

Berlinale  
74<sup>th</sup> Internationale  
Filmfestspiele  
Berlin  
Competition

كيك محبوب من

# MY FAVOURITE CAKE

a film by  
MARYAM MOGHADDAM  
& BEHTASH SANAEEHA





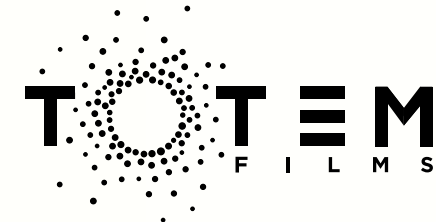
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# MY FAVOURITE CAKE

a film by  
MARYAM MOGHADDAM  
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2024 | COLOR | 96'  
Iran, France, Sweden, Germany  
16:9 (1.77:1) | 5.1 | Farsi

## INTERNATIONAL SALES



Paris, France  
hello@totem-films.com  
www.totem-films.com

## INTERNATIONAL PRESS

### WOLF CONSULTANTS

Michael Arnon | Gordon Spragg  
Tel: +49 178 547 0179  
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wolf-con.com

## PRODUCTION

FILMSAZAN JAVAN  
Gholamreza Mousavi

BEHTASH SANAAEHA

CARACTERES PRODUCTIONS  
Étienne de Ricaud

HOBAB  
Peter Krupenin

WATCHMEN PRODUCTIONS  
Christopher Zitterbart

ONE NIGHT.  
TWO LONELY HEARTS.  
ENDLESS  
POSSIBILITIES.

## LOGLINE

Mahin (70) lives alone, until she decides to break her solitary routine and revitalize her love life. But as she opens up to romance, **an unexpected encounter quickly evolves into an unforgettable evening.**





# SYNOPSIS

Mahin (70) lives alone in Tehran since her husband's death and her daughter's departure for Europe, until an afternoon tea with friends leads her to break her solitary routine and revitalize her love life. **But as Mahin opens herself up to new romance, what begins as an unexpected encounter quickly evolves into an unpredictable, unforgettable evening.**

# WRITERS-DIRECTORS' STATEMENT

**I**N MIDDLE-EASTERN COUNTRIES GOVERNED BY RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGIES, **WOMEN ARE CONSIDERED SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS.** They are deprived of a large number of rights and can only claim an identity through the men in their lives. Unfortunately, Iranian women also fall under this category. For years, Iranian women have struggled against unjust laws such as the mandatory hijab and lack of equal rights. Relations with the opposite sex are placed under a microscope in all situations. These conditions get even more complex when a woman decides to live alone, as is the case for our protagonist Mahin.

“ IN MY FAVOURITE CAKE, WE FOCUS OUR CONCERNS ON WOMEN, LONELINESS, AGING AND THE ABSURDITY OF LIFE. ”

The film is the story of a woman living on her own, and attempting to be independent in a traditional society. Mahin has no choice but to worry about the views and threats of a religious and misogynistic wider society. She is a woman whose basic freedoms are restricted by laws that are intrinsically anti-woman.

**Iranian people have been staring into sorrows and desolation for many years and they know that if they get a chance to be happy, they should appreciate it well.** Because maybe that moment will be the only chance they get. This is also a story about seizing that moment.





“ THE FILM TAKES PLACE AT A TIME WHEN IRANIAN WOMEN HAVE MOVED TO THE FRONT LINES OF THE FIGHT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AND ARE ATTEMPTING TO TEAR DOWN THE WALLS OF THESE OUTDATED AND FOSSILISED BELIEFS. ”

The same beliefs that forbid writers, filmmakers, and all storytellers from depicting the true lives of Iranian women behind closed doors. **The pre-production of the film started at the beginning of the summer and three months before the beginning of the *Woman, Life, Freedom* movement.** We were in the beginning of shooting when Mehsa Gina Amini was killed. Our whole team suddenly was under a deep shock, and in the mental state we were in, it was not easy to continue to work.

Those were terrible days. **Shooting had to be done in secret as much as possible.** We could not stop, nor could the events on the streets be ignored. Even as we struggled, we agreed together to make and finish this film. **A film in praise of women, in praise of life and in praise of freedom.**

For years, Iranian filmmakers have been making films under the weight of restrictive rules. Breaking the rules can lead to years of suspension or prohibition. In this deplorable situation, we are still trying to depict the reality of Iranian society in our films, generally lost under different layers of censorship.

Breaking some of these restrictions is a choice we are making as we hope to address the issue of Iranian women. We believe it is no longer possible to tell the story of an Iranian woman while replicating oppression, such as with the mandatory hijab. **Women have never been allowed to have their real lives depicted on screen, as they are in their homes, and this time we decided to cross the red lines. We accept the consequences of this choice.**

Already, after making the film BALLAD OF A WHITE COW, we got involved in a court case that lasted two years. The same complaint the security agencies filed against us for making that film and its anti-death penalty/execution content persisted until recently, and it has caused the film to be banned. But the success of the film also gave us the motivation to not be afraid, and to keep fighting to make our favourite films.

The actors who participate in such films can also be subject to complex consequences. **Our wonderful female lead actress, who we thought of for the role from the beginning, has taken a big risk to star in this movie.** Not many female actresses in Iranian cinema would sign on to play such a role.

“ IT FEELS LIKE IN IRAN, EVEN EVERY NON-POLITICAL STORY GETS MORE POLITICAL, MOMENT BY MOMENT, BECAUSE EVERYTHING IN IRAN IS CONNECTED TO THE POLITICAL SITUATION. EVEN WHAT YOU EAT. WHAT YOU WEAR. EVEN THE INTIMATE RELATIONSHIPS OF PEOPLE. ”

**This is a story based on the reality of the everyday lives of middle-class women in Iran and a close look at a woman's loneliness as she enters her senior years.** The realities of women's lives in Iran have hardly ever been told, and yet the film is a playful tale about hope and joy in life, as well as the absurdity of death.

- Maryam Moghaddam & Behtash Sanaeeha  
*Writers & Directors*



# MARYAM MOGHADDAM & BEHTASH SANAEIHA

## WRITERS - DIRECTORS

Maryam Moghaddam was born in Tehran. She is an actress, screenwriter and director. She graduated from the Performing Arts School of Gothenburg, Sweden. She has performed in various Swedish theatres and has starred in Iranian films such as Jafar Panahi and Kambuzia Partovi's *CLOSED CURTAIN* (2013), which won a Silver Bear at the 63rd Berlinale.

Behdash Sanaeeha was born in Shiraz. After completing his degree in architecture, he began writing scripts and directing short films, documentaries and commercials. His first feature film *RISK OF ACID RAIN* (2015) was screened at more than thirty international festivals.

Behdash and Maryam began their collaboration by co-writing the feature film *RISK OF ACID RAIN* (2015). Their film *BALLAD OF A WHITE COW* premiered in Competition at Berlinale 2021. The film was sold by TOTEM FILMS to more than 40 key distributors, and screened at A-list festivals around the world.

## FILMOGRAPHY

2021 - *BALLAD OF A WHITE COW*  
*Feature Fiction, 105'*

Directed by  
BEHTASH SANAEIHA & MARYAM MOGHADDAM  
Written by  
BEHTASH SANAEIHA, MARYAM MOGHADDAM  
& MEHRDAD KOUROSHNIYA

2015 - *RISK OF ACID RAIN*  
*Feature Fiction, 105'*

Directed by  
BEHTASH SANAEIHA  
Written by  
MARYAM MOGHADDAM & BEHTASH SANAEIHA



# MAIN CAST

MAHIN Lily Farhadpour  
FARAMARZ Esmail Mehrabi

# CREW

**DIRECTORS** Maryam Moghaddam & Behtash Sanaeeha  
**SCREENPLAY** Behtash Sanaeeha & Maryam Moghaddam  
**DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY** Mohammad Haddadi  
**EDITORS** Ata Mehrad, Behtash Sanaeeha, Ricardo Saraiva  
**MUSIC** Henrik Nagy  
**SOUND DESIGN** Hossein Ghoorchian  
**SOUND** Abdolreza Heydari, Iman Baziyar  
**PRODUCTION AND COSTUME DESIGN** Maryam Moghaddam & Amir Hivand  
**PRODUCTION MANAGERS** Meysam Meraji, Majid Karbasian  
**PRODUCERS** Gholamreza Mousavi, Behtash Sanaeeha, Étienne de Ricaud, Peter Krupenin, Christopher Zitterbart  
**PRODUCTION COMPANIES** FILMSAZAN JAVAN (Iran), CARACTERES PRODUCTIONS (France), HOBAB (Sweden), WATCHMEN PRODUCTIONS (Germany)  
**SUPPORTED BY** Swedish Film Institute, SVT, New Dawn, ZDF/ARTE, Medienboard Berlin-Brandenburg, World Cinema Fund, CNC Aide aux cinémas du monde, Institut Français, Région Ile de France, Eurimages  
**IN ASSOCIATION WITH** and the Berlinale Coproduction Market  
ZDF/ARTE

# TOTEM FILMS

TOTEM is an international sales & production company based in Paris and launched in 2019.

TOTEM ATELIER develops and produces projects with a strong international potential.

TOTEM FILMS acquires feature films to export them all over the world.

**TOTEM FILMS** selected filmography includes, among many others, CROSSING by Levan Akin (Berlinale Panorama Opening 2024), KALAK by Isabella Eklöf (Special Jury Prize in San Sebastián FF 2023), BLACKBIRD BLACKBIRD by Elene Naveriani (Directors' Fortnight 2023), SLOW by Marija Kavtaradze (Sundance 2023 - Best Director Award), THE SUPER EIGHT YEARS by Annie Ernaux & David Ernaux-Briot (Directors' Fortnight 2022), COMPARTMENT N°6 by Juho Kuosmanen (Cannes Competition 2021- Grand Prix), MONEYBOYS by C.B. Yi (Cannes Un Certain Regard 2021), BALLAD OF A WHITE COW by Behtash Sanaeeha & Maryam Moghaddam (Berlinale Competition 2021), WE by Alice Diop (Berlinale Encounters 2021- Best Film) & AND THEN WE DANCED by Levan Akin (Directors' Fortnight 2019).

**TOTEM ATELIER** filmography includes THE HYPNOSIS by Ernst de Geer (Karlovy Vary 2023, where it won 3 awards), DEAD GIRLS DANCING by Anna Roller (Tribeca 2023), MARCEL! by Jasmine Trinca (Cannes Official Selection 2022).

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