



76. Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Berlinale Forum

CEZARIN WEEKEND

A FILM BY MOHAMMAD SHIRVANI

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TRAILERS

<https://www.youtube.com/@alternativefilmlab>

Alternative Film Lab presents



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CESAREAN WEEKEND

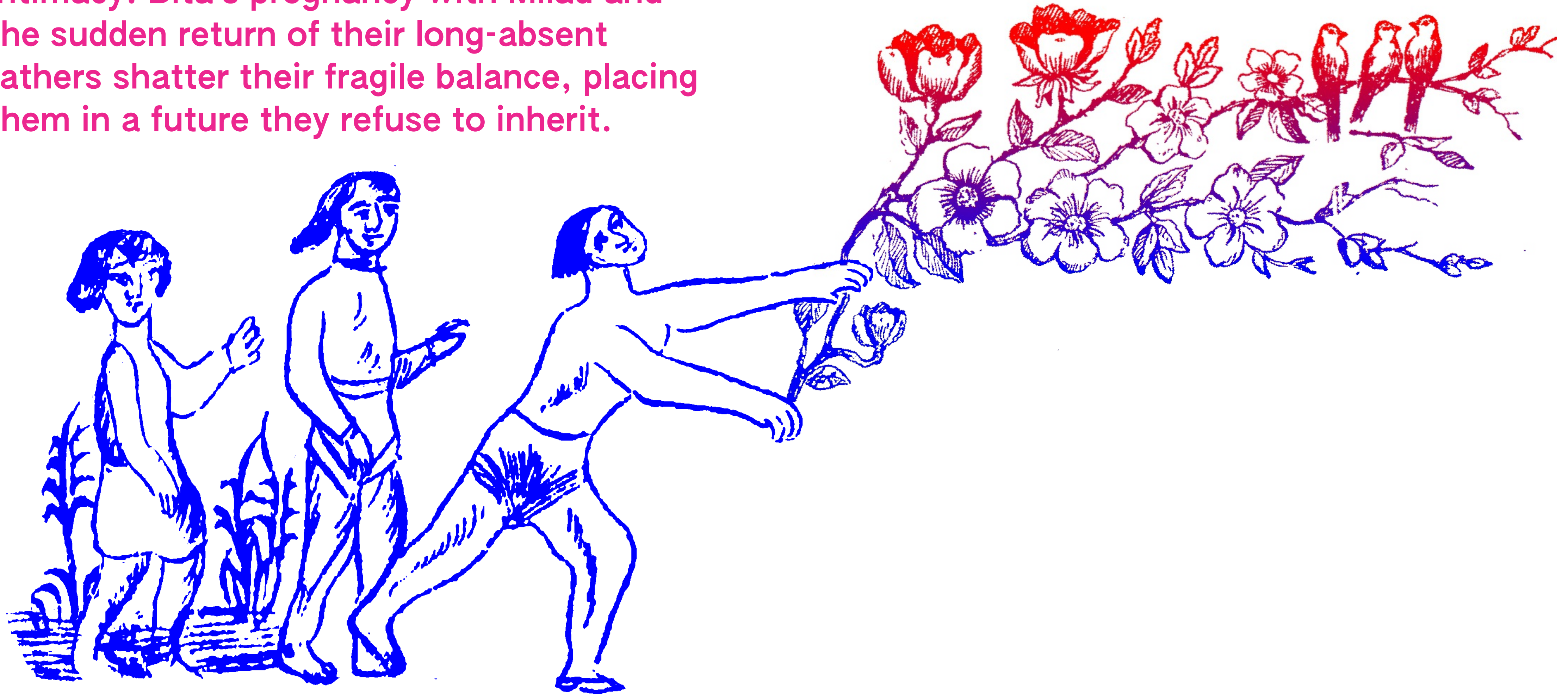
A film by Mohammad Shirvani

90 min - IRAN



LOGLINE

Milad and Armin share an undefined intimacy. Bita's pregnancy with Milad and the sudden return of their long-absent fathers shatter their fragile balance, placing them in a future they refuse to inherit.





SYNOPSIS

Milad and Armin share a close, undefined intimacy shaped by years of emotional dependency. Over a weekend at a seaside villa on the Caspian Sea, a sudden revelation breaks their fragile balance: Bita tells Milad she is pregnant with his child.

The next morning, the long-absent fathers unexpectedly return. Their presence reactivates unresolved tensions and pulls everyone into an unstable confrontation between two generations.

Milad is faced with a decision that will define the course of his life. Staying means accepting early responsibility; leaving means repeating his father's path.



Armin, as he withdraws further into himself, gradually distances himself from the situation and quietly shifts its direction.

As the weekend unfolds, the fragile boundaries between desire, responsibility, and freedom begin to collapse.



**"It deep-dives behind the staged picture of Iranian society, sweeping away the standard tropes that international audiences are usually fed. Cesarean Weekend is a film you won't easily forget."
— Marina Richter, Asian Movie Pulse**

**"Once again Shirvani breaks cultural taboos with scenes of physical intimacy filmed inside Iran depict images unseen on domestic screens since the 1979 revolution."
— Martha Bird, Film Fest Report**

**"Cesarean Weekend subverts all our ideas about Iranian cinema, thank goodness... And as a revolutionary act, it's an absolute marvel."
— Begoña del Teso, El Diario Vasco**

**"In addition to the clear queer overtones that are not directly addressed but rather quietly pulsate beneath the surface, the film attempts to provide a stark portrait of fragile masculinity in the modern world."
— Matthew Joseph Jenner, International Cinephile Society**

**"Free-spirited Iranian cinema that leaves Panahi and co. in the dust with its playfulness and wild experimentation, but is no less political for that."
— Marc Bogoslaw, Achssprünge**

**"Cesarean Weekend is an exercise of freedom, both formally and textually."
— Pedro Lima, Movies we texted about**





DIRECTOR`S STATEMENT

I cannot live forever with the trauma of lacking a responsible father. I do not seek reconciliation. *Cesarean Weekend* begins at the point where blame is no longer sufficient, and continuation is no longer possible. The boys in this film do not wait. They decide with their bodies through intimacy, through risk, and by crossing imposed boundaries.

This is not a consolation. It is a reflection. Nothing is hidden. Everything is fragile and under pressure, yet not entirely sealed. This film was made under conditions where the very possibility of creation felt like walking on thin ice.

For me, freedom begins somewhere much smaller: in the moment when movement becomes possible even within restriction. Not complete liberation, but a crack, a rupture, an exit. This film does not claim freedom; it refuses to erase the desire for it.

Perhaps it is more accurate to say that we, as Iranians, stand at such a moment now, where change feels close enough to touch, yet remains uncertain. In the final moments of the film, the music shifts the weight of everything: between Gustav Mahler and Shahram Shabpareh, between mourning and dance, between an ending and a possible beginning.

Sometimes what remains is not resolution, but the strange persistence of life, even when understanding comes too late.

FORM AND METHOD

This film does not originate from a fixed screenplay. There is a situation, but what takes shape before the camera is constructed in the moment. This approach is close to what I call “Live Cinema”, a performative form in which the film is not a representation of a situation, but the situation itself.

There are no rehearsals. The actors enter a space they must inhabit rather than perform. Direction happens live, in direct contact with what unfolds. The camera is not an observer; it is a body. The body of the camera, the actor, and the spectator share a single field.

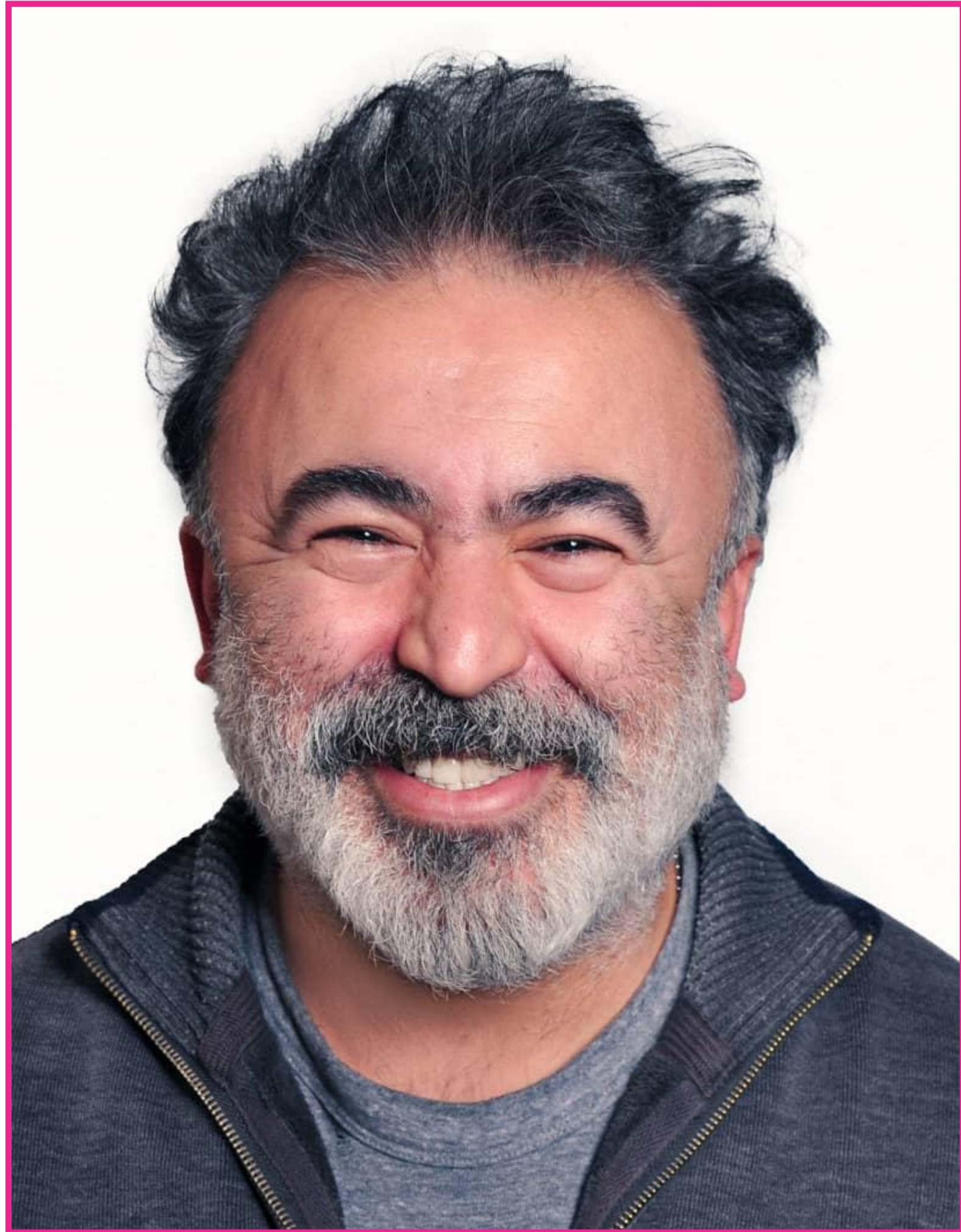
Improvisation here does not mean lack of control. Control and instability move together until prediction collapses and only a living situation remains. Meaning does not lead; it follows. What comes first is reaction: closeness, retreat, touch, resistance.

Time and space are not compressed into narrative. They are opened, so that nothing remains hidden.

A conversation between Mohammad Shirvani and Barbara Wurm, Head of Berlinale Forum:

<https://www.arsenal-berlin.de/forum-forum-expanded/programm-forum/hauptprogramm/cesarean-weekend/interview-mohammad-shirvani/>





MOHAMMAD SHIRVANI

Mohammad Shirvani (born 1973, Tehran) is an Iranian independent filmmaker and producer working between narrative and experimental cinema. His first short film *The Circle* (1999) was selected for the Critics' Week at the Cannes Film Festival, and his early works were distributed in Europe by Mk2. His debut feature *Navel* (2003) marked a turning point in Iranian underground cinema, challenging censorship and official production systems. His second feature *Fat Shaker* (2013) won the Tiger Award at the International Film Festival Rotterdam and was subsequently banned in Iran. Working consistently outside official structures, Shirvani has developed an independent path in response

to restriction and censorship. In 2012, he founded the **Alternative Film Lab** in Tehran, an initiative dedicated to supporting underground filmmaking and mentoring a new generation of filmmakers. In **2015**, in protest against censorship and the continued ban on his work, he released **18 of his prohibited films online**, an act that resonated widely and influenced a new wave of independent Iranian filmmakers. Three of his films received post-production support from the Hubert Bals Fund. His films have screened at major festivals including **Cannes, Berlinale, Sundance, Locarno, and Rotterdam**. His latest feature **Cesarean Weekend** premieres in the **Forum section of Berlinale 2026**.

UPCOMING PROJECT

Shirvani is currently developing his next feature film, a scripted narrative that ventures into the territories of the Road Movie and the Western. This upcoming work seeks to explore storytelling by simultaneously inhabiting these genres and distancing itself from their traditional conventions, creating a unique cinematic experience that challenges the boundaries of narrative form.

FILMOGRAPHY

FEATURE FILMS

Cesarean Weekend — 90 min, 2026

Fat Shaker — 84 min, HD, 2013

Navel — 82 min, DV / 35mm, 2002

DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Telescope — 78 min, HD, 2011

Iranian Cookbook — 73 min, DV, 2009

021, Tehran — 51 min, HDV, 2010

Seven Blind Women Filmmakers
— 106 min, DV, 2004–2008

444 Days — 57 min, HDV, 2007

Where Is Leili? — 73 min, DV, 2006

President Mir Qanbar — 65 min, DV, 2005

SHORT FILMS

Venus Is Close to Us — 2025

A Letter to Yamashita — 2024

Six Eyes — 23 min, DV, 2014

Tight Skin of the Ambience — 2012

The Calm City — 2 min, DV, 2005

Iranian Conserve — 14 min, DV, 2003

The Cherries Which Were Canned — 13 min,
35mm, 2002

Souvenir — 20 min, DV, 2001

To Consent — 20 min, DV, 2001

The Candidate — 15 min, DV / 35mm, 2000

The Circle — 12 min, 35mm, 1999





TECHNICAL DETAILS

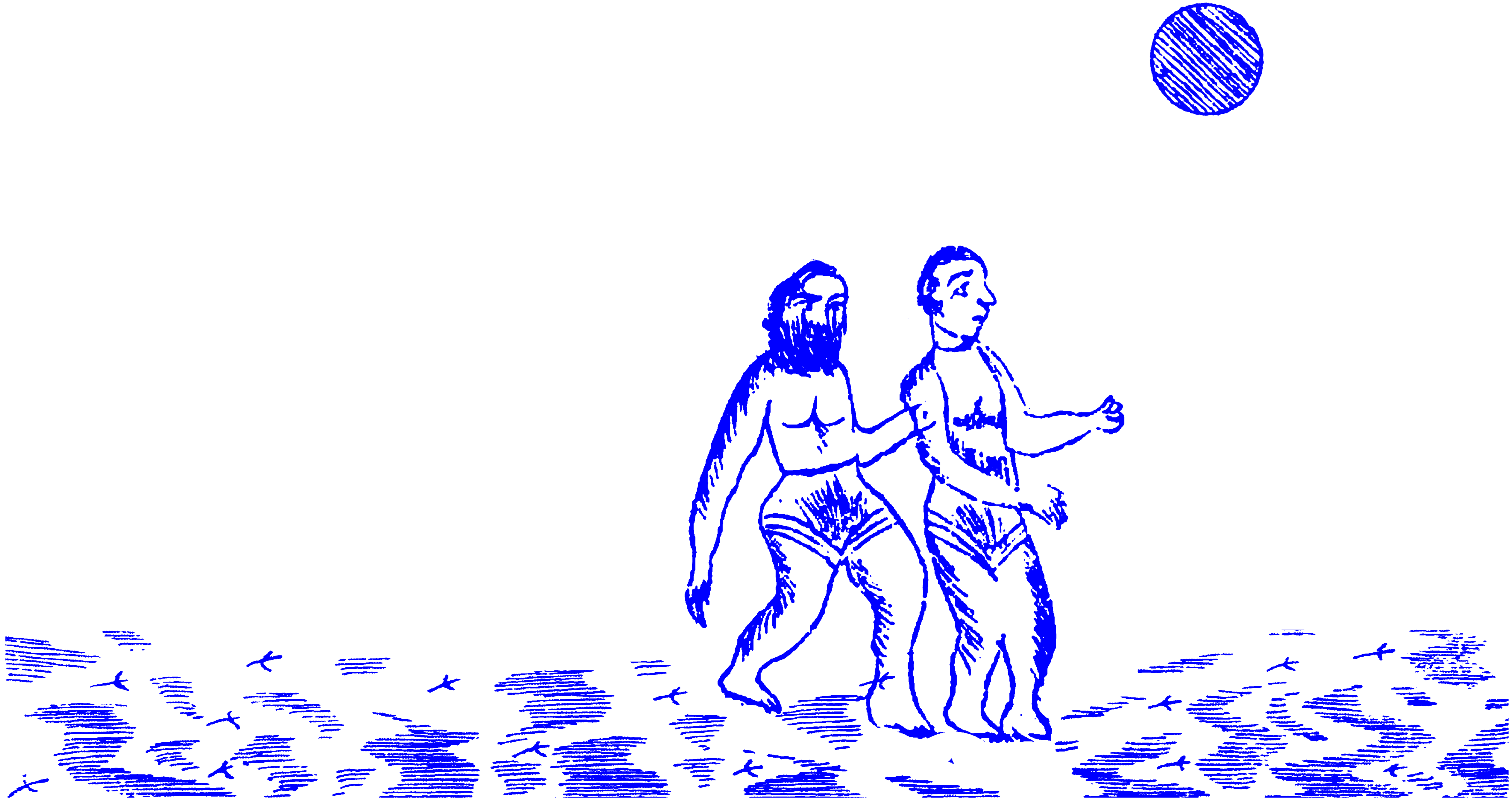
Shooting format: 4K Digital
Screening format: DCP
Sound format: 5.1 Surround
Running time: 90 minutes
Languages: Persian
Subtitles: English
Year of production: 2026
Country: Iran

CREDITS

WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY: Mohammad Shirvani
CINEMATOGRAPHY: Mohammad Shirvani
EDITING: Mohammad Shirvani

CAST:
Nader Mashayekhi
Peyman Yeganeh
Milad Ahmadzadeh
Armin Shirvani
Bitra Jamshidi

SOUND DESIGN: Oveis Derakhshan
COMPOSER: Reza Rostamian
PRODUCER: Alternative Film Lab
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: Alireza Shirvani



alternativefilmlab.com
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ALTERNATIVE FILM LAB

2026