

Iranian Films @ Tiburon International Film Festival

By Saeed Shafa

The Tiburon International Film Festival will present a selection of latest films made by or about the Iranians from around the world. The festival will be held March 13-21, 2008 in Tiburon, California. The tickets are on SALE now. To order your tickets, please check: www.TiburonFilmFestival.com or call the ticket line: (415) 789-8854.



Sound Barrier. Director: Amir Naderi (In Person) Cast: Charlie Wilson, Frank Glacken Deaf and mute eleven-year-old Jesse (Charlie Wilson) travels from Manhattan with a letter and a key to a Queens storage unit. He is searching for a tape cassette recording of his deceased mother, a former radio talk show host, that he hopes will offer further clues to his past and possibly even his hearing loss. But when he does find the tape he must then find somebody to speak it so that he can read their lips and finally hear the message. The legendary Amir Naderi (The Runner), who helped focus attention on Iranian cinema in the mid-80s, tells this minimal story in only two scenes, plus a short prelude and epilogue. The film, his sixteenth, is the first part of his "sound" trilogy exploring the use of sound as character.



Colors of Memory Director: Amir Shahab Razavian (In Person) Cast: Shahbaz Noshir, Ezatollah Entezami, Saber Abar Filled with denial and distrust, heart surgeon Dr. Bahman Parsa (Shahbaz Noshir) returns to his home country Iran after 30 years in Germany. There he meets two men who will change his attitude towards life: Qanati (Ezatollah Entezami), a 70-year old waterfinder and Bahrami, a young and reckless taxi driver. Together with them he travels to his hometown Bam, which was destroyed after a heavy earthquake a few years ago. Step by step this journey brings Parsa closer to his own roots and a past that has been completely erased. But in the experiences with his new friends also lies the chance for a new beginning.

Exile Family Movie (Iran/Austria) Director: Arash Riahi A family's story, typically crazy and



exceptional at the same time. A film about home and exile, parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters and all the other relatives, close and distant, in an extended Persian family. Some of them emigrated to Europe or America, though the majority has stayed in Iran. Regardless of all the danger involved, they secretly meet after 20 years at a place which won't raise suspicion among the Iranian authorities: Mecca. They come from America, Sweden, Austria and Iran to laugh, argue, cook and celebrate. This is accompanied by an excessive amount of hugging and kissing, and also a clash between Muslim and Western cultures.

Unfinished Stories Director: Pourya Azarbyjani Cast: Setareh Pesyani, Hengameh Ghaziani,



Saiideh Amir Saii The three episode-film tells the story of 3 young women, Setareh, Hengameh and Saiideh who share the same situation: they have nowhere to go and have to spend the night on the street. Setareh, is a young girl who has running away from home because her parents are against her marriage with the boy she loves. She is waiting for him to join her in the bus stop so that they can runaway together... Hengameh, is a pregnant woman who has left her house after a big quarrel with her husband who is unwilling to have a baby. She is looking for someone to abort her child... Saiideh whose husband is in prison must runaway from the hospital at night with her new born baby for she has no money to pay the bill but, These three women have three different stories who show different stages and situations of women. One young girl who wants to be married, another married woman who wants to have a baby and the last one who had a baby but tries to keep it. They are all abandoned by their families and are obliged to solve their problem on their own.

Faces on the Wall (Iran/France) Directors: Bijan Anquetil & Paul Costes (In Person) All three Dastvaré children were killed during the Iran-Iraq War. The Islamic Republic of Iran had a

mural painted in their memory. A fresco which, among hundreds of others in Tehran, represents these young soldiers who sacrificed their lives, in the name of God, for their country, dying as "martyrs of Islam". Today, in their neighborhood, the legend of the "Dastvaré martyrs" still circulates, a complex mix of popular religion, State propaganda and personal memories. The Faces on the Wall questions the disillusion that surrounds an ideology based on the martyr's figure, the founding myth of the Iranian new regime.

Iran Behind Walls (Iran/Turkey) Director: Hakan Tokyay (In Person) Cast: Fatima Mutemedarya, Poursan Derakhshandeh, Münire Ravanipur, Azem Talegani In Iran women are the



key to the transformation of the country. Women played an influential role in the downfall of the Shah in 1979 and the rise to power of Muhammad Hatemi. After Hatemi became president, discussions in the media started an ongoing debate on dress code, the chador, punishments for criminals such as diyet and rajm, polygamy, the muta (short-term) marriage, women's abilities to become judges, women's right to divorce, their visibility in the cinema, television and the media. Women claimed that the culture of patriarchy rather than religion kept women under pressure. Where do Iranian women stand vis a vis religious authorities and pro-freedom intellectuals? **A Season of Madness** (Iran/US) Director: Katja Esson (In Person) Cast: Marjan Neshat, Maz Jobrani (In Person), Madhur Jaffrey Based on the short story by Hanan Al Shaykh, SEASON



OF MADNESS is a fairy tale gone wrong about a young woman desperately attempting to escape the golden cage of her arranged marriage – by feigning insanity...but her plan backfires...

Kill the Messenger (France) Director: Mathieu Verboud & Jean Robert Viallet Cast: Sibel Edmonds A few days after the 9/11 attacks, Sibel Edmonds, 32, an American woman of Turkish/Iranian origin, is recruited by the FBI as a language specialist with top-security clearance. Her job is to translate counter-intelligence wiretaps related to ongoing criminal investigations. After two months, Edmonds reports serious wrongdo-



ings in the conduct of investigations and a case of espionage within her unit. Her claims aren't taken seriously. In March 2002, she is fired from the FBI, physically escorted from the building, and warned "Don't talk!" But Edmonds brings a lawsuit. A few months later, then-Attorney General John Ashcroft invokes the all-encompassing blanket of the State Secrets Privilege in the case. Not only Sibel is forbidden from publicly exposing classified information, she can't even go to court with any of her allegations. A tense real-life thriller, Kill the Messenger explores the abuses behind the State Secrets Privilege, and shows the persecution of other US national security whistle blowers. The filmmakers spent nearly two years researching and interviewing experts, including Daniel Ellsberg, Coleen Rowley (FBI), Russell Tice (NSA), Bogdan Dzakovic (DHS), John Vincent (FBI), Steve Elson (FAA), John M. Cole (FBI). Like the National Security Whistle blowers Coalition, the film highlights the danger that government suppression brings to light The Shade (Iran/Canada) Director: Mohammad Gorjestani (In Person) Cast: Aryan Atri, Camyar Chai, Joleh Chaichian In a village in central Iran on a hot summer day a young boy sells balloons in hopes of buying ice cream. His struggle is paralleled with a city man, whose car blows a tire, causing him to search for a way back home. The two stories, though independent to themselves, are united by an umbrella, which shades each character's journey.

Security (US/Iran) Director: Matthew Linnell (In Person) Cast: Chris Messina, Lanna Joffrey, Lori Tan Chinn, Manee Kassai, Rozie Bacchi Dark humor veers into tragedy in Security, a drama about an American Immigration agent at Newark International Airport whose private fears spill into his professional life when he confronts an Iranian mother and her son. Starring Chris Messina (Six Feet Under). Based on the



one act play by Israel Horovitz.

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US speeds issue...



According to the new policy, immigrants applying for permanent residence—commonly known as green cards—will still be required to complete two other security checks before their applications can be approved: an FBI criminal fingerprint check and a search in a federal criminal and anti-terrorist database known as Interagency Border Inspection Services. The FBI will eventually complete name checks for all green card applicants; immigrants seeking to become citizens will still have to wait until the name check is completed to be officially granted citizenship. Christopher S. Bentley, a spokesman for Citizenship and Immigration Services, said, "Only after we received assurances that this would not compromise national security or the integrity of the immigration system did we go forward. This will allow us to give benefits to people who deserve them in a much quicker time frame." The new policy is intended to speed up application

processing for tens of thousands of immigrants with no criminal records who are living in the United States and have been waiting for years for green cards because their names turned up in FBI records. Often an immigrant's name turns up in FBI files because the files include the names of people mentioned in criminal investigations—even if they played no role in a crime or were a witness, not an accused. Bo Cooper, an immigration lawyer and former general counsel for the immigration service, said the old policy "was just stalling adjustment of status for hundreds of thousands of people who pose no security threat, without any demonstrable improvement to national security." Bentley said the agency processes about 1.5 million applications requiring name checks each year and 99 percent are cleared by the FBI in less than six months; the remaining 1 percent of applications—about 140,000—have been held up for more than six months because of the name checks. Critics claim the agency is cutting important security measures and posing a risk to national security. Rosemary Jenks, director of government relations for NumbersUSA—an organization that calls for reduced immigration—said, "They are knowingly granting a benefit to a person who may be a national security threat or a serious criminal." But Representative Zoe Lofgren, Democrat of California and chairwoman of the House Immigration Subcommittee, said the number of applicants who had ever been rejected exclusively as a result of an FBI name check was "microscopic."

Pain in the pocketbook

The price of gas keeps rising. Food costs are through the roof. Consumers are getting squeezed.

CNN: As anyone who's been to the gas station or supermarket lately knows, the prices of fuel and food are on the rise. And you haven't seen anything yet, some experts say. Gasoline now costs an average of \$3.15 a gallon, seven cents shy of the record set last May, according to AAA. But with crude oil prices closing at an all-time high of \$100.88 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange couple of weeks ago, it's only a matter of time before drivers see it hit another record at the pump. Within a few weeks, gas could cost \$3.50 a gallon and, by spring, the price could hit \$4 in some locations, said Peter Beutel, an oil analyst at the consultancy Cameron Hanover. The high cost of gas is helping fuel a surge in food prices. Higher transportation expenses, along with growing demand for agricultural exports from the United States and increasing need for corn-based ethanol for gas supplies, has sent commodity costs soaring. Last month, the federal government reported that the Consumer Price Index rose a greater-than-expected 0.4% in January and 4.3% over the past 12 months, mainly because of higher food and energy costs. Food and beverages jumped 4.8% for the year and transportation soared 9.4%. Abushel of yellow corn, for instance, cost an average of \$5.12 in January, up 41% from a year earlier, according to U.S. Department of Agri-



culture statistics. Not only does this contribute to the higher prices of food made from corn, but it increases farmers' cost of feeding cattle and pigs. Though prices have been climbing for the last few years, consumers didn't feel it as much in the past because their home values were soaring. "But now, with housing prices having gone down, credit becoming tighter and prices of necessities like food and energy going up sharply, it's created quite a squeeze on consumers' disposable income," said Maria Fiorini Ramirez, head of economic consulting firm MFR Inc. Economists fear a continued slowdown in consumer spending will further weaken the economy. The Federal Reserve's rate cuts won't lessen this inflation, said food price expert John Norris. As long as the dollar remains weak, the global demand for American export will remain high. Later in the year, however, oil prices could ease since supplies from both OPEC and non-OPEC sources are expected to increase.