

Document Citation

Title	A moment of innocence - Nun va goldun
Author(s)	
Source	<i>San Francisco International Film Festival</i>
Date	1997
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	65
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	Makhmalbaf, Mohsen (1957), Teheran, Iran
Film Subjects	Nun va goldun (A moment of innocence), Makhmalbaf, Mohsen, 1996



A Moment of Innocence

Nun va goldun

IRAN 1996, 78 min.

DIR/SCR/ED Mohsen Makhmalbaf

PROD Abolfazl Alagheband **CAM** Mahmoud Kalari **CAST** Ali Bakhshi, Mirhadi Tayebi, Ammar Tafti, Maryam Mohamadamini, Makhmalbaf **PRINT SOURCE** MK2 Diffusion

A complete Makhmalbaf retrospective opens in May at the Pacific Film Archive.

Fact meets fiction in the most intriguing fashion in Mohsen Makhmalbaf's latest feature. This captivating follow-up to his acclaimed *Salam Cinema*, which told the stories of ordinary Iranians who want to become movie stars, is based on an incident from the Iranian screenwriter and director's youth. At age 17—while a member of an anti-Shah militant group—Makhmalbaf attacked a policeman in an attempt to steal his gun. He stabbed the officer with a knife and took a bullet in return. The policeman went to the hospital; Makhmalbaf went to a torture chamber hosted by the dreaded SAVAK secret police. He stayed there until the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Twenty years later, the filmmaker placed an ad in the paper to recruit actors for *Salam Cinema*. The same wounded officer responded to the ad. In **A Moment of Innocence**, the victim and the assailant both get the chance to tell their side of the story. In the process, they exorcise the demons of their past while examining how film and memory shape our perceptions. The result has been hailed as a sly, witty film with a script honed to razor sharpness and carefully hewn characters. It's "a wisp of a pic," *Variety* opined recently, "that continues to resonate long after higher profile arty stodge has sunk without a trace."

Selected Filmography: Mohsen Makhmalbaf (b. Tehran, Iran, 1957) *Salam Cinema* (SFIFF 1996), *Gabbeh* (1995), *The Actor* (1993), *Once Upon a Time, Cinema* (1991), *The Time of Love* (1990)

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