

Cinema Museum to Explore Four Decades of Sacred Defense



TEHRAN -- The Art and Experience Cinema is set to convene two specialized sessions dedicated to an in-depth critique and analysis of four decades of Iran's Sacred Defense cinema. The events, held at the Cinema Museum, promise a rich dialogue with prominent film critics and scholars.

The first session, scheduled for Wednesday, will feature the acclaimed critic Javad Tousi, who will navigate the development and transformation of Sacred Defense cinema throughout the 1980s and 1990s (Iranian decades 60s and 70s). The second session, on Sunday, September 20, will welcome Akbar Nabavi to discuss the cinematic narratives and aesthetics from the 2000s and 2010s (Iranian decades 80s and 90s).

Prior to each discussion, attendees will be treated to the screening of Pardeh-Khani Cinema-ye Jang (The Narration of War Cinema), a four-part documentary directed

and produced by Arian Attarpour.

The film assembles voices of significant contributors and commentators, including Javad Tousi, Ramtin Shahbazi, Hussein Fallah, Muhammad Ali Bashe Ahangar, Danesh Eghbashi, Sahar Asr Azad, Aria Ghorayshi, Hassan Najarian, Hussein Zandbaf, and Seyed Bagher Nabavi.

The documentary traces the genesis, maturation, and consolidation of the war and Sacred Defense cinematic tradition, offering valuable insights into a uniquely Iranian filmic genre.

Screenings begin at 4 PM, followed by panel discussions starting around 6 PM, both held in the Ferdows Hall of the Cinema Museum. The sessions are open to the public free of charge, inviting cinephiles, scholars, and the curious alike to engage with this pivotal facet of Iran's cinematic history.

Tehran Theatre House Presents Daring Season of Experimental Plays

TEHRAN -- At Tehran's Nofel Loshato Theater House, a bold and varied season is currently underway. Five productions are running in repertory, each occupying a different temporal, intellectual, and emotional register.

What unites them is an appetite for experimentation and a rejection of theatrical comfort. These are not plays that seek applause; they demand engagement.

The Cow of Fate
Dir. Meysam Nikkhah

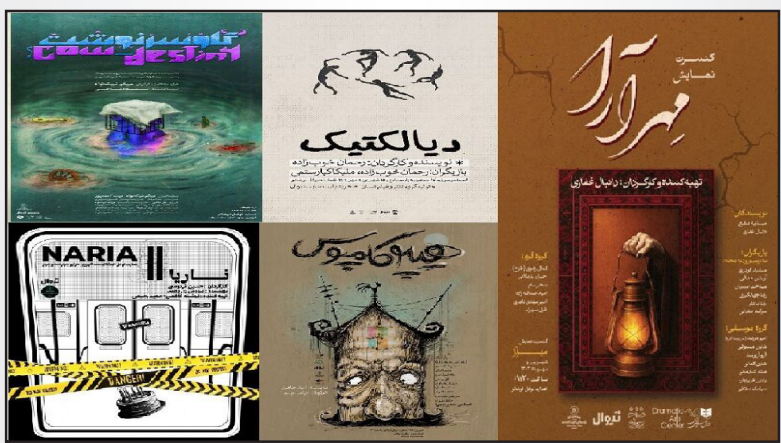
Opening the evening program is The Cow of Fate, an abstract and evocative piece created, directed, and co-performed by Meysam Nikkhah. A two-hander with actor Mahsa Ahmadpour, the play operates in the surreal mode, with hints of Beckett and a distinctly Iranian existentialism.

A character describes their horns—"not of bone, but of dream"—and the audience is invited into a space where the line between physical and psychic confinement collapses. The minimalist design allows the poeticism of the text to breathe, while silence functions as its own character. Walls speak, mouths do not. It's a meditation on powerlessness and memory, rendered with stark elegance.

Dialectic
Writer & Director: Rahman Khoobzadeh

Philosophy becomes drama in Dialectic, a rigorous 60-minute piece directed by its writer Rahman Khoobzadeh. The premise is simple: two intellects locked in dialogue, not to win, but to illuminate.

Performed with a quartet of actors (including Khoobzadeh himself), the piece is spare in staging but rich in tension. It is a cerebral work—more essay than play at times—but



executed with conviction. The audience, positioned as silent interlocutors, is left to sift through questions of reason, ethics, and epistemological doubt. Demanding, yes. But rewarding for those who meet it on its own terms.

Naria 2
Writer: Kiyavash Zare'talab | Dir. Hussein Ferdowsi

If The Cow of Fate whispers, Naria 2 shouts. A sprawling ensemble piece featuring over 30 performers, Ferdowsi's production plunges its characters—and the audience—into a frenetic urban nightmare.

Set in a city metro system that becomes increasingly allegorical, the play explores themes of entrapment, surveillance, and collective amnesia. Movement is tightly choreographed, but the chaos feels intentional. There's a raw, unpolished energy to the piece that aligns with its critique of modern inertia. At 75 minutes, it occasionally overreaches, but its ambition and theatrical risk-taking are undeniable.

Hippocampus: A Philosophical Comedy
Writer: Omid Taheri | Dir. Meysam Abdi

The standout of the season in terms of tonal balance is Hippo-

campus: A Philosophical Comedy. Abdi's direction finds the delicate midpoint between absurdism and sincerity. The structure is episodic—sketches of memory, identity, and intellectual pretension—all filtered through the concept of the hippocampus as the brain's centre of recall. Performances are sharp, especially from lead Mansour Eskandari, who anchors the play's shifting moods with dry wit and aching vulnerability. It's intelligent, funny, and unexpectedly moving.

Mehra
Writers: Dania Ghaffari & Mahdich Safari | Dir. Danial Ghaffari

Rounding out the lineup is Mehra, a quieter, emotionally charged chamber piece. It's a story of a lost person returned—or perhaps never lost at all. Ghaffari's direction leans into minimalism, letting the performances carry the emotional weight. The cast is strong across the board, with Mahshid Goudarzi delivering a standout turn. The narrative is subtle, built on suggestion rather than revelation, and the result is a play that lingers long after its final moment.

In summary, Noufel Loshato has positioned itself as a haven for contemporary, risk-taking Iranian

Renowned Literary Critic Siros Parham Passes Away at 97

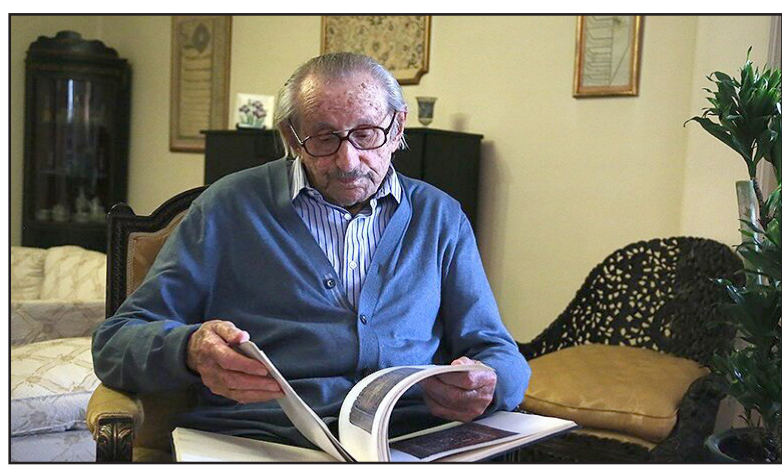
TEHRAN -- Siros Parham, one of Iran's foremost literary critics and editors, passed away Monday at the age of 97.

Renowned for introducing Western methods of literary criticism to Iranian letters, Parham was a transformative figure who helped modernize the country's critical discourse and editorial standards.

Born in 1928, Parham was among the earliest Iranian intellectuals to engage seriously with Western literary theory. His seminal work, Realism and Anti-Realism, alongside Literary Schools by Reza Seyyed Husseini, stood as foundational texts for generations of Iranian writers and scholars seeking to navigate and expand their literary horizons beyond traditional paradigms.

For many, these works became indispensable reference points in the evolving conversation around literature and aesthetics in Iran.

Beyond his critical writings, Parham's



influence extended deeply into the world of publishing. He was among the first professional editors in the country and served as a key editor at Franklin Publications, a respected institution in Iranian intellectual circles.

His meticulous approach to editing

helped elevate the quality of Iranian books and fostered a culture of rigor and care in publishing that had long been absent.

In 2016, recognizing the need to professionalize and dignify the editorial craft, Parham joined forces with Mehdi Ghanavati and Mahnaz Maghdesi to es-

tablish the Iranian Editors' Guild. This organization aimed to safeguard the standards and reputation of editors, marking a significant step in formalizing a profession essential to the country's literary ecosystem.

The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance expressed its condolences with Minister Abbas Salehi noting that Parham "opened a new path for writers and researchers," highlighting the critic's role in shaping a modern, methodical approach to literary study and publishing.

Parham's legacy is one of bridging worlds: introducing the critical frameworks of the West into the rich soil of Persian letters and nurturing a new generation of scholars and editors who would carry that torch forward.

As per his wishes, Parham's final resting place will be in the courtyard of Imamzadeh Taher in Karaj, a serene space befitting a life dedicated to the cultivation of thought and culture.

Excavations in Shiraz Uncover 1,000 Years of History

TEHRAN -- The first phase of archaeological excavations in the historic fabric of Shiraz, which began in April 2025, has concluded with the uncovering of invaluable artifacts.

Conducted under a tripartite agreement between Shiraz Municipality, the Shiraz University of Arts, and the Iranian Cultural Heritage Research Institute—with oversight by the Fars Provincial Heritage Office—the "rescue excavation" was carried out at the pilgrims' parking lot adjacent to the holy shrine of Ahmad ibn Musa Shah Cheragh, in preparation for the construction of the shrine's metro station.

Dr. Meysam Nikzad, the project's lead archaeologist and a faculty member at the Shiraz University of Arts,

detailed the findings, noting that at a depth of eight meters below the surface, the team reached virgin soil layers revealing the earliest traces of human habitation in the area.

According to the evidence, the oldest remains date back to the mid-10th to 11th centuries CE (4th to 5th centuries AH), preceding the extensive development of the Shah Cheragh shrine complex.

Intriguingly, layers of waste materials found beneath the later architectural remains likely indicate the presence of an open space or public square during earlier periods, before the Ilkhanid era.

Architectural remains uncovered primarily belong to the Ilkhanid period and extend through the 13th and 14th



centuries AH, showcasing continuous residential construction in this part of Shiraz over approximately 800 years, with habitation lasting until roughly two decades ago. This continuity highlights the longstanding urban and cultural significance of this district.

One of the most remarkable discoveries is evidence of turquoise glaze production workshops dating to the Safavid period.

Since turquoise glaze is made by oxidizing cobalt ore, the identification of firing facilities and kiln remnants affirms Shiraz's role as a center for advanced ceramic technology during this era.

While historical texts suggested Shiraz as a major producer of turquoise glaze, the excavation provides the first solid archaeological proof supporting those accounts.

Additional finds include coins spanning from the Safavid period (such as Lar coins) through the late Pahlavi era, as well as fragments of pottery

and glassware, which together attest to continued occupation and activity in the area up until the mid-20th century.

Future excavation phases are planned at two other locations within the historic fabric—likely near 9th of Dey Street and Zoghali Alley—before metro construction advances further.

Registered as a national heritage site in August 2023, the 357-hectare historic fabric of Shiraz comprises roughly 12,000 parcels and over 410 significant cultural assets. After 15 years of effort, a 57-hectare master plan for the preservation and revitalization of Shiraz's historic-cultural core was approved by the Supreme Council of Architecture and Urban Planning in January 2025.

The plan aims to protect the unique identity and cultural heritage of Shiraz, home to the third holiest shrine of the Ahl al-Bayt, while addressing residents' needs and upgrading urban infrastructure.

Picture of the Day

Harvesting of high-quality Estameran dates in Karun County, Khuzestan Province.

Photo by IRNA