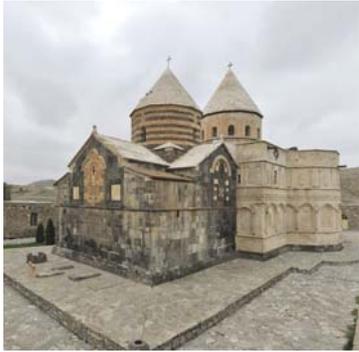


Art & Culture

Eucharist to be held in St. Thaddeus Monastery

Thaddeus Monastery, the oldest church in the world, is to host Iranian and non-Iranian Christians for Eucharist. The ceremony has changed to the symbol of religious minorities' freedom in Iran. St. Thaddeus Monastery is very sacred for Christians, especially Armenians. Many Iranian Christians baptize their children in the ancient church, IRNA wrote.



Chaldoran County, northwestern Iran, in which the church is located, is ready to host the international event. Christians from Iran, Armenia, Syria, Lebanon, the Netherlands, France, Germany, Canada, and other countries will attend the ceremony. The Eucharist is a Christian rite that is considered a sacrament in most churches and an ordinance in others. According to the New Testament, the rite was instituted by Jesus Christ (PBUH) during the Last Supper when Jesus commanded his followers to "do this in memory of me" while referring to the bread he gave to his disciples as "my body". Through the Eucharistic celebration Christians remember both Christ's sacrifice of himself on the cross and his commission of the apostles at the Last Supper.

Mysterious black sarcophagus unearthed in Egypt

A mysterious black granite sarcophagus has been unearthed during a dig in Alexandria in Egypt — buried with a stone head made of alabaster. Experts admit they have no idea who's inside. The stone casket was found buried 16 feet below ground during construction of new buildings, and dates from the Ptolemaic period 2,000 years ago. Egyptian law means that owners have to excavate before building any new constructions, according to metro.co.uk.



The 16-foot sarcophagus was found by workers for the Supreme Council of Antiquities in the Sidi Gaber district of Alexandria. A marble bust of a man, who might be the tomb's owner, was also found inside. The Ptolemaic period lasted from 332-30BCE, from the death of Alexander the Great until the rise of the Roman Empire, and saw Greek influence on areas around the Mediterranean. A layer of mortar between the lid and the body of the stone coffin suggests it has not been opened since it was sealed, experts from Egypt's government said. Mostafa Waziri of the Supreme Council of Antiquities said, "Experts have not yet determined to whom the tomb belongs."

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Minister highlights moderate thoughts as basis for Iran-Austria ties

Art & Culture Desk

Iran has called for developing moderate and rational thoughts as the basis for relations with Austria. Iran's Culture Minister Abbas Salehi, who was speaking in a meeting with Austria's deputy foreign minister for cultural affairs in Tehran, further referred to the 90 years of diplomatic ties between Iran and Austria and said that President Hassan Rouhani's recent visit to Vienna indicates the deep political ties between the two countries, IRNA wrote. He added that Iran's Embassy in Austria and Austria's Cultural Association in Iran have made great efforts to develop cultural ties. Salehi noted, "We are eager to continue and deepen the ties since the devel-



Development of cultural and artistic relations will pave the way for more sustainable relations. Art, science, literature and culture are

the fields that Iran and Austria can cooperate on, he said, adding that although Iran has a good status in all, its literature is also world-renowned. Salehi pointed to some Austrian universities which included Persian language as an optional language on their syllabus, adding that it was a good move to propagate Persian language. The Austrian official said that she is visiting Iran to follow the cultural agreements made during the Iranian president's trip to the European country. Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Austria pays special attention to cultural activities, she said, adding that it has almost 6,000 to 7,000 joint cultural projects with other countries. Austrian capital, Vienna plans to host the 8th round of Iran-Austria interfaith dialogue next year.

Exclusive

Veteran designer: Vaziri-Moqaddam is an international artist

By Hassan Homayoun

An expo of artworks by Mohsen Vaziri-Moqaddam, Iranian designer, painter, sculptor, art maestro and professor of Iranian contemporary art, is currently underway at Etimad Gallery. A creative artist, Vaziri-Moqaddam was born in 1924. He is a graduate of Tehran University of Art and was the dean of the university during 1966-76.

He has been described as the "pioneer of modern Iranian abstraction". Between 1959 and 1960, he developed a vision of abstract art through experiments that were highly focused on materials. This eventually led to the creation of some of his most powerful works: "The Sand Composition Series". These paintings were conceived in a playful moment in the spring of 1959, and for the next three years, Vaziri kept trying his hand at them, until 1963 when they were put on public display. Different types of sand were applied to the canvas in their natural state or mixed with color. This original concept grabbed the attention of some of the most prominent Italian art critics of the time, including Giulio Carlo Argan and Palma Bucarelli. In 1964, Vaziri was at the peak of his artistic career,



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marked by the purchase of one of his paintings by the Modern Art Museum (MoMA) in New York. A veteran Iranian graphic designer, Qobad Shiva was among Vaziri-Moqaddam's students in the 60s. Commenting on his maestro, he told Iran Daily that Vaziri-Moqaddam is an international figure.

He added, "He is known worldwide as an Iranian artist. During his lifetime, he has undertaken massive efforts and experienced many sufferings and difficulties to, through his works of art which have a modern artistic expression, present Iranian culture to the world. At the age of 94, despite his senility, he, as a modern Iranian artist, is still continuing his purposeful attempts with an unbeliev-

INTERVIEW

able energy. In the absence of his teachings and outlook on adopting a modern method of artistic expression, we were still repeating old and outdated forms."

Excerpts of the interview follow:

IRAN DAILY: What year did you enter Tehran University of Art?

QOBAD SHIVA: I entered the university in 1961.

You, along with famous deceased Iranian film director Abbas Kiarostami and Iranian-American fine art painter Nikzad Nodjoumi, were among the students of Vaziri-Moqaddam. What courses did he teach you?

I was in the middle of my third year at the university when we were told that another professor has joined the faculty of Tehran University

of Art. He has recently come back to Iran from Italy. Those students who were among art lovers, were all waiting enthusiastically to meet him. He was not in charge of any certain atelier at that university and paid visits to all of them randomly to work and discuss things with students. He used to stay late at night in the atelier to teach us. His entry into the university helped change the atmosphere there. His modern teachings and methods were new and interesting to students.

How do you evaluate him as a university professor?

Given his scientific, cultural and artistic capabilities as well as love and enthusiasm for art, I believe that he has spent many years and a great deal of inexhaustible energy inside and outside Iran. He, in fact, is an international artist who has started his artistic flight from

Iran. During his flight, he has experienced several difficulties and sufferings to be able to become a capable and intelligent artist. He delved into the multi-thousand-year history of art for years to be able to eventually, find his own modern artistic expression. Despite senility, he is still making attempts with amazing energy to further develop his pure and desirable art. We are required to correctly recognize his value.

How was his attitude toward his students?

As far as I remember, he was very humble and unassuming. He was very emotional and had a transparent character. The door of his personal atelier was always open to any of the students. He grasped each and every opportunity to teach us something generously.

What is the reason for Vaziri-Moqaddam's importance in Iran's contemporary art?

He is known worldwide as an Iranian artist. During his lifetime, he has undertaken great efforts and experienced many sufferings and difficulties to, through his works of art which have a modern artistic expression, present Iranian culture to the world. He has, and still is, transferring his knowledge and findings honestly, sincerely and heartily to his students. He taught effective thinking and observing as well as being purposeful to me and his students.



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