

HI GLOSS ENTERTAINMENT AND MEMENTO FILMS PRESENTS

THE SALESMAN

A FILM BY ASGHAR FARHADI

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GENRE: DRAMA

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SHAHAB HOSSEINI TARANEH ALIDOOSTI

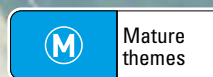


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BEST SCREENPLAY
CANNES FILM FESTIVAL



BEST ACTOR
SHAHAB HOSSEINI
CANNES FILM FESTIVAL



| SYNOPSIS

Emad (Shahab Hosseini) and his wife Rana (Taraneh Alidoosti) are actors in an amateur Tehran production of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*.

When their home is devastated by an earthquake, they are forced to move into a new apartment, until recently occupied by a mysterious young woman.

When a tragic incident occurs in the apartment, their lives are changed in ways they could never have predicted – as Rana draws herself into the shadows, Emad sets out for revenge, opening a rift between the couple that will push their marriage to its limits.



| INTERVIEW WITH ASGHAR FARHADI

After making *THE PAST* in France and in French, why did you go back to Tehran for *THE SALESMAN*?

When I finished *THE PAST* in France, I started to work on a story that takes place in Spain. We picked the locations and I wrote a complete script, without the dialogue. We discussed about the project with the producers and main cast. But to get the whole team together would take a year, which, much to my delight, gave me the time to do a film in Iran. I wasn't totally at ease with the idea of doing two films in a row abroad, and distancing myself from shooting in my own country. But now, all going well, I'll get back to the Spanish project.

How did this new project come about?

I'd been taking notes for this simple story that I'd had at the back of my mind for some time. When the chance to do a film in Iran came up, I started collecting all these scattered notes I'd been taking over the years. Besides that, I've always wanted to do a film that takes place in the world of theatre. I did theatre when I was younger, and it meant a lot to me. The story was ideally suited for the theatre milieu. So I started developing a scenario about characters putting on a play.

How would you define *THE SALESMAN*? Is it a story of revenge or of lost honour?

I'd have real difficulty in defining or summarizing *THE SALESMAN* or even saying what this story means to me personally.

Everything depends on the viewer's own particular preoccupations and mindset. If you see it as social commentary, you'll remember those elements. Somebody else might see it as a moral tale, or from a totally different angle. What I can say is that once again, this film deals with the complexity of human relations, especially within a family.

At the start of the film, Emad and Rana are an ordinary couple. Are these two characters typical of the Iranian middle class?

Emad and Rana are a middle class Iranian couple. We can't say they represent the majority of couples in this class as to their relations or as individuals. The characters were simply created so that the viewer doesn't have the feeling this couple is any different from many others. It's an ordinary couple with its own characteristics. They're both in the cultural sphere and act in the theatre. But they find themselves in a situation that reveals unexpected aspects of their personalities.

The original title of the film echoes that of the Arthur Miller play *Emad and Rana* are acting in with their friends. Why did you choose to use this work?

I read *Death of a Salesman* when I was a student. I was very struck by this play, probably because of what it says about human relationships. It's a very rich play, offering multiple possible readings. The most important dimension is the social critique of a period in history when the sudden transformation of urban America caused the ruin of

a certain social class. A category of people who couldn't adapt to this rapid modernization got crushed. In that sense, the play resonates strongly with the current situation in my country. Things are changing at a breath-taking pace and it's adapt or die. The social critique at the heart of the play is still valid in our country today.

Another dimension of the play is the complexity of social relations within the family, notably the couple composed of the salesman and Linda. The play has a strong emotional appeal, which as well as being very moving, makes the audience think about very subtle questions. Once I'd decided that the main characters in the film would belong to a theatre troupe and would be acting in a play, Miller's work seemed to me very interesting, to the extent that it allowed me to establish a parallel with the personal life of the couple the film is built around. On stage, Emad and Rana play the roles of the salesman and his wife. And in their own life, without realizing it, they are going to be confronted with a salesman and his family and have to decide on his fate.

You evoke the anarchic development of Tehran through the view the characters have from the terrace of the new apartment. Is this your personal view of the city you live and work in?

Tehran today is very close to New York as described by Miller at the start of the play. A town whose face is changing at a heady pace, destroying everything that's old, orchards and gardens, to replace them with towers. This is exactly the environment the salesman lives in. And it's a new parallel between the film and the play. Tehran is changing in a frenetic, anarchic, irrational way. When a film tells the story of a family, the house obviously has a main role. That was already noticed in my previous films. This time again, the house and the city play a central role.



ASGHAR FARHADI

DIRECTOR, WRITER AND PRODUCER

Asghar Farhadi was born in 1972. He made his first short film at age 13 in a youth cinema club and had made five short films before going to the University of Tehran in 1991 to study theatre, a choice that would influence his film making style significantly. He defended Harold Pinter's work and the function of silence and pause in Pinter's plays for his bachelor thesis. After he graduated, he continued his studies in stage direction at Tarbiat Modares University in 1996. Here he started writing radio plays, and then television series. After graduating with a masters in stage direction, he started work immediately directing television series he himself had written, A TALE OF CITY (DASTANE YEK SHAHR) being a typical example.

In 2002, he wrote and directed his first feature film, DANCING IN THE DUST (RAGHSS DAR GHOBAR). The film won awards for Best Actor at the 25th Moscow International Film Festival and the Russian Society of Film Critics' Best Film award, and also won the Best Screenplay, Best Director at the 48th Asian Pacific Film Festival.

A year later, Asghar Farhadi made BEAUTIFUL CITY (SHAHRE ZIBA), a social genre which was a rarity at the time. It describes the conflict between two families, one of a murderer sentenced to death, the other of his victim. The victim's family hold the fate of the 18 year-old murderer in their hands since they can accept to have the death sentence revoked.

The film was released in France in 2012 and attracted attention in local and international festivals, winning several awards, including

the Grand Prix at the Warsaw International Film Festival.

Farhadi's next film was FIREWORKS WEDNESDAY (CHAHAR SHANBE SOURI) in 2005, which shone an uncompromising light on the stressed lifestyle of a middle class family through eyes of their maid and illustrated the double life of a family in society.

Two years later, Asghar Farhadi made ABOUT ELLY (DARBAREYE ELLY), a film about a close group of young friends who take a vacation in the north of Iran. When one of them goes missing, it puts the group in a complicated situation and sets in motion an exciting drama. The film was screened for the first time at the Berlin International Film Festival and Fajr Film Festival simulataneously. It won the Silver Bear for Best Director in Berlin and the Crystal Simorgh for Best Directing in Fajr. In 2009 ABOUT ELLY was released in France and had over 100,000 admissions.

After the success of ABOUT ELLY, Asghar Farhadi started to write A SEPARATION (JODAEIYE NADER AZ SIMIN) which he started directing in 2010. Again the focus is on a middle class couple, whose marriage is on the rocks, and who, despite having a child, go through a divorce. The film attracted a wide audience from many different cultures and point of views.

A SEPARATION was screened at the Berlin Film Festival for the first time and broke an audience record that had stood for 60 years. The impact unprecedented, with the film taking the Golden Bear for Best Film, the Silver Bear for the ensemble of the actresses

and the Silver Bear for the ensemble of the actors. This was only the beginning of a long list of prizes of over 70 awards internationally, including the Golden Globe for Best Foreign Language Film, the César for Best Foreign Film, and finally, the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film.

A SEPARATION was an international success, unparalleled by any Iranian film. In France alone, the film chalked up one million admissions, the most widely-viewed Iranian film in that country, and was released in 250 theatres. The film was released in December 2011 in the United State, equalling the most successful foreign language films ever. In the same year, Asghar Farhadi was named one of Time magazine's 100 most influential people in the world.

Other awards won by A SEPARATION: Best Foreign Language Film at the Durban International Film Festival, Best Feature Film and Best Screenplay at the Asia Pacific Film Festival, Best Film at the Sydney Film Festival.

While A SEPARATION was being screened in different festivals and countries, Asghar Farhadi and his family moved to Paris so he could start work on the screenplay of THE PAST, a story that takes place outside of Iran. The main character, Ahmad, returns to Paris after a four-year absence to finalise the legal aspects of his divorce from Marie. Ahmad's presence in Marie's life after all this time creates a complicated situation for them, and forces them to dig into their common past.

THE PAST was released in 2013 in France at the same time as the Cannes Film Festival and

again it had around one million admissions. It won the Best Actress Award at Cannes Festival and was nominated for Golden Globe and César.

After THE PAST, Asghar Farhadi started on a story to be shot in Spain, produced by Alexandre Mallet-Guy and Pedro Almodóvar. However, the project was delayed for a year so he decided to take advantage of this time to make THE SALESMAN in Iran.

A few months later, THE SALESMAN was selected in competition by Cannes, the second Farhadi film to be in the running for the Palme d'Or.

THE SALESMAN is the second film by Asghar Farhadi produced by Alexandre Mallet-Guy for Memento Films Production and their fifth film together in distribution. They first met in Berlin in 2009, where Alexandre Mallet-Guy had just discovered ABOUT ELLY.

I SHAHAB HOSSEINI

Shahab Hosseini was born on February 3, 1974 in Tehran, Iran. His first collaboration with Asghar Farhadi was in ABOUT ELLY (2008), followed by A SEPARATION (2011). He received the Diploma of Honour from Fajr Film Festival and the Silver Bear from the Berlin film festival for his role as Hodjat in A SEPARATION. He has also received several nominations and awards from Iran's House of Cinema, including Best leading actor for his performance in ABOUT ELLY. He directed his first film in 2014.

THE SALESMAN is his third film with Asghar Farhadi.



SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY:

- 2016 THE SALESMAN by Asghar Farhadi - Official selection, Cannes Film Festival
MY BROTHER, KHOSROW by Ehsan Biglari
- 2015 SHAHRZAD (TV Series) by Hassan Fathi
GHOLAM by Mitra Tabrizian
WEDNESDAY by Soroush Mohammadzadeh
- 2013 THE PAINTING POOL by Maziar Miri
- 2011 A SEPARATION by Asghar Farhadi
Silver Bear for Best Actor - Berlin Film Festival 2011
AFRICA by Hooman Seyyedi
- 2009 ABOUT ELLY... by Asghar Farhadi
- 2008 SUPER STAR by Tahmineh Milani - Best leading actor - Fajr Film Festival
- 2004 A CANDLE IN THE WIND by Pouran Derakhshandeh
- 2003 THE FIFTH REACTION by Tahmineh Milani
- 2002 THIS WOMAN DOES NOT SPEAK by Ahmad Amini
ROKHSAREH by Amir Ghavidel



I TARANEH ALIDOOSTI

Taraneh Alidoosti was born on January 12, 1984 in Tehran, Iran. She began acting in 2002 in Rasoul Sadrameli's *I AM TARANEH, I AM FIFTEEN YEARS OLD* winning the Silver Leopard at the 55th Locarno Film Festival and the Crystal Simorgh at the Fajr Film Festival. Her second major role was in Asghar Farhadi's *BEAUTIFUL CITY* (2004), followed by Farhadi's *FIREWORKS WEDNESDAY* (2006) and *ABOUT ELLY* (2009).

THE SALESMAN is her fourth film with Asghar Farhadi.

SELECTIVE FILMOGRAPHY:

- 2016 **THE SALESMAN** by Asghar Farhadi
Official selection, Cannes Film Festival
- 2015 **SHAHRZAD** (TV Series) by Hassan Fathi
- 2014 **ABSOLUTE REST** by Abdolreza Kahani
THE WEDLOCK by Rouhollah Hejazi
ATOMIC HEART by Ali Ahmadzade
- 2013 **THE SHALLOW YELLOW SKY** by Bahram Tavakoli
- 2012 **MODEST RECEPTION** by Mani Haghighi – best actress
on Asian and Arab competition award
- 2009 **ABOUT ELLY...** by Asghar Farhadi
- 2008 **SHIRIN** by Abbas Kiarostami
CANAAN by Mani Haghighi
- 2006 **FIREWORKS WEDNESDAY** by Asghar Farhadi
- 2004 **BEAUTIFUL CITY** by Asghar Farhadi
- 2002 **I AM TARANEH, I AM FIFTEEN YEARS OLD** by Rasoul Sadrameli
Silver Leopard on the 55th Locarno Film Festival and the Cristal Simorgh
on Fajr Film Festival

ALEXANDRE MALLET-GUY

PRODUCER AND DISTRIBUTOR

ALEXANDRE MALLET-GUY, Co-founder with Emilie Georges in 2003 of Memento Films, a production, distribution and international sales company.

THE SALESMAN (FORUSHANDE) is the second film by Asghar Farhadi produced by Alexandre Mallet-Guy for Memento Films Production and their fifth film together in distribution after THE PAST, A SEPARATION, ABOUT ELLY and BEAUTIFUL CITY.

Alexandre Mallet-Guy has recently coproduced Nuri Bilge Ceylan's WINTER SLEEP, which won the Golden Palm in 2014 (over 400,000 admissions at the French Box Office) and Joachim Trier's LOUDER THAN BOMBS which was presented in Competition at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival.

On the French Distribution side of Memento Films, his recent successes include IDA by Pawel Pawlikowski (Oscar for Best Film in Foreign Language, 500,000 admissions), TAXI TEHERAN by Jafar Panahi (Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival in 2015, 600,000 admissions), MARGUERITE by Xavier Giannoli (César for Best Actress, 1,100,100 admissions) and SLACK BAY by Bruno Dumont, the second film this year in Competition in Cannes for Memento Films.

