

FROM TEHRAN TO LONDON

Non-finish film by Mania Akbari



www.maniaakbari.com

UK / IRAN

Nonfinish - 43 minutes

Directed by:

MANIA AKBARI

Producer:

MANIA AKBARI

Short Synopsis:

Mania Akbari's *From Tehran to London* (2012), has a Russian-doll structure. It begins with Akbari shooting her latest film entitled *Women Do Not Have Breasts* about a couple, the young poet and writer Ava and her upper-class older husband Ashkan, who live in a large, beautiful - yet isolated - house in the hilly outskirts of the city. Household workers Maryam and Rahim attend to their needs. But despite their comfortable lives, Ava is increasingly dissatisfied and estranged in her relationship with Ashkan. What seems to have been an exciting relationship in the past is now little more than a series of mutual reproaches, as Ashkan incessantly tries to change Ava into someone she isn't - a dutiful wife. Frustrated and lonely - as both artist and wife - Ava seeks refuge in her relationship with young, attractive and lively Maryam, which unknown to Ashkan grows ever deeper and more intimate. When Maryam mysteriously disappears towards the second half of the film, Ava's situation becomes more stressful, and the arguments with her husband begin to escalate. Ashkan has to deal with the household duties on her own, without Maryam's soothing presence, but is able to count on the help and support of her sister Roya (played by Akbari), who is spending some time with the couple. The film's main focus is on female bonding in the domestic realm - female grooming, in many ways another form of female enslavement shared with the West. The 'ouches' and 'ahs' of tweezing and waxing not only reveal sisterhood (Ava-Roya) but also hint at a lesbian relationship (Ava-Maryam), transforming the act of grooming into self-indulgence and therefore an act of defiance against the invisibility and powerlessness of women in Iran (an issue fully explored in Akbari's *One.Two.One*). After one of their quarrels, Ava applies the red lipstick that her husband now disapproves of her wearing (there's no need for her to be sexy anymore) and kisses the mirror to tease him - but what the camera captures is Ava kissing herself. As make up and grooming become acts of creativity and transformation, the sisters engage in a series of inventive photographic sessions in order to unleash Ava's artistic talent. Yet Roya's constant awareness of her own spinsterhood means that the advice she proffers aims for a balance between the emerging artist and the marriage. For Ava this is something that cannot be achieved, since in her opinion art arises from insanity, which marriage suppresses. When Ava becomes pregnant for what turns out to be the second time, she decides to once more abort the child without telling Ashkan and against Roya's advice. *Women Do Not Have Breasts* ends at this point, its various strands left hanging - Akbari had to literally flee the country because filmmakers were being arrested in Iran. The film is dedicated to them. It transpires that none of Akbari's films have ever been granted permission to be made or exhibited inside Iran. Hence, fiction mirrors reality - just like the protagonist of her film, this suffocating, closed environment proves too much. The filmmaker leaves behind her country and her family for exile in London, and as she transforms her whole life, she also reshapes her feature into a medium-length film called *From Tehran to London* - the moving testimony of Akbari's own undeterred creativity.

by Mar Diestro Dopide





FESTIVALS & SCREENING :

- Mania Akbari's Retrospective in Cyprus Film Days Int'l Film Festival 4-13 April 2014
- Mania Akbari's Retrospective in Sderot film International festival 29May-8June (2014)
- Mania Akbari's Retrospective- Danish Film Institute. DFI Copenhagen.Denmark.25-26 Feb (2014)
- UCLA Celebration Of Iranian Cinema.Los Angeles. US. April 24- May 14 (2014)
- Bristol Radical Film Festival.Bristol.UK.March 7 (2014)
- Admiralkino.Vienna. Austria.30 Jan (2014)
- Mania Akbari's Retrospective . Oldenburg Film Festival . German 10-15 Sep (2013)
- Mania Akbari's Retrospective. British Film Institute. BFI London. UK. July 14-28(2013)
- Nour Iranin Film Festival In Los Angeles , USA Sep (2013)
- Persian International Film Festival Sydney, Australia . Jun (2013)
- Edinburg International Film Festival, Edinburg, UK. June 23&24 (2013)
- Flying Broom International Women's Film Festival. Ankara. Turkey. May 13 (2013)
- Fribourg International Film Festival. Fribourg, Switzerland. March 16-18 (2013)
- International Rotterdam Film Festival (2013)





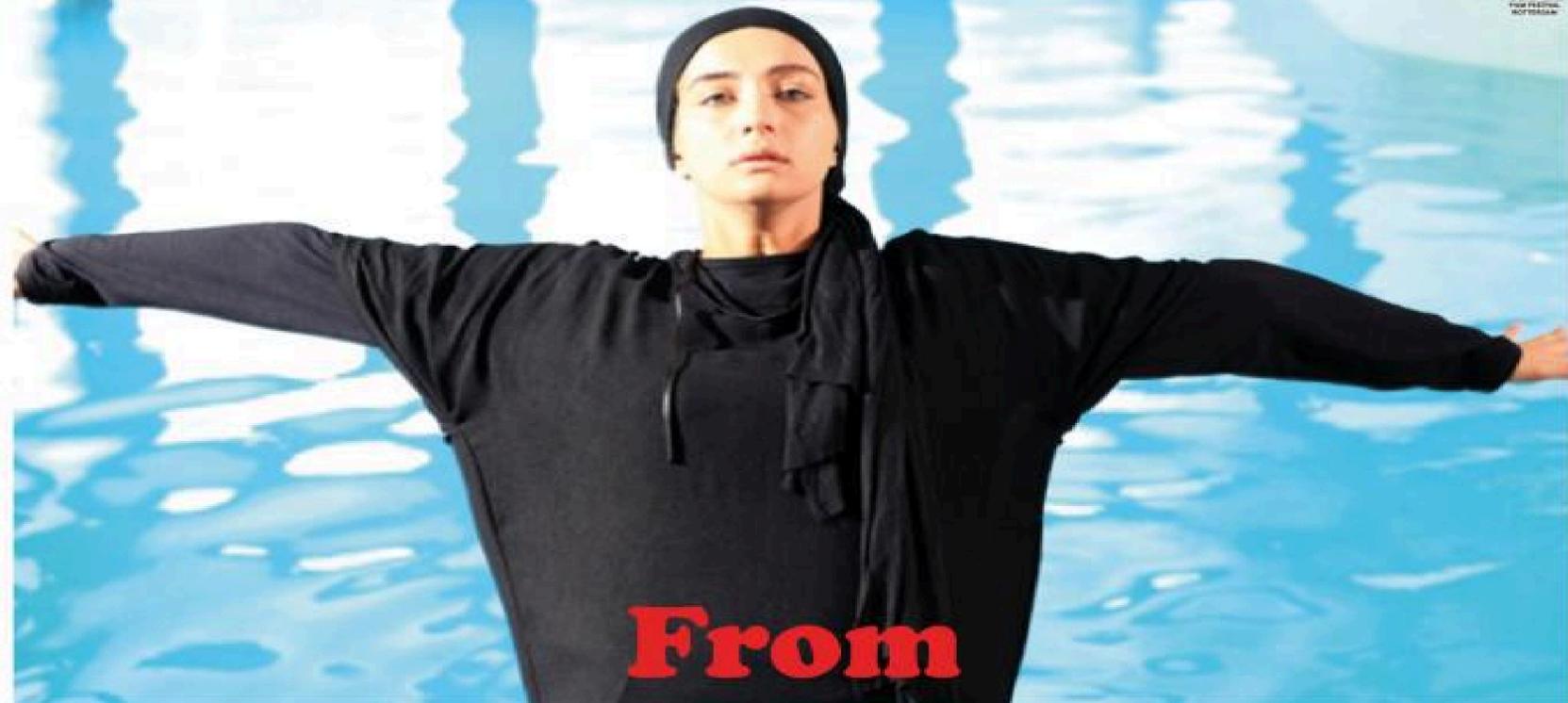












From
Tehran
To
London

A Film by
Mania Akbari

Director, Scriptwriter & Producer: Mania Akbari
Director of Photography: Ali Mohammad Ghasemi
Editor: Mastaneh Mohajer, Hamila Moayeri
& Saad Ahmad Bires
Sound & Mix: Alireza Alavian
Sound Recorder: Vahid Moghaddasi
Assistant Director & Executive Producer: Amin Maher
Cast: Bijan Daneshmand, Neda Amiri, Elabe Hesari
& Mania Akbari
Color, HD, 16:9, 45 min
At the end of 2012, (Tehran-London)