

Building cultural bridges: Animation art exhibition connects Iran, Kurdistan – video

Posted on July 4, 2012

Like  Share  3  Tweet  5

7 Votes

In Kurdistan, the Ministry of Culture and the Iranian-British arts organisation ArtRole join forces to show new media art.

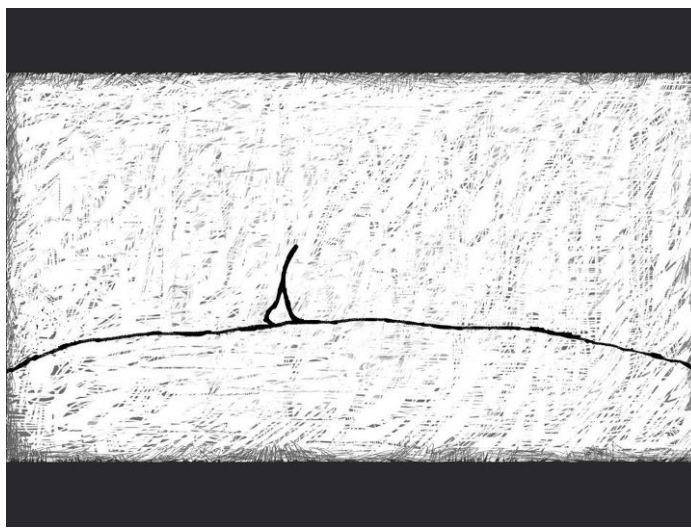
PressTV reporter Dale McEwan was in Erbil, Kurdistan in June 2012 to cover an exhibition of work by Mashaallah Mohammadi, an Iranian-Kurdish painter and animator. Event organisers hope that this exhibition is the first of many cultural exchanges that will bring Iran and Kurdistan closer.

Watch the PressTV report on the June 2012 exhibition, called “Animation & Painting”, below or **click here to watch the video on YouTube.**

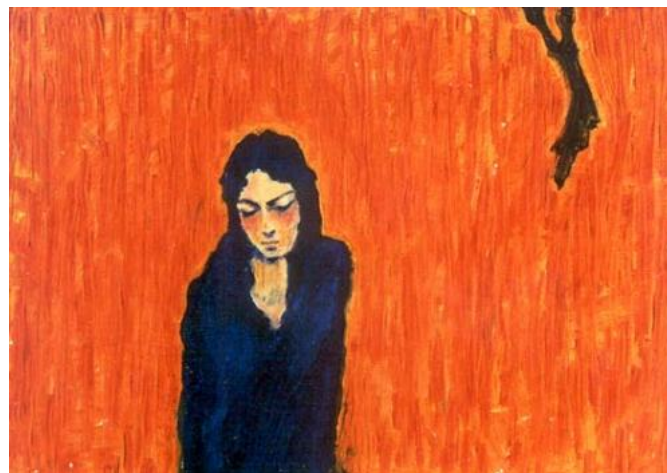
Mohammadi’s message of regional love

The solo exhibition of Mohammadi’s work, named “Animation & Painting”, was presented by Merg Gallery in Erbil, Kurdistan from 17 to 23 June 2012. **Kurdistan** is a roughly-defined geo-cultural region in which the Kurdish ethnic group composes a majority population. It covers parts of Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria.

The show included thirty oil paintings from the early 1970s through 2011 and featured four of the artist’s more recent short animation pieces created between 2004 and 2011. For Mohammadi, a Kurd born in and living in Iran, the overall message of this exhibition is “love for the neighbouring relationship between Iran and the Kurdistan region.” His works explore recurring themes of shared human experiences, ranging from a mother’s love to nature and the disasters of war.



Mashaallah Mohammadi, 'Human Beings', 2009, animation. Part of 'Animation & Painting', at Merg Gallery, Erbil, Kurdistan, Iraq.



Mashaallah Mohammadi, 'Untitled', 2001, oil on canvas, 47 x 67 cm, in Animation & Painting. Part of Merg Gallery, Erbil, Kurdistan, Iraq.

Animation's communicative power

The artist began drawing at the age of twelve but did not start to experiment with animation until 2004. Animation is rooted in drawing and painting, and in his work, Mohammadi draws upon his rich cultural heritage of the region in which he was born: textile design, folk art and calligraphy among other crafts.

Although he still paints, his current focus on animation allows him more freedom to express a simple and direct message. In the animations, which are primarily black and white with snippets of red, he depicts simply-drawn human figures working together to achieve an end or struggling alone against some insurmountable situation.

Click on the video below to watch Mohammadi's recent animation work, *Human Beings* (2009), in which "a man takes a [piece] of ground and adds it to his height and another man". **To watch it on YouTube, click here.**

Diplomacy through art and culture

The show was organised in partnership with Kurdistan's Ministry of

Culture and was sponsored by **ArtRole**, “a local organisation that offers innovative ways for cultural diplomacy by using art and culture as platforms for dialogue and expression among communities,” says Dale McEwan of *PressTV*.

For **Adalet Garmiany**, Director of ArtRole, exhibitions of this kind are imperative to developing strong ties between nations by “using arts and culture, not just political sectors”, particularly in regions such as Iran and Kurdistan. He continues, “It is important to create a platform to build up a connection with the rest of the world.”



Iranian-Kurdish artist Mashaallah Mohammadi.

About Mashaallah Mohammadi

Mashaallah Mohammadi graduated with Bachelor of Arts from the University of Fine Arts in Tehran in the late 1980s. Having participated in over 100 film and art festivals, his work has been exhibited and has won numerous awards in Iran as well as internationally, including **Festival Internazionale del Cinema d'Arte di Bergamo** (Italy; 2011), **World Festival of Animated Film** (Varna, Bulgaria; 2011), **Kazan International Muslim Film Festival** (Kazan; 2011) and **Adelaide Festival Centre** (Australia; 2010). In February 2012, he won the Special Prize for his animation work *Human Beings* at **ZOOM – Zblizenia Art Fair** in Poland.

KF/KN/PR

Related Topics: **Iranian artists, video art, animation, videos**

Related Posts:

- **Video Art: Newfangled or here to stay? 6 must-read Art Radar posts** – June 2012 – as part of our “lists” series, we have collected six of our best video art posts
- **Ayyam Auctions targets young West Asian contemporary art lovers – event alert** - January 2012 – discover what USD7000 can buy for a collector of West Asian art
- **Shirin Neshat’s inspiration from home – TED video** – December 2011 – Neshat describes her experience as a woman growing up in the midst of the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and how this inspires her artwork
- **Japanese artist Hirotoshi Iwasaki draws time with video** –

picture feast – August 2011 – flip book-like works and video pieces
explore time, memory, space

- **Contemporary Art in the Middle East – a first book survey** –
May 2011 – *Art Radar* reviews this comprehensive survey of West
Asian art and artists

Subscribe to *Art Radar* **for more on contemporary art in the Middle East**

This entry was posted in **Animation, Connecting Asia to itself, Gallery shows, Identity art, Iranian, Iraq, Journey art, Mashaallah Mohammadi, Memory, Painting, Social, Video, Videos, War** and tagged **Adalet Garmiany, Adelaide Festival Centre, animation, Animation & Painting, animation art, animation videos, art in Iraq, art video, ArtRole, computer animation, contemporary video art, Festival Internazionale del Cinema d'Arte di Bergamo, Human Beings, Iranian Art, Iranian artist, Iranian contemporary art, Iranian contemporary artists, Iraqi contemporary art galleries, Kazan International Muslim Film Festival, Kristin Franclemont, Kurdish artist, Kurdish artists, Kurdistan, Mashaallah Mohammadi, Merg Gallery, Middle East video, Middle Eastern art, Painting, video animation, Video art, video artist, World Animated Film Festival, ZOOM – Zblizenia Art Fair**. Bookmark the [permalink](#).