



OSAMA



(A)FGHANISTAN: AN IMPOSSIBLE STATE



STRAY DOGS

## Reel Afghanistan

Afghanistan may have become a byword for war and tragedy but this first ever Afghan festival of Cinema and Culture in the UK explores the rich cultural possibilities available in the country whose capital was once described as "the light garden of the Angel king", and that drew many travelling along the silk route to its infinite charms. The war is unavoidably present, but whether it is *Earth and Ashes* exploring the beauty of the landscape, or *The Beauty Academy of Kabul* admiring the physical beauty of the people, Reel Afghanistan looks at a largely unknown and exciting area of cinema.

Accompanying the film festival will be music events, exhibitions, talks and masterclasses at Filmhouse and elsewhere. See [www.reelafghanistan.org](http://www.reelafghanistan.org) for full details of all festival events. Come and join us.



**Firefly International**  
Scottish Charity Number: SC 028744  
Student Volunteer Centre,  
5th Floor, Queen's  
Edinburgh EH8 8AL, UK



### Osama

Thu 21 Feb at 6.00pm

Siddiq Barmak • Afghanistan/Japan/Ireland 2003 • 1h23m • 35mm • Pashtu, English and Dari with English subtitles • 12A  
– Contains moderate emotional distress

Cast: Marina Golbahari, Zubaida Sahar, Arif Herati, Mohamad Nader Khadjeh, Mohamad Haref Harati.

A compelling parable about female suffering and religious extremism under the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, Siddiq Barmak's film is about a widow who disguises her 12-year-old daughter as a boy so that at least one family member can earn money. The child however is dispatched to an all-male Taliban training school, where she's named Osama and where her life depends on keeping her true identity disguised.

Director Siddiq Barmak will be present for a Q&A after the screening.

### Earth and Ashes

Khakestar-o-khak

Fri 22 Feb at 6.00pm

Atiq Rahimi • Afghanistan/France 2004 • 1h45m • Beta SP • Dari and Pashtu with English subtitles •

Cast: Abdul Ghani, Jawan Mard Homayoun, Walli Tallosh, Kader Arefi.

Dastaguir sits on the side of the road, his grandson at his side. He is on a painful journey to see his son, the child's father, who works in the mine. He must tell him that their village has been bombed and his entire family killed. Along the way Dastaguir encounters several strangers: there's the sentry house guard, the philosophical roadside merchant, the mysterious veiled woman who waits endlessly, and other victims of this nameless war that rumbles on somewhere offscreen.

Director Atiq Rahimi will be present for a Q&A after the screening.

### (A)fgghanistan: An Impossible State

Sat 23 Feb at 9.30pm

Atiq Rahimi • Afghanistan/France 2002 • 54m • Beta SP • Subtitles • 12A • Documentary

Participants in a loya jirga (a political gathering) explain the reality of democracy in Afghanistan from an insider's point of view.

PLUS SHORT

**Voice of the Moon** (Richard Stanley, Britain/Afghanistan 1990, 30 min)

This short poetic take on Afghanistan in the late eighties was made by the young Richard Stanley before he went on to make *Hardware* and *Dust Devil*.

### Stray Dogs

Sag-haye velgard

Sun 24 Feb at 2.00pm

Marzieh Meshkini • Iran/France 2004 • 1h33m • 35mm • Persian with English subtitles • 12A

Cast: Gol-Ghotai, Zahed, Agheleh Rezaie, Sohrab Akbari.

The sad, compelling and sometimes bleakly funny tale of two young siblings in post-Taliban Kabul. Their parents are in prison – the father for being in the Taliban and the mother, at his behest, for having remarried when she presumed him dead. Essentially orphans, the children embark on a life of crime in an attempt to themselves be jailed.

PLUS SHORT

**Kabul Cinema (Kabul Nendari)**

(Mirveis Rekab, Afghanistan 2002, 23 min)

A short drama, about a bus which breaks down in the desert, which explores the two decades of civil war between the Tajik, Baluch, Azara, Pashto tribes in Afghanistan.



THE BEAUTY ACADEMY OF KABUL



THE BOY WHO PLAYS ON THE BUDDHAS OF BAMIIAN



KANDAHAR

## The Beauty Academy of Kabul

Mon 25 Feb at 6.00pm

Liz Mermin • USA 2004 • 1h14m • Beta SP • English and Persian with English subtitles • PG • Documentary

What happens when a group of hairdressers from America travel to Kabul with the intention of telling Afghan women how to do hair? This unique development project, funded in part by beauty-industry mainstays (Vogue, Clairol, M.A.C.), sets out to teach the latest cutting, colouring, and perming techniques to practicing and aspiring hairdressers and beauticians in an intense three-month curriculum. *The Beauty Academy of Kabul* documents the poignant and often humorous process through which women with very different experiences of life come to learn about one another, offering a rare and intimate look into the lives of women in Afghanistan.

### PLUS SHORT

**Malalai Joya** (AINA, Afghanistan 2007, 10 min, DVD)

A portrait of the politician and women's rights activist, made by the Afghan women's film group.

### TICKET DEALS

See any three (or more) films in this season and get 15% off

See any six (or more) films in this season and get 25% off

See any nine (or more) films in this season and get 35% off

These packages are available online, in person and on the phone, on both full price and concession price tickets.

Tickets must all be bought at the same time.

## In This World

Tue 26 Feb at 6.00pm

Michael Winterbottom • Britain 2002 • 1h30m • 35mm • Pashtu, Persian and English with English subtitles • 15 – Contains strong language

Cast: Jamal Udin Torabi, Enayatullah, Imran Paracha, Hidayatullah, .

Michael Winterbottom's intimate, yet hard-hitting, response to the asylum controversy follows two Afghan teenagers as they escape from the Shamshatoo refugee camp in Pakistan, along the smugglers' route known as The Silk Road. Travelling through Iran, Turkey, Italy, and France, Jamal and his cousin Enayatullah embark on a desperate journey to freedom. *In This World* is styled as a fictional documentary, using voiceover narration and real refugees and locations (including the now infamous Sangatte camp).

## The Boy Who Plays on the Buddhas of Bamiyan

Wed 27 Feb at 5.45pm

Phil Grabsky • Britain 2003 • 1h36m • DigiBeta • Dari with English subtitles • PG • Documentary

The Taliban's destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan in March 2001 caused an international furor. Less well known are the 250 refugee families who fled to Bamiyan's caves to escape the Taliban's brutality, hoping to find work in rebuilding the treasures. Over three seasons we follow eight-year old Mir, lively, playful and resilient, making the most of the playground potential of his devastated environment, while his family eke out an existence amidst constant worry over the next meal. A sensitive and involving portrait of an Afghanistan reeling from more than two decades of upheaval.

Director Phil Grabsky will be present for a Q&A after the screening.

## Kandahar

Safar e Ghandehar

Fri 29 Feb at 5.45pm

Mohsen Makhmalbaf • Iran/France 2001 • 1h25m • 35mm • Persian, English, Pashtu and Polish with English subtitles • PG – Contains some potentially distressing images of hardship

Cast: Nelofer Pazira, Hassan Tantai, Sadou Teymouri, Hoyatala Hakimi.

Iranian master Mohsen Makhmalbaf's fiction/documentary hybrid charting the perilous journey made through Afghanistan by Nafas (Niloufar Pazira), a Canadian journalist of Afghan origin. She is searching for her sister, who has threatened to kill herself at the next solar eclipse. Over the course of her journey, Nafas comes to understand why. The land she travels through has been ravaged, first by war with the Soviet Union, then by civil war, and finally by the policies of the victorious Taliban. Under their rule, women are imprisoned and invisible within head-to-toe coverings, while men are mutilated by the landmines that lie hidden everywhere.

## Afghan Archive

Sat 1 Mar at 1.00pm

1h30m • Format TBC • Subtitles • 15

This screening will be a surprise showing of one of the Afghan National Archive films. This is especially rare as the print has survived attempted destruction by the Taliban, being hidden in the walls of the archive by workers there when the Taliban took Kabul. For more information about this title please see [www.reelafghanistan.org](http://www.reelafghanistan.org) or the festival programme.

SEASON CONTINUES OVERLEAF



VIEW FROM A GRAIN OF SAND



VIEW FROM A GRAIN OF SAND



FUNNY KINDA GUY

## View From A Grain of Sand

Sun 2 Mar at 3.45pm

Meena Nanji • USA 2006 • 1h22m • Beta SP • Dari with English subtitles • 15 • Documentary

2001 saw an unprecedented level of international interest in the lives of Afghan women living under the Taliban. With the Taliban's fall later that year, the US proclaimed the dawn of a new era in Afghanistan that promised peace, democracy and liberation for women. As the 6th anniversary of this 'new era' passes what are their lives like now? Have they really improved since a new government took power? Have they gained any real rights or do they still live in fear and repression?

## Convoy of Death

Sat 8 Mar at 1.00pm

Jamie Doran • Britain/Afghanistan 2007 • 50m • DigiBeta • Subtitles • 15 • Documentary

A harrowing documentary telling of the horrific forced journey undertaken by thousands of prisoners who surrendered to America and its Afghan allies after the siege of Kunduz. Over 4,000 are unaccounted for, with many of these believed to be buried in a mass grave in northern Afghanistan.

Director Jamie Doran and international human rights lawyer Andrew McEntee will be present for a Q&A and discussion following the screening.

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Funny Kinda Guy

Sat 9 Feb only

Travis Reeves • Britain 2005 • 1h23m • DigiBeta • PG • Documentary

A musical odyssey from female to male of transgendered singer-songwriter Simon de Voil, winning his long-sought masculinity while irreversibly sacrificing his female singing voice to hormone treatment.

The film will be introduced by director Travis Reeves who will be available for a Q&A session afterwards.



Screening as part of LGBT History month.

## EXHIBITIONS

Artwork being exhibited at Filmhouse as part of the Reel Afghanistan Festival.

### Ivan Sigal – After the War: Afghanistan Rediscovered Its Own Vision

In the months immediately after the Taliban were defeated in Afghanistan in 2001, Ivan Sigal discovered hope in that war-ravaged country, documenting the return of mass media and visual culture to a land that was deprived of both under the former government.

### Richard Stanley – Through the Mountains

Filmmaker Ricahrd Stanley and his German cameraman Immo Horn left Britain in 1988, fleeing the cash-starved backwaters of the British film industry where Stanley had been miserable making music videos. They joined a UN relief mission to Afghanistan, but soon realised that, in such an official capacity, they were unlikely to visit anywhere unseen by Western eyes and the Western news media. So they jumped ship, enlisting with the Mujahedin and touring the country with their cameras. But during the battle of Jalalabad in 1989 Horn was seriously injured, and Stanley was forced to abandon shooting and ship his friend across the border to safety. These photographs capture this unique journey.

### Saraswati Exhibition

Exhibition of Afghan crafts, textiles and dress incorporating photographs from Dan Gorman and Zahra Ashq.

### Black Sun

Tue 12 Feb only

Gary Tarn • Britain 2006 • 1h10m • DigiBeta • 12A • Documentary

The story of Hugues de Montalembert, a French artist and filmmaker living in New York who was blinded during a violent assault in 1978. Gary Tarn's remarkable debut film is the protrait of one man's extraordinary reaction to a life-changing event, an expressionist film whose power lies in visualising a world from the perspective of the blind de Montalembert. Part-survivor's testimony, part-philosophical meditation on the nature of perception, *Black Sun* is a celebration of life that makes us see the world anew.

The film will be introduced by director Gary Tarn, who will participate in a question and answer session afterwards.

Second Run DVD

Scottish  
Documentary  
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