

BEYOND A CANVAS: EYES ON THE WORK OF NATURE

CLIMATE CHANGE,
NATURE & BIODIVERSITY LOSS,
POLLUTION & WASTE



UNITED NATIONS
ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN



A GROUP ART EXHIBITION ON THE TRIPLE PLANETARY CRISIS



BEYOND THE CANVAS: EYES ON THE WORK OF NATURE



9-17 AUGUST, 2024



TEHRAN, IRAN

This initiative brings together 36 works of art by 18 Iranian artists, shedding light on our global environmental challenges as seen through the lens of the three interlinked crises that our planet faces today: climate change, nature & biodiversity loss, and pollution & waste.

This exhibition is jointly organized by the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the UN Information Centre (UNIC) in Iran, in partnership with Ech Art Gallery and Artunity.





Disclaimer: The individual views and opinions expressed by the implementing partners, artists and creators that have contributed to the exhibition are solely their own and do not necessarily reflect those of the United Nations. The United Nations is not liable for any misunderstandings or misinterpretations. Included facts, information and statistics only represent a fraction of challenges faced by our planet.

Foreword

By Stefan Priesner, UN Resident Coordinator

It is a pleasure for me to be sharing this digital brochure, which showcases the innovative multi-stakeholder partnership that the UN in the I.R. of Iran has curated over the past months. The exhibition before you – titled “Beyond a Canvas: Eyes on the Work of Nature” – is a visual and informative journey through the state of our planet as seen through the lens of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste.

As we navigate through the exhibit, it is clear that humanity has pushed nature to the brink. We need an all-of-society approach to ensure the well-being of our planet – today, and for future generations. Nature is strong, and solutions exists. From an individual, personal level, to the private sector, civil society, governments, and international organizations, all must act.

Awareness-raising and constructive dialogue on our shared environmental challenges is a foundational effort if we are to tackle the triple planetary crisis. When we know the facts, that is when we can take informed actions in support of nature and its inhabitants.

In just over a month, Member States of the UN will convene in New York for the Summit of the Future. This event is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to reform and reinvigorate the global multilateral system and place us on the right path towards a genuinely sustainable and equitable future for all. The triple planetary crisis will be a key topic at the summit, and the world watches with anticipation for urgent and effective outcomes.

I would like to thank all the 18 artists and creators that have shared their passion and creativity with us for this important cause. A special gratitude also to the project's implementing partners, ECH Art Gallery and Artunity for their partnership in bringing this idea to life.

I would also like to thank our colleagues from the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and in UN Information Centre (UNIC) in Iran for organizing this important and creative endeavor, which was originally planned for June 2024 - in commemoration of the World Environment Day on June 5 - but had to be postponed due to external constraints.

UNDP together with other UN sister agencies, funds, and programmes, works closely with national and international partners to promote the integration of environment-friendly policies into all sectors. We advocate for improved management of natural resources and biodiversity conservation and strive to increase national capacities to address climate action, including through international advocacy for climate finance.

We look forward to more such initiatives with your continued support and friendship in the coming months and years.

Tehran | August 2024



The Statement

Step into a passage where art meets urgency, where each brushstroke and sculpture speaks volumes about the pressing environmental crises the world faces. This exhibition invites you to journey through the critical themes of climate change, the fragility of our nature and biodiversity, and the overwhelming impact of pollution and waste.

As you explore through these works of art, you will encounter thought-provoking pieces that challenge us to reflect on our relationship with nature and our role in its preservation. These artworks are more than just visual experiences; they are calls to action, urging us to acknowledge the severity of our environmental challenges as a global community, and to work collectively towards sustainable solutions.

Across the world, humanity has pushed nature into a corner. But nature is strong, and with our active role, it can bounce back. We need an all-of-society-approach to move from living at odds with nature, to living in harmony with it. Everyone has a role to play.

This initiative is organized by the UNDP and UNIC in Iran, in partnership with Artunity and Ech Art Gallery.

Together, we aim to raise awareness and inspire meaningful conversations about the future of our planet's precious environment.





The Artists

Mehrdad Aboutalebi

Mitra Aminaei

Haniyeh Azmoodeh

Yasaman Bazargan

Eli Ebrahimpour

Neda Estaki

Mirmohammad Fatahi

Neda Ghayoori

Amir Hesari

Amirali Izadi

Neda Jalili

Mahsa Karimi

Neda Mobarra

Zahra Nouri Zonouz

Pooneh Oshidari

Mousa Rabbani

Pegah Rajamand

Mohammad Seymari



The Artworks

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather, altering ecosystems. Human activities, mainly energy use, industry, transport, buildings, and agriculture, are the main drivers of these changes.

Consequences include more intense droughts, water scarcity, wildfires, rising sea levels, flooding, melting ice, severe storms, and declining biodiversity.



Neda Jalili

2023 was the warmest year on record. Humanity is using the equivalent of 1.6 Earths to maintain its current way of life and ecosystems cannot keep up with our demands.

Cities account for 75% of global resource and energy use, and produce at least 60% of greenhouse gas emissions. Cities across our planet are the source of more than half of global waste.



Pegah Rajamand

Energy systems drive economies and sustain societies. However, the transformation and use of energy is the single biggest contributor to global warming. Renewable energy is key for a sustainable future.



Haniyeh Azmoodeh

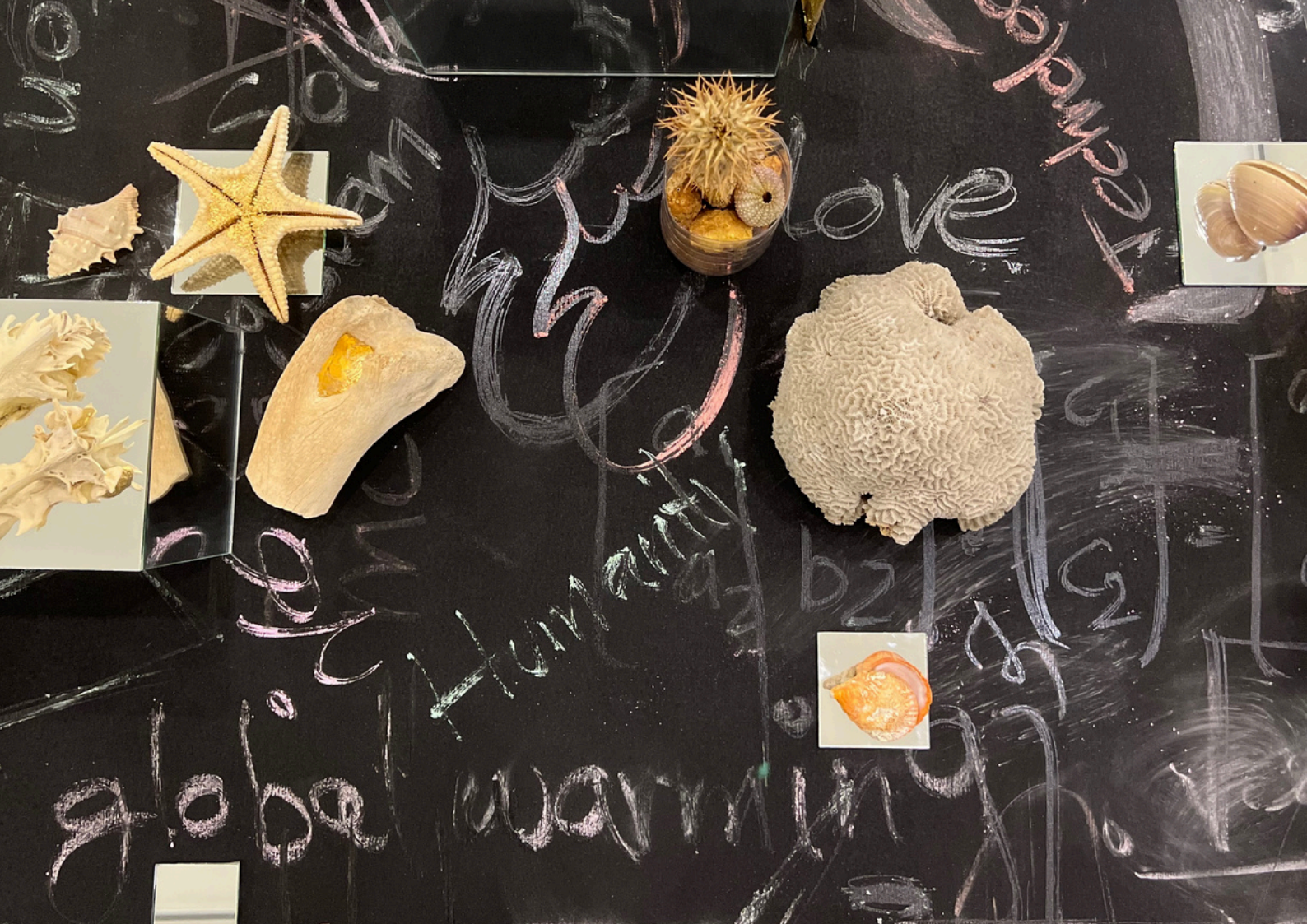
Forests are critical ecosystems, providing habitats for most of the planet's species and livelihoods for nearly one billion people. Healthy forests play a crucial role in mitigating climate change by acting as carbon sinks, absorbing billions of metric tonnes of CO₂ annually. However, they are under threat due to deforestation and degradation.

Did you know that trees in urban areas can cool the air by up to 5°C, reducing air conditioning needs by 25 percent?



Mehrdad Aboutalebi

While a third of humanity faces food insecurity, an equivalent of one billion meals go to waste every day. Food loss and waste contribute to up to 10 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions.



Amirali Izadi

NATURE AND BIODIVERSITY LOSS

Biodiversity loss is the decline of animals, plants, and ecosystems. Some of the causes include overfishing, habitat loss such as deforestation, and desertification due to climate change.

Biodiversity is the baseline for everything on the planet – as in the end we are all interlinked. Biodiversity loss impacts food supplies and access to clean water – without it we have no future on our planet.



Mahsa Karimi

Animals play a vital role in ecosystems, contributing to biodiversity, nutrient cycles, and ecosystem stability. They serve as pollinators, seed dispersers, predators, and prey, shaping the dynamics of natural communities. But, today, one million of the world's estimated 8 million species of plants and animals are threatened with extinction.



Pooneh Oshidari

Around 3.2 billion people, or 40 percent of the global population, are adversely affected by land degradation. Every five seconds, the equivalent of one football pitch of soil is eroded. Yet, it takes 1,000 years to generate 3 centimeters of topsoil.



Haniyeh Azmoodeh

Freshwater ecosystems underpin all human social and economic activity. They are vital for supporting the web of life on Earth. Lakes, rivers and wetlands hold 20–30 percent of global carbon despite occupying only 5–8 percent of its land surface.



Mitra Aminaei

About 1 in 8 people make their livelihoods from wetlands in ways that also deliver food, water supplies, transport and leisure. Yet, wetlands are among the ecosystems with the highest rates of decline, loss and degradation.



Neda Ghayoori

One million species of wild flora and fauna are at risk of extinction. This is while wild Fauna and Flora are an indispensable source of food, shelter and income for hundreds of millions around the world.



Yassaman Bazargan

POLLUTION AND WASTE

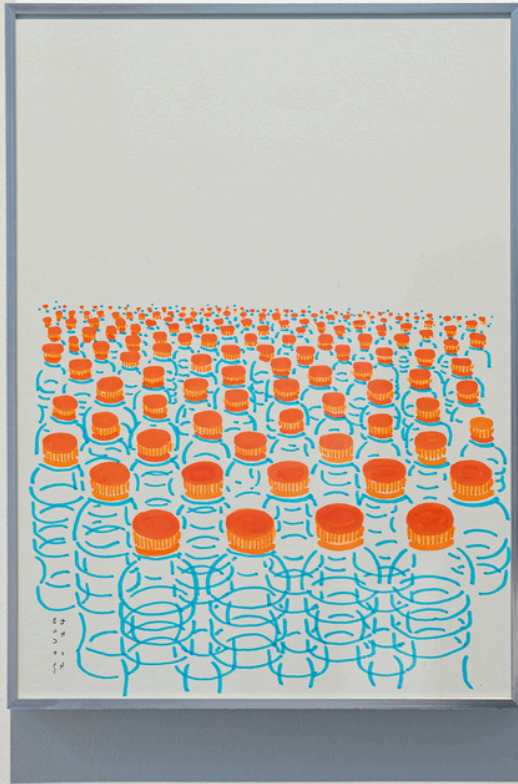
Pollution is jeopardizing ecosystems and human health, whether through air, soil and water pollution, or exposure to harmful chemicals.

By 2025, the world's cities will produce 2.2 billion tonnes of waste every year, more than three times the amount produced in 2009.



Eli Ebrahimpour

Across the world, the food we eat, the air we breathe and the water we drink are contaminated. Air pollution alone is responsible for nearly seven million deaths every year.



Mousa Rabbani

Around 117,000 plastic bottles will have been used by the time you finish reading this sentence. While it takes seconds to produce, a plastic bottle takes about 450 years to decompose.



Mirmohammad Fatahi

If we don't do anything, oceans will carry more plastic than fish by 2050. Every day, the equivalent of 2,000 garbage trucks full of plastic are dumped into the world's oceans, rivers, and lakes.



Neda Estaki

Cigarette butts – whose filters contain tiny plastic fibers – are the most common type of plastic waste found in the environment.

Food wrappers, plastic bottles and caps, grocery bags, straws, and stirrers are among the most common items. Many of us use these products every day, without even thinking about where they might end up.



Neda Estaki

Did you know the single-use plastic waste produced in 2021 weighed as much as over 13,700 Eiffel Towers?



Amir Hesari

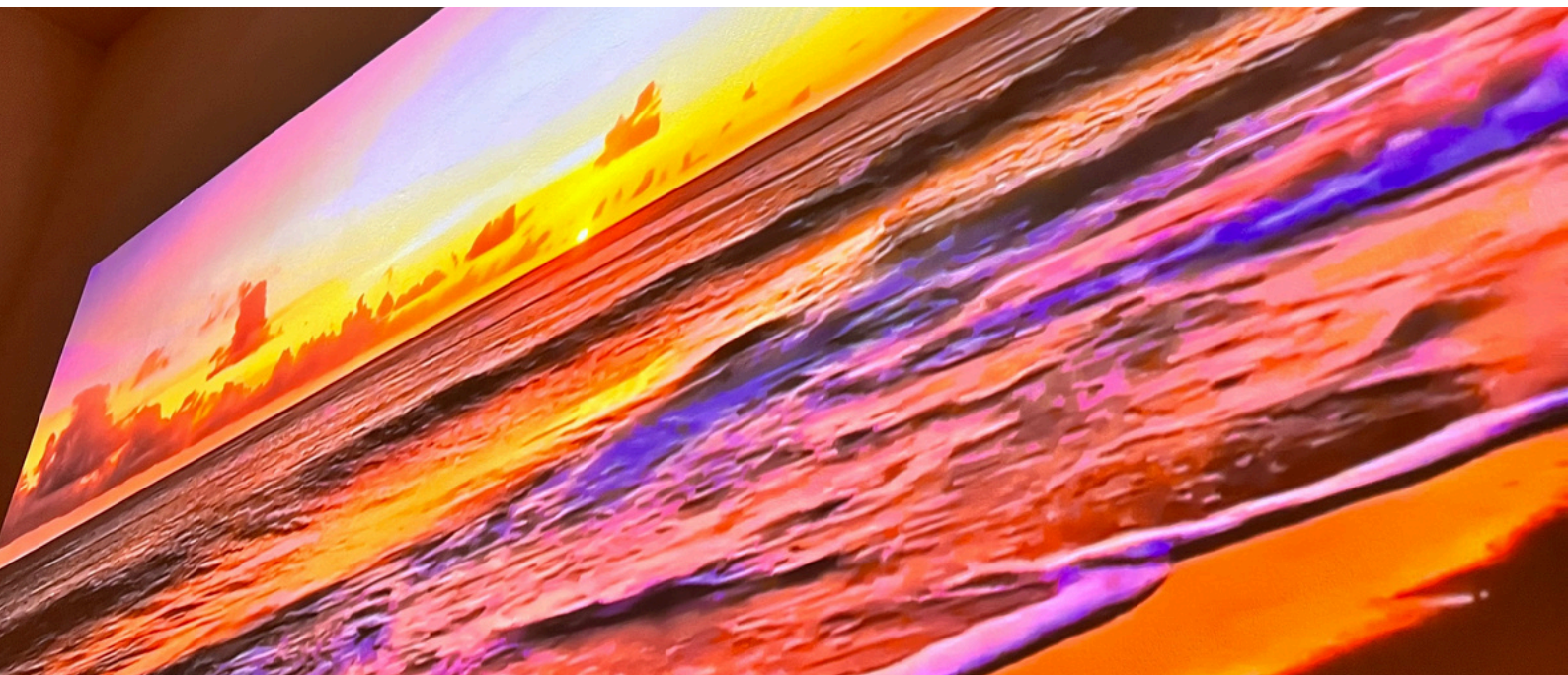
Plastics account for at least 85% of marine litter. How does it get there? A lot of it comes from the world's rivers, which serve as direct conduits of trash into lakes and the ocean.

What is needed? Reduce, reuse, reorient & diversity, recycle.



Zahra Nouri Zonouz

According to research, about 40 percent of seabirds contain ingested plastic.



*Mohammad Seymari
Neda Mobarra*

A SEA OF SOLUTIONS





The United Nations remains the one place on earth where all the world's nations can gather together, discuss common problems, and find shared solutions that benefit all of humanity. The UN consists of 193 Member States and Iran was one of its founding members.

In Iran, the United Nations' activities including its efforts to address the Triple Planetary Crisis, are carried out by 20 resident and non-resident agencies, funds and specialized programmes.

The UN in Iran focuses primarily on development work and humanitarian assistance. The UN System is a partner in Iran's development process, as articulated in the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework 2023-27.

To learn more about us, click on the link below!

www.iran.un.org



UNDP is the United Nations' lead agency on sustainable human development. Having pioneered the concept more than 30 years ago and given its long-term presence and cooperation in the vast global development network, UNDP is uniquely positioned for connecting countries to knowledge, best-practices, and resources to achieve greener and sustainable development objectives.

We are nimble, innovative, adaptable, and work with partners for solutions to national development challenges.

It is a field-driven organization working in more than 170 countries and territories. UNDP has been present in Iran since 1966.

Our work in Iran, like everywhere else, is guided by a Country Programme Document, developed, and agreed upon in partnership with the government, covering 2023-2027. It focuses on four areas:

1. Integrated natural resource management, climate action and environment conservation
2. Public health management
3. Socio-economic resilience
4. Disaster risk reduction management

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