

Malaysia Islamic Museum to Showcase Orientalist Art



KUALA LUMPUR (Dispatches) -- More than 100 paintings of Orientalist art are set to go on display at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) in Kuala Lumpur this week, the largest-ever exhibition – outside Europe and the United States – of paintings and artifacts that capture the essence of the Orient in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Highlights of IAMM's Orientalist Paintings: Mirror Or Mirage? exhibition, which runs from June 3 to Oct 15, include renowned works by some of the most celebrated painters of the era, including Jean-Leon Gerome, Eugene Delacroix, John Frederick Lewis and the remarkable but rarely seen Ottoman polymath Osman Hamdi Bey.

Most of these paintings from IAMM's collection were also shown at the British Museum's high-profile exhibition Inspired By The East: How The Islamic World Influenced Western Art in 2019.

The Orientalist painting collection – more than 300 works – of the IAMM is among the world's largest, and the Orientalist Paintings: Mirror Or Mirage? exhibition offers visitors a glimpse of this vast treasure trove.

"The exhibition Orientalist Paintings: Mirror Or Mirage?"

is the latest chapter in a long story. The relationships between Europe, America and what used to be called the 'Orient' were explored by the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia 15 years ago. In a pioneering exhibition we examined these influences, focusing on the decorative arts of East and West. There was one vital ingredient missing then: paintings," said Syed Mohamed Al-Bukhary, IAMM director in a media statement.

The exhibition – curated by London-based Lucien de Guise and KL-based Rekha Verma – takes a thematic look at that vast region in a time of transition.

The display at IAMM is divided into eight sections that follow the artists' different creative callings.

"We follow a path that starts in the Maghreb and Al-Andalus. This was the main gateway that led European artists and other visitors into the Islamic world. The cultures they found have straddled Europe, Africa and Asia for centuries," outlines the exhibition notes.

Orientalist Paintings: Mirror Or Mirage? is also one of the largest exhibitions ever undertaken at the IAMM, and the works will be displayed over two main galleries.

Rosewater Festival Celebrates Extract of Spring

TEHRAN – The rosewater festival in Iran, estimated to be the birthplace of rosewater production in the world, is a unique sociocultural event that is priceless enough to be on the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO.

Known as Golab-Giri in Persian, the ancient ceremony is annually held in Iran to introduce the paramount role played by the rose in cuisine, cosmetics, medicine, and traditions.

The treasured festival is held every year in the spring, usually from mid-May to the end of June.

Rosewater, golab in Persian, is traditionally produced from damask roses.

The sweet-smelling flower is locally called gol-e Muhammadi or gol-e sorkh in Iranian culture.

When spring approaches in Iran, roses blossom in every corner of the country. Iran is considered the leading producer of damask roses in the world, accounting for 70% of the global output.

Muhammadi roses mainly grow in the provinces of Fars, Kerman, and Isfahan, as well as some parts of West Azarbaijan province, namely Khoy and Urmia.

But Kashan and Qamsar remain the main production center of rosewater in Iran.

Although the ancient method of rosewater making has changed over time, it has still retained its originality.

Flower pickers start working early in the morning before sunrise and they have to finish the task before noon. Based on an old



farmers' myth, flowers picked before sunrise will spread a richer and stronger odor.

The petals are put into massive copper pots and boiled.

Each pot is filled with 80 liters of water and around 30 kilograms of rose petals, and it is connected to metal pipes so that steam can pass through to produce the hydrosol.

The extracted water is then kept in special bottles. The longest the distillation is, the better will be the quality of the homemade rosewater.

Local residents say rosewater traditionally distilled is of higher quality than that manufactured in factories, probably due to the speedier harvesting and distillation processes.

Rosewater and rose oil are thought to have therapeutic qualities. Some claim that rose oil soothes the mind and lessens anxiety, stress, and depression. The product is said to help boost the health of the skin.

A bottle of tonic liquid is found in the kitchen of every Iranian household as it plays a key role in the cuisine of the Asian country.

The zesty ingredient spices up tea, herbal drinks, and local dishes.

Rose water is also used as a fragrance in religious ceremonies around the globe. Water used to clean the Kaaba combines water from the Zamzam well with rosewater as an additive.

The aromatic liquid is also utilized as a base for making perfumes and sprays.

'Dolphin Boy' to Compete at Shanghai Festival



TEHRAN – Iranian animation 'Dolphin Boy' will compete at

the Shanghai International Film Festival (SIFF) in China.

Directed by Muhammad Kheirandish, 'Dolphin Boy' premiered in Russian cinemas in August and was warmly received by the audience.

The animation took two years to produce.

The film which was previously planned to premiere at the 39th edition of Fajr Film Festival, hit big screens at Iranian cinemas in September 2022.

Muhammad-Amin Hamedani, the producer of the film, told the media that the crew has also decided to produce a serial version of 'Dolphin Boy'.

Kheirandish, the writer and director of 'Dolphin Boy', said the

animation has been translated into different languages including Russian, Turkish, Arabic and English.

The film is about a boy who survives a plane crash and is raised by dolphins. When he becomes a teenager he embarks on a journey to find his mother.

Founded in 1993, the SIFF provides a cultural exchange platform for filmmakers from around the world.

The festival aims to create opportunities for new filmmakers and to present the best international works to the audience.

This year's edition of the event will be held on June 9-16.

Two Iranian Researchers Pass Away

TEHRAN – Dr. Abdol-Ali Ghavam, a distinguished Iranian translator, researcher and professor of international relations, passed away on Tuesday at the age of 78.

During his four decades of scientific activity, Ghavam wrote many books in the field of political science and played an unmatched role in enriching studies of international relations in Iran.

He was a professor of the Tehran-based Faculty of Economics and Political Sciences at Shahid Beheshti University and former head of the Department of Political Sciences of this

university.

His book titled 'Principles of Foreign Policy and International Policy' was chosen as the best at one of the editions of Iran's Book of the Year Awards years ago.

Meanwhile, Bagher Parham, an Iranian translator and researcher of philosophy, has passed away in Sacramento, California at the age of 87.

The news of his death was announced by his son Ramin who is also a researcher.

Born in Roudbar, Bagher Parham was a founding member of the Iranian Writers Association. He

studied in Iran and France and translated books and articles of philosophy and sociology which are still important sources in Iran that are regularly reprinted, including three famous works of Hegel, Karl Marx's 'Grundrisse' and a book of studies on social classes, written by Russian-born French sociologist and jurist George Gurevich.

Parham also authored a number of books, such as 'Society and Government', 'Mutualism and Unity: A Collection of Articles' and 'Through Ferdowsi's Perspective'.

Picture of the Day



Chabahar in Sistan and Baluchistan province is Iran's southernmost city. Most people consider Chabahar an abbreviation of chahar bahar because of its four spring seasons and call it the paradise of southern Iran.

Photo by IRNA