



'Reflections of Spain' on display

A group painting exhibition entitled 'Reflections of Spain' (Reflejos de España) will be held in Bahar and Tabestan Galleries of the Iranian Artists Forum, from May 4 to 15. Curated by Hamid Pazuki, the show will feature works by 18 artists including Ehsan Azari, Raziieh Iranpour, Yasna Askari and Payam Yassini.

Qasr-e Qand, living museum of handicrafts

Iranica Desk

Qasr-e Qand city in the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan is an ideal destination for both foreign and domestic tourists.

The city has more than 440 natural and historical places, rivers, qanats (ancient Iranian underground structure used to collect, purify and store water), high palm groves and green paddy fields. It is located on the path of Kaju River.

Paddy fields, waterfalls, tropical fruit trees and the Kaju River are among the must-see attractions of the city.

Mugger crocodiles, also called Gando in Iran, which are native to freshwater habitats of Sistan and Baluchestan Province, also draw in tourists, according to IRNA.

Rice is harvested twice a year from the paddy fields of the region, which rarely happens in other areas, thanks to the presence of 22 qanats and flowing water in the region. Picturesque villages

with tropical fruit gardens, waterfalls, mineral water springs and rare wildlife around Kaju River are among other tourist attractions of this city. With regard to its historical background, Qasr-e Qand is one of the oldest cities in the southeast of Sistan and Baluchestan, which is also known as the "capital of Makran". Makran is a semi-desert coastal strip in Pakistan and Iran, along the coast of the Sea of Oman. It is home to the strategic port of Chabahar.

Qasr-e Qand is a special agricultural hub in southern Sistan and Baluchestan. Its most important products are dates, rice, mangoes, limes, sweet lemons, papaya and bananas.

Historical monuments

Qasr-e Qand has 14 historical monuments, which have been registered on Iran's Cultural Heritage List. The Castle of Qasr-e Qand is located in the center of the city, surrounded by residential buildings.



An overview of Qasr-e Qand
• MOHAMMAD ATAIE/MEHR NEWS AGENCY



Castle of Qasr-e Qand
• seeiran.ir



Nature of Qasr-e Qand
• seeiran.ir



A pottery workshop in Qasr-e Qand
• IRNA

According to the writings and books, the history of the construction of the castle dates back to the pre-Safavid era

(1501-1736 CE). This castle is located on a man-made hill, which is about 10 meters high. The rooms on the west

side of the castle, which is 285 square meters, were last used as a gendarmerie. It was registered on the National

Heritage List in 2003. Another important castle in Qasr-e Qand is called "Bog". It is located in a village with the same

name. It was built in the Safavid era on a hill. It is 1,400 square meters and has occupied 520 meters of the surface of the hill. The most important part of the complex pertains to its huge stone foundation. The castle is on the National Heritage List.

Agricultural products

Tropical fruit gardens such as bananas, mangoes, oranges and limes also highlight the importance of this city. Most of the fruits are exported to other parts of Sistan and Baluchestan. Qasr-e Qand was once the warehouse of Baluchestan Castle.

Handicrafts

Rich and valuable handicrafts have turned Qasr-e Qand into the living museum of handicrafts of Sistan and Baluchestan.

Qasr-e Qand's needlework is among the masterpieces of female artisans of the city. The villages of Hit, Kaju, Sarbuk and Homeyri are the most important

centers of needlework in Qasr-e Qand.

One of the other handicrafts of Qasr-e Qand and the most important industry that is comparable to other instances in the province is the art of mat weaving.

Mat weaving has a special status in the city. Its raw materials are prepared from the leaves of wild palm trees. The products include brooms, belts, shoes, praying mats, small baskets, saddle bags and all kinds of decorative items.

Pottery

The art of pottery is among special industries of Qasr-e Qand. Since ancient times, small ovens with firewood as their fuel, have been used in the city's pottery industry.

The raw materials of pottery are supplied from the region thanks to the high quality of clay of the villages of Kolluk and Holonchokan. The designs on the pottery are very simple and created with fingers in the form of grooves.

Iran to host ECO states culture ministers' conference



Arts & Culture Desk

The Islamic Republic of Iran is preparing to host an upcoming conference for the culture ministers of the member states of the ECO Cultural Institute (ECI).

The conference is scheduled to take place on June 13 in Tehran, Iran's capital, MEHR news agency reported.

Iran's Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaili will preside over the conference.

During a meeting attended by Culture Ministry officials, Iran's Deputy Director of the Islamic Culture and Relations Organization (ICRO) Hossein Rouzbeh, emphasized the need for all-inclusive cooperation to ensure an excellent meeting.

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) is an intergovernmental organization in Asia that was founded in Tehran in 1985 by leaders from Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey. It serves as a platform for discussions on ways to enhance development and promote trade and investment opportunities.

Girls' Music Conservatory: Preserving Iran's musical heritage

Arts & Culture Desk

The Girls' Music Conservatory in Tehran is a revered institution that has been a symbol of musical education for over a century. Founded in 1914, it is the first music school in Iran, which later became an academy in 1933, two years after adding an advanced course. The tireless efforts and contributions of legendary music teachers, such as Abolhassan Saba, Nasrollah Zarin-Panjeh, Hossein Alizadeh, and Hossein Dehlavi, have left an indelible mark on Iranian music, inspiring the next generation of Iranian musicians.

Conservatory's history

In 1949, the academy became further active in teaching Iranian music, thanks to the efforts of Rouhollah Khaleqi. The Girls' Music Conservatory, which is one of the two branches of the institution after 1979, celebrated its centenary in 2018. Parisa Zehhtabian, the current director, recently spoke about the institution's activities, providing insights into the academy's history and current state.

The conservatory's curriculum encompasses two prominent genres of music: Iranian and classical. Students at the



conservatory learn to play a diverse range of instruments, including eight indigenous Iranian instruments, such as the santoor, qanun, tar, setar, oud, kamancheh, ney, and qeychak, and 12 classical instruments, such as the piano, violin, cello, viola, alto, double bass, flute, oboe, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, and bassoon.

To gain admission to the academy, students must have completed the sixth grade and cleared theory and solfège tests. Additionally, they must undergo a selection process to determine their preferred instrument, which could be one they have been previously trained in or one that

matches their physicality, proclivity, and aptitude, as per the discretion of the jury and professors.

The conservatory's educational books are classified into two categories, including general and specialized courses. While certain course books, such as 'Fundamentals of Iranian Music' and 'Iranian and Global Instrumentation,' have prescribed texts, other courses, such as 'History of World Music,' 'Group Singing,' and 'History of Iranian Music,' are bereft of such textbooks.

Conservatory's current state

The conservatory's educa-

tional system has undergone several transformations since 1972. Currently, a system called the 6.3.3 educational system (six years of elementary courses, three years of intermediate courses, three years of advanced courses) is in place.

The conservatory's halls are adorned with portraits of legendary music teachers who have left an indelible mark on Iranian music. The passion for music is palpable among the students who practice and play outside of class hours on every floor. Almost every classroom has a mirror to help students refine their technique and posture. The conservatory's goal is to secure the cooperation of the finest conservatory professors and financial backing to enable these courses to be available to students in the form of books, thereby facilitating superior education.

Instrument selection

After passing the theory and solfège test, students must undergo an instrument selection process. Participants who have already worked with a particular instrument will take the test on that instrument. However, for those who are new to music, they will be provided with a vari-

ety of instruments to choose from, including piano, guitar, violin, drums, and more.

"Our music teachers will guide them through the process and help them choose an instrument that suits their interests and abilities. We understand that choosing an instrument can be a daunting task, especially for beginners. Therefore, we provide students with the opportunity to try out different instruments before making their final decision," Zehhtabian says.

Future of music education

When asked about the future prospects of music education, the conservatory's director confidently stated that the future luminaries of the music industry are the current students of music conservatories. A significant proportion of the country's musical prospects rests with the graduates of these centers.

In recent years, officials from Iran's Culture Ministry have endeavored to establish music conservatories in various cities. Zehhtabian finds this initiative highly commendable as it caters to the needs of society. However, she notes that numerous students from diverse regions of Iran have applied for music education, but due to the absence of a conservatory in their city, they have either been denied education or forced to relocate to Tehran, which presents its own set of challenges.