



Madare ghalb atomi

Atom Heart Mother

مادرِ قلبِ اتمی

Ali Ahmadzadeh

Producer Amir Seyedzadeh. **Production company** Afrand Film (Teheran, Iran). **Director** Ali Ahmadzadeh. **Screenplay** Ali Ahmadzadeh, Mani Baghbani. **Director of photography** Ashkan Ashkani. **Visual effects** Ali Tasdighy. **Art director** Melody Esmaeeli. **Costume** Melody Esmaeeli. **Sound** Amin Mirshekari. **Music** Sahand Mehdizadeh. **Editor** Ali Ahmadzadeh, Ehsan Vaseghi.

Cast Taraneh Alidoosti (Arineh), Pegah Ahangarani (Nobahar), Mehrdad Sedighyan (Kam), Mohammad Reza Golzar.

DCP, colour. 96 min. Farsi.

Premiere 9 February 2015, Berlinale Forum

World sales DreamLab Films

On their way back from a wild party, Arineh and Nobahar cause a car accident. A mysterious stranger by the name of Toofan offers to cover the costs. This won't be the last time they'll cross his path over the course of the night. Cars form a popular setting in Iranian cinema. They move through the public sphere, yet their occupants remain among themselves. But what happens if a policeman suddenly gets into your vehicle, finds black market DVDs and forces you to admit, tipsily, that *Argo* is a film hostile to Iran? This road movie through Tehran by night begins as a hyperactive, drugged-up farce that pokes fun at the authorities, interprets the cultural history of Western toilets, and postulates other daring intercultural theories. Yet gradually the atmosphere changes and tension steadily rises in the car, thanks to Toofan, who keeps appearing again and again out of the blue. He plays a diabolical game with the two friends, one that crosses the boundaries into the metaphysical realm. As fanciful and spooky as the plot may seem, it is clearly anchored in Iran's present.

Anke Leweke

The dictator's confusion

The no-man's-land between dream and reality has forever fascinated me and I've always been attracted to those that oscillate within it. The dividing line between the two is but a hair's breadth and thus we often confuse them.

Should, one evening, a dictator cross your path, you will rapidly realise that he lives on a completely different planet to you. The problem is that the opposite is also true and that you have no place in his cosmology.

And if we push the logic a little further, you will find that the most notorious dictators in the history of humanity have always confused dream and reality.

And that confusion has often led to the destruction of the real world.

Ali Ahmadzadeh

"Tehran is a mother with a nuclear heart"

How did you choose the title of the film? Are you a Pink Floyd fan?

As a child, I was a fan of Pink Floyd. The first time I heard the song *Atom Heart Mother*, I was a kid, but the name of the movie has nothing to do with the song by Pink Floyd. In the past decade, political events both inside and outside of my country have affected Iranian lives, so in my opinion Tehran is a mother with a nuclear heart.

The film opens with a title card explaining an amendment to a law. What's that about?

The story happens on the night in 2009 when the Iranian government began implementing its long-planned reform of the distribution of subsidies to citizens. I thought I should explain to foreign audiences where this law came from. This movie is about dictatorship. The main role is an example of a dictator who can harass two young girls. *Madare ghalb atomi* is about an important and historical character in a surreal environment.

Lots of Iranian films take place in cars. Do you have any insight into why that is?

I love road movies. Both of the feature films I've made so far take place in cars. I am not interested in making films in a place like an apartment or another indoor location, because of some of the limitations that we have in Iran, like the hijab. I think audiences won't find the characters plausible if they wear a headscarf when they are at home. It's totally unrealistic, so I prefer to put them outside. Because even foreigners know that women in Iran have to cover their heads when they're out on the street.

To what social class do your two heroines, and their friend Kami, whom they pick up on the way home, belong?

They belong to the middle class, which forms the largest and most important part of Iranian society, and whose members are often young and well educated, with so many dreams. The two girls and their friend Kami dream of emigrating and possibly leading a free life.

Kami gets out of the car at some point, and a strange man appears out of nowhere, a mysterious apparition.

Madare ghalb atomi is about a strange man who sometimes gets so weird that it seems unreal. The other man, Kami, is a complicated character; you can find many like him in Iran. From

his way of dressing, speaking, and analysing politics, you can conclude that he's a weirdo. He's about to emigrate to another country and he's gay. He behaves the way young people in Iran act when they want to show that they are different. He wears sunglasses at night, which also emphasises the surreal environment of the movie.

Interview: Anke Leweke, January 2015



Ali Ahmadzadeh was born in Tehran, Iran in 1986. After earning an Architecture degree, he studied Music at the Neinava University of Music Sciences in Tehran, as well as Film Directing at the Young Cinema Society.

Films

2007: *Achmaz/Pinned* (11 min.). 2009: *Avantage/Advantage* (23 min.). 2011: *Collage* (20 min.). 2012: *Zanjan* (40 min.). 2013: *Mehmouniye Kami/Kami's Party* (80 min.). 2015: *Madare ghalb atomi / Atom Heart Mother*.