

Artist Creates Diorama Inspired by Images of Martyred Leader



TEHRAN -- A diorama artist says enduring public images of the "martyred leader" inspired the creation of a three-dimensional work intended to reflect on memory, presence, and loss.

Speaking to Mehr News, Muslim Alamzadeh described diorama—also known as a three-dimensional miniature or life-scale scene—as an art form that recreates spaces and moments in either full size or reduced scale, often for display in museums.

He said the medium originated in theatrical stage design before developing into an independent artistic practice.

Alamzadeh characterized art as a means of reflecting social experience, stating that artists inevitably draw on the environments in which they live. He said diorama, by capturing a specific place and moment, en-

ables artists to preserve what he described as a society's visual memory.

Explaining the motivation behind his latest work, Alamzadeh said images of the "martyred leader" attending ceremonies at Imam Khomeini Hussainiya and smiling during informal meetings with members of the public remained vivid in his mind and became the inspiration for the piece.

He said the work was conceived to evoke both the leader's presence and absence without explicitly depicting loss. Instead, he said, it seeks to create a space for quiet reflection, moving from individual emotion toward what he described as a shared collective memory.

Alamzadeh expressed hope that the diorama would serve as a lasting testament to the continued remembrance of the "martyred leader."

Tehran's Muharram Arts Festival Displays Shared Iranian, Afghan Traditions



TEHRAN — Ritual percussion from southern Iran, Afghan qawwali, traditional mourning chants and orchestral performances came together on Saturday during the seventh evening of "Kheymeh-ye Honar" (Tent of Art), an annual Muharram cultural program held at Tehran's City Theater complex.

The event, organized by Iran's Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance, showcased religious music, ta'zieh passion plays, storytelling traditions and poetry centered on the commemoration of Ashura.

The evening opened with the Avay-e Sahel ensemble performing senj and damam, ceremonial percussion associated with Muharram observances in southern Iran. The rhythmic performance transformed the outdoor venue into a setting evocative of the region's mourning rituals.

The program continued with the Naghmeh Sepidar choir, which presented choral works dedicated to the uprising of Imam Hussein and themes of sacrifice.

One of the evening's most notable performances came from Afghanistan. The Salam ensemble presented qawwali, the devotional musical tradition rooted in South Asian Sufism, adapting it to lamentations honoring Prophet

Muhammad's household. Organizers described the performance as highlighting the shared cultural and religious heritage linking Iran and Afghanistan.

Award-winning vocalist Mahmoud Salehi, accompanied by ney player Ali Abdi, then performed traditional mourning songs reflecting the atmosphere of Muharram.

Popular Iranian singer Meysam Ebrahimi followed with a patriotic composition arranged in a martial style, adding a contemporary popular-music element to the evening's largely traditional repertoire.

The musical segment concluded with a performance by a wind orchestra led by conductor Sina Zakaei.

Beyond music, audiences also watched a pardeh-khani (traditional illustrated storytelling) performance titled The Departure of Mokhtar by Morshed Rasoul Mirzaali, a ta'zieh production depicting the story of Wahb al-Nasrani under the direction of Ahmad Azizi, and poetry recited by Yaha Kashani.

Several senior cultural officials attended the event, including Deputy Minister of Culture Mehdi Shafiei, former Minister of Culture

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Beyond Leadership: The Cultural Legacy of Martyr Leader Part I: Culture as the Soul of Civilization

TEHRAN -- Culture stood at the very heart of the intellectual and civilizational vision of the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Grand Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khomeini—may his soul be sanctified.

His legacy is not defined solely by political and religious leadership, but by a profound and unwavering commitment to culture, knowledge, literature, and the written word.

For him, culture was never a secondary expression of society or a decorative element added to political life; rather, it was the foundation upon which national identity, collective consciousness, and civilization itself were built.

In the landscape of contemporary Islamic thought, he emerged as a towering intellectual figure who regarded culture as the first line of defense for a nation and the essential source of its strength, resilience, and continuity.

This understanding of culture formed the basis of his concept of "cultural piety"—a form of socie-



tal self-care through which a nation protects its inner character, preserves its intellectual foundations, and develops immunity against external efforts to reshape its identity.

Scholarly analyses of his thought have emphasized that culture, in his worldview, was not merely an area of artistic activity or social expression, but the foundation upon which a society's ability to resist external pressures depended.

A nation that safeguards its cul-

ture safeguards its existence; a nation that neglects it risks losing the very qualities that define it.

From this perspective emerged one of the central pillars of his cultural thought: the principle of "cultural independence." He viewed cultural independence as inseparable from genuine national sovereignty, stating that political and economic independence could not be sustained without the preservation of a nation's intellectual and

cultural foundations.

His warnings regarding "cultural invasion" reflected his belief that soft power could be used to weaken societies by gradually eroding their identity, historical awareness, intellectual confidence, and ideological foundations. For him, this was not an abstract concern, but a practical reality requiring awareness, resistance, and cultural responsibility.

The Persian language occupied a unique and central position within this vision. For the martyred Leader, Persian was far more than a means of communication; it represented "the framework of cognition and the connecting thread of thought and the identity borders of Iranians."

Language, in this understanding, was the vessel through which a civilization preserved its memory, transmitted its values, and maintained its connection with its historical roots. His lifelong advocacy for strengthening Persian reflected

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The Pen and Global Future of Persian Language



TEHRAN -- Iran marked National Pen Day on July 5 with a renewed focus on the role of writing, scholarship and educa-

tion in preserving and promoting the Persian language.

Observed on the country's official calendar, National Pen

Day celebrates the pen not only as an instrument of writing but also as a symbol of intellectual inquiry, cultural continuity and historical memory.

In Iranian and Islamic tradition, the pen occupies a distinctive place, reflecting a longstanding association with knowledge, literature and the pursuit of truth.

In an era of growing cultural and linguistic competition, the pen has become a vehicle for extending languages beyond national borders. Persian should be viewed not only as a literary inheritance but also as a civilizational asset that carries centu-

ries of philosophy, history, poetry and lived experience.

Sustaining the language requires the combined efforts of writers, researchers, translators, educators and cultural institutions. The Saadi Foundation oversees Persian-language education outside Iran, supporting language-teaching programs, research and international academic cooperation.

Research plays a central role in teaching Persian to non-native speakers, with effective language instruction relying on strong academic foundations, audience analysis, curriculum

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Murakami Adaptation to Debut at Tehran's Labkhand Theater

TEHRAN — A new Iranian stage production inspired by a short story by acclaimed Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami will premiere in Tehran on July 12, exploring themes of memory, identity and psychological healing through a surreal narrative.

Written and directed by Nima Mazaheri, the play, titled "Haruki Murakami," is based on one of the author's short stories and will be staged at the Labkhand Theater Complex.

According to the production synopsis, the story follows Gava, the human resources manager of the Yuhago Zoo, who suddenly forgets his own name. After meeting a therapist, he discovers that the mysterious lapse in memory has deeper psychological roots.

The production stars Farzaneh Ghasemzadeh, Maryam Firouzi and Nima Mazaheri.

Murakami's fiction has long attracted a devoted readership in Iran, where several of his short stories have previously been adapted for the stage. His works, known for blending surrealism, magical realism and psychological introspection, have also inspired film adaptations internationally.

Among the best-known Iranian theatrical interpretations of Murakami's work is playwright Naghmeh Samini's Three Therapy Sessions and a Party, adapted from the short story "Shinagawa

Monkey" and previously staged under the direction of Afsaneh Mahian.

The new production is produced by Seyed Adel Mosadegh and features a creative team including music composer Andre Khachikian, costume designer

Sara Babaei, set designer Nika Alikhani, lighting designer Ali Yousefi, and makeup designer Ehsan Ronasi.

The 75-minute production will run nightly at 9 p.m. in Hall No. 2 of the Labkhand Theater Complex beginning July 12.



Picture of the Day



Mourners at Tehran's Grand Mosalla pay their respects during a farewell ceremony for the martyred leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khomeini, on Saturday, July 4, 2026.

Photo by ISNA