

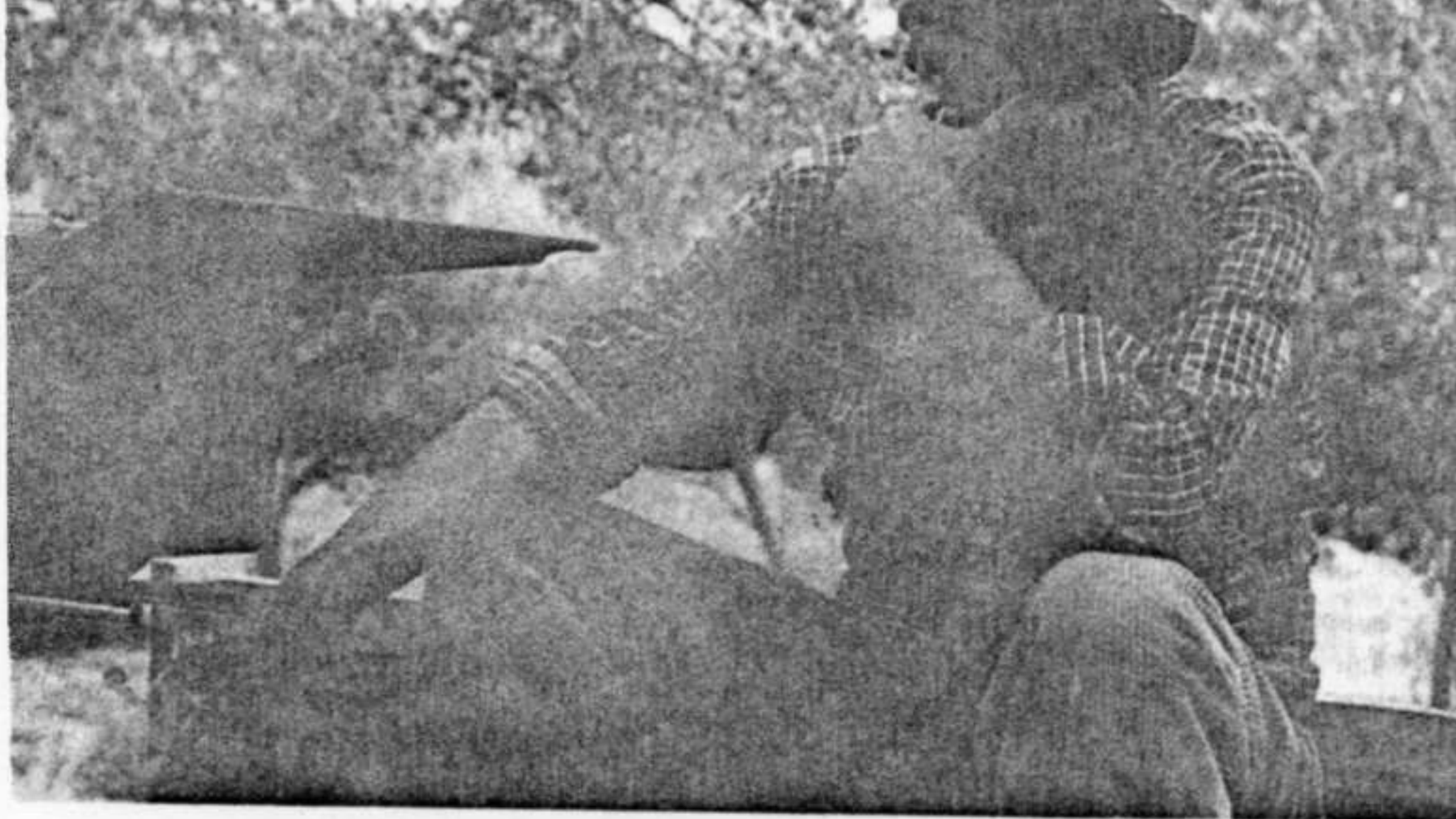
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Khaneh-ye doost kojast? (Where is the friend's home?),
Kiarostami, Abbas, 1987

Betartib ya bedun-e tartib (Regularly or irregularly),
Kiarostami, Abbas, 1981

Whatever you love, you are RUMI



*This retrospective of Kiarostami's feature films and selected shorts pays tribute to the most renowned director to emerge from Iran in the last two decades. He first attracted international audiences in the late '80s with *Where is the House of My Friend?* In the '90s, *Close-up*, *And Life Goes On...*, *Through the Olive Trees* and *The Taste of Cherry* sealed his reputation.*

Born in 1940 in Tehran, he came to film by chance. After studying painting and working as a traffic warden, he joined an advertising agency. Upon joining 'Kanoon', the Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults (which he helped create), this background proved beneficial in making educational films.

Even in 1969, his first feature for 'Kanoon', *The Bread and the Street*, contained the cinematic devices to be found 17 years later in *Where is the House of My Friend?* In his early films, which resemble Sufi parables, the child protagonists rely on their own wits, succeed in righting wrongs and act from a personal sense of justice. Whether depicting a private quest (*The Solution*) or questioning adult authoritarianism (*Homework*), all the films encourage personal initiative.

In his later films, a mixture of fiction and reality highlights the distinction between life and its representation, the desire to reveal the cinematic process and the role of art in daily life. The devices used to illuminate these themes, analysed in essays in the book 'Life and Art, The New Iranian Cinema', which accompanies this season, are integral to Kiarostami's status and success as a master of contemporary film-making.

ROSE ISSA

Kiarostami Short Films

Thu 10 June 8.45 NFT1; Mon 28 June 8.30 NFT2

The Bread and the Street (Nan va Kucheh) (Iran 1970). A young boy is sent to buy bread. On his way home, a dog blocks his route. How to bypass the menace? Since retreat is out of question for Kiarostami, he has to find a solution. Kiarostami's first masterpiece, with no dialogue, anticipates his later work. Plus **Experience** (Tajrobeh) (Iran 1973), an odd-job boy working in a photography shop falls in love from afar with a wealthy girl. Plus **The Solution** (Rah-e Hal) (Iran 1978). A man stranded on a busy road waits for a lift: a minimalist tale with maximum results. Plus **With or Without Order** (Be Tartib Ya bedun-e Tartib) (Iran 1981). In several doubled sketches, Kiarostami depicts the role of order in society. Actions are shown being carried out in an orderly, then a chaotic manner. This pertinent and very witty short purports to argue the case for order – or does it? 90 mins total approx.

The Report (Gozareh)

Sun 6 June 8.30 NFT2; Sun 13 June 6.15 NFT2

Unlike most of Kiarostami's future films, which are set in the countryside, this is an urban chronicle, set in the Tehran offices of the Ministry of Finance. It's 1977, two years before the Revolution, and in the Shah's last years malaise and corruption are blooming. An employee receives favours in exchange for advancing people's files. His relationship with his wife is in crisis; exhausted, she is threatening to leave him. One day he is prevented from entering his office, due to a complaint from a man who refuses to tip him. Returning home, he finds his wife has tried to kill herself... Iran 1977. 112 mins

Homework (Mashq-e Shab)

Wed 16 June 6.15 NFT2; Sun 20 June 8.45 NFT1

Inspiration for this film came from personal experience: each evening, Kiarostami's children faced problems created by teachers' demands. Here, young children talk about their schoolwork, their relationships with their parents, hardship, and their preference for watching cartoons over copying out boring homework. A tragic statement about the ineptitude of the education system. Iran 1990. 86 mins.

We are delighted to welcome Abbas Kiarostami to introduce the screening on Sun 20 June.



Where is the House of My Friend?



Traveller (Mosafer)

Wed 9 June 6.15 NFT2; Thu 17 June 6.15 NFT2

Qassem prefers playing football in the streets to doing his homework. He's desperate to travel to Tehran and watch a match with his favourite team. He'll do virtually anything to raise the amount required for the trip and the ticket. But life can take tragi-comic turns... 'What you find is what you are'—Rumi. *Iran 1974. 72 mins.*

Where is the House of My Friend?

(Khaneh-ye Doost Kojast?)

Tue 15 June 6.30 NFT1; Mon 21 June 8.45 NFT1

In this lyrical film, a schoolboy sets out to find a friend's house in a neighbouring village, to return a notebook he took by mistake; his friend will be punished if he fails to do his homework. The journey is full of revelations. A tale of great beauty that can be read on many levels, it's a fable about children and adults, friendship and loneliness, duty and bravery. *Iran 1987/Dir Abbas Kiarostami. 85 mins. J (early house only).*

We are delighted to welcome Abbas Kiarostami to introduce the screening on Mon 21 June.



Close-up (Namay-e-Nazdik)

Thu 17 June 8.45 NFT1; Sun 27 June 6.15 NFT2

A poor, unemployed man, Ali Sabzian, passes himself off to a middle-class family as upcoming director Mohsen Makhmalbaf. He enters their home under the pretence of looking for a location. Inspired by a newspaper story, Kiarostami films Sabzian's trial – 'Translate my suffering in your films' – and recreates key events with all the people involved, Makhmalbaf included. A playful film about changing characters, dupes, dreams and cinema, it's also a lesson on how reality may become fiction and vice versa. *Iran 1990/Dir Abbas Kiarostami. 90 mins.*



And Life Goes On... (aka Life, and Nothing More...)
(Va Zendegi Edameh Darad)

Fri 18 June 8.30 NFT2; Sat 26 June 6.30 NFT1

The film investigates the aftermath of a devastating earthquake in 1990 which killed 50,000 people in northern Iran. A film-maker and his son travel to Koker, hometown of the two boys who appeared in his *Where is the House of My Friend?* A powerful and beautiful tale of life and death, destruction and reconstruction, pain and loss, filmed largely in silence, it is a masterly demonstration of how death and devastation can become a dramatic source of life. *Iran 1992/ Dir Abbas Kiarostami. 91 mins.*

Through the Olive Trees

(Zir-e-Derakhtan Zeyton)

Tue 22 June 6.30 NFT1; Tue 29 June 8.45 NFT1

A film director has cast two amateur actors to play a newly married couple in *And Life Goes On...*. But the man stutters as soon as he speaks to the girl, Tahereh. As a last minute replacement, Hossein, a handyman, is given the role. But Tahereh is reluctant to play opposite Hossein, who is desperately in love with her in real life. Will the film give Hossein the chance to achieve in real life what he is acting out in a movie? Kiarostami at his best. *Iran 1994. 103 mins. J Cert U (early house only).*

We are delighted to welcome Abbas Kiarostami to introduce the screening on Tue 22 June. Joint ticket available (Tue 22 June screening only) with the Guardian Interview with Abbas Kiarostami £10.00, concs £7.50.



The Guardian Interview with Abbas Kiarostami

Tue 22 June 8.45 NFT1

The most innovative Iranian director of the last decade will be appearing on the NFT stage. After an absence of more than 20 years, this is a rare opportunity to hear Abbas Kiarostami discuss his work and share his views on cinema. The Guardian Interview will be conducted by Geoff Andrew, film editor of *Time Out* and NFT Programmer.

Tickets £8.00, concs £6.00. Joint ticket available with the Tue June 22 screening only of *Through the Olive Trees* £10.00, concs £7.50.



The Taste of Cherry (Ta'meh-e-Gilas)

Fri 25 June 6.30 NFT1; Sat 26 June 8.45 NFT1; Sun 27 June 3.20 NFT2

A man in his 40s, seemingly well off, drives around asking strangers (labourers, a soldier) to perform a favour he'll pay for. He is repeatedly rebuffed. After 20 minutes we learn he's planning to commit suicide, and wants someone to bury him. What are his reasons? Kiarostami merely hints at the man's life and motivation, while subtly observing details of modern Iranian life; refugees, unemployment, rapidly changing landscapes, a silent despair. Yet it's also, finally, a fable about how a taxidermist who deals with death might just give a desperate man a taste for life. *Iran 1997/ Dir Abbas Kiarostami. 99 mins. J-Cert PG (early houses only).*

