

Iranian Qari Finishes Second in Lebanon's Qur'an Contest



TEHRAN -- Mohsen Qassemi, a qari from Iran, has ended second in an international radio Qur'an competition held in Lebanon.

The Khayr at-Tilawa (best recitation) Qur'an competition was held by Lebanon's Sawt al-Huda Radio in four stages.

The contenders in all four stages sent audio files of their recitation of the Qur'an to the radio station, Qassemi told IQNA.

He said the call for taking part in the contest had been issued before the holy month of Ramadan.

The participating qarīs were required to submit a three-minute audio file of their recitation in the first stage, he said, adding

that 20 top contestants made it to the second round.

From among them, 10 qarīs qualified for the third round and then five were selected to compete in the finals, according to Qassemi.

The recitations were aired on the Sawt al-Huda Radio during Ramadan and evaluated by a panel of experts who chose the top winners, he stated.

In the end, Abdul Razzaq Shahaawi from Egypt won the top prize, while Qassemi from Iran and Saad Muhiyeddin from Lebanon came second and third.

Qassemi said he participated in the contest with the aim of evaluating his readiness to take part in international events.

A Look at Artistic Career of Amir Karimi



TEHRAN -- Amir Karimi shines as a prominent figure in the realm of Iranian cinema, his multifaceted skills as both a photographer and a cinematographer leaving an enduring imprint on the industry.

With experience in both television and cinema, Karimi has cemented his position as a storyteller through his keen eye for visual narrative, iFilm reported.

Born with a passion for the art of filmmaking, Karimi embarked on his journey in the world of cinema in 2008-2009.

It was during this period that he emerged as a prolific force, contributing to the production of several works that garnered critical acclaim.

His involvement in projects such as 'The Postman Doesn't Knock 3 Times' and 'The Fateful Night', where he showcased his ability as a director of photography, laid the foundation for his illustrious career.

Karimi's ascent to prominence was further propelled by his collaboration on popular television series like 'In the Eye of the

Storm' and 'The Doormat'.

His cinematic repertoire boasts an array of acclaimed works, including 'Solitary' (2022), 'Texas 2' (2019), 'Lovers' Secret' (2018), 'Duel' (2002), 'Walking on String' (2017), 'Another One's House' (2017), 'Together Again' (2015), 'We're All Sinner' (2013), and 'The Freeway' (2012), each showcasing his ability to imbue every frame with depth and emotion.

Karimi's talent has not gone unnoticed within the industry, as evidenced by his recognition at film festivals.

His nomination for the Crystal Simorgh Award for Best Cinematography at the Fajr Film Festival for 'The Fateful Night' and subsequent win for 'Days of Life' underscore his skill and contribution to the art form.

Additionally, his work as a cinematographer on films like 'The Golden Collars' and as a lighting assistant on 'Hezar Dastan' further solidified his reputation as a multifaceted talent within the industry.

Thousands of Iranian Inmates Memorize Qur'an

TEHRAN -- Thousands of inmates in Iranian prisons have memorized the entire or parts of the Holy Qur'an during imprisonment, head of Iran's Prisons' Organization said Wednesday.

Qur'anic programs are at the "forefront" of initiatives that aim to decrease the number of repeat offenders, Gholamali Mohammadi told IQNA.

The Qur'an is the book of life and guidance, he said, adding that 518 Dar al-Qur'an centers have been established in prisons across the country to bring the Quran into prisons.

Many inmates, previously unfamiliar with the Qur'an, have discovered its teachings while



in prison, he said, adding that the Qur'anic curriculum covers lessons in recitation, memorization, and interpretation.

Thanks to these programs, a significant number of inmates have achieved remarkable milestones in Qur'anic memoriza-

tion, Mohammadi said.

He said 1,517 have memorized selected verses, 2,362 have memorized selected surahs, 482 have memorized three juzes, 252 have memorized five juzes, 147 have memorized 10 juzes, 75 have memorized 15 juzes, 61 have memorized 20 juzes, and 72 have committed the entire Quran to their memories.

Some inmates have even avoided capital punishment by qualifying for amnesty through their dedication to the Qur'an, he said.

To date, five Qur'anic competitions have been organized in prisons, provincially, and regionally, he noted.

A Guide to Persian Miniature Paintings

TEHRAN -- Throughout the history of Persian art, there has been an extremely rich tradition of court painting, and the various centers of royal patronage produced some of the greatest painters of all time. It was uncommon for Persian artists to sign their works until the 16th century, so an understanding of the particular features of the major schools makes it easier to recognize and identify works.

The Ilkhanid Period (1256-1353)

The main centers of art production in the Ilkhanid period were Tabriz in present-day Iran and Baghdad in Iran. The main artistic focus at this time was the production of illuminated and illustrated manuscripts of religious and secular texts, and it is from manuscript illustration that the tradition of Persian painting developed. In the great cultural exchange that followed the Mongol conquests of the 13th century, East Asian influences are felt in Persian art. Ilkhanid painters introduce new motifs, including dragons, lotuses and peonies, into the Perso-Islamic repertoire.

The use of paper and textiles had become widespread, allowing designs to be translated easily from one medium to another. Among the most famous Ilkhanid artists was Ahmad Musa, who was described by the 16th-century painter Dust Muhammad as the man who 'unveiled the face of painting'.

The Jalayirid Period (1340-1411)

The Jalayirid Sultanate emerged from the disintegration of the Ilkhanate in western Persia. The Jalayirids were enchanted by Persian poetry; as a result, the paintings that have survived from this period tend to be illustrations to subjects popular in contemporary verse, such as battle scenes and heroic accomplishments.

The Jalayirid school developed a stronger sense of color and design than Ilkhanid painting, while also taking care to depict individualized faces (rather than facial types) and the details of everyday life. Two of the most celebrated Jalayirid artists were Junayd and 'Abd al-Hayy, both students of Shams al-Din (who had himself been a pupil of Ahmad Musa).

The Timurid Period (c. 1370-1507)

The Timurid dynasty was the final great dynasty to rise from the Central Asian steppe. Its founder, Amir Timur, conquered territory from Syria to India and sent craftsmen back to his capital, Samarkand, in present-day Uzbekistan. This movement of skills and ideas initiated one of the most brilliant periods in Islamic art.

Timurid rulers were great supporters of the arts of the book, and their extensive patronage attracted many artists, architects and men of letters. The eastern Islamic world became a significant cultural hub, with Herat, in Afghanistan, as its centre. Thanks to this culture of manuscript illumination and illustration, the Herat school is often regarded as the apogee

of Persian painting.

One of the most famous Persian artists from this period was Kamal al-Din Behzad. Behzad transformed the somewhat rigid, academic painting style common in the early years of the Timurid dynasty by injecting more life and personality. His figures were animated and individualized, his rocks, trees and vegetation more naturally rendered than those of his predecessors.

As the Timurid empire collapsed, there was a late flourishing of the Herati style in the city of Bukhara after it was conquered by the Shaybanids in the early 16th century. The leading artist of the Bukhara school was Mahmud Muzahhib, whose patron was the great bibliophile Sultan 'Abd al-Aziz.

The Safavid Dynasty (1501-1736)

The Safavids established their capital at Tabriz, which became the main centre of early Safavid painting. It was here that some of the most renowned artists of the time painted the illustrations to the magnificent Shahnama of Shah Tahmasp. Although during this period Shiraz in the southwest of Iran was no longer a major court, many magnificent manuscripts continued to be produced in the unique Shirazi style.

This style was a hybrid, drawing on local tradition but assimilating elements of many other Persian schools. It is characterized by a tendency to divide the illumination into geometrically defined sections, with complex architectural forms painted in bright colors.

The most distinguished of the Safavid rulers, and the greatest patron of the arts, was Shah Abbas, who ruled

from 1587 to 1629. Shah Abbas transferred his capital to Isfahan, in southern Iran, where he built a new city alongside the old one. During this period, lines became more calligraphic, human figures filled out, and artists favored a palette of browns, purples and yellows.

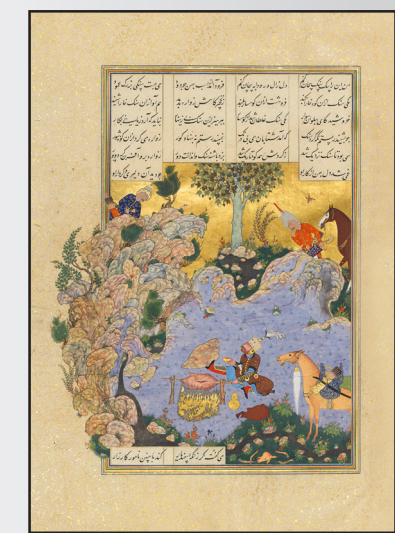
It was under Shah Abbas that the primary focus of Persian painting began to move away from the illustration of texts and towards standalone paintings. Among the most celebrated artists of this time was Reza Abbasi (c. 1565-1635). Thanks to his influence, semi-nude women, relaxed youths and lovers came to replace the heroes of Persian epics in the repertoire of many artists. Reza had a gift for capturing the inner emotions of his subject, and his work would set the tone for much of the 17th century.

In the mid-17th century, as a result of increased contact between Europe and Iran, European conventions of modeling and perspective began to appear in Persian art. It is at this time that the first Persian oil paintings on canvas were produced. Muhammad Zaman imported European styles into Persian court painting, which quickly became standard practice. Although this gave Safavid art a new look on the surface, the substance remained entirely Persian.

Persian Painting in the 18th and 19th Centuries

With the end of the Safavid period, Persian painting was all but ignored for nearly half a century. During the Afsharid dynasty (1736-96) and Zand periods (1751-94), political uncertainties resulted in a drying up of artistic commissions.

The rise of the Qajar dynasty (1779-1924) signaled a new era of



peace, and Qajar shahs relied heavily on the visual arts to solidify their position and promote their reputation. Throughout this period, as in previous centuries, artists working in a range of media produced manuscripts featuring miniature paintings. But different Qajar kings preferred different mediums. Fath Ali Shah, who reigned between 1797 and 1834, for instance, was an avid sponsor of life-sized oil paintings. Meanwhile, it was common for prominent Qajar artists to apply intricate decoration to lacquered objects such as pen cases, caskets and bookbindings.

After photography came to Iran in the early 1840s, it became common for artists to paint from photographs, and the two-dimensional Persian painting tradition fell out of favor. Although 19th-century methods of painting differed dramatically from those of previous centuries, the resulting works have their own unique beauty.

Picture of the Day



The terraced village of Palangan in Iran's Kurdistan province has hosted the Hezar Daf (1000 daf) festival with the participation of local people, officials and daf players from across the country.

Photo by IRNA