

Tell me an image, show me a story

A hands-on workshop
designed by Negar Tahsili

Can you turn this photo to a powerful story?



The internet has changed the film industry dramatically. Online streaming providers draw consumers in with their affordability, convenience and sheer number of options. Online platforms threaten movie theatres. Storytelling has changed in the digital age. But still innovative movies are shining in the chain of global film culture.

I am coming from Iran, a country with respected film industry. Iran's award-winning cinema is known for moral values, rural beauty and poetic elegance. However, before films are released, movies produced in Iran must go in front of the state censorship board. The censorship code is so burdensome that the first talent any serious filmmaker must possess is the ability to get around it. We all believe that cinema can push the boundaries. Of course movies of the boundary-pushing filmmakers are 'different'. And for me this is the secret of the success of Iranian cinema.

Filmmaking may be the most important part of your life, but sometimes a change of focus is needed to put everything into perspective. So let's try together to tell an impactful story through film, begin with 'Why making a film?' and do not start till you have an answer for this important question. Let's try experiencing moviemaking by not making a movie at first step. During 4 days we try to tell one story with choosing different medias. Each day a new narration will be created and we will develop our ideas. In a different skill we even try to make an advertisement in some hours and push it forward to a larger audience. Film schools are trying to give freedom to students as much as possible. But during all these 4 days you will experience how and why constraints can make you more creative. Psychologists call this the paradox of choice. When overwhelmed with too many options, one of two things happen. We either constantly think about those other things we didn't choose, or we end up doing nothing because we can't decide between the options.

By watching a few examples of Iranian movies during the workshop followed by discussions, you will find out how you can begin to use constraints to aid your own creativity and productivity. Also some exercises shows you how strict restrictions can help you make the best film possible. In this limited time we also experience how to wise up about what skills will set you apart from other filmmakers, and catapult yourself onto the big screen as the future of cinema lies in your handhelds!

Negar Tahsili

Born and raised in Tehran, Negar Tahsili started painting of a very young age and has painted professionally since 1996. She studied "Industrial Design" and finished her master's degree with the final project which has been patented as an Invention. In the year 2000 she became a member of "AIP" (association of Iranian painters) and in 2007 became member of inventor's association in Iran. Cinema had always been a passion. She started making video arts and then documentary films. Since 2005, Tahsili has collaborated with Swedish and Swiss production companies on series of documentary films and her works about stereotypical perspectives and politics of gender in modernising society has been shown in many cities around the world. Alongside her filmmaking practice Negar Tahsili works with different mediums such as painting, performance and photography. She also curates exhibitions with the focus on Iranian films and video arts. Her curated collection "Tehran 2008" was shown in Turkey, Macedonia, and the United States.



In the past few years, she started filming, documenting and making an archive about Iranian contemporary art. It is now 10 years that she makes portrait documentaries of Iranian artists for The British Broadcasting Corporation and made a feature documentary film about gender and contemporary art.

Negar Tahsili was awarded many fellowships and grants by art institutions like Akademie der Künste der Welt (Academy of the Arts of the World) in Cologne, Heinrich Böll foundation and now she is a fellow artist in Stuttgart. The fellowship is granted by Württembergischer Kunstverein, for a year.

From 2014 till now she has been given many lectures and workshops about 'mini budget films', 'Iranian cinema' and 'making films with boundaries' in many universities and art institutions across the globe. Tahsili is now editing her feature length documentary about contemporary dancing and also doing the research for her first fiction movie. Her fiction film, about migration is going to be shot in North Africa.