



# Iranian Cinema

16 + GUIDE

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# Iranian Cinema

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London W1T 1LN

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## 16+ MEDIA STUDIES

### INFORMATION GUIDE STATEMENT

“Candidates should note that examiners have copies of this guide and will not give credit for mere reproduction of the information it contains. Candidates are reminded that all research sources must be credited”.

## ACCESSING RESEARCH MATERIALS

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### 1. *bfi* NATIONAL LIBRARY:

All the materials referred to in this guide are available for consultation at the *bfi* National Library. If you wish to visit the reading room of the library and do not already hold membership, you will need to take out a one-day, five-day or annual pass. Full details of access to the library and charges can be found at [www.bfi.org.uk/library](http://www.bfi.org.uk/library).

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#### ***bfi* National Library**

British Film Institute  
21 Stephen Street  
London W1T 1LN  
Tel. 020 7255 1444  
[www.bfi.org.uk/library](http://www.bfi.org.uk/library)

The library's nearest underground stations are Tottenham Court Road and Goodge Street (please see [www.bfi.org.uk/library/visiting](http://www.bfi.org.uk/library/visiting) for a map of the area).

### COPIES OF ARTICLES

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## 2. OTHER SOURCES:

- Your local library

Local libraries should have access to the inter-library loan system for requesting items they do not hold and they may have copies of MONTHLY FILM BULLETIN and SIGHT AND SOUND. Some recent newspaper items may be held by your local reference library. Larger libraries will hold other relevant materials and should offer internet access.

- Your nearest college/university

Universities may allow access to outside students, though you may not be able to borrow books or journals. Ask your reference librarian, who should be able to assist by locating the nearest college library holding suitable material. The *BFI Film and Television Handbook* lists libraries with significant media collections.

- Your school library

- Local bookshops

Some of the books mentioned in the bibliography will be in print and your bookshop should be able to order items for you.

- The British Library Newspaper Library

The Newspaper Library will have all the newspaper items referred to in this guide. Contact the library first if you wish to visit. 16+ students under the age of 18 will need to make an appointment.

The British Library Newspaper Library  
Colindale Avenue  
London NW9 5HE  
Tel. 020 7412 7353

## Why do research?

You cannot simply rely on your existing knowledge when approaching essays in Media Studies. Although you will have some understanding of the area being explored, it is not enough to enable you to examine the area in depth. If you were asked to write about the people in your street in detail, you might have some existing information about names, faces, relationships, issues and activities but this knowledge would not offer you details such as every single one of their names, who knows who, who gets on with whom, how people earn a living, what has happened to them in the past and so on. This extra information could change your opinions quite dramatically. Without it, therefore, your written profile would end up being quite shallow and possibly incorrect. The same is true of your understanding of media texts, issues and institutions.

Before researching any area, it is useful to be clear about what outcomes you are hoping to achieve. Research is never a waste of time, even when it doesn't directly relate to the essay you are preparing. The information may be relevant to another area of the syllabus, be it practical work or simply a different essay. Also, the picture you are building up of how an area works will strengthen your understanding of the subject as a whole. So what outcomes are you hoping to achieve with your research?

- **A broad overview of the area you are researching:** This includes its history, institutions, conventions and relationship to the audience. Research into these aspects offers you an understanding of how your area has developed and the influences which have shaped it.
- **An awareness of different debates which may exist around the area of study:** There are a range of debates in many subject areas. For example, when researching audiences you will discover that there is some debate over how audiences watch television or film, ranging from the passive consumption of values and ideas to the use of media texts in a critical and independent way. Any discussion about censorship, for example, and an analysis of the debates which emerged over the release of the film "Crash", will be extremely shallow if you have no knowledge of these different perspectives.
- **Some knowledge of the work of theorists in that particular area:** You need to demonstrate that you have read different theorists, exploring the relevant issues and investigating the area thoroughly in order to develop your own opinion based on acquired knowledge and understanding.
- **Information relevant to all key concept areas.** You should, after research, be able to discuss all key concept areas as they relate to that specific subject area. These are the codes and conventions, representation, institutions and audience.

## Types of research

- **Primary:** This is first-hand research. In other words, it relies on you constructing and conducting surveys, setting up interviews with key people in the media industry or keeping a diary or log of data (known as quantitative information) on such things as what activities women are shown doing in advertisements over one week of television viewing, for example. Unless you are equipped to conduct extensive research, have access to relevant people in the media industry or are thorough in the up-keep of your diary or log, this type of research can be demanding, complex and sometimes difficult to use. Having said that, if you are preparing for an extended essay, then it is exactly this type of research which, if well used, will make your work distinctive and impressive.

- **Secondary:** This is where you will be investigating information gathered by other people in books, pamphlets, on radio, television, in the newspaper and in magazines. All of these sources are excellent for finding background information, statistics, interviews, collected research details and so on. This will form the majority of your research. Some of these will be generally available (in public libraries for example); others such as press releases and trade press may only be available through specialist libraries.
- **Other Media:** When considering one area of the media or one particular product or type of product, it is very important that you compare it with others which are similar. You will need to be able to refer to these comparisons in some detail so it is not enough to simply watch a film. You will need to read a little about that film, make notes, concentrate on one or two scenes which seem particularly relevant and write all of this information up so that you can refer to it when you need to.
- **History and development:** Having an understanding of the history and development of the media text which you are researching will provide a firm foundation and context for contemporary analysis. There is a difference between generally accepted facts and how theorists use these facts.
- **Theory:** This is the body of work of other critics of the media. Most of the books and periodical articles which you will read for research will be written by theorists who are arguing a particular viewpoint or position with regard to an issue within the media. It is this which forms the debates surrounding the study of the media, in which you, as a media student, are now becoming involved.

## Using research

- **Organising your research:** Before rushing headlong into the local library, the first stage of research is to plan two things. When are you able to do your research and how are you going to organise the information gathered? You may, for example, wish to make notes under the headings listed above.
- **Applying your research:** Always return to the specific questions being asked of the text. The most obvious pitfall is to gather up all of the collected information and throw it at the page, hoping to score points for quantity. The art of good research is how you use it as part of or evidence for an analysis of the text which you are exploring. The knowledge you have acquired should give you the confidence to explore the text, offer your own arguments and, where appropriate, to quote references to support this.
- **Listing your research:** It is good practice, and excellent evidence of your wider reading, to list all references to secondary research, whether mentioned within the essay or not, at the end of your work. This is usually written in this way:

### Notes

1. Len Masterman, *Teaching About Television*, London, Macmillan, 1980.

2. Manuel Alvarado and Bob Ferguson, "The Curriculum, Media Studies and Discursivity", *Screen*, vol.24, no.3, May-June 1983.

Other media texts referred to in detail should be listed, with relevant information such as the director, date of release or transmission, production company and, where possible, scene or episode number.

Where you have compiled primary research, it is useful to offer a brief summary of this also at the end of your work.

## Introduction

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The rediscovery of Iranian cinema in the West has been mainly attributed to the success and acclaim bestowed upon Iran's major filmmakers at international film festivals. Abbas Kiarostami, in particular, has received exceptional attention from both critics and other filmmakers. Akira Kurosawa called him the finest living filmmaker, and Jean-Luc Godard is reported to have said that included in a list of his life's disappointments is his failure "to force the Oscar people to reward Kiarostami instead of Kieslowski." Such acclaim has resulted in the elevation of this one director to almost godlike status, and with this in mind we have included references that address this issue, as well as those about other important Iranian filmmakers. We have also chosen to focus on the work of women filmmakers in Iran.

It has been suggested that Iranian film offers the spectator a new cinematic language. The common use of non-professional actors, no/minimal scripts, low budgets, the representation of social issues, the use of documentary style and the exclusion of themes so often found in other types of national cinema, have produced a distinctly Iranian style. Strict regulations determined by Islamic law govern the depiction of women, female/male relations, political and religious issues; consequently they must be scripted and filmed sensitively. The references in this study guide cover filmmakers who have been unsuccessful in their attempts to get their films screened in Iran, but have had success abroad, others who have achieved both at home and abroad, and also those living in exile. Despite the fact that there are many common themes, devices and techniques used by Iranian filmmakers, they remain distinct from each other and the references will show this.

The current popularity of Iranian cinema is perhaps a backlash to Hollywood. The films have a tendency to convey a philosophical and poetic outlook and demand more from the audience than more populist contemporary cinema; indeed, Kiarostami fully encourages and expects his audience to "fill in the blanks".

The international success of Iranian cinema has been instrumental in providing a new insight into Iranian culture. Western media have tended to focus on the negative aspects of the country's history and although the films do not shy away from the representation of social issues, we also see humour, landscapes, and sensitive portrayals of the complexities of humanity. For example, in *SECRET BALLOT* (2001) we see an independent strong minded woman determined to collect as many votes as possible, an image that contradicts the negative Western perception of the oppression of Iranian women.

The study of Iranian cinema is by no means easy, compared to other national cinemas, as there is relatively little documentation available in English and videos of the films are not always presented with English subtitles, though the trend is slowly reversing. The bfi National Library has a wealth of collections which can be consulted in our Reading Room, and our aim here is to offer a selective guide that provides a rounded view on the subject of Iranian cinema from all perspectives. You can keep up to date with developments in Iranian cinema by reading back issues of the journals *FILM INTERNATIONAL* and *CINEMAYA*, as well as research individual filmmakers other than those included in this guide. References available on the web have only been included where we felt they added to other literature or offered a totally different perspective. Finally, it is worth looking out for seasons on Iranian cinema - in London, for example, there have already been seasons at the Barbican, ICA and NFT and new films are being screened at the 46<sup>th</sup> Regus London Film Festival - as it may be the only chance to view the films and talk to the filmmakers.

We hope that you find this a useful guide into Iranian cinema and if you feel that we have missed out anything of importance please let us know.

# General References

by Louise Johnston

## Books

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**BOORMAN**, John and **DONOHUE**, Walter (eds.)

**Projections 8: Filmmakers on filmmaking.**

London: Faber and Faber. 1998. vii-x, 406p. .

Chapter five, written by Godfrey Cheshire, focuses on the work of Abbas Kiarostami. Cheshire succeeds in painting a portrait, out of the words of this important director, by looking at the significance of place both in his films and his personal life. An illuminating discussion considers why Kiarostami made *TASTE OF CHERRY*, given its controversial response, and asks why the film's protagonist wanted to kill himself. The relevance and function of international film festivals to the director's work are considered throughout the chapter. Cheshire suggests that the cinema of Iran challenges the West's perception of art and in doing so provides the film world with a new cinematic language.

**BUTLER**, Alison

**Women's cinema: the contested screen.**

London; New York: Wallflower Press, 2002. 134p.

(Short cuts, no. 14)

This excellent book contains a small section entitled "Women directors in the Iranian New Wave" (pp.96-100) debating the main issues surrounding their work. The way in which the "purification" of Iranian cinema through Islamic values transformed film into an acceptable industry for women to enter is considered, and Bani-Etemad's work is used as example, in particular *The MAY LADY*, to show how cinematic techniques are employed to overcome censorship regulations. Also looks at the cinematography used in Marzieh Meshkini's *THE DAY I BECAME A WOMAN* and concludes that generally in women's cinema in Iran there is often a "veiling of meaning" and that films are often ambiguous because of fear of repercussions, as experienced by Tahmineh Milani.

(No author given)

**The cinema of Iran during Pahlavi Age.**

Tehran, Iran: Fardin Press, [s.d]. ca.160 leaves. .

A beautifully presented book containing limited biographical details of directors, producers and actors. The usefulness of this book lies in the biographical information that is difficult to find in other English language texts. The glitzy photographs of the personalities are helpful in gaining an insight into the differences in the culture of cinema before and after the Revolution.

**DABASHI**, Hamid

**Close Up: Iranian cinema: past present and future.**

London; New York: Verso, 2001. 302p. . filmog. notes.

The book opens with a very personal and vivid account of the author's experiences of cinema as a young person during the Pahlavi era. The emphasis of this book is very much on cinema within the realm of other Iranian art forms and this is particularly explicit in the first chapter. A section on Kiarostami traces the history of Iranian cinema through the life of the director. Other chapters consist of an interview with Bahram Beiza'i where the relationship between other earlier art forms and Iranian cinema is discussed, and an interview with Bahman Farmanara, a director who left Iran after the revolution but then returned in the mid 1980's. The interview with Farmanara includes a discussion of his experiences of filmmaking, cinema audiences at home and abroad, and his thoughts on other filmmakers. Although the text can be quite dense in parts the author is an excellent interviewer and really brings out the best of

his subjects, who also includes Mohsen Makhmalbaf. The final chapters look at the work of Rakhshan Bani-Etemad and Samira Makmalbaf and the future of Iranian cinema.

#### **FARABI CINEMA FOUNDATION**

##### **A selection of Iranian films = Une selection de films Iraniens.**

Tehran: Farabi Cinema Foundation.

An annual booklet from 1986-2000 with details of the years' films. Includes brief credits, a short biography of the director and stills from the film. Worth a look as some contain tables to show box office successes in Iran, film festival achievements, success abroad or more general information on the state of the Iranian film industry for the previous year.

#### **Iranian cinema.**

Fardin House Press, 1988. 402p.

The 1988 issue of this annual, by Bahram Reipour and Jamal Omid, is a filmography of feature films and short films produced between 1985 and 1988 with details of films screened at international film festivals. A special feature of this book that can be found at the back in the appendix, is the small section on rules and regulations. Tables of statistics show the effect of policy to restrict foreign films being exhibited in Iran on attendances to home-grown films during the period covered. In addition information on the film grading system is provided.

#### **ISSA, Rose and WHITAKER, Sheila (eds.)**

##### **Life and art: the new Iranian cinema.**

London: British Film Institute/National Film Theatre, 1999. 159p. . biofilmogs. index.

A comprehensive text with some useful bio/filmographies at the back. Seven of the eleven chapters examine the following directors: Bani-Etemad, Bayzai, Jalili, Kiarostami, Makhmalbaf, Mehrjui, and Saless whilst other chapters consider common themes, such as poverty and isolation, and genres, such as melodrama and suspense. A section focusing on women both in front and behind the camera contains an interesting discussion on the presence and function of the veil. A helpful history of Iranian cinema argues that the government has both developed and repressed the medium. The book provides an exploration of the difficulties experienced by Iranian filmmakers working within a censored industry and examines the cinematic techniques employed by some to get around these difficulties whilst imprinting an individual stamp on their films.

#### **ISSARI, M. A.**

##### **Cinema in Iran, 1900-1979.**

Metuchen, NJ; London: Scarecrow Press, 1989. 446p. . tables. bibliog. filmogs. index.

This incredibly detailed text is a historical account of Iranian cinema focusing on the relationship between the government and cinema rather than on individual directors and genres. In doing so the author manages to convey the necessity for government support to the success of the Iranian cinema industry. As with other books included in this guide the author looks at pre-cinema entertainment as a method of placing Iranian films within the greater context of a tradition of Iranian art. Contains sections on censorship, dubbing and the importation of foreign films, documentary filmmaking and feature filmmaking.

**KIAROSTAMI, Abbas; KARIMI-HAKKAK, Ahmad** et al. (translators)  
**Walking with the wind: poems by Abbas Kiarostami.**  
Cambridge, MA; London: Harvard University Press, 2001. 237p.  
(Voices and visions in film)

Although this is not an essential text to the study of Iranian cinema, this work of haiku-like poetry is useful for an extended study of Kiarostami. The introduction considers the form and style of the poems and their relationship to his cinematic work.

**LEAMAN, Oliver** (ed.)  
**Companion encyclopedia of Middle Eastern and North African film.**  
London; New York: Routledge, 2001. xvi, 607p. . filmogs. indices.

The detailed, yet readable section on Iranian cinema is excellent, covering four main areas: history, women filmmakers, exile, and a listing of Iranian filmmakers. The history is dealt with in three sections: a small section on the Qajar Era Cinema, and two larger sections on the Pahlavi Era cinema and the Islamic Republic Era cinema. These are further divided into subsections that analyse the different film movements and genres of the eras, such as the tough guy (luti) genre from the 1960s and early 1970's and the humanist genre from post-Revolutionary Iran. The section on women and cinema looks at how filmmakers have developed their own film language to get around the problem of enforced rules regarding the portrayal of men and women on the screen. An interesting point is made that today women have an easier time working behind the camera rather than on screen because the profession is well respected as an industry that adheres to Islamic law. A small section on Exilic and Diaspora films provides a good introduction to this aspect of Iranian film. The end of the section contains a filmography and list of directors and popular actors with useful biographical details such as how actor Mohammad-Ali Fardin (popular tough guy star) left the world of acting after the Revolution to work in the bakery business! The list of directors is useful as the details indicate their preferred genres and significant moments from their career. All in all this is possibly the most useful text in the selection, containing a mine of information on Iranian cinema.

**MAHBOOB-MANESH** (ed.); **ESLAMI, M.** et al. (translators)  
**Iranian new cinema.**  
Tehran: Farabi Cinema Foundation, 1998. 310p. .(mostly col.). credits. biofilmogs. awards. indices.

The introduction looks briefly at Iranian Cinema before and after the revolution, in particular on the role of the Farabi Cinema Foundation and the Fajr Film Festival. Bearing in mind that the book was published by the Farabi Cinema Foundation - the government established body for film - this text offers a rather subjective view of Iranian cinema. The main body of the text consists of a year by year guide to a selection of films produced in Iran 1980-1997. Each title is given one page consisting of a synopsis of the film, a short biography of the director, brief credits and a still. There is also a list of film awards at the back. This book is invaluable as it provides useful filmographic information that can be difficult to find elsewhere.

**MAST, Gerald** and **KAWIN, Bruce F.**  
**A short history of the movies.** [7<sup>th</sup> ed.]  
Needham Heights, Mass: Allyn & Bacon, 2000. iii-x, 702p. [16]col.plates. bibliog. gloss. index.

A short piece (pp.505-506) on Iranian cinema argues that the films made during the mid-1980's and later, revived "neorealism, the fable and the children's film all at once" (p.505). Films such as *The WHITE BALLOON*, and *WHERE IS MY FRIEND'S HOUSE* are used to illustrate this point.

**MINISTRY OF ERSHAD-E ESLAMI and GENERAL DEPARTMENT OF RESEARCH AND CINEMATOGRAPHIC RELATIONS**

**Post-revolution Iranian Cinema.**

Tehran: Min. of Ershad-e Eslami, Gen. Dept. of Research, 1982. 121p. col..

Published just three years after the Revolution, the introduction to this filmography is an interesting read with a strong anti-American sentiment and is useful to study as it demonstrates the mood of the authorities at the time. Discusses the ways in which the Revolution has "cleaned up" Iranian cinema and the planning for current and future productions to be channelled and gain international exposure.

**NAFICY**, Hamid (ed.)

**Iran media index.**

Westport, CT; London: Greenwood Press, 1984. 265p. indices.

(Bibliographies and indexes in world history, no. 1)

Although this is primarily an index, the introduction to this text provides a useful overview of the production of non-fiction film and television programmes about Iran by English speaking countries up until 1982 and could be useful in a media studies context. The first section deals with the period 1900-1941 looking at newsreels and commenting on their reception by Iranians home and away. Other types of film are also dealt with: the depiction of tribes in GRASS, in ethnographic films, and also institutional films which represented countries which had a great deal of economic and political interest in Iran at the time. The second section covers 1942-1979 and shows that many of the non-fiction films made during this period were of a propagandist nature reflecting the official position of the US and British governments towards Iran. It goes on to look at the reporting of the Islamic Revolution and US hostages and notes the increasing amount of time devoted to items on the Middle East.

**NAFICY**, Hamid

**The making of exile cultures: Iranian television in Los Angeles.**

Minneapolis; London: Minnesota University Press, 1993. 283p. . tables. notes. bibliog. index.

An unusual, yet fascinating media-studies type book. Academic, yet on the whole fairly accessible, this is a comprehensive look at those who watch and those who make Iranian television as well as the cultural and political influences surrounding the medium. Each chapter begins with a personal memory from the author, the aim of which is to put into context the rest of the chapter. Chapter four is especially interesting as it considers exilic television as a ritual genre and argues that it "creates for exilic producers and viewers alike a sense of stability out of instability and commonality out of alienation" (p.91). Other forms of popular culture discussed in brief are: periodicals, radio, films, associations and music.

**NANCY**, Jean-Claude; **IRIZARRY**, **Christine** et al. (translators)

**L'évidence du film: Abbas Kiarostami = The evidence of film: Abbas Kiarostami.**

Bruxelles: Yves Gevaert Éditeur, 2001. 96, 58p. . [24]col. plates.

"At times I think that a photograph, a picture is worth more than a film". Kiarostami discusses the symbolic function of an art piece in AND LIFE GOES ON and the author makes explicit the particular resonance that still photography and painting holds for the director. When the discussion turns to the question of a definition of cinema Kiarostami argues that those who consider film to be an art should read it in the same way as they would a picture or a poem so that it retains some ambiguity and mystery. Stills from six of his films are contained in a separate section and the first half of the book consists of an essay that seeks to provide the reader with a new way of looking at the director's work. Overall this is useful book for any investigation into the work of Kiarostami however the first half can be quite challenging to read as it is very theoretical and should not be used as an introduction to the work of the director.

**NESHAT**, Shirin and **MILANI**, Farzaneh; **BERNOCCHI**, Gino (translator)  
**Shirin Neshat.**

Milano: Charta, 2001. 79p. (some col.). bibliog. biog. appendix.

"Artfully simple, conceptually complex, and increasingly poetic, Shirin Neshat's work contributes to an exciting dialogue among cultures". A portrait of filmmaker Shirin Neshat, an Iranian born artist living in the US, taking in her photography and video and film work. The text is trated by some striking images and looks at the thematic elements of her work. Using examples, the author observes how men and women inhabit the cinematic space and looks at how the gaze is used.

**RIDGEON**, Lloyd

**Makhmalbaf's broken mirror: the socio-political significance of modern Iranian cinema.**

Durham: University of Durham, Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, 2000. 40p.

(Durham East paper, no. 64)

Mohsen Makhmalbaf, unlike many of his contemporaries, has enjoyed success with his films at home in Iran and also abroad during the 1990's. This work examines how the director has addressed his political concerns on film whilst working in a heavily censored industry. Contains a useful section on censorship that describes the five-part process that films must go through before approval. Also deals with the treatment of women in his films and more aesthetic issues such as his desire to show on screen that truth is not absolute. This is an excellent paper that discusses clearly the major issues and themes in Makmalbaf's work as well as providing useful background details about the director.

**SREBERNY-MOHAMMADI**, Annabelle and **MOHAMMADI**, Ali

**Small media, big revolution: communication, culture and the Iranian revolution.**

Minneapolis; London: Minnesota University Press, 1994. 225p. . gloss. bibliog. index.

This is a media/communications studies text that looks at how the use of small media such as audiocassette tapes and leaflets were used as a means to propel the Islamic revolution. Looks at State communications and ideology and those who were opposed to it in chapters four and five. A fascinating read for those interested in delving deeper into the use of media in an Islamic country.

**STONE**, Judy

**Eye on the world: conversations with international filmmakers.**

Beverly Hills, CA: Silman-James Press, 1997. 826p. .

Three Iranian directors are featured in this collection of interviews (pp.382-391). Amir Naderi, the "self-made film maker" talks about his childhood passion for film (p.383). Jafar Panahi discusses the development of *The WHITE BALLOON*, and Parviz Sayyad talks about making comedy films in pre-revolutionary Iran.

**TAPPER**, Richard (ed.)

**The new Iranian cinema: politics, representation and identity.**

London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2002. xv, 282p. . notes. tables. bibliog. filmog. indices.

An important compilation of essays written mainly by Iranian authors have been brought together here to portray, understand and present the problematic issue of "The New Iranian Cinema". Richard Tapper structures a body of knowledge of great importance taking the reader on a journey within the wider context of Iranian society, culture and politics. Iranian cinema's troubled history and its inherent ideological turbulence are given an important academic hearing. Highlighting cinema as a weapon or tool, the issues placed under scrutiny are gender representation, censorship, moral and ethical acceptability. The reader pivots within the troublesome framework of what is a densely historic and religious civilisation and the all encompassing and consuming Modernity. One can witness that through the power of cinema Iranian cultural identity has undergone a negotiation. This factor alone has been a great source for Iranian film makers and "for many in the diaspora a source of renewed pride in their culture and heritage". "The New Iranian Cinema" is not just a political text, but a celebration of art that deserves its present adulation and recognition.

**TASKER**, Yvonne (ed.)

**Fifty contemporary filmmakers.**

London; New York: Routledge, 2002. xxiii. 447p. filmogs. index.

Kiarostami is one of fifty selected filmmakers in this edited text. His work is discussed in relation to his place in the international film festival circuit, his cinematic style and his interest in social realist themes. Although a relatively short piece, it provides a good overview of his work.

**THOMPSON**, Kristin and **BORDWELL**, David

**Film history: an introduction.** [2<sup>nd</sup> ed.]

Boston; London: McGraw-Hill, 2003. xx, 788p. . [24]col.plates. bibliog. gloss. index.

A concise history of Iranian cinema from 1970 up to the present day (pp. 669-671). This relatively short piece is a useful overview of the cinema from Iran, taking in the most prolific directors, themes and political issues affecting the industry. Explains how a national cinema was established despite a tradition of heavy censorship and notes the importance of the Children and Young Adults' Unit in facilitating these developments.

**UNTERBURGER**, Amy L. (ed.)

**The St. James women filmmakers encyclopedia: women on the other side of the camera.**

Farmington Hills, MI: Visible Ink Press, 1999. vii-xxvi, 568p. . index.

Sadly this otherwise excellent encyclopedia contains information on just one Iranian director: Rakhshan Bani-Etemad. The entry takes the format of brief biographical and career details, a filmography and then a short text looking at the important aspects of the director's career.

## Journal Articles

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PLEASE NOTE: These articles are arranged alphabetically by periodical title first, and then chronologically starting with the most recent.

### ASIAN CINEMA

vol.13 no.1. Spring/Summer 2002, pp.3-16

#### **The impact of globalization on Iranian cinema**, by Ali Mohammadi

Informative article on the Iranian film industry, which analyses the government's control over its past, present, and future, and the challenges that new filmmakers face as they try to survive in a globalized market.

### ASIAN CINEMA

vol.12 no.1. Spring/Summer 2001, pp.14-28

#### **Cinema and Iran: culture and politics in the Islamic Republic**, by Ali Mohammadi and Eric Egan

On the development of cinema in Iran since the revolution, placing it within a social, political and cultural framework and linking it to the historical development of a 'third' cinema.

### CINEMAYA

no.28/29. Summer 1995, pp.64-65

#### **Deep roots, firm traditions**, by Mohammed Sa'ead Mohassessi

Part of a special issue on documentaries. This article looks at the development of documentary filmmaking in Iran, as well as organisations which have supported the cinema industry.

### CINEMAYA

no.22. Winter 1993, pp.51-68

#### **New Iranian cinema**

Special feature on new Iranian cinema, including filmographies, discussion on documentary production, short films, government film policies, and international awards.

pp.52-56 **Beyond the shadow of a doubt**, by Houshang Golmakani  
Discusses the reception of Iranian films abroad from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s by looking at the role of the Farabi Cinema Foundation, the recognition Iranian films received through their appearance in international festivals, and the contradictory reactions of foreign critics.

pp.56-58 **Documentary cinema: a voice fading into the past**, by Masud Mehrabi  
A brief look at the history of documentary filmmaking in Iran.

pp.58-60 **The poster as individual idiom**, by Reza Abedini  
A few words on the work of graphic designers in Iran and the importance of the film poster as a medium.

pp.60-61 **The short film: staying afloat**, by Masud Mehrabi  
Critical article on short film production in Iran.

pp.62-63 **In the eyes of a foreign addict**, by Yves Thoraval  
An appreciation of Iranian film.

pp.64-65 **Government policies**, by Mohammad-Mehdi Dadgoo  
An overview of the differing government policies with regard to the cinema in Iran. Some general statistics are also included.

pp.66-68 **Directory**  
Bio-filmographies of Iranian filmmakers.

## **CINEMAYA**

no.9. Autumn 1990, pp.4-8

### **The aesthetics and politics of Iranian cinema in exile**, by Hamid Naficy

A look at the themes and topics covered by, and the expectations placed on "ethnic" films. The author lists films made by Iranian filmmakers in exile in the 1980's but discusses primarily those which concern themselves with Iranian themes: SUITORS, The MISSION, The GUNS AND THE FURY, CAT IN THE CAGE, CHECKPOINT, The NUCLEAR BABY, VEILED THREAT, FACE OF THE ENEMY, The GUESTS OF HOTEL ASTORIA, and LEGAL ALIENS.

## **CINEMAYA**

no.4. Summer 1989, pp.22-29

### **New times, new perceptions**, by Houshang Golmakani

In depth article on censorship in Iran from the 1930's to date, noting the difficulties Iranian filmmakers have faced over the decades and how they have attempted to overcome them. The three main areas which have traditionally come under the strictest regulations are categorised as: sex, politics, and ideology. The final page of the article, titled "Forbidden Themes", details the changes over time to the *Regulations for Cinema and Entertainment Institutions*.

## **CINEMAYA**

no.3. Spring 1989, pp.18-25

### **No trivia no masterpieces**, by Houshang Golmakani

Discussion on Iranian cinema since the 1979 revolution, looking at the main reasons for its decline in the years immediately following the revolution; the turning point in mid-1983; notable emerging filmmakers of that period and the themes they adopted.

## **FILM COMMENT**

vol.36 no.3. May/June 2000, pp.11-13

### **Tehran journal**, by Alissa Simon

Report on the 2000 Fajr Film Festival. Examines the festival's importance to local audiences and to foreign festival programmers, and takes a look at some of the films shown. The article also details the state of the Iranian film industry, in particular the exhibition sector.

## **FILM COMMENT**

vol.19 no.4. July/Aug 1983, pp.56-59

### **Exiles**, by John Motavalli

Article on the emergence of the New Wave Iranian cinema in the 1970's, the fate of filmmaking under the Khomeini regime, the activities of Iranian directors (Sohrab Shahid Saless, Parviz Sayyad, Parviz Kimiavi) and actors (Mary Apick, Houshang Touzie, Behruz Vosuqi) in exile.

## **FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.7 no.2/3. Autumn 1999, pp.90-94

### **For a fresh air: political films in Iranian cinema, past & today**, by Tahmasb Solhjo

Albeit badly translated this is a useful article highlighting the implications for Iranian filmmakers and their films when a political context is incorporated into the work. The author gives examples, post-1950, which illustrate how the films made are linked to and responds to the country's political history.

## **FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.7 no.1. Summer 1999, pp.48-61

Articles on genre in Iranian cinema.

pp.49-52 **Melodrama: the main genre in the Iranian cinema**, by Tahmasb Solhjo  
The author cites examples throughout Iranian cinema history of films which trace the rise of melodrama as a popular film genre in Iran.

pp.53-54 **Color of Red Rose: action genre in Iranian cinema**, by Nasser Saffarian  
Examples of the action genre in Iranian cinema.

pp.55-58 **Once upon a time...: literary adaptations in Iranian cinema**, by Naghmeh Samini  
Part one of a feature looking at the links between cinema and literature in Iran and some of the best examples of adaptation. Part two [**A new birth: part II: post revolution cinema**] can be found in FILM INTERNATIONAL, vol.7 no.2/3 Autumn 1999, pp.95-99.

pp.59-61 **The street cinema: the favorite sub-genre of avant-garde filmmakers**, by Javad Toosi  
Analysis of films which fall under the genre of "street cinema".

## **FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.6 no.2. Autumn 1998, pp.40-42

### **The Syracuse experience in Iran**, by Mohammad Saeed Mohassesi

On the period of Iranian documentary cinema history (1949 -1959) when a programme of filmmaking and training was carried out with the help of the Syracuse University which in turn played a significant role in the development of Iranian cinema.

**FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.6 no.1. 1998, p.14

**Sit-in and food strike by the producers of commercial films**

Reporting on the protest by eight directors and producers of commercial films whose films were given a C classification; a purely subjective classification awarded by the Deputy Minister for Cultural Affairs, and not classed important enough, therefore, to be included in the Fajr Festival or to enjoy the facilities and privileges awarded to Class A and B films.

**FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.6 no.1. 1998, pp.44-49

**Effective role-plays: a survey of acting in Iran**, by Mahdi Arjmand

Analysis of the development of acting in Iran looking at whether an Iranian acting style exists; the traditional perception of the actor's presence through the power of their voice; exceptional performances by Iranian actors and actresses; the use of non-professional actors in Iranian filmmaking; acting theory; and contemporary performances.

**FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.4 no.4. Summer 1997, pp.46-55

**The history of Iranian cinema: documentary films - long view**, by Massoud Mehrabi

Article along with a selected filmography (pp.50-55) of Iranian documentary films. Extracted from the book by the same author, "A guide to Iranian documentary films from the beginning to 1997".

**FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.4 no.3. Summer 1996, pp.48-54

**Iranian films/Iranian posters**, by Massoud Mehrabi

The history of film posters in Iran reflects the history of Iranian cinema and can therefore be divided into two distinct parts - the pre and post revolutionary periods.

**FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.3 no.4. Autumn 1995, pp.58-63

**The history of Iranian cinema: the gathering storm**, by Massoud Mehrabi

Final part of an article on the history of cinema in Iran, covering the late 1960's and fluctuations of the 1970's up to the Islamic Revolution in February 1979.

**FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.3 no.3. Summer 1995, pp.40-45

**The history of Iranian cinema: years of idleness**, by Massoud Mehrabi

Part three of an article on the history of Iranian cinema, covering the rebirth of the industry after a twelve year silence (1936-1948).

**FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.3 no.2. Spring 1995, pp.30-34

**The history of Iranian cinema: a century minus five**, by Massoud Mehrabi

Continued from the previous issue - part two of this article on the history of Iranian cinema looks at feature films, noting that the first Iranian sound film A LOR GIRL was produced in India in 1932.

**FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.3 no.1. Winter 1995, pp.16-22

**The history of Iranian cinema**, by Massoud Mehrabi

First in a series of articles on the history of Iranian cinema, from the turn of the century to the present day.

**FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.1 no.2. Spring 1993, pp.4-7

**The Asian dream - The concept of the family: its decline and revival in Iranian cinema**, by Omid Rowshanzamir

On the image of the Iranian family in films looking at examples from the 1960s and 1970s and the way they affirm an Asian identity with Western culture being a threat.

**FILM QUARTERLY**

vol.47 no.3. Spring 1994, pp.16-27

**Discovering form, inferring meaning: new cinemas and the film festival circuit**, by Bill Nichols

The author offers a view on how the international film festival circuit provides audiences with a means of discovering "new" cinemas and the cultures of countries they represent, as well as the additional reward of a filmmaker's presence. He also discusses the assumptions and expectations placed on these "new" cinemas using Iranian cinema as his prime example. Critics' commentary is juxtaposed to that of individual filmmakers to provide a glimpse of the disparity in readings from a film. The films discussed are listed in a filmography at the end of the article, and include synopses.

## **Journal Articles: Filmmakers**

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PLEASE NOTE: These articles are arranged alphabetically by periodical title first, and then chronologically starting with the most recent.

### **ASIAN CINEMA**

vol.11 no.2. Autumn/Winter 2000, pp.32-46

#### **Reflexivity in recent Iranian cinema: the case of Mohsen Makhmalbaf**, by Donato Totaro

The author analyses some of Makhmalbaf's most prestigious films to show the important role played by reflexivity in contemporary Iranian cinema. Torato establishes three modes of reflexivity gestures: inter-textual, anti-illusionist and self-referential. The PEDDLER (1986), The CYCLIST (1988), ONCE UPON A TIME, CINEMA (1992), GABBEH (1996) as well as CLOSE-UP (Kiarostami, 1990) and The MIRROR (Panahi, 1997) are viewed here in the light of both, the influence of neo-realism and the films' resort to Western inter-textuality.

### **BULLETIN OF THE NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE OF IRAN**

no.3. December 1990

#### pp.12-23 **Iranian women filmmakers**

Looking at the contribution of five women filmmakers to contemporary Iranian feature film production: Pouran Derakhshandeh, Rakhshan Bani'etamad, Tahmineh Ardakani, Tahmineh Milani and Feryal Behzad. The article provides synopsis of CONTACT (1986), LITTLE BIRD OF HAPPINESS (1988), PASSING THROUGH THE MIST, The LOST TIME, OFF THE LIMITS (1988), CANARY YELLOW, FOREIGN CURRENCY, GOLBAHAR (1987), CHILDREN OF DIVORCE, KAKOLI, which reveal their common preoccupation with the topic of human understanding.

#### pp.43-55 **Introduction to the Iranian filmmakers: Mohsen Makhmalbaf**

This article concentrates excessively on the thematic shifts that Makhmalbaf's career has been exhibiting from film to film, but little in his stylistic evolution. Yet, some formal aspects such as narrative strategy, religious symbolism and editing rhythms are briefly commented upon.

#### pp.25-40 **Introduction to the Iranian filmmakers: Abbas Kiarostami**

Provides valuable synopses of Kiarostami's early films for children, which he made to "establish rapport with the young viewers, to create a delicate feeling in them, and to remind the elders of the same feeling, or, in other words, to awaken this same feeling in them".

### **CELLULOID**

vol.21 no.3. 30 Jul 1999, p.8-10

#### **You see the movies, I see life**, by Abolfazl Jalali

Jalali discusses his style of filmmaking and describes his methods of working with non-professional actors without scripts. His desire to create real-life on screen is clarified when he informs the interviewer that he watches only a couple of other films per year because "You see the movies, I see life".

## **CELLULOID**

vol.21 no.1. 30 Jan 1999, pp.8-11

### **Life is nothing but..., by Gonul Donmez-Colin**

An interview with Kiarostami, that takes in some different aspects of *TASTE OF CHERRY*. He discusses the relationship of life to death in the film, as well as the process of choosing the actors. He also answers questions about the simplicity of style in his work, and his own appearance on screen at the end of the film.

## **CINEACTION**

no.54. January 2001, pp.46-51

### **The import/export business: the road to Abbas Kiarostami's *Taste of Cherry*, by Devin Orgeron**

Given that the road is a recurrent motive in Kiarostami's films, the author of this article wonders: "Where does Kiarostami's interest in the road comes from?" In his quest for an answer, Orgeron traces Kiarostami's cinematic influences and finds out that "roads, like films, record and contain human activity, human mobility".

## **CINÉASTE**

vol.27 no.1. Winter 2001, pp.40-41

### **Films by and about Mohsen Makhmalbaf, by Rahul Hamid**

Brief but clarifying article on *BOYCOTT* (1985), *MARRIAGE OF THE BLESSED* (1989), *The ACTOR* (1993) and two short films directed by Makhmalbaf between 1992 and 1996. Hamid highlights the most remarkable formal elements of the films and includes a comment about *STARDUST STRIKEN, MOHSEN MAKHMALBAF: A PORTRAIT* (Golmakani, 1996), which features interviews with the director as well as clips from his films.

## **CINÉASTE**

vol.25 no.4. October 2000, pp.8-15

### **How to read Kiarostami, by Godfrey Cheshire**

Cheshire plays devil's advocate in this excellent article by attempting to balance the hype surrounding Kiarostami. Looks at the arguments for and against the success of the director and points out that his accomplishments may lie with factors other than the quality of filmmaking itself. The suggestion is that any other talented Iranian director could have been in his place and gained the same successful reputation on the film festival circuit, given the reluctance of festivals like Cannes to embrace directors from the developing nations. Cheshire offers viewers a way into Kiarostami's work by suggesting they should consider the films not as separate but as an interrelated body of work. He goes on to argue that, in order to understand them, critics should discuss the films in the context of other Iranian directors, rather than drawing comparisons with Western filmmakers. A lengthy discussion of the difference between Western and Iranian understandings of symbolism is undertaken using *The WIND WILL CARRY US* as a point of reference.

## **CINÉASTE**

vol.21 no.3. July 1995, pp.31-33

### **Real life is more important than cinema**, by Pat Aufderheide

Interview with Kiarostami in which he discusses the process of finding inspiration for his work from everyday life. Also talks about the cinema industry in Iran, the types of films exhibited, and the function of the Farabi Film Foundation.

## **CINÉASTE**

vol.19 no.2/3. December 1992, pp.38-40

### **The camera of the art: an interview with Abbas Kiarostami**, by Miriam Rosen

Kiarostami talks about the significance of the title of CLOSE-UP as well as the function of a symbolic style of cinema. The use of symbolism and metaphor is strongly associated with Iranian cinema so it is interesting to hear Kiarostami's views against the conscious use of these devices by filmmakers.

## **CINEMAYA**

no.25/6. Autumn 1994/Winter 1995, pp.36-41

### **Daughters of the revolution**, by Noushabeh Amiri

A concise overview of women in Iran that explains how the Islamic revolution transformed cinema into an art form, and therefore an acceptable industry for women to work in. Provides brief career details of five female directors including Bani-Etemad.

## **CINEMAYA**

no.13. Autumn 1991, pp.18-20

### **Mirror images**, by Mohsen Makhmalbaf

Makhmalbaf provides an account of his background before gaining success in the film industry and explains how the concerns of his films have shifted from works about political issues to those with a more philosophical outlook. He comments that he does not understand why love is a sensitive topic in Iranian cinema given its long tradition in Persian literature.

## **CINEMAYA**

no.10. Winter 1990/91, pp.14-16

### **A gentle look at a harsh world**, by Puran Derakshandeh

"..the responsibility of art is to help man reach an understanding of himself and others, a spiritual fulfilment. That, I feel, is the goal of cinema. However, art does not deliberately impose a choice on the audience. That choice is theirs."

In this article Puran Derakshandeh describes her experiences as a woman filmmaker in Iran working both in television and the cinema, her choice of subject and its use as metaphor, and her view on Iranian cinema.

## **CINEMAYA**

no.9. Autumn 1990, pp.4-8

### **The aesthetics and politics of Iranian cinema in exile**, by Hamid Naficy

This article is based on films by exiled Iranians screened in Los Angeles. An outline for each film is provided and the writer argues that they portray claustrophobic situations that typify or represent a community under siege, either mentally or literally. A brief list of narrative features made by exiled Iranians is included.

## **CINEMAYA**

no.9. Autumn 1990, pp.10-16

### **Worlds apart: 5 Asian women directors in Berlin**, by Fumiko Matsuyama

Interviews with five Asian women directors in Berlin, in an issue focusing on exile. The Iranian filmmaker Mehrangis Montazami-Dubui talks about the reasons for featuring the Turkish community in Germany in her documentary films, as opposed to the Iranian community; the reaction of that community towards her films; and the difficulties she has experienced in getting her films televised.

## **CINEMAYA**

no.3. Spring 1989, pp.26-27

### **Iranian women directors**, by Houshang Golmakani

Brief article focusing on the work of Puran Derakhshandeh, Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, and Tahmineh Ardakani and their beginnings in filmmaking, but also looking at other women filmmakers in Iranian cinema.

## **FILMBANK (website)**

[http://www.fiba.dircon.co.uk/text/fiba\\_02\\_home.htm](http://www.fiba.dircon.co.uk/text/fiba_02_home.htm)

### **Caught between cultures: Behrouz Vossoughi searches for a homeland**, by Thomas Filmayer and Nosrat Zehri

([http://www.fiba.dircon.co.uk/text/fiba\\_02\\_behrouz1.htm](http://www.fiba.dircon.co.uk/text/fiba_02_behrouz1.htm))

Interview with the actor Behrouz Vossoughi who now lives in San Francisco.

## **FILM COMMENT**

vol.36 no.4. July/Aug 2000, pp.14-15

### **First look**, by Mohammad Atebbai

The author offers his view on why Jafar Panahi's *The CIRCLE* represents an important breakthrough for Iranian cinema, and reports on the difficulties the director has encountered in its making and exhibition.

**FILM COMMENT**

vol.36 no.4. July/Aug 2000, pp.20-26

**Movie of the moment**, by David Sterrit

This is a concise, straightforward interview that reveals the main concerns of the director. Kiarostami discusses the importance of the audience's interpretation of the film to the overall meaning of the work and likens it to the experience of reading a poem. He reveals how occasionally, when watching a film at the cinema he has left half way through it, because he felt that the ending had happened! Also talks about the controversy and censorship issues surrounding TASTE OF CHERRY.

**FILM COMMENT**

vol.33 no.4. Jul/Aug 1997, pp.62-70

**Makhmalbaf: the figure in the carpet**, by Godfrey Cheshire

Looks at how Mohsen Makhmalbaf has maintained his popularity within different sectors of Iranian society and notes that unlike many of his contemporaries he has never been accused of pandering to the needs of Western audiences. Goes on to trace his film career dividing it up into phases, as credited by Makhmalbaf, and looks at the issues and themes that have concerned him within each period. Provides a detailed analysis of GABBEH.

**FILM COMMENT**

vol 32 no.4 July/Aug 1996, p34-43

**Abbas Kiarostami: a cinema of questions**, by Godfrey Cheshire

Observes how some critics have suggested that Kiarostami makes films for foreign audiences rather than those at home and attempts to explain his success in the West. The author also recalls how a "passionate tribute" from Kurosawa solved the problem of hostility at home which had been a direct result of his success in the West. Suggests that his style, influenced by a combination of Italian neo-realism and the French new-wave may help us to understand the immense critical acclaim he has received from foreign audiences. Looks in detail at the relationship between documentary filmmaking and his feature films. Also contains an interview where he talks about his film technique, the function of close-up versus long shot, the slow pace of his films, and comments that the Revolution did not change the way in which he made films.

**FILM COMMENT**

vol.32 no.4. July/Aug 1996, p.44

**Method in movie madness: Salaam Cinema**, by Gavin Smith

Smith questions Mohsen Makhmalbaf's "sardonic, cryptic, and at times bullying manners" in the making of SALAAM CINEMA, in which non-professional actors attending a casting call are filmed when having their screen tests. Those auditions are in turn converted into the actual subject matter of the film.

## FILM INTERNATIONAL

vol.8 no.1. Summer 2000

Issue containing interviews with a number of Iranian filmmakers, some of which are detailed below.

pp.9-10 **The Makhmalbafs in long shot**, by Houshang Golmakani  
News update on the Makhmalbaf family's recent activities, with comments by Mohsen Makhmalbaf.

pp.17-20 **I know what love means**, by Jahanbakhsh Nouraei  
Samira Makhmalbaf talks about her film *The BLACKBOARDS* and how a visit to Kurdistan served as her inspiration to make the film.

pp.21-22 **I'm not conservative**, by Nazanin Farahani  
Rakhshan Bani-Etemad talks about her interest in the documentary film style, making *UNDER THE SKIN OF THE CITY*, and the reception of some of her films from the public.

pp.25-28 **Movement is symbol of life**, by Jahanbakhsh Nouraei  
Interview with Marzieh Meshkini in which she talks about *The DAY I BECAME A WOMAN* and in particular about the three stages of womanhood portrayed in the film.

pp.33-39 **Jafar Panahi: an independent filmmaker**, by Shadmehr Rastin  
Article on Jafar Panahi, looking especially at his style, his use of non-professional actors, his success with *The WHITE BALLOON*, and the portrayal of women's issues in *The CIRCLE*. The article is followed by a filmography which includes reviews of *The WHITE BALLOON*, *The MIRROR*, and *The CIRCLE* (pp.35-38); and a list of awards (national and international) received for his films (p.39).

## FILM INTERNATIONAL

vol.7 no.4. Spring 2000, pp.18-21

**Cinema of tomorrow**, by Samira Makhmalbaf

Lecture delivered by Samira Makhmalbaf at the Cannes International Film Festival, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> May 2000.

## FILM INTERNATIONAL

vol.7 no.2/3. Autumn 1999

pp.26-49 **The year 2000 and the feast of Iranian cinema: interviews with nine Iranian directors in Fajr**, by Alireza Motamedi  
Nine directors interviewed at the 18<sup>th</sup> Fajr International Film Festival give their views on the Iranian film industry and talk about their latest productions. The directors interviewed are: Bahman Farman Ara (pp.27-29); Seyyed Reza Mirkarimi (pp.30-31); Jafar Panahi (pp.32-34); Bahman Ghobadi (pp.35-37); Mohammad-Ali Najafi (pp.38-39); Mohammad-Ali Talebi (pp.40-42); Babak Payami (pp.43-44); Parviz Shahbazi (pp.45-47); and, Hassan Yektapanah (pp.48-49).

pp.100-103 **The twin sisters in Samira Makhmalbaf's "The Apple": two years later**, by Omid Najvan  
Mohsen Makhmalbaf talks about the making of *The APPLE*, and updates its audience with news of the sisters depicted in the film.

### **FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.6 no.3. Winter 1999, pp.64-65

**“Documentary films should be screened in a documentary-like atmosphere”**, by Pirooz Kalantari

Rakhshan Bani-Etemad expresses her disappointment at the failure of documentary filmmakers, herself included, to publicly screen their films in Iran, and especially to achieve a screening near to the time of making, at which point their effect would be the strongest. Her own films, TO WHOM YOU SHOW THESE FILMS, LAST MEETING WITH IRAN DAFTARI, and UNDER THE SKIN OF TOWN, are used to illustrate some of the reasons behind the difficulties.

### **FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.6 no.2. Autumn 1998, pp.44-48

**“I give credit to my audience”**: Kiarostami’s panel discussion at the Wexner Center for the Arts

Extracts from the transcript of the dialogue between Dr Ali-Akbar Mahdi, Bill Horrigan, and Abbas Kiarostami at a public forum in March 1998 following a screening of TASTE OF CHERRY. Kiarostami affords us excellent insight into the making of the film, its ending, and the restrictions which affect his filmmaking.

### **FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.5 no.2. August 1997

pp.12-13 **“The controversy surrounding Makhmalbaf’s four films screened at the Jerusalem film festival”**

Interesting article on how a film festival can almost cause an international incident.

pp.42-47 **Honest to God, he is not a copy-cat: an interview with Jafar Panahi**, by Ahmad Talebinejad

Jafar Panahi talks about his films The MIRROR and The WHITE BALLOON; winning the Camera d’Or for the latter; and about Abbas Kiarostami.

pp.48-53 **As restless as her characters: an interview with Tahmineh Milani**

Extracts from a frank interview with Tahmineh Milani in which she discloses the background behind her films, the restrictions she has faced due to her choice of subject, and her views on women’s social condition in Iran. A short career profile can also be found on pages 29-31 of this issue.

### **FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.4 no.1/2. Win/Spring 1996, pp.4-60

**Ink on paper: an anthology of writings for films by Iranian filmmakers on the occasion of cinema’s centennial**

Eighteen Iranian filmmakers narrate stories, plots and parts of screenplays not yet translated onto the screen - on the occasion of the centenary of cinema. Includes filmographies for the filmmakers.

## **FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.3 no.1. Winter 1995

pp.32-35 **Slick fictions**, by Bardia Shakiba

Career profile of the filmmaker Abolfazl Jalili, offering synopses and a brief examination of his films MILAD, The SPRING, La GALE (SCABIES), DORNA, DANCE OF DUST, DET MEANS GIRL, and A TRUE STORY.

pp.46-50 **Yesterday's lies: a debate with Abbas Kiarostami**

Interview with Abbas Kiarostami in which he discusses his films, and in particular issues related to his use of sound, choice of music, compositional shots, and surrealism.

## **FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.2 no.3. Summer 1994, p.4-13

**Lioness's share: Iranian women make films**, by Reza Tahami

The author provides a historical overview of women's involvement in cinema in Iran, from audience to active participant. The table which gives numerical statistics of women's presence in filmmaking is a little confusing. The second half of the article (pp.6-13) gives brief biofilmographies for several women filmmakers.

## **FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.2 no.2. Spring 1994, pp.4-11

**Eastern mysticism versus Western discipline: a dialog on violence and tenderness, love and death, cinema and poetry between Werner Herzog and Mohsen Makhmalbaf**

At the 12<sup>th</sup> Fajr Film Festival in Tehran in February 1994, Werner Herzog and Iranian filmmaker Mohsen Makhmalbaf discuss the differences in the cultures of their respective countries and how this is reflected in their cinemas.

## **FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.1 no.3. Summer 1993, pp.36-46

**In search of the lost horizon**, by Hassan S. Zahedi

Bio-filmographic article on Mohsen Makhmalbaf (pp.36-39); a short screenplay, The VIRTUE OF BISHMILLAH, which he wrote in memory of his late wife (pp.40-44); plus an article by the director himself on his perception of reality (pp.44-46).

## **FILM INTERNATIONAL**

vol.1. no.2. Spring 1993, pp.54-60

**My concern is the truth**, by Omid Rohani

Interview with Abbas Kiarostami about his career and filmmaking techniques.

## **FILM WEST**

no.32. May 1998, pp.24-26

**Abbas Kiarostami: the mirror of possible film worlds**, by Fergus Daly

Argues that although Kiarostami's films may seem very simple on the surface, they are in fact, "every bit as complex as the most ostentatiously post-modern film" and looks at the influence

of neorealism, even drawing comparisons with Hitchcock. Contains some useful information on his methods of working with non-professional actors.

**MAKHMALBAF FILM HOUSE (website)**

<http://www.makhmalbaf.com>

Official website of the Makhmalbaf family (Mohsen, Marziyeh Meshkini, Samira, Maysam, and Hana) which offers bio-filmographies; synopses, reviews and credits for each individual film; photo galleries; and news updates.

**SCOPE (online journal)**

[www.nottingham.ac.uk/film](http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/film)

**The wind will carry us**, by Andrew Grossman

(<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/film/journal/filmrev/the-wind-will-carry-us.htm>)

Critical review of Abbas Kiarostami's film.

**SENSES OF CINEMA (online journal)**

Archive of issues are available from the home site, [www.sensesofcinema.com](http://www.sensesofcinema.com).

Describing itself as an "online journal devoted to the serious and eclectic discussion of cinema"

**SENSES OF CINEMA (online journal)**

Great directors section.

**Great directors: a critical database: Abbas Kiarostami**, by Mehrnaz Saeed-Vafa

(<http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/directors/02/kiarostami.html>)

Feature on Abbas Kiarostami in the Great Directors section, featuring bio-filmographical information, bibliographic references, links to other articles within this journal, and further web links.

**SENSES OF CINEMA (online journal)**

no.22. Sep/Oct 2002

Special women's issue.

**The House that Mohsen built: the films of Samira Makhmalbaf and Marzieh Meshkini**, by Adrian Danks

(<http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/02/22/makhmalbaf.html>)

On the films of Samira Makhmalbaf and Marzieh Meshkini, just as detailed in the title!

**SENSES OF CINEMA (online journal)**

no.17. Nov/Dec 2001

**Abbas Kiarostami: a dialogue between the authors (Chicago, September 3, 2001)**, by Mehrnaz Saeed-Vafa and Jonathan Rosenbaum

([http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/17/kiarostami\\_authors.html](http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/01/17/kiarostami_authors.html))

There are three features on Kiarostami in this issue. This particular feature is a dialogue between the two authors on Kiarostami which is reproduced from their forthcoming book "Abbas Kiarostami" to be published by the University of Illinois Press in early 2003.

## **SIGHT AND SOUND**

vol.12 no.1 January 2002, pp.32-34

### **Persian blues**, by Hamid Dabashi

Contemporary Iranian films such as *FELLOW CITIZENS* (Kiarostami, 1983), *The CYCLIST* (Makhmalbaf, 1988), *The WHITE BALLOON* (Panahi, 1995), *The APPLE* (Makhmalbaf, 1997), and *The CIRCLE* (Panahi, 2000) are analysed in terms of the influence that the regained vitality of the city of Tehran has had on filmmakers. Details about recent political events help to locate the films within the social context in which they have been created.

## **SIGHT AND SOUND**

vol.11 no.1. January 2001, pp.26-28

### **Gimme shelter**, by Laura Mulvey

Mulvey begins this article comparing Samira Makhmalbaf's *The APPLE* (1997) and her second film *BLACKBOARDS* (2001), which tells the story of Kurdish refugees escaping from misery across the Iran-Iraq frontier. The film theorist highlights the director's aesthetic choices by analysing the mise-en-scène, the camera work and the film's symbolism.

## **SIGHT AND SOUND**

vol.9 no1. January 1999

pp.18-20 **Quietly ruling the roost**, by Sheila Johnston

In this interview Samira Makhmalbaf comments on different aspects of her debut *The APPLE* (1997). She refers to the film's significant combination of elements from the documentary and the fictional; the difficulties she had in persuading the little girls' parents to participate in the film; and the lack of a conventional script.

p.20 **Rashshan Bani-Etemad talks to Hadani Ditmars about bending the rules in MAY LADY**, by Hadani Ditmars

Bani-Etemad's fourth film portrays the life of a divorced documentary filmmaker trying to raise his teenage son alone in Teheran. In this short interview, the director talks about the film's mixture of conventional fictional narrative, fake documentary footage and interviews with prominent Iranian women.

## **SIGHT AND SOUND**

vol.8 no.6. June 1998, pp.24-27

### **Kiarostami's uncertainty principle**, by Laura Mulvey

Mulvey examines *A TASTE OF CHERRY* in terms of a theory of spectatorship and the aesthetics of curiosity. Thus, the article highlights formal elements of the film that specifically contribute to generate audience expectations: camera work, narrative strategy and mise-en-scène. Mulvey draws on the film's similarities with the avant-garde rather than with art cinema, and locates Kiarostami's work within the context of post-Revolutionary Iran.

## **SIGHT AND SOUND**

vol.6 no.12. December 1996, pp.10-13

### **From the top to the hill**, by Hadani Ditmars

"You can say that Iranian cinema is caught between poetry and censorship. The beauty and poetry of our cinema is one side - censorship is the dark side of this". These are Mohsen

Makhmalbaf's words, who in this interview talks about GABBEH and how, paradoxically, the film got the Iranian authorities' approval for the script, but was later banned from screening. GABBEH is also analysed in terms of its subversive potential derived from the use of both alternative narrative techniques and gender representations.

### **VERTIGO**

no.5. Aut/Winter 1995, pp.38-39

#### **Why and for whom do we film today?**

This article contains responses from four directors, commenting on their ideas of cinema in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Abbas Kiarostami predicts that the relationship between the filmmaker and the spectator will become more important. He believes that there will be a move away from the notion that the director is master so that the spectator's imagination and intelligence are utilised during the viewing process.

## Press Articles

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PLEASE NOTE: These articles are arranged by filmmaker, oldest first, and then chronologically starting with the earliest references. All the references listed here can be found on the personality fiche at the bfi National Library. Please request this from staff at the Reading Room Counter. Some of these references should also be available via the web or in main reference libraries.

### Dariush Mehrjui [b. 1939 - ]

#### VILLAGE VOICE

25 May 1999, p.132

#### Internal affairs: Dariush Mehrjui's domestic dramas, by Steve Erickson

Brief analysis of Mehrjui's career, from his early neorealistic *The COW* (1970) and *The CYCLE* (1974) to more recent work around the multiple contradictions of Iranian women's role in society: *BANOO* (1992), *SARA* (1993), *PARI* (1995) and *LEILA* (1997).

#### VILLAGE VOICE

17 November 1998, p.35

#### Man of Iran, by Leslie Camhi

Third member of the 'great triumvirate' that includes Kiarostami and Makhmalbaf, Mehrjui has been making films for over three decades, troubling the censors of both pre-and post-revolutionary Iran. The article comments on *The PEAR TREE* (1998), Mehrjui's most autobiographical film so far.

### Abbas Kiarostami [b. 22/6/1940 - ]

#### DAILY TELEGRAPH

21 September 2000

#### The best director in the world?, by S.F. Said

Clear article about Kiarostami's working method, themes and aesthetics. All peppered with categorial and illuminating comments by the director himself: 'Our films are very simple. They are not about technology; they're about people'.

#### INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

17 September 2000, p.2

#### 'You want to send a message? Go to the post office', by Chris Darke

This is an enjoyable interview, where Kiarostami, recalling Francois Truffaut's straightforward statement ('If you want to send a message...'), explains why his films do not bear a clear, easily identifiable political agenda. His comments on *The WIND WILL CARRY US* (1999) and contemporary cinema in general are, as usual, deep and revealing.

**THE GUARDIAN**  
**SECTION 2**

15 September 2000, pp.6-7

**One of your scenes is missing**, by Peter Lennon

"My aim is to create a cinema to see how much we can do without actually showing it" says Iran's leading filmmaker in this well written interview where one of Kiarostami's main concerns - how to boost the audience involvement in the act of watching a film - is cleverly analysed using some key sequences from his films.

**FINANCIAL TIMES**

28 June 1999, p.20

**Talking about revolution, in pictures**, by Nigel Andrews

In this short interview, Abbas Kiarostami comments on the two elements that most determine his narrative style: storytelling and censorship.

**VILLAGE VOICE**

24 March 1998, p.110

**On the road: Abbas Kiarostami circles a taboo subject**, by Kent Jones

The social consequence of suicide is Kiarostami's lasting concern or universal theme in his 1997 Cannes prize winner TASTE OF CHERRY (1996). In this brief interview the Iranian director plainly explains his approach: 'By killing himself, that one person reminds everyone else of their responsibility to live wisely'.

**THE INDEPENDENT**

21 December 1997, p.14

**Playing me, playing you**, by Chris Darke

Darke summarises CLOSE-UP as "a parable of those moments when the life of the imagination becomes more certain, more tangible, than the uncertainty of the material life that one inhabits". The article includes a brief piece of writing by Nanni Moretti, who in THE FIRST DAY OF THE PREMIERE OF CLOSE-UP pays homage to both Kiarostami and the people that released the film theatrically.

**THE GUARDIAN**

19 December 1997, pp.10-11

**An Iranian's revolution**, by Simon Hattenstone

Art-house genius Kiarostami talks here about the amazing adventures and misadventures in the making of CLOSE-UP (1990). The film, half way between documentary and fiction, tells the real story of an unemployed man who was arrested in Tehran for passing himself off as the other major Iranian filmmaker Mohsen Makmalbaf.

## **VILLAGE VOICE**

27 May 1997, pp.13-14

**After the Revolution: how Iran's Islamic fundamentalist regime created a movie Mecca,**  
by Alissa Simon

This article looks at Iranian film history and industry, whose dynamism in the last decade has produced, in spite of (or because of) strong censorship, a considerable number of world-class films and filmmakers. Among them Kiarostami, whose neorealistic style has been of huge influence on a new generation of Iranian directors, is considered as its ambassador. Simon also refers to other filmmakers' careers such as those of Makhmalbaf, Beyzai, Naderi, Mehrjui, Milani and Derakhsbandeh.

## **VILLAGE VOICE**

30 April 1996, p.62

**Earthshaking cinema,** by Elliot Stein

Brief account of Kiarostami's first feature film *The TRAVELLER* (1974) as well as his best known trilogy *WHERE IS THE FRIEND'S HOUSE* (1987), *AND LIFE GOES ON* (1992) and *THROUGH THE OLIVE TREES* (1994). Stein includes some details about the director's biography such as his job as an illustrator of children's books and the ten years Kiarostami spent directing TV commercials.

<b>Mohsen Makhmalbaf [b. 1951 - ]</b>
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## **VILLAGE VOICE**

17 June 1997, p.70

**Sage of innocence,** by Leslie Camhi

Brief overview of Makhmalbaf's filmographic career from *BOYCOTT* (1985) to *The BREAD AND THE VASE* (1996). The author also includes references to *The PEDDLER* (1987), *The CYCLIST* (1989) and *SALAAM CINEMA* (1995).

<b>Rakhsan Bani-Etemad [b. 1954 - ]</b>
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## **GOZARESH FILM**

pp.2

**I am not a pessimist: Rakhsan Bani-Etemad talks about Nargess and other films,** by  
Noushabeh Amiri

Bani-Etemad's interest in cinema comes from the potential of films to portray social issues. Consequently, social determinism and political alienation appear as the main concerns of her work. In this interview the director comments on *OFF THE LIMITS*, *FOREIGN CURRENCY* and *NARGESS*.

**Jafar Panahi [b. 11/7/1960 - ]**

**VILLAGE VOICE**

22 May 2001, p.134

**Jafar Panahi's INS trial contra Iran**, by Lance Lattin

The same week *The CIRCLE* (2000) was released in New York, Panahi arrived at Kennedy Airport where immigration officers "chained his feet and locked him to a wooden bench" as his visa had expired. Unfortunately, as this article informs, Panahi has not been the only Iranian director receiving this humiliating treatment: Makhmalbaf, Merhji... In a country whose symbol is liberty, says Panahi, how can there be such oppression?

**DAILY TELEGRAPH**

29 December 1995, p.17

**The goldfish that's delighting the world**, by Hugo Davenport

Panahi's first film *The WHITE BALLOON* (1995) is a beautiful, fresh and revitalising account of childhood that depicts the adventures and misadventures of a little Iranian girl who, after begging her mother for money to buy a plump goldfish, gets into trouble by dropping the note in a drain. The article unveils curious details about both the process of making the film and Panahi's biography.

**TIME OUT**

20 December 1995/3 January 1996, p.89

**Child's play**, by Wally Hammond

The *WHITE BALLOON* is analysed here in terms of its visual style, with reflection of Kiarostami's "Bressonian methods" clearly identifiable in Panahi's attention to detail.

**Tahmineh Milani [b. 1960 - ]**

**THE GUARDIAN**

2 November 2001

**Thorn in their side**, by Steve Ross

<http://film.guardian.co.uk/censorship/news/0,11729,661797,00.html>

News of Tahmineh Milani's arrest by the Revolutionary Council on charges of "supporting factions waging war against God", and a petition signed by many notable Hollywood filmmakers.

**THE INDEPENDENT**

13 December 1997, p.12

**Film censor allows a chink of light behind the veil**, by Robert Fisk

Milani is one the few Iranian directors willing to speak out publically about her country's politics. This article gives an account of the restrictions imposed on Iranian filmmakers after the 1979 Islamic revolution as well as her personal views on the political context that the general elections of 1997 brought in.

## **ASIAN AGE**

15 November 1997, p.18

### **Iranian woman filmmaker fights to lift the veil**, by Scherezade Faramarzi

Milani's struggle to get approval for her movies reached the toughest moment with KAKADU in which she spent four years fighting the censor's endless objections. Milani discusses in this article some of the strictest rules affecting the female characters, such as the obligation to follow the Islamic dress-code even when asleep, or the impossibility of touching the opposite sex on screen.

<b>Samira Makhmalbaf [b. 1980 - ]</b>
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## **VILLAGE VOICE**

23 February 1999, p.120

### **The apple of her eyes**, by Abby McGanney Nolan

Confident Samira Makhmalbaf expresses her opinions on art, fame and ambition: "I don't want to be famous like my father. I would like to walk in the street the same as all the people. An artist needs to look at the people. Some times when all the people are looking at you, you can't look. So you can't see the world, you can't see life".

## **TIME OUT**

16-30 December 1998, p.14

### **Born again**, by Nick Bradshaw

Bradshaw locates The APPLE in the 'found-story approach' tradition of Iranian cinema, relating Samira Makhmalbaf's fascinating film to Kiarostami's CLOSE-UP, or Mohsen Makhmalbaf's A MOMENT OF INNOCENCE.

## **THE OBSERVER**

13 December 1998, p.7

### **Lights, camera, action, birth certificate...**, by Charlotte O'Sullivan

This is a daring interview in which Samira Makhmalbaf is provocatively asked how she managed to get, for the film The APPLE, the blind mother's permission to use footage of her swearing at the girls all the time: "She didn't let me", says Samira, "I didn't ask her permission...She couldn't see the camera". O'Sullivan's questions seem to irritate the young director ...Yet her answers are, indirectly, an insight into the distinction between reality and fiction in the making of docudramas.

## **THE GUARDIAN**

11 December 1998, pp. 2-3, 24

### **Meet Samira: she's a director from Iran, the new world capital of film, she's 18 ½**, by Simon Hattenstone

Samira Makhmalbaf talks to Hattenstone about her involvement in the process of making films, her views on cinema and her debut feature The APPLE. Playing with reality and fiction, this docudrama follows the process of rehabilitation to the outside world of two 12-year-old Iranian sisters who, since birth, have been locked up at home by their father.

**THE INDEPENDENT  
REVIEW**

8 August 2000, p.10

**The fundamental things apply**, by Tom Lubbock

Lubbock takes a structural approach at Neshat's video work, including her piece SOLILOQUY, and highlights the means by which binary oppositions (Islam and feminism, East and West, men and women) are formally treated.

**INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY  
CULTURE**

6 August 2000, p.5

**Veils of meaning unravelled in black and white**, by Charles Darwent

Hitchcock's influence on Neshat's work is explored here by focusing on her use of camera angles, lighting and narrative techniques. Yet, "Hollywood-comes-to-Tehran" as Darwent puts it, is problematic, resulting in a certain confusion between cinema and art video.

**FINANCIAL TIMES**

1 August 2000, p.16

**Lifting the veil on Iranian society**, by Lynn MacRitchie

Neshat's superb first solo video installation at the Serpentine Gallery included her trilogy FERVOR, TURBULENT (1998) and RAPTURE (1999). Common to all three, the subject matter deals with the relationship between men and women in contemporary Iran. MacRitchie also analyses in this article Neshat's formal style (use of expressionist sound and exotic mise-en-scène).

**THE GUARDIAN  
SECTION 2**

1 August 2000, pp.12-13

**Cry from the heart**, by Adrian Searle

The critic maintains that Neshat's work contains 'certain ambivalence' regarding the position of women in Iranian society. Thus, Searle in this article explores the strengths and weaknesses of the director's complex and moving video installations.

**THE TIMES  
SECTION 2**

1 August 2000, pp.16-17

**Dream journeys across the great divide**, by Richard Cork

Focusing on the subject matter Cork gives a painstaking description of Neshat's trilogy: FERVOR, RAPTURE and TURBULENT. Neshat's concerns are explained here in terms of the artist's complex reaction to the troubled gender divide in her native Iran.

**VILLAGE VOICE**

27 March 2001, p.134

**Children of the revolution**, by Michael Atkinson

Paradoxically, fundamentalistic strictures on cinema have made possible the peculiar eloquence Iranian cinema is famous for. In this article Atkinson briefly comments about current debates among Iranian filmmakers on censorship and freedom.

## **Audiovisual Materials**

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PLEASE NOTE: The *bfi National Film and Television Archive* may hold other Iranian titles in its collection. Please contact them direct to check holdings or to arrange a screening.

### **Abbas Kiarostami**

CLOSE-UP (1990) BFI. VHS.

TASTE OF CHERRY (1997) ARTIFICIAL EYE. VHS.

THROUGH THE OLIVE TREES (1994) ARTIFICIAL EYE. VHS.

Audio tape of GUARDIAN INTERVIEW at the NFT. 22.6.99. Available at *bfi National Library*

### **Majid Majidi**

The COLOUR OF PARADISE (1999) OPTIMUM. VHS.

### **Mohsen Makhmalbaf**

GABBEH (1996) ICA. VHS.

A MOMENT OF INNOCENCE (1995) ICA. VHS.

### **Samira Makhmalbaf**

The APPLE (1997) ARTIFICIAL EYE. VHS.

### **Marziyeh Meshkini**

The DAY I BECAME A WOMAN (2000) ARTIFICIAL EYE. VHS/DVD.

### **Amir Naderi**

The RUNNER (1984) CINEMA CLUB. VHS/DVD.

### **Jafar Panahi**

The CIRCLE (2000) ARTIFICIAL EYE. VHS/DVD.

The WHITE BALLOON (1996) UNIVERSAL PICTURES. VHS.

### **Mohammed-Ali Talebi**

BAG OF RICE (1996) BFI. VHS.