

Professional scientific sessions for art, architecture and urban planning Thursday evenings

Held in: Conference hall of Herampey Consulting Engineers

Date: 05.10.2017

Title: Religious Theatre and simulated presentations.

Speakers and panel members: Mr. A. Kamiabi Mask, Mr. A. Atrchi and Mrs. I. Diba.

The first speaker was Mr. Kamiabi Mask. He began his speech talking about the role that arts in general and theatre in particular have had in the history of the human life and civilization. Almost all of the researchers and historians on art agree that arts and especially the theatre has their root in religious beliefs. He also added that human religious, political and social thoughts have always been expressed in artistic fields, like painting, music, sculpture, architecture, literature and theatre.

If we agree that the origin of the theatre has to be found in ancient Greece, we can see that it expressed the relationship between their gods and men. After the advent of the Christianity and the prohibition of theatre in Greece for over three centuries, the popular presentations were organized in front of the churches and urban centers, by ambulant actors, telling the story of Jesus Christ's and his disciples passion. This type of presentation was authorized also inside the churches.

After the Renaissance and especially in the 17th century, writers, artists and actors created a presentation called classic theatre by copying the Greek theatre style and spirit, dedicating it to love, historical and epic episodes of human society. Mr. Kamiabi Mask continued to present the process of theatre evolution in Europe, then beginning to talk about the history of theatre in Iran.

Mr. Kamiabi Mask explained that in Iran because of numerous invasions and crimes committed by savage tribes, the Iranians have not experienced long period of peace and stability, and consequently political, economic and cultural wellness. Of course in the short peace and stability periods the Iranians succeeded to create great masterpieces that included also the theatre, touching religious and social arguments and spheres. The religious presentations were especially used to introduce and present the newly accepted religion of Islam. In other cases the people used the theatre to express the problems that for many centuries caused many problems to the Iranian society.

Coming to the last period of fifty years Mr. Kamiabi Mask explained how researchers beginning from Dr. Ali Shariati and others tried and worked to present, classify and explain the theatre as an art and popular manifestations. Many books have been published, many conferences and seminars have been dedicated to the theatre, that shows the great interest that the Iranian society has toward this art.

During the last decades the artists have dedicated many of their presentations to stories caught from stories of Holy Defense and also stories of Ashura historic event. Mr. Kamiabi Mask explained how and why this kind of presentation should be classified as religious presentation.

Continuing his speech Mr. Kamiabi Mask presented the general rules that in his opinion had to be used for the classification, interpretation and understanding of the theatre.

Mr. Kamiabi Mask talked about the relationship that exists between art and religion, the diversities, the common points, the religious components of the theatre. He also talked about the religious personalities in theatre, its content and subject.

Talking about the contemporary theatre in Iran he explained how the authorities tried their best to ensure and improve the existence of the theatre in Iran. He said that many traditional and religious events had been organized, how festivals and manifestations with the participation of local and foreign artists and groups had been organized, in order to create the necessary relationship that the local artists need to improve their activity and capacities.

Mr. kamiabi Mask presented a short history of the religious-traditional-popular theatre in Iran called Ta'zieh. This kind of religious presentation is very popular in Iran, because through the Ta'zieh they tell the story of martyrdom of Imam Hussein and his followers. In Iran Ta'zieh has different characteristics in every region and it shows how it is popular and has deep roots in the Iranian society and their religious believes. Talking about the precedent regime of Shah in Iran, Mr. kamiabi Mask explained how Shah had prohibited the presentations of Ta'zieh and how despite the prohibition the people continued the presentations, especially in the rural areas where the religious believe of the people was stronger and genuine.

Mr. Kamiabi Mask added that during the precedent regime, Shah had decided to permit also the presentations of Ta'zieh, thinking that it would be interpreted as a religious and artistic tolerance of his regime.

Concluding his speech Mr. Kamiabi Mask added that the field of theatre in Iran needs to be studied in his different aspects and characteristics.

The speech was concluded by the presentation of parts of Shahname by Mr. Atrchi and Mrs. Diba, welcomed sincerely by the presents.