



## **PaykanArtCar Uses Art and Advocacy for Human Rights in Iran**

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Acting as a “new vehicle for human rights,” an historic, 1974 Paykan Hillman Hunter limousine was unveiled at the Human Rights Foundation’s Oslo Freedom Forum in Miami as the [PaykanArtCar](#) on Monday, newly adorned with a mural on its side.

According to the website, The PaykanArtCar is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization uniting the talents of contemporary national artists with a symbol of national pride—the Paykan car—to advocate for restoring human rights and dignity for all people in Iran, regardless of race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation.

The 1974 Paykan limo was a gift by the Shah of Iran to the authoritarian Romanian dictator, Nicolae Ceausescu. The car is now covered in paintings commissioned from expatriate Iranian artist Alireza Shojaian, transforming the vehicle into a statement advocating for the human rights of all Iranians and aiming to raise awareness of the persecution faced by LGBTQ people in Iran. PaykanArtCar will also offer PaykanArtCar- and Shojaian-related artwork for sale, with proceeds to support Iran’s LGBTQ community.

The painting was inspired by one of Iran’s most celebrated texts, the Shahnameh (Book of Kings), dating back to the late-10th century. Shojaian used the prominent and tragic story of Rostam and his son Sohrab to comment on a 2021 murder of a 20-year-old gay Iranian man, Alireza Fazeli Monfared, who was beheaded by members of his family in an “honor killing.”

“The story of Rostam and Sohrab for me was an inspiration for highlighting the brutal injustices that the LGBTQ community faces every day in Iran due to the laws imposed by the government,” Shojaian says. “The PaykanArtCar will help shed light on the deadly abuse of the LGBTQ people in Iran, a tragedy that has been repeatedly denied by the regime and neglected by Iranian society, including in the diaspora.”

“This vehicle once was a dictator’s car, but from this moment forward, it will be known as the PaykanArtCar, restored as a symbol of pride, calling for advancing human rights in Iran,” says Ambassador Mark D. Wallace, CEO of PaykanArtCar. “We can think of no better place to introduce the PaykanArtCar to the world than at the Human Rights Foundation’s Seventh Annual Oslo Freedom Forum, surrounded by some of the world’s most accomplished human rights advocates and organizations, all exchanging ideas and strategies to combat persecution across the globe.”

The PaykanArtCar will be presented in next Paris at the art fair Asia Now, which is highlighting Iranian art and artists this year. The nonprofit intends to commission different artists of Iranian background to use the car's surface as a canvas, with each presentation offering a new focus on human rights abuses in Iran.

For more from PaykanArtCar, find them on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).



*Photo courtesy of PaykanArtCar on Instagram*

To read the article on the web, please click [here](#).