INTERNATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION

Dey Memorial Competition

A memorial for those killed in Iran, January 2026

DOCUMENT	Competition brief, first edition (draft for review)
CATEGORIES	A. Memorial architecture B. Sculpture, visual and abstract art
OPEN TO	Architects, sculptors, visual and abstract artists, students
ENTRY FEE	None. Free and open to everyone.
KEY DATES	Registration closes 22 December 2026 Submission deadline 9 January 2027 Results 21 March 2027
LANGUAGE	English

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1 The competition

In January 2026, people across Iran took to the streets and were met with lethal force by security forces. Human rights organisations have documented a very large number of dead, among them students, workers, artists and children. The heaviest killing took place on 8 and 9 January. Many families were denied public mourning, and many graves remain unmarked.

This competition invites architects, sculptors and artists to give form to remembrance for these people. The work does not need a site in Iran. It may be imagined for a city anywhere, for a garden, a plaza, a shoreline, a building interior, or as an object that can travel.

We are looking for restraint over spectacle. A good entry honours individuals, not only a crowd, and leaves room for private grief as well as public gathering.

Two categories

CATEGORY A	**Memorial architecture.** A memorial element or building, up to a maximum envelope of 5 m x 5 m in plan and 6 m in height. Presented on one sheet of 100 x 70 cm.
CATEGORY B	**Sculpture, visual and abstract art.** Five short stories are offered. Entrants choose one or several, give their work its own name and make it. Dimensions are free. Presented on one sheet of 50 x 70 cm.

Eligibility

Open to everyone, individually or in teams of up to five. No professional licence is required, and students are welcome. Members of the jury and the organising group, and their direct relatives, may not enter. A person or team may submit to both categories, with a separate entry for each.

Entering safely

Entrants living in Iran, or anywhere this could put them or their families at risk, may use a pseudonym and a separate email address. The organisers will not publish the names of entrants before the jury has decided, and will publish a name afterwards only with the participant's consent.

2 Category A: Memorial architecture

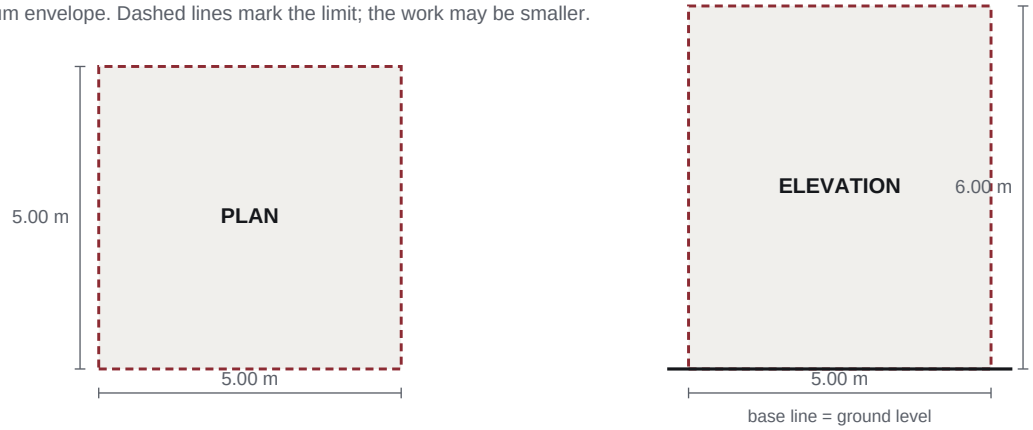
2.1 The task

Design a memorial element or a small memorial building. Visitors should be able to arrive, pause, gather and leave, alone or in a group. Interiors, courtyards, canopies, walls, steps, water and planting are all possible, as long as the work fits inside the envelope below. The setting is yours to propose: a city, a type of place, or none at all.

2.2 Maximum envelope

Everything above ground must fit within a volume of **5.00 m x 5.00 m in plan and 6.00 m in height**. Foundations are not counted. This is a limit, not a target: a smaller work is welcome. The size keeps entries comparable, keeps them buildable by a small team, and lets a full-size mock-up or a 1:20 model fit in a room.

Maximum envelope. Dashed lines mark the limit; the work may be smaller.



2.3 Suggested sites

Entrants may choose their own setting. Five places in Iran carry particular stories from 8 and 9 January 2026. An entry may respond to one, several or none of them. No site is assumed to be buildable: a memorial proposed elsewhere may still carry the story of one of these places.

MASHHAD	**Haft-e Tir Boulevard.** Hamid Mahdavi, a 38-year-old firefighter, was killed on 8 January. Reports say he was carrying an injured protester to safety. A story of rescue and care.
RASHT	**Municipality Square.** One of the deadliest places of the crackdown. Crowds were pushed from the square toward the bazaar, which burned. A story of fire, and of a city centre that became a trap.
TEHRAN	**Forensic Diagnostic and Laboratory Center, Kahrizak.** Videos showed hundreds of bodies, and families searching among them for their own. A story of mourning, identification and the right to a name.
SHIRAZ	**Qadamgah Street, Linda flower shop.** Gholamreza Zareh, the shop's owner, was reported killed on 8 January after giving shelter to protesters. A story of refuge, told at the scale of a small shop.
ISFAHAN	**Alikhani Square.** The scene of protests on 8 January, and later the place where detained protesters were executed. A story of a public square that became a place of punishment.

Accounts of individual events come from human rights organisations and witnesses. Entrants should treat them as testimony, not as a complete record.

2.4 Presentation: one sheet, 100 x 70 cm

Submit **one sheet of 100 x 70 cm, landscape**, saved as a single PDF page. Use the sheet to present the idea as clearly as you can. The sheet must contain at least the following, and anything else that helps the jury understand the work:

- **Elevations**, at least two, showing the work against the 6.00 m height limit.
- **Plan**, showing the 5.00 m x 5.00 m envelope and how visitors move through it.
- **Section**, at least one, showing the spatial idea and its construction.
- **Idea**: a concept statement of up to 300 words, with sketches if you wish.
- **Three-dimensional views**: renders, a model photograph, or axonometric drawings.
- **Diagrams**: for example visitor path, light, structure, materials, or a sequence in time.
- **Context**: the setting you propose, and a scale figure or scale bar on every drawing.

A scale of 1:20 suits the envelope (the plan then measures 25 x 25 cm, the height 30 cm). 1:50 is also fine and leaves more room for images. Drawings must state their scale.



Example layout of the 100 x 70 cm sheet. Not mandatory.

3 Category B: Sculpture, visual and abstract art

3.1 How this category works

Below are five short stories from 8 and 9 January 2026. They have no titles on purpose. Read them, then choose **one story, several, or a part of one** that stays with you. Give your work a name of your own, and make it.

You do not need to illustrate a story. You may answer with a feeling, a gesture, a material or a question that the story raises. Abstract and figurative work are equally welcome, in any medium: sculpture, installation, relief, light, sound, textile, painting, print, video, or a mixture. Dimensions are free; state them on your sheet. State which story or stories your work answers.

STORY I On the evening of 8 January, on a boulevard in Mashhad, a firefighter walked toward the shooting rather than away from it. Reports say he lifted an injured stranger onto his back and set off to find a safe place. He was shot and died that night. Think of what it means to take on the weight of someone you do not know, and of what remains of a gesture when the person who made it is gone.

STORY II In Rasht, crowds gathered at the municipality square and were driven by gunfire toward the old bazaar. The bazaar burned. Witnesses say people were shot as they ran from the flames. A place of trade and ordinary meetings became a place that people could not leave. Think of fire as destroyer and as witness, and of what a city centre remembers.

STORY III South of Tehran, at a forensic centre, families came in the days after the killing to look for a son, a daughter, a brother. They walked between rows of covered bodies, looking for a face or a piece of clothing they knew. Some found the person they were looking for. Some did not. Think of searching, of waiting, and of the moment when a person becomes a name again.

STORY IV On Qadamgah Street in Shiraz, the owner of a small flower shop opened his door to protesters running from the shooting. He was reported killed that evening. A shop is made for something gentle. Think of shelter, of a door left open, and of how small a refuge can be and still matter.

STORY V In Isfahan, people gathered in Alikhani Square on 8 January. Months later a gallows was built in the same square, and families of detained protesters stood there before dawn. Think of a public square that holds two memories at once, and of what it means to return to the place where something began.

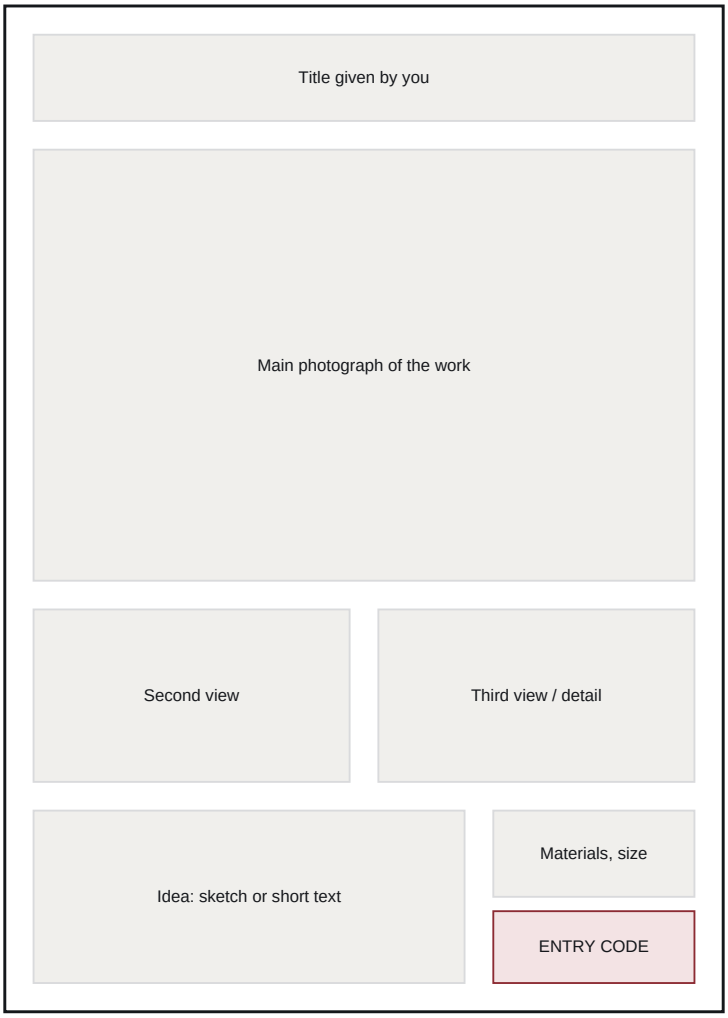
3.2 What not to submit

No graphic depiction of violence or of the dead. No recognisable portrait of a victim unless the family has agreed to it in writing. Work that attacks or demeans a group of people is excluded.

3.3 Presentation: one sheet, 50 x 70 cm

Submit **one sheet of 50 x 70 cm, portrait**, saved as a single PDF page. It must show:

- **Photographs of the work**: at least two views. If the work is not yet built, show a model, a maquette or realistic renders.
- **The idea**: a short text of up to 200 words, and sketches or studies if you wish.
- **Materials and dimensions**, and the story or stories your work answers.
- **Your title** for the work. A proposed setting is optional.



Example layout of the 50 x 70 cm sheet. Not mandatory.

4 Submission and rules

4.1 How to enter

Entry is in two steps, both through the online entry form on the competition website. **Step 1, registration, by 22 December 2026:** you give your details and category, and receive your entry code. **Step 2, submission, by 9 January 2027:** you enter your code and upload your sheet. The form delivers both to the organisers by email. Contact details are seen only by the organisers, never by the jury.

4.2 Anonymity

Judging is anonymous. Place only your entry code, received at registration, in 14 pt type, in the lower right corner of the sheet. No names, logos, signatures or personal references on the sheet or in the file name. Entries that identify their participants may be excluded.

4.3 File

FORMAT	One PDF per entry, containing one page: 100 x 70 cm (Category A) or 50 x 70 cm (Category B).
SIZE	Maximum 10 MB. Embed images at 150 dpi at full sheet size.
FILE NAME	The entry code only, for example DM-XXXX-XX.pdf.
LANGUAGE	English for all text.
UNITS	Metric.

4.4 Evaluation criteria

- **Meaning.** How clearly the work gives form to remembrance and to loss.
- **Dignity and restraint.** Respect for the dead and for their families.
- **Experience.** The quality of the encounter: space, light, movement, material.
- **Originality.** A distinct idea rather than a familiar memorial type.
- **Category A: feasibility.** Credible scale, structure and construction within the envelope.
- **Category B: integrity.** A work whose material and form belong together, and which could be made as shown.

4.5 Rights

Participants keep the copyright in their work. By entering, participants give the organisers the right to publish and exhibit the submitted sheet, with credit, in connection with the competition. Any commission to build or make a work would be agreed separately.

5 Jury and prizes

5.1 The jury

The jury will be announced soon.

Jurors see entry codes only. No juror may have a professional or personal link to an entrant. Decisions are made by majority vote after open discussion, and the jury publishes a written statement for every prize and mention.

5.2 Prizes

Each category has its own prizes. Prize money is paid in euros.

FIRST PRIZE	EUR 2,000 in each category.
SECOND PRIZE	EUR 1,500 in each category.
THIRD PRIZE	EUR 1,000 in each category.
MENTIONS	Further entries recognised by the jury in each category.
EXHIBITION	A group exhibition of the selected entries in several European cities, and online.
PUBLICATION	A catalogue with the jury report and the winning entries.

5.3 Timeline

22 DECEMBER 2026	Registration closes.
9 JANUARY 2027	Submission deadline.
JAN TO MAR 2027	Anonymous judging, with a written jury report.
21 MARCH 2027	Results announced.
TO BE ANNOUNCED	Group exhibition of selected entries in several European cities.

6 Contact

Questions about the competition, the rules or your entry can be sent to the organisers at any time. Registration is free and open to everyone.

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