



#MFAHatHome • Virtual Cinema

Festival of Films from Iran

January 22–February 7

The 28th annual **Festival of Films from Iran** features award-winning Iranian films, from social documentaries to dark comedies, January 22–February 7, 2021. This online festival is co-curated by Tom Vick of Freer Sackler Galleries, Marian Luntz and Tracy Stephenson from the MFAH, and independent film programmer Carter Long. All films are made in Iran unless otherwise indicated and presented with English subtitles.

Visit mfah.org/films/virtualcinema for tickets, details, and help with streaming. Your ticket purchase supports the film department.

Generous funding is provided by the ILEX Foundation.

FESTIVAL OF FILMS FROM IRAN

THERE IS NO EVIL (*SHEYTAN VOJUD NADARAD*)

Directed by Mohammad Rasoulof
(Germany/Iran/Czech Republic, 2020, 151 min.)

The winner of the Golden Bear at the 2020 Berlin International Film Festival, this profoundly humanist film from Mohammad Rasoulof takes on the issue of capital punishment through four powerful vignettes dramatizing the social, psychological, and emotional toll of taking a human life. Rasoulof wrote the story after seeing his own interrogator at the bank one day.



AFRICAN VIOLET (*BANAFSHEH AFRIGHAEI*)

Directed by Mona Zandi Haqiqi
(2019, 93 min.)

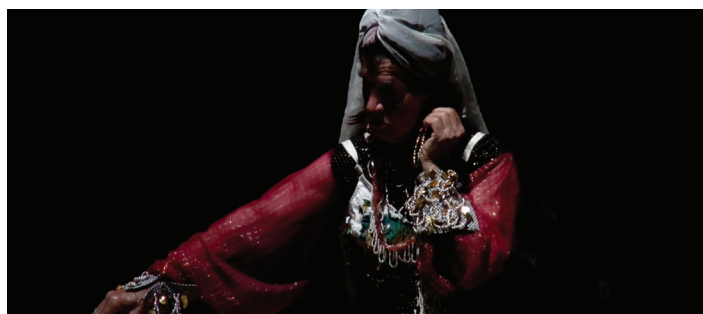
This tender and moving film begins with middle-aged Shokoo (Fatimah Motamed-Aria) relocating her elderly ex-husband from a nursing facility into her own home so she and her current husband can care for him. When neighborhood gossip begins to irk Shokoo's current spouse, their marriage is strained, but ultimately each compassionate character discovers how love can transform over time.



GRACEFULLY (*KHORAMAM*)

Directed by Arash Eshaghi
(2019, 62 min.)

Since 1979, dancing publicly has been forbidden in Iran, and has been considered particularly sinful for women and trans people. *Gracefully* offers a tender and moving portrait of an unnamed 80-year-old man known for dancing at local ceremonies and celebrations dressed as a woman, but who now works as a farmer. Throughout the film, the protagonist finds discreet reasons for which to dance: for expression of his art, in pursuit of happiness, and as an act of resistance. Winner of the John Steven Kellelt Freedom of Vision Award at Houston's 2020 QFest.



CARELESS CRIME (*JENAYAT-E BI DEGHAT*)

Directed by Shahram Mokri
(2020, 134 min.)
Discussion with filmmaker February 4, 6:00 p.m.

Shahram Mokri, whose single-take feature *Fish & Cat* wowed audiences six years ago, returns with a brilliantly constructed reflection on cinema and its importance in Iranian culture. Four men in contemporary Iran plot to replicate a horrific arson attack on a movie theater in 1978 that killed 478 people. Mokri weaves narratives together until fact, fiction, past, and present merge. Winner of the Silver Hugo Jury Prize at the 2020 Chicago International Film Festival and the award for best screenplay at the 2020 Venice Film Festival.



BANDAR BAND

Directed by Manijeh Hekmat
(Germany/Iran, 2020, 75 min.)

Three young musicians—a husband, his very pregnant wife, and their friend—travel in a van through the flood-ravaged country, trying to make it to a battle-of-the-bands contest in Tehran. Manijeh Hekmat's latest film was shot during the devastating 2019 floods in the Khuzestan Province. Along the surreal, watery landscape, their daylong journey includes joyful moments of impromptu music-making, stops to help with relief efforts, and numerous U-turns that coalesce into a metaphor for their generation's thwarted dreams.

**THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE (KOSHTARGAH)**

Directed by Abbas Amini
(2020, 102 min.)

At the start of this tense thriller, Amir is summoned by his father to hide the bodies of three men who died under suspicious circumstances. Attempting to find the truth, Amir investigates the illegal activities in which those around him are involved. He sinks deeper and deeper into the high-stakes, illegal currency-exchange ring in which his boss is enmeshed. Meanwhile, his shared secret with his father threatens to blow up their family in this edge-of-your-seat tale of crime and its consequences.

**DANCE WITH ME (JAHAN, BA MAN BERAGHS)**

Directed by Soroush Sehat
(2019, 94 min.)

Depressed, middle-aged Jahangir invites his friends to his villa in the country for a weekend-long birthday celebration, where he reveals surprising news. Deftly mixing poignant moments with dark comedy, *Dance with Me* is reminiscent of *The Big Chill* in the way jealousies, rivalries, and good-humored fellowship play out among this group of old friends amidst idyllic natural surroundings. Winner of the best director and best actor awards at the 2019 Fajr International Film Festival in Tehran, there are even touches of surrealism, such as a classical string ensemble that occasionally appears to Jahangir alone, and a cheeky reenactment of Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*.



Special thanks for programming assistance to Tom Vick (Freer Sackler Galleries, the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art), Carter Long, and Kristen Hoskins (Department of Space and Time).

ABOUT VIRTUAL CINEMA

While the Brown Auditorium Theater is currently closed for films and lectures, the Museum is offering a virtual cinema series. Films are available online through ticketed streaming platforms. Please visit mfah.org/virtualcinema and follow the instructions to find the page for the movie you'd like to watch. Ticket prices vary, and a portion of your ticket supports the film department. We look forward to watching films together in the Brown Auditorium Theater soon!

The MFAH film department is supported by Tenaris; the Vaughn Foundation; Nina and Michael Zilkha; Franci Neely; The Consulate General of the Republic of Korea; Carrin Patman and Jim Derrick; Lynn S. Wyatt; ILEX Foundation; L'Alliance Française de Houston; and The Foundation for Independent Media Arts.

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