

a season of madness
a film by katja esson



CREW

written and directed	KATJA ESSON
based on the short story by	HANAN AL-SHAYKH
executive producer	JAN WARNER
co-executive producer	JONATHAN GRAY
producers	CHIEMI KARASAWA KATJA ESSON JOEL BLANCO
director of photography	MARTINA RADWAN
editors	SHELLY WESTERMAN SABINE HOFFMAN
production designer	SUSAN LINSS
costume designer	CHERISH CULLISON
original music	REZA DERAKSHANI LIZ LYSINGER
sound design	COLL ANDERSON
casting by	PATRICIA DICERTO

CAST

FATIN	MARJAN NESHAT
BIJAN	MAZ JOBRANI
SHAHNAZ	MADHUR JAFFREY

SYNOPSIS

Based on the short story by Hanan Al Shaykh, SEASON OF MADNESS is a fairy tale gone wrong about a young woman desperately attempting to escape the golden cage of her arranged marriage – by feigning insanitybut her plan backfires...

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When I first read Hanan Al-Shaykh's short story, abstract poetic images illustrating the main character's struggle between feigned and real madness exploded in front of my eyes. I knew immediately that I wanted to capture them on film.



Writer/Director Katja Esson

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CAST

Marjan Neshat “Fatin”

Played the lead role in the feature films *“Cry Funny Happy”* (Sundance 2003), *“Bought and Sold”* (Tribeca 2003) as well as appearances in *“Alfie”*, *“Coney Island Baby”*, the forthcoming *“508 Nelson”* as well as TV’s *“Law & Order”*. Her theatre credits include lead roles in *“The Tempest”*, *“The Crucible”* *“No Exit”* and *“The Golden Ladder.”* Neshat is currently performing in David Mamet’s *“Sexual Perversity in Chicago”* directed by Peter Riegert at ACT in San Francisco.

Maz Jobrani – “Bijan”

Was most recently featured in Sydney Pollack’s *“The Interpreter”* as Secret Service Agent *“Mo”* and in *“13 Going on 30”* with Jennifer Garner, and *“Friday After Next”* with Ice Cube. He has also had several guest appearances on TV’s *“Law & Order”*, *“The West Wing”*, *“NYPD Blue”*, *“24”* and *“Without a Trace”*. Jobrani is a regular on the stand-up comedy circuit both in New York and Los Angeles, and has been featured on Comedy Central’s *“Premium Blend”* and CBS’s *“The Late Show”*.

Madhur Jaffrey – “Shahnaz” (Mother in Law)

Was most recently featured with Meryl Streep in Ben Younger’s *“Prime”*. Jaffrey has appeared in dozens of films, most memorably in the title role of Merchant-Ivory’s *“Cotton Mary”* (2000), also appearing in *“A Perfect Murder”*, *“Flawless”*, *“Six Degrees of Separation”* and *“Shakespeare Wallah”* for which she won the Silver Bear for Best Actress at the Berlin Film Festival. She has also starred in *“EastEnders”*, Britain’s most popular evening soap, and in the Andrew Lloyd Webber’s musical *“Bombay Dreams”* on Broadway. She has been awarded an honorary CBE (Commander of the British Empire) by Queen Elizabeth II for “her services to drama and promotion of appreciation for Indian food and culture.”

FILMMAKERS

DIRECTOR Katja Esson is a New York-based independent filmmaker who mixes documentary, narrative and experimental genres. She has directed a variety of award-winning documentaries, short films and commercials. Born and raised in Germany, Esson brings a quirky European sensibility to the distinctively American subjects she chooses.

The documentary short *Ferry Tales*, which turns the unlikely setting of the Staten Island Ferry Powder Room into a celebration of sisterhood, received an Academy Award®-nomination in 2004 and aired on HBO. In 2006, Esson completed *Hole in the Sky—The Scars of 9/11*, which premiered at ‘Sunny Side of the Doc’ and received the Gold Award at the World Media Festival. *Season of Madness* (2006), her first narrative short film, is currently playing at international film festivals. It is based on the haunting, lyrical short story by renowned Lebanese author Hanan al-Shayk.

Currently, Esson is in post-production with *Breast Side Story* a documentary about the cultural complexities behind the simple act of breastfeeding. She is in production on a film about the Mohawk tradition of ironworking, with the working title *Mohawks – Trail to the Skyline*. And Esson is in pre-production with *Poetry of Resilience*, a film about seven poets who survived human atrocities, and their stories of transformation for which she received the Simons Fellowship for the Humanities at Kansas University in 2007.

PRODUCER Chiemi Karasawa founded Isotope Films, an independent production company, to produce and develop feature films and documentaries out of New York City. She has 15 years of experience working in feature film, television and documentary production, beginning as assistant to director Emir Kosturica on “Arizona Dream”. For the past 13 years, she served as Script Supervisor on numerous studio and independent feature films such as “*Adaptation*”, “*High Fidelity*”, “*Summer of Sam*”, “*Big Daddy*”, “*Coffee & Cigarettes*”, “*Kids*”; episodic television shows “*The Sopranos*”, and “*Sex in the City*”. She is currently completing work on feature documentary “Billy the Kid” and developing a new feature film directed by John Turturro.

DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Martina Radwan started in her native Germany in the film industry in 1987 as a Camera Technician at ARRI, Berlin. In 1988 she began to work in production as an Assistant Camera, working with DP’s such as Robby Mueller, Juergen Juerges and Sophy Mantigneux and directors like Wim Wenders and Albert Maysles. In 2001 she collaborated with Ellen Kuras as 2nd Camera Operator on “*Personal Velocity*”, a feature directed

by Rebecca Miller and produced by InDiGent. The film won 2002 at Sundance Film Festival the Cinematographer Award and The Grand Jury prize for Best Film. She continues to shoot feature films and documentaries around the world and recently completed Jeff Lipsky's "*Flannel Pajamas*", Sundance 2006.

EDITOR Sabine Hoffman was the editor of Rebecca Miller's "*Personal Velocity*" (which won the Grand Jury Prize in Sundance as well as its Award for best Cinematography and the John Cassavettes Award for independent filmmaking) and she currently completed Miller's new feature film "*The Ballad of Jack and Rose*", starring Daniel Day Lewis and Catherine Keener. Other credits include Morgan J. Freeman's "*Desert Blue*" and "*Hurricane Streets*" which won the Audience, Best Director and Best Cinematography awards at the 1997 Sundance Film Festival, and "*Harlem Aria*", winner of three Audience Awards (Urban World Film Festival in NYC, Chicago International Film Festival 2001, Los Angeles Pan African Film Festival 2002), directed by William Jennings, "*The Party is Over*" with Phillip Seymour Hoffman, directed by Donovan Leitch and Rebecca Chaiklin and "*Brother to Brother*" (winner of the Gordon Parks Screenwriting Award 2001, Special Jury Award at 2004 Sundance Dramatic Competition)

EDITOR Shelly Westerman began as an assistant editor on films such acclaimed films as "Jesus' Son", "Velvet Goldmine", "Vanity Fair" and "You've Got Mail". Her credits as an Associate Editor include "Far From Heaven" and "Bee Season". As an Editor, she has just completed Larry Fessenden's "The Last Winter" and is currently editing Robert Pulcini and Shari Springer-Berman's "The Nanny Diaries."

COMPOSER Reza Derakshani

A Tehran native who has been and integral part of the experimental, contemporary, Persian and world music scene for decades. His past work with John Densmore of the Doors, Branford Marsalis, Madonna, Deepak Chopra, Bill T. Jones exposes his rich, diverse and universal musical approach.

COMPOSER Liz Lysinger has worked as music editor for such Saturday morning cartoons as "*Pokemon*," "*Yu-Gi-Oh!*," "*Funky Cops*," "*F-Zero*," and "*Yu-Gi-Oh! GX*." She was also assistant mix engineer/sound designer for "*Blue Man Group's Complex Rock Tour - Live!*" Her music has appeared on the movie trailers for "*The Forgotten*" starring Julianne Moore and Gary Sinise and "*The Libertine*" starring Johnny Depp. She is signed to "*Universal Music Publishing Group*" as a composer. Liz has performed her piano/vocal act throughout the East Coast and is recording an album of electronic industrial music.