

The Pretender: Young filmmaker's portrait of Attar of Nishapur

Ramin Hosseinpour's New Short Documentary on Attar of Nishapur

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INTERVIEW

Ramin Hosseinpour is an Iranian film director, architect and composer, known for blending cinema with architecture and rock music. After making the experimental short films *Ghanimat* (2014) and *Eshtiagh* (2017), both of which were screened at international festivals and reached the finalist stage, he has in recent years gained a stronger presence at international festivals with *Sculpture* (2022), a short documentary centered on Rumi and Shams Tabrizi, for which he has received several awards. Hosseinpour is currently developing *The Pretender*, a short animated documentary about the life and mystical journey of Attar of Nishapur against the historical background of the Mongol invasion. He is serving as the film's screenwriter, director and composer, including composing its orchestral score. The international success of *Sculpture* (2022) and its run on the festival circuit drew attention to Hosseinpour's subsequent projects. He is currently developing *The Pretender*, a short animated documentary on Attar of Nishapur, which he has stated he intends to present at major international festivals. *Sculpture* received third place at the Rhode Island International Film Festival in 2022, one of the Academy Awards® qualifying festivals in the United States, and later won the Special Jury Prize and Best Short Documentary at the Toronto International Nollywood Film Festival (TINFF) in 2025, a Canadian Screen Award qualify-



Ramin Hosseinpour

ing festival. In addition to these highlights, the film received approximately seventy awards across various international festivals.

IRAN DAILY: First, could you tell us a little about your background in short filmmaking and the path you have taken from your early works to *The Pretender*?

HOSSEINPOUR: In 2014, I made a film called *Ghanimat*, which was an experimental short. I then made *Eshtiagh* in 2017, which was also an experimental short. Both films were screened at international festivals.

After *Eshtiagh*, I moved on to a project that took from 2020 to 2022 to complete. It was a film called *Sculpture* (2022), which explored Rumi and his relationship with Shams Tabrizi. The film was screened at various festivals and went on to receive several international awards.

What story did *Sculpture* specifically tell about Rumi and Shams Tabrizi, and from what perspective did you approach their relationship?

HOSSEINPOUR: The story begins when Shams goes to Rumi's home. Rumi has a book in his hands containing his poems. Shams engages him in conversation and eventually takes the book from Rumi and throws it into a pool. Rumi becomes worried, but the book sinks into the water and later returns intact, described as emerging from the water by divine or spiritual permission.

I incorporated this story into the film as a conceptual adaptation. In the film, there is a sculptor sitting at his desk who hears Rumi's poetry and recreates it in his surroundings in the form of figures and sculptures. In fact, the figure that takes shape is a kind of representation of that book and of the relationship between Rumi and Shams. The film also has the quality of a reading, with the text itself becoming part of the work, while poetry serves as one of the main elements of the narrative.

What challenges are involved in bringing profound mystical and historical concepts into the format of a short film?

HOSSEINPOUR: When you tell a big story in a short amount of time, you must be able to bring the sequence of events and concepts together with the

mise-en-scène, découpage, architecture and musical harmony, without allowing any of these elements to stick out from the overall structure of the film.

Since 2014, I have been pursuing an approach that focuses on blending cinema with architecture and rock music, alongside orchestral composition. I don't see cinema as being limited simply to dialogue, actors and sets. For me, color, rhythm, space, rock intensity, orchestral sound and concept are also languages of cinema. Sometimes I use musical rhythm to create excitement, sometimes color, and sometimes architectural space. Ultimately, all these elements should be blended into the service of a single structure.

Let's turn to your new work, *The Pretender*. How did the idea for the film and the choice of Attar of Nishapur as its central figure come about?

HOSSEINPOUR: The Pretender is about the Mongol invasion of Iran and the city of Nishapur, as well as the life and mystical journey of Attar of Nishapur. The film explores Attar's life, thought and mystical journey through a conceptual and historical approach, while avoiding a conventional biographical treatment.

What stage of production is the film currently at? And do you have plans to take *The Pretender* to major festivals?

HOSSEINPOUR: The project is currently in production, and I hope to finish it by the end of this year. But because it is a demanding project, I cannot rush it. We are trying to maintain the quality of the work. If the conditions allow, we hope to present *The Pretender* at major international festivals. With *Sculpture*, I gained valuable experience on the festival circuit, so it is natural for me to have greater expectations for this new work and for a subject like Attar.



Multidisciplinary Background

Ramin Hosseinpour was born on March 20, 1987. He holds a Ph.D. in Architecture and bachelor's degrees in Film Directing and Music.

In architecture, Hosseinpour has worked as a lecturer and designer, with publications on vertical architecture, human-technology relations, ecology, and structural behavior in skyscrapers.

In music, Hosseinpour works as a composer and rock vocalist, with five rock albums: 8Choices, Contempo-

rary, Avangard (Vol. 1), The Pretender, and Ganjoor (Vol. 1), as well as several singles. His music has received multiple awards at international festivals, including a Bronze Medal at the Global Music Awards, Best Male Vocalist at the LA Music Video Awards, and Best Composer at the LA Sun Film Fest.

In January 2026, Hosseinpour was interviewed by The New Arab about the work and legacy of Iranian filmmaker and playwright Bahram Beyzai.

TENDER NO.: 08-38-0240005

second Announcement

The National Iranian South Oil Company (NISOC) is seeking to procure the specified goods listed in the table below through a Qualitative Evaluation Call for conducting a public tender via the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD). All stages of the tender process including the receipt of tender documents, submission of bidders' proposals, and the opening of bid envelopes, shall be carried out exclusively through the Government Electronic Procurement System (SETAD) portal at www.setadiran.ir. Bidders who have not previously registered must complete the registration process on the aforementioned portal and obtain an Electronic Signature certificate to participate in the tender.

Item	Material Description	Quantity
1	PARTS FOR "HYDRA RIG" COILED TUBING IN MODEL: HR660, SER. NO. J13471, JOB#302197 REF. HYDRA RIG INJECTOR CHAIN ASSEMBLY, CD316387C GRIPPER 1.25 IN. (OPTIONAL) FIRST 7_DIGIT_OF_IRANCODE:6222260,NAFT_CODE:62222605555530 P/N:CD366723	60NO
2	GRIPPER 1.75 IN. (OPTIONAL) FIRST 7_DIGIT_OF_IRANCODE:6222260,NAFT_CODE:62222605555530P/N:CD365722	60NO

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at: www.setadiran.ir, not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded. The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 3,609,02 EURO or 6,146,945,095 RIAL, in favor of NISOC.

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