

Nowruz Festival 2026

Artwork

Nowruz Festival 2026 Theme: The Vines of Love

Each year, the Nowruz Festival is shaped around a central theme, and the festival artwork expresses it visually and conceptually. This year, 'The Vines of Love' centers wine as the thematic thread, connecting all elements of the Nowruz Festival.

In Persian literature and poetry, wine symbolizes divine love, wisdom, and liberation, most notably in the works of Rumi, Khayyam and Hafiz. In addition to its metaphorical significance, wine, particularly Shiraz wine, is an agricultural product rooted in rich history and unique traditions. The archeological discovery of a Neolithic settlement in Hajji Firuz Tepe in northwestern present-day Iran dates wine production in this region to approximately 5400-5000 BCE.

Following the Islamic Revolution of 1979, all wineries in Iran were closed. Through many harrowing journeys of migration and displacement, the Iranian diaspora safeguarded the Shiraz (Syrah) grape and Persian winemaking knowledge and traditions from extinction. These traditions not only survived but thrived globally –from Australia to California– all while Iranian diasporic communities navigated with the manyfold challenges of immigration, resettlement, and finding a place and sense of belonging.

The Nowruz Festival celebrates Persian wine not merely as a poetic relic or a metaphor for love, but as a profound living witness to history –an enduring trustee of culture, values, and collective heritage, a storyteller that imbues hearts with love and connects generations of our fellow Iranian-American / Persian Angelenos.

Artwork Concept Development and Crafting

The Nowruz Festival 2026 artwork connects this cultural heritage to the core purpose and mission of the library. The Los Angeles Central Library is the arena where the culture and wisdom of the East and West converge to enlighten and educate the people of Los Angeles. Professor Alexander embedded this philosophical foundation in the architecture of the [Flower Street entrance facade](#) of the Goodhue building. As Kenneth Breisch noted, "In a letter to Alexander in March of 1924, Goodhue" envisioned the building's west side landscape as "long stepped pools, Persian fashion, with a double row of cypresses..." (Breisch, 2016, p. 121). His vision was inspired by his "extended journey through Persia" in 1901 (Breisch, 2016, p. 123).

Building on this legacy while [commemorating the 100th anniversary](#) of this branch, the Nowruz Festival 2026 artwork depicts the Flower Street entrance of the Central Library with its doors

open onto a night scene from Persepolis, inviting the viewer into a cultural and intellectual landscape. The artwork aims to illustrate the nuanced historical and cultural significance of Persian wine while situating it within the contemporary context of the City of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Public Library as a place of belonging for the Iranian-American Angelenos.

The theme reflects the tender yet sprawling and inclusive nature of love, as well as the maturation required for love to manifest in its true form –as metaphorically explored through wine imagery in Persian poetry. The artwork draws on these themes conceptually, highlighting the greater Shiraz region for two main reasons. First, Shiraz (Syrah) grapes and wine stand as a prominent representative of viticulture and winemaking traditions in the greater Iranian plateau. Second, many of these traditions and histories are documented in artifacts of the Achaemenid empire era and on the walls and columns of Persepolis.

Rendered in mixed media, the artwork takes the form of a sculptural installation, 30" H x 24" W x 37" D. It portrays a night scene in Persepolis. The Nowruz sign hung on the arched head of the entrance incorporates feathers of the mythical bird, Simurgh, a symbol of wisdom, courage, and resilience. The eight columns of the Apadana Palace, an Achaemenid wine-serving rhyton, as well as the Neolithic wine jar embody the historical ethos of the theme. Shiraz (Syrah) grapes flowing from the rhyton symbolize the resilience and survival of the endangered winemaking traditions –reflecting the resilience of the Iranian-Americans communities in Los Angeles. The night sky features the Aries constellation, which marks the spring equinox and the beginning of Nowruz. Its inclusion pays tribute to Omar Khayyam of Neyshabur, poet, astronomer, mathematician, and polymath, who prolifically invokes wine as a vessel for true love and divine connection. It also celebrates Khayyam's remarkably precise calculation of the solar year and development of the solar calendar, beginning at the exact moment of the vernal equinox, Nowruz.

Materials Used

The variety of materials selected for this artwork were chosen intentionally to honor craftsmanship and the longitudinal dialog between multiple artistic media, echoing the layered histories and stories of wine in Persian culture:

Object	Material
Doorframe	Masonry
Doors and arched top	MDF and Plywood
Nowruz signage	Copper
Persian columns	3D printed PLA
Night sky backdrop	Hand-painted Cardstock

Rhyton	Clay
Grapes	Clay
Wine jar and cups	Clay
Floor covering	Sand

Artists and Credits

The festival theme and artwork concept were developed in summer 2025 by the festival co-chairs Toki Gholami, Senior Librarian, Northridge Branch, and Ramin Naderi, Senior Librarian, Frances Howard Goldwyn-Hollywood Regional Branch. Utilizing an Asset-Based approach, the co-chairs convened a group of Iranian-American Angelenos who collectively brought the artwork to life:



Artist: Shirin Sadri

Contributions: Nowruz Signage, Night Sky Backdrop

Shirin is an Iranian multidisciplinary artist working with ceramics, metal, and wearable forms. Her practice is rooted in material exploration and hand-driven processes, resulting in sculptural objects that reflect intimacy, imperfection, and quiet presence. Shirin designed, cut and finished the copper Nowruz sign, hand-drew the night sky backdrops, and joined the artwork assembling team to install the Nowruz Festival 2026.



Artist: Hamid Rastegar

Contributions: Door and the Arched Head, Wooden Stage

Hamid is a master scheduler in the aerospace industry, where he is specializing in coordinating complex production timelines and ensuring programs run smoothly. Outside of work he enjoys woodworking, fishing and exploring the outdoors. Hamid modeled the Flower Street entrance doors, cut, carved, painted and finished the doors. He also created a stage on which he and the rest of the team installed the Nowruz Festival 2026 artwork.



Artist: Alipasha Sadri

Contribution: Persian Columns

Alipasha is an Iranian Civil Engineer working on developing a simulation software. His hobbies include singing in a Persian/Farsi choir, woodworking, tinkering, and occasional 3D printing projects. Alipasha purchased the original column [model](#) and modified it to the specifications of the artwork project, complying with the object's "Royalty Free License".



Artist: Ramin Barzegar

Contributions: Photography, Graphic Design and Digital Rendering, Co-Directing

Ramin Barzegar is an internationally renowned visual artist and architectural photographer, adorned with over 80 international photography awards. In 2025, he was selected among the 100 recipients of the El Greco Award by ICM Gestora Cultural in Barcelona, Spain. His work explores the relationship between space, light, and human experience. Ramin's recent book, *Eternal Frames*, captures a wide array of his architectural photos across five continents.

Ramin B. joined the artwork installation team and assisted Ramin N. and Toki in directing the artwork scene. Then, he photographed and videographed the artwork and processed the materials digitally for online and print publication.



Artist: Toki Gholami

Contributions: Artwork Concept, Grapes, Entryway, Co-Directing

Toki G. is a bilingual librarian with a strong passion for community-centered programming. She co-chairs the library's annual Nowruz Festival. Outside of work, she enjoys cooking, gardening, crafting, and playing tennis. Toki co-developed the conceptual theme of the festival and its artwork. She created the clay grapes and co-directed the artwork scene. Toki assisted Ramin N. in creating the masonry entryway and joined the team to install the artwork.



Artist: Ramin Naderi

Contributions: Artwork Concept, rhyton, Entryway, Co-Directing

Ramin N. is a librarian, scholar in training, and community builder. He co-chairs the library's annual Nowruz Festival. He enjoys writing poetry, pottery, woodworking, designing and building simple structures, and cooking Koobidah kabob from scratch! all while enthusiastically reading audiobooks. Ramin co-developed the conceptual theme of the festival and its artwork. He modeled, created, and painted the clay rhyton, wine jar and cups, built the arched entryway with Toki's assistance, and co-directed the installation of the artwork.

Reference

Breisch, Kenneth A (2016). *The Los Angeles Central Library : building an architectural icon, 1872-1933.* The Getty Research Institute.