

Studium Generale
(the General Studies Department of Leiden University)
presents in co-operation with
the Department of Persian Studies and Omid Tofighian:

Iranian *Six Film Nights* *and an* *International Symposium*

Cinema

With additional funding from
NWO, LUCIS and KNAW

Studium Generale



Universiteit Leiden

In the past few decades, Iran's film industry has established itself as one of the strongest internationally. Iranian films regularly win international acclaim and awards. Iranian cinema has also begun to establish itself as a subject in academia, instigating scholarly inquiries into its history, nature, messages, and forms.

After the Islamic Revolution (1978-1979), the production of films decreased dramatically, primarily due to anti-cinema sentiments in Iran. Clerics and religious classes censored television and cinema because they believed that it advocated 'corrupt' western norms and values. Cinema was seen as a visible icon of the West, as anti-Islamic in nature and as associated with immorality and the Shah's regime. Clerics considered visiting a cinema a sin. An abhorrent example of this detestation for cinema was Cinema Rex in Abadan, which was burned down along with several hundred visitors during the Islamic Revolution. Cinema Rex was not the only theatre that was burned during the Revolution: 180 of the 256 cinemas were destroyed.

Inroads for intellectual inquiry abound. How did Iranian cinema arrive in its current situation? How do filmmakers go about constructing their representations of life, politics, time, space, and gender? What are the poetic, cultural, and political characteristics of successful movies? Most importantly, what are the connections between the artistic forms and expressions and the social, cultural, and political contexts in which these movies are produced and consumed? These are just some of the questions that will accompany us throughout this series of films and the closing symposium.

We will address the Iran-Iraq War and the concept of martyrdom and probe into issues of gender, such as women's veiling and their participation in society. Also, we will explore how filmmakers rely on children and teenagers to voice their criticism of social and political issues and to avoid censure. We will see how Iranian cinema deals with the serious problems of drug addiction and prostitution in Iran. Finally, we will explore how Iranian identity has changed and been cast in new forms over the course of the last decades.

Monday, 7th of September 2009

The Cow *Gav*

Director: Dariush Mehrjui

Iran 1969

Persian with English subtitles

Masht Hassan owns the only cow in a remote village and treats it like his own child. When the animal dies during his absence, the villagers hide the corpse and tell Masht Hassan that the cow has run away. In a state of desperation, Masht Hassan identifies more and more with the beloved animal and starts treating himself to a diet of hay...

Monday, 14th of September 2009

The Lizard *Marmoulak*

Director: Kamal Tabrizi

Iran 2004

Persian with English subtitles

Reza is a thief who escapes jail by posing as a mullah. When he has to stay in disguise longer than expected, he accidentally becomes the revered leader of a small-town mosque who draws the masses with sermons featuring sexual innuendo and references to Tarantino's Pulp Fiction.

Monday, 21st of September 2009

The Day I Became a Woman *Ruzi ke zan shodam*

Director: Marziyeh Meshkini

Iran 2000

Persian with English subtitles

This is the story of three women in Iran at three different stages of life. A young girl is told on her ninth birthday that she can no longer play with the boys of the neighbourhood. A young woman enters a bicycle race against her husband's wishes. And an old woman who has come into some money chooses to use her financial freedom in a way that makes one wonder just how free she really is.

Feminine breeze. Arts and Freedom in Iran

(director Anje Beyen) will be shown as supporting film.

Monday, 28th of September 2009

The Cycle *Dayere-ye mina*

Director: Dariush Mehrjui

Iran 1978

Persian with English subtitles

A young man named Ali becomes increasingly corrupted by the shady businesses that operate within the Tehran hospital to which he has taken his sick father. While the father waits endlessly for treatment, Ali rises to the top of the black market, selling everything from leftover food from the hospital kitchen to tainted blood.

Monday, 5th of October 2009

Mirror *Ayeneh*

Director: Jafar Panahi

Iran 1997

Persian with English subtitles

Mirror is a film blurring the boundary between documentary and fiction. When a little girl's mother fails to pick her up from school in Tehran, the girl tries to find her way home on her own. The set is plunged into chaos when, abruptly, the actress playing the role of the girl decides that she – like the character she was playing – needs to return home immediately. As the filmmakers and actors struggle to navigate the city streets of modern Tehran the viewer is treated to an inside view of Iran's capital.

Monday, 12th of October 2009

Baran *Baran*

Director: Majid Majidi

Iran 2001

Persian with English subtitles

The illegal Afghan worker Najaf breaks his foot in an accident and is replaced by his fragile son Rahmat. When co-worker Lateef finds out that Rahmat is really a girl called Baran, an irresistible love story unfolds against the backdrop of Afghan exile in Iran.

Time and location of all film screenings:

7.30 pm

Room 011

Lipsius Building (1175)

Cleveringplaats 1

Leiden

Monday, 26th

and Tuesday 27th of October 2009

From Pariah to the Pedestal:

The Burgeoning of Iranian Cinema

A symposium with lectures by international experts.

Authorities on film and documentary, Persian culture and art meet to discuss developments in Iranian cinema over the past thirty years.

Time and location of symposium:

9.30 am to 5.30 pm (both days)

Room 002

Matthias de Vrieshof 2

Leiden

More information on the symposium will be available at:

www.studiumgenerale.leidenuniv.nl and at: www.persianstudies.nl from September onwards.

You can also contact Tilman Grünewald at: t.a.grunewald@ics.leidenuniv.nl and Asghar Seyed-Gohrab at: a.a.seyed-gohrab@hum.leidenuniv.nl with further inquiries regarding the symposium.

Entrance to all parts of this programme is free!
You are welcome without prior registration.

All films are in Persian with English subtitles.

English introductions to the films will
be provided by Asghar Seyed-Gohrab
(7th of September through 5th of October)
and Omid Tofighian (12th of October).

Organisation:

Studium Generale Leiden University

P.O. Box 9500

2300 RA Leiden

t.a.grunewald@ics.leidenuniv.nl

071 527 7283/7295/7296

www.studiumgenerale.leidenuniv.nl

(see previous page for link to English website)



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Dariush Mehrjui



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