



SÉLECTION OFFICIELLE  
COMPÉTITION

# 3 FACES

a film by **Jafar Panahi**

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# 3 FACES

a film by **Jafar Panahi**

**CREW**

Producer & Director JAFAR PANAHİ  
Script JAFAR PANAHİ  
Director of Photography AMİN JAFARI  
Edit MASTANEH MOHAJER  
Sound design & Edit AMIREZA ALAVIAN  
Post production POOYA ABBASIAN

**CAST**

BEHNAZ JAFARI as Behnaz Jafari  
JAFAR PANAHİ as Jafar Panahi  
MARZIYEH REZAEI as Marziyeh Rezaei  
MAEDEH ERTEGHAEI as Maedeh  
NARGES DEL ARAM as Mother

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Iran | 2018 | 100' | 1:85 | Farsi, Azeri

## ORIGIN OF THE PROJECT

Social networks are extremely popular in Iran. There is a mad quest for contact, especially with film celebrities. Despite his position as a director officially forbidden in his own country, Jafar Panahi remains a very popular recipient of messages, many from young people who want to make films. He usually deletes them, but sometimes he is touched by a sincerity, an intensity, that has led him to wonder more about those who send such messages. One day, he received a message on Instagram that raised a 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. Out of composing these three stories came the image of this narrow and winding road, which is a concrete metaphor of 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 his mother, his father and his 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 able to work even at night outdoors without the need for heavy equipment. As always, Jafar Panahi wrote the entire script to the smallest detail - although he did make some improvements during the shoot according to the situation. Filming outdoors was a much welcomed situation after his previous movies (*This is Not a Film*, *Closed Curtain*, *Taxi Tehran*) confined 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 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

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. With her, Panahi decided to take on the role, using his good knowledge of the Azeri language and participate in relations with the villagers and the girl who sent the message, relations which are one of the issues in the film. 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 second major female character of the film is played by Marziyeh Rezaei whom the director met by chance in the street, immediately convinced that the young woman was born for this role. The third "face" is legendary Iranian movie star Shahrzad (real name Kobra Saeedi). In Iran, everyone knows her, including the younger generations. Among her most famous appearances, many remember her role in *Qeysar* (1969), Massoud Kimiai's great film noir. Shahrzad performs a sensual number comparable to that of Rita Hayworth in *Gilda*.

*3 Faces* points out how actresses have always been regarded with a certain disrespect, perceived as 'easy' women, both before and after the Islamic Revolution. One of Jafar Panahi's goals is to emphasize how much they were, and are, on the contrary, true artists. This is exemplarily the case of Shahrzad, star of the pre-revolutionary era's mainstream cinema. Often used to highlight her physical attributes in song and dance numbers, this very talented actress is also a poet, author of an important work.

## PRESENT IN HER ABSENCE

Once his 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 does not play 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.





## MASCULINE/FEMININE

Similar to Shahrzad, actor Behrouz Vossoughi, made reference to on a poster in *3 Faces*, was immensely popular, and remained so even though he exiled to the United States after the Revolution. He starred in Amir Naderi's *Tangsir* (1973), in contemporary western style, is a tale of revolt against the corrupt, including religious, whose hero continues to embody a spirit to which the Iranians proudly refer.

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, nor 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

Unlike *Taxi Tehran*, where the names of the collaborators were not mentioned in the end credits, they are all there this time in *3 Faces*. Proof of a change of mood in Iran: during the previous film, some technicians were afraid of the consequences if their name appeared. This time, everyone insisted on appearing in the end credits. As we also saw during the protests in Iran at the end of 2017, there are now gestures of protest much more openly than in the past. This also resulted in the mobilization of all film professionals in favor of Jafar Panahi: all the professional associations of cinema (directors, producers, distributors, technicians, etc.) wrote to the Iranian president asking him to allow Panahi to travel to Cannes. Panahi welcomed the support of these colleagues, but insisted above all on the fact that he be authorized to film as he sees fit, and to show his films in his country. Panahi has also let it be known that he has requested that other abused filmmakers also be left in peace, with the opportunity to freely travel and make films - starting with Mohammad Rassoulof, who was arrested along with Panahi in 2009, and who is again the subject of administrative pressure, with the authorities having seized his passport after he presented his last film abroad.