

First of Iran's Cinema

First Iranian talkie made in other countries

'Lor Girl' was the first talking film ever to be produced in the Farsi language. Directed by Ardeshir Irani, it was filmed in 1932 under the Imperial Film Company in Mumbai, India. Lor Girl is the first feature film to star a female actress. It was still a taboo at the time to broadcast women in cinema and even radio.

First Iranian documentary

The very first Iranian documentary film was about an event called the Flower Day in Ostend, Belgium. It was filmed by Mirza-Ebrahim Khan Akkasbashi.

First Iranian war documentary

'Khorramshahr: The City of Life, the City of Blood' was filmed by Mahmood Bahadori, and 'Flaming Poppies' was made by Hooshang Shafti in 1963. Flaming Poppies is about the daily life of Bakhtiari nomads in winter.

First Iranian film trailer

The first film trailer was for 'A Girl from Shiraz', a film produced by Samuel Khachikian in 1954. The trailer later became a popular role model for Iranian trailer makers.

First Iranian drama school

Registration for the first drama class started in 1930 with a total enrollment of 300 students, even though only 12 students participated in the classes. The classes were held in various fields of music, acting, sports, filmmaking, gymnastics, and dancing.

First Iranian director

Ovanes Ohanian (October 1896-September 1960) was an Armenian-Iranian filmmaker who built the first film school in Iran's history. His first film, Abi and Rabi, was made in 1930.

First Iranian film

Abi and Rabi was Iran's first feature-length film directed by Ovanes Ohanian. The film depicts the amusing adventures of Abi (a tall man) and Rabi (a short man) in various scenarios.

First Iranian talkie made in Iran

'The Storm of Life' was the first talking film ever to be produced in Farsi. The film, which was shot in black and white, was directed by Ali Daryabeigi and written by Nezam Vafa. It was produced by Mitra Film Company in Iran in 1948.

First Iranian colored film

'Whirlwind' is the first colored Iranian film directed by Hassan Kheradmand in 1953.

First Iranian theatres

Cinema Soleil (soleil means Sun in French) was established in 1900 in Tabriz. Cinema Etemad al-Saltaneh, which was owned by a person named Etemad al-Saltaneh, was built by Avano in Mashhad. It was also commonly called Shahr-e-Farang. Cinema Pars was built on Dariush Street in 1926 in Shiraz.

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Iran Daily

Twisting story of Iran's National Cinema Day

Arts & Culture Desk

Iran's National Cinema Day, celebrated on September 12, has long been a subject of controversy regarding its true birthdate.

Abbas Baharloo, a cinema researcher, argues that when Mozaffar al-Din Shah, the fifth Qajar king, bought cinematography equipment, he marked the birth of cinema in Iran, which could also roughly be measured from the filming of the 'flower festival,' dating back to 120 years ago.

However, there is another perspective that maintains the production of the first Iranian film, 'Abi and Rabi,' is the beginning of Iranian cinema history in Iran, which falls short of 90 years ago.

The selection of September 12 as National Cinema Day was based on the day Mirza Ebrahim Khan Akkas Bashi, the royal photographer of Mozaffar ad-Din Shah, first used a camera to film the 'flower festival'.

Twenty-six years ago in 1997, the Iranian House of Cinema proposed the idea of designating a National Cinema Day, with the intention of honoring May 21, but it was eventually approved on September 12, 2000, becoming an official part of the Iranian calendar.

It was in 1997 that Abolhassan Davoudi, one of the council members of Iran Cinema Celebration, said, "It has been decided that one day of the year be named 'National Cinema Day,' and the cinema celebration should be held simultaneously with that day. It is planned to honor May 21 as 'National Cinema Day,' and we have presented this proposal to the Supreme Council of Culture. With the approval of the Iranian Parliament, we can officially hold the House of Cinema celebration every year on the same day."

Two years later, on September 12, 2000, 'National Cinema Day' was approved and became part of the Iranian calendar. From that



year onward, this day served as an occasion to address the challenges facing filmmakers and the national cinema industry and to draw the attention of the general public to this sector.

Although there were occasional comments about the insignificance or ineffectiveness of this day, the symbolic presence of Cinema Day on the national calendar does signify the importance of cinema.

However, in 2020, the General Culture Council of Iran moved 'National Cinema Day,' along with several other occasions, to the appendices of the calendar. The secretary of the council explained, "Our official calendar had

become full, so we had to eliminate some occasions and move others to the appendices. 'National Cinema Day' was one of the cases that got moved to the appendices."

The removal of this national day from the country's calendar sparked objections from filmmakers, and the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution finally reinstated National Cinema Day in the calendar in 2014.

National Cinema Day has been back on the calendar for several years now as an opportunity to further explore the concerns and challenges that the Iranian cinema is currently facing and find solutions to address them.

On the occasion of Iranian National Cinema Day, here are some

Prime examples of Iranian social cinema

Social Desk

All through the history of Iranian cinema, filmmakers exploited the transformative potential of the medium as a tool for raising critical social concerns and driving social change.

Before the Islamic Revolution of 1979, despite facing stringent censorship and

political restrictions posed by the Pahlavi regime, Iranian filmmakers used the silver screen to artfully express dissent, challenge societal norms, and shed much needed light on urgent issues. Iranian New Wave directors used symbolism and allegory as a means to convey deeply political and social messages to their audience in a time period that mind-numb-

ing, cheesy melodramas dominated theater halls.

After the revolution, Iranian cinema underwent a humanistic, spiritual transformation, after which it gradually found its unique style of depicting timeless struggles facing humankind. In time, post-revolution cinema of the country turned into a social platform that could speak to

large audiences.

Not only Iranian cinema was primarily a social one until recently, but it also carried the power to affect society in an array of ways. In this piece, we will put under examination a handful of post-revolution films that have captivated Iranian – and even international – audiences and stirred the social imagination.



1969 'The Cow' by Dariush Mehrjui

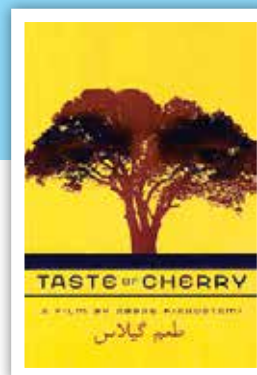
Based on a story by Gholam-Hossein Sa'edi, the film revolves around a humble villager named Masht Hassan, who lives a simple life in a remote Iranian village with his beloved cow. When tragedy strikes and his cow unexpectedly dies, Masht Hassan's world is shattered. Consumed by grief, he descends into madness and begins to believe that he is the cow, assuming its identity and mannerisms. The villagers, initially sympathetic, are taken aback by Masht Hassan's transformation and struggle to comprehend his shattered psyche. As the line between reality and delusion blurs, the film explores the complexities of identity, mental health, and the fragility of the human mind.



1992 'From Karkheh to Rhein' by Ebrahim Hatamikia

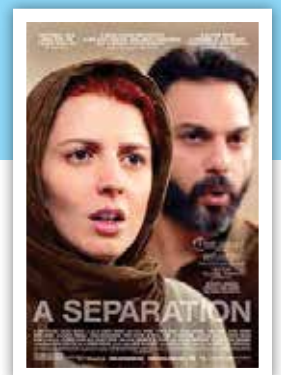
It is an emotionally powerful movie that narrates the story of Saeed, a soldier injured in the Iraqi-imposed war, who is sent to Germany for treatments. In Germany, he meets his sister and her German husband.

The sorrows of Iranian soldiers who fell victim to chemical attacks of Iraqi dictator Saddam, enabled by western countries' support, moved Iranian as well as international audiences, bringing many to tears. The audiences were transfixed as the siblings, who have not had any relations in many years, try to re-establish the close relationship that they had long time ago.



1997 'Taste of Cherry' by Abbas Kiarostami

One of late Abbas Kiarostami's memorable movies, it follows its protagonist Mr. Badii, a middle-aged man, on a mysterious quest. Driving around, looking for someone to assist him, he picks up various passengers. When it is revealed that he plans to commit suicide and is seeking someone to bury him if he succeeds, each passenger reacts differently. Each encounter with a potential assistant reflects a different aspect of life, raising existential questions and exploring the profound intricacies of human existence. Through these encounters, the film scrutinizes themes of loneliness, connection, and the search for meaning in a world that often feels devoid of purpose.



2011 'A Separation' by Asghar Farhadi

This internationally acclaimed masterpiece explores complex themes of gender, class, and justice within Iranian society. Through a gripping narrative centered around a couple seeking a divorce, the film depicts the intricacies of interpersonal relationships and the moral dilemmas faced by individuals on a daily basis in a changing society.

The movie not only resonated with Iranian audiences but also garnered worldwide recognition. The accolades received by the movie and its director filled Iranians with a sense of pride.