

2023 UCLA Celebration of Iranian Cinema explores stories of resilience

Free at the Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum, April 29–May 14

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LOS ANGELES (Mar. 29, 2023) – The UCLA Film & Television Archive continues its tradition of bringing the best cinema from Iran and the Iranian diaspora to Los Angeles. Mindful of the present moment, we celebrate individual films by emerging and established filmmakers, while acknowledging the resilience and courage of Iranian media makers, artists and activists, in general. Many of the [2023 UCLA Celebration of Iranian Cinema](#) selections give voice to the struggles of women and other marginalized communities in Iran against the systems that oppress them.

“The power of cinema to connect audiences and spark conversation about the urgent issues of the day is nowhere more evident than in the work of Iranian filmmakers, wherever they call home, and the selections for this year’s Celebration—occurring at time of profound protest and change in Iran—are no exception,” said Paul Malcolm, senior public programmer at the UCLA Film & Television Archive, a division of UCLA Library. “Along with our partners at Farhang Foundation, the Archive is honored to provide a platform for these films in Los Angeles.”

"During these most challenging times for Iran and Iranians around the world, celebrating and amplifying the voice of Iranians through the arts is perhaps more important than ever before," said Alireza Ardekani, executive director of Farhang Foundation. "Farhang Foundation is always honored to support the annual UCLA Celebration of Iranian Cinema, and we cherish our close and long partnership with the UCLA Film & Television Archive in presenting this incredible series every year."

All films originate from Iran and are in Persian with English subtitles, except where noted.

- Apr. 29, 7:30 p.m.

[The Voice of Dust and Ash](#) (U.S., 2022)

In her timely directorial debut, documentarian Mandana Biscotti weaves an intimate and powerful portrait of Iranian music icon Mohammad Reza Shajarian. From his childhood reciting the Quran at political rallies at the behest of his conservative father to his first performances under a pseudonym to escape his family’s disapproval, Shajarian developed a classical singing style that made him a star. When the regime—which otherwise banned music—sought to co-opt his fame, Shajarian resisted and became the voice of a generation.

Preceded by

[Inner Self](#) (*Nahan*, Iran, 2020) – Farhang Foundation Short Film Festival Finalist

A violinist is barred by authorities from entering the building where she is expected to perform because she lacks the required hijab. Forced to stay in the waiting room, she's inspired to deliver her own concert in protest.
16 min.

In person: Mandana Biscotti

- April 30, 7 p.m.

[The Carriage Driver](#) (*Doroshkechi*, Iran, 1971)

Director Nosrat Karimi's pre-revolutionary Iranian classic opens on a funeral and ends with a violent conflagration, yet remains deliriously funny every minute along the way. When a family patriarch dies, a carriage driver sees his chance to marry the woman he's loved since childhood. Karimi spins this set up into a wide-ranging satire that leaves no character unscathed. Digitally restored with new English subtitles, *The Carriage Driver* recently played at Il Cinema Ritrovato in Bologna, Italy, where programmer Ehsan Koshbahkt declared it not only Karimi's best film but "one of the finest comedies in the history of Iranian cinema."

- May 5, 7:30 p.m.

[Until Tomorrow](#) (Iran/France, 2022)

Writer-director Ali Asgari brings dramatic urgency to the precarious position of women in Iranian society with *Until Tomorrow*. Rising star Sadaf Asgari (*Yalda, a Night for Forgiveness*) plays Fereshteh, a young woman who has 24 hours to find someone to watch the infant she's kept a secret from her parents who are coming for a visit. With single-minded drive, she faces obstacle after obstacle in their pursuit to simply secure reliable childcare.

Preceded by

[Kooseh, A Man Who Can't Grow a Beard](#) (Iran, 2022) – Farhang Foundation Short Film Festival Finalist

Samim, a teenage Afghan refugee boy with a secret, works illegally in a banquet hall in Tehran. The head waiter in the hall discovers Samim's big secret and has his sights on him.
15 min.

- May 7, 7 p.m.

[Shorts Program Curated with Roya Rastegar](#)

The murder of Mahsa Amini in 2022 sparked ongoing protests for the human rights of women and all marginalized communities in Iran as the necessary precondition for fundamental change. This program of short films and conversation, curated with filmmaker, programmer and arts activist Roya Rastegar, will highlight recent works that speak to and about the central issues driving the protests with a focus on the role and responsibilities of all artists during such times of change.

In person: Roya Rastegar

- May 8, 7:30 p.m.

[The Last Snow](#) (*Barf-e Akhar*, Iran, 2022)

A wintry chill suffuses every frame of co-writer-director Amirhossein Asgari's second feature, a fact of life in the remote mountain region where a local veterinarian, Yousef (Amin Hayai), recently injured in a fire and abandoned by his wife, excises his quiet rage by hunting wolves at night. The wild creatures are being reintroduced to the region by a naturalist who becomes the focus of the community's superstition and possibly Yousef's last chance to heal.

Preceded by

[113](#) (Iran, 2019) – Farhang Foundation Short Film Festival Finalist

Exhausted by the demands of military life, a soldier finds a place to nap under the table in a strategy planning room. He awakes to find himself eavesdropping on a top secret meeting of high ranking officers discussing his disappearance.

8 min.

- May 12, 7:30 p.m.

[World War III](#) (*Jang-e Jahani Sevom*, Iran, 2022)

A day laborer devastated by personal tragedy, Shakib (Mohsen Tanabandeh) gets a second chance when he suddenly lands the lead role in a low-budget film. But opportunity brings sharks and Shakib proves ill-equipped to negotiate the forces scheming around him. Writer-director Houman Seyedi explores the dynamics of violence and power in this slow burn thriller loaded with provocations.

Preceded by

[White Winged Horse](#) (*Asbe sefide baldar*, Iran, 2020) – Farhang Foundation Short Film Festival Finalist

The figure of a white-winged horse has haunted Taha since childhood—an emblem of the sweetheart he left behind years ago when war tore apart their town. Now, Taha returns with big hopes that he can win her heart.

16 min.

- May 13, 7:30 p.m.

[Wind of Change](#) (*Solouk*, Iran, 2022)

One morning, beset housewife Sara (Narges Mohammadi) wakes to discover her husband has gone missing. Sometime in the night, he just up and left, leaving behind a mystery that falls almost entirely on Sara to solve. What comes quicker into view though is just how dependent she had become on him to survive. Writer-director Abbas Rafei deftly balances suspense with social commentary as Sara simultaneously searches for her husband while struggling to reclaim her and her daughter's independence.

Preceded by

[Nazri](#) (Iran, 2022) – Farhang Foundation Short Film Festival Finalist

After it was publicly revealed that Omid and his best friend Masoud were engaged in a same-sex relationship, Omid commits suicide. In the wake of tragedy, his grieving mother prepares a traditional Nazari meal offering with a secret ingredient, prepared especially for those who tormented her son.

13 min.

- May 14, 7 p.m.

[Leila's Brothers](#) (Iran, 2022)

Winner of the FIPRESCI Prize at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival where it premiered in competition, *Leila's Brothers* is a sweeping family drama that cuts to the heart of Iranian's patriarchal society. The incomparable Taraneh Alidoosti delivers a magnetic performance as a weary sister whose future depends on her feckless brothers and father. When she sets a plan in motion to break free, old family faultlines crack open and it's anyone's guess where the pieces will fall.

Preceded by

[Faranak](#) (Iran, 2021) – Farhang Foundation Short Film Festival Finalist

Fired from his job, behind on his rent and abandoned by his wife, a burnt-out taxi driver gets an unusual passenger who is more similar to him than meets the eye. *Faranak* is the story of an unlikely friendship and the chance encounters whose values we often fail to recognize.

17 min.

Program generously funded by the Farhang Foundation.

For all program details and admission information, please visit cinema.ucla.edu. Schedules and guest speakers subject to change.

About Farhang Foundation

Farhang Foundation is a member supported nonreligious, nonpolitical, and not-for-profit foundation with the sole mission to celebrate and promote Iranian art and culture for the benefit of the community-at-large. For more information please visit Farhang.org

[About the UCLA Film & Television Archive](#)

A division of UCLA Library, the Archive is internationally renowned for rescuing, preserving and showcasing moving image media and is dedicated to ensuring that the visual achievements of our time are available for information, education and enjoyment. The Archive has over 500,000 film and television holdings conserved in a state-of-the-art facility at the Packard Humanities Institute Stoa in Santa Clarita, CA, that is designed to hold materials ranging from nitrate film to digital video at all preservation standards. Many of the Archive's projects are screened at prestigious film events around the globe.

The Billy Wilder Theater at the Hammer Museum is the home of the UCLA Film & Television Archive's public programs. The theater is among a handful of venues nationwide able to exhibit an entire century's worth of moving images in their original formats. From the earliest silent films requiring variable speed projection all the way up to cutting-edge digital cinema, the Wilder can accommodate an array of screen technologies.

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