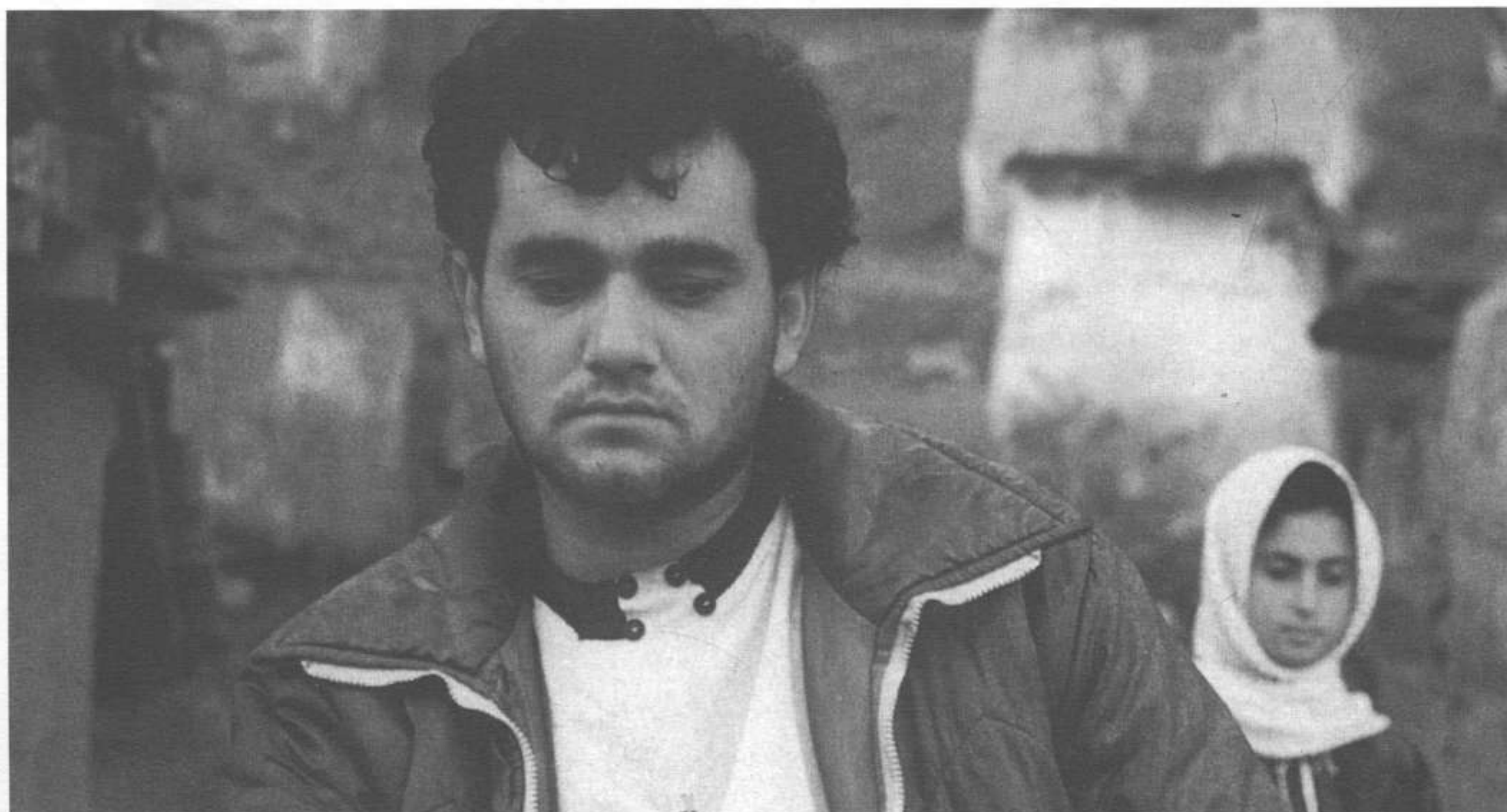


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Zir-E Darakhtan-É Zeyton

Through the Olive Trees

Abbas Kiarostami

IRAN, 1994

103 minutes ■ Colour/35mm
Production Company: **CiBy 2000**
Producer: **Abbas Kiarostami**
Screenplay: **Abbas Kiarostami**
Cinematography: **Hossein Djafarian,**
Farhad Saba
Editor: **Abbas Kiarostami**
Sound: **Mahmoud Samakbashi,**
Y. Nadjafi
Principal Cast: **Hossein Rezai,**
Mohamad Ali Keshavarz,
Farhad Kheradmand, Zarifeh Shiva,
Tahereh Ladanian

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The sublime sweetness and simplicity of Abbas Kiarostami's films cannot be easily defined. No one who has seen *Where is the Friend's Home?* will ever forget it, yet merely recounting the plot or describing the neo-realist style comes nowhere near the actual experience.

Through the Olive Trees, which takes its lead from Kiarostami's last film, *And Life Goes On...*, is a film about the process of making a film. Here, a fictional film crew returns to a northern Iranian village, razed to the ground by an earthquake, to shoot another version of *And Life Goes On...*. We are re-introduced to Hossein, a young stonemason, who is offered a small part in the film. By chance, Farkhonde, a young girl he has been courting unsuccessfully in "real" life (she has refused his offer of marriage because he is illiterate and has no house), is given the role of his wife in the film. Ardently pursuing his intended, Hossein points out that since the earthquake no one has a roof over his head, and so all are equal now.

Kiarostami's fascination with the overlap between fiction and documentary provides a backdrop to this touching courtship. As a director, he likes to shoot on location with non-professional actors, preferring to improvise and adapt dialogue rather than use a detailed screenplay. On one level, the subject of Kiarostami's film is the blurred line between what is real and what is cinema, and it is treated with great sophistication,

made all the more rich by the simplicity with which it is presented. But the delight and deep emotional satisfactions that come from the film derive primarily from Kiarostami's deep humour, loving humanity and clear poetic intelligence.

■ **Dimitri Eipides**

Abbas Kiarostami was born in 1940 in Tehran, Iran. Between 1960 and 1968 he worked on commercials and on credit sequences for feature films. He studied fine art at university and earned a living as a clerk in a police station. In 1969, he and a friend founded the cinema department at the Institute of Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults, now one of Iran's most famous studios. Since 1970, he has made several short films and eight features: *Traveller* (74), *The Report* (77), *First Graders* (84), *Where is the Friend's Home?* (87), *Homework* (89), *Close Up* (90), *And Life Goes On...* (92), *Through the Olive Trees* (94).

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