



hakawati

POETRY IN MOTION CONTEMPORARY IRANIAN CINEMA

3-24 April 2019



Further Information: <http://www.bagrifoundation.org/events/poetry-motion-contemporary-iranian-cinema/>

Ticket sale link: <https://www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/2019/series/poetry-in-motion-contemporary-iranian-cinema>

We are delighted to announce **Poetry In Motion: Contemporary Iranian Cinema**, which takes place between 3-24 April at the Barbican Centre in London and showcases some of the country's most inventive filmmakers.

Reflecting Iranian culture's rich, diverse traditions and love of storytelling, Poetry In Motion presents the work of bold contemporary directors whose stories will charm, surprise and enchant, a mix of everyday, universal themes, and the retelling of traditional narratives in new ways.

The season showcases emerging voices in Iranian cinema through the prism of Persian poetry, rather than through its modern day politics and often stereotyped representation. It features seven films – several of which are UK premieres - and ScreenTalks with an array of the country's leading directors and artists.

Poetry In Motion: Contemporary Iranian Cinema has been commissioned by the Bagri Foundation; award winning film producer/curator Elhum Shakerifar and curator Faye Harvey have curated the programme in partnership with the Barbican.

“Positioning the cinema as a unique space for discovery and discussion, this season was developed in response – and as a provocation to – the stereotyped ways that modern Iran is predominantly portrayed. Iranian culture is imbued by rich, diverse traditions and by a love of storytelling, which has marked Iranian cinema more distinctly than is ever celebrated. By framing a diverse selection of new voices through the evergreen language poetry, we invite reflection and nuance, as well as a celebration of storytelling in its many guises through the live elements accompanying screenings.”

- Elhum Shakerifar, Hakawati, season co-curator

“Poetry in Motion supports our ambition as a Foundation to challenge the way art from across Asia is represented and we are honoured to have commissioned this season at the Barbican. We are captivated by Iranian culture, in fact it is a personal passion of mine, having recently experienced its beauty first-hand. We are particularly excited to shed light on the great tradition of storytelling and poetry as a key element of Iran's cinematic culture through the work of emerging contemporary filmmakers. The wonderful array of films have been expertly curated by Elhum Shakerifar and Faye Harvey to bring new perspectives, universal themes and contemporary narratives about Iran to London audiences.”

- Alka Bagri, Trustee of the Bagri Foundation

“Poetry In Motion gives our audiences the opportunity to explore and experience Iran with a new lens through its contemporary cinematic narratives, voicing fresh creative perspectives. The fact that these are linked to its rich past and present through the tradition of poetry and storytelling makes this programme both timely and enlightening.”

Gali Gold, Head of Barbican Cinema

Film Screenings

***A Dragon Arrives!* + ScreenTalk with Director Mani Haghighi**

*** UK Premiere ***

Mani Haghighi 2016, 107 mins

Wed 3 Apr, 18.10, Cinema 2

Originally premiering in competition at the Berlinale, this is certainly one of the most ambitious and inventive recent films from **Mani Haghighi**, one of Iran's most prolific and eclectic filmmakers.

Set both in 1965 and the present day, an eclectic trio – a detective (played by rising star Amir Jadidi), a geologist and a sound recordist – investigate mysterious geological behaviour in an abandoned cemetery on Qeshm Island and the suspicious death of a political exile.

When they discover the 17th century shipwreck where the exile was last seen, they find every inch of the ship's walls are covered in writing – lines from stories, diary entries, poems and dreams. One of the many elements at the core of *A Dragon Arrives!* is the search for truth and the challenges of finding meaning within that process.

***Atomic Heart* + ScreenTalk with Dr Orkideh Behrouzan**

2014, Ali Ahmadzadeh, 93 mins
Sun 7 Apr, 16.15, Cinema 2

A hallucinatory journey through nighttime Tehran, charged with reflexive, sharp-witted dialogue, *Atomic Heart* reflects on contemporary narratives in all their contradictions, both imagined and lived.

In high spirits after a party, Arineh and Nobahar cruise tipsily through nocturnal, polluted, traffic-jammed Tehran, meeting an array of entertaining characters along the way. They raucously relive dreams and reflect on urban existence, but after the two young women meet a tall dark stranger, their journey takes a turn into the surreal.

Consolidating his niche of representing Tehran's upper-middle class urban lives, **Ali Ahmadzadeh's** second feature brings together a brilliant cast (including Mohammad Reza Golzar and Taraneh Alidousti) alongside polished craft: deftly crafted, beautifully lensed camerawork by Ashkan Ashkani and sharp, electric dialogue.

The screening will be followed by a ScreenTalk with Dr **Orkideh Behrouzan**, a physician, medical anthropologist, anthropologist of science and technology, and author of **Prozak Diaries: Psychiatry and Generational Memory in Iran** (2016, Stanford University Press). Orkideh founded the Beyond Trauma exploring narrations of memory in cultural productions including art, literature, and everyday life.

Braving the Waves + ScreenTalk with Mina Keshavarz

2016, Dir Mina Keshavarz, 90 mins
Tue 9 Apr, 18.30, Cinema 2

A young entrepreneur and mother living in Minab, on the Southern coast of Iran, Roghieh's quest to establish a much-contested women's bazaar is the subject of this observational documentary from Mina Keshavarz.

In Southern Iran, it is said that the mythical Damahi fish swims out in stormy weather to guide seamen safely back to the shore. Roghieh's drive to enable local women to have stable jobs selling food and handicrafts in a unionised space takes inspiration from its courage.

Interspersed with moments of colourful animated illustration, imbued with textures of the sea and of women, this documentary draws from with the rich traditions of the region to celebrate an everyday hero, Roghieh, poised to challenge the situation for women in her own society.

A champion of strong female voices, **Mina Keshavarz's** *Braving the Waves* also highlights the beauty with which Roghieh expresses herself – her language is full of imagery and metaphor, her resolve is stoic and grounded.

Keshavarz will join us for a post screening Q&A during which we will reflect on the place that language plays in representing realities, and how the anchor of a strong poetic tradition – Keshavarz herself is from Shiraz, the city of Iran's unofficial national poet Hafez – has woven its way into her work as a storyteller. She was one of the filmmakers behind the celebrated and beautiful multi-authored documentary *Profession: Documentarist*, in which she was one of seven female filmmakers in Iran, reflecting on the narratives they have had to suppress.

Tehran: City of Love + ScreenTalk with Director Ali Jaberansari

Ali Jaberansari, 2018, 102 mins
Sat 13 Apr, 18.00, Cinema 2

In a triptych playing on the trope of unrequited love – a consistent subject of traditional Persian storytelling,

promising young director **Ali Jaberansari**'s refreshing and original tale of Tehran reflects on the fleeting nature of happiness, with note-perfect, deadpan humour that has echoes of Scandinavian cinema.

Hessam, a retired bodybuilder who trains affluent older men, is cast in a film with the French actor Louis Garrel – who neither he, nor anyone around him has ever heard of, though the producer assures him is extremely famous. Mina is a receptionist at an up-market beauty clinic; unhappy about her weight but addicted to ice cream, she catfishes men she encounters at work. Meanwhile, after his girlfriend breaks up with him, Vahid, a singer at funerals, is convinced by his friends to try singing at weddings instead.

***Hendi & Hormoz* + ScreenTalk with Hana Louise Shahnawaz**

*** UK Premiere ***

Abbas Amini, 2018, 88 mins

Sun 14 Apr, 16.00, Cinema 2

Shot against an intense backdrop of vivid red soil, this sensitive drama highlights the trials of a teenage married couple forced to face the realities of adulthood all too soon.

Hendi and Hormoz are 13 and 16 years old at the time of their arranged marriage. Hendi loves her life at school; Hormoz has been promised a job in a local mine. But things don't go as smoothly as expected, and as the pair begin to see the responsibilities that lie in store, both children must grow up very quickly.

Punctuated by fleeting moments of joy and love, *Hendi and Hormoz* captures the growing pains of youth to adulthood, with the tender gaze of its powerful, intimate camerawork. Never before has the earth of the Hormoz Island been explored in such vivid dynamism as in **Abbas Amini's** (*Valderama*) stunning new drama.

The screening will be followed by a discussion with British-Iranian Painter **Hana Louise Shanavaz**, Winner of The Ciclitira Prize 2017, to discuss the role of colour and the extraordinary, picturesque backdrop of Hormoz Island in the film. This is also a unique opportunity to hear Hana discuss her work and process, sourcing and mixing her own paint, including Hormoz's iconic searing red.

***Janbal* + ScreenTalk with Directors**

*** UK Premiere ***

2017, Mina Bozorgmehr and Hadi Kamali Moghadam, 72 mins

Wed 17 Apr, 18.30, Cinema 2

Persian mythology, ancient rituals, and traditional storytelling collide in *Janbal*, a layered patchwork of documentary and fantasy, performance art and poetry.

Janbal is inspired by an ancient Hormuz Island myth, in which people sacrifice clothes of the deceased to the sea so that the goddess Sea-Mother will cleanse their souls. The film takes stories told by the island's dwellers as its starting point, and playfully finds its form from there.

Musa is enchanted by the sounds of the sea. He collects clothes from its shore to create pictorial visions of the Sea-Daughter; he writes stories; he plays the jahleh (clay pot) to keep alive the sound of her voice.

Directed by celebrated video and performance duo **Mina Bozorgmehr** and **Hadi Kamali Moghadam**, *Janbal* takes cinematic storytelling to realms rarely explored, blurring the real and the imaginative in a richly

textured and poetic form that is inventive, rhythmic, and visually out-of-this-world. The screening will be followed by a discussion with Directors **Mina Bozorgmehr** and **Hadi Kamali Moghadam**.

Ava

2017, Sadaf Foroughi, 103 mins
Wed 24 April, 18.15, Cinema 2

Beautifully shot and subtly observed, Ava is a tightly wound domestic drama about a young woman's increasingly strained relationship with her mother.

A bright student who wants to pursue music, Ava's world begins to shift as the existential angst of being a teenager sets in. The destructive forces of peer pressure, hormones, and disagreements with her mother are compounded by an ardently severe head teacher, causing Ava to play up to all authority and resolute to disrupt even her closest friendships.

Sadaf Foroughi's impressive debut won the FIPRESCI Discovery Award at Toronto International Film Festival, where it premiered. Loosely autobiographical, her astute and lingering camerawork brings into frame a family struggling with change, obstinately imploding in slow motion.

Please note that further live elements will be announced over the next weeks.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

For further information please contact:

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Ticket prices:

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/whats-on/cinema>

Box Office: 0845 120 7527

Standard: £13.50 Barbican Members: £10.80 Concessions £12.50,
Young Barbican £5

Hakawati

Hakawati produces, distributes and curates films that hold the art of storytelling at their core. The company supports storytellers with distinctive vision and enables new talent to take creative risks. Committed to the broader visibility of independent film, Hakawati gives platforms to quieter voices and unique individual – often minority – perspectives in relation to a dominant whole. In making and giving visibility to creatively bold films with integrity, representation and reframing narratives are at the heart of what we do. Hakawati's projects all derive from the central tenet that a good story is in the telling, and that after all, we are the stories we tell. Founded by BAFTA nominated producer Elhum Shakerifar, Hakawati is supported by the BFI Vision Award and was named one of Screen International's 2018 #Brit50 Producers on the Rise.

<http://hakawati.co.uk>

Bagri Foundation

The Bagri Foundation is a UK registered charity, inspired by creative, unique and unexpected ideas that weave the traditional and the contemporary of arts and culture from across Asia. The Foundation is driven by curiosity and supports a myriad of thought-provoking artistic projects that aim to challenge, engage,

inspire and inform. Through a diverse programme of film, visual arts, music, dance, literature, courses and lectures, Bagri Foundation gives artists and experts from across Asia, or those inspired by the continent, wider visibility on the global stage.

<https://www.bagrifoundation.org/>

The Barbican

A world-class arts and learning organisation, the Barbican pushes the boundaries of all major art forms including dance, film, music, theatre and visual arts. Its creative learning programme further underpins everything it does. Over 1.1 million people attend events annually, hundreds of artists and performers are featured, and more than 300 staff work onsite.

The architecturally renowned centre opened in 1982 and comprises the Barbican Hall, the Barbican Theatre, The Pit, Cinemas 1, 2 and 3, Barbican Art Gallery, a second gallery the Curve, foyers and public spaces, a library, Lakeside Terrace, a glasshouse conservatory, conference facilities and three restaurants. The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre.

The Barbican is home to Resident Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra; Associate Orchestra, BBC Symphony Orchestra; Associate Ensembles the Academy of Ancient Music and Britten Sinfonia, Associate Producer Serious, and Artistic Partner Create. Our Artistic Associates include Boy Blue, Cheek by Jowl, Deborah Warner, Drum Works and Michael Clark Company.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic are the Barbican's International Orchestral Partner, the Australian Chamber Orchestra are International Associate Ensemble at Milton Court and Jazz at Lincoln Centre Orchestra are International Associate Ensemble.

<https://www.barbican.org.uk/>