



MARTIN SCORSESE PRESENTS

RHINO SEASON

A film by Bahman Ghobadi

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SYNOPSIS

Based on the diaries of Kurdish-Iranian poet Sadegh Kamangar, *RHINO SEASON* tells the story of Kurdish-Iranian poet Sahel (Behrouz Vossoughi) and his wife Mina (Monica Bellucci), a couple unjustly incarcerated during Iran's Islamic Revolution. Having survived 30 terrible years in prison, Sahel is finally released, only to discover that Mina, believing him long dead, has left the country for Turkey, where she lives as an immigrant with her two children, still mourning the loss of her husband. A damaged ghost of his former self, Sahel sets out for Istanbul in search of the woman he loves. As he travels, his journey quickly reveals itself as an uncanny passage through the darkness of their history, the black shadow of the man who has kept them apart all these years re-emerges...

A lyrical account of Sahel's past and present blurs all boundaries in the landscape of his experience. Woven together from his poems, the words that follow Sahel are both his curse and saviour. Will he find Mina? Will they learn to live again?

CHARACTERS

Sahel

Sahel is an established Kurdish-Iranian poet whose life has been shattered during the Islamic Revolution of Iran. Sentenced to 30 years in prison on charges of blasphemous writing, he will learn to survive by clinging to the memory of his beautiful wife Mina, and creating a separate dimension to the four walls of his cell through his poems. Upon his release, Sahel is just a shell of the man he used to be. If there's one thing keeping him alive, it's the thought of reuniting with Mina, who thinks him dead. But Sahel's fragile state of mind following years of brutal torture and mistreatment make it hard for him to re-enter the reality of the outside world. As he immerses himself in the search for his beloved wife, he is forced to delve ever deeper into painful memories, leading him back to the person who has kept him and Mina apart all these years...

Mina

Mina, once the privileged daughter of a commander under the Shah's rule and passionate wife to Sahel loses everything when she is locked away under a 10-year prison sentence for allegedly conspiring with her husband against the government. Thirty years later, she lives the life of an immigrant in Istanbul with her two children. Believing her husband dead for many years now, she still grieves over her loss, and finds release only in tattooing people with his poems. But Mina is soon to find out that Sahel is alive, and that the man to blame for their separation has been one step behind her all this time...

Akbar

Under the Shah's rule in Iran, Akbar works as Mina's driver. With an infatuation for her that borders on obsession, Akbar slips ever deeper into desperation and resentment as he observes Mina's passionate relationship with her husband Sahel. But when Iran is shaken by the Islamic revolution, the tables are turned and Akbar becomes a leading figure in the new government. Using his new position to sabotage Mina's and Sahel's marriage, he commits acts of vengeance that will forever change the course of all their lives... Now, thirty years later, his past is about to catch up with him.

Bousseh

Young and beautiful Bousseh is Mina's daughter. Believing her father dead and knowing little of his mysterious history, slipping into bad company and prostitution, Bousseh seems lost. Little does she know, her father is alive and closer than ever.

Ebru

Handsome, tough, razor-sharp, Ebru is a streetwise pimp who introduces Bousseh to prostitution.

Amir

Distant and thoughtful, the somewhat melancholy Amir tries his best to support his mother Mina - an Iranian exile whose past is full of pain.

Shot in Istanbul over the past year, director Bahman Ghobadi's widely anticipated new feature marks the next big step in a devotion to cinema that has seen him leave Iran following the local controversy around his last film, "No One Knows About Persian Cats".

Monica Bellucci stars alongside Iranian cult icon, Behrouz Vossoughi and revered Turkey-based Kurdish actor, Yilmaz Erdogan.

RHINO SEASON will premiere at this year's Toronto International Film Festival.

Ghobadi draws his audience into a magical intersection of reality and dream that reflects the inner visions of a man who, having lost everything, has to re-enter life in the outside world. With a style that is constantly evolving, Ghobadi overwhelms us with stunning cinematography, and a powerfully instinctive portrayal of loss and recovery

CAST

OLD SAHEL

MINA

AKBAR

YOUNG SAHEL

BEHROUZ VOSSOUGHİ

MONICA BELLUCCI

YILMAZ ERDOĐAN

CANER CİNDORUK

EBRU

BOUSSEH

AMİR

ALI POURTASH

AHMET MÜMTAZ TAYLAN

BELÇİM BİLGİN

BEREN SAAT

ARASH LABAF

DADA

DAVOUD

CREW

Written and Directed by
BAHMAN GHOBADI

Director of Photography
TOURAJ ASLANI

Editor
VALÉRIE LOISELEUX

Sound Editor
THOMAS ROBERT

Sound Mix
STEPHANE DE ROCQUIGNY

Original Music
KAYHAN KALHOR

Visual Effects
FARBOD KHOSHTINAT

Producer
BAHMAN GHOBADI

Production Companies
MIJFILM (Iraqi Kurdistan)
In co-production with BKM FILM (Turkey)
2012

Fiction - 35 mm – colour – 103 minutes

Original Languages
Farsi, Turkish, English

Subtitles
English

Sound: Dolby digital 5.1

DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHY

Bahman Ghobadi

Bahman Ghobadi was born on February 1st, 1969 in Baneh, a city near the Iran-Iraq border in the province of Kurdistan, Iran. The first son in a family of seven siblings, he lived in Baneh until, at the age of 12, civil disputes caused his entire family to immigrate to Sanandaj, the center of Kurdistan Province in Iran.

After graduating from high school in Sanandaj, Ghobadi moved to Tehran in 1992. He started his artistic career in the field of Industrial Photography. Though he attended the Iranian Broadcasting College, he never graduated. Rather than following a formal curriculum, he believed the only way he could learn the craft of cinema was by tirelessly making short films. Using 8mm film, his starting point was to shoot a series of short documentaries.

Through his instinctive, hands-on approach to filmmaking, Ghobadi developed a unique style, soon gaining widespread local recognition. A breakthrough came with "Life in a Fog" (1999), one of the most acclaimed shorts ever made in Iran. Following this success, Ghobadi went on to make *A TIME FOR DRUNKEN HORSES* (2000)- the first feature-length Kurdish film in the history of Iran. In the wake of being awarded several different International Awards, Ghobadi attracted worldwide attention and established himself as a pioneer of Kurdish cinema.

This film and all subsequent made by Ghobadi (among others, *TURTLES CAN FLY*, 2004, and *HALF MOON*, 2006) were widely praised at film festivals the world over, gathering dozens of awards, but were little or not seen in his native country. In 2009, Ghobadi completed *NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT PERSIAN CATS* - a semi-documentary feature about the underground indie music scene in Tehran, filmed in Iran without an official permit and in very restricted conditions. He has since had to leave Iran and continue working abroad. His latest film, *RHINO SEASON* (2012), was shot in Istanbul.

Filmography

Feature Films

2012: *Rhino Season*

2009: *No One Knows About Persian Cats*

2006: *Niwemung (Half Moon)*

2005: *Behind the Scenes of Turtles Can Fly*

2004: *Turtles Can Fly*

2002: *Marooned in Iraq (The Songs Of My Motherland)*

1999: *A Time For Drunken Horses*

Short Films

2004: *Daf (Tambourine)*, and *The War is Over*

1998: *Ballads of a Plain Girl*

1997: *Telephone Booth*

1997: *The Pigeon Of Nader Flew*

1997: *Life in a Fog*

1996: *Ding*

1996: *Notebook's Quota*

1996: *God's Fish*

1996: *Like Mother*

1996: *Party*

1995: *That Man Came Along*

1995: *Again Rain With The Melody*

1993: *Private M. Hosseini*

1991: *Barbershop*

1991: *Pantol*

1990: *A Glance*

1990 : *Golbaji*

1989: *From Another Angle*

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