

2nd Annual IRANIAN FILM FESTIVAL

SAN FRANCISCO

September 19-20, 2009

In honor of the Iranian women and the important role they play in the Iranian society, we dedicate this year's festival to all the great women of Iran anywhere on the planet.

Discovering the Next Generation of Iranian Filmmakers©



Four Wives One Man

Director: Nahid Persson, 2009, Sweden/Iran, 76 minutes



From Nahid Persson, the filmmaker of the award-winning *Prostitution Behind the Veil*, comes an intimate portrait of a polygamist family in a rural Iranian village. Persson reveals the intricacies of the relationships between the four wives, their husband, their astoundingly free-spoken mother-in-law and their numerous children. Sometimes humorous and often heartbreaking, this film follows the daily lives of the wives whose situation has turned them into both bitter rivals and coconspirators against their abusive husband.

Persson's camera unobtrusively and beautifully captures the range of the family's interactions – from peaceful, pastoral scenes of a family picnic, to the temporary chaos caused by a broken faucet in the kitchen, to a furtive, whispered conversation between two wives about the latest beating. The women's work – making bread, weaving carpets, milking and herding the sheep – provide the background to their frank conversations. Avoiding sensationalism and sentimentality, this film provides unique insights into the practice of polygamy and its effect on the women involved.

Queen & I

Director: Nahid Persson, Sweden, 90 minutes



Two Iranian exiles, a left-wing filmmaker and the deposed Shah's widow, Queen Farah, form an unlikely bond in this illuminating and compassionate documentary about life after the Islamic revolution.

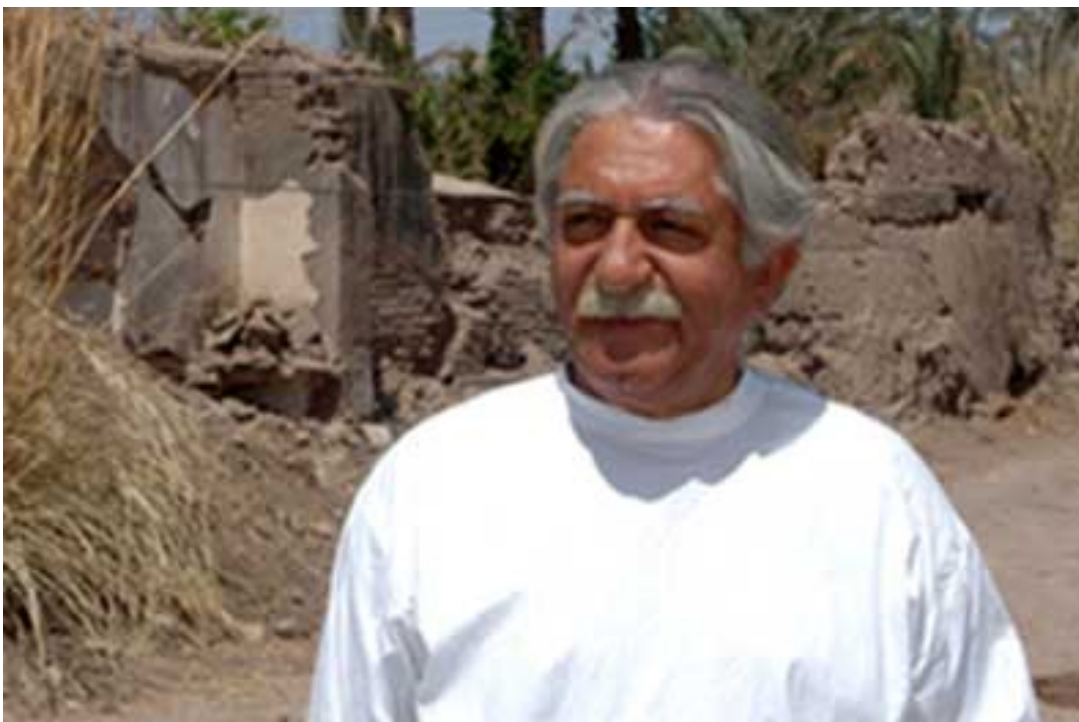
Nahid Persson

Born in Iran, immigrated to Sweden in the 1980's. After studying microbiology, she founded a local radio station. In 1993, Persson began her filmmaking career and enrolled at Film- och TV Skolan. Her film, *Prostitution Behind the Veil*, won first prize at the Marseille Festival International du Documentaire. Her latest film is *Queen and I* about Farah Pahlavi.



Colors of Memory

Director: Amir Shahab Razavian, 102 minutes, Iran/Germany/Canada, **Cast:** Shahbaz Noshir, Ezatollah Entezami, Saber Abar, Reza Khamseh, Roya Javidnia



Filled with denial and distrust, heart surgeon Dr. Bahman Parsa (Shahbaz Noshir) returns to his home country Iran after 30 years in Germany. There he meets two men who will change his attitude towards life: Qanati (Ezatollah Entezami), a 70-year old waterfinder and Bahrami, a young and reckless taxi driver. Together with them he travels to his hometown Bam, which was destroyed after a heavy earthquake a few years ago. Step by step this journey brings Parsa closer to his own roots and a past that has been completely

erased. But in the experiences with his new friends also lies the chance for a new beginning.

Amir Shahab Razavian was born in Tehran, Iran in 1965 and began his cinematic activities at Hamedan Filmmaking Center in 1980. He received his BA in Film Directing from the College of Theatre and Cinema of Art University Tehran in 1990; and received his MA in animation films from the same college in 1995. Since 1980 he has produced over 70 short films and has directed 30 short films as well as the feature films: Journey of the Grey Men, Tehran 7 AM, Colors of Memory...



Moon Sun Flower Game

Director: Claus Strigel, 90 minutes, Sweden/Iran, **Cast:** Forough Farokhzad, Hossein Mansouri, Ibrahim Golestan, Farzaneh Milani



In 1962 the young Iranian poetess Forough Farokhzad visited the lepers at the end of the earth to make a film about their world. Her film, “The House is Black”, was to become

world famous and change the world of a small boy who had the good fortune to meet her. Moon Sun Flower Game begins by revisiting the colony and winds its way to München, where exiled Iranian poet Hossein Mansouri searches for the boy and discovers a fable about his own roots and the magical power of words...

Claus Strigel was born in 1955 in Munich. Before finally changing to filmmaking as a producer, writer and director, he studied Communications and Psychology. Since 1976, he has co-directed and written together with Bertram Verhaag over 50 award-winning documentaries and feature films including: Too Much Man! (echt tu matsch!., Nuclear Split (Spaltprozesse, documentary) The Eighth Commandment (Das Achte Gebot, documentary), Runaway, Blue Eyed (documentary), Grenzgaenger - Hans-Peter Duerr (TV), Der Agrarrebell (TV), Tote Ernte (TV), Al Barnum, The Last Man Alive (Die gruene Wolke) and many more.



Letters from America

Director: Nezam Manouchehri [in person], 90 minutes, Iran



‘Letters from America’ revolves around the saga of a father and daughter and their impressions of America upon returning to the US after so many years. It is the testimony of a western educated Iranian intellectual who having returned to Iran to raise his family after living in America for many years; has once again returned to America to witness the changes that have taken place since he lived there. It is also the testimony of his nineteen years old daughter born in America and raised in post-revolutionary Iran, who leaves home in Tehran to go to America at sixteen. In this journey, we also encounter a varied array of characters both Iranians and Americans who also provide their own reflections of what America means to them. The film has been shot in DV in New York, Washington and Philadelphia on the east coast and Los Angeles, San Francisco and Arcata on the west coast of USA.

Nezam Manouchehri is a writer, translator, photographer, filmmaker and actor (*Deserted Station*), born and brought up in Iran. Went to England and US for his higher education. Graduated from San Francisco Art Institute and made a number of short films. He also attended San Francisco State University where he was granted an MFA. He moved back to Iran after the war, where he is currently residing between Iran and America.

Filmography: Letters from Iran (2004), A World Between (2006), Letters from America (2008)



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Iran's Young Rebels

Producer: Evan Solomon, 45 minutes, Canada



30 years ago, they had a political revolution - but is Iran about to have a revolution of a very different kind? In an exclusive investigation, we go inside Iran to explore the secret underground world of sex, drugs and rock 'n roll. Just how far can Iran's Young Rebels change the country's religious regime?

Evan Solomon has worked as a journalist and writer for publications throughout North America and Asia, including The Globe and Mail, The National Post, The Toronto Star and The South China Morning Post. His first novel, Crossing The Distance. Solomon is the co-founder of Shift, an international award-winning magazine about technology and culture. He was the editor-in-chief from 1992 -1999. Born in Toronto, Solomon graduated from McGill University with a B.A. in English literature and a master in religious studies.



Red Burqa

Director: Roxana Pope, 5 minutes, Scotland/Iran



The Red Burqa worn by women in the Hormozgan region of Southern Iran. This short art documentary takes us behind the masks to reveal the lives of the women who wear them as well as take us on a visually stunning journey across the landscapes of Southern Iran.



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Tehran Backyard

Director: Roxana Pope, 30 minutes, Scotland/Iran



Pari is a sixty-five-year-old woman who lives on the outskirts of Tehran. Each day she travels over six hours into the sprawling city to work as a cleaning lady for the middle-class ladies of north Tehran. Her husband is blind, she has five children and two grandchildren and she is still the main breadwinner.

Set against the backdrop of big demonstrations for Iran's right to Nuclear Energy, we travel behind the scenes to witness the extraordinary life of Pari, a strong woman who has carried her family through many adversities.

Roxana Pope is a British Iranian writer, director and actor. Recent film work includes co-writing the feature film 'Trouble sleeping' (Scottish Screen/BBC) about the lives of refugees in Edinburgh. The short film 'Leila' she wrote about the life of Iranian asylum seekers in Scotland has been shown in film festivals world wide and was selected as top ten UK Film Council digital shorts. She is currently developing her next documentary 'Mama Zar' to be shot in southern Iran.



Tehran Has No More Pomegranates

Director: Massoud Bakhshi, 68 minutes, Iran



Director Massoud Bakhshi and crew are on a mission to make a film about their hometown, Tehran, but have hit a wall and must explain to their overseers at the Documentary Film Center why their project cannot be completed. They decide to investigate the city's past in order to better understand the present. What follows is a sarcastic and comic narrative about Tehran's transformation from a small village into a megapolis of increasing urban mess, pollution, inadequate housing, class gaps and the fatal destiny of its delicious pomegranates. Using an energetic mix of rare archival footage from the past 150 years, unconventional photography, mock interviews and a playful soundtrack, the aesthetic and cultural values of old and new Tehran are brought to life. In the process, director and crew embark on a self-discovery, realizing that while they belong to a drastically transformed Tehran, being a Tehrani is a timeless state of mind.



Massoud Bakhshi (1972, Iran) studied film making in Italy. He is a film maker, screenwriter, producer and film critic.

Filmography: Cine citta (1999, short doc), Shenasaeye yek zan/Identification of a Woman (1999, short doc), Vaghti Behrang Ayoumi ra molaghat mikonad/When Behrang Meets Ayoumi (2001, short doc), Namaze

baran/Praying for the Rain (2003, short), Panjerehay-E-Gomshodeh/Lost Windows (2004, short doc), Teheran,Tehran/Tehran Has No More Pomegranates! (2006, doc), Arayesh gar e Bagh Dad/Bagh Dad Bar Ber (2008, short).

A People in the Shadows

Director: Bani Khoshnoudi, 90 minutes, Iran



Almost thirty years after the revolution, and twenty since the end of the long Iran-Iraq war, **A People in the Shadows** takes us on a voyage into the heart of Tehran, a megalopolis of 14 million people. The city is still recovering from its past, as talk of sanctions and a possible American attack resonate. Using direct cinema methods, the film takes an intimate look at the way people live in this immense city today, caught up in the paradoxes and contradictions of their society, surrounded by images of past and future death, and finding ways to juggle state propaganda and foreign threat on a daily basis.

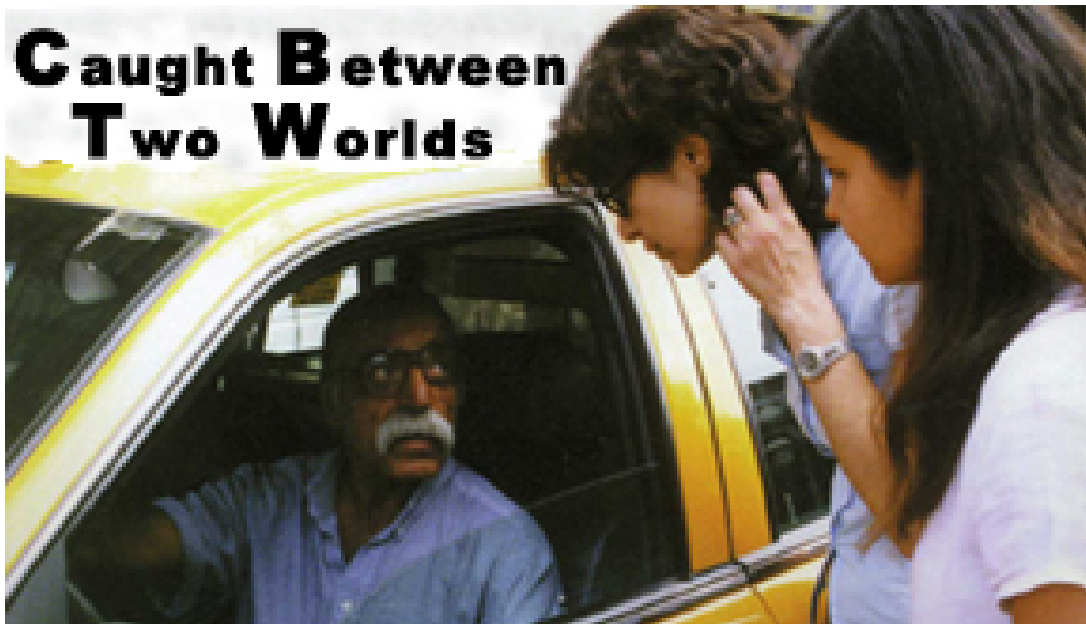
Bani Khoshnoudi was born in Tehran. She immigrated to the United States with her family in 1979. After studying film and photography in Austin, Texas, she moved to Paris,



France, where she made short fiction and experimental works, as well as feature length documentaries. In 2004 she directed *TRANSIT*, a short fiction, which received the Grand Jury Prize at the Premiers Plans Angers Film Festival and played in a number of international film festivals. The film was nominated for the Jean Vigo Prize and the Prix Novaïs-Terxeira in 2005. Also in 2004, she directed *SHIRIN EBADI: A simple lawyer*, feature documentary commissioned by the French channel ARTE. The film played in many international festivals and on television around the world, and is part of a number of university library collections. In 2006, Bani founded her production company, and has recently produced and directed a feature length documentary about Tehran, *A People in the Shadows*.

Caught Between Two Worlds

Directors: Persheng Sadegh-Vaziri **[in person]** & Simin Farkhondeh, Iran/US, 58 minutes



This thought-provoking documentary examines the complexities and challenges faced by a population estimated at between 600,000 to 1,000,000 Iranians who now make the USA their home. By weaving together excerpts from the lives of people living in Los Angeles, Washington, DC and in New York City, the film explores the diversity of Iranian-Americans who make up a virtual nation in exile. Many of the people featured in *Caught Between Two Worlds* fled Iran during the Revolution of 1979, in which the Shah was overthrown and an Islamic Republic was established. These people live and work in the USA as artists, political activists, journalists and academics—both Jewish and Muslim, young and old. The film draws attention to such issues as assimilation into a new culture, language, the traumas of revolution and the hostage crisis, religion, and life in the USA after 9/11. *Caught Between Two Worlds* is structured in layers, with each additional

layer providing further understanding about the overall experience of what it's like to be caught between two worlds—torn between two cultures.

Persheng Sadegh-Vaziri is an award-winning independent filmmaker, born and raised in Tehran, Iran. When the revolution in Iran broke out she was compelled to stay in the US, where she received her BA from Trinity College in Hartford, Ct., and an MA in Cinema Studies from New York University. She has worked as producer for Deep Dish TV on a series about the war in Iraq, for Trinity TV on documentaries about 9/11 and for Internews Network on programs that promote dialogue between societies in conflict. She has also, worked for the award-winning PBS series POV, taught film in Boston and New York, and curated a documentary film festival in Tehran. Her personal documentaries about Iran were broadcasted on PBS and have been shown widely in museums, art houses and universities. They are: *Women Like Us*, 2002; *A Place Called Home*, 1998; *Far From Iran*, 1990; and finally *Journal from Tehran*, 1987, a memoir of war days in Tehran, which was a prize winner screened at the Independent Focus series of PBS.



Simin Farkhondeh is an award winning independent filmmaker, educator and artist living in New York. She was born in Germany and raised in Iran. Her work has been broadcast on PBS, Channel Four in England and on CUNY TV and screened at the Whitney Biennial, the Margaret Mead and the Women of Color Film Festivals. Since 1995 she has been directing and producing Labor at the Crossroads (LaborX), a television program for and about working people, which aired on cable in New York City. She has produced over 25 half-hour programs for LaborX. In 1999 she produced *Adjunct Agony*, a short dramatic piece about the plight of adjunct faculty in US universities and in 2002 she produced *Salt Peanuts*, a short piece about the plight of airline workers after September 11. Currently, she is finishing work on *Who Gives Kisses Freely From Her Lips*, a film about temporary marriage a taboo subject in Iranian culture. She teaches Film and Video Arts at Hampshire College of Massachusetts.



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1 Hour 99 Years

Directors: Negin Kianfar & Daisy Mohr, Iran/Netherlands, 50 minutes



For most young Iranians, Tehran is a frustrating place to live. The press is censored, boys and girls are often separated and everything that has to do with sex is taboo. With sixty percent of the population under the age of thirty, authorities are getting more aware of the problems young people face. *Sighe*, a temporary marriage for between 1 hour and 99 years, could be a way to release some of the frustrations and give young people some room in this country where extra-marital sex remains out of the question. The issue has triggered heated debates, as many see it as legalized prostitution.

1 hour – 99 years gives an intriguing insight into the lives of people in this young, frustrated and confused society and the way old religious practices like *Sighe* are being used in an attempt to solve contemporary problems.

Negin Kianfar (Teheran, 1969). Studied Cinema, majoring in Direction at the Art University of Teheran, trained factual program making in The Netherlands (RNTC). Researched and produced in Iran for VPRO Tegenlicht. Voice artist, and presented numerous current affairs series for Iranian Radio & Television (IRIB). Writing professional weblog for NOS journal.

Filmography: Deep dark blue, 1996; The Birthday, 2006; 1 hour-99 years, 2008; Eve & Adam, 2009.



Daisy Mohr was born in 1978 in Amsterdam. She studied at the American University of Beirut – Beirut and received her MA in Political Economy, Political Science and History of the Middle East. She is a Middle East correspondent for the Dutch newspaper Het Algemeen Dagblad – covering Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Libya, Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Iran. Also, a reporter and producer for RTL4 NEWS, and a documentary filmmaker who has made *The Birthday*, which has screened at more than 50 international festivals and has won several awards, directed and produced in Iran with Negin Kianfar.



Cyanosis

Director: Rokhsareh Ghaemmaghami, Iran, 30 minutes



In Tehran streets, you can't find any working painter, except Jamshid Aminfar. He has many difficulties with civil wardens, people and his own family, but insists because he loves painting. Trying to promote his life and work conditions, his friends decide to organize an exhibition for his paintings in a gallery. Preparing some works for his first exhibition, he falls in love with Alice Bombardier, a French girl. His happiness for his first exhibition turns to anxiety and fear: "what if Alice goes back to Paris?"

Rokhsareh Ghaemmaghami born in Tehran, 1976, has a BA in cinema and a MA in animation. She has been editing and making some documentary films since 2000. "Eshgh bazi" is a 20-minute documentary film about competitions of pigeon fanciers in Tehran, made in 2001. After two years of working on her MA thesis, "Documentary Animation", her first book with the same title is going to be published in Persian. As a practical result of her researches, she has made "**Cyanosis**", a documentary included with 10 minutes of animation. Now she is working on her new project, an animated documentary about her own childhood memories of Iran's war.



Salam Iran, A Persian Letter

Director: Jean-Daniel Lafond, Canada, 72 minutes



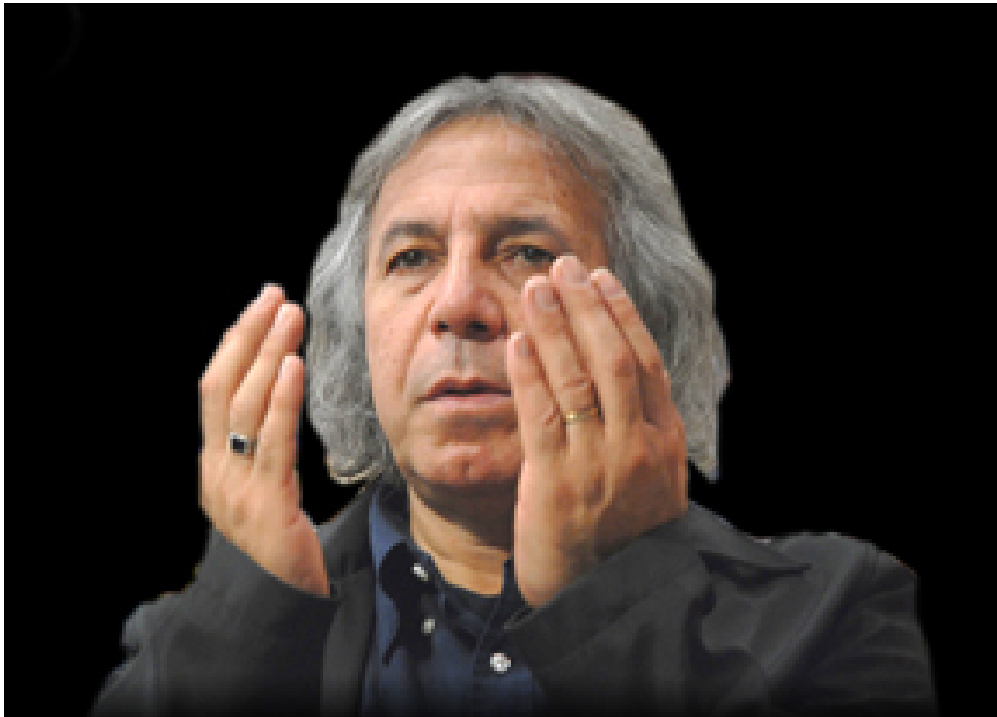
"I first traveled to Iran with Amir, without ever leaving Montreal. Until the day when a new wind of hope sprang up across Tehran. After 18 years in exile, Amir had decided to return home. And I, to make a film. What seemed at first like a simple story quickly turned complex. In a country where the dead and martyred are more alive than the living, where the past is more present than the present, and where the invisible overwhelms the visible, everything could happen. Women fighting for their rights, a younger generation seething with frustration, democrats locked in political combat... all embody a thirst for freedom and a hunger for life which the conservative Mollahs in power can no longer contain. Today, in Iran, the failure of the revolution has deepened the cleft between an obscurantist Islam terrified by fear of the wave and an Islam open to the world, prepared to plunge into the wave of modernity that sets words and bodies free..."



Jean-Daniel Lafond born in France, is a former philosophy professor, a documentary filmmaker and a writer. He has written and directed over a dozen films that embody his commitment to creative documentary filmmaking: *Dream Tracks*, *Tropic North*, *Freedom Outraged*, *Haiti in All Our Dreams*, *Last Call for Cuba*, *The Barbarian Files*, *Salam Iran*, *A Persian Letter*, *American Fugitive: The Truth about Hassan*.

It Rises from the East

Director: Sudeep Kanwal, US/Iran, 18 minutes, **Cast:** Matthew Hamm, Bahman Soltani, Michael Croce



Three individuals struggle to survive in this stand off drama involving faith and enlightenment. When Andrew hired Reza for the overnight position at the gas station he manages, he had no idea that training him would be the longest night of his life. A Robber intrudes. Will faith prevent these two men from squeezing their triggers? With the sun on its way up will there be a shot fired before IT RISES FROM THE EAST.

Sudeep Kanwal. When Sudeep was getting a degree in Media Studies, he was quite certain that he wanted to go in to advertising. He started directing and producing advertisements and infomercials for local and foreign language channels. Sudeep's first encounter with a 16mm Bolex changed everything. He started taking Advance cinematography and screenwriting courses at City College, while getting his Bachelors from Queens College. The round trips between the two colleges made it clear that Sudeep wanted to pursue only film.



Final Fitting

Director: Reza Haeri, Iran, 30 minutes



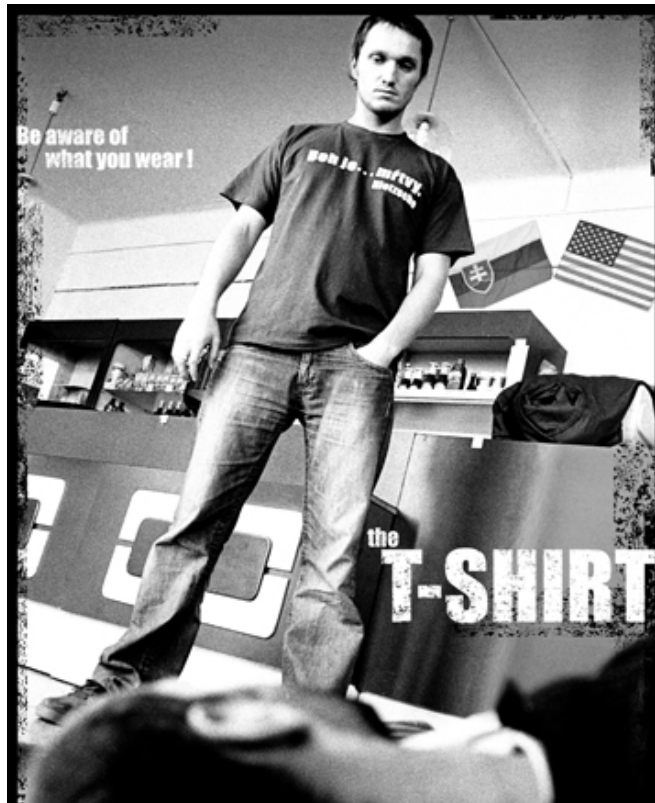
A documentary about Mr. Arabpour, the master tailor and craftsman, and the proprietor of the most famous tailor shop in Qom. He is in his eighties and for the last several decades has been the official tailor to the most important religious leaders of the country,

Reza Haeri is an Iranian filmmaker and author. Imamzadeh Internet was produced by Article Z (Paris, France) for ARTE, TV3, and other channels. In 1998 he directed the documentary Do you know Mr. Kiarostami? about ordinary people in Tehran and the famous director. Since then he has made documentaries about taxi drivers in Tehran and the rock band 127, and created two video installations, one of which was chosen for the Tehran Biennale. His latest film is a documentary about a tailor who sews clothes for mullahs, including the ex-president Mohammad Khatami.



The T-Shirt

Director: Hossein Martin Fazeli, Canada, 11 minutes, **Cast:** Marian Mitas, Andrej Kovac



Mark is half-American, half-Slovak. And he has strong beliefs. In a trip to Slovakia he meets Tomas who is wearing a T-shirt that offends his beliefs.

Hossein Martín Fazeli is an Iranian-Canadian film director. He makes short films, documentaries, and Public Service Announcements. An experienced filmmaker with a background in art of filmmaking. He has ten years of experience in various aspects of filmmaking in Europe and North America.



Rebirth

Director: Talieh Rohano, US/Iran, 12 minutes



Rebirth is based on a poem by Frough Farokhzad, a Persian poet and activist. *Rebirth* explores the identity of women through a visual poetry. It follows the imaginations of a woman from childhood to adulthood while walking her through solitude and depression.

Talieh Rohani studied filmmaking in Soureh University in Tehran before going onto do a BFA in Image Arts/Film Studies at Ryerson University in Toronto and to pursue an MFA in Cinema Studies at San Francisco State University. She has directed several short films and worked, variously, as a director, art director and production designer,



cinematographer and editor. She is interested in the emergence transnational culture in lives of young Iranian-Americans and in the larger impact of technology on the development of a new global imagination.

Siza (Punishment)

Director: Chiman Rahimi, UK/Iran, 12 minutes, **Cast:** Rzgar Sais, Pegah Rahimi, Omar Xayat, Kris Fortello



‘Siza’ is based on a true story of a young girl living in fear for her life, within London’s Kurdish community. By dating a white London boy, Siza throws ‘dishonor’ on her family. Pressure mounts on her father to take drastic reprisals.

Chiman Rahimi was born in Kurdistan of Iran. She had to leave Iran when she was only 18 years old and has lived in London ever since. Chiman went to study film and video at London College of printing now known as London College of Communication. She acquired her B.A (Hons) in Film and video in 1999. She has made few short films since. Her latest project is a short drama called ‘SIZA’. She is now working as a VO correspondent in London. She has also worked as a free-lance reporter for Kurdish satellite Televisions and newspapers. Chiman has always been active in the area of human right and women rights issues.





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**Venue:**

**San Francisco Art institute**  
800 Chestnut Street, San Francisco, CA 94133  
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Iranian Film Festival ~ San Francisco

6 Beach Road, 544 ~ Tiburon, CA 94920 USA ~ Phone: (415) 251-8433 ~ Fax: (253) 663-1250
info@IranianFilmFestival.org ~ www.IranianFilmFestival.org