

Tehran Auction to Offer 100 Works Valued at Up to \$2 Million



TEHRAN — The 25th edition of Tehran Auction will offer 100 works by 80 artists on Friday, with pre-sale estimates ranging from 354 billion to 423 billion to-mans (\$2 million-\$2.5 million), as Iran’s leading art sale expands its focus to include modern, classical and traditional Iranian art.

The sale, titled “Modern, Classical and Traditional Iranian Art,” will take place at Tehran’s Parsian Azadi Hotel and feature paintings, sculpture, calligraphy, miniatures and carpets in what marks the auction house’s second edition devoted to a broader spectrum of Iranian art beyond its traditional emphasis on modern and contemporary works.

A total of 100 lots by 80 artists will go under the hammer, including works by six women artists—Parvaneh Etemadi, Behjat Sadr, Farideh Lashai, Leyli Matine-Defatry, Elaheh Khatami and Leyla Barzegar Yarmuhammadi—whose eight works account for a small share of the sale’s offerings.

The auction’s top lots are expected to be “High Horizon” by modernist painter Sohrab Sepehri and “Mohabbat” (Affection) by calligrapher and painter Muhammad Ehsai, each carrying an estimate of 28 billion to 30 billion to-mans. Sepehri’s oil painting dates to around 1967, while Ehsai’s large-scale calligraphic work previously appeared at both Tehran Auction and Christie’s London.

Among the sale’s notable departures from previous editions are several carpets and works of calligraphy, despite earlier guidance from Tehran Auction that traditional handicrafts were generally outside its remit unless they represented landmark examples of innovative or historically significant artistic practice.

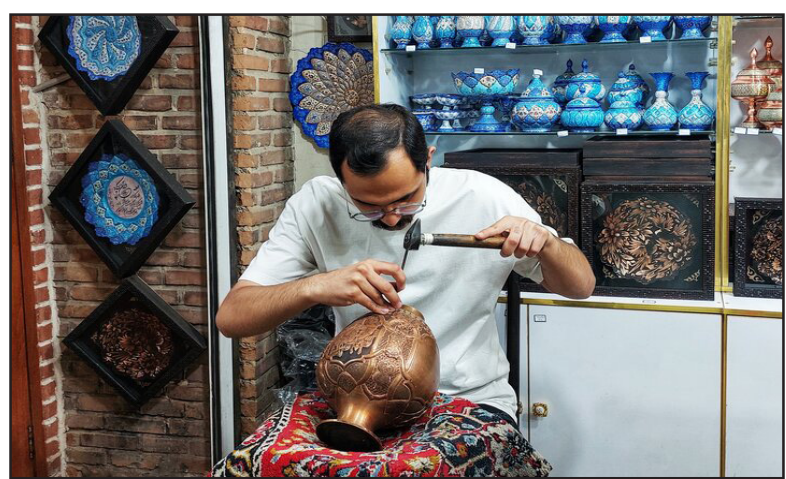
One highlight is an illustrated Caucasian carpet from northwest Iran, dated 1331 AH (1913 CE), estimated at 6 billion to 7 billion to-mans, while a contemporary calligraphic work by Mojtaba Malekzadeh is expected to fetch 300 million to 400 million to-mans.

According to the organizers, Tehran Auction defines “classical” Iranian art primarily as works by Kamal-ol-Molk, his leading pupils and artists associated with his school, whose paintings bridged the transition from Persian miniature traditions to modern Iranian art.

The “modern” category encompasses artists who introduced modernist concepts to Iranian art from the 1940s onward, while the “contemporary” section includes later generations working beyond modernist conventions.

The auction traces its origins to 2012, when its inaugural sale realized 2.15 billion to-mans. Its most recent edition, held in October 2025, recorded sales of 147.2 billion to-mans, underscoring the continued growth of Iran’s domestic art market despite broader economic challenges.

Reimagining Qalamzani for a New Generation



TEHRAN -- In a workshop where silver, copper, and brass are still shaped by hammer and chisel, Barsam Ghahremaninejad is asking a question that reaches far beyond Iran’s handicrafts industry: what, exactly, makes a tradition authentic?

For centuries, qalamzani—Iran’s distinctive art of metal engraving—has been recognized through its familiar visual language. Persian floral scrolls, miniature-inspired hunting scenes and royal banquets have adorned bowls, vases and platters since long before the Safavid era, their lineage stretching back to ancient Persia. Yet Ghahremaninejad believes those motifs are only part of the story.

“The nature of this craft is entirely Iranian,” he says. “If we use motifs that are not originally Iranian, it may move away from being purely traditional, but that

does not mean its authenticity is damaged.”

His argument challenges one of the enduring assumptions surrounding traditional craft: that heritage resides primarily in appearance. For Ghahremaninejad, authenticity is embedded instead in process—in the discipline of engraving by hand, the accumulated technical knowledge, and the material relationship between artisan and metal.

Working from a family workshop with more than four decades of experience in Isfahan-style handicrafts, he has spent recent years experimenting with imagery rarely associated with Iranian metalwork.

Realist European flowers replace stylized Persian blossoms. Cherubs borrowed from classical French painting appear where miniature figures once dominated.

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Annual Ashura Poetry Night to Feature Tribute to Martyred Leader

TEHRAN — Iran’s annual “Rendan-e Teshneh Lab” (Thirsty Rakes) Ashura poetry gathering will be held on July 20, bringing together poets and satirists for an evening of elegiac verse dedicated to Imam Hussein and, this year, to what organizers describe as the country’s “martyred, literature-loving leader.”

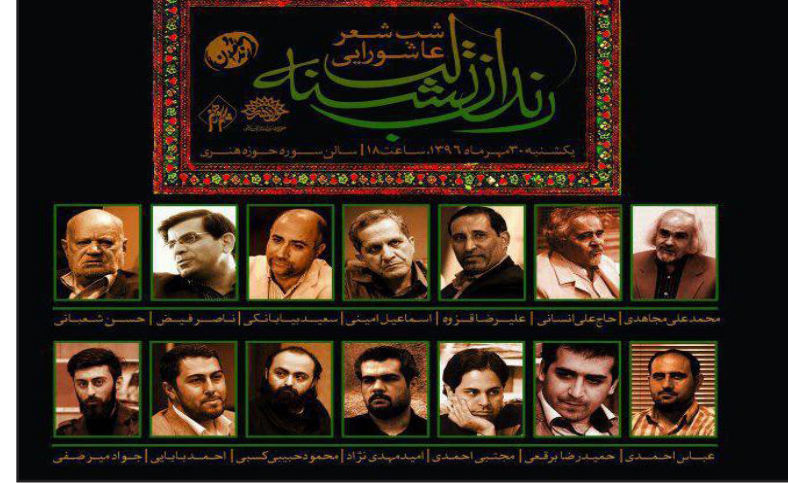
Organized by the Office of Satire at the Art Bureau of the Islamic Revolution, the event is the Ashura edition of the long-running Dar Halgheh-ye Rendani (“Among the Rakes”) poetry series, which has been held for more than two decades.

According to organizers, this

year’s program will feature traditional Ashura elegies alongside poems paying tribute to the late leader.

The event will be hosted by poet and satirist Saeed Biyabanki and will feature readings by a number of prominent contemporary Iranian poets and writers, including Nasser Feyz, Omid Mahdinejad, Abbas Ahmadi, Milad Erfanpour, Muhammad Salami, Ali Akbar Modarreszadeh, Hassan Malekan, Haj Ali Ensani, Muhammadreza Tahmasbi, Maliheh Rajaei, Fatemeh Fahimi, and Seyed Muhammad Sadat Akhavi.

The gathering is scheduled to



begin at 6 p.m. local time on Monday, July 20, at Sooreh Hall in the Art Bureau’s headquarters

in central Tehran. Admission is free and open to the public, organizers said.

Three New Films Hit Iranian Cinemas in Bid to Boost Ticket Sales

TEHRAN — Three new Iranian films opened in cinemas on Tuesday, raising hopes of a revival in the country’s box office after months of sluggish ticket sales caused by prolonged screenings of a limited number of titles and repeated disruptions to cinema operations.

The releases of “Estakhr” (The Pool), “Zنده Shour” (The Death Bath), and “Lebas-e Shakhsi” (Personal Clothes) come after industry experts and cinema owners had argued that audience-friendly productions and long-delayed films were needed to help reverse a sharp decline in admissions during the first four months of the Iranian year compared with the same period a year earlier.

According to ISNA, many producers had delayed releasing their films because of uncertainty



tainty over cinema operations and concerns that theaters could face further closures. Several previously banned films, including Ghatel va Vahshi (“The Killer and the Savage”) and Shishlik, also remain without a confirmed release date.

The latest releases follow the recent screenings of “Teh-

ran Kenaret” (Tehran, Another View) and “Antique”, which were credited with providing a relative boost to cinema attendance in recent months.

The four films now showing represent a mix of genres, alongside the comedy “Khab-namā” (Dream Seer), which began screening on July 10.

Among the new releases, “The Pool”, directed by Soroush Sehat, has attracted particular attention following the director’s previous films, “Jahan Ba Man Beraghs” (“Dance with Me”) and “Breakfast with Giraffes”, both of which gained a strong following.

The film stars Amin Hayayi, Sahar Dolatshahi, and Sorena Sehat, with Alireza Khamseh, Pantea Panahiha, Bijan Bonafshekhan, Majid Yousefi, and Kazem Sayahi also appearing in the cast. According to reports cited by ISNA, the film’s final scene differs from the version screened at last year’s Fajr Film Festival.

The other major release, “The Death Bath”, follows a public prosecutor’s representative through a story combining tragic

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New Study Traces Achaemenid Royal Iconography to Neo-Elamite Traditions

TEHRAN — A new study comparing the Arjan Bowl with the royal audience reliefs of the Apadana Palace at Persepolis states that key elements of Achaemenid royal iconography and court ceremonial may have evolved from the political and artistic traditions of Neo-Elam, rather than emerging independently under the Persian Empire.

The research, “From Arjan to Apadana: Continuity of the Royal Audience Ceremony and the Visual Language of Kingship from Neo-Elam to the Achaemenids,” was conducted by documentary filmmaker and researcher Bijan Edalat, who has spent several years studying Elamite civilization.

The study examines similarities between the famous Arjan Bowl, discovered in the Arjan Tomb near Behbahan in southwestern Iran, and the audience scene carved on the eastern stairway of the Apadana at Persepolis.

It proposes that the Achaemenids inherited and reinterpreted an established visual language of kingship developed centuries earlier in Elam.

According to the research, the formal representation of the king, ceremonial appearances before the ruler and the choreography of court ritual were among the defining features of political art in ancient Iran.

While these traditions reached their most elaborate expression in the Achaemenid reliefs at Persepolis, their origins may lie in the political culture of Neo-Elam.

The Arjan Bowl, generally dated to the late seventh or early sixth century BCE, is

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Picture of the Day



A mist-covered mountain village is seen in the highlands of Savadkuh, Mazandaran province. Photo by ISNA