

Training Qur'an Calligraphers



TEHRAN -- Experts at a forum here highlighted the need for training young artists in Qur'anic calligraphy to keep the art alive.

Several calligraphers addressed the forum "The Need for Synergy Among Contemporary International Quranic Institutions," which held Saturday on the sidelines of the 32nd Tehran International Holy Qur'an Exhibition at the Imam Khomeini Mosalla. Attendees included artists and calligraphers from Iran, Turkey, Thailand, and Algeria.

Among the speakers were Mohamed bin Qanif, an Algerian calligrapher and president of the Algerian Calligraphy Association; Qader Perdapyat, a Thai calligrapher of the Qur'an; Hulya Asan, president of the Turkish cultural and Qur'anic institute Çoku Anbar; and Morteza Tavakoli, director of Iran's Center for Qur'an Printing and Publishing.

Opening the session, bin Qanif praised the organizers of the Tehran International Qur'an Exhibition, saying the event reflects the Islamic Republic of Iran's commitment to the Qur'an.

He said the calligraphy traces its roots to the early scribes of revelation

during Prophet Muhammad's era. "I am not a specialist in Qur'anic sciences, sociology, or politics, but as a calligrapher, I believe that the art of writing the Qur'an is an integral part of our religious heritage."

Bin Qanif called for greater collaboration among Qur'anic institutions to support calligraphy.

"Gathering Qur'anic calligraphers and artists fosters unity in this field. This initiative serves the words of God, strengthens solidarity, and helps prevent division and discord."

He proposed launching an international Qur'anic calligraphy competition. He said organizations such as the Research Center for Islamic History, Art, and Culture (IRCICA) in Turkey and institutions in Algeria hold calligraphy contests, but a global competition featuring top calligraphers would be highly beneficial.

Hulya Asan described the Qur'an as a fusion of wisdom and art.

"The Qur'an is a source of mercy and guidance for humanity. Its light has illuminated souls throughout history, manifesting aesthetically through the hands of artists. Islamic arts such as calligraphy, illumination, pottery,

and architecture all draw inspiration from the Qur'an," she said.

"The Qur'an teaches us to think and act as one nation, accepting differences as strengths. Like the soul of an ummah, art unites diverse geographies, cultures, and languages, becoming a powerful medium for bringing people together," she said.

She highlighted the unifying power of Qur'anic-inspired art. "Islamic calligraphy on mosque domes and illuminated Quranic pages exemplifies the Quran's ability to connect people through art."

Perdapyat also praised the Qur'an exhibition and expressed interest in bringing similar events to Thailand. "We do not have such gatherings in Thailand, but we are eager to introduce this idea."

Perdapyat, who specializes in Qur'anic calligraphy on wood, donates proceeds from his artwork to support orphans.

"I was deeply inspired when I saw non-Muslims appreciating the beauty of calligraphy. This motivated me to dedicate my art to the Qur'an," he said.

The final speaker, Morteza Tavakoli, provided historical context on the transcription of the Qur'an, noting that its written tradition dates back to the time of revelation.

"Today, many Islamic countries, from North Africa to Southeast Asia, are engaged in Quran printing," he said.

Tavakoli highlighted Iran's contributions, stating that following the Islamic Revolution, the Center for Qur'an Printing and Publishing was established under the directive of Ayatollah Khamenei.

"Since its inception, the center has successfully printed ten handwritten Qur'ans and has produced over one million copies," he said.

'Prophet Moses' Attracts Visitors at Qur'an Exhibition



TEHRAN -- At the 32nd International Holy Qur'an Exhibition, a special booth named Prophet Moses has captured visitors' attention.

The booth showcases a collection of models and sculptures used in the award-winning Iranian film 'Prophet Moses'.

Visitors can get a close look at the artistic effects of the film.

Ebrahim Hatamikia's new offering is a groundbreaking

achievement in Iranian cinema, combining breathtaking visuals, compelling storytelling, and outstanding performances.

The director brings the story of Prophet Moses (Peace be upon Him) to life with profound spiritual depth and cinematic brilliance.

The film has won multiple awards and nominations at the 2025 edition of Fajr International

Film Festival in Iran.

The opening ceremony for the 2025 International Holy Quran Exhibition took place on March 5 at the Imam Khomeini Mosalla Mosque in Tehran.

The exhibition features diverse cultural, artistic, and educational displays from across the Islamic world, and it welcomes enthusiasts of Qur'anic culture and knowledge.

Book Chronicles Artistic Odyssey of Iranian Designer

By: Majid Abbasi*

TEHRAN -- Farshid Mesghali is one of the most influential and prominent representatives of graphic art and illustration of this period.

With a deep understanding of both Iranian and international visual languages, Mesghali creates works that, while poetic and simple, invite entirely personal and free interpretations.

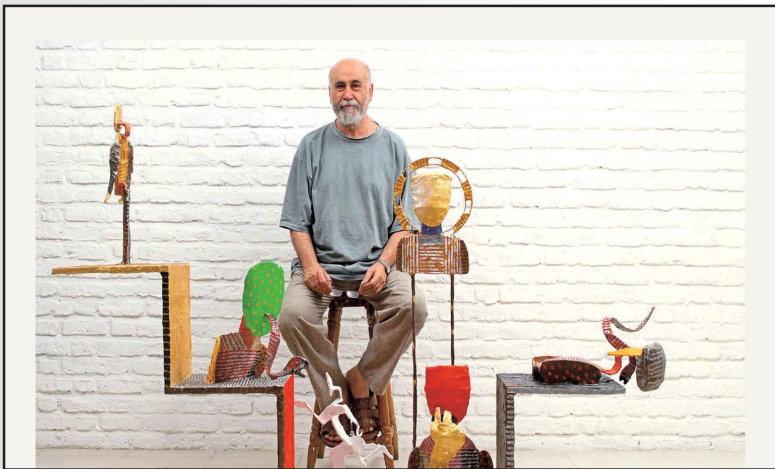
He often reimagines these diverse sources into innovative forms, embodying a generation that laid the foundations of the golden age of graphic design in Iran.

A comprehensive book, Selected Works of Farshid Mesghali, was recently published in Tehran by Nazar Art Publishing. This book, unparalleled in its kind, offers a relatively complete collection of Mesghali's works in graphic design, illustration, painting, sculpture, and photography. It also includes essays exploring various aspects of his life and work by Mahmoudreza Bahmanpour (publisher and curator of Islamic Art at LACMA), Ali Bakhtiari (curator and writer), Behzad Hatam (graphic designer), and Amir Nasri.

Bahmanpour writes in the introduction of the book: "This book is a collection of the works of an artist committed to creating beauty and bliss throughout his career, consciously avoiding gloom and ugliness. Farshid Mesghali's interaction with difficult times, both when he worked in Iran and when he lived in France and the U.S., is rooted in hope. In dealing with the modern age and its achievements, not only did he not fail, but he deliberately distanced himself from portraying destruction and despair, attempting to resurrect and recreate utopia in his artwork."

He continues, "He created a new visual universe with elements from the past, including lithographic book images and Persian painting framing. By changing the structures of this category, he changed the way traditional details were used. Mesghali is the creator of an identity that presents and stabilizes Iranian modernism in imagery rather than taking us back to the past. That perception of Iranian aesthetics continues in his later work, especially his paintings and sculptures."

Farshid Mesghali (born 1943, Isfahan) is a graduate of the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Tehran, where he studied painting. He began his professional career in the mid-sixties as a graphic designer and illustrator with Negareh Publishing and Advertising and Negin Magazine. He later collaborated with producer and art director Firooz Shirvanloo at Negareh Publishing, with graphic designers Morteza Momayez and Ali-Asghar Masoumi at Sharkat-e 42,



Farshid Mesghali at his Studio, Tehran, 2015.

and with the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (IIDCYA). Mesghali served as the head of the IIDCYA graphic design studio from 1970 until before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

Mesghali is a creator of beauty through the simplest forms. His spontaneity, freedom, and ease in execution, which result in the masterful conveyance of emotion onto paper or canvas, have made him a consummate artist and a seasoned designer with unique technical and professional experiences. He has designed numerous posters for festivals and organizations, including the IIDCYA and the International Festival of Children and Youth Films.

He also illustrated and designed layouts for magazines as well as for children's books. Alongside his unparalleled works, he directed and produced several animations and also designed sets and title sequences for several feature movies.

Among his extensive body of enduring works, the illustrations for The Myth of Creation in Iran and The Poetry of Nima Yushij stand out as exemplary due to their distinctive style and fidelity to the literary content.

Mesghali is the first artist from Asia and the only artist from the Middle East to win the Hans Christian Andersen Award for his body of work in children's book illustration. His works reflect his transparent, simple, lovable, and professional personality. The graphic designer in Mesghali can be seen in his sculptures and paintings, and the artist in him is evident in his graphic designs, including posters, layouts, album covers, and books.

Each of Mesghali's works, beyond fulfilling its "practical truth in their time," is timeless and forms an inseparable part of the history of graphic design and contemporary Iranian visual culture. For Mesghali, problem-solving is the most exciting aspect of graphic design:

The amount and proportion of each element

in a design, like cooking, determine its success. The right balance of ingredients creates a delicious meal, while the wrong balance can make it inedible. Graphic design lies somewhere between necessity and art.

Mesghali says in a short introduction at the beginning of the book, "I have worked in graphic design and animation; I sculpt and paint... But, profession-wise, I cannot give myself a label. Each of these titles represents a part of me. I don't completely conform with any; I only partially attribute to them. The pleasure of the experience is all I care for. My entire career path has been slippery. Like a traveler that enters a new city, I have constantly floundered from one alley to another, new buildings, water edges, cafes... Life has always been like that for me, from here to there, one day at a time. In happiness or despair, like mercury that flows incessantly, at its own will."

In recent years, Mesghali has devoted less time to graphic design and illustration, focusing instead on creating artworks such as photography, paintings, and sculptures. His exploratory and innovative spirit defines him, continually surprising his audience with each new creation.

In the introduction to the book, Farshid Mesghali's Collected Works, Morteza Momayez wrote:

"In his visual language, literary concepts rarely appear. He is one of those who, through his work, has contributed to expanding and enriching the pure contemporary visual language of Iran. For this reason, while his style of expression is a treasure and a significant event for experts in the field, it remains incomprehensible and unfamiliar to those who do not know or understand the visual language and its expression, and they respond to his work with estrangement.

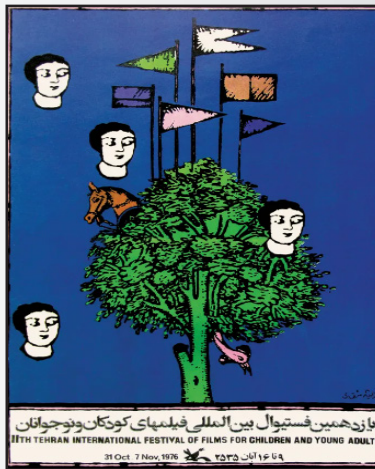
"The work begins childlike but does not end childlike. It is as if a child spontaneously starts playing with painting. Up to this

point, Farshid accompanies his inner child. But then the mature, contemporary Farshid progresses in the same atmosphere, reaching a clear and pure expression with a sense of visual mysticism. It is a kind of ascent to transparency, achieved through this style, that has made him a complete artist. The sun itself is evidence of the sun."

The book also includes a section by Amir Nasri about Mesghali's paintings:

"In my generation, Mesghali is known as the creator of The Little Black Fish. That unconsciously puts him in the guise of an illustrator, ignoring his painterly side, which is emphasized or rather exaggerated in his recent portraits. They directly reference Fauvist coloring methods, making it seem like the painter recreated a portrait by Matisse to confirm that connection. The powerful presence of color in these works, in addition to being 'a cover of matter,' portrays the 'limits' from a child's point of view and transforms portraiture of 'serious people' into childlike fantasies of 'a rainbow and a pure image.'"

Mesghali belongs more to his own creative, personal world than to the collec-



Posters for Tehran International Festival of Films for Children and Young Adults, 1970s.



tive. He prefers solitude and introspection over hollow and superficial communion. Illustration was the foundation of graphic design in Iran during those years, and if it were to be imagined as a triangle, Farshid Mesghali would undoubtedly be one of its highest points. His impact on graphic design

and illustration in Iran was so profound that, for years, no other designer could match his influence.

Courtesy: Print Magazine
*Majid Abbasi is the design director of Studio Abbasi, an internationally active studio based in Tehran and Toronto.

Picture of the Day



Ahmad Sidawi, known as Abu Shahab, is one of the veteran flower farmers in Hamidiyeh, Khuzestan province.
Photo by Mehr News