

## Document Citation

Title	<b>At five in the afternoon</b>
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Source	<i>Toronto International Film Festival</i>
Date	2003 Sep 09
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	2
Subjects	Makhmalbaf, Mohsen (1957), Teheran, Iran
Film Subjects	Panj é asr (At five in the afternoon), Makhmalbaf, Samira, 2003

**TORONTO  
INTERNATIONAL  
FILM  
FESTIVAL**  
2003 SEPT 4-13

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**FILM TITLE:**
**At Five in the Afternoon**
**(Panj É Asr)**
**Programme:** Contemporary World Cinema

**Director:** Samira Makhmalbaf

**Country:** Iran/France

**Year:** 2003

**Time:** 106 minutes

**Film Types:** Colour/35 mm

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**SCREENING TIMES:**
Tuesday, September 09   **09:15 PM**   **UPTOWN 1**
Thursday, September 11   **02:00 PM**   **VARSITY 2 or 3**
**Production Company:** Makhmalbaf Film House/Wild Bunch/Bac Films

**Executive Producer:** Syamak Alagheband

**Producer:** Mohsen Makhmalbaf

**Screenplay:** Samira Makhmalbaf, Mohsen Makhmalbaf

**Cinematography:** Ebrahim Ghafori

**Editor:** Mohsen Makhmalbaf

**Sound:** Faroukh Fadaei

**Music:** Mohammed Reza Dar Vishi

**Principal Cast:** Aghelah Rezaie, Abdolganj Yousefrazai, Razi Mohebi, Marzieh Amiri

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After the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan, girls were once again allowed to go to school. But Noqreh's (Aghelah Rezaie) conservative father (Abdolganj Yousefrazai) maintains his belief that girls shouldn't be educated, although he concedes sufficiently to allow her to attend Koran school. Off she goes each morning, pretending to honour his wishes – but after he drops her off, she changes her slippers for high heels and heads for a newly opened secular school, where girls learn self-respect along with the three Rs.

In a class on politics, Noqreh begins to voice her dream of becoming president of her country, taking former Pakistan prime minister Benazir Bhutto as her inspiration. A handsome young poet (Razi Mohebi) falls for her and the film takes off on an exploration of socio-political possibilities for women in present-day Afghanistan.

*At Five in the Afternoon* is reminiscent of twenty-three-year-old director Samira Makhmalbaf's previous films in its use of documentary-like episodes featuring first-time actors in actuality settings. Combined with gentle humour and poetic dialogue, the nobility of the actors suffuses the film with sympathy and humanity. As usual for Makhmalbaf, the drama is situated in one visually striking setting after another. After moving through a series of temporary shelters, Noqreh's family finally takes refuge, along with hundreds of other homeless citizens of Kabul, in a bombed-out parliament building replete with large balconies, classical pillars and majestic open spaces. All the inhabitants of the ruin face disease and starvation and the search for water is a daily chore. Eventually, the grizzled old father, a cart-driver, makes the desperate decision to take his family across the desert, despite the even more perilous dangers of that brutal terrain.

The film's mysterious title comes from a Federico García Lorca poem

whispered at the beginning of the film. By the lyrical finale, which neither offers hope nor suggests tragedy, the themes of the poem – life, death and our relation to nature and the world around us – resonate far more widely than the story of one young girl.

– Kay Armatage

**Samira Makhmalbaf** was born in Tehran. She first became involved in cinema at the age of seven when she appeared in *The Cyclist* (88), directed by her father, Mohsen; she later worked as an assistant director on his film *The Silence* (98). She made two videos before directing her first feature, *The Apple* (97), which screened at the Festival in 1998. Her subsequent features, *Blackboards* (00) and *At Five in the Afternoon* (03), received jury prizes at the Festival de Cannes in 2000 and 2003, respectively. She also contributed the segment "God, Construction and Deconstruction" to the omnibus work *11'09"01* (02), which played at last year's Festival.

Associated with *European Film Promotion*,  
an initiative supported by the  
European Union's MEDIA Programme.

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