

Iranian Filmmaker Jafar Panahi Attends Golden Apricot Film Festival After 15 Years of Ban and Imprisonment

YEREVAN, ARMENIA, July 16, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Jafar Panahi](#), the celebrated Iranian filmmaker, has made an unexpected return to the international festival scene by attending the 21st [Golden Apricot Film Festival](#) in Yerevan, Armenia. This marks his first appearance at an international film festival in 15 years following his house arrest and ban on filmmaking in Iran.

Panahi, whose body of work has earned him prestigious awards such as the Golden Leopard at the Locarno Film Festival, the Golden Lion at Venice, the Golden Bear at Berlin, and the Golden Camera at Cannes, faced 14 years of home detention and imprisonment in his homeland due to his creative and public activities. Despite these challenges, Panahi has remained a resilient and outspoken figure in the world of cinema, and the festival paid tribute to his spirit and contributions, highlighting his unwavering commitment to artistic freedom.

Reflecting on his experiences, Panahi shared, "It is indeed difficult to continue making films in such circumstances; however, for someone who truly wants to create, there are no boundaries. When



I was restricted from making films, I filmed 'This Is Not a Film.' When I did not have a camera, I filmed on my phone, on a video recorder. I sometimes risk a lot—I risk my money, I risk my life—but I know that it is worth it."

Panahi also spoke about his approach to filmmaking, stating, "There are two types of filmmaking: the one that goes after big audiences, and the one that leads its audience. I believe I belong to the second category." Panahi celebrated his birthday in Yerevan, where he engaged with film lovers and journalists in a special session moderated by film critic and journalist Anton Dolin. Dolin, who authored the book "Act of Disobedience" about Panahi, facilitated the discussion, which delved into the filmmaker's extraordinary journey and enduring passion for cinema. The session became a heartfelt tribute to Panahi's legacy, emphasizing the impact of his work on audiences worldwide.

It was symbolic to award Jafar Panahi with a special prize for his contribution to world cinema - the Parajanov 100th anniversary medal - as a tribute to the disgraced artist of the 21st century, thus uniting the two artists with a shared fate.

Founded in 2004, the Golden Apricot Film Festival is one of the biggest film festivals in Eastern Europe, featuring filmmakers from around the world. The festival's history is adorned with visits from illustrious filmmakers like Marco Bellocchio, Abbas Kiarostami, Darren Aronofsky, Nastassja Kinsky, Fanny Ardant, the Dardenne Brothers, Takeshi Kitano, and many more.

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