

a Cinema Guild release



Opens August 7 in virtual cinemas nationwide

2019 / 74 min / Flat / DCP / 5.1/ Color
In Persian with English subtitles

PRESS

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Press Materials:

http://www.cinemaguild.com/theatrical/sunless_press.html

SYNOPSIS

Mehrdad Oskouei's follow-up to the critically acclaimed *Starless Dreams* (2016), *Sunless Shadows* takes another look at the lives of teenage girls in an Iranian juvenile detention center. But this time the focus is narrowed: each of the film's principal subjects is serving time for the murder of a male family member. One by one, Oskouei invites them to go into a room alone, push the red button on the camera and address their accomplices or their victims.

With this new confessional approach combined with the ever-deepening relationships he has with his subjects, Oskouei presents a picture of the disenfranchised in an aggressively male-dominated society and of the prison that is their shelter from it.

CREDITS

Written and Directed by Mehrdad Oskouei
Director of Photography: Mehdi Azadi
Editing: Amir Adibparvar
Music: Afshin Azizi
Sound Designer: Mahmoud Khorsand
Sound Recordist: Parsa Karimi
Production Manager: Vahid Hajilouei
Executive Producer: Siavash Jamali

Producer Mehrdad Oskouei
Production Company: Oskouei Film Production

Co-Producer: Carsten Aanonsen
Co-Production Company: Indie Film

World Sales: Dreamlab Films
U.S. Distribution: Cinema Guild

SELECT FESTIVALS & AWARDS

WINNER - Best Director, IDFA 2019
Official Selection, MoMA Doc Fortnight 2020
Official Selection, True/False Film Festival 2020
Official Selection, CPH:DOX 2020

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

This film focuses on the act of murder. Not so much the *how*, but more the *why*.

Iranian women who murder their husbands show very little remorse for their homicides. Even after years in prison, they still believe that they were in the right. But why would a mother kill her husband with her daughter's help? What happened in their lives to bring them to such an act? There are those who say they should have gotten divorced instead of killing their husbands, but when divorce is decided by the husband and the wife has no say, what then?

In this film we see murder through the eyes of murderers, both mothers and daughters. I wanted to scrutinize their act of killing from various perspectives, understand their reasons and find out whether the act itself was a difficult task. Do they carry the burden of their deed for years on end?

I have been filming at Centers for Correction and Rehabilitation for 12 years. Both my father and grandfather were political prisoners and, as a consequence, prisons and prisoners have always fascinated me. What's more, when I was 15, I attempted suicide after my father's third bankruptcy. Suicide strangely makes one both murderer and murdered. That is perhaps why I feel the need to delve into the motivations of those who kill and try to elucidate them.

DIRECTOR'S BIO

Mehrdad Oskouei is an Iranian filmmaker, producer, photographer and researcher. He was born in Tehran in 1969 and graduated with a degree in film direction from the University of Arts. One of Iran's foremost documentarians, his films have screened at festivals around the world to great critical acclaim. In 2010, Oskouei received the Dutch Prince Claus award for his achievements.

He is a founding member of the Institute of Anthropology and Culture, has sat on the juries for several international film festivals and served as a cultural ambassador for the United Nation's humanitarian committee UCHA. He teaches at film schools around Iran and is active in the Tehran Arts and Culture Association.

FILMOGRAPHY

Sunless Shadows (2019)
Starless Dreams (2016)
The Last Days of Winter (2011)
The Taste of Iran (Episodes 1 & 4, 2009)
It's Always Late for Freedom (2007)
Nose, Iranian Style (2005)
Thin Ray of Light (2005)
Maryam of Hengam Island (2005)
The Other Side of Burka (2004)
The Widower (2002)
I Can't Remember Anything About Afghanistan (2002)
Caresser of Light (2001)
Look at Me (2001)
The Eclipse (Co-directed with Ebrahim Saeedi, 2001)
My Mother's Home, Lagoon (2000)
The New Year for Tribe (1997)
Saochi (Co-directed with Reza Yazdani, 1996)