

Centre  
Pompidou

BO  
ZAR

CINEMATEK



13.10–28.11.2016  
JAFAR PANAHI

# Introduction

The Centre Pompidou, in collaboration with the National Museum of Modern Art and the Festival d'Automne, is paying homage to Jafar Panahi, a major figure in contemporary Iranian cinema. The renowned multi-cultural establishment in Paris is presenting a comprehensive retrospective of his work in the context of the Festival d'Automne and is exhibiting his brand new *Les Nuages* photo series for the very first time. BOZAR and CINEMATEK are joining forces with these institutions to pay tribute to his exceptional work as a filmmaker and photographer right here in Brussels.

Jafar Panahi was born in Mianeh in 1960. After studying Film at the University of Tehran, he made several films for Iranian television. Following in the footsteps of Abbas Kiarostami, for whom he worked as an assistant (*Through the Olive Trees*), Jafar Panahi became the emblematic filmmaker of the Iranian New Wave. A socially engaged artist, he comes up with simple stories which revolve around contemporary Iranian society. His artistic work is more interested in the relationship between his characters than in the characters themselves. In each of his films he comes up with a series of portraits: a portrait of the city of Tehran, portraits of women or groups of women, family portraits etc.

To date, Jafar Panahi is the author of more than fifteen films and, like a lot of Iranian directors, he creates works with and about children, a well-known way of getting around censorship. His cinema is characterised by its minimalism, its simple yet virtuoso photography, its humour and its playfulness. In 1995 he directed his first feature-length film *The White Balloon/Badkonake Sefid*, whose screenplay was written by Abbas Kiarostami. The film, which won the Golden Camera at the Cannes Film Festival, became the first Iranian production to win an award in a major festival, and immediately demonstrated the

filmmaker's talent. His second film, *The Mirror/Ayeneh*, was awarded the Golden Leopard at Locarno, in 1997. His 2000 film *The Circle/The Dayereh* denounces a regime which denies women freedom and won the Golden Lion at Venice. Jafar Panahi obtained a lot of international exposure but the film was banned in Iran, just like the director's later films have been. Shot in 2003, *Crimson Gold/Talaye Sorkh* won the Jury Prize in the "Un Certain regard" category at Cannes. His 2006 film *Offside* was awarded the Silver Bear at Berlin.

In 2010 the Iranian regime sentenced Jafar Panahi to six years in prison. He was also given a twenty year ban on filming and travelling outside the country. Since then he has been working in secret. *This Is Not a Film/In Film Nist*, a documentary essay made during his house arrest, is a testimony to the day-to-day life of a director who is no longer allowed to film. In 2012, the European Parliament awarded Jafar Panahi and his compatriot Nasrin Sotoudeh, an enthusiastic civil rights lawyer, the Andreï Sakharov Award for their independence of mind, their resistance and their refusal to submit. In 2013, Jafar Panahi codirected *Closed Curtain/Pardé* with Kambuzia Partovi. The script was awarded a Silver Bear. In 2015, *Taxi Tehran*, his latest film, won the Golden Bear in Berlin.

In June 2014, the filmmaker began a photographic work. "Seeing as I wasn't allowed to take my camera and go onto the streets and film people, what else was there? I opened the window and said to myself: I'm going to use my camera to film the sky! There won't be any people in the shot, just clouds! Black clouds and white clouds – which might just be enough to tell a story ..."

By putting together a programme around Jafar Panahi here in Brussels, BOZAR and CINEMATEK want to re-examine his exceptional body of work and introduce it to a wide audience whilst paying tribute to his courage and defending his right to freedom of speech.

# Filmography

- 1988 *The Wounded Heads (Yarali bashlar)*, Iran, 30'
- 1989 *The Second Look (Negaheh Dovom)*, Iran, 30'
- 1992 *The Friend (Doust)*, Iran, 42'  
*The Last Exam (Ākharin emtahan)*, Iran, 42'
- 1995 *The White Balloon (Badkonake sefid)*, Iran, 85'  
Scenario: Abbas Kiarostami  
Caméra d'Or, Cannes
- 1997 *Ardekoul*, Iran, 29'  
*The Mirror (Ayneh)*, Iran, 95'  
Golden Leopard, Locarno
- 2000 *The Circle (The Dayereh)*, Iran/Italy/Switzerland, 87'  
Golden Lion, Venice
- 2003 *Crimson Gold (Talā-ye sorkh)*, Iran, 97'  
Scenario: Abbas Kiarostami  
Official Selection, Un Certain Regard, Cannes
- 2006 *Offside*, Iran, 88'  
Golden Bear, Berlinale
- 2007 *Untying The Knot (Ghereh Ghoshai)*, Iran, 7'  
Extract of the film collective Farsh,  
The persian Carpet
- 2010 *The Accordeon (Ākordeon)*, Iran, 8'  
Extract of film collective Then and now,  
beyond borders and differences
- 2011 *This Is Not a Film (In Film Nist)*, Iran, 74'  
Jafar Panahi & Mojtaba Mirtahmasb
- 2013 *Closed Curtain*, Iran, 102'  
Jafar Panahi et Kambozia Partovi
- 2015 *Taxi Tehran*, Iran, 88'  
Golden Bear, Berlinale
- 2016 *Où en êtes-vous, Jafar Panahi ?*, 15'  
Commissioned by Centre Pompidou

BOZAR



# 13.10–28.11

Vernissage 13.10 — 19:00

## Three photos from the series *Les nuages* (*The Clouds*)

In 2010, the Iranian film-maker Jafar Panahi was sentenced to a six-year jail sentence and a twenty-year ban on making films. Accused of 'propaganda against the government', he has been under house arrest ever since and is no longer allowed to leave his country or give press interviews. Every morning, he faces the threat of the Pasdaran (Army of the Guardians of the Islamic Revolution) arriving on his doorstep to inform him of his immediate incarceration. Not only that, but he cannot give reign to his passion for making films, his reason for living. Panahi could have stopped filming, changed profession or chosen exile. Instead, he decided to flout the ban by continuing to film, whatever the price — *This Is Not a Film* (2011), *Closed Curtain* (2013), *Taxi Tehran* (2015) —, and by accepting the Centre Pompidou's commission to produce a short film *Où en êtes-vous, Jafar Panahi ? (How's it going, Jafar Panahi?)* In each of his films, he examines the deprivation of liberty, harnesses it, and overcomes it. His answer to 'banned' film, is 'un-subjugated' film. When he is not producing informal films and when he is not dreaming of those he cannot make, Panahi dedicates himself to photography. Since 2013, he has primarily focused on clouds. They appeal to him because they are the very prototype of that which is elusive. The sky is also, for him, a projection screen beyond compare. One on which he explores his most ardent desire. Delicate, nomadic and utterly unshackled, clouds represent for him the most accurate form of liberty.

Salle des Vitraux BOZAR

Free entrance

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EXPO

# 13.10.2016

In the presence of Sylvie Pras  
(Head of the Cinema Department at Centre Pompidou)

## 20:00

### *Où en êtes-vous, Jafar Panahi?*

At the request of the Centre Pompidou, as part of its *Où en êtes-vous ? (How's it going?)* collection, which launched in 2014 with Bertrand Bonello, Jafar Panahi takes an introspective look at himself and his films. This film is being shown for the first time in Belgium.

## 20:15

### *The Circle*

"*The circle* is a shape that I am particularly fond of and which is perfectly suited to the society in which we live. The circular structure of my films allows me to denounce both the confinement of Iranian society and the energy the characters put into, if not escaping, then at least widening the circumference of that restraint." (Jafar Panahi, *Le Monde*, 25/02/2004, interview by Jacques Mandelbaum)

A pivotal film in Jafar Panahi's directing career and his third feature film, *The Circle* marked his move away from 'children's films' and the influence of Abbas Kiarostami to tackle, head on, the plight of women in Iran. Several fates intertwine: former inmates, single mothers and prostitutes run, escape, hide. Delivered with breakneck drama and by remarkable actresses, the film denounces the patriarchal yoke of these women's daily lives. Using an unending narrative loop told over the course of one day, Jafar Panahi depicts characters who are forever lost in the crowd. It was this film that led to Panahi being considered a threat by the Iranian authorities, which did their utmost to prevent its production. "Rather than discuss them, the government brushes these social ills under the carpet of silence," explains Panahi. "My duty as a film-maker is to address them. And so I did." The film won the Golden Lion award at the Venice Film Festival in 2000.

"The title of Panahi's film is as perfectly desperate as they come: it describes a shape, a promise, and a failure. It is emblematic of an unattainable place. In Persian, the letter for circle is drawn in convolutions, a Möbius band in which only an interior force could break the implacable logic of confinement. And so goes the cinematographic form of the film: anxious wanderings, an escape route, a *dérive* from different perspectives, a quest for possibilities. The young women successively cross paths, taking over the story on their way. Fugitives of law, they concoct a continuous flow of causes. Each shot becomes a part of this circle, adds to it. Each woman in turn takes on the perpetuity of this curve, acknowledges its lines or, on the contrary, hopes to make it emerge, ultimately, as a pocket of resistance. In the middle of it all, the sympathetic camera of Jafar Panahi makes a complete revolution, turns 360° on itself, leaves the world of men, and enters the prisoner zone." (Philippe Azoury, *Libération*, 31/01/2001)

(How's it going, Jafar Panahi?)  
FR, 2016, 15', color, OVST FR

(Dayereh)  
IR / IT, 2000, 35mm, color, 89',  
OVST FR - NL



# 28.11.2016

In the presence of Jean-Michel Frodon (tbc)

## 19:30

Filmed interview of  
*Jafar Panahi*  
by *Jean-Michel*  
*Frodon*

2016, 45', OVST FR

## 20:30

*Untying The Knot*

In a phenomenal sequence shot which takes us from the street to the basement of a sales room, Jafar Panahi shows us the distress of a young soldier and his silent sister as they try to negotiate the best price to sell a precious family carpet. This short is an extract from the film *Persian Carpet*, a joint production by fifteen Iranian filmmakers about handmade Persian carpets. "When they proposed *Carpet* to me, I refused. I don't like this kind of materialistic effort. If I wanted to make a film about carpets, it would be about the beauty of the carpet. I really don't like the concept of marketing the product.

When they insisted, I remembered my childhood, when we had a carpet in the house, and my father had a financial problem, so he took the carpet to be sold. The people there looked just like us, ordinary people. So when I accepted to make a short film for the carpet project, I thought, what could I do? I thought that there must be a single unit of time, a single unit of place, and a single character. With one time, one place and one person, it is better to have only one shot." Peter Rist in conversation with Jafar Panahi, *Offscreen*, November 2009

## &

### *The Friend*

Two classmates chase each other after an argument in the classroom. One will prevent the other going home. Jafar Panahi produced this film in homage to Abbas Kiarostami's first short film, *The Bread and the Alley*, produced in 1970, which was the first of a series of films on childhood, one of the signature traits of Kiarostami's filmwork and later that of Panahi. Kiarostami produced this film while at the Kanun, the film department of the Institute for the intellectual development of children, founded in 1969, which he managed for many years. Panahi uses the same characters as in *The Bread and the Alley* (the cyclist, the old man), but expands the story in order to develop the tension between the two boys. The film is being shown for the first time in Belgium.

(Doust) Jafar Panahi  
IR, 1992, 42', OVST FR

(Ghereh Ghoshai) Jafar Panahi  
IR, 2007, 7', color, OVST FR

CINEMA

# 14

# 15

CINEMA

*Jafar Panahi:  
“When a film  
calls me”  
In conversation with  
Jean-Michel  
Frodon*

JMF Jafar, maybe you could start out by explaining your legal and professional situation in Iran.

JP In 2011, I was sentenced to six years in prison and was banned from leaving the country or making films for twenty years. I had to find ways to get round it so that I could get back to work in spite of the ban. [...] After *Offside* in 2006, I spent five years trying to make films which always ended up getting blocked. In 2008, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was re-elected president and this led to a massive popular uprising, the green movement, against electoral fraud. Mohammad Rasoulof <sup>1</sup> and I decided to make a film about these events. One day the police came to my door and arrested me.

JMF In spite of your imprisonment at the time of the police raid, an initial sentencing in 2010, then the upholding of the sentence on appeal in 2011, you have worked, made films and taken photos.

JP I didn't immediately understand quite how serious the sentence was, what these bans meant for me. But little by little, I became depressed. Fortunately, digital cameras and other facilities offered by technology meant I could film discretely and cheaply without needing to request authorisations. I could start filming again, it saved me.

JMF Could you talk about the short films that you made when you were a student, some of which are being shown for the first time as part of the Centre Pompidou retrospective?

JP In the beginning, I tried to prove to myself that I was capable of making films, their primary *raison d'être* was to test what I was capable of doing with actors. Well, that wasn't the case with the very first one, *The Wounded Heads*, which is a documentary. Here I just wanted to immortalise a ritual <sup>2</sup> that, at the time, I thought would soon cease to exist. The experience with the documentary taught me not to judge what I film or who I'm filming. *Second Look* is the film I

made during my final year of studies. It is a sort of imaginary 'making of' a film. *The Last Exam* was shot later on, for television.

JMF Your first feature-length film, *The White Balloon*, was very well received, notably with the Golden Camera for the best first film at the 1995 Cannes Film festival.

JF Fortunately, *The White Balloon*, based on a script by Abbas Kiarostami, has been awarded numerous prizes and has been very successful, in Iran and abroad. Since then I have produced or co-produced of all my films, I manage the budget. That in particular is what enabled me to film *The Circle*: if I hadn't been the main backer, there wouldn't have been any way to make this kind of film in Iran.

JMF Didn't the fact that *The Circle* was awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival make it easier to get the film screened in Iran?

JF No, it was quite the opposite, that actually made things worse for me. The awards that I get for my films are seen by the authorities, a section of the media and the population, as proof of Western hostility towards Iran, and the more awards I receive the more people say that I make anti-Iranian films.

JMF After that came the episode we spoke about, your arrest, imprisonment, sentencing, depression. After which, aside from cinema, you also took up photography.

JF Before that moment when I was arrested and sentenced, each film took up three years of my life, from the preparation to the promotional work before its worldwide release. Since then, at least this final phase has disappeared and now I make my films really quickly, guerrilla-style. Otherwise they block me. So I have a lot of free time. One day I was going round in circles, I looked out of the window of my apartment and I saw the clouds. I thought they

looked really impressive so I took my camera and started photographing them. I liked the result so I carried on.

JMF How did you come up with the idea of this collection of photos of the sky?

JF After my first photos of the sky, I got into the habit of never going anywhere without my camera, be it on the streets of Tehran or when I'm moving around in the country. I did that for almost two years and then I selected the pictures I liked the best, I kept the most powerful ones. The general idea in the organisation of this collection of photos was an evolution from darkness to light.

In conversation with Jean-Michel Frodon on 25 April 2016 in Tehran. Extracts from the book *Jafar Panahi Images/nuages*, co-written by Jean-Michel Frodon and Clément Chéroux and co-published by Filigranes Éditions/ Les Éditions du Centre Pompidou, October 2016.

<sup>1</sup> Iranian filmmaker of the same generation as Jafar Panahi. Director of, amongst others, *Iron Island* (2005) and *Manuscripts Don't Burn* (2013).

<sup>2</sup> The film is about the Ashura ritual, Shiite mourning during which the penitents inflict pain upon themselves, in this case they take swords to their own heads to make themselves bleed in memory of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain. These rituals are still widely practised in Iran.

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14.10  
16.10  
02.11

19:00  
17:00  
21:00

## *The Last Exam*

Fatima is anxious about her end-of-year exam.

The morning of the exam, she meets her best friend, Zahra, who she walks to school with, but who, in saving the life of a little girl, becomes the victim of an accident. *The Last Exam* was produced for television and was shot in southern Iran. On experimental ground for Panahi, this drama, tainted with mischief, uses a blend of fantasy and special effects. As with *The Friend*, it is a short version of the children's stories that he develops in his first feature films: an obstacle course on a journey across town.

## *The Wounded Heads*

Jafar Panahi's first film, produced while studying at university, and the sole documentary in his filmography. He depicts a ritual that is still widely practised in Iran: Ashura, the Shi'ite day of mourning in which penitents beat their own heads with knives to shed their blood in memory of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn. "Here, I wanted to record a ritual that I believed, at that time, would very likely soon disappear. The experience of making a documentary film taught me not to judge what I film, or those that I film," explains Jafar Panahi. The film is being shown for the first time in Belgium.

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## *The Second Look*

A puppet master and his puppets are hired to appear in a children's film. His graduation film, *The Second Look* explores the boundaries between reality and film, falling somewhere between *The Muppet Show* and a behind-the-scenes documentary. "It is a kind of imaginary 'making of' a film for which I should have been the assistant director but on which I didn't have the time to work. At that time, I had a job in film archives to earn a living while studying. For want of being the assistant director on this feature film, I invented this little fictional film about its making." In this poetic fantasy which prefigures the children's films that followed (*The Friend*, *The Last Exam*, *The White Balloon*, *The Mirror*), Panahi already demonstrates maturity, particularly in the sequences recreating the behind-the-scenes of a shoot. The film is being shown for the first time in Belgium.

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(Akharin emtehan) Jafar Panahi  
IR, 1992, 42', OVST FR

(Yarali bashlar) Jafar Panahi  
IR, 1988, 20', OVST FR

(Negahesh Dovom) Jafar Panahi  
IR, 1989, 40', OVST FR

Still detail from *The Second Look*

17.10  
23.10

19:00  
17:00



Still detail from *The Bread and the Alley*

Jafar Panahi's first short film offers a moving take on what it is to be young. Preceded by Abbas Kiarostami's first film, the director for whom Panahi would later work as assistant, and to whom he paid homage in *The Friend*.

## *The Bread and Alley*

Trying to navigate his way home with a loaf of bread, a little boy finds the alleyway blocked by a hostile dog. "*The Bread and the Alley* was my first experience in cinema and I must say a very difficult one. I had to work with a very young child, a dog, and an unprofessional crew except for the cinematographer, who was nagging and complaining all the time. Well, the cinematographer, in a sense, was right because I did not follow the conventions of film making that he had become accustomed to" (Kiarostami).

## *The Friend*

Two classmates chase each other after an argument in the classroom. One will prevent the other going home. Jafar Panahi produced this film in homage to Abbas Kiarostami's first short film, *The Bread and the Alley*, produced in 1970, which was the first of a series of films on childhood, one of the signature traits of Kiarostami's filmwork and later that of Panahi. Kiarostami produced this film while at the Kanun, the film department of the Institute for the intellectual development of children, founded in 1969, which he managed for many years. Panahi uses the same characters as in *The Bread and the Alley* (the cyclist, the old man), but expands the story in order to develop the tension between the two boys. The film is being shown for the first time in Belgium.

(Pan va Koutcheh) Abbas Kiarostami  
IR, 1970, B&W, 11', no dialogue

(Doust) Jafar Panahi  
IR, 1992, 42', OVST FR

20.10  
22.10

19:00  
21:30



Still detail from *The White Balloon*

## *The Accordeon*

A brother and sister provide for their family by playing the accordion and percussion, respectively, on the streets of a big city in Iran. One day, they venture into a square, not realising that there is a mosque next door. A passer-by accuses them of sinning and steals the boy's instrument. The siblings set off in hot pursuit, mixed with anger and solidarity. This short film by Jafar Panahi is part of the collective film *Then and Now, Beyond Borders and Differences* in 2010 produced by Adelina von Fürstenberg, in which Tata Amaral, Fanny Ardant, Hüseyin Karabey, Masbedo, Idrissa Ouédraogo and Robert Wilson also participated, each exploring, in their own way, Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which stipulates the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

(*Accordeon*) Jafar Panahi  
IR, 2010, 8', color, OVST

## *The White Balloon*

*The White Balloon* was Jafar Panahi's first feature film, based on a script by Abbas Kiarostami for whom he worked as assistant director on the filming of *Through the Olive Trees*. A story that traces the journey of a young girl determined to buy the goldfish of her dreams for the New Year celebrations, the film depicts colourful characters in a popular district of Tehran. *The White Balloon* won the Caméra d'or at the Cannes Film Festival in 1995. "Although the film resonates strongly with the work of Abbas Kiarostami (who wrote the script), in its analysis of the real through the eyes of a child, it should not be considered as simplistic. [...] On the contrary, with his first feature film, Jafar Panahi achieves that delicate blend of ironic observation and involvement in a tenuous drama that has dramatic consequences for its young heroine. [...] Snake charmers, a grumpy tailor, a soldier on leave, and a balloon seller paint a portrait of a society, of its conflicts of class and religion, of its minorities." Yann Tobin, *Positif*, no. 413-414, July-August 1995

(*Badkonake sefid*) Jafar Panahi  
IR, 1995, color, 84', OVST FR - NL  
With: Aida Mohammadhani, Mohsen Kafili,  
Fereshteh Sadre Orafaei

24.10  
26.10

19:00  
21:00

## *The Mirror*

In his second feature film, Jafar Panahi continues the theme started with *The White Balloon* two years earlier: the situation of a little girl lost in the city provides the pretext for a journey across Tehran, exposing the suffering of individuals in the metropolis. The film is part of a tradition in Iranian film, consisting in denouncing the country's social ills under the cover of a 'children's film' (particularly *Where is my friend's house?* by Abbas Kiarostami). The film is a first hint at what would become central to Panahi's work: a continuous game between fiction and documentary which turns the film into a skilful *mise en abyme*. *The Mirror* obtained the Golden Leopard at the Locarno festival in 1997 but only appeared on French screens in 2011. "The technique used in *The Mirror* is the epitome of that 'Iranian period' of the 1990s, when under the impetus of Kiarostami and the tradition of national cinema, which from the 1960s onward had been revolutionised to bring it closer to social concerns, films would be dismantled: it is the era of *Close-Up*, *Through the Olive Trees*, *The Mirror*, and also *Salaam Cinema* by Mohsen Makhmalbaf. Fiction films, although laying the conditions of their existence out on the table, leave their creation shrouded in mystery. Iranian filmmakers amplified the dual heritage of neo-realism and modern fracture, reaffirming by the same token the sovereignty of the snapshot and the unveiling of artifices." Jean-Philippe Tessé, *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 674, January 2012

(Ayneh) Jafar Panahi  
IR, 1997, color, 93', OVSTFR – NL

With: Mina Mohammad Khani, Kazem Mojdehi, Naser Omuni

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Still detail from *The Mirror*

29.10  
18.11

21:00  
19:00

30.10  
01.11

21:00  
19:00

*Où en êtes-vous,  
Jafar Panahi ?*

&

*The Circle*

29.10

18:00

*Panahi's poetics,*  
talk by **Christophe  
Verbiest**

It's no coincidence that Jafar Panahi has entitled a film *The Circle*, because the director is a great exponent of the circular in Iranian cinema. His aesthetics were initially based on neorealism, but have developed — partly through no choice of his own — into a very unique style on the borderline of documentary and fiction, related to yet different from the approach of his mentor Abbas Kiarostami. In this talk on Panahi's poetics his problems with the Iranian government are only referred to indirectly.

*Crimson Gold*

Adapted from a news item and written with Abbas Kiarostami, structured like a cycle of inevitability, *Crimson Gold* follows Hussein as, on his moped, he crosses a Tehran which has been torn apart between its geographic and social poles. Back from the war against Iraq, which has left him with physical and psychological scars, the young man has become a pizza delivery man. He questions the inequalities which are present in our daily lives as he rides through town, alone in the night, or alongside his friend Ali, until the day when his integrity is shaken. "With a clearly apparent simplicity, the social tensions due to the massive differences in fortune are the main driving force behind the tale which takes the form of an infernal machine. The constraints of tradition, the illusions of the early days of the revolution and the war against Iraq, police presence, the oppression of women, the way in which former exiles are so poorly adapted ... form a maze of voltage lines which run through the film, irrigating it like a network of veins transporting burning fluids. [...] *Crimson Gold* is also, or first and foremost, a story of honour and of the way see people. The way the well-off see the poor, how men see women; how con-men see honest individuals and the way people in authority see those who have none." Jean-Michel Frodon, *Le Monde*, 27 May 2003

(Tajajye songh) Jafar Panahi  
IR / FR / IT, 2003, colour, 96'; OVST FR – NL  
with: Hussein Emadeddin, Kamayan Sheisi, Azita Rayeji

The talk will be in Dutch

04.11  
07.11

19:00  
19:00

## Offside

To shoot his fifth feature length film, Jafar Panahi told the Iranian authorities that he was filming a documentary on Iran's World Cup qualifying match against Bahrain. The filmmaker actually shot *Offside* while it was going on, thus giving the initial screenplay a valuable historical dimension. The vividness of reality is at the origin of the film: Panahi drew inspiration from something which happened to his football-crazy daughter. "For me football is an excuse to talk about all the limits imposed upon women," he confides. Indeed, the film speaks of a disqualification: that of women, turned away from the stadium due to a governmental prohibition. So they end up using their cunning to achieve their aims. Just like in *The Circle*, Panahi's camera is placed alongside them, giving them the power to invent the main event which is now going on off camera. "We won't see anything of the match, but we will still feel it, through [the female characters], the most beautiful sensations. Because what makes this encounter strong and moving — far beyond any sporting consideration — is that it reveals the strength of these young women's desire, women who are ready to defy the bans to support their team. [...] incorporating the limits imposed by Iranian society, the mischievous film turns this blockaded, narrow pitch into a space that is full of words, life and of a particularly thrilling confrontation which speaks volumes about the contradictions within the country. One of his greatest achievements is that he never reduces the two sexes to a superficial representation, but rather he gives real depth and identity to each of the protagonists. The group doesn't kill the individual, whatever side of the border you're on. [...] At the end of the match a team is born — offside but far from being off the point!" Amélie Dubois, *Les Inrockuptibles*, 5 December 2006

CINEMA

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Still life from *Offside*

05.11  
08.11

19:00  
19:00

## *This Is Not a Film*



Still detail from *This Is Not a Film*

Because the Iranian government has banned him from creating, the filmmaker Jafar Panahi is condemned to working in secret from his own home. Filmed in the space of ten days with the help of his friend and director Mojtaba Mirtahmasb, the film is about a typical day in Jafar Panahi's life. It examines the way time goes by when you are at home, far from the bustle of the city. The off-camera is not a permanent threat, but rather a sum of allied voices — those of family and friends. *This Is Not a Film* is an incredible home movie, in which the filmmaker's imagination is transformed into a weapon of resistance against a unique time, place and system of thought. In the course of the conversations between the two directors, the images of Panahi's former films arise as well as the gripping tale of a fake/phantom film that the filmmaker directs on a carpet because he can't actually shoot it. "This film is a testimony to what you can do with cinema in a country which prevents you from making films. You can resolve the problem created in the cinema with cinema", says Jafar Panahi in an interview. "Moving between Panahi's moments of frustration and despair and scenes of intensified creativity, *This Is Not a Film* expresses the anger of a filmmaker who has been prevented from doing what he loves. This is the strength, the fear and the beauty of a cinematographic gesture out of context. This is a whole world in an unexpected cinematic entity. "A film is never what you say, but what you create." Exactly. Jafar Panahi directed *This Is Not a Film*, and this is a film. And a fine one at that." Sarah Elkaïm, "This is a great film", *Critikat*, 27 September 2011

(In Film Nist) Jafar Panahi, Mojtaba Mirtahmasb  
FR, 2011, colour, 75', OVST FR

06.11  
09.11

19:00  
21:00

## Closed Curtain



Still detail from *Closed Curtain*

Pardé, which means the 'curtain', is the second film Jafar Panahi directed after his conviction. Made with the help of Kambozia Partovi, co-screenwriter of *The Circle* and director, it is above all his most desperate film. He places himself between the stressful 'in camera' of *This Is Not a Film* in which Panahi, who is appealing against the decision, hasn't yet realised how serious the sentence is, and the fresh outburst of energy at work in *Taxi Tehran*, which is (almost) filmed out in the open. Shot in secret in his holiday home beside the Caspian Sea, the film delves into the psyche of Jafar Panahi who is once again the central character of the film. Torn between the desire to continue creating and the temptations of suicide, two options embodied by two contrasting characters, Jafar Panahi creates a stratified story that is both complex and allegorical. The call of the sea is strong in this Pirandellian 'in camera' where different systems of images collide, complement and confront one another. The film was awarded the Silver Bear for best screenplay at the 2013 Berlinale. "Night and day follow on from one another without any clear distinction behind the blackout curtains of the villa, like a decisive loss of the notion of time. The night, outside, is nothing more than a residue of sound, an off camera that is extremely present in the eyes of the characters, but which no longer wants to show its face, which is inaccessible to them. During the day, it is no more than a recording, a trace on a screen that you can only touch with your gaze. [...] And yet we don't want this heart-rending cry of revolt which constitutes *Closed Curtain* to be the final battle of a filmmaker who has been pushed to breaking point, but who continues to humbly confide his response to that thing he holds in such high esteem: his craft." Julien Marsa, *Critikat*, 12 February 2013

(Pardé) Jafar Panahi  
FR, 2013, 106', OVSTFR  
with Kambozia Partovi, Maryam Mogadam

11.11  
27.11

21:00  
17:00

## Taxi Tehran



Still detail from *Taxi Tehran*

After directing *This Is Not a Film* (2011) in his own home, then *Closed Curtain* (2013) inside his seaside villa, Jafar Panahi, still banned from filming, decided to go back in search of the sounds of the city, collectively and in motion “All I can do is make films. What if one day I’m forced into becoming a taxi driver?” For his latest feature film, Jafar Panahi spent two weeks travelling the streets of Tehran at the wheel of a taxi, a spatial constraint which is reminiscent of *Ten* (2001) by Abbas Kiarostami. In order to play on the continuity and the stops along the way, he placed three Blackmagic cameras inside the taxi and invited along a series of characters-passengers, with lively personalities and ideas. From a vendor of illegal videos to his insolent niece, ten protagonists follow on from one another to share their thoughts on contemporary Iranian society, in the perpetual murmur of Tehran’s off camera. Jafar Panahi, driver and cameraman, gives us a fascinating film on the way reality spills over into the heart of fiction. He responds to the words of the people, in permanent construction and full of contradictions, with a clever reflection on the make-up of moving shots, certain characters have the power to create images. “The images, their power of representation and concealment, are the fuel which drives Panahi’s *Taxi*. [...] Jafar Panahi has managed to laugh in the face of the bans and send his film to Berlin, where he received the Golden Bear. And as you can imagine, some of the powers that be in Tehran are not at all happy about this. Rather than dwelling on it, they should take a closer look at *Taxi*: with patience and joy (the film is surprisingly lacking in anger), Jafar Panahi explains to them how the images are formed, put together and disseminated without any bureaucrat managing to completely control it. The only ones who can claim to have this power are the artists.” Thomas Sotinel, *Le Monde*, 15 April 2015

Jafar Panahi  
Iran, 2015, 82', OVST NL – FR

# Jafar Panahi, *Images/nuages*



Jafar Panahi, *Images/nuages*, co-written by Jean-Michel Frodon and Clément Chéroux, co-published by Filigranes Éditions and the Éditions du Centre Pompidou, 25 €  
Available in BOZAR bookshop

The first book dedicated to the Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi, is an essay about his cinema and his photographs and echoes the full retrospective of his films at the Centre Pompidou, and the exhibition of a never-before-seen series of photographs entitled *Nuages*, that he began after he was sentenced to six years in prison and given a twenty year ban on filming or leaving the country. First and foremost Jafar Panahi is a filmmaker (*The White Balloon*, *The Circle*, *Taxi*), but photography enabled him to continue creating at a time when defying the forbidden to make films hadn't yet been envisaged. The cinema critic Jean-Michel Frodon, has written a detailed essay on his work as a filmmaker and there is a long conversation with Panahi that took place in Tehran in April 2016. Clément Chéroux, curator of photography at the Centre Pompidou, concentrates on the photo series *Nuages*, which is reproduced in this work. A selection of these photographs will be incorporated in the Centre Pompidou collection.

Jafar Panahi, *Images/nuages*  
Jean-Michel Frodon & Clément Chéroux

## PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### BOZAR

13.10.2016  
8,6 euro

28.11.2016  
6,4 euro

Photo series *Les nuages*:  
free entrance  
[www.bozar.be](http://www.bozar.be)

### CINEMATEK

4 euro (2 euro / -12 year)  
[www.cinematek.be](http://www.cinematek.be)

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## Contribution to the focus on Jafar Panahi in Brussels

### THE CENTRE FOR FINE ARTS

Head of Exhibitions: Sophie Lauwers  
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### CINEMATEK

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Programmer: Micha Pleitnickx  
Digilab: Francis Malfiet, Bruno Mestdagh, Marianne Marfoutine, Christoph Piette

## With special thanks to:

### CENTRE POMPIDOU

Head of Cinema: Sylvie Pras  
Curator of the exhibition: Clément Chéroux, Sylvie Pras  
Programmation: Eva Markovits, Claire Allouche, Amélie Galli  
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Jafar Panahi, Solmaz Panahi, Pooya Abbasian & Jean-Michel Frodon

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