KURDS AND KURDISH ISSUES ON FILM

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Features

Ashk-i sarma
“The story of a soldier expert at defusing mines and a Kurdish shepherdess. Set in the chilly border zone of Kurdistan, the soldier keeps defusing mines while the girl keeps helping guerrillas lay them.”
Media Collection PN1997.A77 2006

Journey of Hope = Reise der Hoffnung = Umud’a yolculuk
[HBO Films, 1991] (111 min) Turkish, German, and Italian with English subtitles. Turkey
"Based on the true story of one man’s dreams for a better life. Haydar and his wife Meryem are poor Kurdish villagers living with their seven children in Turkey, dreaming of a ‘paradise’ in Switzerland. Haydar decides to sell his possessions and emigrate illegally to build a better life, and taking his wife and one child, they set off on a journey across the mountains. Haydar and his family are at the mercy of their smugglers, and as the journey progresses, they find that every step they take is more expensive than promised. By the time they reach the Swiss borders, they have lost most of their possessions and all of their money. With nothing but their dream to guide them, they face the most difficult part of their journey, crossing by foot the brutally cold and dangerous Swiss mountain slopes"

Journey to the sun
[Facets Video, 2004] (105 min) Kurdish & Turkish with English subtitles. Turkey. Dir Yesim Ustaoglu
“Mehmet is a cheerful young man from Western Turkey, and Berzan is a Kurdish rebel in the underground, who become fast friends while living in Istanbul. Mehmet is unjustly arrested, but the experience makes him aware of his country’s political realities. When the situation heats up, and Berzan is involved, Mehmet embarks on a sweeping, spiritual journey across Turkey to his friend’s Kurdish homeland.”
Media Collection PN1997 .J688 2004

Niwemang = Half Moon
“Mamo is an iconic Kurdish musician in the twilight of his life and failing health, must lead a dozen of his sons to Iraq for a concert to celebrate the fall of Saddam Hussein and the end of his repression of Kurdish music. Their plan is to drive across the border
between Iranian and Iraqi Kurdistan, but the road will be long and winding and the local wise man has predicted calamity. The men will encounter the most sublime visions alongside the most horrendous brutality. First they must pick up Hesho, Mamo’s exiled singer and muse. Her voice represents a divine, transformative power, and Mamo is left in a state of grace no one could ever have anticipated.”

Takhtah-i siyah = Blackboards
“A group of male teachers cross the mountainous paths of the remote Iranian Kurdistan region. They wander from village to village in search of students, carrying large blackboards on their backs, sometimes using them as shelter, camouflage and as shields from gunfire.”

Vodka Lemon
“A small Armenian village faces tough times after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Hamo is a widower with a small military pension and three useless sons. While making one of his daily visits to his wife’s grave he meets Nina and the two begin to date.”

Yol
[GALA, 2000] (105 min) Turkish with English subtitles. Turkey. Dir. Yilmaz Guney
“This drama by Turkey’s leading filmmaker, Yilmaz Güney, was made while he was imprisoned in a Turkish labor camp. It focuses on five inmates in one of Turkey’s "open" prisons who receive one-week passes to visit their families in the eastern region of the country. Their experiences reflect the larger climate of Turkey - one large prison oppressed by political tyranny, superstition and bigotry. Yusuf is arrested at the outset because he has lost his papers; Mevlut is kept from his fiancée by patriarchal traditions; Mehmet flees with his wife from his vengeful family; Omer, a Kurd, returns to his village only to find it destroyed by the Turkish army; and Seyit is required by custom to kill his wife for being unfaithful to him during his incarceration.”

Zamani bara-yi masti-i asbha = A time for drunken horses
[S.n., 200?] (80 min) Persian with English subtitles. Iran. Dir. Bahman Qubadi
“Just off the Iraqi border in the cold and stark mountains of Iranian Kurdistan, a boy is forced into the smuggling trade in order to raise money to get medical treatment for his older brother.”

**Documentaries**

**Good Kurds, Bad Kurds: No Friends but the Mountains**
"This program presents the history of the Kurdish people and their modern struggle for independence. It also presents a paradox in U.S. foreign policy which portrays the Kurds as "good" when they are Saddam Hussein’s victims and "bad" when they are waging an armed insurrection against Turkey, an American ally."
Media Collection DS59.K86 G663 2000

**Iraq in Fragments**
[Typecast Releasing, 2007] (94 min)
Documentary in three parts: "A fatherless 11-year-old is apprenticed to the domineering owner of a Baghdad garage; Sadr followers in two Shiite cities rally for regional elections while enforcing Islamic law at the point of a gun; a family of Kurdish farmers welcomes the U.S. presence, which has allowed them a measure of freedom previously denied. American director James Longley spent more than two years filming in Iraq to create this ... documentary of the war-torn country as seen through the eyes of Sunnis, Shiites and Kurds"
Media Collection DS79.76.I7258 2007

**Mystic Iran: the unseen world**
[Questar, 2008] (85 min) Dir. Aryana Farshad
"Aryana Farshad’s ... spiritual odyssey deep into the heart of in her native Iran after a 25-year absence. At the risk of confiscation of film equipment and the threat of drug traffickers, Farshad embarked on a ... cinematic tour to capture on film rites and rituals hidden for centuries. From the women’s chamber at the Great Mosque to the temple-caves in the land of Zarathustra, to the sacred dance of the Dervishes in Kurdistan, she gained access to religious ceremonies and locations never before seen by the outside world"
Media Collection BL2270.M97 2008

**Vendetta song**
[ONF/NFB, 2005] (62 min) Dir. Eylem Kaftan
“A young Canadian filmmaker travels deep into eastern Turkey, the heartland of her Kurdish ancestors, to investigate the unsolved murder of her aunt.”
Media Collection DR435.K87 V46 2005