10

IRANIAN FILM FESTIVAL ZURICH



10 Years of Iranian
Cinema in Zurich

10
IRANIAN FILM FESTIVAL ZURICH

"Human beings are members of a whole,
In creation of one essence and soul.
If one member is afflicted with pain,
Other members uneasy will remain.
If you've no sympathy for human pain,
The name of human you cannot retain!"

بنی‌آدم اعضای یک پیکرند
که در آفرینش ز یک گوهرند
چو عضوی به درد آورَد روزگار
دگر عضوها را نمانَد قرار
تو کز محنت دیگران بی‌غمی
نشاید که نامت نهند آدمی

Poem from Saadi's Persian poetry book "Golestan"
(chapter 1, story 10), completed in AD 1258.

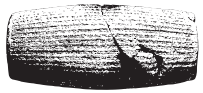


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WELCOME

Welcome

Guest of Honor Maryam Keshavarz

Opening film

Closing film

WILLKOMMEN
WELCOME
BIENVENUE
خوش آمدید



Yadolah Dodge
Founder & Artistic
Director, IFFZ

We are delighted to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Iranian Film Festival Zurich (IFFZ) in 2024. This special edition is dedicated to a master of filmmaking and the founder of the Iranian New Wave, Dariush Mehrjui, and his family. The IFFZ cherishes the wonderful memories of his visit to our festival when he was honored with the Golden Cyrus Cylinder in 2017.

Our mission in organizing such a significant cultural event in Zurich is to bridge the cultural gap between Iranians, Swiss, and other nationalities living in Switzerland. Each year, the festival presents the Swiss audience with a selection of the best contemporary feature films, fiction, and documentaries from all generations of Iranian filmmakers. In addition the IFFZ is the only festival in Switzerland to specialize on Iranian cinema and films in Persian. The IFFZ serves as a platform to showcase Iranian culture and traditions, fostering a deeper understanding and connection through the universal language of art, particularly cinema.

The inaugural festival was held at the charming Stüssihof cinema in downtown Zurich, which, despite its small size, provided an intimate and beautiful setting with its 70 seats. It was here that we introduced the Cyrus Cylinder as the festival's trophy, symbolizing Iranian history, peace, love, care for others, and above all, equality and justice for all, regardless of gender, race, or ethnicity.

Over the years, we have faced numerous challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and the tragic killing of Jina Mahsa Amini. During the pandemic, we adapted by offering free online screenings across Switzerland, allowing audiences from Sion to St. Gallen and Geneva to Basel to enjoy Iranian films from the safety of their homes. In response to Jina Mahsa Amini's death, we mourned with the Iranian people by showcasing four films directed by women filmmakers.

This 10th edition promises to be our richest yet. For the first time in the history of the festival, we will present seven classic Iranian films over one week. Each day, attendees will have the opportunity to watch one of these timeless masterpieces. Additionally, we are proud to feature young women filmmakers from Iran, France to the USA, addressing issues related to their homeland, Iran.

This year, our jury is composed entirely of women, who will evaluate 12 films in competition, encompassing both fiction and documentaries, with some making their world premiere.

Join us for this unique nine-day cultural event, and together, let us build bridges for a better understanding of Iranian life and the integration of nations. With your generous support and contribution, just like in the past years, we hope to see the IFFZ reach its 50th edition in the future.





MARYAM KESHAVARZ

Iranian-American writer-director
to receive the Honorary Golden Cyrus
Cylinder for her courage and advocacy
for women's rights.

IFFZ AWARD 2024 HONORING

"'The Persian Version' Director Has Always Lived in the In-Between"

The New York Times

"In the 'The Persian Version,' generations of independent Iranian women find their lane"

The LA Times

MARYAM KESHAVARZ WRITER-DIRECTOR



Biography

Maryam Keshavarz received her MFA from New York University, Tisch School of the Arts in film direction and has been making award-winning films for 11 years. In 2001, with a band of an all girl crew and cast, Keshavarz directed her first experimental 16mm film, entitled “Sanctuary”. This surreal fantasy film about an Iranian woman in post-9/11 America traveled to several international festivals and landed Maryam the Steve Tisch fellowship to attend NYU's graduate film program.

Maryam’s first feature documentary, “The Color Of Love”, an intimate portrait of the changing landscape of love and politics in Iran, won numerous awards at top-tier festivals and was broadcast internationally. Maryam’s short film “The Day I Died” garnered top accolades at Mar del Plata, Clermont-Ferrand, New York Film Festival and Berlin International Film Festival; and was the only short film at Berlinale to win two awards: the Gold Teddy and the Jury Prize.

Maryam’s first narrative feature fiction film, “Circumstance” premiered to overwhelming critical acclaim at the 2011 Sundance Film Festival, garnering the coveted Sundance Audience Award, leading to Maryam’s inclusion in Deadline.com’s 2011 Director’s to Watch. “Circumstance” has won over a dozen international awards including Best First Film at the Rome Film Festival and the Audience & Best Actress Awards at Outfest. The Independent Spirit Award nominated film was described by the New York Times as “Swirling and sensuous”, by the Wall Street Journal as “Supremely cinematic”, and by the Hollywood Reporter as “Amazingly accomplished.” The film released theatrically in over a dozen countries in 2012.

Maryam‘s sophomore feature “Viper Club” starring Susan Sarandon had its world premiere at Toronto International Film Festival 2018 as a Special Presentation. “Viper Club” was released theatrically in the United States by Roadside Attractions on Oct 26, 2018. The film also features powerful performances by Edie Falco, Matt Bomer, Lola Kirke, Sheila Vand, Adepero Oduye, and newcomer Amir Malaklou.

More recently, Keshavarz's newest film project “The Last Harem” won the prestigious Hearst Screenwriters Grant and the San Francisco Film Society/ KRF Screenwriting Award, while her museum installation work entitled “Between Sight And Desire: Imagining The Muslim Woman” won a multi-year grant from Creative Capital. Maryam has also been tapped to co-write and direct the narrative adaptation of the award-winning HBO documentary “Hot Coffee”.

Keshavarz is an alumna of the Sundance Screenwriters and Directors Lab, Tribeca Film Institute's All Access Program. She is the recipient of dozens of grants and fellowships including the French Government's Fonds Sud, Rotterdam Film Festivals' Hubert Bals Award, Women in Film's Grant, Adrienne Shelly Award, numerous Sundance fellowships, and multiple San Francisco Film Society grants. She has been a visiting artist at the University of Pennsylvania and guest lecturer at dozens of prestigious international universities.

She is an active member of Film Independent serving as a mentor for their Project Involve Initiative and speaking on numerous filmmaking panels.

GUEST OF HONOR

> “For Maryam, morality is as complex as the people who attempt to police it. She does not shy away from this reality in any of her films, presenting empathetic characters who make choices that are not always palatable.”
>
> **Gertrudepress**

Filmography

- **The Color of Love, 2003**
- **Not for Sale, 2006**
- **The Day I Died (“El día que morí”), 2006**
- **Circumstance, 2011**
- **Viper Club, 2018**
- **The Persian Version, 2023**

Awards

– The Persian Version: 2023 Sundance Film Festival Audience Award
– Circumstance: Rome International Film Festival, Best First Film, 2011 Sundance Film Festival, Audience Award, 2011 Noor Iranian Film Festival – Audience Favorite Award, 2011 Outfest – Audience Award
– The Day I Died: Berlin International Film Festival – Gold Teddy Best Short Film & Jury Prize Special Mention

Genre: Comedy

Country and year of production: USA, 2023

Duration: 107 min

Language: Persian / English

Subtitles: English

Opening film

Swiss Premiere



THE PERSIAN VERSION

نسخه ایرانی

Screenplay:
Maryam Keshavarz
Cinematography:
André Jäger
Editor: Abolfazl Talooni, Joanne Yarrow
Sound: Javier Farina
Music: Rostam Batmanglij
Producer: Maryam Keshavarz, Anne Carey, Ben Howe, Luca Borghese

Cast:
Layla Mohammadi
Niousha Noor
Kamand Shafieisabet
Bijan Daneshmand
Bella Warda
Chiara Stella
Tom Byrne

Synopsis
Iranian-American Leila (Layla Mohammadi) strives to balance and embrace her opposing cultures while challenging societal labels. When her family reunites in New York City for her father's heart transplant, Leila tries to keep her "real" life separate from her family life.

However, her secret is revealed, showing parallels between her life and her mother Shireen (Niousha Noor). With a bright color palette, comedic relief, and vibrant dance numbers, "The Persian Version" portrays a woman who remains unapologetically herself in a heartfelt story about family, belonging, and the influence of pop music.



Screenings:
Wednesday, Sept 11, 20:15, Hall 01





CLOSING FILM

Genre: Drama

Country and year of production: Iran, 2024

Duration: 168 min

Language: Persian

Subtitles: German, French

Closing film

Swiss-German Premiere



THE SEED OF THE SACRED FIG

دانه انجیر مقدس

Screenplay:
Mohammad Rasoulof
Cinematography:
Pooyan Aghababaei
Editor: Andrew Bird
Sound: Philipp Kemptner, Hassan Shabankareh
Music: Karzan Mahmood
Producer:
Mohammad Rasoulof, Amin Sadraei, Jean-Christophe Simon, Mani Tilgner, Rozita Henduanian

Cast:
Misagh Zare, Soheila Golestani, Mahsa Rostami, Setareh Maleki



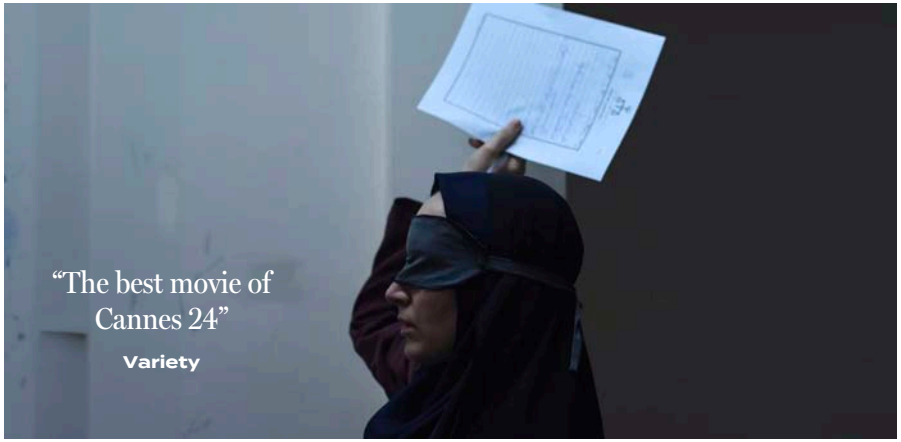
Synopsis
Iman, an investigating judge in the Revolutionary Court in Tehran, grapples with mistrust and paranoia as nationwide political protests intensify and his gun mysteriously disappears. Suspecting the involvement of his wife Najmeh and his daughters Rezvan and Sana, he imposes drastic measures at home, causing tensions to rise. Step by step, social norms and the rules of family life are being suspended.

Director
Mohammad Rasoulof was born in Shiraz, Iran, 1972, and is a renowned filmmaker. His notable films include "Iron Island" (2005) and "There Is No Evil" (2020), the latter winning the Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival.

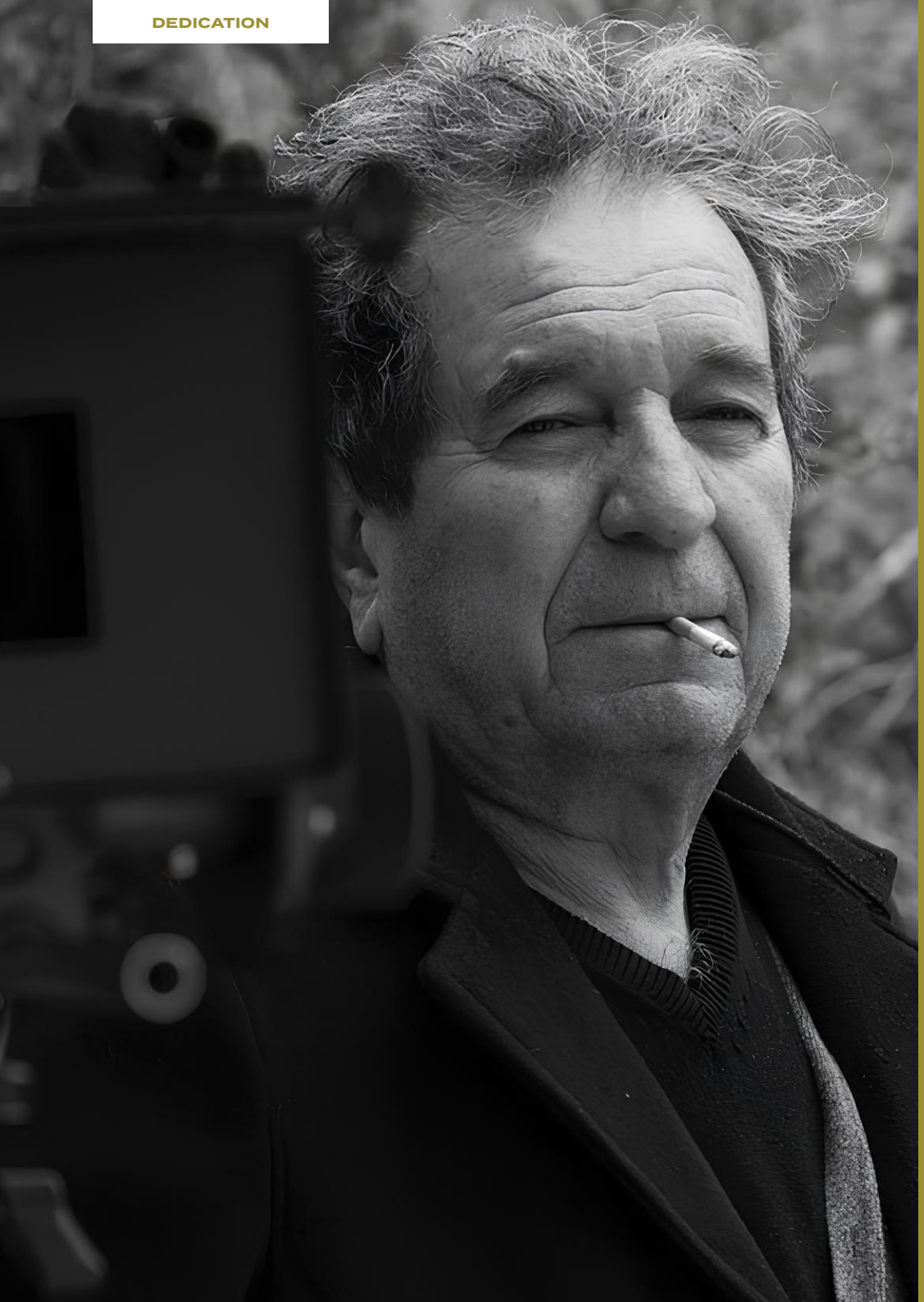
In 2022, Rasoulof faced severe repercussions for his activism, receiving an eight-year prison sentence for national security charges after signing a petition. Despite his sentence and house arrest, Rasoulof completed his film "The Seed of the Sacred Fig". Rasoulof fled Iran on foot to Germany, where he arrived just weeks before the film's premiere at the Cannes Film Festival in 2024. Rasoulof attended the Festival, where his film received significant attention.

Screenings:
Thursday, Sept 19, 20:15, Hall 01









DEDICATION

DEDICATION

Dariush Mehrjui and his Wife Vahideh Mohammadifar

DEDICATION

WE DEDICATE THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY TO DARIUSH MEHRJUI: A CINEMATIC PIONEER





"Dariush Mehrjui's films are marked by a profound humanism and a deeply rooted cultural consciousness, capturing the essence of Iranian society with a critical yet compassionate eye."

AnotherMag

This year's festival is dedicated to the memory and legacy of Dariush Mehrjui, a towering figure in Iranian cinema whose innovative spirit and profound storytelling have left an indelible mark on the world of film. His tragic assassination has robbed us of a cultural icon, but his work continues to inspire and influence filmmakers and audiences globally.

A Cinematic Visionary

Dariush Mehrjui was born on December 8, 1939, in Tehran, Iran. He studied cinema at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), where he was exposed to the burgeoning New Hollywood movement. This experience profoundly influenced his cinematic vision, leading him to merge Western cinematic techniques with deeply Iranian narratives and themes.

Mehrjui's breakthrough came with his seminal film, "The Cow" (1969), which is often credited with laying the foundation for the Iranian New Wave. The film tells the poignant story of a villager's deep bond with his cow, exploring themes of identity, community, and psychological breakdown. "The Cow" garnered international acclaim, winning the FIPRESCI Prize at the Venice Film Festival and receiving praise for its neorealist style and emotional depth.

A Legacy of Innovation

Over the years, Mehrjui continued to push the boundaries of Iranian cinema with a series of critically acclaimed films. "The Cycle" (1978) exposed the corruption in Iran's healthcare system, while "Hamoun" (1990) delved into the existential crises of a middle-aged intellectual. Both films exemplify Mehrjui's talent for combining social critique with compelling character studies.

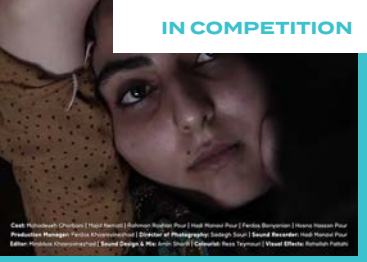
His versatility as a filmmaker is evident in his adaptations of Western literature, such as "Sara" (1993), based on Henrik Ibsen's play "A Doll's House," and "Leila" (1997), a poignant drama exploring the pressures of infertility on a young couple. Mehrjui's ability to contextualize universal themes within Iranian society made his work resonate both locally and internationally.

A Tragic Loss

The film community was shaken by the tragic news of Dariush Mehrjui's assassination on October 14, 2023. He and his wife, Vahideh Mohammadifar, were found dead in their home in Tehran, victims of a brutal and senseless attack. This devastating event has not only ended the life of a beloved filmmaker but has also left a significant void in the cultural and artistic landscape of Iran.

As we dedicate this festival to Dariush Mehrjui, we remember his unparalleled contributions to cinema and his relentless pursuit of artistic truth. His films remain a testament to his vision, courage, and profound understanding of the human condition. Mehrjui's work continues to educate, inspire, and move audiences, ensuring that his legacy endures.

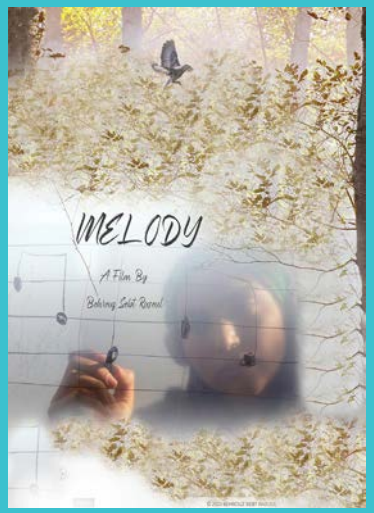
Join us in celebrating Iranian Cinema, pioneered by Dariush Mehrjui, whose films have not only defined but have also made an incredible mark on global film history.



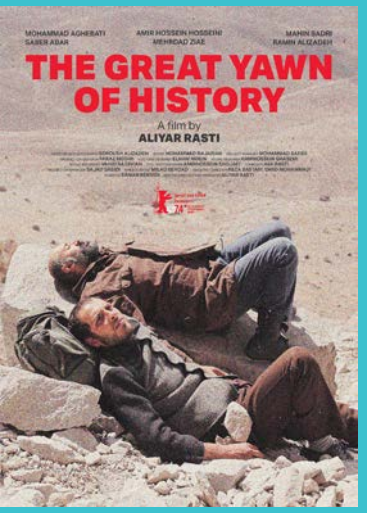






















IN COMPETITION

FILMS IN COMPETITION

- Parvin
- Cold Tea
- Cause of Death: Unknown
- The Last Birthday
- Melody
- Green Plum Season
- The Great Yawn Of History
- In The Arms Of A Tree
- Is There Any Trace Of Tomorrow's Blossoms?
- Shâd Bâsh
- A Revolution On Canvas
- Shahid

Genre: Fiction, Drama

Country and year of production: Iran, Turkey, 2023

Length: 81 min

Language: Kurdish (Leki)

Subtitles: English

Swiss Premiere



PARVIN

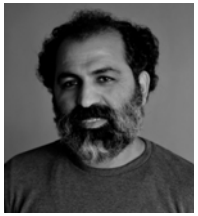
پروین

Synopsis
A rural teenage girl secretly brings her boyfriend home while her family is away. When her family unexpectedly returns, she scrambles to help him escape.

Director
Mirabbas Khosravinezhad, (born 11 September 1977 in Khorramabad, Iran) is an Iranian director and screenwriter. After graduating in Mechanical Engineering from university in 2000, he made his first short narrative film entitled “Khorram”. He has directed nine independent short narrative films. Some of the films he has directed include “Valentine's Day” (short fiction, Iran 2012), “Forouzan” (short fiction, Iran 2017), “Azadeh” (short fiction, Iran 2019) and “Aydin” (short fiction, Turkey / Iran 2020).

Screenplay:
Mirabbas Khosravinezhad
Cinematography:
Sadegh Souri
Editor: Mirabbas Khosravinezhad
Sound: Amin Sharifi
Music: Ehsan Abdipour
Producer:
Erfan Ghasempour

Cast:
Mohadeseh Ghorbani
Majid Nemati
Rahman Roshan Pour
Hadi Manavi Pour
Ferdos Bonyanian
Hosna Hassan Pour



Screenings:
Monday, Sept 16, 16:30, Hall 03
Thursday, Sept 19, 18:15, Hall 03

IN COMPETITION

Genre: Drama

Country and year of production: Iran, 2023

Length: 97 min

Language: Persian

Subtitles: English

Swiss Premiere



COLD TEA

چای سرد

Synopsis
It is the last day of the year and the city is celebrating with fireworks. A three-storey flat in the city. On the first floor lives a family of ordinary citizens. All members of the family have gone on a trip, except the teenage son, who has secretly brought home a prostitute. On the second floor, a documentary filmmaker and his wife move into a rented flat.

Director
Amir Razi, born in 1960 in Tehran, graduated in Theater from the University of Tehran and started as a director and screenwriter. He made the award-winning documentary “Blood in the Flowers of the Carpet” before moving to the Netherlands in 1989 to study filmmaking, where he created the acclaimed short film “The Red Fish.” In 1999, he won 12 international awards for “A Rose from Africa.” Invited by the UN in 2000, he returned to Iran, winning several awards at the Fajr International Film Festival.

Screenplay:
Amir Razi
Cinematography:
Shahin Araghi
Editor: Masoud Farjam
Sound: Hossein Ghorchian
Music: Arman Mousa Pour
Producer: Amir Razi

Cast:
Mina Noruzifard,
Pooyan Mokri,
Sonya Esmaeeli,
Sarwar Alidust,
Akbar Madadimehr,
Kereshmeh Yousefi

Screenings:
Saturday, Sept 14, 14:15, Hall 03
Sunday, Sept 15, 20:15, Hall 03



Genre: Drama, Mistery

Country and year of production: Iran, 2023

Length: 106 min

Language: Persian

Subtitles: English

Swiss Premiere



CAUSE OF DEATH: UNKNOWN

علت مرگ: نامعلوم

Screenplay:
Ali Zarnegar
Cinematography:
Davood Malek Hosseini
Editor: Hamid Najafirad
Sound: Saeed Bojnoordi
Music: Easa Habibzadeh
Producer: Majid Barzegar

Cast:
Banipal Shoomoon,
Alireza Sani Far,
Neda Jebraeili,
Ali Mohammad Radmanesh,
Zakieh Behbahanim,
Reza Amouzad,
Soheil Bavi,
Saeed Rezaeikia

Synopsis
In the desolate expanse of the Lut Desert, a van with seven passengers travels along a quiet, smooth road. Shortly after their journey begins, they make a chilling discovery-a body inside the van. Without a doctor's confirmation of death, emergency services refuse to send an ambulance.

Amidst the uncertainty, some passengers suggest driving to a nearby police patrol to report the incident. Before setting off, they decide to search the deceased man's body for identification or contact information. What they uncover instead is something they never should have seen.

Director
Ali Zarnegar, an Irainian author, film director and poet, was born in 1983 in Tehran. He graduated in film directing from Tehran University of Art and has a Master's degree in Drama.



Screenings:
Tuesday, Sept 17, 14:15, Hall 03
Wednesday, Sept 18, 20:15, Hall 03

Genre: Drama

Country and year of production: Iran, Afghanistan, 2023

Length: 80 min

Language: Persian

Subtitles: English

Swiss Premiere



THE LAST BIRTHDAY

آخرین تولد

Screenplay:
Navid Mahmoudi
Cinematography:
Mehran Mamdooh
Editor: Nima Jafari Jozani
Sound:
Hossein Ghoorchian
Music:
Sahand Mehdizadeh
Producer:
Navid Mahmoudi

Cast:
Elnaz Shakerdoust,
Pedram Sharifi,
Sheyda Khaligh,
Armin Rahimian,
Sogol Khaligh,
Niloufar Koukhani

Synopsis
Soraya is a female journalist who has been trying to spread news of the difficult situation of Afghan women to the world for years. This issue exposes her career. Taliban forces surprise Soraya and her friends once they arrest her at home on her birthday.

Director
Born in Parvan, Afghanistan in 1980, Navid Mahmoudi moved to Iran along his family when he was six years old. Having started his professional career as an assistant director, he directed his own short films whilst producing other works.

He has produced more than ten TV movies. In 2014, he produced his first feature film "A few Cubic Meters of Love", warmly received by both international critics and the public. In 2016, he directed his first feature film "Parting", before producing "Rona, Azim's Mother" in 2018. All three films have been Afghanistan's official Oscar entries. His recent film "Drowning in Holy Water" received Kim Ji Seok award in Busan Film Festival 2020.



Screenings:
Thursday, Sept 12, 20:45, Hall 06
Wednesday, Sept 18, 14:15, Hall 03

Genre: Drama, Mistery

Country and year of production: Iran, Tajikistan, UK. 2023

Length: 85 min

Language: Persian

Subtitles: English

Swiss Premiere



MELODY

ملودی

Synopsis

Melody teaches music at a children's cancer center for thirty children which are going to have a party at the end of autumn. Melody is to compose a piece using the sounds of thirty different birds. As she goes to her home village to record the birdsong, she is helped by the mute care taker of the family home, Mango.

When they find just 20 birds, Mango makes Melody understand that only the old village singer knows where the other birds are, but bird hunters have forced him out of the village. Melody sets out to find both him and the missing birds.

Director

Behrouz Sebt Rasoul is an Iranian director, screenwriter, and producer. He graduated as an Industrial Engineer but has pivoted toward the film industry since 2008. His latest film, Melody (2023) has been submitted by Tajikistan for the 2024 Oscars, the country's first entry in 18 years.

Screenplay:
Behrouz Sebt Rasoul
Cinematography:
Ali Mohammad Ghasemi
Editor: Behrouz Sebt Rasoul
Sound: Mahmoudreza Mousavinejad
Music: Fouad Samiei
Producer: Nosir Saidov, Behrouz Sebt Rasoul

Cast:
Diman Zandi,
Alireza Ostadi,
Meghdad Eslami,
Safar Hakadodov,
Zulfiya Sadikova



Screenings:
Sunday, Sept 15, 14:15, Hall 03
Thursday, Sept 19, 16:30, Hall 03

Genre: Drama

Country and year of production: Iran, 2024

Length: 95 min

Language: Persian

Subtitles: English

Swiss Premiere



GREEN PLUM SEASON

فصل آلوچه های سبز

Synopsis

After submitting his application to resign, a judge, Ata, seeks shelter in his family villa out of town. When his son, Farhad, a university student, is released from prison, Ata experiences a cold reunion with the family while his wife, Giti, is filing for divorce.

But a car accident, leading to the death of Farhad and the paralysis of Giti, puts him in a game of concealing the truth from Giti and Vida, Farhad's girlfriend – just as it has been constantly concealed since the time of the loss of another family member under the heavy steps of history in a country shaken by public movements from time to time.

Director

Born in 1983 in Arak, Ali Bayat studied Mechanical Engineering before attending film courses. Bayat has made five short films: "Cave," "Guitar," "Underground," "Fall" (which participated in 40 international festivals and won 20 awards), and "Respect the Court." He has also worked as a production manager on the feature films "Isolation" and "Forever." In 2024, he completed his debut feature film, "Green Plum Season."

Screenplay:
Ahmad Rafizadeh
Cinematography:
Majid Gorjian
Editor: Ebrahim Saeedi
Sound: Hassan Mahdavi
Music: Behzad Abdi
Producer: Mohammad Najafizadeh

Cast:
Mehdi Ahmadi,
Fariba Kamran,
Siavash Cheraghi Pour,
Ayoub Aghakhani,
Ehsan Majouni,
Maryam Hemmatian



Screenings:
Saturday, Sept 14, 16:15, Hall 03

Genre: Drama
Country and year of production: Iran, 2024
Length: 93 min
Language: Persian
Subtitles: English
Swiss Premiere



THE GREAT YAWN OF HISTORY

خمیازه بزرگ

Screenplay:
Aliyar Rasti
Cinematography:
Soroush Alizadeh
Editor: Mohammad Najarian
Sound: Amirhossein Ghasemi
Music: Ava Rasti
Producer: Aliyar Rasti

Cast:
Mohammad Aghebati,
Amirhossein Hosseini,
Saber Abar,
Mahin Sadri,
Mehrdad Ziaie,
Ramin Alizadeh

Synopsis
"The Great Yawn" tells the story of a man who dreams of a box of gold waiting for him at the end of a cave. Curbed by his religious belief that it's not permissible to go after it himself, he employs the assistance of a non-believer. Together they embark on a long journey across the Iranian landscape in pursuit of a miracle. But their treasure hunt soon turns tempting also for those they meet along the way.

Director
Aliyar Rasti was born in 1988 in Tehran. He began his career in photography, video, and video installations in 2008, gradually shifting towards his true passion for filmmaking. He has created over ten music videos for independent Iranian bands that have participated in various festivals.

In 2018, he won the Best Debut Film award at the Tirana Film Festival for his debut short film, "In Be-tween." His second short film, "America," followed, and "The Great Yawn" became his first feature-length film. Currently, he is rewriting the script for a feature film titled "The Mountain," inspired by a true story based on his relationship with his father.



Screenings:
Saturday, Sept 14, 20:15, Hall 03
Monday, Sept 16, 14:15, Hall 03

Genre: Drama
Country and year of production: Iran, 2023
Length: 82 min
Language: Persian
Subtitles: English
Swiss Premiere



IN THE ARMS OF A TREE

در آغوش درخت

Screenplay:
Babak Khajehpasha
Cinematography:
Mohamad Fakouri
Editor:
Hosein Jamshidigohari
Sound: Mohamadmehdi Javaherizadeh
Music: Fardin Khalatbari
Producer:
Sajad Nasrolahinasab,
Mohamadreza Mesbah

Cast:
Maral Baniadam,
Javad Qamati,
Rohollah Zamani,
Ahoura Lotfi,
Rayan Lotfi

Synopsis
The complex crisis of Kimia and Farid's life, who have been married for twelve years, destroys the beautiful world of their children, children who know nothing but simplicity and kindness in life.

Director
Babak Khajehpasha was born in 1981. He has a B.A in Graphic Design and a degree in Theater and Dramatic Literature. He has made some short films, TV movies and he has directed some theaters. "In the Arms of a Tree" is his first feature film. Short films: "Leyla's Fest", "Color and Soil", "Cold Illusion".



Screenings:
Friday, Sept 13, 16:30, Hall 03
Monday, Sept 16, 20:30, Hall 03

Genre: Documentary
Country and year of production: Iran, 2024
Length: 92 min
Language: Persian, Azeri
Subtitles: English
Swiss Premiere



Cinematography: Ghazaleh Zaim
Editor: Ghazaleh Zaim
Sound: Ghazaleh Zaim
Producer: Ghazaleh Zaim

IS THERE ANY TRACE OF TOMORROW'S BLOSSOMS?

فردا از شکوفه ها خبری هست؟

Synopsis
This documentary traces the life stories of: myself, my mother, my grandmother, and my great-grandmother. It explores the joys and hardships that have shaped our lives. From personal triumphs to shared struggles, the film captures the essence of our experiences and the enduring strength passed down through generations.

Director
Ghazaleh Zaim was born on April 24th 1994 in Tehran, Iran. She graduated with a BA in Film Directing from Sooreh University of Art. She has acted in several plays and short films. "Is There Any Trace of Tomorrow's Blossoms?" is her debut project.



Screenings:
Friday, Sept 13, 14:15, Hall 03
Sunday, Sept 15, 16:00, Hall 03

Genre: Documentary
Country and year of production: France, 2024
Length: 79 min
Language: French, Persian
Subtitles: English
Swiss Premiere



Cinematography: Hélène Rastegar, Damien Fritsch, Gautier Gumpper
Editor: Gautier Gumpper
Sound: Aymeric Eustache
Music: Bijan Rastegar
Producer: Milana Christitch

SHÂD BÂSH

شاد باش

Synopsis
Bâbâdjoun, my dear dad, what's Iran like now? What if I went there? History has redistributed the cards of our personal history, creating knots and gaps. Going to Iran is an impulse towards you that my life has missed so much. But am I able of going to the country you fled? In the memory of my heart, the lines of a Persian poem you taught me : "Nothing stays, everything passes, everything changes, so live in joy". Bâbâdjoun, will we be able to make up for lost time before we disappear?

Director
Hélène Rastegar is a fiction and documentary filmmaker. After studying cinema, she co-organized the Chacun Son Court short-film festival, then took part in the Lussas writing residency. She directed the short fiction films "Nocturnes" (produced by GREC) and "Hydrangeas in Winter", and the feature-length documentaries "Dreams in Progress" and "Shâd Bâsh".

Her films are imbued with a dual Iranian culture in perpetual construction, and feature female characters whose bodies bear the marks of an internal struggle to survive and make a place for themselves.



Screenings:
Friday, Sept 13, 20:30, Hall 03

Genre: Documentary

Country and year of production: USA, 2023

Length: 95 min

Language: English, Persian

Subtitles: English

Swiss Premiere



A REVOLUTION ON CANVAS

انقلاب روی بوم

Cinematography: Till Schauder
Editor: Simeon Hutner, Gretchen Hildebran
Sound: Chris Foster, Hossein Ghoorchian
Music: Sussan Deyhim
Producer: Sara Nodjoumi, Till Schauder

Synopsis
Sara Nodjoumi delves into the mystery surrounding the disappearance of more than 100 “treasonous” paintings by her father, seminal Iranian modern artist Nickzad Nodjoumi.

Directors
Till Schauder and Sara Nodjoumi are accomplished filmmakers known for their collaborative work on documentary and narrative films. Till Schauder, originally from Germany, has directed and produced several award-winning films, including “The Iran Job,” which explores the intersection of sports and politics.

Sara Nodjoumi, an Iranian-American producer and director, focuses on stories that highlight cultural and political issues, co-directing and producing “A Revolution on Canvas” with Schauder. Together, they founded Partner Pictures, a production company dedicated to creating impactful, socially relevant films. Their work has been featured at prestigious festivals such as Tribeca and has garnered critical acclaim and numerous awards.





Screenings:
Tuesday, Sept 17, 20:15, Hall 03
Thursday, Sept 19, 14:15, Hall 03

Genre: Documentary

Country and year of production: Germany, 2024

Length: 83 min

Language: German, Persian, English

Subtitles: English



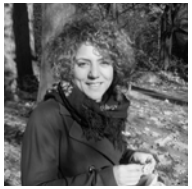
SHAHID

شهید

Cinematography: Felix Pflieger
Editor: Frank Müller, Narges Kalhor
Sound: Philip Hutter, Andreas Goldbrunner
Music: Marja Burchard
Producer: Michael Kalb

Synopsis
Shahid is a political drama and a desperate comedy at the same time. It features historical heroes, contemporary criminals, and modern women having to deal with both. SHAHID is a personal film, questioning all kinds of radical ideologies – while not taking itself all too seriously either.

Director
Narges Kalhor was born in Tehran in 1984 and studied film directing at the Tehran Film Academy. She has participated in various international film festivals and received numerous awards for her work. Her graduation film “In the Name of Scheherazade” premiered at Visions Du Réel in 2020 and won the Young Talent Award at the Oberhausen Short Film Festival.



Screenings:
Wednesday, Sept 18, 16:00, Hall 03

Genre: Documentary

Country and year of production: Netherlands, 2022

Length: 71 min

Language: English, Dutch

Subtitles: English

Swiss Premiere



ALL YOU SEE

آنچه میبینید

Cinematography: Jean Counet, Jefrim Rothuizen
Editor: Niki Padidar, Albert Markus, Festus Toll
Sound: Diego van Uden
Music: Fin Greenall
Producer: Menna Laura Meijer

Synopsis

In “All You See,” leading characters find themselves in a new world where nothing aligns, provoking daily reactions in the Netherlands. They continuously face questions like “where are you from?” and “do you speak Dutch?” This is a familiar experience for director Niki Padidar, who left Iran at age 7. Through conversations with three immigrants—Khadija from Somalia, Sophia from the UK, and Hanna from Ukraine—Padidar explores the alienation and projections newcomers face, questioning how long someone can be considered new.

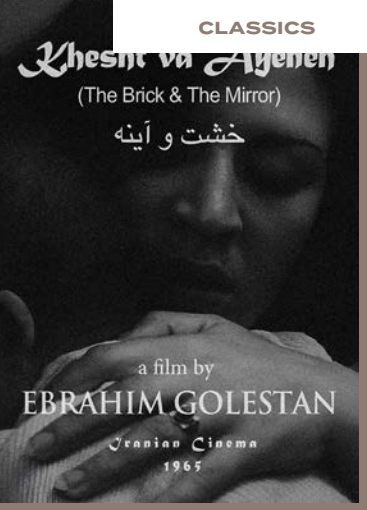
Director

Niki Padidar is an Iranian-Dutch filmmaker who emigrated from Iran to the Netherlands at the age of 7. She is known for her work that delves into the immigrant experience, including her acclaimed film “All You See.” Padidar’s films often explore themes of identity, alienation, and the societal projections faced by newcomers in their adopted countries.

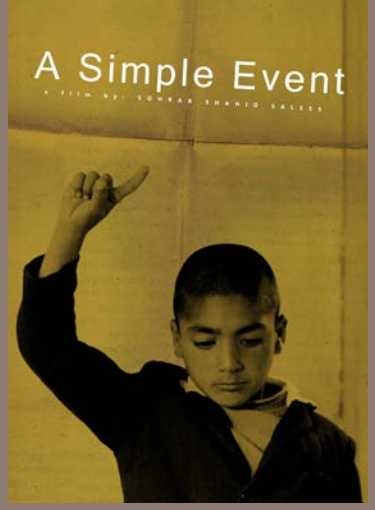


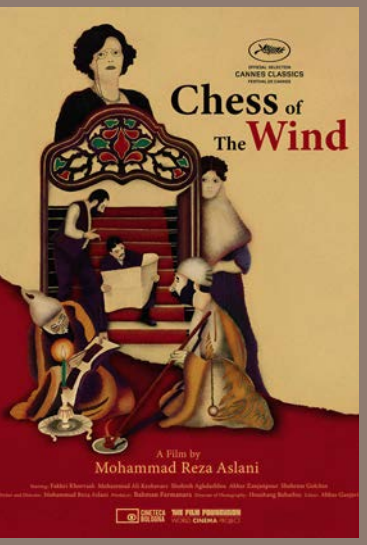
Screenings:
Tuesday, Sept 17, 16:45, Hall 03

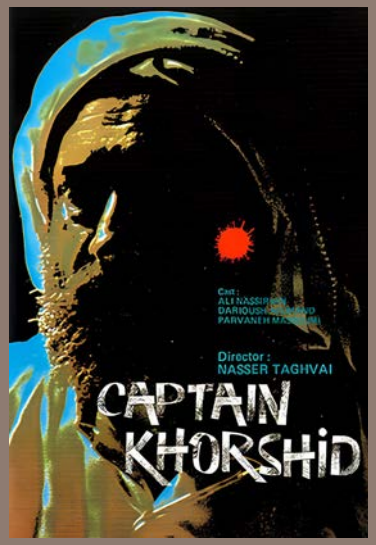


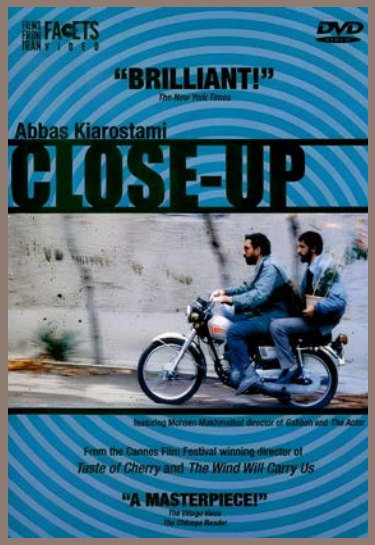


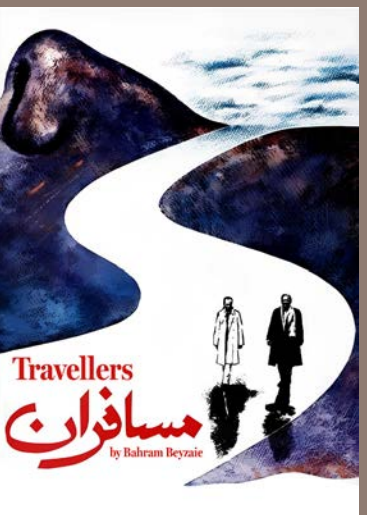
















CLASSICS

7 CLASSIC FILMS

Faszinierende Vielfalt und Kontinuität

7 Classics of Iranian Film

The Brick And The Mirror

The Cow

A Simple Event

Chess Of The Wind

Captain Khorshid

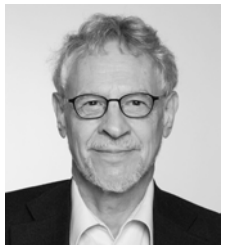
Close-Up

Travellers

CLASSICS

Klassiker des iranischen Films

FASZINIERENDE VIELFALT UND KONTINUITÄT



Martin Girod

> “Mit dem Parabelhaften und Fantastischen, dem eleganten Verzicht auf Eindeutiges, umschiffen sie die Zensur”
>
> **Martin Girod**

Die filmische Weltkarte, die die Kinos in den 1960er-Jahren dem hiesigen Publikum präsentierten, war voller weisser Flecken. Einer davon war der Iran. Ausser dass das Land von einem „Schah“ diktatorisch regiert wurde (und dass dieser eine verschwenderische Frau hatte), wussten wir europäischen Cinephilen so gut wie nichts über das Land. Schon gar nicht, dass es über eine umfangreiche kommerzielle Filmproduktion verfügte.

Die Vorführung einiger Filme an der Mostra Internazionale del Nuovo Cinema in Pesaro 1965 trug wesentlich dazu bei, das Interesse der internationalen Filmfestivals an iranischen Filmen zu wecken. 1971 wurde in Venedig Dariush Mehrjuis “Gav” (Die Kuh) gezeigt und mit dem Preis der Filmkritiker (FIPRESCI) ausgezeichnet. Dies löste eine erste Welle der “Entdeckung” des iranischen Kinos aus, die aber weitgehend auf Festivals und Filmclubs beschränkt blieb. Da konnte man fasziniert diese ästhetisch bestechenden und verzaubernden, zumeist aber auch etwas rätselhaften Wunderwerke von Mehrjui, eines Sohrab Shahid Saless, Parviz Kimiavi oder Bahram Beyzaie und anderer bestaunen.

Ihr oft parabelhaftes Erzählen hatte, wie wir später entdecken sollten, einen doppelten Hintergrund: den der persisch-arabischen Erzähltradition und den einer strengen Zensur. Diese fügte den Tabus des US-Produktion-Codes (wie Religion oder Sex) noch eigene hinzu, insbesondere jede Kritik am Schah-Regime oder an den sozialen Zuständen im Land.

Mit der “Islamischen Revolution” von 1979 kam das Filmschaffen im Iran weitgehend zum Erliegen. Das Kino stand generell als westlich-dekadent unter Verdacht, und die Unsicherheit, was nun ein “islamischer Film” sein könnte, schreckte private Produzenten ab. Zudem wurde die Zensur kaum gelockert, sondern zusätzlich um die “islamischen Bekleidungsvorschriften” für Frauen erweitert. Erst die Errichtung der Farabi Foundation for Cinema 1983 schuf eine neue, jedoch streng kontrollierte Basis für die Produktion von Filmen.

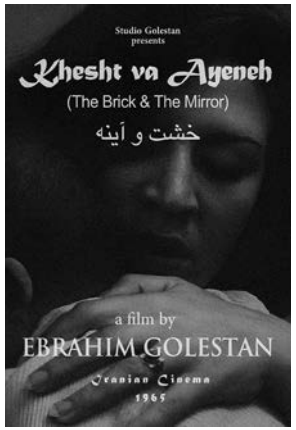
Nach Jahren weitgehender Abwesenheit von internationalen Festivals setzte Ende der 1980er Jahre die zweite “Entdeckung” des iranischen Films ein. David Streiff, damals Direktor des Festivals von Locarno, fuhr als einer der wenigen europäischen Festivalvertreter nach Teheran zum dortigen Filmfestival, war sehr angetan vom Gebotenen und brachte gleich drei Filme mit. So kam “Wo ist das Haus meines Freundes?” von Abbas Kiarostami 1989 in Locarno zu einem der Hauptpreise. Es war der Auftakt zu Kiarostamis internationalem Ruhm und zu einer Welle iranischer Filme nicht nur an Filmfestivals, sondern auch in den europäischen Filmkunstkinos.

Die Rezeption dieser Filme im Westen war allerdings weitgehend ahistorisch, denn die Kenntnis des iranischen Filmschaffens vor 1979 fehlte. Der Zugang zu den früheren Werken war kaum möglich, weil die offiziellen iranischen Stellen die Kultur der Schah-Zeit pauschal mieden und weitgehend tabuisierten. Erst in den letzten Jahren haben die Farabi Foundation for Cinema und das iranische Filmarchiv nach und nach die Klassiker restauriert. Damit haben sie gewissermassen eine dritte “Entdeckung” des iranischen Filmschaffens ermöglicht: Sie macht erstmals klar, dass es nicht wirklich ein Kino vor 1979 und ein völlig neues Kino ab 1983 gab. Sieht man Werke aus beiden Perioden, lässt sich unschwer eine erstaunliche Nähe erkennen, nicht zuletzt in ihrer Ästhetik. Die Filme haben mehr miteinander gemeinsam, als eine politisierte Leseart auf den ersten Blick wahrnimmt.

Die Auswahl dieser Retrospektive zeigt – mit einer bezeichnenden Lücke zu Beginn der 1980er-Jahre –, dass es über den politischen Umbruch hinweg eine kreative Kontinuität im iranischen Filmschaffen gab. Regisseure wie Dariush Mehrjui und Mohammad Reza Aslani, die hier mit Werken vor 1979 vertreten sind, haben ihre Filmarbeit im Iran später fortsetzen können. Umgekehrt waren Bahram Beyzai, Abbas Kiarostami und Naser Taghvai, von denen spätere Werke auf dem Programm stehen, bereits in den 1970er-Jahren hervorgetreten.

Eine andere, traurige Gemeinsamkeit liegt darin, dass einige der besten iranischen Filmemacher sich gezwungen sahen, ihrer Heimat den Rücken zu kehren: Shahid Sorab Saless floh 1975 nach Deutschland und arbeitete da weiter, Ebrahim Golestan verliess den Iran Ende der 1970er Jahre, um nach England zu gehen, Bahram Beyzai, der vor wie nach 1979 zu den produktivsten Filmautoren Irans gehört hatte, zog 2010 in die USA. Viele der profiliertesten Regisseure der jüngeren Generation folgten in den letzten Jahren ihrem Beispiel.

Neben direkter, politisch motivierter Verfolgung hat sicher die Zensur, diese übermächtige Konstante des iranischen Filmschaffens, zu diesem Exodus stark beigetragen. Andrerseits hat sie aber die Filmautoren erfinderisch gemacht und das Publikum gelehrt, hellsichtig und hellhörig zu sein für kritische Untertöne. Mit dem Parabelhaften und Fantastischen, dem eleganten Verzicht auf Eindeutiges, umschiffen sie die Zensur. So geben die iranischen Filmautoren nicht nur, wie ihre westlichen Kollegen, die Fiktion als Realität aus, sie lassen oft das Fiktive durch ihre Fantasie als irreal erscheinen – und vertrauen darauf, dass das Publikum darin die eigene Realität erkennt.

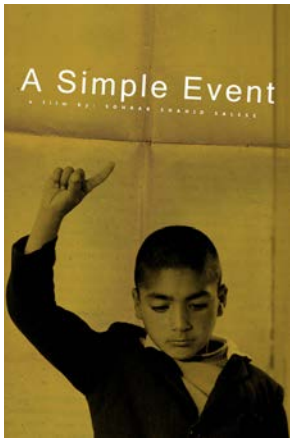


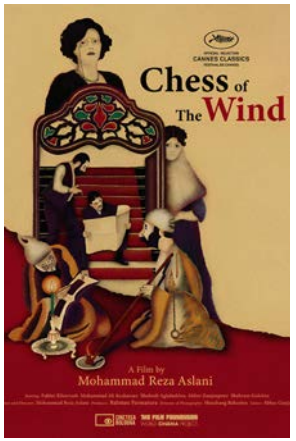
7 CLASSIC FILMS OF IRANIAN CINEMA

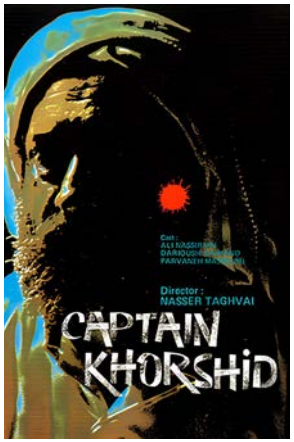
Yadolah Dodge

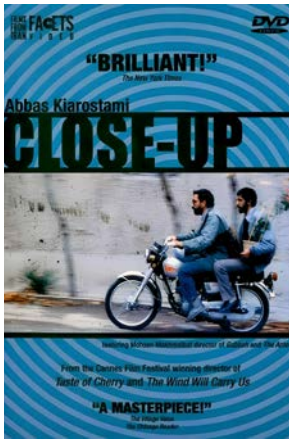
"These seven films are not just milestones in Iranian cinema but also timeless works of art"

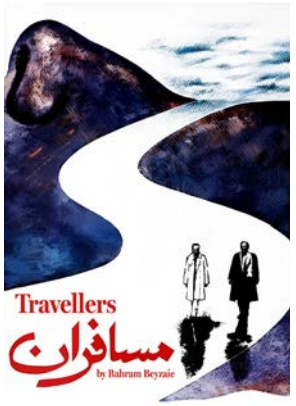












Welcome to this special showcase of Iranian cinematic masterpieces, where we present seven iconic films that have left an indelible mark on the landscape of world cinema. This carefully curated selection spans decades of artistic innovation, cultural reflection, and storytelling brilliance, offering a unique glimpse into the soul of Iranian society and its rich cinematic heritage.

The Brick And The Mirror (1965) –
Directed by Ebrahim Golestan
A seminal work in Iranian cinema, "The Brick And The Mirror" is a haunting exploration of moral ambiguity and existential despair. The film follows a taxi driver who finds an abandoned infant in his cab, leading to a series of events that unravel his psyche. Golestan's direction and the film's noir-inspired aesthetics make it a poignant commentary on urban alienation and societal decay.

The Cow (1969) –
Directed by Dariush Mehrjui
Dariush Mehrjui's "The Cow" is a cornerstone of the Iranian New Wave, telling the story of a villager's profound bond with his cow. When the cow dies, the villager's descent into madness serves as an allegory for the human condition and communal ties. This film's raw emotional power and its exploration of identity and loss have earned it international acclaim.

A Simple Event (1973) –
Directed by Sohrab Shahid-Saless
Sohrab Shahid-Saless's "A Simple Event" is a minimalist masterpiece that depicts the monotony and quiet despair of a young boy's life in a small Iranian village. The film's deliberate pace and observational style reflect the director's deep humanism and attention to the subtle rhythms of everyday life.

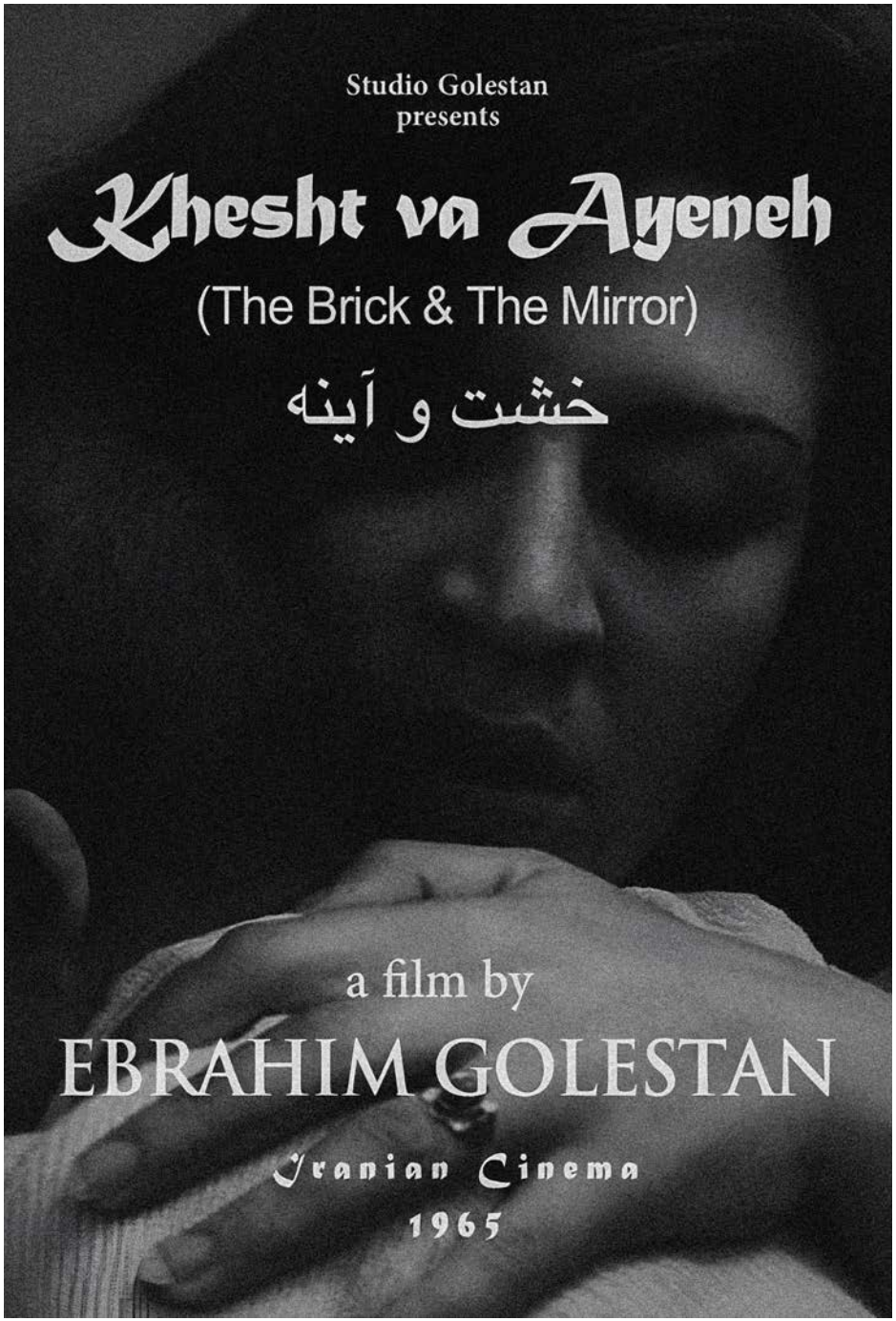
Chess of the Wind (1976) –
Directed by Mohammad Reza Aslani
Long considered lost, "Chess of the Wind" was rediscovered and restored to great acclaim. This atmospheric period drama delves into the machinations of a wealthy family during the Qajar era. Aslani's meticulous direction and the film's sumptuous visual style create a hauntingly beautiful narrative about power, greed, and corruption.

Captain Khorshid (1987) –
Directed by Naser Taghvai
Adapted from Ernest Hemingway's "To Have and Have Not," "Captain Khorshid" is set in southern Iran and tells a powerful story of survival and resilience amid socio-political upheaval. Directed by Naser Taghvai, the film explores the challenges faced by a one-armed boat captain. The film won the Bronze Leopard at the Locarno International Film Festival.

Close-Up (1990) –
Directed by Abbas Kiarostami
Abbas Kiarostami's "Close-Up" blurs the line between documentary and fiction in its portrayal of a real-life incident where a man impersonates a famous filmmaker. The film is a profound meditation on identity, art, and the nature of reality, showcasing Kiarostami's innovative approach to storytelling and his deep empathy for human complexity, while challenging viewers to rethink the boundaries between truth and illusion.

Travelers (1992) –
Directed by Bahram Beyzai
"Travelers" is a visually stunning film that intertwines the lives of its characters with traditional Iranian art and mythology. Bahram Beyzaie crafts a multi-layered narrative about a family journeying to a wedding, blending reality with surreal elements to explore themes of fate, loss, and cultural heritage.

These seven films are milestones in Iranian cinema and timeless works of art that resonate with universal themes. Immerse yourself in these cinematic treasures and experience Iranian culture through the eyes of its visionary filmmakers.



CLASSICS

THE BRICK AND THE MIRROR

خشت و آینه

Genre: Drama

Country and year of production: Iran, 1966

Length: 130 min

Language: Persian

Subtitles: English

Swiss Premiere

"The Brick And The Mirror" (1965) is an influential Iranian drama film directed by Ebrahim Golestan. The film is considered a milestone in Iranian cinema and is known for its modernist approach and social commentary.

The story follows a Tehran taxi driver named Hashem who finds an abandoned baby in the backseat of his cab one night. Unsure of what to do, he takes the baby to his girlfriend, Taji, hoping she might help him figure out the next steps. Together, they navigate the bureaucratic and societal challenges of trying to find a safe place for the child.

As Hashem and Taji search for the baby's mother or a suitable home, they encounter various characters and institutions that reflect the complexities and moral ambiguities of Iranian society. The film explores themes of responsibility, compassion, and the social obligations of individuals within a community. Through its narrative, "The Brick And The Mirror" critiques the inefficiencies and moral failures of contemporary urban life.

Themes and Style:
"The Brick And The Mirror" is notable for its realistic portrayal of Tehran in the 1960s, capturing the social and economic conditions of the time. The film employs a modernist style, using long takes, natural lighting, and a mostly non-professional cast to create a sense of authenticity. Golestan's direction emphasizes the internal struggles of the characters, particularly Hashem's existential crisis as he grapples with the moral implications of his actions.

The title "The Brick And The Mirror" symbolizes the contrast between harsh reality (brick) and self-reflection or illusion (mirror), suggesting the dual nature of

Screenplay:
Ebrahim Golestan
Cinematography:
Soleiman Minasian,
Amir Karari
Editor: Ebrahim Golestan
Sound: Mahmood Hangval
Producer: Ebrahim Golestan

Cast:
Zakaria Hashemi,
Akbar Meshkin,
Pari Saberi,
Jamshid Mashayekhi,
Mohammad-Ali Keshavarz,
Manouchehr Farid,
Parviz Fannizadeh,
Jalal Moghadam

Screenings:
Thursday, Sept 12, 18:15, Hall 06



"Important, powerful yet frustrating cornerstone of early Iranian cinema"
—Daniel Karlsson

human experience and the tension between external circumstances and inner life.

Significance:
"The Brick And The Mirror" is acclaimed for its bold storytelling and its critical perspective on Iranian society. The film is seen as a precursor to the Iranian New Wave, influencing subsequent generations of Iranian filmmakers with its innovative style and thematic depth. It holds a significant place in Iranian cinematic history, not only for its artistic achievements but also for its role in paving the way for future filmmakers to explore complex social and philosophical themes through cinema.

The impact of "The Brick And The Mirror" on Iranian cinema cannot be overstated. It helped to establish a foundation for the Iranian New Wave, a movement characterized by its use of poetic realism, non-professional actors, and an emphasis on social issues. Golestan's work is often compared to that of contemporaries such as Federico Fellini and Jean-Luc Godard, and his influence is evident in the works of later Iranian directors like Abbas Kiarostami and Mohsen Makhmalbaf.

Ebrahim Golestan



Ebrahim Golestan was an eminent Iranian filmmaker, writer, and journalist, known for his pioneering contributions to Iranian cinema and literature. Born on October 19, 1922, in Shiraz, Iran, Golestan has been a significant cultural figure whose work has spanned various forms of media and art.

Early Life and Education
Ebrahim Golestan was born into a well-educated and affluent family. He studied law at the University of Tehran but eventually gravitated towards literature and journalism, fields where he would make his most significant impacts. His early involvement in journalism included working for newspapers and translating literary works, which honed his skills in storytelling and critical analysis.

Career in Film and Literature
Golestan's career in filmmaking began in the 1950s when he established Golestan Films, one of Iran's first independent film studios. This studio became a hub for creative and experimental projects, diverging from the more commercial and formulaic productions of the time.

Writing and Literary Contributions
Golestan was also a prolific writer, with several collections of short stories, essays, and translations to his name. His literary work is known for its incisive critique of Iranian society and its exploration of existential themes. His writing style is marked by its clarity, depth, and often, a biting wit.

Personal Life and Legacy
Ebrahim Golestan's personal life has been as intriguing as his professional career. He had a notable relationship with the acclaimed Iranian poet Forough Farrokhzad, who worked at Golestan Films and whose work and life were profoundly influenced by their association. In the late 1970s, Golestan moved to the United Kingdom, where he continued his work in literature and film, albeit at a slower pace.

His reflections on Iranian culture and politics offer valuable insights into the intellectual and artistic movements of 20th-century Iran. Golestan's legacy is multifaceted: he is celebrated for his cinematic and literary achievements and his role in shaping modern Iranian cultural identity, with his works continuing to be appreciated for their artistic merit and societal commentary.

Notable Films
• "A Fire" (1961): This documentary, examining the tragic fire at the Abadan oil refinery, showcased Golestan's adeptness at blending social commentary with cinematic art.

• "The Hills of Marlik" (1963): Another documentary that reflects on ancient Iranian civilization, highlighting Golestan's interest in cultural and historical subjects.

• "The Brick And The Mirror" (1965): This feature film is considered a milestone in Iranian cinema for its modernist approach and social realism. The film's narrative and stylistic innovations had a lasting influence on the Iranian New Wave.



CLASSICS

THE COW
گاو

Genre: Drama

Country and year of production: Iran, 1969

Length: 105 min

Language: Persian

Subtitles: English

"The Cow" (1969) is a landmark Iranian drama film directed by Dariush Mehrjui, based on a story by Gholam-Hossein Saedi. The film is highly regarded for its poignant narrative and its critical role in the emergence of the Iranian New Wave.

Synopsis

The story is set in a remote and impoverished village in Iran and revolves around Masht Hassan, a humble and devoted villager who owns the only cow in the village. This cow is not only Masht Hassan's most prized possession but also a vital source of milk and income for him and his wife. The villagers respect him for his dedication to his cow, which he treats almost like a family member.

One day, Masht Hassan has to leave the village for a short trip. During his absence, the cow mysteriously dies. Fearing Hassan's reaction and knowing how deeply he cares for the animal, the villagers decide to conceal the truth from him. They hastily bury the cow and concoct a story that the cow ran away.

Upon his return, Masht Hassan is devastated to find his cow missing. Despite the villagers' attempts to convince him that the cow has indeed run away, he becomes increasingly despondent. Gradually, Hassan's grief and denial evolve into a psychological breakdown. He begins to believe that he is the cow, losing touch with reality as he assumes the cow's identity. He mimics its behavior, eats hay, and even prefers to stay in the cow's stable.

The film portrays the villagers' helplessness and the tragic consequences of their well-intentioned deception. As Hassan's condition deteriorates, the villagers are confronted with the limits of their solidarity and the harsh realities of their existence.

Screenplay:
Dariush Mehrjui,
Gholam-Hossein Saedi
Cinematography:
Fereydun Ghovanlou
Editor: Zari Khalaj,
Dariush Mehrjui
Sound: Yadollah Asgari,
Bahram Darai,
Hormouz Farhat
Music: Hormoz Farhat
Producer: Dariush Mehrjui

Cast:
Ezzatollah Entezami,
Mahin Shahabi,
Ali Nassirian,
Jamshid Mashayekhi,
Jafar Vali,
Khosrow Shojazadeh,
Ezzatollah Ramazanifar

Screenings:
Friday, Sept 13, 18:15, Hall 03



"A Dazzling Achievement!"
The New York Times

"Simple and Moving."
Roger Ebert

Themes and Style
"The Cow" is a profound exploration of themes such as identity, mental illness, rural life, and the human-animal bond. It reflects on the socio-economic conditions of the time and critiques the traditional and often superstitious mindset of rural communities.

Mehrjui's direction is characterized by its stark realism and emotional depth. The film uses minimalistic settings and naturalistic performances to create an immersive and poignant atmosphere. Its black-and-white cinematography enhances the starkness of the village's harsh life and Hassan's descent into madness.

Dariush Mehrjui's "The Cow" remains an influential piece of cinematic art, celebrated for its compassionate storytelling, its critique of societal norms, and its profound psychological insight.

Dariush Mehrjui



Dariush Mehrjui is a prominent Iranian filmmaker, screenwriter, and producer, considered a leading figure in Iranian cinema. Born on December 8, 1939, in Tehran, Mehrjui was a crucial player in the Iranian New Wave movement, transforming Iranian film with its focus on social issues, realism, and innovative storytelling.

His films explore complex social, psychological, and philosophical themes, known for their realistic portrayal of characters and situations, blending neorealism with a distinctively Iranian narrative style. His work frequently critiques societal norms and addresses issues like gender inequality, corruption, and the human condition.

Early Life and Education
Mehrjui grew up in Tehran in a middle-class family with an early interest in art and literature. After high school in Iran, he moved to the United States to study at UCLA. Initially enrolled in a philosophy program, he later switched to film and theater arts. Influenced by New Wave directors like Jean-Luc Godard and Robert Bresson, Mehrjui graduated and became a key figure in the Iranian New Wave, blending Western techniques with Iranian cultural narratives.

Early Career and Breakthrough
Mehrjui's directorial debut, "Diamond 33" (1967), was a comedy that did not achieve much success. However, his second film, "The Cow" (1969), marked a significant turning point in his career.

Based on a story by Gholam-Hossein Saedi, "The Cow" is considered a pioneering film of the Iranian New Wave. It won the FIPRESCI Prize at the Venice Film Festival, bringing international recognition to Iranian cinema and establishing Mehrjui as a major filmmaker.

Legacy and Personal Life
Despite political and social changes in Iran that sometimes limited his creative freedom, Mehrjui continued to make influential films. His contributions have cemented his legacy as a pioneer of the Iranian New Wave, bringing Iranian cinema to the global stage.

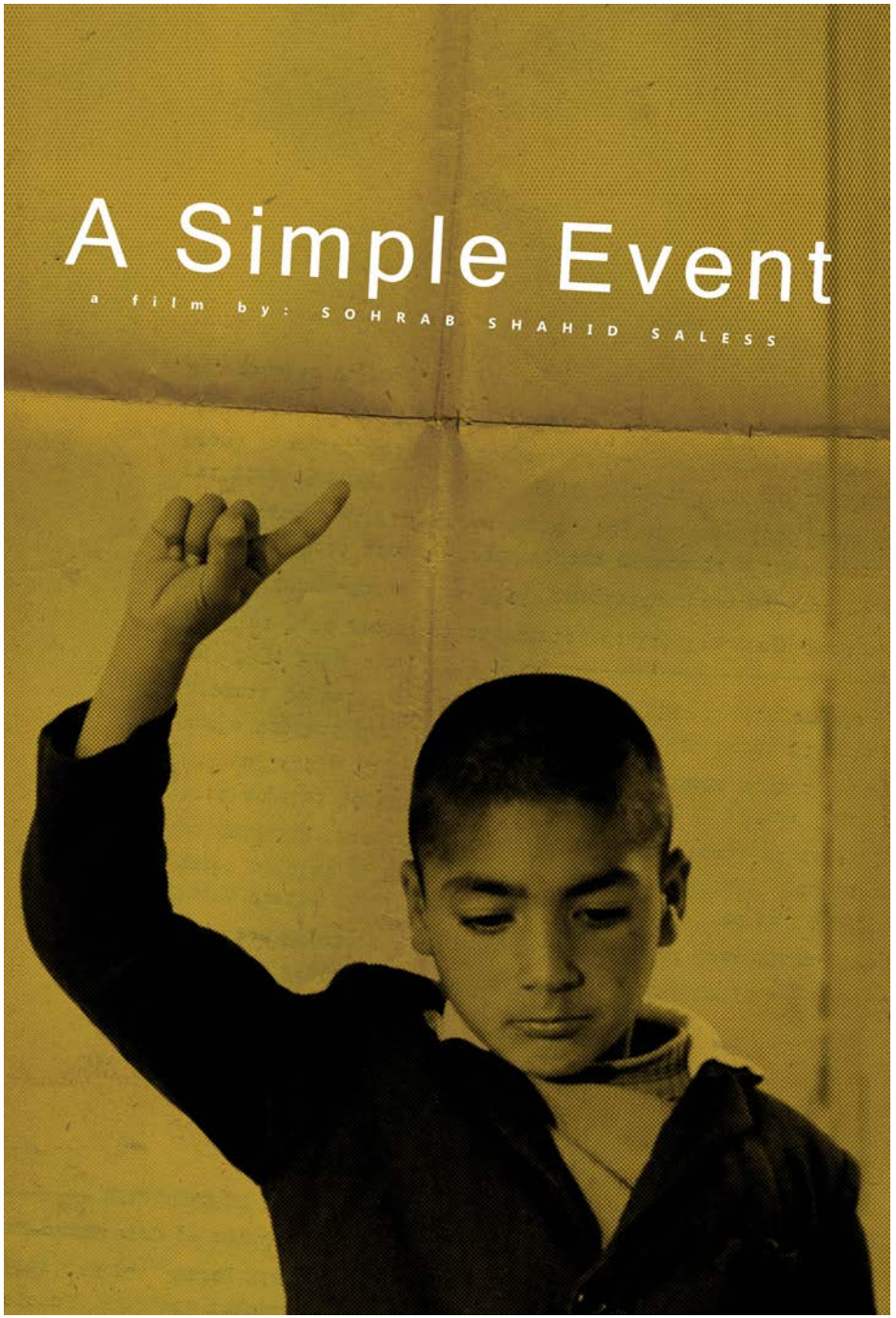
Mehrjui's international experiences, especially during times of political unrest, have informed his cinematic perspective, drawing from diverse cultural and intellectual traditions. Respected for his artistic integrity, Mehrjui remains a revered figure in cinema with a profound impact on Iranian cultural expression.

Notable Films
- "The Postman" (1972): This film, based on a play by Saedi, continues Mehrjui's exploration of societal and psychological themes.

- "The Cycle" (1978): A critical examination of the black market for blood, this film won numerous awards and highlighted issues of corruption and poverty in Iran.

- "Hamoun" (1990): A philosophical and existential drama that is considered one of Mehrjui's masterpieces. It delves into the psyche of an intellectual grappling with personal and professional crises.

- "Sara" (1993): An adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's play "A Doll's House," this film critiques traditional gender roles and societal expectations in Iranian culture.



CLASSICS

A SIMPLE EVENT

یک اتفاق ساده

Genre: Drama

Country and year of production: Iran, 1973

Length: 80 min

Language: Persian

Subtitles: English

"A Simple Event" (1973) is an Iranian drama film directed by Sohrab Shahid Saless. The film is notable for its minimalist style and realistic portrayal of everyday life, which had a significant influence on the Iranian New Wave cinema.

Synopsis

The film revolves around the life of a young boy named Mohammad, who lives with his ailing mother and largely indifferent fisherman father in a small coastal village by the Caspian Sea. The narrative is deliberately simple, focusing on the mundane and routine aspects of Mohammad's life, reflecting the stark realities and struggles of rural existence.

Mohammad's daily activities include going to school, helping his father with fishing, and performing household chores. His mother's illness adds a layer of somberness to his already monotonous life. The film captures the small, uneventful moments that define his day, from attending lackluster school lessons to playing alone on the beach.

As the film progresses, the mother's health deteriorates, and she eventually passes away. The event is portrayed with the same understated, quiet realism that characterizes the rest of the film. Life goes on with an almost indifferent continuity, as Mohammad and his father return to their daily routines, highlighting the resilience and stoicism required to endure such hardships.

Themes and Style

"A Simple Event" is a study in minimalism and realism. Shahid Saless employs long takes, static camera positions, and natural lighting to create an immersive and authentic depiction of village life.

Screenplay:
Azadeh Abbasifar,
Omid Roohani,
Sohrab Shahid Saless
Cinematography:
Naghi Ma'soomi
Editor: Kazem Rajinia
Sound: Mohammed Sadeq Alami, Rouhollah Emami
Producer: Central Film Office of the Iranian Ministry of Culture

Cast:
Hibibollah Safarian,
Mohammed Zamani,
Anne Mohammad Tarikhi,
Hedayatullah Navid

Screenings:
Saturday, Sept 14, 18:15, Hall 03



“There is a degree to which this quiet observation is saying so much more about life and society in Iran, and by extension the whole world, than any polemical piece of filmmaking.”

Peter Hourigan

The film's slow pace and focus on the minutiae of daily life emphasize the simplicity and harshness of the characters' existence.

Thematically, the film explores themes of poverty, isolation, and the unremarkable passage of time. It reflects on the human condition and the quiet endurance of people living in modest, often harsh circumstances. The lack of dramatic incidents and the focus on routine tasks underscore the resilience of the human spirit in the face of life's adversities.

Significance:

“A Simple Event” is considered a seminal work in Iranian cinema, exemplifying the characteristics of the Iranian New Wave. Its emphasis on realism, simplicity, and the portrayal of ordinary lives had a profound impact on subsequent Iranian filmmakers. The film's understated, almost documentary-like approach challenged traditional narrative structures and paved the way for a new cinematic language in Iran.

Sohrab Shahid Saless



Sohrab Shahid Saless was an influential Iranian filmmaker, screenwriter, and director known for his pioneering contributions to Iranian New Wave cinema. Born on June 28, 1944, in Tehran, his work is characterized by its minimalist style, profound realism, and deep humanism.

Early Life and Education

Sohrab Shahid Saless was born on June 28, 1944, in Tehran into an intellectual family. From a young age, he showed a keen interest in literature and cinema, influenced by Persian poetry and cultural heritage. Seeking broader horizons, he moved to Europe to study cinema, first in Vienna, Austria, and then in Paris, France.

The European art cinema, especially the works of directors like Jean-Luc Godard and Robert Bresson, significantly shaped his minimalist and realist filmmaking style.

Major Works and Contributions

His feature films are notable for their minimalism, long takes, and use of non-professional actors, focusing on the mundane and repetitive aspects of life. These elements emphasize the human condition and the quiet struggles of ordinary individuals.

His films explore themes such as poverty, isolation, and the passage of time. His deep empathy for characters and commitment to depicting marginalized individuals with respect and dignity mark his unique style.

Legacy and Death

Sohrab Shahid Saless passed away on June 2, 1998, in Chicago, Illinois. Despite his relatively short career, his profound influence on Iranian cinema endures.

His innovative narrative techniques and commitment to realism have left a lasting legacy, with his work continuing to inspire and be studied for its artistic merit and humanism.

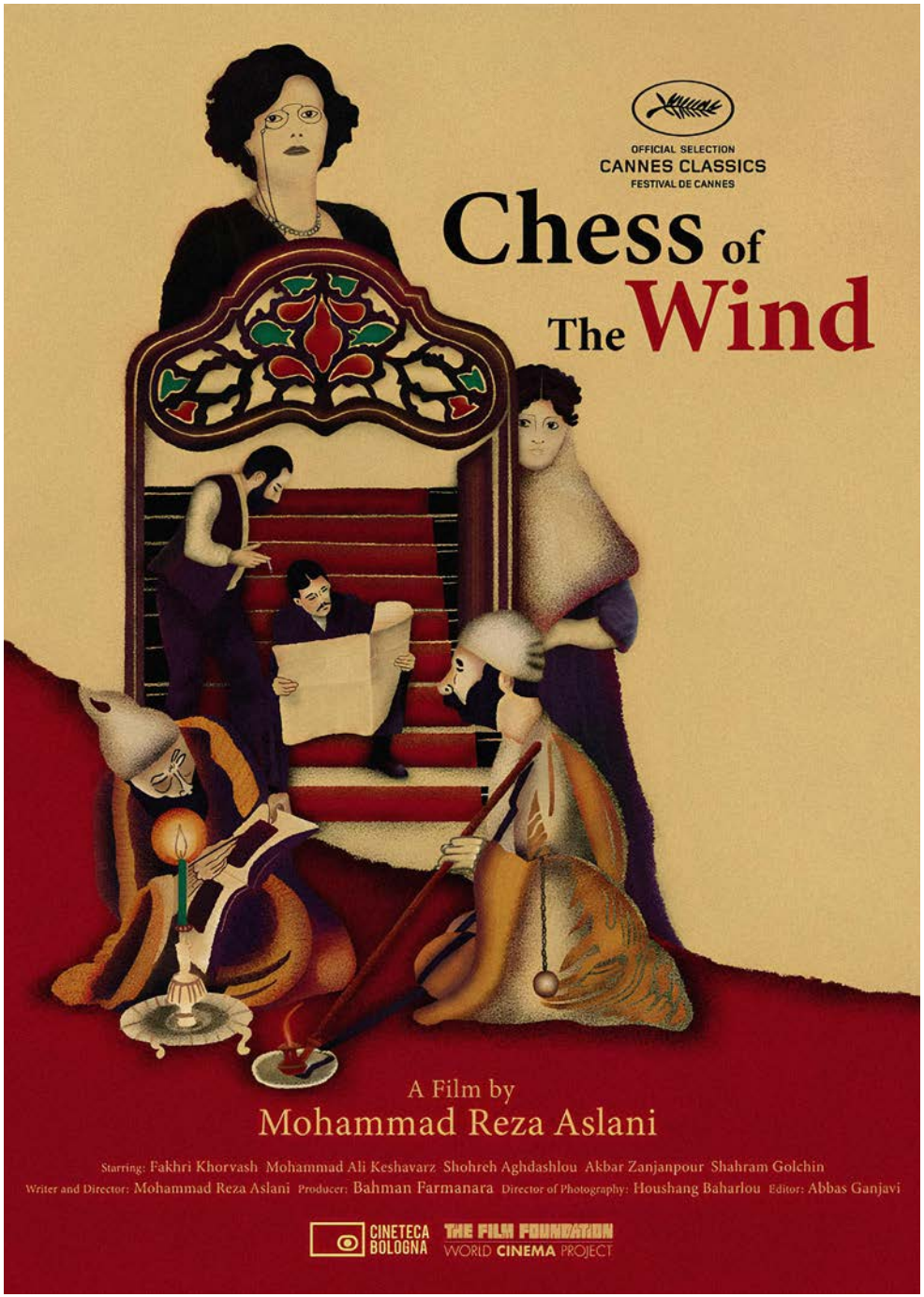
Impact and Recognition

His films have received international acclaim and been featured in numerous film festivals. Shahid Saless’s approach to storytelling and character development has inspired a generation of filmmakers, both in Iran and globally. His legacy endures through retrospectives and continued admiration from cinephiles.

Notable Films

• “A Simple Event” (1973): This film marked his breakthrough and is considered one of the cornerstones of Iranian New Wave cinema. It tells the story of a young boy in a coastal village, focusing on the simplicity and hardships of his daily life. The film's minimalistic approach and focus on realism set a new standard for Iranian filmmaking.

• “Still Life” (1974): Another significant work, this film explores the life of an elderly railway worker facing forced retirement. The film’s slow pace and meticulous attention to detail highlight the monotony and quiet dignity of the protagonist's life.



CLASSICS

CHESS OF THE WIND

شطرنج باد

Genre: Drama

Country and year of production: Iran, 1976

Length: 99 min

Language: Persian

Subtitles: English

Chess Of The Wind, is a 1976 Iranian film written and directed by Mohammad Reza Aslani. The film was screened only once before the 1979 Revolution in Iran and was accompanied by negative reception. After being rediscovered in 2020, the film was released in different countries to critical acclaim.

Synopsis

The film is a hauntingly atmospheric and visually stunning film that delves into the themes of power, greed, and familial decay within the confines of a decaying aristocratic household in 1920s Iran. The story revolves around a wealthy matriarch, the Lady Aghdas, who has recently passed away, leaving behind a considerable fortune. Her death sets off a bitter power struggle among the surviving family members, including her paralyzed daughter, known as Khanom Kouchak (the Little Lady), her opportunistic stepfather, and various servants and relatives.

Each character is driven by their own motivations and schemes to secure the inheritance. Khanom Kouchak, confined to a wheelchair, emerges as the central figure amidst this chaos. Despite her physical limitations, she demonstrates a sharp intellect and a will of iron, determined to protect her late mother's legacy from those who seek to exploit it. The film meticulously explores the psychological and emotional turmoil of its characters, unraveling their hidden desires and dark secrets.

As the plot unfolds, the tension escalates, leading to a series of betrayals, murders, and supernatural occurrences that blur the lines between reality and madness. The claustrophobic setting of the mansion, with its labyrinthine corridors and opulent yet decaying interiors, amplifies the sense of entrapment and

Screenplay:
Mohammad Reza Aslani
Cinematography:
Houshang Baharlou
Editor: Abbas Ganjavi
Sound: Valod Aghajanian, Mostafa Mostafazadeh
Music:
Sheyda Gharachedaghi
Producer:
Bahman Farmanara

Cast:
Fakhri Khorvash,
Mohamad Ali Keshavarz,
Akbar Zanjanpour,
Shohreh Aghdashloo,
Shahram Golchin

Screenings:
Sunday, Sept 15, 18:15, Hall 03



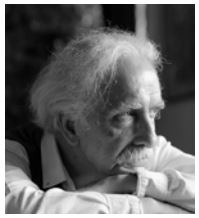
"This rediscovered jewel of Iranian cinema reemerges to take its place as one of the most singular and astonishing works of the country's pre-revolution New Wave."

Film Forum

doom that pervades the film. Chess of the Wind is celebrated for its intricate narrative structure, rich character development, and its visual style, which draws heavily from Persian art and architecture. The film's use of symbolism and metaphor provides a deep commentary on the socio-political climate of the time, as well as the universal themes of human frailty and the corrupting influence of wealth. Despite being banned shortly after its release in 1976 and subsequently lost for decades, Chess of the Wind has been rediscovered and restored, earning its rightful place as a masterpiece of Iranian cinema. The film's resurgence has allowed contemporary audiences to appreciate Mohammad Reza Aslani's visionary direction and the film's enduring relevance and artistic significance.

In addition to its thematic depth, the film's sound design and use of traditional Persian music further enhance its immersive quality. The performances, particularly by Shohreh Aghdashloo as Khanom Kouchak, add to the film's emotional intensity, making it a compelling exploration of human nature and societal decay. "Chess of the Wind" draws influence from symbolic elements of miniatures and translates them to Iranian cinema, reflecting themes of ambiguity, East and West, old and new, that mirrored the society of the time. The rediscovery of "Chess of the Wind" has been hailed as a significant cultural event, shedding light on a pivotal era in Iranian cinema and reaffirming the film's status as an essential piece of cinematic history.

Mohammad Reza Aslani



Mohammad Reza Aslani, born in 1943 in Rasht, Iran, is a distinguished Iranian filmmaker, screenwriter, poet, and scholar. He began his career in the arts by studying painting at the University of Tehran, which significantly influenced his visual style in filmmaking.

Challenges and Contributions

Aslani began his cinema career with documentaries and short films, showcasing his detailed understanding of Iranian culture and history. His feature debut, "Chess of the Wind" (1976), is set in a decaying aristocratic household and explores themes of power and familial decay with a haunting visual style. The film received harsh initial reviews for its avant-garde gothic style, which set it apart from the Iranian New Wave films.

Initially banned and obscured after the Islamic Revolution because of its depiction of unveiled women, the film has been restored and is now recognised as a masterpiece of Iranian cinema, having not been screened in or outside Iran for 44 years. The film is the first in Iranian cinema to feature a delicate lesbian scene.

Documentary Filmmaking

Apart from his work in narrative cinema, Aslani has made significant contributions to documentary filmmaking. His documentaries often explore Persian art, literature, and history, reflecting his scholarly background and deep appreciation for Iranian cultural heritage. Notable documentaries include "Tehran Is the Capital of Iran" (1966) and "Wind and Anemone" (1970).

Poetry and Literature

Aslani's work extends beyond filmmaking into poetry and literature. He is an accomplished poet, with his poetry often reflecting the same rich cultural and philosophical themes found in his films. His literary works contribute to his reputation as a versatile and intellectually engaged artist.

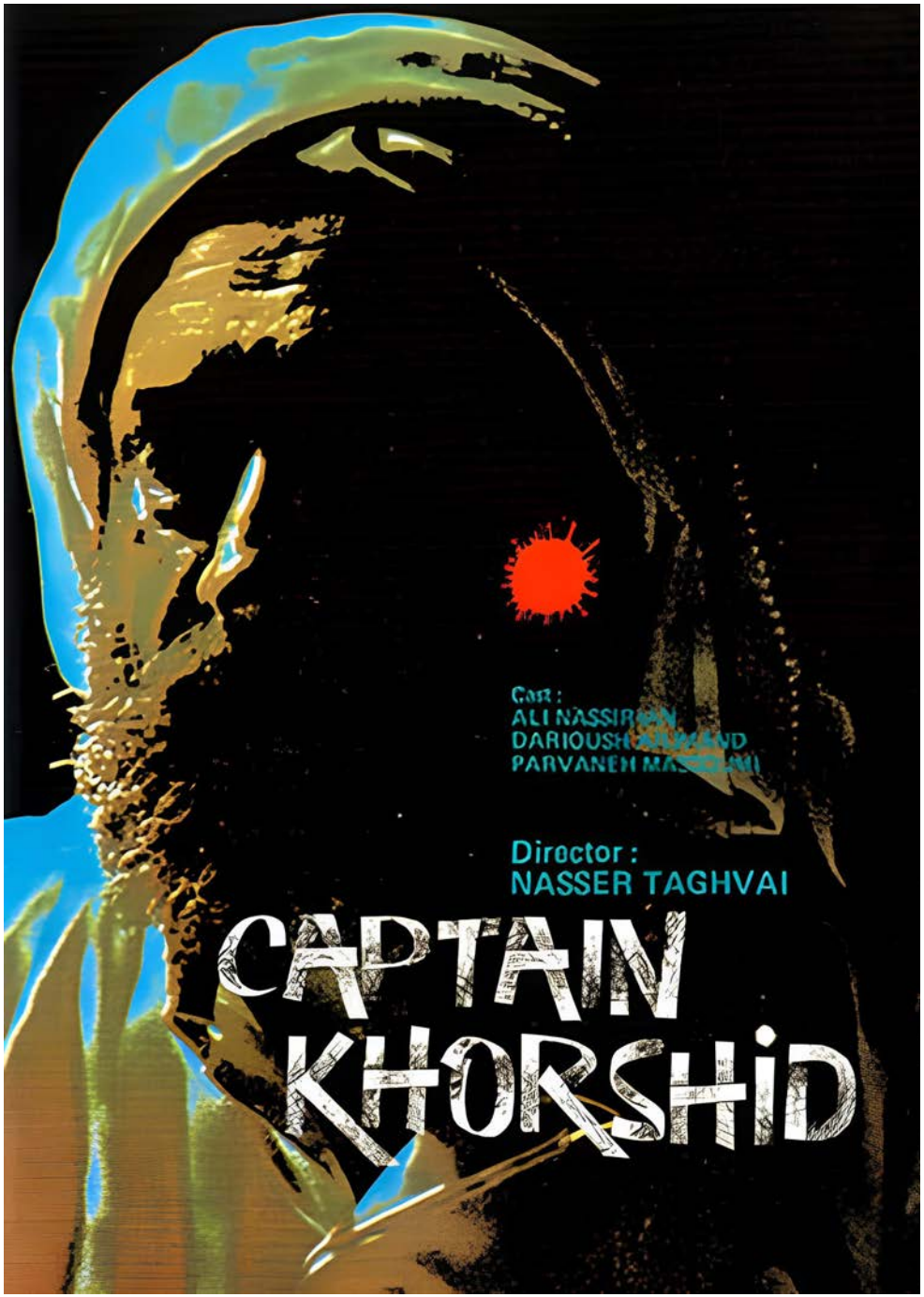
Legacy

Mohammad Reza Aslani's films are celebrated for their artistic integrity and cultural depth. His innovative blend of traditional Persian elements with modern cinematic techniques has greatly influenced Iranian cinema. Aslani's work is studied globally and featured in international film festivals, affirming his status as a pioneering filmmaker. His contributions to Persian art and literature continue to inspire and enrich cultural studies.

Notable Films

• "The Green Fire" (2008): This film weaves together multiple narratives across different timelines, based on an old Iranian tale called "Sang-e-Sabour." Initially planned to be shot at the Bam Citadel, it was relocated due to an earthquake, showcasing Aslani's adaptability and commitment to storytelling.

• "The Conference of the Birds" (1999): A documentary based on the 12th-century Persian poem by Attar of Nishapur, this film delves into mystical and philosophical themes, reflecting Aslani's scholarly background and deep appreciation for Persian literary heritage .



CAPTAIN KHORSHID

ناخدا خورشید

Genre: Drama

Country and year of production: Iran, 1987

Length: 118 min

Language: Persian

Subtitles: English

"Captain Khorshid" is a masterful adaptation of Ernest Hemingway's novel "To Have and Have Not," skillfully transposed into an Iranian context by the acclaimed director Naser Taghvai.

Synopsis

Set in a small port town on the Persian Gulf during the 1940s, the film follows the story of Captain Khorshid, a one-armed boat captain struggling to make a living through legitimate means in a corrupt and oppressive society. Captain Khorshid, portrayed by Dariush Arjmand, is a principled man who finds himself entangled in a dangerous web of deceit and violence when he reluctantly agrees to smuggle a group of desperate men across the Persian Gulf. These men, driven by their own desires and ambitions, bring turmoil and danger into Khorshid's life, challenging his moral compass and survival instincts.

The film delves deep into the themes of honor, betrayal, and survival, set against the harsh realities of life in a coastal town under economic and social pressures. Taghvai's direction brings a unique Iranian flavor to Hemingway's story, capturing the essence of the local culture, landscape, and socio-political atmosphere. The tension in the film escalates as Khorshid navigates the treacherous waters of smuggling, leading to a climactic confrontation that tests his resolve and principles. Khorshid's struggle is not just against external threats but also against his internal conflicts, adding depth to his character and the narrative.

"Captain Khorshid" not only pays homage to Hemingway's classic but also stands as a powerful commentary on the universal struggles of human

Screenplay:
Nasser Taghvai
Cinematography:
Mehrdad Fakhimi
Editor: Nasser Taghvai
Sound: Rubik Mansuri, Faramarz Rasooli
Music:
Fereydoun Naseri
Producer:
Mohamad Ali Soltanzadeh, Haroon Yashayayi

Cast:
Dariush Arjmand,
Ali Nasirian,
Saeed Poursamimi,
Parvaneh Massoumi,
Fathali Oveisi

Screenings:
Monday, Sept 16, 18:15, Hall 03



"The film stands out in Iranian cinema for its adaptation of Hemingway's themes into a Persian Gulf setting, capturing the local culture and socio-political atmosphere authentically"

AllMovie

dignity and resilience. The film's exploration of moral ambiguity and the cost of survival resonates deeply, making it a significant work in Iranian cinema. The film received critical acclaim and won the Bronze Leopard at the Locarno International Film Festival, further cementing Naser Taghvai's reputation as a visionary director capable of transforming literary classics into culturally rich cinematic experiences.

The film's evocative cinematography and compelling performances add to its immersive quality, making it a standout piece in the landscape of international cinema. The portrayal of the stark socio-economic conditions and the moral dilemmas faced by the characters offer a profound insight into the human condition. Moreover, Taghvai's skillful blending of suspense and drama keeps the audience engaged throughout, underlining the timeless relevance of Hemingway's themes. The film's success has cemented its status as a classic, influencing future generations of Iranian filmmakers and contributing to the rich tapestry of world cinema.

Nasser Taghvai



Nasser Taghvai, born on July 12, 1941, in Abadan, Iran, is a prominent Iranian filmmaker, screenwriter, and director. Growing up in the oil-rich region of Abadan, he was exposed to the cultural and social complexities of Iran from an early age, which deeply influenced his cinematic vision. He pursued Persian literature at the University of Tehran, developing a profound understanding of Iran's cultural heritage.

Career Beginnings

Taghvai started his career in the arts by writing short stories and screenplays. His directorial debut with the short film "Arba'in" (1970) garnered attention for its innovative narrative style and social commentary. His first feature film, "Peace in the Presence of Others" (1972), established him as a leading figure in the Iranian New Wave movement. This film, which critiqued the socio-political environment of Iran, was banned shortly after its release but later recognized as a critical work in Iranian cinema.

Notable Works and Style

In 1987, Taghvai directed "Captain Khorshid," an adaptation of Ernest Hemingway's "To Have and Have Not," set in southern Iran. The film won the Bronze Leopard at the Locarno International Film Festival and is celebrated for its powerful storytelling and exploration of human resilience amid socio-political upheaval. His ability to adapt Western literature to the Iranian context showcased his versatility and creativity.

Taghvai's distinctive style blends realism with poetic imagery, often exploring themes of poverty, injustice, and the human condition, as seen in his films "Unruled Paper" (2001) and "The Last Act" (1991).

Contributions to Television and Legacy

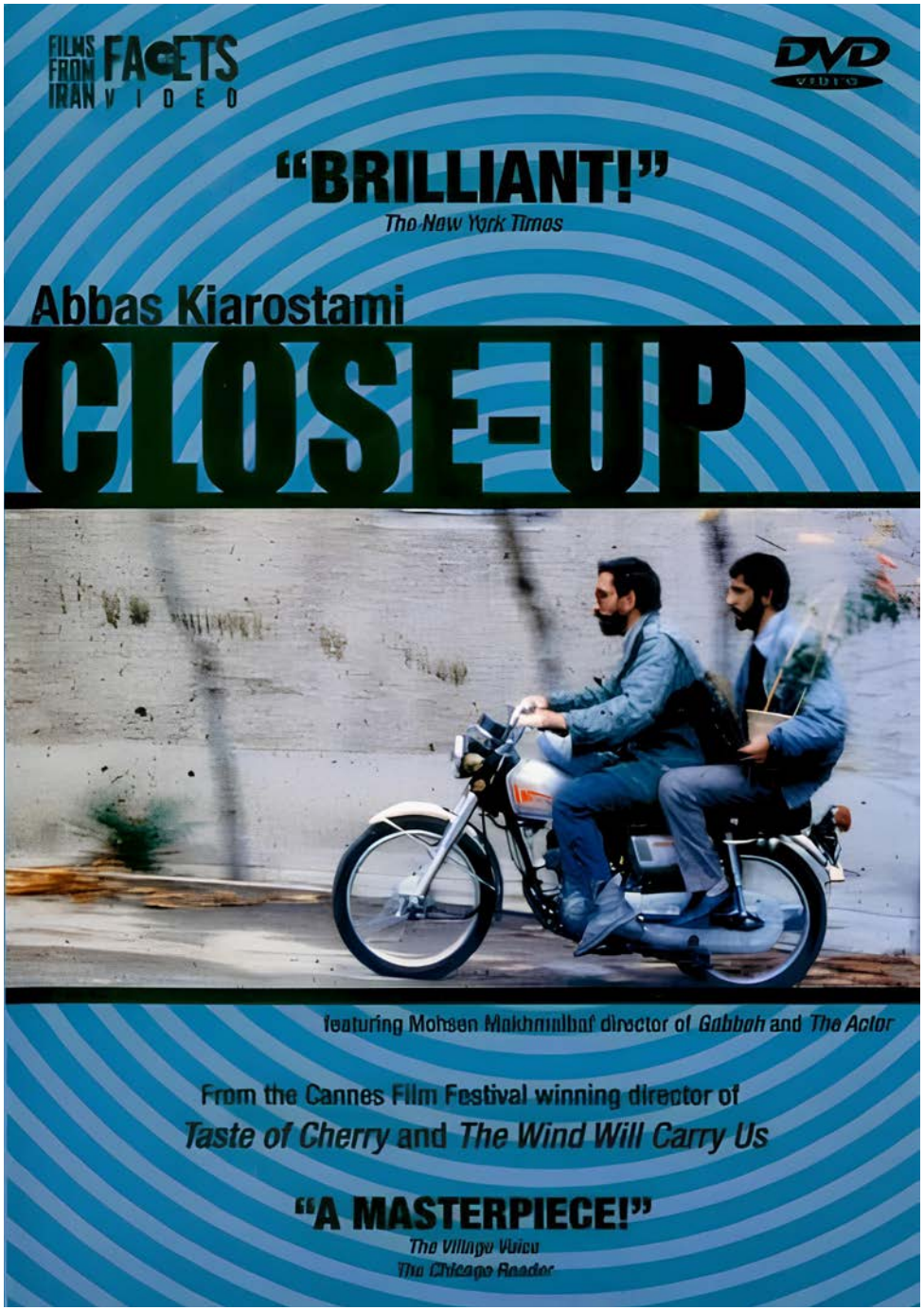
In addition to his work in cinema, Taghvai has made significant contributions to Iranian television, directing several acclaimed series and documentaries that delve into Iran's cultural and social issues. His documentary "Tavahhom" (1994), which examines the psychological effects of the Iran-Iraq War on Iranian society, is considered a masterpiece.

Taghvai's legacy is marked by his unwavering commitment to artistic integrity and his profound impact on Iranian cinema. His films are studied worldwide, and retrospectives of his work are frequently held at international film festivals, ensuring that his contributions to cinema are celebrated and remembered.

Notable Films

• "Peace in the Presence of Others" (1972)
Based on a story by Gholam-Hossein Sa'edi, this film explores the life of a retired general who faces societal and personal decline after marrying a young teacher. It delves into themes of anxiety and societal pressures, marking a pioneering work in Iranian cinema.

• "The Curse" (1973) tells the story of an old squire on a deserted island whose life is disrupted by a construction painter, leading to his downfall. Known for its unique rhythm and portrayal of desolation, the film reflects Taghvai's deep understanding of human conditions and societal decay.



CLOSE-UP

نمای نزدیک

Genre: Docufiction

Country and year of production: Iran, 1990

Length: 98 min

Language: Persian

Subtitles: English

"Close-Up" is a critically acclaimed Iranian docufiction directed by Abbas Kiarostami. The film is a unique blend of documentary and narrative cinema, exploring themes of identity, deception, and the power of cinema.

Synopsis:
The film is based on a real-life incident in Tehran, where a man named Hossain Sabzian, a cinephile and struggling individual, impersonates the famous Iranian filmmaker Mohsen Makhmalbaf. Sabzian convinces a well-to-do family, the Ahankhahs, that he is Makhmalbaf and that he wants to use their house for his next film. The family, excited and flattered by the prospect, welcomes him into their lives, only to discover the truth later.

The film opens with a reporter and two policemen on their way to arrest Sabzian at the Ahankhahs' residence. This sequence sets up the premise of the story and introduces the main characters.

Sabzian is arrested and taken into custody. During his interrogation, he explains his motives and how his deep love for cinema and admiration for Makhmalbaf led him to this deception. He confesses that he wanted to escape his mundane life and be someone significant, even if only for a short time.

The heart of the film is the courtroom trial, where Sabzian faces the Ahankhah family. Kiarostami blends real footage from the trial with re-enactments, blurring the lines between reality and fiction. Sabzian's genuine remorse and the emotional exchanges between him and the family are deeply moving.

In a poignant and surprising turn, the real Mohsen Makhmalbaf meets Sabzian outside the courtroom after the trial. They ride a motorcycle together to

Screenplay:
Abbas Kiarostami
Cinematography:
Ali Reza Zarrindast
Editor: Abbas Kiarostami
Sound: Ahmad Asgari
Producer:
Hassan Agha Karimi

Cast:
Hossain Sabzian,
Abolfazl Ahankhah,
Mehrdad Ahankhah,
Nayer Mohseni Zonoozi,
Ahmad Reza,
Moayed Mohseni

Screenings:
Tuesday, Sept 17, 18:15, Hall 03



"Brilliant!"
The New York Times

"A rich, Multi-layered but Beautifully Forthright Film"
Time Out

the Ahankhahs' house, symbolizing reconciliation and the bridging of two worlds. This scene encapsulates the film's themes of forgiveness, redemption, and the transformative power of cinema.

Themes and Style:
"Close-Up" delves into the nature of identity and the human desire for recognition and belonging. It raises questions about truth, illusion, and the thin line between reality and fiction. Kiarostami's innovative use of non-professional actors (including the real people involved in the incident) and his documentary-style approach lend the film an authentic and introspective quality.

The film is notable for its minimalist style, long takes, and naturalistic performances, hallmarks of Kiarostami's filmmaking. The blending of real events with staged re-enactments creates a meta-cinematic experience, inviting viewers to reflect on the nature of storytelling and the impact of cinema on real life.

Significance:
"Close-Up" is considered one of Abbas Kiarostami's masterpieces and a seminal work in world cinema. It received widespread critical acclaim for its originality, emotional depth, and innovative narrative structure. The film has influenced numerous filmmakers and is frequently studied for its unique approach to blending documentary and fiction.

Overall, "Close-Up" stands as a powerful exploration of human vulnerability, the longing for significance, and the profound connection between life and art.

Abbas Kiarostami



Abbas Kiarostami, born on June 22, 1940, in Tehran, Iran, was a distinguished Iranian filmmaker, screenwriter, photographer, and poet. Kiarostami began his artistic career studying painting at the University of Tehran and later worked as a graphic designer and commercial director.

Career Beginnings
His foray into the film industry started in the 1970s when he joined the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (Kanun), where he directed a series of educational films. His first feature film, "The Report" (1977), gained critical attention, but it was with the release of "Where Is the Friend's House?" (1987) that Kiarostami began to receive international acclaim.

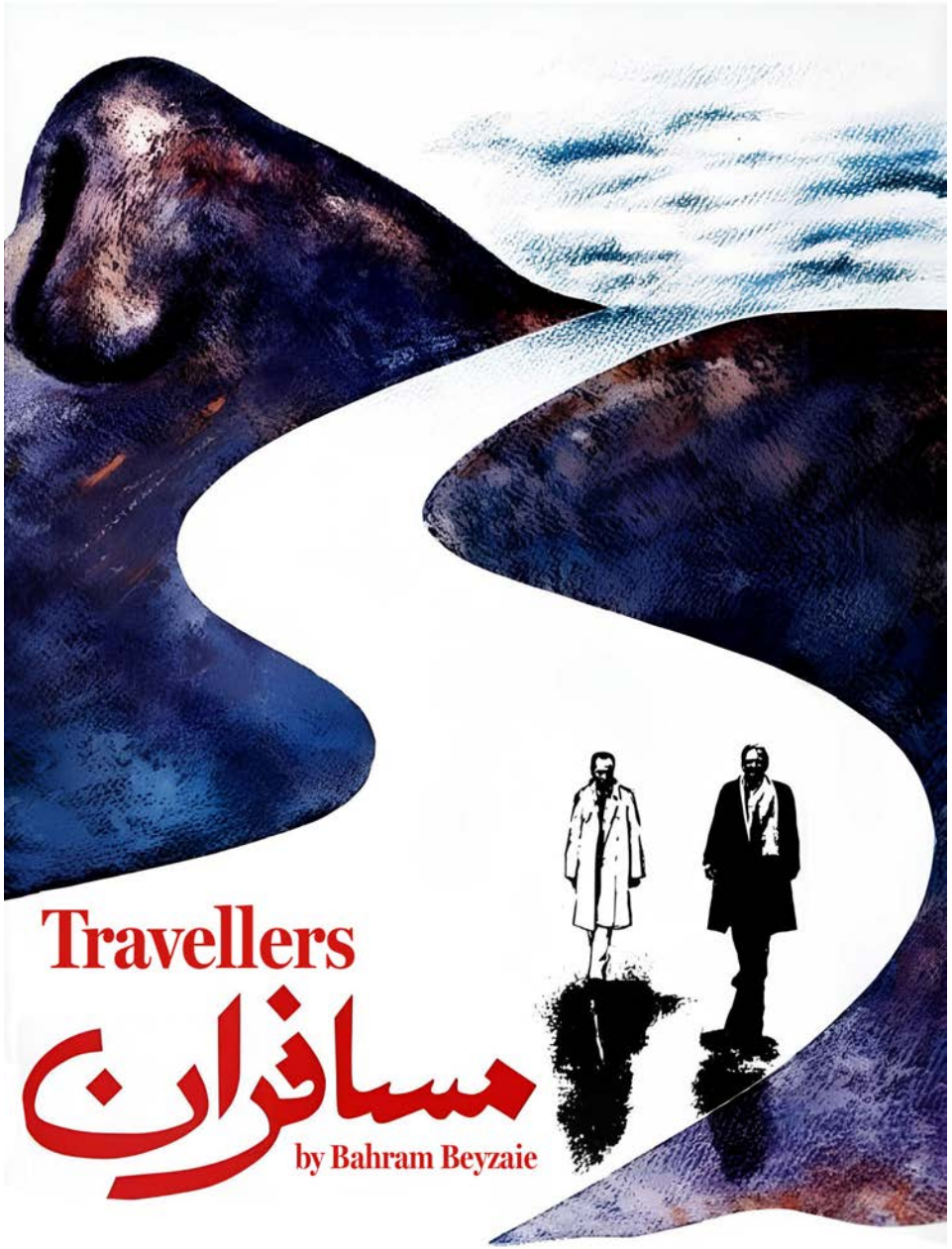
Major Works and International Acclaim
"Where Is the Friend's House?" along with "Life, and Nothing More..." (1992) and "Through the Olive Trees" (1994), forms the Koker Trilogy, which is celebrated for its profound simplicity and humanistic approach. Kiarostami achieved global recognition with "Taste of Cherry" (1997), which won the prestigious Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. The film is a contemplative exploration of life and death, resonating with audiences worldwide for its existential depth. Another notable work, "The Wind Will Carry Us" (1999), further solidified his reputation as a master of poetic cinema.

Innovative Techniques and Later Works
Kiarostami's work often blurres the lines between fiction and reality, notably in "Close-Up" (1990), which reconstructs a real event with the actual people involved. This blend of documentary and fiction became a hallmark of his style. Beyond filmmaking, Kiarostami was also an accomplished photographer and poet, known for his minimalist and reflective works. His later films, such as "Certified Copy" (2010) and "Like Someone in Love" (2012), showcased his ability to transcend cultural boundaries with international settings and casts.

Legacy
Abbas Kiarostami passed away on July 4, 2016, in Paris, France, leaving behind a legacy of profound and influential works that continue to inspire filmmakers and audiences around the world. His contributions to cinema are celebrated for their innovative storytelling, deep humanism, and the ability to capture the essence of life in all its complexity and beauty.

Notable Films
• "Taste of Cherry" (1997) is a contemplative exploration of life and death, following a man who drives through Tehran seeking someone to assist with his suicide. The film won the prestigious Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival, highlighting Kiarostami's ability to address profound existential themes with subtlety and depth.

• "Where Is the Friend's House?" (1987) This film tells the simple yet poignant story of a young boy's journey to return his friend's notebook, showcasing Kiarostami's talent for depicting everyday human experiences. It is the first part of the Koker Trilogy, renowned for its humanistic approach and profound simplicity.



CLASSICS

TRAVELLERS

مسافران

Genre: Docufiction

Country and year of production: Iran, 1991

Length: 90 min

Language: Persian

Subtitles: English

Synopsis:
The story follows a family preparing for a wedding, focusing on the journey and interconnected lives of its members. The central event is Mahtab's wedding in Tehran. Mahtab's mother, Mrs. Safiri, and other family members travel from northern Iran to Tehran for the celebration. Initially filled with joyful preparations, the tone shifts dramatically when the travelers face a tragic accident on the road, leading to a devastating event that overshadows the festivities. Unaware of the tragedy, the rest of the family in Tehran continues with the wedding preparations, creating a poignant commentary on the unpredictability of life and the coexistence of joy and sorrow.

Themes and Style:
"Travellers" is marked by Beyzaie's signature style, blending realism with elements of traditional Iranian theater and symbolism. The film explores deep existential themes, such as the fragility of life, the inevitability of death, and the way individuals cope with loss and grief.

Beyzaie employs a non-linear narrative, using flashbacks and dream sequences to weave together the past and the present. This storytelling technique creates a tapestry of memories and emotions, enhancing the film's introspective and philosophical tone.

Significance:
"Travelers," is celebrated for its artistic depth and exploration of universal human experiences. The film's innovative narrative structure and rich visual and thematic layers make it a standout in Iranian cinema. Beyzaie's direction, paired with strong performances, particularly Fatemeh Motamed-Aria's portrayal

Screenplay:
Mehrdad Fakhimi
Cinematography:
Ali Reza Zarrindast
Editor: Bahram Bayzai
Sound: Mahmoud Samakbashi
Music: Babak Bayat
Producer:
Bahram Bayzai

Cast:
Mozhdeh Shamsai,
Jamileh Sheikhi,
Majid Mozaffari,
Fatemeh Motamed-Arya,
Atila Pesyani,
Homa Rousta,
Enayat Bakhshi,
Jahangir Forouhar

Screenings:
Wednesday, Sept 18, 18:15, Hall 03



"Travellers is one of the first Iranian films to place a woman at the center while questioning patriarchal society."

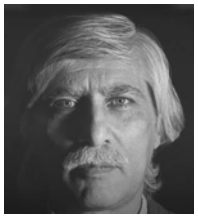
Susan Taslimi, Film International

of Mahtab's mother, enhances the film's emotional impact.

The story unfolds as a family prepares for a wedding, with the bride's sister and her family embarking on a journey that ends in tragedy, overshadowing the joyous occasion. The film delves into themes of fate, destiny, and the transient nature of life, showcasing Beyzaie's ability to intertwine personal and universal narratives. His masterful storytelling blends traditional cultural elements with contemporary cinematic techniques, creating a timeless and thought-provoking piece that resonates on multiple levels.

"Travelers" remains a significant work in Beyzaie's oeuvre and a notable contribution to world cinema. The film is a testament to Beyzaie's cinematic artistry and his ability to capture the complexities of the human experience, offering a poignant exploration of human resilience and the enduring bonds of family. With its rich tapestry of emotions and profound philosophical insights, "Travelers" stands as a compelling and evocative film, reflecting the mastery of one of Iran's most acclaimed directors.

Bahram Beyzaie



Bahram Beyzaie, born on December 26, 1938, in Tehran, is a distinguished Iranian playwright, filmmaker, screenwriter, and scholar. He is considered one of the most influential figures in contemporary Persian arts and literature.

Early Life and Education

Bahram Beyzaie was born into a literary family with a rich cultural background. His father, Ne'matallah Beyzaie, was a prominent poet and writer. This environment nurtured Beyzaie's early interest in literature, theater, and history. He studied Persian literature at the University of Tehran, where he also began to immerse himself in the study of traditional Iranian theater and performance arts.

Career in Theater and Cinema

Beyzaie's career in theater began in the 1960s. He was deeply influenced by traditional Persian storytelling and theater forms such as Ta'zieh, as well as by Western playwrights like Bertolt Brecht and Samuel Beckett. His plays are known for their innovative use of language, their blending of myth and reality, and their exploration of social and political themes.

Beyzaie also made a significant impact on Iranian cinema. His films are noted for their poetic style, historical depth, and critical perspective on Iranian society.

Academic Work and Exile

In addition to his work in theater and film, Beyzaie is a respected scholar. He has written extensively on Iranian theater, cinema, and literature. His academic work includes several critical studies and translations, and he has taught at various universities.

Following the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Beyzaie faced increasing censorship and political pressure. In 2010, he left Iran for the United States, where he has continued his work as a scholar and educator, teaching at Stanford University.

Legacy

Beyzaie's work is characterized by its engagement with Iranian history, culture, and mythology, often critiquing social and political issues. He is known for his innovative narrative structures and commitment to exploring the human condition. His contributions have had a lasting impact, inspiring generations of artists and intellectuals. His work is celebrated for its artistic excellence, intellectual depth, and profound humanism.

Notable Works

• "The Marionettes" (1963): One of his early works, this play reflects his interest in combining traditional Persian forms with modern themes.

• "Death of Yazdgerd" (1979): Perhaps his most famous play, it reinterprets the historical narrative of the last Sassanian king through a modern lens, exploring themes of power, betrayal, and justice.



JURY MEMBERS TEAM, INTRO & TROPHY

Jury 2024	Team	Collaborators
Anna Thommen	Armin Apadana	Sepehr Ali Mohammad Iou
Karin Heberlein	Alex Cyrus Poulikakos	Ehsan Tabasi
Katrin Jaggi	Sara Walker	
Lara Dalileh Wolf	Dariusch Apadana	
Maria Sorensen	Véronique Gray	
	Saeed Pouresmaeili	
	Neptune Ingwersen	
	Nina Khamsy	
	Ivana Milenković	
	Martin Girod	
	Amin Jafari	



Anna Thommen
Featue film jury member

Anna Thommen was born in Basel. After her initial training as a primary school teacher, she studied film at the Lucerne School of Art and Design and holds a Master in Documentary Film at the Zurich University of the Arts. In her films, Neuland (2014), Volunteer (2019) and Les Nouvelles Èves (2021), she deals with social issues and has received a number of international awards and nominations. She lives and works in Basel as an independent film director and is the mother of two children.



Karin Heberlein
Featue film jury member

Born in Basel and raised in Zurich, she studied acting at the Central School of Speech & Drama in London. After graduating, she worked as an actress at various theaters in England and Scotland and toured international festivals. In 2012/13 she was a scholarship holder of the 24th Screenwriting Workshop at the HFF in Munich and has since worked as a freelance writer and director.

Her debut film SAMI, JOE UND ICH celebrated its world premiere at the Zurich Film Festival 2020 and has been touring international festivals ever since. She is a member of the European Film Academy and the Swiss Association of Directors and Screenwriters ARF/FDS. In 2022, she was part of the publication Filmstern für DiCH, a portrait of Swiss female directors.



Katrin Jaggi
Featue film jury member

Katrin Jaggi is a Swiss architect and urban designer. After earning her diploma from ETH Zürich, she worked for several bureaus as well as for the City of Zurich. She used to be the deputy head of the city's Department for Urban Development. Today, she specializes in quality procedures, quality control, and jury competitions.

From 2011 to 2017, she was the vice president of the board of Theaterhaus Gessnerallee Zürich. In 2016, she founded Welcome to School, educating over 90 asylum-seeking teenagers and young adults daily, with a focus on inclusion through culture and arts.



Lara Dalileh Wolf
Featue film jury member

Lara Dalileh Wolf is a Persian-Swiss actress and singer. She is based in Los Angeles, New York, and Zurich. She holds an MSc in Psychology from the University of Zurich and is a graduate of the Lee Strasberg Theater & Film Institute in NYC. She is an original and current member of the Primitive Grace Theatre Ensemble co-founded by David Zayas and Paul Calderon in NYC, where she has developed and work shopped her writing and continues honing her skills as an actress.

Lara is known for her role as Princess Nour on ABC's Quantico, starring opposite Priyanka Chopra. Later this summer, starting July 18th, she will be seen as Queen Berenice in the Peacock original series Those About To Die, starring Anthony Hopkins and directed by Roland Emmerich and Marco Kreuzpaintner.

Lara also stars opposite Golshifteh Farahani in the upcoming film Reading Lolita In Tehran, based on the New York Times bestselling novel by Azar Nafisi and directed by Eran Riklis, as well as starring in the period film The Performance (directed by Shira Piven and starring Jeremy Piven and Robert Carlyle).



Maria Sorensen
Featue film jury member

Maria Sorensen is an independent art and film curator, writer and researcher. Combining her experience of growing up in an authoritarian country with her background in Film and Visual Arts, her curatorial practice focuses on highlighting important societal issues using strong and powerful artistic language.

She writes for a London-based Index on Censorship magazine covering culture and politics and has previously worked for various film channels curating a World Cinema program. Having lived and worked in the US, London, Copenhagen and Tokyo she is currently based in Zurich, Switzerland where she collaborates with Zurich Film Festival. She has a postgraduate degree in Curating and is currently doing MA in Cultural Critique at Zurich University of Arts (ZHdK).



Armin Apadana
Graphic Designer

Armin Apadana was born in 1992 in Zurich, where he lives and works as a graphic designer for Neue Zürcher Zeitung. He created the appearance of the film festival, online aswell as in print. He is also responsible for its continuing development.



Alex Cyrus Poulikakos
Project Manager

Alexander Cyrus Poulikakos, born in 1993 in Illinois, U.S.A., holds an MSc in architecture from ETH Zurich. He works as an architect and runs his design and research practice, Bab Al Morpheus, focusing on documenting contemporary space. He authored “Resurrecting Babylon,” and his texts have been published by Trans Magazine and Saqi Books. His works on Iran have been exhibited at gta Exhibitions, Museum für Gestaltung Zurich, and Espacio Gallery London.



Sara Walker
Project Manager

Sara Walker completed her sports degree at the University of Bern and is passionate about her work as a social and circus educator. As managing director of Carpet Market Persepolis, she combines her cultural affinity with professional commitment. She also organizes Persian cultural events and has been a co-organizer of socio-cultural events in Zurich, including the Vorstandsounds Festival, Kids in Dance and Mix & Match.



Dariusch Apadana
Project Manager

Dariusch Apadana, who is half Swiss and half Iranian, was born in Zurich in 1995. In his job as a product manager, he is responsible for launching and establishing various brands and products in Switzerland. With a degree in business administration and a background in marketing, he is responsible for the Iranian Film Festival’s social media presence.



Véronique Gray
Selection Committee

Véronique Gray obtained her Bachelor of Art in history with honors from the University of Atlanta, USA; she went on to study journalism. She has been published in various magazines in Great Britain, Canada, France and the USA. As an entrepreneur, artist and Editor-in-Chief of Vivamost she lived in Berlin, Frankfort, Munich and now Zurich. As a journalist she writes, reports and critics on festivals in Switzerland and Germany. Véronique Gray is a Franco-Swiss citizen.



Saeed Pouresmaeili
Selection Committee

Saeed Pouresmaeili was born in Isfahan, Iran in 1967. His experiences in cinema expand over 25 years with directing of five short films, two television series and director of cinematography of The Voyage of the Men in Gray by Amir Shahab Razavian. Saeed Pouresmaeili has won more than five awards for cinematography in different Iranian Film Festival in his homeland.



Neptune Ingwersen
Selection Committee

Neptune Ingwersen watches about 4 to 8 films a week, each morning at the press previews in cinemas around Geneva and attends various film festivals, thus reaching a number of approximately 300 plus films a year. She started writing on film with the Currents magazine in Hamburg, and then the Geneva Post daily and GVA magazine and other publications. She now writes a monthly column called AU CINEMA for The Courier magazine in Geneva and a weekly film column on Le-News.ch. Along with some compatriots, she started the CineClubPersan in Geneva some 11 years ago, showing Iranian films every 2 months at the Grutli Cinemas. She is originally from Shiraz, Iran and has lived for more than 30 years in Switzerland.



Nina Khamsy
Selection Committee

Nina Khamsy is a Swiss-Iranian born in 1991. After her studies in Middle Eastern studies and anthropology at SOAS University of London and Oxford University, she has published on different aspects of Persian cultures and Iranian Cinema. She has recently joined the Cine-ClubPersan in Geneva where the team shows Iranian films every two months at the Grutli Cinemas. She is currently a PhD researcher in anthropology as well as an amateur documentary filmmaker.



Ivana Milenković
Selection Committee

After completing her studies in art history and film studies at the University of Zurich, Ivana Milenković works as a freelance artist, curator and cultural mediator. With her chosen medium of nail art, she initiated Hotmailhotnail in 2019 and moves on the margins of sectors, services, art and social-political commitment. Always with a social structure as her focus, she has created non-commercial projects and try-outs in the areas of film and conceptual art. In 2022, Ivana co-initiated the art and culture venue Babyangel.



Amin Jafari
Selection Committee

Born in Hamadan in 1974, Amin Jafari earned his diploma in graphic design from Tehran School of Art, then BA in Cinema in 2008 and Director of Photography from Iranian Cinema in the same year. From 2019, executive director of short films at Iran/Iranian Film Festival Zurich-Switzerland. Recent Films: Captain, directed by Mohammad Hamzei (Iran) 2023, Ropewalker Memoirs, directed by Hamed Rajabi (Iran) 2023, A Tale of Shemroon, directed by Emad Ale-Ebrahim-Dehkordi (Iran-France) 2022, 2 Awards, No Bears, directed by Jafar Panahi (Iran) 2022, 4 Awards & 7 Nominations, Summer With Hope, directed by Sadaf Forughi (Iran-Canada) 2022, 1 Award & 7 Nominations.



Naghmeh Danesh Ashtiani
PR in Iran

Naghmeh Danesh Ashtiani, born in 1980 in Iran, holds a master's degree in cultural studies and has been an activist in art, culture, and media for the last three decades. She has worked as an editor for various media platforms and has experience in public relations with organizations like the Art and Experience Cinema Institute and the Iranian Cinema Critics and Writers Association. She has been a media consultant and public relations manager for numerous Iranian films and series, including "Yalda," "Dasht-e Khamoosh," "Night, Interior, Wall," and "Silent City."



Martin Girod
Adviser

Martin Girod was born in Basle (Switzerland) and obtained his MA in theatre studies in Cologne (Germany). He had different activities in film programming, managing arthouse cinemas, film teaching and film journalism before becoming chief editor of Ciné-Bulletin, the monthly of the Swiss film professionals (1988-1993).

In 1993 he was appointed co-director of the Municipal Filmpodium in the Department of the Mayor of Zurich. Retired he continued as programme curator for Filmpodium. He has participated in juries of several international festivals and contributed as a freelance film journalist to different newspapers and film periodicals.



Yadolah Dodge
Founder & Artistic Director IFFZ

Yadolah Dodge was born in Abadan, Iran, and is a Swiss citizen. Along with a full-time position as Professor and Chair of Statistics at the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland, he made three long documentaries: Turicum: Das ist Zurich (2014), Dear Son (2018) and So ein Theater (2019).





The IFFZ Intro

The Intro of the Iranian Film Festival is its creation, based on a story told by Yadolah Dodge. A Comet containing some wise messages from a faraway universe was attracted to planet Earth. The Earth had sunken into darkness. When the Comet reached the Earth, the light came back to it. Plants and flowers grew everywhere. This Comet is called The Cirus Cylinder.

Sepehr Ali Mohammad lou was born in 27 March 1973 in Tehran. He obtained a diploma in graphic arts and a B.A. in philosophy. He is a widely exhibited painter and a fimmaker. His most popular animated feature film is TALE OF GREED.









The IFFZ Trophy

Ehsan Tabasi was born in March 1984. He created the Golden Cyrus Cylinder Trophy by using the exact copy which can be found in the United Nations Headquarter. He lives in Tehran where he continues his work as trophy and medal maker for national and international firms.

Known as the first declaration of Human Rights, the Cyrus Cylinder contains text in Babylonian cuneiform. It speaks about Cyrus, king of Persia (559 - 530 BC) and his conquest of Babylon in 539 BC. With this declaration Cyrus made a friendly bridge between the people of Babylon and Persia.

The inscription on the cylinder speaks of Cyrus' promotion of religious, racial, and linguistic freedom and his permission to those deported by the Babylonians to return to their homelands. It extols Cyrus as a benefactor of the citizens of Babylonia who improved their lives, and restored temples and cult sanctuaries across Mesopotamia and elsewhere in the region. Some segments of the text say:

"I will never let anyone take possession of anyone's movable properties or real estate by force or without compensation. While I am alive, I prevent unpaid, forced labor. Today, I announce that everyone is free to choose a religion. People are free to live in all regions and take up a job provided that they never violate anyone else's rights."

Source: ancient-origins.net, translation obtained from Gresham College, England

TIME—TABLE FRAME CINEMA

	SEPT 11 Wednesday	SEPT 12 Thursday	SEPT 13 Friday	SEPT 14 Saturday
The Persian Version, 107'	20.15, Hall 01			
The Seed of the Sacred Fig, 168'				
Parvin, 81'				
Cold Tea, 97'				14.15, Hall 03
Cause of Death: Unknown, 106'				
The Last Birthday, 80'		20.45, Hall 06		
Melody, 85'				
Green Plum Season, 95'				16.15, Hall 03
The Great Yawn Of History, 93'				**20.15, Hall 03***
In The Arms Of A Tree, 82'			16.30, Hall 03	
Is There Any Trace Of... 92'			**14.15, Hall 03***	
Shâd Bâsh, 79'			**20.30, Hall 03****	
A Revolution On Canvas, 95'				
Shahid. 83'				
All You See, 71'				
The Brick And The Mirror, 130'		18.15, Hall 06		
The Cow, 105'			18.15, Hall 03	
A Simple Event, 80'				18.15, Hall 03
Chess Of The Wind, 99'				
Captain Khorshid, 118'				
Close-Up, 98'				
Travellers, 90'				

** FOLLOWED BY PANEL DISCUSSION

	SEPT 15 Sunday	SEPT 16 Monday	SEPT 17 Tuesday	SEPT 18 Wednesday	SEPT 19 Thursday
The Persian Version, 107'					
The Seed of the Sacred Fig, 168'					20.15, Hall 01
Parvin, 81'		16.30, Hall 03			18.15, Hall 03
Cold Tea, 97'	20.15, Hall 03				
Cause of Death: Unknown, 106'			**14.15, Hall 03***	**20.15, Hall 03***	
The Last Birthday, 80'				14.15, Hall 03	
Melody, 85'	14.15, Hall 03				16.30, Hall 03
Green Plum Season, 95'					
The Great Yawn Of History, 93'		**14.15, Hall 03***			
In The Arms Of A Tree, 82'		20.30, Hall 03			
Is There Any Trace Of... 92'	**16.00, Hall 03***				
Shâd Bâsh, 79'					
A Revolution On Canvas, 95'			**20.15, Hall 03***		**14.15, Hall 03***
Shahid. 83'				**16.00, Hall 03***	
All You See, 71'			16.45, Hall 03		
The Brick And The Mirror, 130'					
The Cow, 105'					
A Simple Event, 80'					
Chess Of The Wind, 99'	18.15, Hall 03				
Captain Khorshid, 118'		18.15, Hall 03			
Close-Up, 98'			18.15, Hall 03		
Travellers, 90'				18.15, Hall 03	

* WITH DIRECTOR Q&A

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Shohreh Aghdashloo, Iranian Actress