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'Earthquake Trilogy'

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Feb. 4, 11, and 18, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts honors acclaimed Iranian director and Cannes award winner Abbas Kiarostami this month with a rare screening of his "Earthquake Trilogy," a triptych of films hinging on the 1990 earthquake that ravaged northern Iran. Each film can be viewed on its own, but as a trilogy they flesh out a series of languorously impressionistic snapshots of life in his home country. Not much happens in Kiarostami's films, but the more the characters wander through their existences, the more you will intuitively slip into the pace of life in the Iranian countryside as if it were your own existence. In the first film, *Where Is the Friend's Home?*, a boy's journey to return a notebook to his classmate provides a voyeuristic glimpse into the banalities of daily life in Iran. *And Life Goes On* revisits the town where the first film was shot, as a father and son drive from Tehran to find out the fate, after the earthquake hit, of the boy who starred in the first film. *Through the Olive Trees* further obscures the fiction-reality continuum, with famed Iranian actor Mohamad Ali Keshavarz introducing himself as the actor who will play the director, in a story that takes place during the filming of *And Life Goes On*. This last and best of the triptych concerns an actor who is actually a suitor spurned by the woman playing his wife in the film-within-a-film. Kiarostami's trilogy seems to illustrate that there are no dead ends in fiction or reality. The zigzag dirt road leading to the town of Koker, the tents erected near the highway after the earthquake, and the townspeople carrying on with their daily lives provide an axis for the director to spiral off into tangential story lines, eventually circling back to the same people and place where he first began. Long-distance shots of a car sputtering up a dirt road, or a man following after the mysteriously silent object of his affection can go on for a full 10 minutes, but they turn seemingly inconclusive moments into an exposition on the quiet, universal open-endedness of life. See Rep Clock for schedule. (Robin Lapid)



WHERE IS THE FRIEND'S HOME? PHOTO OF BAHEK AHMED POOR