

**MoMA AND P.S.1 PRESENT FIRST MAJOR UNITED STATES RETROSPECTIVE OF
ABBAS KIAROSTAMI**

Three-Part Exhibition Comprises Film, Photography, and Media Installation

Abbas Kiarostami: Image Maker

**March 1–19, 2007 (film retrospective)
MoMA, The Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters**

**March 1–May 28, 2007 (media installation)
MoMA, The Yoshiko and Akio Morita Gallery**

**February 11–April 29, 2007 (photography and media installation)
P.S.1, Painting Gallery and Drawing Gallery**

NEW YORK, February 21, 2007—The Museum of Modern Art and P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center present the most comprehensive exhibition of the work of Abbas Kiarostami ever organized in the United States. ***Abbas Kiarostami: Image Maker***, a three-part exhibition of film, photography, and installations, on view from March 1 through May 28 at MoMA, and February 11–April 29, 2007, at P.S.1, includes a retrospective of 33 short and feature-length films, along with new photography and media works being exhibited for the first time. Kiarostami is one of the world's most critically acclaimed directors and has been largely responsible for the high profile of Iranian cinema in the past decade. The director will introduce the opening night film, *Ta'am-e gilās* (*Taste of Cherry*, 1997), on March 1 at MoMA. ***Abbas Kiarostami: Image Maker*** is organized by Jytte Jensen, Curator, Department of Film, and Klaus Biesenbach, Chief Curator, Department of Media, The Museum of Modern Art, in collaboration with The Iranian Art Foundation.

This exhibition presents different aspects of the artist's career. The film series, presented March 1–19 in The Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters, comprises all of the director's most celebrated works, many in newly struck prints acquired for The Museum's permanent collection, such as *Where Is the Friend's House?* (1987); *And Life Goes On.../Life and Nothing More...* (1991); *Through the Olive Trees* (1994); *Taste of Cherry* (1997), which won the Golden Palm at Cannes; *The Wind Will Carry Us* (1999), winner of the Grand Special Jury Prize at Venice; and *Ten* (2002). Several of Kiarostami's early films, seldom screened in North America, are included, such as his first film, *Nan va koutcheh* (*Bread and Alley*, 1970), and his debut feature film *Mossafer* (*The Traveller*, 1974), as well as most of the other films he made while at Kanoon, The Institute for the Development of Children and young Adults, in Tehran.

The video installation *Five* (2006), which is presented March 1–May 28 in MoMA's Yoshiko and Akio Morita Gallery, comprises separate projections of each of the five parts of the artist's 2004 feature *Five*, in which five scenes, filmed by a static camera, play out in front of a beach looking over the Caspian Sea.

Concurrent with his international acclaim as a filmmaker, Kiarostami has seriously pursued his passion for photography since the 1980s. The photographic works on view at P.S.1 through April 29 are from four different series. The seven color prints in the series *Rain* (2006) were taken by the artist through the windshield of his vehicle, with everything but the raindrops on his windshield in focus. Kiarostami has described his car as his “best friend,” for its function as his office, a comfortable space, and a location for contemplation. In the 17 color photographs in *Trees and Crows*, the linearity and serenity of compositions of trees in various settings is interrupted by the appearance of a bird or birds. Both of these series are being exhibited for the first time by the artist.

The 19 black-and-white photographs in the series *Roads and Trees* and *Snow White* (both 1978–2003) are mostly landscape shots for which the artist has already received widespread acclaim. Also at P.S.1, the video installation *Summer Afternoon* (2006) is an interior scene that depicts shadows dancing against a curtained window. The breeze from a fan positioned behind the viewer adds another experiential dimension, as if the viewer is actually standing at the window itself.

Abbas Kiarostami (Iranian, b. 1940), is the most important filmmaker to have emerged from post-revolutionary Iran, having been one of the leading directors in the Iranian “New Wave” of the late 1960s and early 1970s. After graduating from Tehran University’s Faculty of Fine Arts, Kiarostami worked variously as a traffic policeman, painter, graphic designer, and book illustrator, before beginning a film career by designing credit titles and then directing commercials. He established the film department of the nonprofit Kanoon and directed his first film, *Bread and Alley*, there, one of a number of educational films he made while at the institute.

As part of the Iranian New Wave, Kiarostami and his colleagues drew on the neorealism of filmmakers such as Roberto Rossellini, with social, observational fiction dramas the hallmark of the movement. Since the 1980s, these directors and their films have received wider exposure and acclaim from the international critical community, with Kiarostami garnering major awards at Cannes and Venice film festivals.

A sense of minimalism permeates all of Kiarostami’s work, both visual and written (he is a published poet). Besides exhibiting a poetic quality, Kiarostami’s cinema is one of questions and questioning; his films are almost always initiated as a question or a quest that develops, as his films’ characters evolve, into much larger ethical and philosophical inquiries. This characteristic is present from the early shorts and features of didactic origins—many screened here as United States premieres—and it continues through such later works as *Zendegi va digar hich* (*And Life Goes On.../Life and Nothing More...*), where such lyricism supports—both overtly and obliquely—the basic humanism that illuminates all of the director’s oeuvre.

Thematically, Kiarostami’s films feature the conflicts between modernity and tradition, urban and rural, and, since the catastrophic earthquake that decimated parts of northern Iran in 1990, life and death. His oeuvre is distinguished as much by its ethical and philosophical core as by its visual simplicity and its focus on the humanity of ordinary people. The characters in his films engage in an endless interrogation—of each other, of themselves, and of the director.

Stylistically and technically, Kiarostami has moved away from shooting on film in recent years and has embraced digital video—primarily for the intimacy and immediacy that it allows him to have with his actors or, as in the case with *ABC Africa* (2001), with his documentary subjects. Using mostly nonprofessional actors and, by his own admission, incomplete scripts when he commences shooting, the director often finds his own films a voyage of discovery. He uses an economical film grammar that includes long takes, a small cast and crew, and an absence of flamboyance in camera movement.

ABOUT THE CURATORS

Jytte Jensen, Curator, Department of Film, The Museum of Modern Art, has been with the Museum since 1984. At MoMA she has organized annual programs such as *Premiere Brazil!* and *Global Lens*, as well as *Prix Jean Vigo* (2006), a yearlong celebration of French film, and *Bright Stars, Big City: Chinese Cinema's First Golden Era, 1922–1937* (2005). She is a member of the selection committee for *New Directors/New Films*. Her publications include: *Benjamin Christensen: An International Dane* (1999), "Four Decades of Brazilian Cinema" in *Cinema Novo and Beyond* (1998), and monographs on *Carl Th. Dreyer* (1994) and *Bela Tarr* (2001), as well as interviews and articles for newspapers in the United States and abroad.

Klaus Biesenbach is Chief Curator, Department of Media, The Museum of Modern Art, and Chief Curatorial Advisor at P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center. At MoMA he organized *Douglas Gordon: Timeline* (2006) and co-organized *Doug Aitken: sleepwalkers* (2007). In 2005 he co-organized *New Works/New Acquisitions* with Ann Temkin, Curator, Department of Painting and Sculpture, and collaborated with Roxana Marcoci, Curator, Department of Photography, on *Take Two. Worlds and Views: Contemporary Art from the Collection*. He is the founding director of KW (Kunst-Werke) Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin; was a member of the international jury of the 1997 Venice Biennale; co-organized the "hybrid workspace" of *Documenta 10* in Kassel (1997); directed the Berlin Biennale in 1998, and cocurated the Shanghai Biennale in 2002. At P.S.1 he organized *Into Me/Out of Me* (2006) and co-curated the *Greater New York* exhibitions in 2000 and 2005. Mr. Biesenbach also organized the P.S.1 presentation of *Roth Time: A Dieter Roth Retrospective*, at MoMA QNS and P.S.1 in 2004.

SPONSORSHIP

Abbas Kiarostami: Image Maker is co-presented by The Museum of Modern Art and P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, in collaboration with the Iranian Art Foundation.

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TRAVEL

The film and photography components of the exhibition will travel to Berkeley Museum and Pacific Film Archive (July 2007) and Los Angeles County Museum of Art (Fall 2007).

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Closed Tuesday

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SCREENING SCHEDULE

ABBAS KIAROSTAMI: IMAGE MAKER

[All films by Abbas Kiarostami, produced in Iran, and in Farsi with English subtitles, unless otherwise indicated]

Thursday, March 1

7:00 *Tavalod-e noor (Birth of Light)*. 1997. Japan.
Dawn breaks over the mountains in one continuous shot. 5 min.

Ta'am-e gilās (Taste of Cherry). 1997.
A middle-aged man circles the mountains in his truck, appealing to strangers and luring them into fateful conversations. Kiarostami's Palme d'Or winner is haunting and sublime. It poetically transcends the reality of its life-and-death questions as the film refuses to offer any answers—or even an ending. 99 min.

Program 104 min.

Friday, March 2

6:00 *Nan va koutcheh (Bread and Alley)*. 1970.
A hostile dog complicates a boy's journey through an alley with a loaf of bread. No dialogue. 10 min.

Zang-e tafrih (Recess/Breaktime). 1972.
A dark tale in which a boy is punished for misbehaving at school—and when freedom rings, life outside doesn't welcome his participation either. No dialogue. 14 min.

Tadjrobeh (The Experience). 1973.
Earning his keep at a photography studio where he also sleeps, an orphan aspires to be closer to the object of his affection, an older girl from a higher social class. 60 min.

Program 84 min.

8:00 *Man ham mitounam (So Can I)*. 1975.
Animated proof of the power of imagination and intelligence. 4 min.

Do rah-e hal baray-e yek massaleh (Two Solutions for One Problem). 1975.
A droll allegory about the importance of honest reconciliation. 5 min.

Mossafer (The Traveller). 1974.
In the first of Kiarostami's feature-length physical and spiritual journeys, a schoolboy begs, borrows, and lies to get to the soccer match of his dreams. Poised between calmness and frantic action—extremes brought together by use of a zoom lens—the film is a tentative celebration of ingenuity and determination, even when absent noble ambition or moral worth. 74 min.

Program 83 min.

Saturday, March 3

2:00 *Rang-ha (Colors)*. 1976.
A refreshingly irreverent, didactic short that teaches children to identify colors. 15 min.

Az oghat-e faraghat-e khod chegouneh estefadeh konim: Rang-zanie (How to Make Use of Leisure Time: Painting). 1977.

A humorous slice of educational instruction on refurbishing and painting. 7 min.

Rah-e hal-e yek (Solution No. 1). 1978.

In Kiarostami's first "road movie," a man with a broken-down car is stranded on a desert road. 11 min.

Lebasi bara ye aroussi (The Wedding Suit). 1976.

Two boys covet a new wedding suit before it is handed to its rightful owner. Great suspense is built by purely visual means, recalling the apparent simplicity of Neorealism. Issues of class and friendship are exposed in achingly real dialogue that covers a range of subjects, from money to karate. 54 min.

Program 87 min.

4:15 ***Dandan-dard (Toothache)***. 1979.

Equal parts narrative and instructional cautionary tale, *Toothache* emphasizes taking care of one's teeth. 23 min.

Be tartib va bedoun-e tartib (Orderly or Disorderly). 1981.

Demonstrations of how to behave properly in real-life scenarios. Whether organized or chaotic, the reenacted situations are hard to capture on film: reality and cinema at odds. 16 min.

Hamsarayan (The Chorus). 1982.

An elderly man drifts in and out of the clamor of daily life, with help from his hearing aid. 17 min.

Hamshahri (Fellow Citizen). 1983.

A traffic cop (Kiarostami's first job in real life) attempting to prevent drivers from entering a closed-off area is treated to an infinite array of excuses. A revealing study of man's capacity for inventing stories (or "lying"), and a witty use of repetition at its most extreme. 52 min.

Program 108 min.

Sunday, March 4

2:00 ***Avali ha (First-Graders)***. 1984.

An investigation into the education of pupils in one of Tehran's poorest school districts, the film follows first-graders from the start of their school lives. Small but significant gestures between the students reveal the world of children at school—and most scenes, tellingly, take place in either the schoolyard or the principal's office. 84 min.

4:00 ***Khaneh-je doost kojast? (Where Is the Friend's House?)***. 1987.

A boy's quest—to deliver a schoolbook to a classmate who will be punished if it doesn't reach him—turns into a journey of determination and resilience, as the road to the neighboring village is filled with obstacles. This deceptively simple tale is given suspense through Kiarostami's lyrical sense of single-minded purity. Both repetition and the tension between real time and ellipsis are used to great effect, imbuing the film with lasting visual power. 87 min.

6:00 ***Mashq-e shab (Homework)***. 1989.

By including his own role as cinematic interrogator, Kiarostami has created a multilayered documentary that not only gives a picture of education and children's home life in Iran, but also encompasses a questioning of cinema's role and of its potential for manipulation. By interviewing several children and exploring the way they deal with homework, the film reveals their lack of stimulation and exposes the fear and dread that grown-ups can inspire in children's lives. 86 min.

Monday, March 5

6:00 *Namay-eh nazdik (Close-Up)*. 1990.

Based on real events, *Close-Up* is a masterful exploration of the often blurred boundaries between fiction and truth. A man poses as a famous film director for reasons that are not exactly clear—perhaps for money, fame, or to indulge a fantasy? Kiarostami's humane and infinitely complex portrait—using both actual trial footage and reenactments by the people involved—is heartbreaking, lyrical, and inspiring in its fearless uncovering of a fluctuating truth. 98 min.

8:00 *Zendegi va digar hich (And Life Goes On.../Life and Nothing More...)*. 1991.

In the aftermath of the 1990 earthquake that killed over 50,000 people in northern Iran, a filmmaker and his son drive to the region to look for two boys who participated in an earlier movie. Traveling through the landscape, they interview several survivors, and the result is a movie that communicates the rebirth of vital construction in the midst of destruction. 91 min.

Wednesday, March 7

6:00 *Zir-e darakhtan-e zeyton (Through the Olive Trees)*. 1994. Iran/France.

Interweaving related narratives, both fictive and real, and showcasing a film within a film, *Through the Olive Trees* humorously re-creates problems that supposedly plagued the filming of *And Life Goes On...* (1991)—such as one of the earlier film's nonprofessional cast members falling in love with and pursuing the woman portraying his wife. A tale of life, love, and cinema, the film's stunning last shot provided the film's title and became a signature image for the director. 103 min.

8:00 *Bad mara khahad bourd (The Wind Will Carry Us)*. 1999. Iran/France.

A television crew arrives at a remote Kurdish village to wait for the impending death of an old woman and the subsequent ancestral funeral ceremony. The daily life of the ancient valley town is contrasted with phone calls from modern Tehran—calls that are accessible only on the nearby mountaintop. As Behzad, the crew's cameraman, shuttles between the two, he learns patience and reassesses his route through life. 118 min.

Thursday, March 8

6:00 *ABC Africa*. 2001. Iran/France.

Commissioned by the United Nations to make a film about women left behind and children orphaned by AIDS and war in Uganda, Kiarostami made a research trip to the country. He and his cameraman found themselves surrounded by beauty, energy, and resilience, contrasted with (a few) scenes of devastation and darkness—all of which were captured using digital cameras. The director decided to use this travel diary to fashion an ode to life, as embodied by the vitality of the Ugandan people. 85 min.

8:00 *Sham-e yeknafare (Dinner for One)*. 1995. France/Denmark/Spain/Sweden.

From the compilation *Lumière and Company*. A woman (voice of Isabelle Huppert) leaves an answering machine message. 1 min.

Ten. 2002. Iran/France.

With Mania Akbari, Amin Maher.

The director's favorite setting, the automobile, serves as the perfect inside/outside, confined space for conversations between women. In ten separate scenes, six women at different stages of life—including the driver, a divorcee—open up about their emotional lives and attitudes. In the opening sequence, the sole male, the driver's petulant young son, sets the scene for the women his "mother" lends an ear to with a conversation that is a true example of communication difficulties. 93 min.

Program 94 min.

Friday, March 9

- 6:00** *Five*. 2004. France/Iran/Japan.
Dedicated to Yasujiro Ozu, *Five* mines the potential of digital imagery and sound and investigates the fluid limits of documentary practice. Canny and sublime, the film is comprised of five long, apparently single takes of a beach on the Caspian Sea. The cast includes pedestrians on a boardwalk, dogs, ducks, a piece of driftwood, and moonlight reflected on stormy waters—a seemingly mundane procession in which Kiarostami observes a universe of change. No dialogue. 74 min.
- 8:00** *10 on Ten*. 2004. Iran/France.
With examples from *Ten* and other films, Kiarostami takes us to the heart of his creative process and demonstrates how his complete body of work is a journey of discovery. A candid and unpretentious assessment of his own work, these lessons—originally conceived of as a teaching tool or master class—amount to an incisive, sometimes funny, and often provocative contemplation of the art of cinema. 93 min.

Saturday, March 10

- 2:00** *Letters*. 2006. Spain/Iran.
An exchange of eight digital “letters” between two like-minded artists, Victor Erice and Abbas Kiarostami, whose correspondence plays with the tension between the similarities and differences in their lives and work. Examples of chapter (or letter) titles are “The Painter’s Garden (V.E.)” and “The Quince (A.K.).” In Spanish, Iranian; English subtitles. 70 min. **U.S. premiere.**
- 4:00** *Rug*. 2006.
In this guided tour of a unique Persian carpet, a close-up of the delicate “spine” of a tree branches out into the discovery of a fantastical world. 10 min. **World premiere.**
- Tickets*. 2004. Italy/Great Britain/Iran.
The film’s middle segment, directed by Kiarostami, concerns a woman on a train ride who refuses to show her ticket (if she has one) and the young man accompanying her, who is embarrassed by her behavior. 25 min. **U.S. premiere.**
- Roads of Kiarostami*. 2005.
An unassuming introduction to Kiarostami’s landscape photography turns into a poetic—then frightening—tour of motion and stasis, photos and dogs, and beauty and destruction by the auteur himself. 32 min.

Program 67 min.

- 6:00** *Zir-e darakhtan-e zeyton (Through the Olive Trees)*. See Wednesday, March 7, 6:00.

Sunday, March 11

- 2:00** *Nan va koutcheh (Bread and Alley)*. See Friday, March 2, 6:00.
Zang-e tafrih (Recess/Breaktime). See Friday, March 2, 6:00.
Tadjrobeh (The Experience). See Friday, March 2, 6:00.
- 4:00** *Man ham mitounam (So Can I)*.
Do rah-e hal baray-e yek massaleh (Two Solutions for One Problem).

Mossafer (The Traveller). See Friday, March 2, 8:00.

6:00 *Dandan-dard (Toothache)*.

Be tartib va bedoun-e tartib (Orderly or Disorderly).

Hamsarayan (The Chorus).

Hamshahri (Fellow Citizen). See Saturday, March 3, 4:15.

Monday, March 12

6:00 *Rang-ha (Colors)*.

Az oghat-e faraghat-e khod chegouneh estefadeh konim: Rang-zanie (How to Make Use of Leisure Time: Painting).

Rah-e hal-e yek (Solution No. 1).

Lebasi bara ye aroussi (The Wedding Suit). See Saturday, March 3, 2:00.

Wednesday, March 14

6:15 *Avali ha (First-Graders)*. See Sunday, March 4, 2:00.

8:00 *Mashq-e shab (Homework)*. See Sunday, March 4, 6:00.

Thursday, March 15

6:00 *Khaneh-je doost kojast? (Where Is the Friend's House?)*. See Sunday, March 4, 4:00.

8:00 *Zendegi va digar hich (And Life Goes On.../Life and Nothing More...)*. See Monday, March 5, 8:00.

Friday, March 16

6:00 *Bad mara khahad bourd (The Wind Will Carry Us)*. See Wednesday, March 7, 8:00.

8:30 *Namay-eh nazdik (Close-Up)*. See Monday, March 5, 6:00.

Saturday, March 17

2:00 *Tavalod-e noor (Birth of Light)*.

Ta'am-e gilās (Taste of Cherry). See Thursday, March 1, 7:00.

4:00 *ABC Africa*. See Thursday, March 8, 6:00.

6:00 *Sham-e yeknafare (Dinner for One)*.

Ten. See Thursday, March 8, 8:00.

Sunday, March 18

2:00 *Five.* See Friday, March 9, 6:00.

4:00 *Letters.* See Saturday, March 10, 2:00.

Monday, March 19

6:00 *10 on Ten.* See Friday, March 9, 8:00.

8:00 *Rug.*

Tickets.

Roads of Kiarostami. See Saturday, March 10, 4:00.