

# New Theatre Season Opens in Tehran With Three Major Works



TEHRAN -- Tehran's vibrant theater scene is making headlines this October with the return of the immersive concert-play **Café of Love at Niavaran Cultural Center**, the haunting one-woman show **Incendies in the Heart at Hamoon Theater**, and the evocative musical production **Mikis Theodorakis at Azadi Tower**.

After a two-year hiatus, **Café of Love**—a concert-play by writer-director Seyed Jalaleddin Dorri—returns to the Persian Gulf Hall at Niavaran Cultural Center beginning Thursday, as originally staged in 2017 under the title Layla and Majnun, and reimagined in 2022 as **Café of Love**, the piece blends live music, theater, and poetry into a unique sensory experience. With over 18,000 audience members attending its last run, the new version promises a fresh musical direction and reworked vocal arrangements.

Part of an ongoing initiative to present contemporary world drama to Iranian audiences, the play is presented in a new Persian translation by Nazanin Mihan and is supported by a strong design team including:

Erfan Almasi (Production Manager, Stage Manager)  
Behzad Bakhtiari (Sound & Music)  
Amir Panahi-Far (Set Design)  
Paria Almasi (Costume Design)  
Solmaz Najafi (Makeup)  
Majid Seyedat (Lighting)  
Hamed Farahi (Graphics and Motion Design)  
Maryam Rahmani (Photography)

Simultaneously, director Sa'di is set to premiere another production titled **The Beach People** at Tehran's City Theater complex later this season.

The cast includes Fardad Safakhoo, Samira Husseini, Sadaf Beheshti, and Amir Kourosh Arabi, with performances by actor-vocalists Hamidreza Torkashvand, Fayeze Kamab, Elham Karimi, and Mohsen Soleimani. Music is composed by Kian Darat, who also performs alongside a full ensemble including Youna Darat, Saba Samimi, and vocal trio Parand Darat, Hengameh Goodarzi, and Sara Ne'mati.

**Mikis Theodorakis: A Musical Portrait at Azadi Tower** Rounding out the month is Mikis Theodorakis: Unheard Melodies, a poetic concert-play celebrating the life and work of legendary Greek composer Mikis Theodorakis, written and directed by Azadeh Shams. Running October 7–9 with two daily performances at 6:00 PM and 8:00 PM, this multi-sensory production fuses narrative and music to explore the composer's deep love, personal trials, political resistance, and enduring legacy.

**Incendies in the Heart (A Bomb in the Heart): A Stark One-Woman Drama at Hamoon** Opening in November 2025, **Incendies in the Heart**, adapted from the powerful play by acclaimed Lebanese-Canadian playwright Wajdi Mouawad, takes the stage at Hamoon Theater under the direction of Muhammadamin Sa'di. Produced by Fatemeh Kohestani, the intimate production stars Faeqe Shalalvand in a demanding solo performance, portraying three dis-

Rather than using music as background, the production makes it central to the dramatic arc, using live performance and visual storytelling to reflect key emotional and historical moments in Theodorakis's life. As the program teases: "Mikis Theodorakis composes a piece for his beloved—and the world listens." Tickets are available through Tiwall.

# National Museum Unveils 330 Hidden Artefacts

TEHRAN -- After a closure of over three months triggered by the recent 12-day war, the National Museum of Iran has reopened its doors, unveiling an extraordinary exhibition featuring 330 remarkable artefacts.

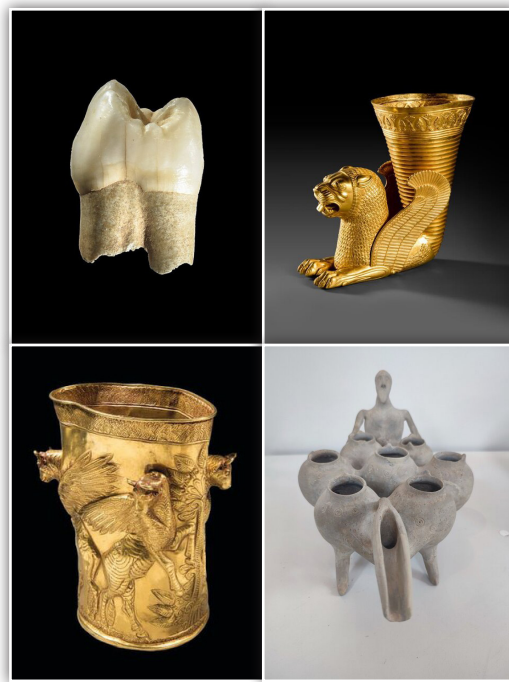
For many, this is a rare opportunity to view objects that have never before been displayed outside the museum's secure storerooms.

The reopening comes with a caveat: the museum's principal galleries — those dedicated to Ancient Iran and the Islamic Era — remain closed to visitors for the time being. Instead, the public can explore a carefully curated selection spanning both collections in the newly launched exhibition titled "Storytellers of Ancient Iran."

Fereydoun Biglari, a prominent archaeologist and cultural deputy at the National Museum, explained that the exhibition was designed as an interim presentation while preparations continue for the reopening of the main halls. The 330 objects on display represent one of the museum's largest temporary exhibitions in recent memory.

Visitors are led through three distinct galleries, each offering a unique glimpse into Iran's vast cultural heritage. The first gallery explores prehistoric times, showcasing artefacts from the Paleolithic era to the dawn of metallurgy and early rural settlements.

Highlights include a 40,000-year-old Neanderthal tooth discovered in the Wazmeh Cave of Kermanshah province — the first definitive evidence of Neanderthal presence in Iran — alongside one of the oldest musical instruments found in the country: a bone flute dating back 7,000 to 8,000 years from the



Neolithic site of Sang-e Chakhmaq near Shahrud.

The second gallery covers the era of early urbanization, spanning roughly 3,000 BCE through to the Sasanian Empire. Among the treasures are exquisite gold vessels from Hasanlu and Marlik, a rare golden ring symbolizing Elamite power, and striking reliefs from the Achaemenid period, including the recently repatriated limestone carving of a Persian soldier from Persepolis.

The third gallery celebrates the Islamic era, featur-

ing rare manuscripts such as a 14th-century Qur'an and the Masalik al-Mamalik, alongside Seljuk astrolabes, exquisite Ilkhanid tilework, and a collection of sumptuous Safavid silk brocades and embroideries on display for the first time.

The closure followed the outbreak of the 12-day war during which many priceless artefacts were transferred to secure vaults. The museum's staff undertook a large-scale rescue and conservation operation, documented through a series of photographs now exhibited alongside the artefacts. These images chronicle the painstaking efforts to protect and stabilize key pieces, including the iconic statue of Darius the Great.

Biglari stressed that many of the displayed items were recovered from over 80 archaeological sites across Iran, reflecting the country's rich and diverse history. The exhibition also features extraordinary finds such as the natural mummy known as the Salt Man from Chehrabad mine near Zanjan, dating to the late Parthian or early Sasanian periods.

While the full reopening of the museum's main galleries remains pending, Biglari expressed optimism about progress. "We aim to gradually reopen sections of the Islamic era galleries by November, followed by the Ancient Iran galleries," he stated.

The museum team has used the closure period to reassess and improve the display and arrangement of exhibits, enhancing the visitor experience for when the entire museum reopens.

The "Storytellers of Ancient Iran" exhibition will run until at least the end of November, with the possibility of extension depending on visitor demand and ongoing preparations.

# 'Life in War' Documentary Photo Contest Opens for Submissions

TEHRAN -- Iran Photographers House has officially launched a powerful documentary photography competition titled "Life in War", aiming to capture the multifaceted realities of everyday life and resilience of Iranian people during the devastating imposed war against the country.

This contest is not just about powerful imagery—it seeks to discover new artistic and media talents, while also critically examining the media and artistic management during times of crisis.

### What's the focus?

- The themes span a wide spectrum: Daily life at home and in neighborhoods during wartime
- The involvement of civilians alongside soldiers
- Medical aid and the condition of the wounded
- Destruction of homes and public centers
- Roles of women and children during the conflict
- Funeral and mourning rituals for martyrs
- Grassroots propaganda and shifts in

lifestyle amid war

### Who can enter?

The event is open to both professional photographers and the general public, including youth.

### Professional Section:

- Submit up to 10 single images or a photo series (5 to 12 images)
- Awards for photo series: 1st place – 450M IRR, 2nd – 350M IRR, 3rd – 250M IRR
- Awards for single photos: 1st – 300M IRR, 2nd – 250M IRR, 3rd – 200M IRR
- Additional fees: 50M IRR per series and 30M IRR per single photo

### Public Section:

- Submit up to 8 photos, 5 short videos (edited or raw), and 5 audio or text narratives (max 5 minutes or 500 words)
- 15 winners in photo, video, and storytelling categories will each receive 100M IRR
- Special youth prize for 6 participants under 18, including 50M IRR and free workshops
- All selected works will be exhibited, and participants will receive certificates



and an event catalog.

### Meet the Jury

The professional photography jury features acclaimed experts like Bahram Muhammadi-Fard, Ahmad Nateghi, Ahmadreza Darvish, Hassan Ghaedi, and Mehdi Ghasemi. The public and youth sections are judged by Ali Rekab and others, with Hussein Goliyar as the executive secretary.

### Deadlines and How to Submit

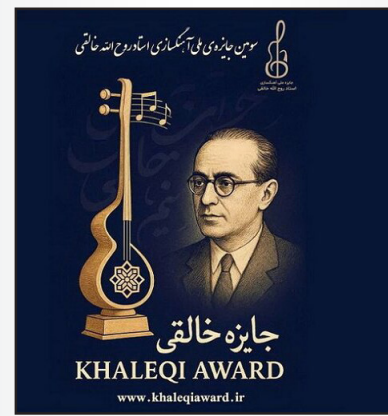
Submission deadline: November 4  
For full guidelines, visit Iran Photographers House website or connect via messaging apps: Bale, Eitaa, WhatsApp, Telegram at 09032792407.  
Public entries can be sent to the username IRAN\_IPC or phone number above.  
Don't miss the chance to document this crucial chapter of history through your lens and voice. Whether you're a seasoned pro or passionate amateur, your story matters.

# Submissions Open for National Khaleghi Composition Prize

TEHRAN -- The third edition of the Ruhollah Khaleghi National Composition Prize is underway, aiming to preserve the rich legacy of Iranian music while nurturing contemporary composers and interdisciplinary works inspired by Persian literature and mythology.

At a press conference held on Monday at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Muhammadreza Azizi, the prize's secretary, outlined the vision behind this prestigious event.

Since its inception two years ago as a student competition, the Ruhollah Khaleghi Prize has evolved into a national platform celebrating compositional excellence with a unique focus on both traditional and modern music.



Azizi emphasized the prize's commitment to artistic independence—a defining feature distinguishing it from many state-backed festivals. "While financial support is essential, we firmly uphold the prize's intellectual and financial autonomy," he said, revealing past negotiations that ensured the event's independence from institutional control.

The competition invites submissions across vocal and instrumental composition categories, with a new section dedicated to research exploring Khaleghi's compositional philosophy and interdisciplinary approaches linking music with classical Persian texts. Winners will receive cash awards, their works published as books or academic collections, and performances scheduled during the upcoming Fajr Music Festival.

Keynote jury member and renowned tar virtuoso Keyvan Saket highlighted Ruhollah Khaleghi's pivotal role in shaping Iran's musical identity. "Khaleghi was one of the greatest and most honorable figures in Iranian music, deeply committed to raising musical culture," Saket noted.

He stressed the importance of score writing, a practice championed by Khaleghi and his mentor Alinaghi Vaziri, as fundamental for the preservation and advancement of Iranian music.

Dr Babak Khazraei, faculty member at Tehran's University of Art, reflected on Khaleghi's profound patriotism—not as narrow nationalism but a sense of responsibility and dedication to cultural development.

"His legacy lies not only in technical skill but in his vision for music education, prolific scholarship, and historic contributions," Khazraei remarked.

Other jury members echoed the significance of archiving Khaleghi's oeuvre, safeguarding scores, and promoting new research into his life and works.

Launched this summer, the third Ruhollah Khaleghi Composition Prize calls on composers of all ages to submit original works by November 1, 2025. The prize supports emerging independent composers, fostering fresh voices in Iranian classical and orchestral music.

The awards ceremony will take place on November 12, coinciding with the anniversary of Khaleghi's passing, at Tehran's Rudaki Hall, supported by the Ministry of Culture's Music Office, the Rudaki Foundation, and private sponsors.

The jury includes luminaries such as Keyvan Saket, Ali Akbar Ghorbani, Muhammadreza Fayyaz, Pouya Sarayi, Pasha Hanjani, and Muhammadreza Tafazzoli, alongside research jurors Babak Khazraei, Seyed Hussein Maysami, and Mir Alireza Mirali-Neghi.

Initiated in 2023 by Azizi—composer, tar player, and university lecturer—the Ruhollah Khaleghi Prize is a vital independent forum dedicated to celebrating and expanding the heritage of Iranian music. Through rigorous and scholarly evaluation, it spotlights innovative compositions that honor tradition while pushing creative boundaries.

# Picture of the Day



The nomadic lifestyle and seasonal migration remain the backbone of the Bakhtiari tribe's identity and survival, with a significant portion of the tribe faithfully following traditional routes to move their livestock between cold summer pastures (yeilāq) and warmer winter quarters (qishlāq).

Photo by IRNA