

“The War Is Still Alive” by Fatemeh Behbudi picked for Italy’s Biennial of Female Photography

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Culture



TEHRAN – Italy’s Biennial of Female Photography has selected Iranian photographer Fatemeh Behbudi’s collection “The War Is Still Alive” showcase at its second edition.

The biennial, which will also put on view collections by Tami Aftab, Sarah Blesener, Betty Colombo, Solmaz Daryani, Delphine Diallo, Esther Ruth Mbabazi, Myriam Meloni, Ilvy Njiokiktjien and Flavia Rossi, is scheduled to take place in the Italian city of Mantua from March 3 to 27.

In “The War Is Still Alive”, Behbudi focuses on the aftermath of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war and its victims who never returned to their normal lives: their wounds have not healed even after more than 30 years.

Over three decades have passed since the end of the Iran-Iraq war, but many mothers are still waiting for the return of the remains of lost sons who perished during the war.

Over 30 years have passed since the end of the war, but children and many people in the border towns of Iran are still the victims of buried landmines in the soil.

The war began in 1980 with Iraq invading the international border of Iran and lasted eight years, becoming one of the deadliest in history with one million deaths.

Behbudi grew up in the middle of the conflict, and her childhood was deeply affected by the pervasive sense of fear, the sounds of emergency sirens and bombs and the escalating number of deaths.

While the war was formally over in 1988, the reality of those who survived was much different. Thirty years on, the lasting trauma of the conflict shows up increasingly.

Behbudi was added to Hundred Heroines, a pioneering list of global women photographers initiated by the Royal Photographic Society in 2018 to mark the centenary of the women's right to vote in the UK by identifying outstanding female photographers from around the globe.

She is also the photographer of the acclaimed series "Waiting Mothers", which focuses on those Iranian women who have lost their children during the war.

Legacy is the theme of the Biennial of Female Photography.

"Looking at the inner lives of families, our DNA, the current debate on our environmental impact, as well as our architectural and cultural heritage, we reflect on the idea of legacy," the organizers said in a statement.

"What did previous generations leave us? And what will we do with it as a consequence?... We did not reach this present (only) because of choices outside our immediate control, but because the world's current complexity is due to the interweaving of people's arbitrary and willful decisions. Our present and our future are children of the past. And the choices of today set the basis for our tomorrow."

Photo: A photo from Iranian photographer Fatemeh Behbudi's series "The War Is Still Alive".

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