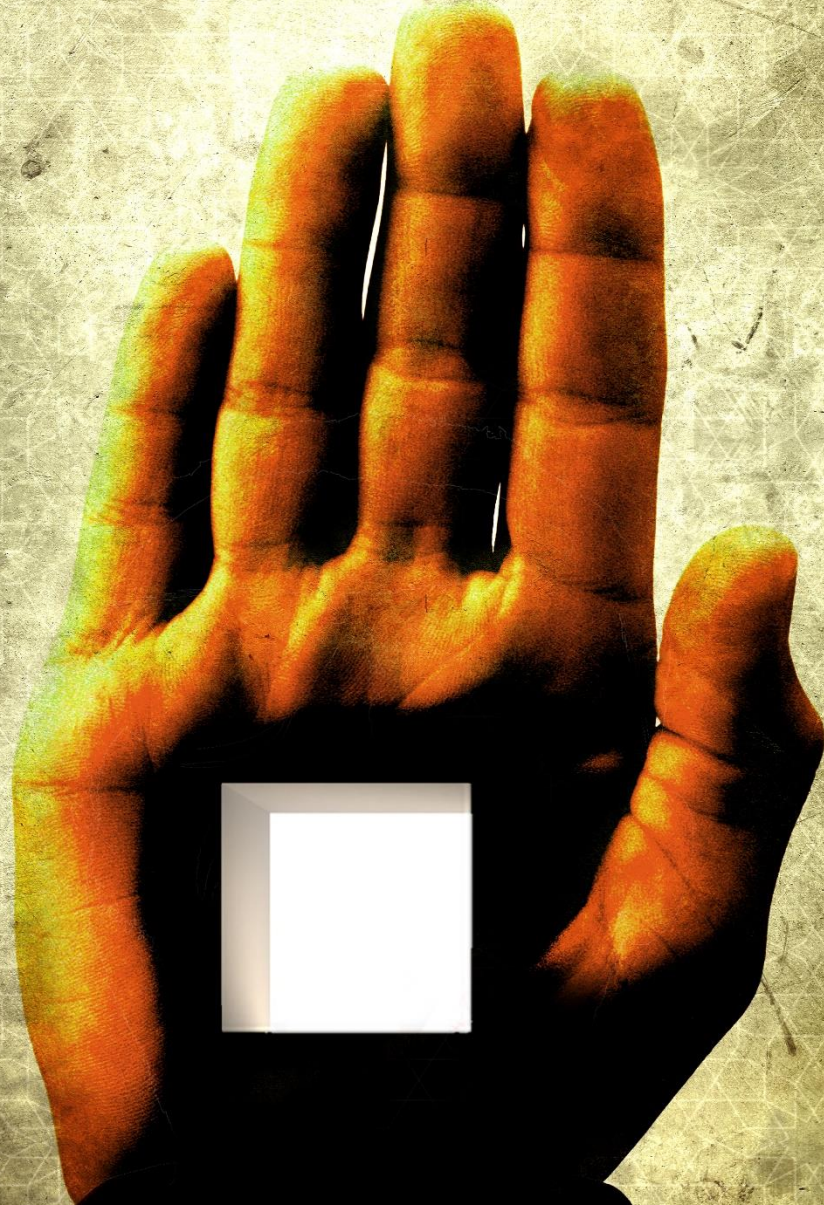


INTERNATIONAL
DIASPORA 15
FILM FESTIVAL
TORONTO, 6-8 NOVEMBER 2015



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International Diaspora Film Festival 15
6 to 8 November 2015
Carlton Cinema

Friday 6 November	7:00	The President Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Georgia/France, 2014, 115 min
	9:10	2 Nights till Morning Mikko Kuparinen, Lithuania/Finland, 2015, 84 min

International Diaspora Film Festival 15

Saturday 7 November	1:15	Pandi Maria-Saroja Ponnambalam, Canada/India, 2014, 60min Preceded by The Neighbour , Nayla Al-Khaja, UAE, 2014, 19 min
	3:10	The President Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Georgia/France, 2014, 115 min
	5:20	The Waiting Room Igor Drljaca, Canada/Bosnia & Herzegovina, 2015, 92 min
	7:20	Where Are You Going Habibi? Tor Iben, Germany, 2015, 79 min Preceded by The House in the Envelope , S. Salketic, Germany, 2015
	9:10	My Stolen Revolution Nahid Persson, Sweden, 2014, 75 min Preceded by America 1979 , Lila Yamtoob, USA, 2014, 14 min

International Diaspora Film Festival 15

Sunday 8 November	2:00	Anywhere Else Ester Amrami, Germany, 2014, 84 min Preceded by Safe Space , Zora Rux, Germany, 2014, 13 min
	4:00	Eryka's Eyes Bruno Lazaro, Canada/Spain, 2014, 95 min Preceded by Away , Parisa Aminolahi, The Netherlands, 2014, 15 min
	6:00	Paradise Suite Joost van Ginkel, The Netherlands, 2015, 123 min
	8:30	Fifi Howls from Happiness Mitra Farahani, France/USA, 2014, 96 min Preceded by I Say Dust , Darine Hotait, USA, 2015, 15 min

Carlton Cinema, 20 Carlton St. (Subway College)
 Admission: \$15 Regular/\$12 Students and Seniors. Festival Pass: \$65
 20% discount online purchase until the night before screening
www.diasporafilmfest.com

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2 NIGHTS TILL MORNING

Mikko Kuparinen, Finland / Lithuania, 2015, 84 min, English/French/Finish with English Subtitles

Toronto Premier

Sexual content and nudity. 18 year and over.

Friday, 6 November 2015, 9:10 PM

A French architect, Caroline (Marie-Josée Croze), in Vilnius, Lithuania on business, has to spend an extra night in the city due to an ash cloud from an Iceland volcanic eruption that shuts down airports across Europe. At the bar she meets Jaakko, a Finnish DJ who is in Vilnius for a gig. Caroline lets him understand that she doesn't speak English, and Jaakko doesn't speak French. Although they lack a common language, they find themselves enjoying each other's company. A pleasant evening ends up with them spending a night together in Jaakko's hotel room. As the airport closure continues for a second day, the two meet again and get to know each other better. What then follows is 24 hours that could change their lives, but do they dare to seize the opportunity?



Mikko Kuparinen's (b. 1979) first feature film was the romantic comedy, *Body Fat Index of Love*, 2012. Three of his short films (*Homevideo*, *Truth of Dare*, *Sirocco*) have won main prizes at international film festivals; *Sirocco* won the H.C. Andersen Award, the Grand Prix at the Odense Film Festival, in Denmark in 2013. *Sirocco* and Mikko were also chosen for the "10 Directors to Watch" DVD, published by four Nordic film magazines. *2 Nights till Morning* is Mikko Kuparinen's first English-language work as a film director.



AMERICA 1979

Lila Yomtoob, USA, 2014, 14 min, in English and Farsi, with English subtitles
International Premiere
Saturday, 7 November 2015, 9:10 PM

In November 1979, a group of young Iranian revolutionaries took 63 hostages at the American Embassy in Tehran. This event echoed daily on television sets across America for 15 months, and soon enough Iranians living in the States were singled out because of their nationality. The dream of the American melting pot was over.

America 1979 is coming of age story of a nine year old Iranian girl and her teenage brother during the hostage crisis. What followed influenced their behaviour, how they were treated and how they grew up.



Lila is a New York based director and producer. Shortly after receiving her degree from NYU film school, she went on to direct and produce her first feature film, *High Life*. Lila has also worked in post-production audio on over 40 films by directors such as Spike Lee, The Coen Brothers, Mary Heron, and John Cameron Mitchell. In 2006, Lila received an Emmy Award for sound editing on the HBO documentary BAGHDAD E.R. Lila was raised in Chicago and Los Angeles and insists that her worldview, sense of humor, and storytelling is informed by her mix of Iranian, Iraqi, Jewish & American culture.



ANYWHERE ELSE

Ester Amrami, Germany, 2014, 87 min, in German, English, Hebrew, Yiddish, with English subtitles
Winner, Dialogue en Perspective Award, Berlin FF 2014; Independent Cinema Award, Karlovy Vary FF 2014; Best Fiction, Potsdam Sehnsüchte 2014; Audience Award, RiverRun International Film Festival 2015
Canadian Premiere
Sunday, 8 November 2015, 2:00 PM

Noa has been living in Berlin for 8 years now. She is about to graduate from university and recently moved in with her German boyfriend Jörg. Although everything should be running smoothly, she experiences a personal crisis. She decides to take a break and spontaneously flies back to Israel. Sun, food, family, speaking her own language... it's all doing her a lot of good. When Noa's grandmother is hospitalized she finds the perfect excuse to extend her stay. But everyday life hunts her down in Israel faster than she could ever have imagined and she feels just as misunderstood in her homeland as she already felt in Berlin. Will Noa somehow be able to find herself amidst this chaos?



Ester Amrami was born in 1979 in Kfar Saba/Israel. In 2003, she moved to Berlin. Since 2005, she has been studying Film Directing at the University of Film and Television "Konrad Wolf" in Potsdam-Babelsberg (HFF/B). Her films include: the shorts BERLIN DIARY (2005), ISI COME ISI GO (2009), HAJOREH-FIRST RAIN (2009), SOLAMENTO MIO (2010), TWO MEN AND A TABLE (2011), and ANYWHERE ELSE (2014).



AWAY

Parisa Aminolahi, The Netherlands, 2014, 15 min

Canadian Premiere

Sunday, 8 November 2015, 4:00 PM

Away tells the story of a young couple who move from Iran to the Netherlands. The woman tries to explore the new environment and adapt herself to it. However, the contrast between where they came from and where they now live, their isolation and being away from family and friends, made the woman dispirited and homesick. The memories and nostalgia for her country encourage the woman to abandon reality and instead to sleep and live in her dreams but a peculiar phenomenon threatens her life...

Parisa Aminolahi was born in Tehran, Iran, in 1978. She is a photographer and filmmaker based in The Netherlands.



ERYKA'S EYES

Bruno Lazaro, Canada/Spain, 2014, 95 min, in English

Canadian Premiere

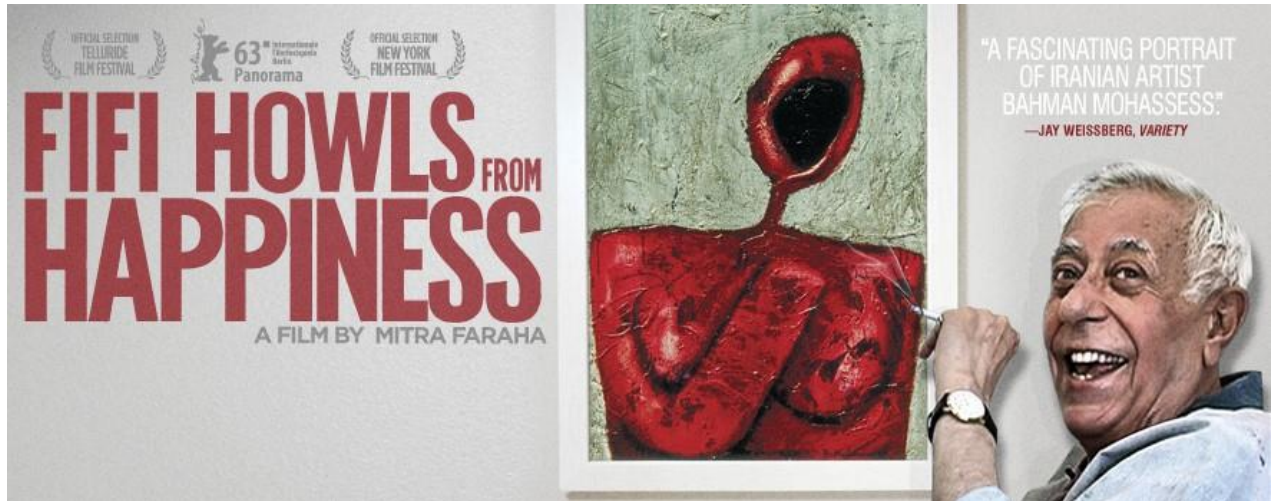
Sunday, 8 November 2015, 4:00 PM

“Forever is a good word.”

Eryka travels to Spain from the African Sahrawi refugee camps where she has been shooting a documentary. On arriving she discovers that her boyfriend, Marc, has vanished hang-gliding over the ocean. She meets David, her boyfriend's roommate and archaeologist co-worker. As they search the coastal area an intense attraction develops. Tormented by this and desperate to find Marc, Eryka continues on her own. One day Marc appears just where he says they had planned to meet. Together again, Eryka dives fearlessly into a sweet death-bound dream.



Bruno Lazaro, born in Madrid, Spain, is a critically acclaimed Spanish-Canadian filmmaker and video artist. His work often explores themes of cultural duality and questions the control of the individual by the state. He completed his film studies at the Centre for the Arts at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, Canada. Most notable among his first films are *HATE TO LOVE* (1982) awarded at the Chicago International Film Festival and invited to the Directors' Fortnight in Cannes, and *SWINGSPAN* (1986) which was also awarded and screened at festivals throughout the USA and Europe.



FIFI HOWLS FROM HAPPINESS

Mitra Farahani, France / USA, 2013, 96 min, In Farsi with English subtitles

Winner, Best Film, Buenos Aires International Festival, 2014; SCAM Award, Cinéma du Réel, 2013

Toronto Premiere

Closing Night Film, Sunday, 8 November 2015, 8:30 PM

Mitra Farahani's lyrical documentary explores the enigma of provocative artist Bahman Mohassess, the so-called "Persian Picasso," whose acclaimed paintings and sculptures dominated pre-revolutionary Iran. Irreverent and uncompromising, a gay man in a hostile world, Mohassess had a conflicted relationship with his homeland—revered by elites in the art scene and praised as a national icon, only to be censored later by an oppressive regime. Known for his iconoclastic art as well as his scathing declarations, Mohassess abandoned the country over 30 years ago for a simple, secluded life in Italy.

While the new Iranian government destroyed many of his works, Mohassess himself obliterated even more-- in rage at man's inhumanity to man, environmental destruction, and the futility of idealism. Ranging from tender to playful to haunting to grotesque, these unforgettable pieces were as mercurial as the man himself, a chain-smoking recluse with the mouth of a sailor and the soul of a poet, touched by a mischievous spark and as likely to lapse into a political rant as a burst of eccentric laughter.



Painter and filmmaker MITRA FARAHANI was born in Tehran, Iran in 1975. She studied with the renowned painter Gholm Hossein Nami. After receiving an art degree at the Azad University in Tehran, she moved to Paris and took up residence in the Cité Internationale des Arts. In 2001, she enrolled in the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs, where she made her first documentary, *Just A Woman*. The film was chosen for the Berlin Film Festival and awarded the Teddy Award Special Jury Prize. *Just a woman* and her next documentary *Taboos* have been screened at International Diaspora Film Festival.



I SAY DUST

Darine Hotait, USA, 2015, 14 min, in English and Arabic with English subtitles

Winner, Special Award, Women Media Arts and Film Festival, Sydney, Australia, 2015

Canadian Premiere

Closing Night Film, Sunday, 8 November 2015, 8:30 PM

An Arab-American take on identity in a diaspora context

Hal, an Arab-American poet belonging to the Palestinian diaspora in New York City, meets Moun, a free-spirited chess sales girl. Their brief love affair challenges their understanding of what makes home.



Darine Hotait was Born in Beirut and immigrated to the US with her family when she was 11. She attended the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California where she completed her MFA in screen writing and film directing. Darine has written and directed a number of films and has published plays, short stories, and poems.



MY STOLEN REVOLUTION

Nahid Persson Sarvestani, Sweden/Norway/UK, 2013, 75 min, in Swedish and Farsi with English subtitles
Winner, Audience Award, Rotterdam International FF; Best Documentary, Stockholm Tempo Doc Festival
Toronto Premiere
Saturday, 7 November 2015, 9:10 PM

A student activist in Iran's 1979 revolution that overthrew the dictatorial Shah, Nahid fled to Sweden with her baby after Islamists began persecuting leftists. Three decades later, events in Iran inspire Nahid to revisit that part of her life. Prompted by brutal crackdowns on anti-government protests in 2009 and long-suppressed guilt for abandoning a younger brother to imprisonment and death, the internationally acclaimed filmmaker locates and reunites with five female activists who survived torture and terror in the Islamist regime's jails. Now living in exile, the women share gripping accounts of how their jailers tried to break them physically and spiritually, and describe what sustained them during these horrible ordeals. With the support of these stalwart survivors, Nahid finds answers to haunting questions about her brother's last days. Shifting skillfully between past and present, this deeply personal documentary is an essential resource for understanding Iran today.



Nahid Persson Sarvestani was born in 1960 in Shiraz, Iran, and currently lives in Sweden. She is most famous for *Prostitution behind the Vail* (2004), where she exposed the lives of Iranian prostitutes under Islamic regime. She gained international reputation for her later work *The Queen and I* (2008).



PANDI

Maria-Saroja Ponnambalam, Canada, 2014, 60 min, in English

Saturday, 7 November 2015, 1:15 PM

Pandi, an Indian filmmaker moved to Canada to forge a career in film, his greatest passion. The film combines narration, video footage that Pandi shot, animated scenes from his script and intimate interviews with his family members to illustrate the mysteries behind his life.



Maria-Saroja Ponnambalam has a BFA in Film Production from York University. Her documentaries *The Consequence of Rain* (2008), and *Pretty Little Bits* (2009) have screened at various festivals around the world. She worked on Jennifer Baichwal's *Act of God* and has been an integral part of the National Film Board's Emmy-winning *Highrise* project, directed by Kat Cizek. She is a recipient of the 2009 Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television's National Apprentice Trainee Award in directing.



SAFE SPACE

Zora Rux, Germany, 2014, 13 min, in German with English subtitles
Toronto Premiere

The film tells the love story of the refugee Patrick and Sara from Berlin, who are fighting together for refugee rights in Berlin. When harmless advance turns into a sexual assault, the group is forced to rethink their aims and the private love story grows to an unwanted public dimension.



Born 1988. Made short films as a teenager. Casting Director for Roy Andersson's *A Pigeon Sat on a Branch*. Scholar / stipendiary at Valie Exports Photo Class. Young Journalist of the Berlinale. Studies Directing at DFFB since 2011.



THE HOUSE IN THE ENVELOPE

Sanela Salketic, Germany, 2015, 14 min, in Turkish and German with English subtitles
Toronto Premiere

Leyla, a young woman of Turkish origin living in Berlin, decides after the death of her father to return to Istanbul to find answers to some questions from the past.



Sanela Salketic was born in Stuttgart, Germany in 1979. After completing her Media studies, she worked on a few TV and cinema projects. She has made several short films including *Exit Bags* (2008), *Thanks for Giving* (2008), *DIJASPORA* (2009), *Sweet Sixteen* (2010), *2cm more* (2013), and *The house in the envelope* (2015).



THE PARADISE SUITE

Joost van Ginkel, The Netherlands, 2015, 122 min, in English, French, Bosnian, Swedish, Serbian, Bulgarian, and Dutch, with English subtitles

Sexual content and nudity. 18 Years and over.

Sunday, 8 November 2015, 6:00 PM

For the beautiful young Bulgarian Jenya, her trip to Amsterdam turns out to be the opposite of what she hoped for. Her gruelling captivity makes the angel-like African Yaya fight for her freedom; a dangerous fight in which he loses everything but his beloved faith. The Serbian war criminal Ivica, who has just become a father, is painfully confronted with the fact that crimes will never go unpunished. Bosnian Seka has nothing left to live for but her vengeance but as it turns out, it's that same vengeance that brings love back in her life. And when the Swedish piano-wonderboy Lukas runs away from his new temporary home, his father Stig finally realises that their passion for music hurts their father and son relationship.

"The Paradise Suite" is a mosaic story about six people finding each other and, sometimes with just one glance, influencing each other's lives irreversibly.



Joost van Ginkel was born in 1971 in The Netherlands. His first short *Sand* (2008) was selected for the Venice Film Festival and won 13 international awards. His second short *Kiss* (2009) was selected for the Tribeca Film Festival. His first feature film, *170 HZ*, was nominated for Best Actress and Best Sound Design and won the Youth Movie Squad Award and the Public's Choice Award at the 2011 Netherlands Film Festival. *Paradise Suite* is his second feature film.



THE PRESIDENT

Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Georgia/ France/ UK / Germany, 2014, 115 min, Georgian with English Subtitles

Opening Film, Venice Film Festival 2014

Canadian Premiere

Opening film, Friday, 6 November 2015, 7:00 PM, and Saturday, 7 November 2015, 3:10 PM

The President tells the story of a dictator who is forced to personally confront the many people tortured by his regime after his government is overthrown.

The President and his family rule the land with a draconian fist, enjoying a privileged and luxurious existence at the expense of his miserable and oppressed subjects. After a coup d'état uproots his position of power, the President's wife and daughters are flown out of the country as he stays behind with his grandson, who is too young to grasp the unfolding events. After his personal escort and bodyguards turn on him, he is forced to disguise himself and flee into the countryside to avoid capture. He soon learns that he is now the country's most wanted fugitive and begins a perilous journey with his grandson, his only ally. Posing as street musicians, the pair blend in with a band of haggard political prisoners just released from jail as they travel towards the coast to an awaiting ship that will take them to safety.



Mohsen Makhmalbaf was born in Tehran, Iran, in 1957. He has made more than 20 films. While his early films are considered propaganda for the Islamic regime of Iran, he changed his style adopting a poetic language. He left Iran in 2005 and lives in Paris since then. He is most known for *Salam Cinema* (1995), *Gabbeh* (1996), and *Kandahar* (2001).



THE WAITING ROOM

Igor Drljiaca, Canada, 2015, 92 min, in English and Bosnian, with English Subtitles
Nominated for Golden Leopard, Locarno Film Festival 2015
Saturday, 7 November 2015, 5:20 PM

Jasmin, once a successful actor in former Yugoslavia, now lives in Toronto with his second wife and young son. While juggling a construction job and a busy audition schedule, he dreams of re-launching an old televised stage show that made him famous in his homeland. When he is cast in a role that triggers recollections of the civil war, he is forced to reconcile his current reality with memories of his past success.



Igor Drljiaca is a Bosnian-Canadian filmmaker. After graduation from York University he started the film production company TimeLaps Pictures. His first feature film was *Krivina* (2012). *The Waiting Room* is his second feature. Two of his shorts *The Woman in Purple* (2009) and *The Fuse* (2011) have been screened at the International Diaspora Film Festival before.



WHERE ARE YOU GOING HABIBI?

Tor Iben, Germany, 2015, 79 min, in German with English Subtitles
Toronto Premiere
Saturday, 7 November 2015, 7:20 PM

WHERE ARE YOU GOING, HABIBI is a buddy movie about an unlikely friendship. Ibrahim, young, gay, and Turkish, falls in love with Ali, a wrestler and criminal, German and straight. A kind of love story develops between the two men that surpasses both of them.



Tor Iben is a German filmmaker based in Berlin. His first short was *Love Kills* (2008) which was followed by his first feature film *Cibrail* (2011). In 2013 he made *The Passenger*. *Where Are You Going Habibi?* Is his third feature film.