

KINO LORBER

3 FACES

A film by JAFAR PANAHI



****Winner | Best Screenplay - 2018 Cannes Film Festival****
****Official Selection | 2018 Toronto International Film Festival****
****Official Selection | 2018 New York Film Festival****
****Official Selection | 2018 AFI Festival****

Country: Iran / Language: Persian, Run Time: 100 minutes, Color, DCP, Aspect Ratio: 1.85 : 1

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ORIGIN OF THE PROJECT

Social networks are extremely popular in Iran, with many people yearning to connect with film celebrities. Despite being forbidden to make movies in his own country, Jafar Panahi remains a very popular recipient of messages, many from young people who want to make films. While he usually deletes them, sometimes he is touched by a sincerity, an intensity, that has led him to wonder more about those who send him these messages. One day he received a message on Instagram that raised his concern, and during the same period the newspapers wrote about a young girl who had committed suicide because she had been banned from making movies. This made him imagine receiving a video of this suicide by social media, and he wondered how he would react to that. This is how the story of *3 Faces* was born.





A NARROW AND WINDING ROAD

Jafar Panahi wanted to look back at Iranian cinema history and explore what has hindered its artists, in different ways, at different times. Hence the idea of evoking three generations, those of past, present and future, through the three characters of the actresses. Ooy of composing these three stories came the image of this narrow and winding road, which is a concrete metaphor for all the limitations that prevent people from living and evolving. The winding road needed for the script actually exists, even if today it is no longer used. Cars generally take another road, wider and paved.



THE SHOOT

The *3 Faces* shoot took place in three villages: the birthplaces of Panahi's mother, father and grandparents. Such a familiar and protective environment greatly facilitated the possibility of filming without risk. Using a very sensitive camera sent by his daughter who lives in France, he was even able to work outdoors at night without the need for heavy equipment. As always, Jafar Panahi wrote the entire script. Filming outdoors was a much welcomed situation after his previous movies (*This is Not a Film*, *Closed Curtain*, *Taxi Tehran*), which confined him to interiors - apartment, house, car.

The three villages used in the shoot are located in the northwest of Iran, in the Turkish-speaking Azeri part of Iran, where people in the countryside are particularly attached to local traditions, with some aspects still very archaic. The attitude of the inhabitants in the film is consistent with what is still happening in this region.



BEHNAZ JAFARI (The “first” face)

At first, Jafar Panahi had planned that the couple arriving at the village would be played by another actress and her husband, who is a producer. This actress could not make the film, so he proposed the lead role to Behnaz Jafari, who is a famous actress in Iran. She has appeared in many films since Samira Makhmalbaf's *The Chalkboard* (2000), as well as in very popular TV series. The episode being watched in a café in *3 Faces* was actually being broadcast on TV when the scene was shot. Alongside her, Panahi decided to take on the other role, using his good knowledge of the Azeri language and participate in engaging with the villagers and the girl who sent the message.. Known for having a strong personality, Behnaz Jafari was keen to fully commit to the project, and refused to be paid.



SHAHRZAD & MARZIYEH REZAEI (the other two “faces”)

The second major female character of the film is played by Marziyeh Rezaei whom the director met by chance in the street, and was immediately convinced that the young woman was born for this role. The third “face” is legendary Iranian movie star Shahrzad (real name Kobra Saeedi), who is popular even with the younger generations. Her most famous role was in Massoud Kimiai's great film noir, *Qeysar* (1969). Shahrzad performs a sensual number comparable to that has been compared to Rita Hayworth's in *Gilda*.

3 Faces points out how actresses have always been regarded with a level of disrespect, perceived as ‘easy’ women, both before and after the Islamic Revolution. One of Panahi's goals is to emphasize how much they were, and are, true artists. This is the case of Shahrzad, star of the pre-revolutionary era's mainstream cinema, who is often highlighted in song and dance numbers, but also happens to be a renowned poet and author. Once the film was shot, Panahi went to Isfahan where Shahrzad actually lives. He asked her permission to use her name. She not only accepted, but agreed to recite her poetry for the movie.

Like all the stars of that period, Shahrzad was banned from performing after the Revolution. She is never seen in *3 Faces*. Her presence is simulated by her absence, a figure in the shadows or seen from behind in the distance. We only hear her voice reciting her own poetry.

EXPLORING MASCULINE / FEMININE THEMES

Similar to Shahrzad, notable Iranian actor Behrouz Vossoughi is made reference to on a poster in *3 Faces*. He is immensely popular, and remained so even though he exiled to the United States after the Revolution. He starred in Amir Naderi's *Tangsir* (1973), a contemporary western style film - a tale of revolt against the corrupt - whose character continues to embody a spirit to which the Iranians proudly hail as a hero. Vossoughi was one of the most celebrated incarnations of heroic male power in films of proclaimed machismo, characteristic of pre-revolutionary mainstream cinema. Although forms of masculine dominance have changed since then, they have not disappeared from the screen. *3 Faces* is critical of this legacy, and puts its female characters at the center of the story. Very present in the most traditional parts of society, the fetishization of the foreskin is also put under question. The sacralization of this snippet of skin, as well as issues related to the reproductive powers of a bull, are laughed at and contribute to this major theme of the film.

A CHANGE OF MOOD IN IRAN

Unlike *Taxi Tehran*, where the names of the collaborators were not mentioned in the end credits, everyone in the cast and crew is credited in *3 Faces*. During the previous film, technicians were afraid of the consequences if their name appeared. For this film, everyone insisted on appearing in the end credits. There has been a rise in protests in Iran in 2017, which has resulted in the mobilization of many film professionals who have written to the Iranian president and government to support allowing Jafar Panahi to continue making movies and allowing him to travel to festivals like Cannes. Panahi welcomed the support, but insists that he be authorized to film as he sees fit, and to showcase his films in his country. Panahi also wants to shed a spotlight on abused filmmakers in Iran and that they be left in peace, and allowed to freely travel and make films - starting with Mohammad Rassoulof, who was arrested along with Panahi in 2009, and had his passport seized by authorities after he presented his last film abroad.



JAFAR PANAHI

Jafar Panahi was born in 1960 in Mianeh, Iran. He is an award-winning director, writer and producer. After several short films and documentaries, he directed his first feature *The White Balloon*, which premiered in 1977 at Cannes' Directors Fortnight and won the Camera d'Or. *The Mirror* premiered in 2000 in Locarno and won the Golden Leopard. *The Circle* premiered in 2003 In Venice and won the Golden Lion. *Crimson Gold* premiered in Un Certain Regard in Cannes and won The Jury Prize. *Offside* premiered in 2010 in Berlin and won the Silver Bear for Best Director. *This is Not a Film* premiered in 2012 in Cannes Official Selection in Special Screening. *Closed Curtain* premiered in 2013 in Berlin and won the Silver Bear for Best Script. *3 Faces* premiered in 2018 in Cannes and won the best screenplay award. Jafar Panahi's films are known for portraying realistic images of the Iranian society, causing them to be banned from the screen in Iran. In fact only his first film, *The White Balloon* has been granted the screening license in Iran. Panahi was arrested twice; the second time for 86 days. The Iranian government released him on bail following pressure from international film festivals, artists and well-known filmmakers and Panahi's own hunger strike.

According to the final judgment by the court, he was condemned to a twenty-year ban on filmmaking, screenwriting, traveling outside of the country and giving interviews. He could be condemned to six years in prison if breaking these restrictions, which is why his past three films and this one were made without authorization. Panahi has won a number of human right prizes, such as the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought and The Medal of Art for Freedom.

CREW

Producer & Director - Jafar Panahi
Script - Jafar Panahi
Director of Photography - Amin Jafari
Edit - Mastaneh Mohajer
Sound design & Edit - Amireza Alavian
Post production - Pooya Abbasian

CAST

Behnaz Jafari as Behnaz Jafari
Jafar Panahi as Jafar Panahi
Marziyeh Rezaei as Marziyeh Rezaei
Maedeh Erteghaei as Maedeh
Narges Del Aram as Mother

About Kino Lorber:

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