



FORGIVENESS

Iran

PAS Nantes 2015

Category : Feminine psychological drama
Length : 90' **Language :** Persian
Shooting format : HD **Shooting location :** Iran
Shooting dates : May-July 2016
Expected date of completion : October 2016
Stage of production : Development stage

Budget : 250 000 €
Financing in place : 40 500 €
Financing supports : Canada Council for the Arts & Le Conseil des Arts et des Lettres du Quebec
Workshops and platforms attended : Maison des Scénaristes (Cannes 2014), Meeting on the Bridge (Istanbul 2015)
Current situation : Seeking for International and European coproducer, international sales agent

Ali MOSAFFA – PRODUCER (*Road Film*)



Ali Mosaffa was born in Tehran, Iran. He studied Civil Engineering at the University of Tehran but then started acting in 1991 and since then he has acted in some thirty Iranian films and a French production *Le passé* by Asghar Farhadi. He started directing films with the short films, *Incubus*, *The Neighbour* and the documentary feature, *The Deceit of Poesy*. He then directed his first feature film, *Portrait of a Lady Far Away* (2005) starring Leila Hatami and Homayoun Ershadi. His second film *The Last Step* starring Leila Hatami has received acclaim from critics and audiences worldwide following its international premiere at Karlovy Vary IFF 2012 and won many awards. Ali started producing films with his own film *The Last Step* and then produced a second one *What's the time in your world?* which won the international critic's FIPRESCI prize in Busan 2014.

SYNOPSIS

Ava is an upper-middle class high school senior in modern day Tehran, Iran. When her mother is suspicious of her secret relationship with a boy, takes her to a gynaecologist to make sure she is a virgin. The experience is so traumatizing for Ava that she develops insomnia and anxiety, leading her to have nightmares and hallucinations. At the same time in Ava's high school, a rumour about a schoolmate's alleged dalliance and illegal abortion, which has been putting her at risk of expulsion, spreads. For this reason, the school principal and her team begin to carefully monitor all the behaviours and actions of the schoolgirls. Fear of her secret relationship with her boyfriend being disclosed to the school administration adds to Ava's mental obsessions and, gradually, turns into the deep-seated dread of pregnancy and childbirth. Discovering that her mother was pregnant with her out of conjugal bond only intensify her struggles, eventually resulting in a failed suicide attempt in the school bathroom. Subsequently, to avoid being expelled from school because of this deed, she agrees to become the headmaster's snitch, reporting on her classmates' "unusual behaviour". This is the last push for guilt-ridden Ava, who cannot possibly carry such a heavy burden.

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Sadaf FOROUGHİ – DIRECTOR



Born in 1976 in Tehran, Iran, Sadaf Foroughi began her artistic career in 2003 when she started to create and produce short films, documentaries and video art pieces. Sadaf holds a master degree in French literature from Tehran Azad University. She graduated with MA in Film Studies from University of Provence (Aix-Marseille I). She also has a degree in Film Production from New York Film Academy. In addition to her film career, she has also been involved professionally in creating photographic based interdisciplinary arts and also video installations. She is the permanent member of the Iranian Short Film Society (ISFA) since 2005 and also the Société des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatiques (SACD) since 2010.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT (extracts)

« [...] My main inspiration in writing *Forgiveness* was to examine the taboos that have been engraved in my mind and the minds of many women whether Iranian or of other cultures. [...] I have always been intrigued by the concept of sexual repression. What has made sex such a restricted subject for so many women? I believe that the liberty to make one's decision about one's mind and body is an established biological principle for both women and men. Just like a flower freely decides to turn its leaves to better face the sun, so too do human beings need freedom in deciding what is best for their bodies. [...] In Iran, having a premarital relationship is a shameless deed as a preeminent concern for parents is that their daughters remain chaste until marriage. Following the dramatically oppressive social and cultural changes in early 80s Iran, these domineering practices found their way into the public schools, which metamorphosed into venues meant to drill the youth with their notions of sexism and religious fervour. [...] I remember that, as a high-school student in the early nineties, the threat of being punished for allegedly having simple relationship with opposite sex had become a constant torment to my schoolmates and me. Our school administrators encouraged us to spy on our classmates and denounce them if they committed any forbidden act. [...] *Forgiveness* is not an autobiographical film, but it depicts the stresses suffered because of oppression in this society, and which came to define us as the post-revolutionary generation of Iranians. »