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Divorce Iranian Style

ENGLAND/IRAN 1998, 80 min.

In Farsi with English subtitles

DIR Kim Longinotto, Ziba Mir-Hosseini **PROD** Longinotto **CAM** Zahra Saiedzadeh, Longinotto **ED** Barrie Vince

GGA *Golden Spire, Society and Culture - International*

Never before has divorce been a topic so simultaneously revealing, inspiring, witty and tragic. *Divorce Iranian Style*, a collaboration between longtime documentary maker Kim Longinotto (*Dream Girls*, SFIFF 1994) and Iranian anthropologist Ziba Mir-Hosseini, offers an intimate and impassioned look at marital life and strife seen through the stories of six Iranian women who are fighting for their rights within a patriarchal judicial system. Shooting almost entirely in one family law courtroom in Tehran, the filmmakers—alternately neutral observers and complicit confidantes—present the women's cases as they unfold in front of the judge and in the halls of the courthouse. In one of the cases, both parties want divorce; in four others, the women seek their freedom; and in the last, a divorced woman desperately seeks to maintain custody of her four-year-old daughter. The remarkable power of this film derives from the filmmakers' ability to elicit frank and honest comments from all involved: The would-be divorcees manipulate the repressive system with an outspoken, indomitable spirit and humor. Though there are few "happy endings," we are still inspired by the women's extraordinary determination—and the fact that this film actually got made, and screened, in Iran.

Irina Leimbacher

Kim Longinotto (b. London, England, 1952) Selected Filmography: *Rock Wives* (1996), *Shinjuku Boys* (1995), *Dream Girls* (SFIFF 1994), *The Good Wife of Tokyo* (1992); Ziba Mir-Hosseini (b. San Andaj, Iran, 1952)



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