FILMS ABOUT IRAN & AFGHANISTAN IN THE UCSB LIBRARY COLLECTION

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Afghan star
[Zeitgeist Films, 2010] (89 min)
“After thirty years of war and five years of Taliban rule, pop culture is beginning to return to Afghanistan. Since 2005, millions have been tuning in to Tolo TV’s wildly popular American idol-style series, Afghan star. Like its Western predecessors, contestants compete for a cash prize and record deal. More surprisingly, the contest is open to everyone across the country despite gender, ethnicity, or age. And when viewers vote for their favorites via cell phone, it is, for many, their first encounter with the democratic process. The film follows the stories of four young finalists--two men and two women--as they hazard everything to become the nation’s favorite performer. By observing the Afghani people’s relationship to their pop culture, this film provides a window into the country’s tenous, ongoing struggle for modernity.”
Media Collection ML3502.A3 A34 2010

Afghan Women
[DER Films, 1974] (17 min)
"The words of the women of Aq Kupruk, Afghanistan and the rhythm of their lives in seclusion suggest both satisfying and limiting aspects of the women’s role in an Afghan rural community."
Media Collection HQ1735.6.A655 2002

The Art of the Book: Persian miniatures from the Shahnamah = Miniyatur’ha-yi Shahnamah
[Films for the Humanities, 2008, c1980] (30 min)
"This program traces the development of Shahnameh painting over three centuries and under the patronage of three distinct Persian dynasties. Parallels between miniature painting and other art forms of the time are examined. This fascinating look at a unique art form was produced with the assistance of the Fogg Art Museum."
Media Collection ND3399.F5 A78 1980

Baha’i World Congress Commemorative Video
[International Baha’i Visual Services, 1992] (40 min)
“The first of the 3 films focuses on the visit of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá to New York in 1912 and the meaning of his statements while there. The second centers on the accomplishments of the Bahá’í Community after the death of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá in 1921. The third is a brief survey of the Bahá’í Faith and its possibilities for peace, well-being and unity for all people in the world.”
Media Collection BP370.B345 1992
Daughters of Afghanistan
[Video Services Corp.; Choices, 2004] (58 min.) Dir. Robin Benger
"Journalist Sally Armstrong investigates the reality for women in Modern Afghanistan and the tremendous obstacles that must still be overcome. When the hated Taliban were ousted, Afghan women felt their living nightmare was over. Now, they hoped to harness the future for their daughters in the former pariah state - despite being left isolated and alone by the international community."
Media Collection HQ1735.6.D38 2004

Devil on the Roof
[Filmakers Library, 1998] (52 min)
“Provides a look at the Turkmans of Iran, who live in small villages north of Teheran, near the Afghanistan border. It examines how Turkman society has changed over several years, capturing varied aspects of their traditional culture as well as the radical changes that occur when electricity and television are introduced.”
Media Collection GN625.I7 D48 2001

Divorce Iranian Style
"Hilarious, tragic, stirring, this fly-on-the-wall look at several weeks in an Iranian divorce court provides a unique window into the intimate circumstances of Iranian women’s lives."
Media Collection HQ922.56.D59 2003

Divorce Sharia Style
[Filmakers Library, 2008] (49 min)
"From a terraced house in East London the Sharia Council presides over hundreds of cases every year, mainly marital disputes. The Sharia Council is a parallel legal system that remains unknown to many people, although it has existed for years. This documentary takes us inside the workings of Sharia law in a Western society, especially as it affects women seeking divorce ... [The Council members’] rulings are not recognized by British law but for the Muslim community their judgments carry the word of God."--Container.
Media Collection On Order

Dress rehearsal
[Facets, 2007] (49 min) Persian with English subtitles
"Chronicles the performance of a ta’zieh, an ancient and uniquely Iranian passion play that celebrates the glory of martyrdom. Based on the life stories and fables of Islam’s prophet Mohammad, but influenced by Iranian folklore, the ta’zieh became the sole dramatic form in the world of Islam after the rise of the Shiite sect. The overall subject of any ta’zieh is the martyrdom [of] Imam Hussein, grandson of the prophet Muhammad, in the desert of Karbala. Among the Imam’s comrades, each of whom is the subject of a specific ta’zieh, the story of the Brave Hurr assumes a singular place. Originally the enemy of the Imam, Hurr does an about-face after he meets the holy
leader, and then Jones forces to fight with him. Generally performed on the streets or in open venues, the ta’zieh "is the only original dramatic art of the Islamic world," according to director Taghvai"- Media Collection PN2017.17 D74 2007

**Enemies of Happiness**
"In September 2005, Afghanistan held its first parliamentary elections in 35 years. Among the candidates for 249 assembly seats was Malalai Joya, a courageous, controversial 27-year-old woman who had ignited outrage among hardliners when she spoke out against corrupt warlords at the Grand Council of tribal elders in 2003. **Enemies of happiness** is a revelatory portrait of this extraordinary freedom fighter and the way she won the hearts of voters, as well as a snapshot of life and politics in war-torn Afghanistan" Media Collection HQ1735.6 .E54 2006

**Feminine Breeze: Arts and Freedom in Iran**
[Beyen.net Films, 2005] (37 min)
"[Focuses] on how Iranian women artists use their artistic medium for autonomy and self-expression in a society dominated by political Islam"--Container. Covers internationally recognized women in karate (Afsaneh Bagheri), theater (Pari Saberi), photography (Shadi Ghardirian), film (Tamineh Milani), poetry (Simin Behbahani), and media (Asieh Amini)."
Arts Library NX574 .Z8 F46 2005

**The Glass House**
[Fictionville, 2009] (93 min) Dir. Hamid Rahmanian
"Omid-e-Mehr is a private rehabilitation center and NGO, in Tehran, for girls aged 15 to 25 who have no where else to turn. It accomodates eighty-five young women who stay for eighteen months and are provided with psychological counseling and classes like computer skills and expository writing which are designed to give them the tools and confidence to stand on their own feet. ... We follow four of the girls’ lives through the dark alleys and traffic jammed highways of contemporary Tehran. Samira is a fourteen-year-old who still loves dolls but is forced into drug addiction by her dealer mother. Mitra has been abandoned by her family and has to learn to avoid her father’s abuse. Nazila, an angry and articulate girl, has a family that misunderstands and mistreats. She dreams of recording her rap song. Sussan is brain damaged from the frequent beatings at the hands of her sigheh (temporary husband) and/or of her brothers who raped and beat her when she was just a child. And of course there is [Omid-e-Mehr’s founder Marjaneh] Halati herself, whose confident and empathetic energy is in direct contrast to the fragile existence of the girls ... She represents a new kind of Iranian woman, one who is hard working and positive, who refuses to let her empathy turn into paralyzed pity" Media Collection HQ1735.2.Z9 T445 2009

**Googoosh: Iran's Daughter**
"Googoosh was Iran's most famous and beloved pop diva, until she was silenced following the 1979 Islamic revolution when female singers were labeled “temptresses” and forbidden to release records or perform publicly in the presence of men. Made during the time when Googoosh was forbidden to grant interviews or perform, the film artfully pieces together clips from Googoosh’s career on stage and screen, creating a portrait of a woman who is a cultural icon for a country trapped between tradition and modernization."

Images From The Qajar Dynasty
[Facets, 2005] (18 min) Persian with English subtitles.
The Qajar (aka Ghajar) family ruled Iran from 1785 - 1925. The film shows rare photos and early film shot during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century at the Shah's court, along with family portraits and fabulous tile mosaics.

Inside out
[First Run/Icarus, 2006] (39 min) Persian with English subtitles
"Documents the daily activities of three individual who are coming to terms with their transgender identities and the related emotional and physical transformations while living in the Islamic Republic of Iran."

The Iran Hostage Crisis: 444 days to freedom: what really happened in Iran: the inside story
[V.I.E.W. Video, 2006] (98 min)
"Through interviews with hostages and other involved, this video relives the trials of captivity and the euphoria of release of the staff of U.S. Embassy in Teheran during the 1979 Iran-American crisis."

Iran: une revolution cinematographique
[First Run/Icarus, 2007] (98 min)
“Traces the development of the Iranian film industry, which has always been closely intertwined with the country’s tumultuous political history, chronicling how Iranian films reflected contemporaneous society and often presaged social change. It shows how mainstream commercial cinema served as a propaganda tool for both the monarchy and the fundamentalist religious regime, recounts the sporadic efforts of some filmmakers to reveal grimmer social realities, and the struggles against censorship and traditional cinematic formulas by such pioneers as Bahram Beyzai and Sohrab Shahid Saless and pre- and post-Islamic revolutionary ‘new wave’ filmmakers.”

Jerry and me
In her intimate documentary "Jerry & Me," filmmaker Mehrnaz Saeedvafa examines the significant role that Hollywood movies played in her life, both as a young film lover growing up in pre-revolutionary Iran, and as an adult working as a filmmaker and educator in both Iran and the USA. Of particular focus in "Jerry & Me" is the intimate relationship young Mehrnaz develops with the image of Jerry Lewis, the iconic American film auteur who delighted audiences around the world with hilarious portrayals of outcasts and misfits in popular Hollywood comedies of the 1950s and ‘60s. As illustrated through a variety of Lewis’ film clips, the shifts in the comedian’s on-screen persona reflected the twists and turns of Saeedvafa’s own life, providing her much needed comfort and companionship during a time that was tumultuous and chaotic. Mehrnaz’s illusion of Lewis as an empathetic fellow outsider is ultimately shattered, however, by the stark reality of a real-life encounter with the star.

**The Jews of Iran**
[NIK Media, 2005] (52 min)
“Documentary on the Jewish community in Iran. Interviews with several Iranian Jews reveal the discrimination that the Jewish community has faced as well as the positive aspects of life in Iran.”
Media Collection DS135.I65 J48 2005

**Khanah siyah ast = The House is black**
[Facets, 2005] (22 min) Persian with English subtitles. Dir. Forough Farrokhzad
This film about the leprosy colony in Tabriz, Iran is a compassionate portrait of forgotten people. Straightforward yet sympathetic, the film affords dignity to its subjects, particularly through Farrokhzad’s striking poem read by the poet herself. The House Is Black has heavily influenced the modern Iranian cinema of such great filmmakers as Abbas Kiarostami and Mohsen Makhmalbaf, who called it "the best Iranian film." It provides, in the film’s own words, "a vision of pain no caring human being should ignore.”
Media Collection RA644.L3 K52 2005

**Mrs. President: Women and Political Leadership in Iran**
[Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 2002] (47 min) Dir. Shahla Haeri
"In the summer of 2001, 47 Iranian women neither affiliated with nor supported by any political party registered themselves as candidates for the presidential elections. Due to the Guardian Council’s interpretation of a clause in the constitution, none of the women were allowed to run. This documentary presents the thoughts and opinions of six female candidates who agreed to be interviewed, along with the commentary of two female Iranian journalists who cover political developments for magazines in their country."
Media Collection HQ1236.5.I7 M78 2002

**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

**Pilgrimage to Karbala**
[Films for the Humanities & Sciences, 2007] (87 min.)
"It is the summer of 2006, and a bus filled with Iranian men and women sets out on a perilous journey to the holy sites of Najaf and Karbala in war-torn Iraq. As the bus rolls through breathtaking desert landscapes, the five-day odyssey takes on spiritual as well as historical dimensions. Each traveler recalls past anxieties and dangers—having lived through Iran’s 1979 revolution and its war with Iraq—and each marvels at the chance to experience the longed-for Karbala pilgrimage, impossible during Saddam Hussein’s rule."
Media Collection BP192.7.I17 2007

**Political Conditions in Iran –Reza Pahlavi**
[C-Span Archives, 2001] (65 min)
"Reza Pahlavi, former crown prince of Iran, talks on the current political conditions in Iran and their effect on regional security issues, and U.S. foreign policy toward Iran. Followed by questions from the audience."  
Media Collection DS318.615.P34 2001

**Runaway**
[Women Make Movies, 2008?] (87 min) Dir. K. Longinotto & Z. Mir-Hosseini
"A powerful and heart-breaking documentary about a group of young runaway girls who are taken to a women's shelter in Tehran-Iran. The film focuses on the sufferings of young girls who struggle to free themselves from the tyrannical and abusive power of their families, mainly their fathers, brothers, and stepfathers -- a subject rarely touched upon by Iranian filmmakers."
Media Collection HV800.5 .R86 2001b

**Ruzgar-i Ma = Our Times**
[Facets Video, 2005] (75 min) Persian with English subtitles. Dir. Rakhshan Bani-Etemad
"Documenting events surrounding the 2001 Iranian presidential election, director Rakhshan Bani-Etemad works with two groups of women, one old and one young, to contrast divergent political attitudes across the generation gap. At one end of this spectrum is the director’s daughter and a group of her friends who form a committee to support the incumbent, President Khatami. On the other end is a group of forty-eight older women running for office on a reform party ticket, despite being thrown off the
ballot by an all-male government. The two stories are linked by the story of Arezoo Bayat and her daughter who are simply trying to scratch out a living amid the headier issue of the elections."

Media Collection HQ1236.5.I7 R89 2005

_The school blown away by the wind_

[Facets, 2005] (8 min) Persian with English subtitles

“The school for nomad children seen in Gabbeh is the subject of this heartwarming short that includes a humanist twist worthy of an O. Henry story."

Media Collection RA644.L3 K52 2005

_Shahrbanoo_

[Prometheus Cinema, 2008] (58 min) Dir. H. Rahmanian

"_Shahrbanoo_ is the story of an American woman's encounter and growing friendship with a traditional Muslim family living in one of the poorest neighborhoods in Tehran, Iran. When Melissa, a liberal American woman, travels to Tehran to visit her new husband's family there, she befriends their housekeeper, Shahrbanoo. Without her own family's knowledge, Shahrbanoo has been moonlighting as Melissa's mother-in-law's housekeeper for more than a quarter of a century."

Media Collection HQ1735.2.S574 2008

_Shirin Ebadi: a Simple Lawyer_

[First Run/Icarus Films, 2004] (48 min)

"This documentary profiles Iranian attorney Shirin Ebadi, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2003 for her efforts for democracy and human rights, in particular the struggle for the rights of women and children."

Media Collection KMH110 .I23 S29 2004

_Sir Alfred of Charles de Gaulle Airport_

[Arab Film Dist., 2008] (29 min) Dir. Hamid Rahmanian

“Sir Alfred of Charles de Gaulle Airport: A documentary regarding the case of Mehran Karemi Nasseri, an Iranian apparently caught helpless in an 18-year long immigration dilemma. Following a series of earlier attempts at emigration, Mehran, also known as Sir Alfred, lives inside Charles de Gaulle Airport from 1988 to 2006 after ending up in the airports’ “Zone d'attente”, the waiting area for travelers without papers. Filmed in 2001, while Sir Alfred’s situation was still nebulous but in the media spotlight, the initially-supportive filmmaker is soon faced with questions regarding the realities of Sir Alfred’s situation and begins to wonder if the story has been completely told.”

Media Collection HQ1735.2 .S547 2008

_Standard-bearers of Hussein_

[Universitet i Tromso, 2003] (35 min.) Dir. Ingrid Flarkerud

"The film introduces Iranian Shi’i women’s performances of commemoration rituals during Muharram and Safar. In parallel to men’s mourning ceremonies, women gather in gender-specific rituals in which they act as hosts, leaders, assistants, servants, lay participants, and financial supporters. The film narrative pursues the viewpoints of two
lay-women who host rituals in their home, and that of a female ritual leader. The rituals are connected to and oriented toward the metahistorical dimension of the battle at Karbala in 680 A.D. The rituals can be profoundly spiritual, while at the same time connecting to social issues of contemporary Iran.”

Stardust Stricken: Mohsen Makhmalbaf, a Portrait
[Facets, 2001] (70 min) Persian with English subtitles. Dir. Houshang Golmakani
"This video documentary is a perfect introduction to the works of controversial Iranian filmmaker Mohsen Makhmalbaf...as well as an insightful look at his life experiences for those already familiar with his films. In this portrait by the respected Iranian film critic Houshang Golmakani, Makhmalbaf speaks about his life, his work, and his beliefs about art, cinema, violence, kindness, God, religion and death."

Tanha dar Tihran = Alone in Tehran
"Behnaz Jafari is a young, aspiring actress in Tehran who wants to live a carefree and creative lifestyle. This lifestyle is not easy to obtain for a modern 24-year-old woman who lives alone in contemporary Iranian society. In this interesting documentary, the old is contrasted with the new as Behnaz considers the traditional advice she receives from well-meaning friends while still following her dream to lead a free life and become one of Iran's leading actresses."

Ten
[Zeitgeist Films, 2002] (94 min) Persian with English subtitles. Dir. Abbas Kiarostami
"A deceptively simple work—shot on digital video within the confines of a single vehicle—that brings the intricate nature of Iran’s sexual and social politics into sharp focus. Seen through the eyes of a beautiful, chador-clad divorcée, the film catches her impromptu conversations with various female passengers (and her imperious young son) as she navigates Tehran’s congested and vibrant streets over the course of several days. As Kiarostami’s “dashboard cam” eavesdrops on these extraordinary and moving stories of sex, divorce, love and religion, an entirely original and fascinating portrait of modern Iran emerges."

They Call Me Muslim
[Women Make Movies, 2006] (27 min)
“Two contrasting profiles of Muslim women who have made opposite decisions about wearing the … Hijab. One in France has chosen to wear the hijab in defiance of French Law. The other skirts the law in Iran, by wearing it as little as possible.”

Tihran anar nadarad = Tehran has no more pomegranates
Iranianmovies, 2009] (68 min) Persian with English subtitles. Iran. Dir. Massoud Bakhshi
"Blends satire with history to paint a portrait of the metropolis and its transformation into a meg[lo]polis of increasing urban mess, pollution, inadequate housing, class gaps, and the fatal destiny of its once delicious pomegranates. Aided by never before seen archival footage from the past 100 years and mock interviews with city officials, the film explains the complex life of Tehran’s inhabitants as they live side by side [with] the past, begging the question of whether anything has changed at all"
Media Collection DS325.T3 T54 2004

The Tree That Remembers
[Bullfrog Films, 2002] (50 min) Dir. Masoud Raouf
"In 1992 a young Iranian student hanged himself from a tree on the outskirts of a small Ontario town. He had escaped the Ayatollah’s regime but he could not escape his past. News of the stranger's death hit home with filmmaker Masoud Raouf. He too is part of the generation of Iranians who rose up against the Shah's despotic rule only to be cruelly persecuted by an equally murderous new regime. His film is his compassionate reflection on the betrayal of the 1979 Iranian revolution and the tenacity of the human spirit."
Media Collection DS318.81.T744 2002

Two Films by Reza Haeri
[Icarus Films, 2010] (62 min). Dir. Reza Haeri
All restrictions end: "An experimental documentary dealing with contemporary Iranian history, focusing on the evolution of clothes and fashion. ... uses collage, archival footage from Iranian cinema, imagery from various stylistic epochs in the history of Persian painting, graphics from the period of the Islamic Revolution, and works provided by various artists. Clothing remains the point of departure in stories about Iran, a land that has tottered for centuries between East and West, the present and the past, freedom and repression"--Container. Final fitting: "Follows Mr. Arabpour, the master tailor and craftsman, and the proprietor of the most famous tailor shop in Qom (Iran’s most important religious center). A spry octogenarian, for the last several decades he has been the official tailor to the most important religious leaders of the country, starting with the late Ayatollah Khomeini to the current Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, as well as for the former president, Mohammad Khatami ... showcases the changing cultural styles of Iran and its clerical elite through its portrait of one man and his time-honored craft"
Media Collection GT1420.T86 2010

Unveiled Views: Muslim Women Artists Speak out
[Women Make Movies, 2009] (52 min)
Media Collection HQ1170 .U58 2009

The Victor weeps: Afghanistan
[F.I. Sheikh, 2002] (32 min) Dir. Fazal Sheikh
“Photographer and journalist Fazal Sheikh traveled through Afghanistan documenting the ravages of the Soviet occupation, recording ruined villages, desolate landscapes, and damaged people. Survivors tell stories of murdered family members, of nearly
unimaginable terror and hardship, and of hope for a better future. Sheikh’s photographs and oral histories are a terrifying portrayal of the hell of war in Afghanistan.

*View from a grain of sand*


"Thirty years ago, urban Afghan women were making unprecedented strides socially and professionally. Now, they are virtually erased from the public face of their nation. Combining vérité footage, interviews and archival material, View from a grain of sand is a ... portrait of Afghan women’s history over the last 30 years--from the rule of King Zahir Shah in the 1960s to the current Hamid Karzai government. Told through the eyes of three Afghan women--a doctor, teacher, and women’s rights activist--this documentary tells the story of how war, international interference and the rise of religious fundamentalism have stripped Afghan women of rights and freedom. Together with rarely seen archival footage, their powerful stories provide illuminating context for Afghanistan’s current situation and the ongoing battle women face to gain even basic human rights"

Media Collection HQ1236.5.A3 V5 2006

*Who Gives Kisses Freely from Her Lips*

[New York: Third World Newsreel, 2009] (41 min)

“A film mixing documentary with fiction to tell the story of Salomé, a filmmaker who travels to Iran, determined to make a film on the practice of temporary marriage, known as "sigheh". A taboo subject in Iranian culture, the filmmaker records insightful interviews with couples who are or have been involved in temporary marriage arrangements. The film looks at the complexity of the Shia Islamic institution, specifically the cultural beliefs and contradictions it presents.”

Media Collection HQ666.4.W46 2009

*Zananah = The Ladies’*


"Directed by the acclaimed Iranian actress Mahnaz Afzali and filmed entirely inside a ladies washroom in a public park in Tehran, this absorbing documentary shatters Western preconceptions of Iranian women. Populated by addicts, prostitutes, runaway girls and others who simply enjoy the camaraderie and atmosphere, the ladies room becomes one of the few places where women feel comfortable enough to smoke cigarettes, discuss taboo subjects and remove their veils.”

Media Collection HQ1735.2. Z34 2003

*Zanha-yi misl-i ma = Women Like Us*


"Filmmaker Persheng Sadegh-Vaziri returns to Iran after 20 years as an expatriate to present this intimate and revealing portrait of five ordinary Iranian women: a nurse, a journalist, a rice farmer, a religious college graduate and a piano teacher. An important and timely look at contemporary Iran.”

Media Collection HQ1735.2.Z75 Z35 2003
Zinat: *yak ruz bi-khusus* = Zinat: one special day
[FirstRun/Icarus, 2000] (54 min)
“Documentary film about Zinat, the first woman from the island of Qeshm in the south of Iran to remove the traditional veil (borgheh) and became a health care worker, who is now running for political office in the first local council elections in 20 years. Live footage taken inside her house the day of the election.”
Media Collection HQ1236.5.17 Z56 2000

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