the 1993 martyrdom of Avini, whose legacy underpins a week-long program

of exhibitions, performances and literary gatherings held across Tehran and other provinces from April 9 to April 16.

## 140 historic sites damaged with Tehran bearing brunt of losses

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An Iranian cultural heritage official said around 140 historic buildings and sites have been damaged following recent hostilities, with authorities shifting from emergency stabilization to strategic restoration planning, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts said in Tehran.

Farhad Azizi, director general of national and world heritage sites, said field assessments based on specialist monitoring teams had identified roughly 140 affected monuments and historic complexes across the country.

He added that the ministry had now moved beyond urgent stabilization into a structured phase of reconstruction, rehabilitation and resilience planning for cultural assets, ILNA reported. The reported damage ranges from structural disruption and extensive physical deterioration to partial or total destruction of architectural elements and decorative features. Each case, according to officials, requires tailored technical intervention depending on the severity of impact.

Tehran has emerged as the principal hotspot of destruction, accounting for about half of all recorded damage. More than 80% of the estimated financial losses and physical degradation are also concentrated in the capital, marking what authorities describe as an urgent need for targeted allocation of resources, funding and operational capacity. Preventive measures were deployed ahead of and



during the crisis, including emergency protection protocols at museums and sensitive heritage sites. These included the secure relocation of museum artefacts and reinforcement of protective layers around high-value monuments, steps which officials say helped avert irreversible losses to movable heritage.

Rapid-response teams were also dispatched to affected locations at the onset of the crisis, carrying out documentation, technical and financial assessments, and emergency risk mitigation work designed to prevent secondary collapses and further safety hazards.

With the stabilization phase now complete, the ministry is advancing towards a long-term restoration framework built on sustainable financing, inter-agency coordination, and the establishment of standardized mechanisms for conservation work. Future rehabilitation efforts will involve heritage specialists, senior restoration experts and volunteer groups, aligned with international conservation standards. Beyond physical repairs, authorities have prioritized strengthening the resilience of Iran's cultural heritage system against future shocks, framing preservation as a strategic national responsibility aimed at safeguarding historical identity under evolving risk conditions.

## Iran heritage at risk as over 200 scholars warn of cultural loss from strikes

More than 200 international researchers and heritage specialists warned from Europe that ongoing US-Israeli bombardments in Iran have caused significant damage to cultural heritage sites and threaten the country's historical record, according to a statement released via the Society of Iranian Archaeology and cited by French and international academic sources.

The signatories said military strikes beginning on February 28, 2026 and continuing through a fragile ceasefire announced overnight on April 8 have already inflicted "considerable" damage across Iranian territory. They argued that the attacks, which they described as violations of international law, are endangering not only civilian lives but also global scientific research and collective human

memory, Art Dependence magazine reported.

The statement, which has gathered more than 240 signatures from academics affiliated with institutions including the Sorbonne, CNRS, the Louvre, the University of Geneva, and Yale University, expressed solidarity with the Iranian people and warned that cultural destruction risks erasing centuries of historical continuity across the Middle East.

The researchers cited repeated March warnings from UNESCO and concerns raised by heritage organizations including Europa Nostra, the International Council of Museums, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, and the US Committee of the Blue Shield.

They said more than 120 heritage sites have been affected, including UNESCO-listed land-

marks such as Golestan Palace in Tehran and Naqsh-e Jahan Square and Chehel Sotoun Palace in Isfahan.

While acknowledging that some damage may be incidental, the signatories said several strikes appeared to have targeted cultural institutions and universities in Tehran and Isfahan, raising concerns over efforts to undermine archival records and academic infrastructure.

They highlighted a March 8 strike in Khorramabad, Lorestan Province, which destroyed offices of Iran's Cultural Heritage Organization, injuring staff and leaving archaeological archives and scientific documentation at risk. Nearby historical sites, including the Falak-ol-Aflak Citadel and an adjacent museum, were also damaged, they said. The statement added that Iran's cultural heritage encompass-

es around 40,000 nationally registered sites and 29 UNESCO World Heritage properties, spanning archaeological layers from prehistoric settlements to major urban and architectural centers of the Achaemenid, Parthian, Sasanian and Islamic eras. The scholars urged expanded international support for documentation, digitization and academic mobility programs, warning that disrupted research and damaged archives could have irreversible consequences for the study of ancient and modern societies.

They also called for sustained academic cooperation with Iranian researchers, citing France's long-standing scientific engagement in the region, and warned that continued conflict risks deepening divisions and eroding shared historical memory across the Middle East.

### PHOTOS OF THE DAY



Members of Iran's Jewish community attend a ceremony honoring Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Iran's late leader, at Yusef Abad Synagogue, officially known as Sukkat Shalom Synagogue, in Tehran, Iran, April 16, 2026.

● JOOANA ABADIAN/IRNA

