



# 23<sup>rd</sup> Iranian Film Festival January 22-February 2, 2016

Festival continues at other venues

February 4-6, 2016



## Special Guest at the MFAH: Fatemeh Motamed Arya (Simin)

The 23<sup>rd</sup> edition of the museum's longest-running film festival is honored by the presence of actress Fatemeh Motamed Arya (Simin), who attends a rare Tuesday night screening. Selections also feature a new documentary about artist Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, who is represented in the museum's permanent collection. The festival continues at The Asia Society Texas Center (February 4) and Rice Cinema (February 5-6). Film selections made in collaboration with Niloo Fotouhi, Executive Director of the ILEX Foundation, Tom Vick of the Freer/Sackler and Carter Long of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.



**Generous funding is provided by the ILEX Foundation. Additional support is provided by the Society of Iranian-American Women for Education (SIAWE) and the Iranian Cultural Foundation-Houston.**

### At the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

*Fri, Jan 22, 7 pm* **TALES** (Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, 2014, 88 min.)

*Sat, Jan 23, 7 pm* **MELBOURNE** (Nima Javidi, 2014, 93 min.)

*Sat, Jan 23, 8:45 pm* **316** (Payman Haghani, 2014, 72 min.)

*Fri, Jan 29, 7 pm* **MONIR** (Bahman Ghobadi, 2014, 54 min.)

*Fri, Jan 29, 8:30 pm* **JAFAR PANAHI'S TAXI** (Jafar Panahi, 2015, 82 min.)

**RETURN ENGAGEMENT!**

*Sat, Jan 30, 7 pm* **I AM DIEGO MARADONA** (Bahram Tavakoli, 2015, 85 min.)

*Sat, Jan 30, 9 pm* **JAFAR PANAHI'S TAXI** (Jafar Panahi, 2015, 82 min.)

**RETURN ENGAGEMENT!**

*Tue, Feb 2, 7 pm* **AVALANCHE** (Morteza Farshbaf, 2014, 101 min.)

**Special guest, Ms. Motamed-Arya (who goes by "Simin"), is one of the most acclaimed actresses of post-revolutionary Iranian cinema. Her appearance is made possible by generous support of the ILEX Foundation.**

The MFAH is located at 1001 Bissonnet between Main and Montrose. Films are screened in Brown Auditorium Theater inside the Caroline Wiess Law Building. Enter for films through the Main Street door. Tickets available online at [www.mfah.org/film](http://www.mfah.org/film), in the Museum lobbies, or at the box office. Film information: 713.639.7515.

*The MFAH film department is supported by Tenaris; Gensler; Salle and James Vaughn; Nina and Michael Zilkha; James V. Derrick; The ILEX Foundation; Franci Neely; and Lynn S. Wyatt.*



**Tales (*Ghesse-ha*)**

Directed by Rakhshan Bani-Etemad  
 (Iran, 2014, 88 min., in Farsi with English subtitles)  
*Friday, January 22, 7:00 p.m.*

One of Iran's leading women directors tells interlocking stories of disparate (predominantly female) characters, weaving together incidents and personalities who appear in more than one story. In a series of vignettes we meet individuals contending with the challenges of life in contemporary Tehran. The cast includes talented stage actors.



**Melbourne**

Directed by Nima Javidi  
 (Iran, 2014, 93 min., in Farsi with English subtitles)  
*Saturday, January 23, 7:00 p.m.*

*Variety* exclaims, "This remarkable debut transcends cultural barriers with its compellingly universal and thoroughly engrossing premise." Indeed, the drama starring Payman Moaadi (*A Separation*) and Negar Javaherian as a couple moving to Australia for graduate studies, offers an unnerving tone reminiscent of Hitchcock. As they prepare, characters come and go, while the hustle and bustle hides a dreadful reality. Suddenly, the couple is plunged into a craftily orchestrated nightmare that offers no easy solutions. "Melbourne is intimate, it's frightening, and yet only so because of the deep human questions it asks of the audience." – *The Huffington Post*



**316**

Directed by Payman Haghani  
 (Iran, 2014, 72 min., in Farsi with English subtitles)  
*Saturday, January 23, 8:45 p.m.*

An aging woman (Sara Vazirzadeh) narrates her life story through memories dominated by the shoes belonging to those she loved. She recounts her childhood when she anxiously waited until she could wear high heels, her life during wartime, meeting her husband, and having children and grandchildren. Payman Haghani's imaginative second film, examines the narrative structure in most creative ways: even though audiences do not see the faces of each character, the emotional reaction is just as rewarding as the film unfolds.



**Monir**

Directed by Bahman Giarostami  
 (Iran, 2014, 54 min., in Farsi with English subtitles)  
*Friday, January 29, 7:00 p.m.*

The documentary looks at the life and work of Iranian artist Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, who first came to attention in the 1970s. The film explores how Monir became one of the most innovative and influential artists of the Middle East, from her method of constructing mirror mosaics to uncovering her past, the political

changes in her own country, and her life in the New York art scene. Now back in Tehran after 30 years, Monir's return sparked an artistic rebirth and, although she is now aged 90, she is at the peak of her career.



### **Jafar Panahi's Taxi**

Directed by Jafar Panahi

(Iran, 2015, 82 min, in Farsi with English subtitles)

Friday, January 29, 8:15 p.m.

Saturday, January 30, 9:00 p.m.

**RETURN ENGAGEMENT!**

Acclaimed director Jafar Panahi (*Offside, This Is Not A Film*) drives a cab through Tehran, interacting with a diverse group of passengers in a single day. His camera captures a spirited slice of Iranian society while brilliantly redefining the borders of comedy, drama and cinema. Winner of the Golden Bear at the 2015 Berlin International Film Festival, Panahi says "I have to continue making films under any circumstances to pay my respects and feel alive."



### **I Am Diego Maradona (*Man Diego Maradona hastam*)**

Directed by Bahram Tavakoli

(Iran, 2015, 85 min., in Farsi with English subtitles)

Saturday, January 30, 7:00 p.m.

A writer narrates his story with multiple beginnings, middles, and ends. When the tale was stolen by a friend, the author receives little sympathy from his family. The film introduces more and more characters who

become involved in criminal mischief, kidnapping, and attempted murder – or do they? Laugh-out-loud moments are interspersed with dark humor that reward audiences along for the wild ride.



### **Avalanche**

Directed by Morteza Farshbaf

(Iran, 2014, 101 min., in Farsi with English subtitles)

Tuesday, February 2, 7:00 p.m.

**In person: Actress Fatemeh Motamed Arya (*Simin*)**

The remarkable Fatemeh Motamed-Arya gives a nuanced, tour-de-force performance as elder care nurse Homa, who is taking care of an old woman during a snowstorm that shuts down the city. The strain of her responsibilities and the claustrophobic situation bring on insomnia and a personal crisis. Special guest, Ms. Motamed-Arya (who goes by "Simin"), is one of the most acclaimed actresses of post-revolutionary Iranian cinema. Her appearance is made possible by generous support of the ILEX Foundation.