

## FILM AT REDCAT PRESENTS

**Mon Nov 18 | 8:30 pm |**

Jack H. Skirball Series

\$10.00 [members \$8.00]

*Event cosponsored by the Levantine Cultural Center*

## **Rakhshan Banietemad** **The Hidden Cost of Violence**

Iran's most celebrated female filmmaker, Rakhshan Banietemad, screens two passionate and fascinating explorations of the impact of the recent electoral processes in Iran. *We Are Half of Iran's Population* (*Ma Nimi Az Jameiate Iranim*, 2009, video, 42 min) shows a diverse coalition of women's rights activists engaged in the political debate. In the world premiere of *See You Tomorrow Elina!* (*Farda Mibinamet Elina*, 2013, DVD, 52 min), Banietemad returns to the kindergarten where she had enrolled her daughter, Baran—now an actress and activist who has since appeared in many of Banietemad's narrative films. The film compares the violence witnessed by Iranian kindergarten students during the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s with that of the recent political protests following the country's 2009 elections.

*World Premiere*

### **In Person: Rakhshan Banietemad**

"[Banietemad's] title as 'First Lady of Iranian Cinema' is not only a reference to her prominence as a filmmaker, but it also connotes her social role of merging politics and family in her work."

– Rini Cobbey, *Film in the Middle East and North Africa*.

"Outspoken director Rakhshan Banietemad paints an unforgettable picture of women in today's Iran, emphasizing their indomitable determination to have a voice in politics despite the cards being stacked against them." – Deborah Young, *Variety*

## Program

### ***We Are Half of Iran's Population***

Iran 2009, video, color, 42 min. Persian with English subtitles

The documentary was made during the months preceding 2009's controversial elections in Iran. Filming a diverse coalition of women's rights activists discussing their opinions on pressing contemporary issues, Banietemad asked three of the four presidential candidates to view the footage for comment, with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad declining to participate. A number of the activists seen in the film were later arrested in the post-election protests.

### ***See You Tomorrow Elina!***

Iran 2013, DVD, color, 52 min. Persian with English subtitles

"In the 1980s, when my daughter, Baran, was a child, the Iran-Iraq war was raging, and many cities, including Tehran, were bombed. Nights were sleepless and filled with fear while in the morning life and its routines had to go on. Every morning when taking Baran to kindergarten, I was wondering how these children deal with the stress while separated from their parents for hours during the day – and these questions about the effects of war, violence and fear on children have haunted me for years. How does Mahnaz, the kind kindergarten teacher, answer the endless questions of kids who can't grasp the meaning of violence?"

Some twenty years later, in the month of Bahman 1389 (February 2010), I returned to visit Mahnaz and her kindergarten; at the same time, people were protesting against the results of the 1388 (2009) elections: once again, children were witnessing violence and conflicts." (Rakhshan Banietemad)

One of Iran's most celebrated directors, **Rakhshan Banietemad** embodies two important trends in Iranian cinema – the nation's long and diverse tradition of innovative documentary filmmaking, dating back before the 1979 revolution, and Iran's perhaps surprising number of women directors.... Banietemad began her career making documentaries for television before making a name for herself as a

fiction filmmaker in the late 1980s with a series of pointed social satires.

*Nargess* (1992) marked Banietemad's shift to a decidedly more personal mode of filmmaking and announced a new focus on the difficulties faced by various kinds of outsiders, and especially women, negotiating their roles in an unstable society. Banietemad's narrative films typically feature female protagonists and engrossing melodrama, romantic triangles, familial conflicts and the struggles of women to balance family, love and work. Setting her melodramas within resolutely gritty and war-torn settings peopled by petty criminals, drug addicts and loners, Banietemad's narrative films maintain a strong commitment to socially grounded realism. Refusing any trace of the sentimental, Banietemad's melodramas are striking examples of popular cinema used as a forceful probe into social problems long familiar - like the place of women - and relatively new - like the ravages of drug addiction.

Over the last several years, as political reform, reaction and unrest have rippled across Iran, Banietemad has returned to documentary to portray a country at the crossroads, taking the urgent pulse of an extremely young population confronting the discontents of the Islamic revolution, of women seizing a newfound freedom but also chafing at the lingering obstacles of religious tradition.

- Harvard Film Archive

### Selected Filmography

- 1984 *Consumer Culture (Farahang-e-Massraffi)* (TV doc)
- 1985 *Employment of the Rural Migrants in Town (Mohojereen Roustai)* (TV doc)
- 1986 *Economic Measures at the Time of War Ta'dabir Eghtessadi-y-Janghi* (TV doc)
- 1987 *Centralization (Tamarkoze)* (TV doc)
- 1989 *Off-Limits (Kharej az Mahdoudeh)*
- 1989 *Canary Yellow (Zard-e Qanari)*
- 1990 *Foreign Currency (Pul-e Khareji)*
- 1992 *Nargess*
- 1992-94 *Report of 1993* (doc, video)
- 1992-94 *Spring to Spring* (doc, video)
- 1992-94 *To Whom Are You Showing These Films?* (doc, video)
- 1995 *The Blue-Veiled (Rusari-ye Abi)*
- 1996 *The Last Visit to Ms. Iran Daftari* (doc, video)
- 1997 *Under the Skin of the City (Zir-e Pust-e Shahr)* (doc, video)
- 1998 *The May Lady (Banoo-ye Ordibehesht)*
- 1999 *Baran and the Native (Baran-O-Bumi)* (short)

2000 *Under the Skin of the City (Zir-e Pust-e Shahr)*  
2002 *Our Times (Ruzegar-e ma)* (doc)  
2005 *Gilane* (co-directed with Mohsen Abdolvahab)  
2006 *Mainline (Khoon bazi)* (co-directed with Mohsen Abdolvahab)  
2009 *We Are Half of Iran's Population (Ma Nimi Az Jameiate Iranim,*  
(doc, video)  
2012 *Kahrizak, Four Views (Kahrizak, chahar negah)* (segment)  
2013 *See You Tomorrow Elina! (Farda Mibinamet Elina)* (doc, video)

Curated by Steve Anker and Bérénice Reynaud  
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*Event cosponsored by the Levantine Cultural Center*

<http://www.levantinecenter.org/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UE9NseYYmuA>

<http://www.firouzanfilms.com/HallOfFame/Inductees/RakhshanBaniEtemad.html>

<http://www.filmdirectorssite.com/rakhshan-bani-etemad>

[http://hcl.harvard.edu/hfa/films/2010aprjun/bani\\_etemad.html](http://hcl.harvard.edu/hfa/films/2010aprjun/bani_etemad.html)