

## Sadeqi returning to stage with "Memoirs of Zarir"

Tehran Times Art Desk

TEHRAN — Leading director Qotbeddin Sadeqi is returning to the stage with his play "The Memoirs of Zarir", which debuts on July 8 at Tehran's City Theater Complex.

Kazem Hajirazad, Esmail Bakhtiari, Mostafa Abdollahi, Ashkan Jenabi, and the other members of the troupe are currently rehearsing the play, which was written by Sadeqi himself.

The play is based on an ancient Iranian story from the book "The Memoirs of Zarir". This story is believed to have been one of the sources which inspired Ferdowsi, the author of the Iranian national epic, the Shahnameh.

The story describes the ancient religious wars at the time of Zarathustra, and recounts the heroic deeds of a champion named Zarir, who is mentioned in Ferdowsi's work and "The Memoirs of Zarir" but unknown otherwise.

Sadeqi stated that the story is performed in a modern style and is different than his previous works, adding, "Three actors will play the role of Bastur, the son of Zarir, at different times."

Most of Sadeqi's works have Iranian national themes. "The Memoirs of Zarir" is Sadeqi's 37th play and will go on stage at the Chaharsu Hall every day of the week except Saturday.

## Kevin Spacey to teach at Oxford

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) — Oscar-winning actor Kevin Spacey has accepted a year-long position as a theater professor at Oxford University, the institution said in a posting on its Website on Friday.

Spacey, 48, who won Academy Awards for supporting actor in "The Usual Suspects" and lead actor in "American Beauty," is following in the footsteps of fellow performers such as Patrick Stewart, star of "Star Trek: The Next Generation."

Others who have occupied the post of Oxford's Cameron Mackintosh Visiting Professor of Contemporary Theater at St. Catherine's College include composer Stephen Sondheim, playwright Alan Ayckbourn, actress Diana Rigg and lyricist Sir Tim Rice.

"It really is an honor for me to have been invited to follow such illustrious names and take up this role at Oxford," Spacey said in a statement. "The university is steeped in tradition and has a great heritage in the arts, and I look forward to working with the students and staff."

The college's master, Professor Roger Ainsworth, called Spacey "a truly international star" who "will bring an enormous wealth of talent and experience in both film and theater to bear on the role."

Spacey has been the artistic director of The Old Vic Theater Company in London since 2003.

He recently was seen in the HBO television movie "Recount," about the race for the U.S. presidency in 2000 between Al Gore and George W. Bush. He also recently starred in movie thriller "21," playing an MIT professor with a team of card-counting poker players who make millions in Las Vegas casinos.

# Damonfar Visual Arts Festival kicks off



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Tehran Times Art Desk

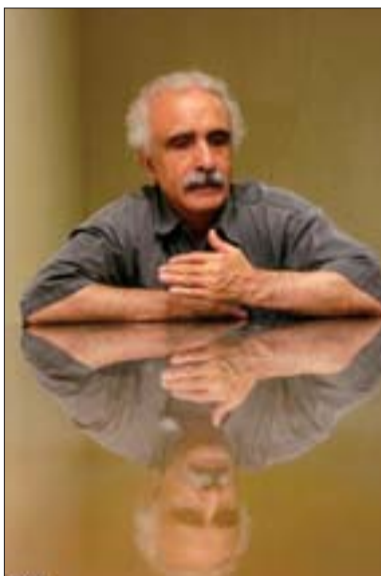
TEHRAN — The Second Damonfar Visual Arts Festival was inaugurated during separate ceremonies at Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Center and Aseman Cultural Complex on

Friday.

This year's biennial is dedicated to artists under 25 years of age and is displaying their paintings, poster designs, illustrations, and painting-calligraphy works until June 20.

At the Niavaran Cultural Center ceremony, the head of the jury, Hossein Khosrojerdi asked artists to price their artworks reasonably and to avoid getting influenced by non-Iranian artwork markets.

## Aslani focusing for Rumi film



Tehran Times Art Desk

TEHRAN — Iranian director Mohammadreza Aslani plans to make a film on Molana Jalal ad-Din Rumi.

Aslani wants to find a producer before beginning to write the screenplay about the Sufi mystic and poet who always wrote in Persian.

"The producer is essential for shaping the screenplay of this project," he told ISNA on Saturday.

Sima Film, a studio affiliated to IRIB, was to produce the project but the negotiations between Aslani and the studio broke down.

According to Aslani, Qatar and some other countries are planning to make films on Rumi.

"There are many claims to this poet (in the world), thus the project needs to be supported by Iran," Aslani noted.

"However, this is not so," he lamented.

The film, which will highlight spiritual slices of Rumi's life, will be set in Rumi's birthplace Balkh in modern Afghanistan as well as in Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and the eastern part of Iran, he explained.

"We also need some shots of Rumi's manuscripts, which will be taken at some Turkish museums," he added.

Aslani always makes low-budget films and says that he will not break with that tradition in the Rumi project.

"The project does not require much money. Thus, I hope the conditions will be created for the production of the film," he said.

Aslani's previous film, "The Green Fire", was inspired by Rumi.

His other credits include "Hassanlu Cup", "Chess with the Wind", "Abu Rayhan Biruni", "Child and Exploitation", "Our Cultural Heritage", "Mash Esmail", "Conference of the Birds" and "Memoirs of a 25-Year-Old Person".

## Majidi pens screenplay for "Samarra"

Tehran Times Art Desk

TEHRAN — Award-winning filmmaker Majid Majidi has penned the screenplay for the animation film "Samarra", which focuses on the destruction of the Askariya Shrine of Samarra, Iraq.

Majidi will probably direct the animation himself, producer Majid Esmaeili told the Persian service of Fars, adding, "The project is sponsored by Tehran's Imam Sadeq University and aims to attract global attention to the sad events of Samarra."

He also stated the project mostly focuses on children of Samarra and will be presented to the world's children with any religious background.

Esmaeili continued, "The project puts no emphasis on Shiite or Sunni beliefs, but promotes Islamic solidarity. We want to express our belief that the bombings and the destruction of the holy shrine were inhumane acts."

Dozens were killed by the attack of February 2006 which hit Samarra's Askariya Holy Shrine, also known as the Golden Mosque. The mosque holds the tombs of two imams of the Shiite Muslims including Imam Hassan Askari (AS), the 11th Imam and the father of Imam Mahdi (AS). Majidi joined the demonstrators gathered in front of the UN office



in Tehran last year protesting the world's silence against the destruction of the mausoleum of the 11th Imam.

He also asked why many films were made on the statue of Buddha when it was destroyed by the Taliban in Afghanistan, but the world remained silent about the blasts of the holy shrines, "International organizations did not even consider it a historical monument, and this shows how oppressed the Shiites are." Majidi had also emphasized that it is the responsibility of artists and the Shiite communities not to remain silent and not to be indifferent to sacrilege against their beliefs.

## Superman, the septuagenarian original comic book superhero

NEW YORK (AFP) — Superman, the original comic book superhero, turns 70 this month, but his strength and invulnerability draws fewer fans in the 21st century world of flawed, postmodern heroes.

An indisputable icon of American pop culture, the Man of Steel made his first appearance in the June 1938 issue of "Action Comics". He is the brainchild of Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, residents of the Midwestern town of Cleveland, Ohio.

Superman can fly in the sky, but he's not a bird or a plane. He's faster than a speeding bullet, more powerful than a locomotive, and able to leap tall buildings in a single bound.

About 1.9 meters (six feet, three inches) tall and weighing some 102 kilos (225 pounds), Superman

has blue eyes, black hair and is a mild-mannered reporter working at the "Daily Planet" newspaper under the alias Clark Kent. He was born on the planet Krypton, exiled to Earth as an infant, and for decades has been fighting for Truth, Justice and the American Way.

"He is a complete fiction, but he is so complete, so ideal, and so well-known around the world — most Americans will know his origin simply by osmosis by the time they are eight — that he is a much fuller representation of an American self-view than Uncle Sam or Mickey Mouse," said Bradley Ricca, who produced a documentary titled "Last Son" on the origin of Superman.

"He really is the quintessential modern Ameri-

can symbol," said Ricca, who is a Case Western University professor specializing in American literature and popular culture. "He is an immigrant in an imperfect world" who "battles injustice in any form."

Superman "is the first fictional superhero, with all the characteristics at the same time: the powers, the cape, the secret identity, the colorful costume, the complicated love triangle, and the unmatched sense of justice," Ricca told AFP.

Superman "is the progenitor of the genre and sets the standard for other figures," said Peter Cogan, who holds a doctorate in American Studies from Michigan State University and specializes in superheroes in U.S. history.

### WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

#### Photo

\* An exhibition of photos by Majid Karimi is currently underway at the Khark Gallery.

Entitled "When You Take Photos by Chance", the showcase runs until June 19 at the venue located at 61 Khark St., Enqelab Ave.

\* An exhibition of photos by Karim Yusefi featuring Iran's natural attractions is currently underway at the Iranian National Commission for UNESCO.

The exhibit will run until June 19 at the venue located at 17 1st Alley, Shahid Hessari St., Mirdamad Blvd.

#### Painting

\* Paintings by Seyyed Mohammad Mosavat are currently on display in an exhibit at the Dey Gallery.

The show will run until June 19 at the gallery located on Vali-e Asr Avenue, opposite Saei Park.

\* The Kamaledin Behzad Gallery is hosting a group exhibition of paintings by Maryam Mo'azzen, Elham Aqakhanzadeh, and Mona Khatib Shahidi.

The exhibit will run until June 19 at the venue located at Shanzdah-e Azar St. at the intersection with Keshavarz Blvd.

\* The Baran Gallery is playing host to an exhibition of paintings by Maryam Hosseinzadeh.

The show will run until June 25 at the venue located at 3 Kachui St., off Evin St., Chamran Highway.

\* Paintings by Elaheh Qods are currently on display in an exhibition at the Sadabad Gallery.

The exhibit will run until June 18 at the venue located at end of Taheri St., Fallahi St., Vali-e Asr Ave.

#### Miniature/intarsia

\* Exhibitions displaying miniatures and intarsia artworks by Fazlollah Afshar and Masumeh Yaqubi are underway at the Melal Cultural Center.

The exhibits will continue until June 19 at the cultural center located in Qeitarieh Park, Sadr Highway.

#### Drawing

\* Drawings by Fatemeh Gaini are currently on display in an exhibition at the Bamdad Gallery.

The exhibit will run until June 18 at the gallery located at 35 Magnolia Alley, Jam St., Motahhari Ave.

## Michael Moore to publish his 'Election Guide' this summer

NEW YORK (AP) — Take cover, McCain. You too, Obama. Michael Moore is coming out with a new book.

The tome, titled "Mike's Election Guide," a manual of mockery for the 2008 presidential election, will be published Aug. 19 by Grand Central Publishing, Jimmy Franco, a spokesman for the publisher, said Friday.

Promotional material for the book reads: "Perfectly timed to coincide with the national political conventions - and to capitalize on massive campaign coverage."

Moore, 54, won an Academy Award for best documentary with his 2002 gun-control film "Bowling for Columbine," and famously lashed out at President Bush in his acceptance speech. Ahead of 2004's election, the director-activist released "Fahrenheit 9/11," his top-grossing film damning the war in Iraq.

Moore's previous book — 2003's "Dude, Where's My Country?" - sold more than a million copies.