

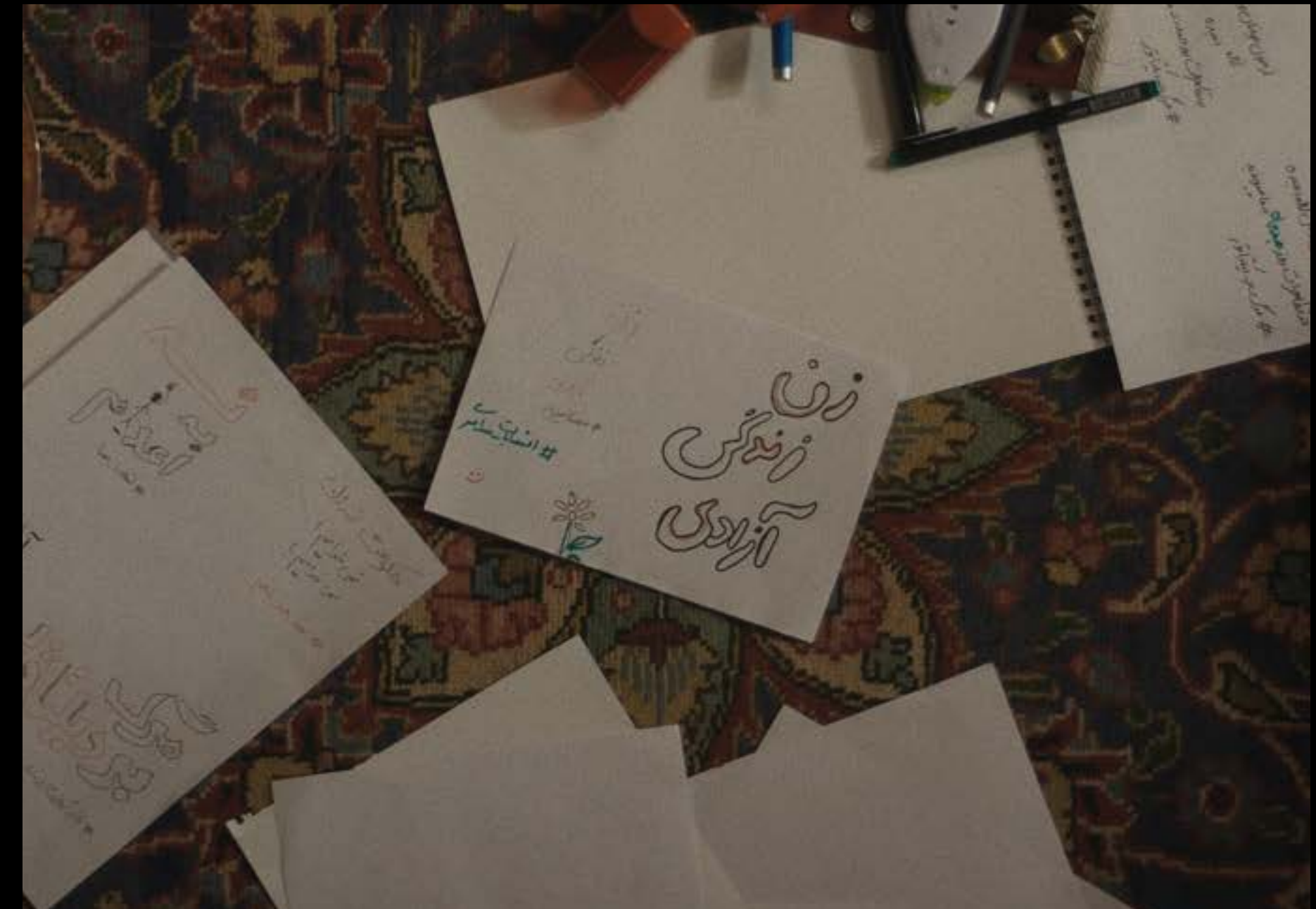
FOR

DAWN

MOTHER, MOTHER, IT'S TIME FOR WAR.



Amid rising tensions in Iran, three teenage girls risk everything to advocate for freedom and women's rights, but when one defies orders, the price of freedom becomes terrifyingly clear.



Synopsis

Three teenage girls, Mahtab, Noor, and Sahar, form a secret group to fight for women’s rights under an oppressive regime. Mahtab, the determined leader, pushes for risky acts of defiance, while Sahar treats their rebellion like a game, frustrating Noor, who's struggling with the growing danger. The brutality of their reality hits hard when Sahar, defying Mahtab’s orders, attends a protest alone and is killed, sparking a government crackdown.

As their school becomes a battleground, Noor is pressured by her mother, the principal, to expose the group. Mahtab rescues her and leads a frantic effort to erase evidence of their rebellion before being fatally shot. Noor, shaken, captures a confession revealing the truth behind Sahar's death. With Mahtab’s sacrifice igniting her resolve, Noor takes a desperate final stand, vowing to carry the fight forward.



Film Specs
and Details

Details

Format: Short Film | Narrative
Genre: Drama | Tragedy
Language: Farsi (English subtitles)
Duration: 20 Minutes
Format: Apple ProRes 422 LT
Country: 2024, Canada

Specs

Camera: ARRI, ALEXA 35
Frame Rate: 23.976
Lens: Canon K35 and Supreme Primes
Resolution | Aspect Ratio: 4096 x 2304 | 1.85:1 Specialty
Camera: Steadicam, Technocrane with Ronin 2, Dolly

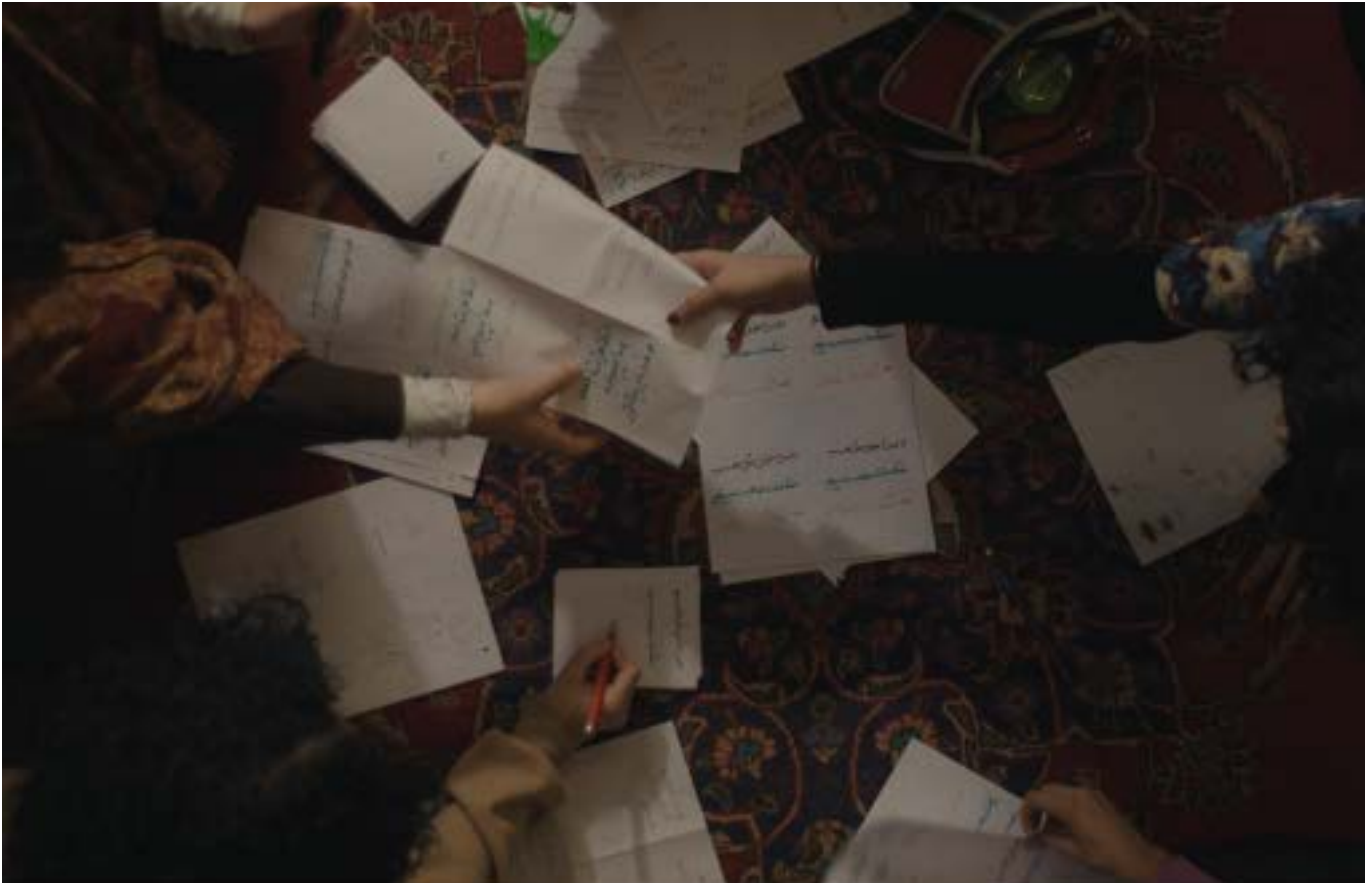


"You'd be hanged by every inch of your body that you expose, and in hell, your hair will become your noose." These were some of what my teachers told us consistently in high school.

Despite it, my fondest memories are from high school. Like that one time at our school trip, when we all secretly gathered, away from the teachers, in one of the rooms. Then we turned one of the trash cans into a drum and danced the night away. That night I learn that girls are bold and Defiant. And what it means to be a woman.

Time passed, and I came to Canada. I forgot many things. It was easier that way. But then it happened. In Iran they killed a woman for her wardrobe in 2022. Her hair became her noose. People stood up, young women and even children came to the street. All fed up and demanding freedom, shouting WOMAN LIFE FREEDOM. So many were brutalized, jailed or killed.

For Dawn is a love letter to those women who never give up. To those who rise through the ashes. May your fire burn bright. May your wings grow strong. And may I fight beside you, until the day my ashes disintegrate.





Biography: Key Cast



Kimia Kalantari (Mahtab)

Kimia Kalantari is a dedicated theatre actor based in Toronto, currently training at George Brown Theatre School in collaboration with the Young Centre for the Performing Arts. She has worked extensively in theatre and film, focusing on stories that explore identity, immigration, and social change while amplifying underrepresented voices. Kimia’s theatrwe credits include Munschstock (YCPA), Far Flung Peoples (Toronto Fringe Festival), and Voiceless (Dora-nominated). She has also appeared in independent films such as Empty Your Pockets (BlackStar Film Festival) and Khastegari (CanFest). With a background in architecture, Kimia brings a strong conceptual and visual sensibility to her performances. Passionate about storytelling that challenges perspectives, she highlights the complexities of immigrant experiences, particularly those of Middle Eastern women.



Maryam Fara (Noor)

Maryam Fara is a Toronto-based actor known for her emotionally attuned and dynamic presence on screen. With 1-3 years of experience, she gravitates toward complex and challenging roles that demand vulnerability, intensity, or action, consistently bringing authenticity and depth to her performances. An addition to her work in film and theatre, Maryam is an accomplished music producer, singer, and songwriter. Currently developing her debut album, she often blends her musical and acting practices to create emotionally layered storytelling experiences. As a queer immigrant artist, Maryam is dedicated to amplifying diverse voices and championing inclusive, authentic narratives through her work. Her creative approach reflects a deep commitment to representation and emotional truth. In her recent acting work, she also contributed as the vocalist for the ending title song of For Dawn, a music produced by Ali Azizian.



Viona Moarefi (Sahar)

Viona Moarefi is a young actress based in the GTA of ON, Canada. She was classically trained at George Brown College for two years and is now a working actress who appears in short/feature films, commercials, vertical series and more. She is known for her roles in For His Name Sake, Open Wide, Begin Again, For Dawn as well as many more films.



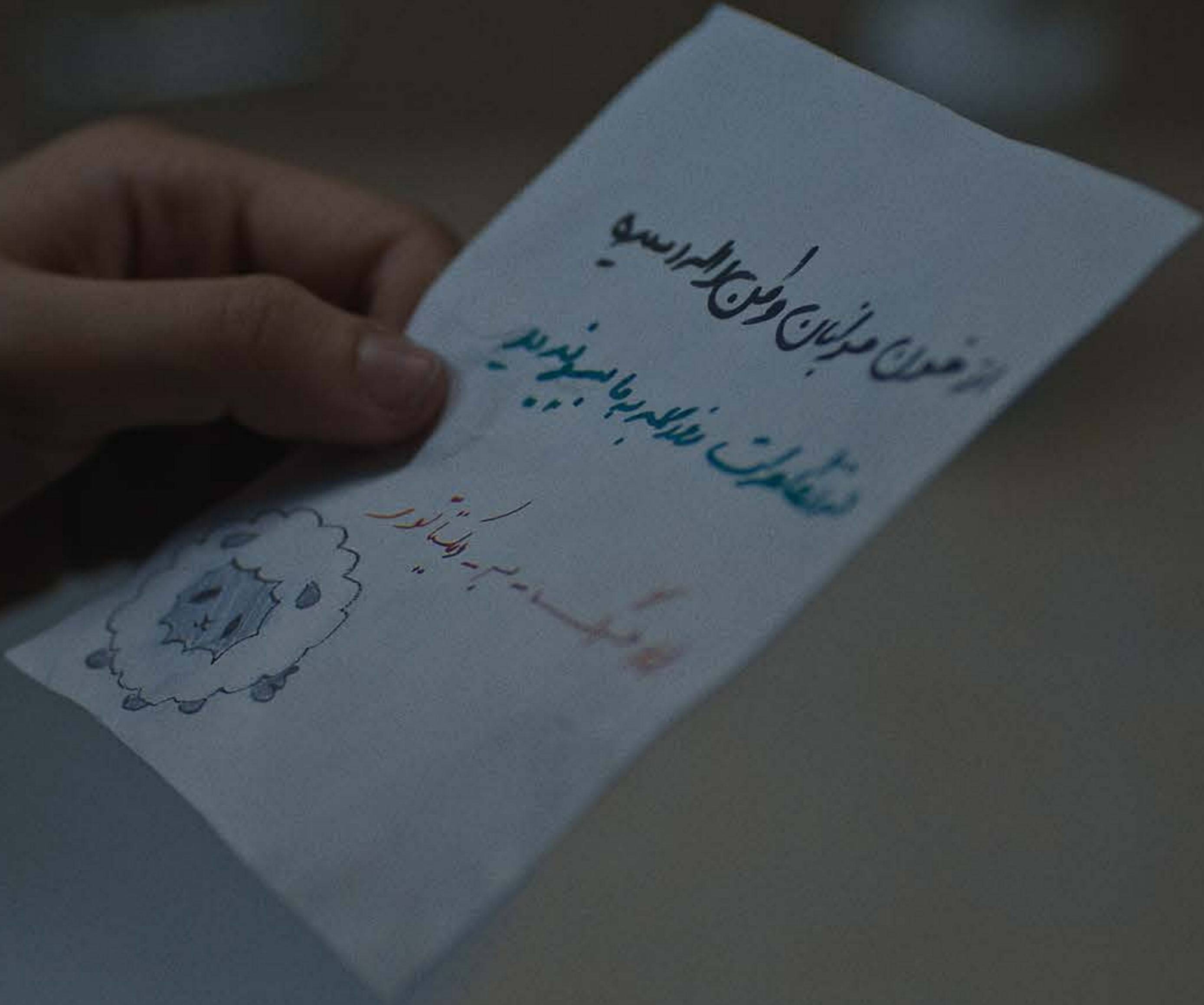
Nakta Pahlevan (The Principal)

Nakta Pahlevan is an Iranian American actor, writer, and theatrical director based in LA. Known for recent creations, TehrAngeles and Seven Labours of Liberty, her works have graced venues like Royce Hall and Wilshire Ebell Theatre. Her credits span Shakespearean plays, acclaimed stage productions, and films like Blackout and The White Ribbon.



Morvarid Alinejad (Teacher)

Morvarid Alinejad, an Iranian-Canadian actress fluent in English and Farsi, began acting at age 2 and won Best Child Actress in Tehran at 7. A Toronto Film School graduate, her credits include Peace in Pain, Paranormal Revenge, and Hours to Kill. She’s also directed short films and worked with notable industry figures.



Biography: Key Crew



Setareh Saleh (Writer/director)

Setareh Saleh is an Iranian Canadian writer and director whose work explores women’s rights, cultural identity, and resistance. Her latest film For Dawn marks her narrative debut. It premiered at the Whistler Film Festival, where it received the Haebler Award and an Honorable Mention for Best Canadian ShortWork, as well as recognition in The Hollywood Reporter. Setareh has also directed two short documentaries. No Man’s Honour addresses gender-based violence, and Forbidden Dance examines the criminalization of women dancing in Iran. Forbidden Dance won Best Short Documentary at the Berlin Indie Film Festival and screened internationally. Drawing from her Iranian heritage and Canadian background, Setareh brings attention to marginalized voices and stories that challenge oppression while affirming the pursuit of freedom.



Sara Fakhr (Producer)

Sara Fakhr is a passionate Persian producer based in Toronto, driven by the power of storytelling. With a background in film, music videos, and commercial productions, she excels in dynamic, fast-paced environments, where she can bring teams together and manage creative logistics seamlessly. Throughout her career, Sara has collaborated with top artists and brands, always ensuring that each project reflects her dedication to authenticity and quality. As a woman in the film industry, she believes in the power of collaboration and inclusivity, creating spaces where diverse voices are truly heard. Her latest project, For Dawn, speaks to her love for impactful storytelling and innovative production.



Tofunmi Adebise (Producer)

Tofunmi Adebise didn’t start his journey in a film studio—he started in a bank. Born in Nigeria and raised between two worlds, prior to film he worked as a Financial Planner at TD. But behind the spreadsheets, a creative fire was quietly taking shape. Photography became his first outlet, framing stories through still images. That eye for detail and instinct for connection would later form the foundation of his filmmaking. Now a Nigerian-Canadian Producer and Director, Tofunmi has produced several short films, music videos, and documentaries, including A Journey to Canada: Eman, selected by the European Short Film Festival in 2022. He also co-produced Breathe, which screened at numerous festivals. His credits include Netflix’s FUBAR and the final season of The Umbrella Academy. Tofunmi is also a Podcast Producer and Host, recently creating content for LumiQ, a CPA-accredited e-learning platform. He holds a Business degree from the University of Windsor, a Film Production Diploma from Toronto Film School, and is currently pursuing his MBA at the Smith School of Business, Queen’s University.



Niloufar Ziaee (Production Designer)

Niloufar, a Toronto-based designer and multidisciplinary artist, holds a Fashion Design degree from George Brown College. With a versatile skill set, she has excelled in diverse roles, including art direction, costume design, set design, set dressing, and painting. Passionate about collective storytelling, Nilou’s work has graced multiple theatre stages and online platforms, including HBO. Her collaborations span prestigious theaters such as Soulpepper Theatre, Factory Theatre, Nightwood Theatre, Starvox Entertainment, Aluna Theatre and Outside the March.



Matthew Labra (Cinematographer)

Matthew Labra is a Toronto-based cinematographer dedicated to crafting visually compelling narratives that explore human emotion, duality, and identity. His work has earned critical recognition, with Forgiveness in F Minor winning Best LGBTQ Film at the Toronto Short Film Festival (2025) and Best Cinematography at the International Motion Picture Awards (2024). The Poem also received international attention, screening at Toronto Indie Horror Fest, Chicago Horror Film Festival, and The Screaming Room. His portfolio includes shorts like For Dawn, Chivalry Ain’t Dead, Not Your Jasmine, Family Dinner, Lost Memories, and Love Boat, featured at Lift-Off, Alternative Film Festival, Dark Comedy Film Festival, and Unbordered LGBTQ Film Festival. Beyond cinematography, Matty works in the grip and electric departments, bringing a hands-on understanding of lighting and camera work to every production. He is committed to creating immersive, emotionally resonant visual storytelling.



Ali Azizian (Composer)

Ali Azizian is an Iranian-American composer, musician, actor, and producer based in Los Angeles. He began making music at 17, inspired by Iranian rock pioneers, and formed his first band, Kam, at 19. After co-founding the Persian rock band HASHT, their song “MiKhande” won Most Popular Rock Song at the 2005 Tehran Avenue Music Festival. Ali released the album Bolandtar (Louder) in 2010 and contributed to the Rock On soundtrack. In LA, he has performed in over 100 shows and composed for major productions, including Seven Labours of Liberty and TehrAngeles. His work blends rebellion and poetry, bridging Iranian culture with contemporary music.



Behind the Scene



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Information



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