

# CONGRATULATIONS ON THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE HOUSTON FESTIVAL OF FILMS FROM IRAN!



"THE RUNNER"

## CAN YOU SHARE A BIT OF THE HISTORY OF THIS EVENT?

**Thank you** – we are proud that this is the Museum's longest-running film festival. The idea was proposed when the esteemed film scholar, Professor Hamid Naficy, was teaching at Rice University in the early 1990s. We became aware that museums and universities in the U.S. had begun showing films from the New Iranian Cinema. These were provided from film agencies and distributors in Tehran. We immediately wanted to make it happen in Houston, and proudly introduced audiences to many leading filmmakers including Abbas Kiarostami, Dariush Mehrjui, Bahram Beyzaie, Mohsen and Samira Makmalbaf, Rakhshan Banietemad, Jafar Panahi and many others.

## WHERE ARE THE FILMS SHOWN?

Over these years, audiences have attended the festival screenings in the MFAH Brown Auditorium and at Rice Cinema, and recently, we have a third location, the Asia Society Texas Center.

## CAN YOU SHARE SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OVER THE YEARS?

In the early years of the festival, it wasn't possible to see these films on tv or streaming platforms, so everyone wanted to see these movies. The screenings were very full! We have hosted guest filmmakers, including Bahram Beyzaie who presented his classic film *Bashu*, *The Little Stranger* in our first edition in 1993. With support from the ILEX Foundation in Boston, we also began hosting

younger filmmakers early in their careers including Niki Karimi, Sara Nodjoumi and Shahram Mokri. We have also shown the work of the noted artist Shirin Neshat, who is also a filmmaker.

Over these three decades we have made close connections with the Houston community, including the Society of the Iranian-American Women for Education and the Iranian Cultural Foundation-Houston. Beyond Houston, we are fortunate to have support from the ILEX Foundation based in Boston. We have strong connections with film professionals who are involved with distributing Iranian cinema around the world.



"DESTINY"





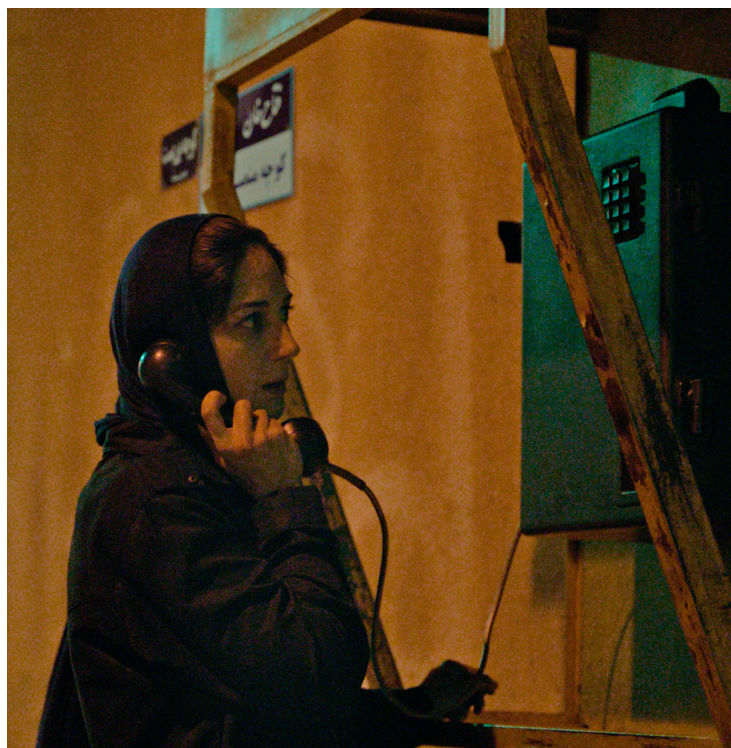
"SHOHREH AGHDASHLOO"

### TELL US ABOUT THE SPECIAL GUEST FOR OPENING NIGHT, SHOHREH AGHDASHLOO.

We are especially proud to be hosting a famous actress who attended our festival in 2007: the Iranian-born actress Shohreh Aghdashloo, who will be attending the 30th festival accompanied by her husband Houshang Touzie, who is also an actor.

Shohreh Aghdashloo is an Emmy Award-winning, Oscar-nominated actress whose prolific work on-stage and screen has been lauded for decades in both her native Iran and all over the world, especially in her adopted home, the United States. American audiences know her best from her Oscar-nominated performance in *House of Sand and Fog* and her Emmy-winning role in *House Of Saddam*. In television, Shohreh can currently be seen guest starring in Season 2 of the Emmy nominated series *The Flight Attendant* and in the futuristic TV series *The Expanse*, which is based on the popular New York Times bestselling book series of the same name. She has gained many fans from her work in these sci-fi series.

For our 30th Festival she is our special guest on the opening night at the MFAH – Saturday, January 21 at 7 pm. She will be presenting *Chess of the Wind*, a gothic drama from 1976 in which she made her feature film debut.



"HOLY SPIDER"



"APPLE DAY"



## WHICH FILMS CAN AUDIENCES LOOK FORWARD TO THIS YEAR?

The MFAH (January 21-22 and 27-29) will also have two screenings of *The Holy Spider*, which is a true crime drama that won the Best Actress award at the Cannes Film Festival for Zar Amir-Ebrahimi. We are showing *No Bears*, the latest film by Jafar Panahi, and a restoration of Amir Naderi's classic *The Runner*, with a live Zoom q&a afterwards with the actor Madjid Niroumand who starred as the little boy, as well as two new films, *The Apple Day* and *Destiny*.

Asia Society Texas Center (January 25) will screen the documentary *This Is Not Me*, with a live Zoom q&a with the film's director Saeed Gholipour and the film's subjects.

Rice Cinema (February 3-5) plans to screen early films directed by Jafar Panahi.

## WHERE CAN WE FIND INFORMATION ABOUT ALL OF THE FILMS AND TICKETS?

**The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston**

<https://www.mfah.org/calendar/series/festival-films-iran>

**Asia Society Texas Center**

<https://asiasociety.org/texas/events>

**Rice Cinema** <https://vada.rice.edu/rice-cinema>



"NO BEARS"



"CHESS OF THE WIND"



"THIS IS NOT ME"



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