



Arthur Miller (American playwright)

The theater is so endlessly fascinating because it's so accidental. It's so much like life.

## OPINION

## I had to take that scary step

By Elham Zahabzadeh\*

It was three minutes to the game, a boring, low-key game for everyone else but a life-changing one for me. A game of basketball between two high school teams in eastern Tehran, around sunset on a rainy autumn day.

I knew the court. I knew every inch of it. "You have been to this court a thousand times," I told myself. "Take that small, tiny step, girl. Go get them." I was stressed out, terrified, not knowing what to do. I was panicked because I felt I lacked the necessary expertise or maturity to do my new job. I was about to officiate the game, for the first time in my life, first of the many to come, hopefully.

"Am I in the right place? Am I good enough for this?" I had been asking myself these questions since early morning as self-doubt was about to get a hold of me. But it was a dream coming true. I didn't want to miss the opportunity under any circumstances. I had always loved being the ultimate authority in the field. What's not to like about authority, really?! The big change I was looking for seemed both close and elusive. It was just a matter of taking that small, tiny step.

"In life, the margin for error is so small – I mean one-half a step too late, or too early, and you don't quite make it. One-half a second too slow, too fast, you don't quite catch it," said Al Pacino in 'Any Given Sunday'.

It was three minutes to the game. I was supposed to take the whistle, go to the middle of the court, and start the game. I'd gotten cold feet. "Should I be here?" I made the final decision and blew the whistle. The game started. Not on its own. I started it. I, cautiously looking, quickly running, panting. Spectators, shouting, screaming, anticipating every move. My officiation partners, making eye-contact with each other, helping me to handle the benches, reviewing the rules. The game was under my control but I was over the moon, excited and anxious at once.

"Keep at it. Just focus on officiating correctly. That's all, not a big deal. You are the god of this little court," I kept reminding myself.

I have been to many games since then. And I am not only satisfied with who I have become, a registered referee for the International Basketball Federation, but also proud of that terrified but resolute Elham who on that rainy autumn day took that last, small step, not leaving me behind with a bag full of regret. A regret of not doing what I always dreamt of doing. A regret which, in the long run, would be even scarier than taking that step.

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## Iran's 'Gallu' among best films at India festival



Iran's 'Gallu,' directed by Kasra Tirsahar, was named the Best Short Film at the Blackboard International Film Festival in India.

'Gallu' won the award jointly with three other films, 'Aicha's Dress' directed by Mohamed Saied, 'L'acte Ultime' by Bernard Asako, and 'Nadie' by Ana Beyron, ifilmv.ir reported.

The film is about a rural man who accidentally finds a piece of meat. And after cooking it, he notices its strange taste. The man crazily searches for another meat that tastes the same, but the quest unleashes a series of catastrophes.

The Indian festival celebrates filmmakers and creators around the world, who take the risk and do experiments in filmmaking.

Tirsahar, who is also producer and composer, studied at the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting University in Tehran.

His first film was named 'Room No. 13,' which brought him the Audience Award at Lift-Off Global Network Sessions Festival in London and the Jury Special Award at New York Film Academy followed by Best Film Award at the International Section of India's Indogma Film Festival where it was also nominated for Best Background Music.

Transforming Novi Sad:  
Serbia's first European Capital of Culture

Serbia's second-largest city Novi Sad was elected as one of the three European capitals of culture for 2022.

A city unique for its history and architecture, but also the hometown of world-known Serbian artists and scientists, Novi Sad enters the New Year with renewed sense of pride as the country's first to receive the honour.

The city joins Kaunas, Lithuania and Esch-sur-Alzette, Luxembourg as the three selections for 2022, euronews.com reported.

Novi Sad is now adorned with lights and projections of the 'For New Bridges' campaign, a play on words at the programmes of new events named after bridges crossing the Danube.

With a calendar of over 1,500 cultural events, the city hopes to further connect its inhabitants and the region's cultural community through "bridges" with the European Union and to reinforce their links with the rest of the Western Balkans area.



canva.com

The new European Capital of Culture will turn its old industrial complexes into galleries, art studios, and theatre stages.

Serbs will also be able to enjoy classical music concerts at the city's concert hall.

"This range of investment in culture didn't occur in the previous 50 years or so in Novi Sad," explains Nemanja Milenković, CEO of the 'Novi Sad 2022' programme.

Along with its newly-won European title, Novi Sad also "won" over

the world-famous violinist Stefan Milenković's heart.

"I'm here because of my family and because it is a challenge for me to participate directly in the life of classical music in Serbia. One of the key factors is, of course, a phenomenal creative climate," Milenković told Euronews.

With this current climate, cultural institutions and independent artists were called to become part of what the organisers called "the beginning of the transformation of Novi Sad".



Crescent moon seen through old palm trees on a Caspian beach at Ramsar, northern Iran

IRAN DAILY

Jaipur Literature Festival  
postponed amid surge  
in India's COVID cases

The 15th edition of the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF), scheduled to run between January 28 and February 1, has now been postponed to March 5-14 in view of the rising number of COVID cases in India, the organisers said on Friday.



jaipurliteraturefestival.org

About 250 authors, thinkers, politicians and popular culture icons across the world are expected to participate in the festival, which will be held in hybrid mode. It will be virtual from March 5 to 9, and in-person from March 10 to 14, business-standard.com wrote.

"Keeping in mind the advent of the new variant and the sharp rise in the number of cases across the country, we have thought it best to reschedule the festival and hold it in March 2022. We remain committed to bring the festival back to Jaipur as an on-ground, immersive experience, promoting dialogue, discussion and debate on books and ideas," festival producer Sanjoy K Roy said in a statement.

India recorded 1,17,100 new cases of COVID-19 on Friday as the virus continues to spread at a blistering pace, largely driven by the virulent Omicron variant.

The festival this year will also witness a shift from its traditional venue Diggi Palace to Hotel Clarks Amber, Jaipur with added facilities to accommodate footfalls and follow COVID-19 safety protocols according to government guidelines.

Turkish bestselling novelist Elif Shafak, Hollywood actor-writer Rupert Everett, award-winning Sri Lankan writer Shehan Karunatilaka, eminent Jamaican poet Kei Miller, Booker Prize winner Damon Galgut, 2003 Booker Prize winner DBC Pierre British and historian-biographer Andrew Lowrie are among those participating in the event.

'Art Treasure'  
exhibition to host  
250 Iranian artworks

Arts &amp; Culture Desk

A group exhibition entitled, 'Art Treasure,' featuring 250 works from 132 young artists, will open at Khiale Sharqi Gallery in Saba Art and Cultural Institute, Tehran, on January 9.



IRNA

The show will run through January 11, according to IRNA.

The exhibition will cover various fields of art and calligraphy.

The artworks are made with different approaches and techniques.

Parvin Me'raji, the founder of Naqsh-e Honar Institute, and Arghavan Afsharian, the curator of visual arts exhibitions, will hold the exhibition with the aim of introducing creativity and innovation among young artists.

Mohammadreza Ahmadzadeh, Maryam Doosti, Sara Alipour, and Roya Gholami are among the artists whose works will be on display.

Art lovers can visit the exhibition from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.