

Lifestyle

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Models present creations by Kuwaiti designer Thaher Baqer during the 'Sehr al-Sharq' or 'The Magic of the Orient' fashion show in Kuwait City. — AFP

Sparse trailer for Kanye West Imax film released

A brief trailer for rapper Kanye West's Imax film "Jesus is King" came out Thursday, as tickets went on sale for limited screenings starting next week. The much touted movie will feature "songs arranged by West in the gospel tradition along with new music from his forthcoming album 'JESUS IS KING.'" Multiple release dates for the album, which apparently sees the mercurial artist take a sharp departure from rap to gospel, have come in gone in the past month.

Rather than release the album, West has been touring the United States and doing pop-up stagings of his "Sunday Service," his performance series that includes gospel choirs and a dose of Christian spirituality. The film brings the service "to life," its website said, and was filmed in the summer of 2019. West first publicly performed a Sunday Service at April 2019's Coachella festival, having previously held them only for select guests, mostly celebrities.

Imax announced that limited screenings of the film would begin October 25, though its website where tickets are available for purchase had show-times starting October 24. The sparse trailer for the film featured a bright light at the end of a tunnel, which the viewer appears to get closer to as a chorus of melancholic gospel rings out. "Saved by his grace, it's in his will," the voices sing. West has long included tinges of religiosity in his music, most blatantly with his 2004 hit "Jesus Walks."

But his previous work remained definitively rap with hits of gospel, and now the 42-year-old appears to be taking interest more in the latter. His California preacher Adam Tyson recently said on a faith-focused podcast that West believes he has been "radically saved." The performer reportedly no longer cusses and during the latest episode of the hit reality series "Keeping Up With The Kardashians," on which his wife Kim stars, took aim at her "too sexy" gown at this year's Met Gala.

"You are my wife and it affects me when pictures are too sexy," West said of the skintight nude Thierry Mugler dress that Kardashian wore. "You built me up to be this sexy person (with) confidence and all this stuff, and just because you're on a journey and transformation doesn't mean I'm in the same spot with you," she fired back. — AFP

Louvre gears up for Leonardo da Vinci retrospective

The Louvre in Paris is putting the finishing touches to an ambitious Leonardo da Vinci retrospective opening Thursday, which groups more than 160 of the artist's works and has already attracted close to 200,000 advance visitor bookings. Timed to coincide with the 500th anniversary of the famed artist's death, the show, simply called "Leonardo da Vinci", took a decade to put together and includes works on loan from Queen Elizabeth and Bill Gates.

"If you want to be amazed, you must come," said Vincent Delieuvin, chief curator at the Louvre's depart-

ment of paintings, during a preview for staff at the Louvre. "It's almost as if we were bringing Leonardo da Vinci's workshop back to life," he said. The Louvre itself owns five of the artist's paintings, more than anybody else, including the Mona Lisa which is seen by 30,000 people every day. "This unprecedented retrospective of da Vinci's painting career will illustrate how he placed utmost importance on painting," the museum said.

"The exhibition will paint the portrait of a man and an artist of extraordinary freedom," it said. In addition to the Mona Lisa—which will remain at her usual spot in the

Louvre—four paintings are to form the centre of the show: The Virgin of the Rocks, La Belle Ferronniere, Saint John the Baptist, and Saint Anne. "The objective is to place them alongside a wide array of drawings as well as a small but significant series of paintings and sculptures from the master's circle," the Louvre said. The exhibition runs until February.—AFP



Sculptor Andrea Gandini carves a sculpture of a wolf's face from a dead tree stump in the Villa Pamphili park, Rome, Italy. — Reuters

Sculptor transforms Rome's dead trees into art

Andrea Gandini, a 22-year-old Roman sculptor, is making a growing name for himself by turning the Eternal City's dead tree stumps into much-admired pieces of art. Gandini, who began his tree carvings around five years ago, chipped away at his 66th stump in the huge Villa Pamphili park on Friday. He has plenty of raw material to work with. Rome is known as one of the greenest cities in Europe, with its 313,000 trees filling its many parks and lining the streets in the city centre. However, many were planted nearly a century ago and are now weak or dying. Seeing how they were neglected made Gandini want to act.

"I had been sculpting wood since I was a kid, in my garage. Then I chose to carve a stump that was out on the street. That is how I chose to start carving stumps in Rome," he said, as he worked on his latest creation. He said he liked to meet people while working and had no personal claim to the faces, animals and other artwork carved out

the stumps. "It takes me about a week to finish one sculpture, then it becomes everyone's. It's a passion and a bit of a fixation," he added, as passers-by stopped to admire his work and take photos with their phones.

Gandini maps the stumps on his website, and the sculptures are becoming a tourist attraction. Tour guides even include his work in their packages. "Stumps are not very well considered but they have the right features that make them perfect for carving," he said. "Rome has many stumps that are waiting to become pieces of art." Despite the popularity of his work among locals and tourists, the Rome authorities have been less enthusiastic.

Although there is no law that forbids people from carving dead tree stumps, police have threatened to ban him from historic areas using tough new rules drawn up in recent years to maintain decorum. Gandini says he loves nature and it hurts him to see the trees become a safety hazard. They often fall and smash cars during storms, and city hall says some 86,000 need to be specially maintained or chopped down. "If nothing changes in ten years there will be hardly any trees left," Gandini said. — Reuters

A day in Elton John's life: Buy Rolls, write hit song, dine with Ringo

When Elton John was working on his new autobiography, the legendary singer, songwriter and performer pulled out diaries he had been encouraged to write during a stint in rehab. One entry read like this: "Got up, tidied the house, bought a Rolls Royce, had dinner, wrote 'Candle in the Wind', had dinner with Ringo Starr," the musician said. "That was one day." John, 72, spoke in a video interview provided to Reuters by his publisher, Henry Holt & Co., to promote the release of his book, which is titled simply "Me."

The diary entries helped jog John's memories from his 50-year career filled with hit records, Grammy awards and royal friendships but also addiction and a suicide attempt two days before a show at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles. "I wanted to show the tough ride of being a successful artist, and how I went through tough times, and how I came out at the end and got my life together," John said. "It's the story of my life up to the present day, warts and all."

In the book, the "Crocodile Rock" singer revealed recent health scares including a near-fatal infection and a serious bout with appendicitis. "I did like 10 or 11 shows, 24 flights, with a burst appendix," he said. John is currently in the middle of a lengthy "Farewell Yellow Brick Road" world tour that will bring his touring career to an end. In the interview, he said performing on stage "just never gets old." "I never go on stage late," he said. "I just love to get out there and I'm raring to go." "Even when I was doing a lot of drugs, I still carried on playing music," he added. "It's been my touchstone of my whole life." A highlight, John said, came in 1975 when John Lennon joined him to perform three songs at Madison Square Garden. It was Lennon's first appearance on stage in New York since the Beatles played Shea Stadium. —Reuters