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- TIME OUT (UK)



abbas kiarostami's

ten



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MARZI KARIMZ and ABBAS KIAROSTAMI present "TEN"
MANI AKHARI - RIFA KHANSAHI - ARZYBEN BALEZIANEN - MAHSAH SHARAFI - AHMAD MOKRI - AMIN MAHER - KAMRAN AIL
MORTEZA SHARAFI - SAHMAN KHANSAHI - MASOUMI MINAJER - MAZDAH SEPPANU - REZA VAZDANI - VARD GRAD
Directed by ABBAS KIAROSTAMI a ZEITGEIST FILMS release

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ten

a film by Abbas Kiarostami

Celebrated Iranian writer-director Abbas Kiarostami (**Taste of Cherry, Through the Olive Trees**) once again casts his masterful cinematic gaze upon the modern sociopolitical landscape of his homeland—this time as seen through the eyes of one woman as she drives through the streets of Tehran over a period of several days. Her journey is comprised of ten conversations with various female passengers—including her sister, a hitchhiking prostitute and a jilted bride—as well as her imperious young son. As Kiarostami’s “dashboard cam” eavesdrops on these lively, yet heart-wrenching road trips, a complex portrait of contemporary Iran comes sharply into focus.

Kiarostami on TEN

Sometimes, I tell myself that TEN is a film that I could never make again. You cannot decide to make such a film... It's a little like CLOSE-UP. It's possible to continue along the same path but it requires a great deal of patience. Indeed, this is not something that can be repeated easily. It must occur of its own accord, like an incident or a happening... At the same time, it requires a great deal of preparation. Originally, this was the story of a psychoanalyst her patients and her car, but that was two years ago...

I was invited to Beirut in Lebanon last week, for a film workshop with students. One of them told me, "You're the only one who can make such a film because of your reputation. If one of us had made it, no one would have accepted it." I replied that, as his teacher, I owed him the truth: making something simple requires a great deal of experience. And, first of all, you need to understand that simplicity isn't the same as facility.

Kundera tells a fascinating story that genuinely impressed me: he relates how his father's lexical range diminished with age and, at the end of his life, was reduced to two words: "It's strange!" Of course, he hadn't reached that point because he had nothing much to say anymore but because those two words effectively summed up his life's experience. They were the very essence of it. Perhaps that's the story behind minimalism too...

The disappearance of direction. That's what is at stake: the rejection of all elements vital to ordinary cinema. I state, with a great deal of caution, that direction, in the usual sense of the word, can vanish in this kind of process. In this form of cinema, the director is more like a football coach. He has to do most of his work before the take starts. Indeed, for me, the film always starts well before the initial preparation and is almost never over. It's a never-ending game. Each time I show it, I await the audience's reactions. The discussions following the screening take on a new turn each time... For me, the beauty of art resides in the reactions that it causes.

This film was created without being made as such. Even so, it isn't a documentary. Neither a documentary nor a purely fabricated film. Mid-way between the two perhaps... A scene occurs and I decide that it suits me. Later, I realize that one particular element was vital for the integration of the whole.

In TEN, we have a shot in the car with the little boy facing the camera. The scene takes place in front of the camera. And yet there are also people who come over, lower the window and peer into the car. That's documentary. This background. They look at the camera. But what happens in front of the camera isn't documentary because it's guided and controlled in a way. The person in front of the camera manages to forget its presence, it vanishes for him. Emotion is created in this way, the result of a certain quantity of energy and information that we give and then recover later. It circulates... Resulting in the complexity of the situation. This flow must be controlled in order to be released at the right moment.

You cannot promise yourself that you'll make another film like this. It's like wavering in your staunchest convictions and ideas. Sometimes it's easier to protect yourself with good old direction, the scenery, the set...

If anyone were to ask me what I did as a director on this film, I'd say, "Nothing and yet if I didn't exist, this film wouldn't have existed."

In all my films, there are shots where the emotional impact goes beyond direction, triumphing over it, and the emotion becomes more powerful than cinema itself. There's the shot in TASTE OF CHERRY where Mr. Badii, while talking about himself, refuses to let out his emotion. And the corners of his mouth start trembling as he begins to sob. These are shots that I do not claim to have created. They deserve better than that. I was able to provoke them and seize them at the right moment. That's all.

This film is my own "two words." It resumes almost everything. I say "almost" because I'm already thinking about my next film. A one-word film perhaps...



Abbas Kiarostami – biography

One of the true masters of contemporary cinema, Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami has won not only the admiration of audiences and critics worldwide, but also the support of directors as distinguished as Jean-Luc Godard, Nanni Moretti (who made a short film about opening one of Kiarostami's films in his theater in Rome), Chris Marker, and Akira Kurosawa, who has said of Kiarostami's "extraordinary" films: "Words cannot describe my feelings about them and I simply advise you to see his films... When Satyajit Ray passed on, I was very depressed. But after seeing Kiarostami's films, I thanked God for giving us just the right person to take his place."

Though Kiarostami emerged in the West as a major filmmaker in the early '90s—with films like *Close-Up* and *Through the Olive Trees*—he had already been making films in Iran for two decades. Born on June 22nd 1940 in Tehran, Kiarostami was interested in the arts from an early age. He won a painting competition at the age of eighteen, and left home to study at Tehran University's Faculty of Fine Arts. As a designer and illustrator, Kiarostami worked throughout the '60s in advertising, making commercials, designing posters, creating credit titles for films, and illustrating children's books.

In 1969—the year that saw the birth of the Iranian New Wave with Dariush Mehrjui's seminal film *The Cow*—Kiarostami helped to set up a filmmaking department at the Institute for Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults. The department's debut

production was Kiarostami's own first film, the twelve-minute *Bread and Alley*, a charming, neo-realist gem about a small boy's perilous walk home from school. The department would go on to become one of Iran's most famous film studios, producing not only Kiarostami's films, but also such modern Iranian classics as *The Runner and Bashu*, the *Little Stranger*.

Though Kiarostami's films have been compared at various times to those of Satyajit Ray, Vittorio de Sica, Eric Rohmer, or even Jacques Tati, they remain uniquely Kiarostamian. Effortlessly simple and conceptually complex in equal measure; poetic, lyrical, philosophical, self-reflexive and increasingly sophisticated, they mix fiction and documentary in unique ways, often presenting fact as fiction and fiction as fact. (Kiarostami has said "We can never get close to the truth except through lying.")

In the 28 years since *Bread and Alley*, Kiarostami has made more than 20 films, including fiction features, educational shorts, feature-length documentaries, and a series of films for television. He has also written screenplays for other directors, most notably *The White Balloon*, for his former assistant Jafar Panahi.

But it was not until the late '80s that his films began to be shown widely outside Iran. And *Life Goes On* (1992)—the first of Kiarostami's films to be shown at the New York Film Festival—and *Through the Olive Trees* (1994), the last two parts of what has become known as the *Earthquake Trilogy* (which started with *Where is the Friend's House* in 1987) were the films that made Kiarostami's reputation in the West. In 1996 he was honored with a retrospective at the Film Society of Lincoln Center, New York, and in 1997 he came to the Cannes Film Festival at the eleventh hour with *Taste of Cherry*, only to walk away with the grand prize, becoming the first Iranian director ever to win the *Palme d'Or*.

Abbas Kiarostami – filmography

- 1970 Bread and Alley (12 mins)
- 1972 Breaktime (17 mins)
- 1973 THE EXPERIENCE (60 mins)
- 1974 THE TRAVELLER (74 mins)
- 1975 Two Solutions for One Problem (5 mins)
- 1975 So Can I (4 mins)
- 1976 The Colors (15 mins)
- 1976 THE WEDDING SUIT (54 mins)
- 1977 THE REPORT (112 mins)
- 1977 Tribute to the Teachers (30 mins)
- 1978 Solution (11 mins)
- 1978 Jahan Nama Palace (30 mins)
- 1979 CASE No.1, CASE No.2 (53 mins)

- 1980 Toothache (23 mins)
- 1981 Regularly or Irregularly (15 mins)
- 1982 The Chorus (17 mins)
- 1983 FELLOW CITIZEN (52 mins)
- 1984 FIRST GRADERS (84 mins)
- 1987 WHERE IS THE FRIEND'S HOUSE? (87 mins)
- 1989 HOMEWORK (85 mins)

- 1990 CLOSE-UP (100 mins)
- 1992 AND LIFE GOES ON (91 mins)
- 1994 THROUGH THE OLIVE TREES (103 mins)
- 1997 TASTE OF CHERRY (95 mins)
- 1999 THE WIND WILL CARRY US (118 mins)

- 2001 ABC AFRICA (84 mins)
- 2002 TEN (94 mins)

Kiarostami also wrote the screenplays for THE KEY (directed by Ebrahim Forouzesh, 1987), THE JOURNEY (Ali-Reza Raissian, 1995), and THE WHITE BALLOON (Jafar Panahi, 1995).

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Mania AKBARI as The Driver
Amin MAHER as Amin (the son)

Roya ARABSHAHI
Katayoun TALEIDZADEH
Mandana SHARBAF
Amene MORADI
Kamran ADL
Morteza TABATABAI
Bahman KIAROSTAMI
Mastaneh MOHAJER
Mazdak SEPANLU
Reza YADZDANI
Vahid GHAZI

Directed by Abbas KIAROSTAMI

The music over the closing credits is "Walking in the Air" by Howard Blake

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IRAN/FRANCE | 2002 | COLOR | DV Cam / 35mm

Running time: 94 mins

Aspect Ratio: 1.66:1

Sound: DTS

In Farsi with English subtitles

A ZEITGEIST FILMS RELEASE

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