

AGENDA

LEBANON

DANCE

'Aita'
Masrah al-Madina, Saroulla Center, Hamra Street, Hamra, Beirut
November 15, 8:30 p.m.
+961 1 360 251
The roving contemporary arts festival Meeting Points 5 presents Moroccan dancer and choreographer Bouchra Ouizguen's "Aita." Ouizguen's dance is inspired by traditional singers whose wails and incantations are subject to admiration and scorn.

MUSIC

Ziad Rahbani and Friends
Club Social, Mar Maroun Street, Gemmayzeh, Beirut
November 19, 22 and 26, 9:30 p.m.
+961 1 562 424
Ziad Rahbani presents a series at Club Social with Armen Hyunsunts on tenor sax, Yervand Markaryan on trumpet, Avo Tutunjian on alto sax, Fuad Afra on drums and Khaled Omran on bass.

THEATER

'The Rubbish Heads'
Ain al-Mreisseh and Sanayeh Garden, Beirut
November 15-16, 4 p.m.
+961 3 614 355
The Beirut Street Festival continues with an interactive street animation by the UK's Desperate Men Theater, being presented on Thursday in Ain al-Mreisseh and on Friday in the Sanayeh Garden.

ART

'Coup d'Oeil au Feminin'
Galerie Janine Rubeiz, Majdalani Building, Raouche, Beirut
Until November 30
+961 1 868 290
Galerie Janine Rubeiz hangs work by Yvette Achkar, Etel Adnan, Huguette Caland and Laure Ghorayeb.

JORDAN

PHOTOGRAPHY

Said Nuseibeh
Dar al-Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, Amman
Until November 27
+962 6 464 3251
Dar al-Funun presents an exhibition by Palestinian-American photographer Said Nuseibeh that focuses on the spirituality and modernity of two Umayyad mosques.

UAE

ART

Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian
The Third Line, Al-Quoz, Dubai
Until November 15
+971 4 341 1367
The ornamentation of Islamic architecture meets abstract expressionism and minimalism in Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian's retrospective entitled "Recollection" at the Third Line.

Fereydoon Ave
B21 Progressive Art Gallery, Al-Quoz, Dubai
Until November 16
+971 4 340 3965
Iranian artist Fereydoon Ave opens an exhibition of mixed-media portraits entitled "Lal Dahlias 07," inspired by a pair of paintings by Cy Twombly.

Just a thought

There is more than one way to burn a book. And the world is full of people running about with lit matches.

Ray Bradbury (1920 -), American writer

One man's filth is another's tour de force

'How Free Is Art?' symposium in Beirut stirs up passionate if sometimes unfocused declamation and debate

Jim Quilty
Daily Star staff

BEIRUT: Censorship is one of those topics that never seems to go stale. It occupies the space between postindustrial societies' two contesting values – "individual freedom" and "the common good." Discussion about restricting artistic expression is as fraught as that of media censorship. This is particularly true in Lebanon, where secular-humanist individualism clashes particularly loudly against the sectarian state.

So the debate during the symposium "How Free Is Art? Censorship of Cultural Expression in the Middle East" was lively. Beirut's Goethe Institute organized the two-day event, along with Umam Documentation and Research and Alexandria's Anna Lindh Foundation. The event was interesting for the breadth of voices it assembled, with local artists and cultural workers rubbing shoulders with a smattering of journalists, academics and state and religious functionaries from Lebanon and abroad. As you might expect, the symposium stirred up some passionate, if sometimes unfocused, declamation and debate.

Since the event had such a strong German flavor, it seemed only appropriate that a German deliver the keynote address. Roland Seim is a writer, editor and sociology lecturer at the University of Muenster. His paper "Censorship Shall Not Fake Place; Even in Popular Culture?" suggested one European model for censorship against which the Arab participants could gauge their own experiences.

Seim's paper invoked the tension between the freedom of speech embedded in the German Constitution and the practical necessity of proscribing certain behavior. Censorship in the German context is, he argues, an ambiguous process because as soon as authorities issue an index of cultural

products to be restricted or banned, it becomes a shopping list for those titillated by their transgressive nature.

At present, Seim informed his audience, there are some 15,000 videos, books, comics, records, computer games and Internet sites indexed by Germany's Federal Office for the Control of Publications Harmful to Youth – a body staffed by members of "socially relevant interest groups, such as churches, youth-welfare organizations, teachers, publishers and distributors" – and so forth and so on. Among those in-

Given the weight of Holocaust war guilt in the German consciousness, it's perhaps no surprise that some among the Lebanese were interested in German attitudes toward criticism of the state of Israel and its policies in Palestine.

The symposium's opening panel, dedicated to "Art Legislation and Freedom of Expression," provoked lively discussion. Represented were Lebanon's advertising sector (Public Arena's Ibrahim Eid), as were the NGO communities in Lebanon (Article 19's Sarah Richani) and Jordan (Cultural

sorship bureau.

The official's delivery betrayed traces of both defiance and defensiveness and, though he emphasized that he and his colleagues are only state employees, he tended to justify their interdicts in personal and moralizing terms – detailing the sort of films that his staff have censored, for instance, and remarking: "Would any parent allow their children to watch such a thing?"

Asmar was vocal throughout the symposium, often replying to remarks arising from Lebanese artists, journalists



The two-day symposium tackled the always-sensitive issue of restricting artistic expression.

dexed are such familiar book titles as Bret Easton Ellis' "American Psycho" and William S. Burroughs' "Naked Lunch."

The creme de la creme of the proscribed material are the 600 titles that the German courts have banned outright for reasons of pornography, glorification of violence, libel or hate speech. The state is particularly sensitive about limiting the freedom of any expression deemed Nazi propaganda – understandable, perhaps, given Germany's unfortunate experience with national socialism. Seim pointed out that hundreds of print and audiovisual titles have been banned as "xenophobic, hate speech, right-wing extremism, race hatred theories of Jewish conspiracy or because they question the Holocaust or German war guilt."

Resources' Basma al-Husseini) and Egypt's academic community (AUC sociologist Samia Merhez), but the Beirut audience's attention was drawn to Major Eli Asmar, deputy director of the General Directorate of Lebanon's Surete Generale and the chief of its censorship bureau.

Asmar's presentation described how censorship works in Lebanon – the basic division between newspapers and publications on one hand and film, theater, television and DVDs on the other. He took pains to underline that Lebanon's censorship is not arbitrarily imposed but grounded in law – quite a liberal reading of the Lebanese penal code, in fact – that decisions didn't stem from him alone but emerged after discussions with the other ("university-educated") officers working at the cen-

sorship bureau. During the question period, Lebanese cultural journalist Pierre Abi Saab remarked upon the paternalistic tone and content of Asmar's presentation, observing: "You speak as an employee but you speak like a legislator. With all respect, it's irrelevant to us what sort of movies you want your children to watch."

The question period became incendiary after Roger Assaf (founder of the Shams collective and the Sunflower Theater) asked Asmar why producers have to pay a fee of \$100 to be censored. Asmar replied that these fees are only \$100,000 and defied anyone who would accuse him of taking bribes.

The spirited audience response was reiterated the next morning during the panel

'Bureaucratic error' sees banned book printed in Iran

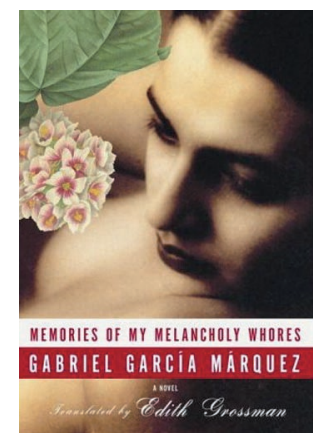
TEHRAN: Iran has banned the latest novel by celebrated Colombian writer Gabriel Garcia Marquez, saying the initial publication of "Memories of My Melancholy Whores" was a bureaucratic error, the Fars news agency reported Wednesday.

The Culture Ministry refused to issue a permit for the reprinting of the book, whose Farsi translation appeared under the slightly more cautious title "Memories of My Melancholy Sweethearts," the agency said. The cultural official responsible for originally authorizing the book's publication has been sacked, it said.

The first edition of around 5,000 copies, which hit bookshops three weeks ago, has already sold out.

"The publication of this book was an error," an unnamed cultural official was quoted as saying. "This kind of thing can happen when 50,000 books are published every year in Iran."

All publications in Iran must be approved by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance and publishers have complained of tighter literary censorship since President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad came to power.



The cover of the offending book.

The novel tells the story of a nonagenarian who decides to celebrate his old age by treating himself to a night with an adolescent virgin.

The book has angered conservatives in the Islamic republic, which applies tough screening on music, books and movies to see if they are in line with Islamic values.

Marquez is one of the most popular writers in Iran, which has published many of his works such as "One Hundred Years of Solitude," "Love in the Time of Cholera" and "Chronicle of a Death Foretold."

"One Hundred Years of Solitude" was banned for years in the Islamic republic but expensive photocopies and second-hand copies of its first Farsi edition could be bought on the black market. – AFP

Hamas police band 'boosts the spirits and encourages the forces'

Nidal al-Mughrabi
Reuters

GAZA: Wearing blue camouflage fatigues and crooning about Islamic holy war, the five members of Hamas' Protectors of the Homeland police band are trying to boost morale in Gaza with an arsenal of anti-Israel numbers.

Standing bolt upright and staring straight ahead in their Hamas uniforms, the bearded men – in their twenties and thirties – are not quite Gaza's answer to boy bands like the Backstreet Boys or N Sync.

"Our duties are to boost the spirits with entertainment and encourage the forces," Hussam Abu Abdou says after a band rehearsal at the Hamas-run police headquarters in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas' top police commander, Jamal al-Jarrah, who is wanted by Israel, formed the band after the Islamist group seized control of Gaza in June following violent clashes with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' secular Fatah faction.

Israel and its allies shun Hamas for its refusal to renounce violence. The result has been the near total closure of

Gaza's borders since Hamas seized the enclave.

The policemen shun the bump-and-grind dancing and sugary love songs favored by boy bands around the world. They sing about heroic fighters, Islamic values and love of the homeland, all recorded over backing tracks played from a laptop computer.

"O Jerusalem, rest assured we are the sacrifice," goes one song. "I will not retreat from my jihad, I will not back down."

Abdu says the band hopes to bolster morale in the impoverished territory of 1.5 million people, which is facing economic collapse due to the blockade.

The men spend most days rehearsing in Gaza City's police headquarters, which was home to Abbas' security forces until Hamas took over. A photograph of Abbas' predecessor, Yasser Arafat, still hangs on the wall behind them as they sing.

The band performs for police units in Gaza and at public functions such as police graduation ceremonies. They also sing and perform short anti-crime skits in jails to "entertain and educate" prisoners.

Amnesty International has

accused Hamas' security services, as well as their Fatah counterparts in the occupied West Bank, of abusing human rights and Israel has attacked police posts in Gaza recently, describing them as "terrorist positions."

Hamas has its own satellite TV channel, radio station and newspapers and has used its influence in the media to garner political support during its power struggle with Fatah.

Hamas' Al-Aqsa Television earlier this year aired a weekly show featuring a Mickey Mouse look-alike who urged children to support armed resistance against Israel, prompting complaints by Israeli watchdogs and international scrutiny.

The character was beaten to death in the show's final episode by a character portraying an Israeli.

The Protectors of the Homeland hope to boost their influence by releasing a cassette of their music, and are working on a video clip to showcase work done by Gaza's police force.

"We aim to entertain," Abdu says, "to help ease the people's suffering and at the same time we deliver a message about morals and values."

STAR SCENE



Amanul Farouque and Jawad Adra



Jayantha Dhanapala and Abdallah Bouhabib



Julianne Bouhabib, Niloufer Farouque and Maureen Dhanapala



Edmond Saab and Samir al-Daher

Sri Lankan ambassador to Lebanon hosts get-together at home

BEIRUT: Sri Lankan Ambassador Amanul Farouque hosted an intimate gathering at his residence in Baabda last week. Attending the reception were Niloufer Farouque, Jawad Adra, Jayantha and Maureen Dhanapala, Abdallah and Julianne Bouhabib, Edmond Saab and Samir al-Daher.

HOROSCOPE

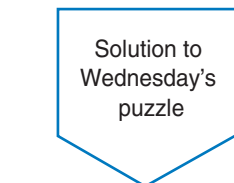
Aries (Mar. 21 – April 19) Spend some time with friends who are positive and supportive. Your ego could use a boost. But then get down to business. You will not impress anyone by behaving like a petulant child.	Taurus (April 20 – May 20) Make sure all your personal and financial documents are in order. You may need them one of these days. Get some sound advice from an elder you respect on an issue of some urgency.	Gemini (May 21 – June 21) Problems with gas, oil, or water in your home may disrupt your routine. Your willingness to help others can lead to fatigue. An older member of your family may have left you with a pressing situation.
Cancer (June 22 – July 22) Opportunities will develop through those you encounter while attending organizational events. Be honest when dealing with your mate. Go over your finances and figure out a solid budget.	Leo (July 23 – Aug. 22) You will be in an overly generous mood today. Your colleagues will love you for it, but don't expect anything from them in return. Learn some new skills that will increase your earning potential.	Virgo (Aug. 23 – Sept. 22) You will feel the need to be vocal today. Your health may have suffered due to neglect or abuse but you are firmly on the path to recovery. Starting your own business is a great idea, but don't do it just yet.
Libra (Sept. 23 – Oct. 22) Don't believe everything you hear today, and don't overreact to friends and lovers who are showing signs of exhaustion and fatigue. Minor accidents are likely if you take risks.	Scorpio (Oct. 23 – Nov. 21) Too much talk and not enough action has made you feel somewhat useless. Get over it and get some work done. Tend to family matters, especially those of a scandalous nature.	Sagittarius (Nov. 22 – Dec. 21) Someone you work with may be trying to steal the limelight. Who cares? Let them. You are not after fame but a career you can be proud of. Don't be disappointed if you don't get your way at home today.
Capricorn (Dec. 22 – Jan. 19) Lay your cards on the table today. The time has come to show what you've got. Talk to your partner or best mate and tell them how you feel. Intimate gestures will make a huge difference.	Aquarius (Jan. 20 – Feb. 18) You will do best to avoid social gatherings for now. You will be more satisfied with yourself if you are satisfied with your work. Your financial situation will stabilize through compromise.	Pisces (Feb. 19 – Mar. 20) Relationships of a romantic nature may not be going well these days. You have to remember that you can't mold a real person into an ideal image. Friends and family may be worried about you.

su do ku

Sudoku is neither a mathematical nor arithmetical puzzle. It is a logic puzzle. Each sudoku puzzle consists of a 9 x 9 grid that has been subdivided into 9 smaller grids of 3 x 3 squares. To solve the puzzle, fill in the grid so that every row, every column, and every 3 x 3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9. In each row, column and box the numbers 1-9 can only appear once. To make a start, look at each of the boxes and see which squares are empty, at the same time checking that square's column and row for a missing number. Every sudoku has a logical and unique solution.

		6		9	1	2		
	8			4				
		1				5	9	
4					7		2	
	2			9				1
	9	5				7		
					8			6
		8	3	5		9		

30



31