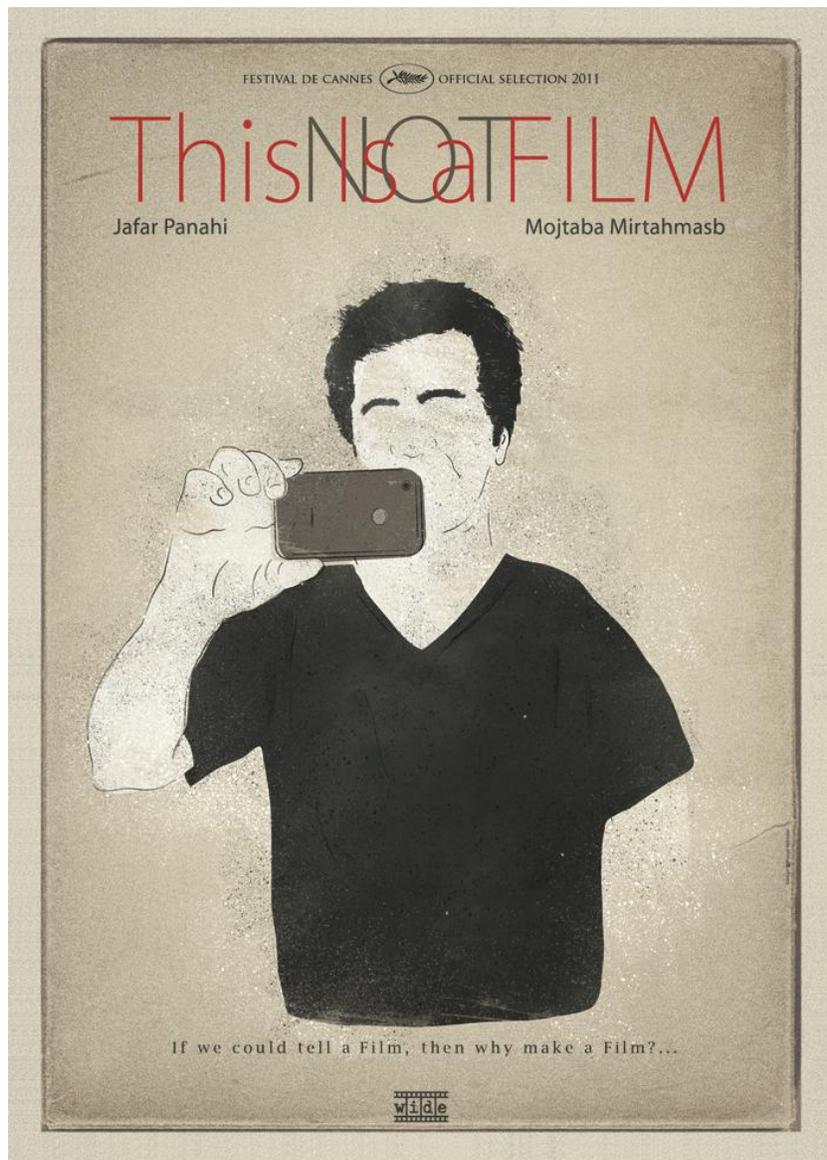


# PALISADES TARTAN PRESENTS



*Iran, Persian, Documentary, 2011, 75 min, color, DCP, Certificate: Pending*



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## FILM OVERVIEW

### **SYNOPSIS:**

This clandestine documentary, shot partially on an iPhone and smuggled into France in a cake for a last-minute submission to Cannes, depicts the day-to-day life of acclaimed director Jafar Panahi (*OFFSIDE*, *THE CIRCLE*) during his house arrest in his Tehran apartment. While appealing his sentence – six years in prison and a 20 year ban from filmmaking – Panahi is seen talking to his family and lawyer on the phone, discussing his plight with Mirtahmasb and reflecting on the meaning of the art of filmmaking.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Renowned Iranian director, Jafar Panahi, received a 6-year prison sentence and a 20-year ban from filmmaking and conducting interviews with foreign press due to his open support of the opposition party in Iran's 2009 election. In this documentary, which was secretly shot on an iPhone and a modest DV camera by Panahi's close friend Mojtaba Mirtahmasb and smuggled into France in a cake for a last-



minute submission to Cannes, Panahi shares his day-to-day life as he waits for a decision on his appeal. Since his detention in 2009, Panahi's cause has won international support from the film community. Juliette Binoche was instrumental in bringing his story into the spotlight at the 2010 Cannes Film Festival when she took the stage carrying a sign that read JAFAR PANAHI and Isabella Rossellini followed suit at the Berlin International Film Festival. World-renowned directors, including Joel and Ethan Coen, Francis Ford Coppola, Jonathan Demme, Robert De Niro, Curtis Hanson, Jim Jarmusch, Ang Lee, Richard Linklater, Terrence Malick, Michael Moore, Robert Redford, Martin Scorsese, James Schamus, Paul Schrader, Steven Soderbergh, Steven Spielberg, Oliver Stone and Frederick Wiseman signed a letter of support calling for his release. In December, Sean Penn, Martin Scorsese, and distributor Harvey Weinstein, among others, signed an Amnesty International petition for him as well. More recently, his co-director Mojtaba Mirtahmasb was detained at the Tehran airport while heading over to attend the film's premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival, which sent shockwaves throughout the international film community. Panahi, whose critically acclaimed work includes *OFFSIDE* (2006) and *THE CIRCLE* (2000), and co-director Mirtahmasb are currently banned from filmmaking and from leaving the country. Both men are accused of fomenting anti-government propaganda through their movies. Panahi's appeal was denied in October 2011. According to the Islamic Republic's laws, he could be arrested and sent back to jail at any time.

## TIMELINE:

- 2000 Panahi releases *THE CIRCLE*, which criticized the treatment of women under Iran's Islamist regime.
- 7/2009 Mojtaba Saminejad reports that Panahi was arrested at a cemetery where mourners gathered near the grave of Neda Agha-Soltan. He was later released but his passport was revoked and he was banned from leaving the country.
- 2/2010 Panahi's request to travel to the 60th Berlin Film Festival is denied.
- 3/2010 Panahi is arrested again and taken to Evin Prison.
- 3/2010 50 Iranian directors, actors, and artists sign a petition seeking Panahi's release.
- 4/2010 Iran's culture minister states that Panahi was arrested because he "was making a film against the regime and it was about the events that followed election."
- 4/2010 American film directors, Paul Thomas Anderson, Joel & Ethan Coen, Francis Ford Coppola, Jonathan Demme, Robert De Niro, Curtis Hanson, Jim Jarmusch, Ang Lee, Richard Linklater, Terrence Malick, Michael Moore, Robert Redford, Martin Scorsese, James Schamus, Paul Schrader, Steven Soderbergh, Steven Spielberg, Oliver Stone and Frederick Wiseman, signed a letter urging Panahi's release.
- 5/2010 Panahi sends a message to Abbas Baktiari, director of the Pouya Cultural Center, and indicated that he has been mistreated and prison and that his family has been threatened.
- 5/2010 Panahi is released on \$200,000 bail.
- 11/2010 Panahi returns to court for his hearing and tells the court that he is Iranian and he will stay in Iran.
- 12/2010 Jafar Panahi is sentenced to six years in jail and banned from making or directing any movies, writing screenplays, giving any form of an interview with Iranian or foreign media as well as leaving the country for 20 years.
- 12/2010 Amnesty International announces its online petition spearheaded by Paul Haggis and Nazanin Boniadi and signed by Sean Penn, Martin Scorsese, Harvey Weinstein and others to protest the imprisonment of Panahi.
- 1/2011 Cine Foundation International announces their launch of a campaign of protest for the release of Panahi.
- 10/2011 Panahi loses his appeal against a six-year prison sentence.

**CAST:**

Jafar Panahi ..... Himself

**CREW:**

Co-Director ..... Jafar Panahi  
Co-Director ..... Mojtaba Mirtahmasb  
Editors ..... Jafar Panahi  
Producers ..... Jafar Panahi  
Production Company ..... Jafar Panahi Film Productions



## DIRECTOR COMMENTS:



This Is Not a Film?

*"Our problems are all our assets."*

Understanding this promising paradox helped us not to lose hope, and to be able to go on since we believe wherever in the world that we live, we are going to face problems, big or small. But it is our duty not to be defeated and to think of solutions.

The reality of being alive and the dream of keeping cinema alive motivated us to go through the existing limitations in Iranian cinema.

The existing possibilities in cinema have convinced us that a filmmaker has only himself to blame if he is unable to make films. The discerning nature of art not only paves the way for the artist to overcome problems, but in the process of creativity, it turns every limitation into a subject for work.

The unpleasant reality governing Iranian cinema and filmmakers today drove us to not overlook this (perhaps transient) reality and to depict parts of it that were reflected in us.

*Jafar Panahi  
Mojtaba Mirtahmasb  
May 5, 2011*

## ABOUT THE DIRECTORS:

### JAFAR PANAHI

(born in 1960, Mianeh, Iran)

Renowned director, author and producer Jafar Panahi made a number of short films and documentaries before he filmed his directorial debut, *Badkonake sefid* (*THE WHITE BALLOON*), which earned him the Camera d'Or in Cannes in 1995. In 1997 he won the Golden Leopard in



Locarno for Ayneh (*THE MIRROR*) and in 2000 the Golden Lion in Venice for Dayereh (*THE CIRCLE*). *OFFSIDE* won the Silver Bear (Grand Prix of the Jury) at the Berlinale in 2006.

In his films Jafar Panahi critically examines the social circumstances in his country. Shortly after the Berlinale invited him to be on the International Jury in 2011, Panahi was sentenced to six years imprisonment and banned from filmmaking for the next 20 years. There has been worldwide protest against this verdict that violates the right to freedom of opinion and expression. Unfortunately Jafar Panahi was denied permission to leave his home country for Berlin. The Berlinale was holding a place open in the Jury for him and in doing so wanted to signalize its support for his struggle for freedom.

Filmography:

2006 – Offside	1992 – The Last Exam (Akharin Emtehan)
2003 – Crimson Gold (Talaye Sorkh)	1992 – The Friend (Doust)
2000 – The Circle (Dayereh)	1991 – Kish
1997 – The Mirror (Ayneh)	1988 – The Wounded Heads (Yarali Bashlar)
1997 – Ardekoul	
1995 – The White Balloon (Badkonake Sefid)	

**MOJTABA MIRTAHMASB**

(born in 1971, Kerman, Iran)



As a director and producer Mirtahmasb sheds light on the artistic and social atmosphere of modern-day Iran. After graduating from Tehran's University of Art in 1995, Mirtahmasb completed a nine-part documentary film series entitled Art Stories. Consisting of films such as Alam and Buy-e gol-e Mohamadi, Art Stories earned Mirtahmasb significant appreciation from his peers for his in-depth look at the artistic artifacts produced by Iran's Islamic culture.

Mirtahmasb would continue to work as a documentarian, collaborating with notable Iranian filmmakers such as Kambozia Partovi (*IRAN IS MY HOME*) and Sediq Barmak (*OSAMA*). Mirtahmasb's recent efforts have provided an honest and objective perspective on the political climate of post-revolutionary Iran. In early September 2011, Mirtahmasb was prevented from leaving the country to attend the Toronto International Film Festival, where his documentary about Panahi was being shown. Mirtahmasb, along with six other Iranian filmmakers,

was arrested later that month on the charge of "collaborating with the Persian BBC" and was forced to spend three months in Evin Prison in Tehran.

#### Filmography:

2010 – Im Bazar der Geschlechter (Line Producer)

2008 – Lady of the Roses (Director)

2006 – Children of the Prophet (Line Producer)

2003 – Two Angels (Assistant Director)

2001 – Kandahar (Assistant Director)

2000 – The Day I Became a Woman (Assistant Director)

2000 – Blackboards (Assistant Director)

### **ABOUT PALISADES TARTAN:**

Palisades Tartan has emerged as one of the premier distributors of independent and arthouse cinema in North America and the UK and has been on the forefront of consumer trends. Straddling both continents, their film line-up boasts an impressive repertoire in the UK including the Ingmar Bergman library and Wong Kar Wai's *2046* and *IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE*. In North America, in addition to many favorites such as Michael Winterbottom's *9 SONGS* and Carlos Reygadas's *SILENT LIGHT*, Park Chan-wook's Cannes jury prizewinner, *OLDBOY*, the film that famously introduced the Western World to the Asia Extreme brand, anchors the library.

Tartan Films was originally founded in 1984 in the UK and is credited with bringing Asian Extreme film to the West as well as some of the most compelling art house films of the last quarter century. In May 2008, Palisades Pictures acquired Tartan Films US library assets and two months later, acquired a majority of Tartan Films UK's film library assets. The new company Palisades Tartan has operations both nationally and internationally.

Palisades Tartan will continue to expand an already distinctive and provocative slate of films by focusing on quality film acquisitions, thus significantly increasing the size of their overall library in both territories. Palisades Pictures and its parent company Palisades Media Corp is a prestigious financier of print & advertising for the independent film market. Together with its affiliate, Palisades Media Asset Fund, Palisades has securitized and financed more than 550 films. [www.PalisadesTartan.com](http://www.PalisadesTartan.com)

### **ABOUT WIDE MANAGEMENT:**

Founded in 1997 by Loïc Magneron, WIDE Management is a leading independent sales company currently representing more than 20 new features films every year and a library of more than 400 fiction titles and 300 documentaries. Our catalogue contains an impressive variety of movies from internationally acclaimed directors and several restored classics (e.g. Max Ophuls *LOLA MONTES*, J-L Godard *VIVRE SAVIE*). Wide Management has also created a company for feature length documentaries and TV format, managed by Anaïs Clanet, WIDE HOUSE.