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❖ Noon: 11:48
❖ Evening: 17:19
❖ Dawn (tomorrow): 5:12
❖ Sunrise (tomorrow): 6:38

Iranian sculptor recreates Gilgamesh epic for Turkish park

Tehran Times Art Desk
TEHRAN — Ceramic replicas of the Akkadian-language tablets telling the Gilgamesh epic have been recreated by Turkey-based Iranian sculptor Babak Sobhi.

The artwork has been installed at Sumer Park in Diyarbakir, southeastern Turkey.

Sobhi has lived in Turkey since 1990 and has created many sculptures that have been installed in Turkish urban sites.

"The artwork has been executed in a ring-like form and all 12 tablets from the Gilgamesh epic have been reproduced on 2500 individual pieces, each measuring 40x40 centimeters, which are viewed from the interior of the ring," Sobhi told MNA on Monday.

"Visitors can observe every part of the epic on every single piece of the artifact," he added.

Sobhi said that the Sumerian names of the sun and pigeon have been inscribed in cuneiform on the exterior part of the ring.

The 30-ton artwork has been installed on 30 columns each 2 meters in height. It took Sobhi and his 10 assistants 27 months to make and match the pieces.

Sobhi, 47, described the magnitude of the artwork as unique in the Middle East and added, "The Gilgamesh epic is important in its use of the word of 'amargi' meaning freedom. Additionally, it refers to the concept of social justice in specific parts."

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, the fullest extant text of the Gilgamesh epic is on 12 incomplete Akkadian-language tablets found at Nineveh in the library of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal, who reigned from 668-627 BC.

Gilgamesh is the best known of all ancient Mesopotamian heroes. Numerous tales in the Akkadian language have been told about Gilgamesh, and the whole collection has been described as an odyssey — the odyssey of a king who did not want to die.

America Ferrera starring in Iraq war drama

LOS ANGELES (Hollywood Reporter) — "Ugly Betty" star America Ferrera has joined the cast of an Iraq War-related drama set for a February start in New Mexico.

The project, tentatively titled "American Tragic", follows a young soldier (Ryan O'Nan) who has trouble readjusting when he returns to his small hometown. He leaves his wife, mother and sister (Ferrera, Melissa Leo and June Diane Raphael) to travel the country in search of redemption.

Ferrera will also executive produce; Ryan Piers Williams wrote and will direct the indie project.

Correction

In the advertisement published on October 23 edition on page 16 related to the export of GRP pipelines, the company's name should read Farabard Company.

Astan-e Qods to host art shows

Tehran Times Art Desk

TEHRAN — Three exhibitions of artifacts will be held at the Astan-e Qods Razavi Library and Museum in Mashhad from November 12 to 20.

An exhibition entitled "The Written Zamzam" will put on display manuscripts and lithographic books, paintings, and many other artifacts on Imam Reza (AS) at the library.

A handwritten Quran attributed to Imam Reza (AS) will also be exhibited in the showcase.

Historical lighting equipments will also be exhibited at the museum. Candlesticks, pottery suet-burners, and lights that were used at holy sites and cemeteries are among the artifacts on display at the exhibition.

A huge bronze chandelier, which was donated to the Shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in 1852, will also be on display at the exhibit.

In addition, the museum will play host to an exhibition named "The Eighth Graciousness", which will be displaying a vast array of artworks on the Eighth Imam of the



A page of a handwritten Quran attributed to Imam Reza (AS) will be on display at an exhibition opening on November 12 at the Astan-e Qods Razavi Library. (Photo by the Astan-e Qods Razavi Library)

Household of the Prophet (S).

A great number of paintings,

calligraphy and intarsia work, metalwork, and woodwork created

by prominent Iranian artists have been prepared for the exhibition.

Movie of "human" Ataturk stirs emotions in Turkey

ANKARA (Reuters Life!) — A new film that portrays Turkey's revered founder Mustafa Kemal Ataturk as a lonely, hard-drinking man beset by doubts has whipped up emotions in a country still grappling with his legacy 70 years after his death.

Ataturk, a former soldier, founded modern Turkey as a secularist republic from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire.

Portraits of a stern-looking Ataturk adorn the walls of government offices, schools, shops and living rooms across the sprawling nation, testament to a man who has achieved the status of a demigod among most Turks.

"Mustafa", a documentary that chronicles Ataturk's life from childhood to his death on November 10, 1938, presents an intimate and flawed Ataturk rarely seen before, angering headline secularists who have called for a boycott and say the film is an enemy plot to humiliate "Turkishness".

The film, which has drawn large crowds, has fed into a climate of soul searching in Turkey, where democratic reforms, social changes and an impassioned debate over secularism is shaking the pillars of the autocratic state left by Ataturk.

"This documentary is the product of an effort to humiliate Ataturk in the eyes of Turkish people," wrote columnist Yigit Bulut in the secularist Vatan newspaper.

"Do not watch it, prevent people from watching it and most importantly

keep your children away from it to avoid planting seeds of Ataturk humiliation in their subconscious," he said.

On Monday, at 9.05 a.m., factory sirens wailed, traffic halted and schoolchildren stood to attention, a ritual Turks have followed for 70 years to mark the moment of his

"Ataturk has been turned into a dogma or a statue by some of his supporters, but I wanted to show a more real Ataturk -- a man who fought difficulties, loved women, who made mistakes, who was sometimes scared and achieved things," Dundar said.

Although the film contains no

a 22-year-old engineering student. "He was not flawless, he was like the rest of us."

"Kemalists", who see themselves as true guardians of Ataturk's legacy and have built a personality cult around him, say the film is an insult to Turkey's national hero.

Nationalists are furious that the boy who plays Ataturk as a child is Greek. Ataturk was born in Thessaloniki (in today's Greece) and Dundar used local children while shooting on location.

Turkcell, Turkey's main mobile phone provider, pulled out of a sponsorship deal for fear of irritating subscribers.

After wresting Turkey's independence from foreign armies after World War One, Ataturk set about building a country based on Western secular values. When surnames were introduced in Turkey, Mustafa Kemal was given the name Ataturk, meaning "Father of the Turks."

He introduced the Latin alphabet, gave women the right to vote, modernized the education system and removed religion from public life. But he also created an authoritarian state and left the army as guardian of order. Under the military constitution drafted in 1982, it is a crime to insult Ataturk.

Today, democratic reforms aimed at European Union membership are straining notions such as secularism, nationalism and a centralized state. The secularist old guard of generals, judges and bureaucrats is losing its grip on society as a rising and more religious-minded middle class moves into positions of power.

Battles between the ruling Islamist-rooted AK Party and the secularist establishment over the use of the headscarf have revived the debate over Islam and secularism in modern Turkey.

Critics say Kemalists have turned Ataturk's legacy into a dogma to defend the status quo. Many of his diaries and letters believed to touch on the issue of Islam and Kurdish nationalism are kept out of public view in military archives.

"The foundations of the republic are being discussed and the secularist establishment feels uneasy," author Hugh Pope said. "The debate around this film is a reflection of that but also of a maturing society that can discuss these things openly."



A woman leaves a flower at the mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk which is covered by his portraits, flowers and a Turkish national flag at the 70th anniversary of his death in Ankara November 10, 2008. A new film that portrays Turkey's revered founder Mustafa Kemal Ataturk as a lonely, hard-drinking man beset by doubts has whipped up emotions in a country still grappling with his legacy 70 years after his death. (Reuters/Umit Bektas)

death. "I wanted to show a more human Ataturk than the Ataturk they teach us about at school and in the military service," respected director Can Dundar said in an interview.

revelations about his life -- thousands of books are published every year on Ataturk -- "Mustafa" is the first film that emphasizes the private side of the deified leader over his military and nation-building feats.

Dundar shows him writing love letters during the battle of Gallipoli, where Turkish troops fought foreign occupiers.

Blending archive pictures, black and white footage and reenactments, he is also seen dancing, drinking raki, wandering his palaces in lonely despair and becoming more withdrawn as he is overtaken by age and illness.

He died of cirrhosis of the liver in Istanbul, aged 58.

Down from a pedestal

"Mustafa" has spawned extensive commentary in newspapers and on television since it opened two weeks ago. Nearly half a million moviegoers saw it in its first five days.

One Turkish newspaper said the film, with a 1-million-euro budget, had "brought Ataturk down from his pedestal."

"I found it interesting to learn more about who Ataturk was as a human being," said Gorkem Dagci,

WHAT'S IN ART GALLERIES

Photo

* A photo exhibition by actress Laleh Eskandari is to open Wednesday at the art gallery of the Rayzan International Conference Hall.

The photos with the central theme of travel are taken from different countries including Germany, Italy, Turkey, France, Austria and India.

The exhibit will continue until November 18 at the venue located on Kashanak St. in the Niavaran neighborhood of northern Tehran.

* The Shirin Gallery is to hold an exhibition of photo by Hooman Nikbakht opening on November 14.

The exhibit will continue until November 26 at the venue located at 120 Fana-Khosro St., near Tajrish Bridge.

Multimedia

* Imam Ali (AS) Religious Arts Museum is displaying several works of photography, painting, and illustration.

The exhibit, which opened on November 8, will continue until November 22 at the venue of the museum located on Esfandiari Blvd., near the intersection with Vali-e Asr Ave.

Painting

* The Kamaledin Behzad Gallery will play host to three exhibitions of paintings by Nushin Toluei, Takin Parvarandeh, and Baharak Shamseddin opening on November 15.

The exhibits will continue until November 20 at the venue located at No. 312, Shanzdah-e Azar St. at the intersection with Keshavarz Blvd.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Film producer Taslimi dies at 83

TEHRAN — Iranian film producer Khosro Taslimi died of a heart attack on Monday at the Imam Khomeini Hospital in Karaj. He was 83.

He was the father of film producer Sirius and actress Susan. He has produced several renowned films including Mohammad Motevasselani's "Mirza Noruz's Shoes," Bahram Beizai's "Maybe Some Other Time" and Puran Derakhshandeh's "Little Bird of Happiness".

Earliest Chinese poems translated into Persian

TEHRAN — The earliest anthology of Chinese poetry "The Book of Songs" is being translated from English into Persian by Azita Bafekr, Susan Pirnia and Mersedeh Daneshvar.

The book consists of hundred and five poems that were compiled by Confucius (552-479 BC) from an earlier manuscript of around three thousand songs.

Kolkata filmfest highlighting Iranian indies

TEHRAN — A number of Iranian films will be screened in the 14th Kolkata Film Festival, which is currently underway in India.

Ali Mosaffa's "Portrait of a Lady Far Away," Babak Shirinsefat's "Rami," Manijeh Hekmat's "Three Women" and Kianush Ayyari's "Wake up Arezoo" have been scheduled for screening in the section of Iranian Independents.

The festival runs until November 17.

MAG MART

Ariana Tourist
Managing director:
Alireza Kazemi Dulabi



The bilingual monthly contains articles in Persian and English on Iran's attractions and Persian costumes.

It contains articles on the Milad Tower in Tehran, the tourist attractions in the regions of northern Iran, Deylaman, and the attractions in Yazd Province. It also includes articles on the Persian myth Gabbeh, a review on Abbas Kiarostami's "Taste of Cherry" and also paintings created by Mokarrameh Qanbari.

Essays on the expansion of Iran's tourism industry, the role of Iranians in world art and science and also the Persian Gulf are also included in the monthly.