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12 || WEEKEND REVIEW

TOWN TALK

Poetry in bronze — Persian style

Parviz Tanavoli: Film looks at Vancouver-based artist, who is considered to be Iran's greatest living sculptor



Malcolm Parry

GO BIG: Members of the Persian community filled Kay Meek Centre recently to see Poetry In Bronze, director Terrence Turner's documentary on West Vancouver-based Parviz Tanavoli. Considered by many to be Iran's greatest living sculptor, and exhibited at art museums worldwide, Tanavoli has yet to have work shown at the Vancouver Art Gallery. Perhaps rapprochement with Iran will ease that.

Nader and Mana Mobargha's extensive Persian-art collection already includes several Tanavoli pieces. More will be exhibited — albeit privately — when the Mobarghas occupy a 20,000-square-foot house under construction. Its high British Properties locale will counter their home in Baku that, at minus-28 metres altitude, is the world's lowest-lying large city. That Azerbaijani capital contains such spectacular, 200-metre-range buildings as the three aptly named Flame Towers and the sinuously twisting Socar Tower.

Such monumentalism is vieux chapeau for the Mobargha home's architect, **Hossein Amanat**, who designed Tehran's white-marble Azadi (Freedom) Tower at age 24. The 1971 fusion of pre- and post-Islamic themes lost its original name, Shahyad Tower (King's Memorial Tower), in 1979. That's when the expulsion of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi precipitated an exodus of those like Tanavoli who would enhance culture, business and the professions here.

ON THE METER: Persian expats attending Tanavoli's post-show reception at Café Ça Va were amused by Mana Mobargha's orange-and-white patent purse. It featured the rear-trunk logo of Iran's once-ubiquitous Paykan car. Derived from Britain's 1965 Hillman Hunter model and built until 2005, the Paykan — meaning "arrow" — dominated Tehran's taxi fleet.

SMALL DINNER, BIG TIP: After consuming mushroom soup, sablefish and berry compote in the Vancouver Art Gallery lobby, 170 diners left \$500,000 on the table. Chaired by VAG trustee **Amelia Gao** and Institute of Asia Art adjunct director **Zheng Shengtian**, the dinner-auction benefited the IAA, which debuted in 2014 following two major exhibitions of Chinese works. Its 13-lot sale saw \$125,000 bid for **Xu Bing's**

A \$20 matchmaking event Feb. 17, wine and chocolate included, is titled: What Can Love Teach Us In Business? One answer: Trouble with a capital T

for this year's six Crazy8's film-makers included selected movies produced at earlier tournaments. The 1999-founded program's title is fitting as auteurs, chosen from 100 or so annual applicants, get \$1,000 and in-kind support to shoot, edit and release their short epics in eight days flat. They'll be screened during a gala at The Centre Feb. 27. Not so crazy is that many past participants now enjoy careers in mainstream moviedom.

ACT TO FOLLOW: Greeting the Rio audience with fellow actor **Omari Newton**, **Luvia Petersen** had hurried back from L.A.'s job-hunting pilot season to book two Vancouver films "because there's so much work here." Credit the tanking loonie for that. As for the duo's interactive shtick — she's known for the Continuum series, he for Blue Mountain State — one might wish to see them do it onscreen together.

SAINTS GO MARCHING OUT: Whatever their plans for offspring may be, 2014 wedding-of-the-year couple **Joseph Fung** and **Michelle Tam** do have school in mind. Naming it for his family's Fairchild Group, St. George's private-school grad Joseph founded Hong Kong's Fairchild Canadian Academy recently. Meanwhile, ever-detail-oriented papa **Thomas** broke from overseeing extensive property and broadcast-media concerns to relish his three-outlet Saint Germain operation snagging top marks as the Chinese Restaurant Awards' best bakery.

FEEL THE BURN: City Hall's jive talk aside, it's not so long since Vancouver's "brand" entailed a family with one average wage-earner needing maybe three years' income to buy a lightly taxed home and, leaving its doors unlocked, take uncongested Sunday drives over litter-pothole-and-gunshot-free streets to "green" countryside close by.



PHOTOS: MALCOLM PARRY/VANCOUVER SUN

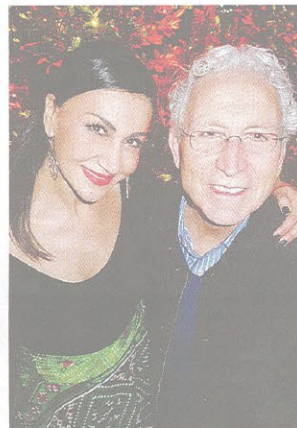
Directors Patrick Currie, Shannon Kohli and Jesse Lupini will have eight days to shoot, edit and complete their short films for screening at the Crazy8's tournament gala Feb. 27.



Collectors Nader and Mana Mobargha feted fellow Persian Parviz Tanavoli when the Poetry in Bronze documentary about him was screened.



Elements of Vancouver Art Gallery's MashUp show backed Amelia Gao and Zheng Shengtian at an Institute of Asian Art benefit.



Pictured with 2014 bride Michelle Tam, Joseph Fung put his firm's Fairchild name to a school he's building in Hong Kong.