

HAF 30 Ways to run



REGION: The Netherlands, Afghanistan

GENRE | FORMAT | LANGUAGE | RUNNING TIME: Drama | Digital Format | Persian | 100mins

DIRECTOR:

Aboozar AMINI

PRODUCER:

Jia ZHAO

HAF GOALS:

Funds, Co-producers

DIRECTOR'S FILMOGRAPHY

2018 *Kabul, City in the Wind*

ONE-SENTENCE SYNOPSIS

All attempts to run away from dire fate evaporate under the bright Afghan sunshine.

SYNOPSIS

Years of war have rendered Kabul a war-torn, chaotic city. Kabul and Kabulis oscillate between good and evil, leaving and staying, life and death, optimism and despair. In the midst of this madness, Abas (45), a scrupulous bus driver, notorious hashish smoker and gambler, wants to maintain law and order in the only place under his jurisdiction: his bus. He does this with the help of his apprentice, Afshin (16), who cleans the bus, calls for passengers, collects fares, and chases pickpockets and fare evaders; Abas calls him the “Lion of Kabul.” Abas’ and Afshin’s clients represent the diverse social tapestry of Kabul: jubilant families going to weddings, solemn soldiers riding to the graveyard to pay their respect to fallen colleagues, drug addicts being taken to rehabilitation camps, and students commuting to school. Nevertheless, after a series of events, Afshin joins a gang of pickpockets, while Abas gambles his bus and loses it.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

The vision of merging fiction and documentary, besides being an artistic aspiration, has its roots in the nature of the project. When I was shooting *Kabul, City in the Wind* (2018), a project which intends to capture a true portrait of Kabul, I experienced magical moments in our life which lose their power unless presented as a documentary. I also became acquainted with bus drivers in Kabul. I found them genuine, hardworking individuals; some are earnest gamblers; and most find solace in smoking hashish. At their core, like all of us, they are humans with human flaws, beauties, concerns and joys. The protagonist, Abas, is one of them: an easygoing man with many untold stories who knows Kabul like the back of his hand. While brainstorming *Ways To Run*, I came to an understanding that the documentary genre enables me to see Kabul and its emotions without interruption, while fiction allows me to weave together stories and life experiences that would otherwise be divorced within a strict documentary narrative scope. The story also is set against current events: after seventeen years of military combat, international stakeholders are now entering into peace talks with the Taliban.

DIRECTOR

Aboozar AMINI

Aboozar Amini (1985, Bamiyan Afghanistan) moved to the Netherlands at young age. He earned his B.A. at Rietveld Art Academy; his graduation film, *Kabul Tehran Kabul* (2010), won the Wildcard Award of the Dutch Film Fund. He completed his M.A. (London Film School) with *Angelus Novus* (2015), which premiered at IFFR. His short film, *Best Day Ever*, opened at the Director’s Fortnight at Cannes 2018. His first feature documentary, *Kabul, City in the Wind*, opened IDFA 2018 and won the Special Jury Award of the International First Appearance Competition. Living in Kabul and Amsterdam, Aboozar is striving to establish new-wave Afghan cinema.

PRODUCER

Jia ZHAO

Jia founded Muyi Film and Silk Road Film Salon (cofounder, Aboozar Amini) to create films embracing cultural differences and expressing respect for human lives, including *Inner Landscape* (dir. by Frank Scheffer, IFFR 2019); *Kabul, City in the Wind* (dir. by Aboozar Aminil, IDFA 2018); *Lady of the Harbour* (Sean Wang, IDFA 2017); and *Fallen Flowers Thick Leaves* (dir. by Laetitia Schoofs, IDFA 2016).

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Silk Road Film Salon

Silk Road Film Salon (SRFS) focuses on topics and cross-regional film production along the ancient Silk Road route from Europe to China/Asia. SRFS embraces cultural differences and aims to promote a deeper reciprocal understanding through collaborative activities and products. SRFS has assembled a unique multi-cultural core team to achieve its goal.