

Tehran Taboo

Cert 15 Germany/Austria 2017 96 mins

Crew

Director	Ali Soozandeh
Screenplay	Grit Kienzlen & Ali Soozandeh
Cinematography	Martin Gschlacht
Film Editing	Frank Geiger & Andrea Mertens

Cast

Elmira Rafizadeh	Pari
Zahra Amir Ebrahimi	Sara
Arash Marandi	Babak
Bilal Yasar	Elias
Negar Mona Alizadeh	Donya
Hasan Ali Mete	Judge

Synopsis

Tehran, the present. Pari is a single mother selling herself for sex in order to care for her young son Elias. By chance she befriends Sara, whose perfect middle-class family life is a façade hiding secrets of her own.

The lives of the two women become intertwined with Babak, a young musician frantically trying to raise money to "restore" the virginity of his girl-friend Donya.

As the stories of sex, drugs and corruption unravel, the unlikely allies push against the restrictions of society, and discover their lives are more alike than they think.



Booking Information

Distributor: Peccadillo Pictures
www.peccapics.com

DVD bookings:

Can be booked now via Troy Film Agency
troyfilmagency@btinternet.com
01474 833263

See inside front cover for more details

Available: January 2019



Review

While a bellicose US president reverses the recent thaw in relations with Iran's leadership, there are more pressing concerns for the young people of the nation's capital, Tehran - such as how to navigate the draconian morality laws of its repressive regime. It's these ordinary Iranians who populate Ali Soozandeh's eye-opening film, brought to life through the rotoscope technique seen in *'Waking Life'* and *'Waltz with Bashir'*. And what a revealing portrait of the city's inner life it is, offering a fascinating insight into its contradictions, bureaucracies and hypocrisies, as well as the everyday struggles of its citizens.

...Beautifully written, acted and imagined, it would work perfectly well as live action, but the rotoscoping has both a distancing effect - which makes some of its more disturbing scenes easier to stomach - and an extra aesthetic dimension: sometimes beguiling, often breathtaking, always compelling.

David Hughes, Time Out, October 2018

...What otherwise might end up as a piece of dark realism, thanks to its technique becomes a varied and somehow irrepressible viewing experience. The film's use of rotoscoping - it was shot by Austrian cinematographer Martin Gschlacht, who filmed live images that were redrawn by computer animation into visual forms - gives it a remarkable fluidity and lightness. It also has the undoubted advantage, for a film made in Europe by a long-term exile from Iran, of giving its participants anonymity; location shooting in Tehran would clearly have been impossible, but the drawn street scenes we see here are a creative reinterpretation that absorbs us no less.

...Strange though it may sound, the immediate consolation that *Tehran Taboo* offers is aesthetic. The chaos of Tehran's street world is something viewers know from contemporary Iranian cinema (not least Jafar Panahi's *Taxi Tehran*) but animation presents it all in a different light. The sheer range of colours - the yellow of the city air, the green of dawn, the red neon roof light that marks one key location - are somehow hues of comfort. The brushwork with which *Tehran Taboo* draws both its characters and visual world is beautiful, but it's only the ebullience of the latter that overcomes the desperation of the former.

Tom Birchenough, The Arts Desk, October 2018

FILM FACTS...

- ☆ The film premiered in International Critics' Week at the 2017 Cannes Film Festival, where it was nominated for the Golden Camera award.
- ☆ Writer/director Ali Soozandeh was born in Iran, but has lived in Germany since 1995, working in animation and documentaries. This is his first feature film.
- ☆ Actors were filmed against a green background, and then Iranian visual location elements were superimposed on each scene via rotoscoping.