

PRESS RELEASE

26 January 2010

Movies that Matter Festival kicks off with film about underground music scene in Iran

***No One Knows About Persian Cats* by Bahman Ghobadi marks the beginning of a week full of engaged films and debates in the Hague**

The Movies that Matter Festival kicks off Thursday 25 March with *No One Knows About Persian Cats*. Bahman Ghobadi's critical film shows two young Iranian musicians who try to form a band in Tehran's underground music scene. The Movies that Matter Festival takes place from 25 to 31 March in Filmhuis Den Haag and Theater aan het Spui in the Hague, city of peace and justice. Director Ghobadi will be the main guest at the festival, which will dedicate a retrospective to his work with the screening of *Half Moon* (2006), *Turtles can Fly* (2004) and *A Time for Drunken Horses* (2000)

No One Knows About Persian Cats, secretly shot in seventeen days, won the Special Jury Prize ('Un Certain Regard') at the Cannes Film Festival. Part of the cast did not return to Iran after this festival, and Ghobadi was arrested at his arrival in Tehran. The film tells the story of two young musicians, a man and a woman, who are released from prison. They decide to form a band together and roam the underground music scene of present-day Tehran to find fellow band members. Because the authorities bans them from performing in Iran, they think up a plan to get away from their forbidden existence and make their dream come true: perform in Europe. Without money or a passport that will not be easy, however.

Ghobadi: *"According to the Islam, music is impure because it makes people cheerful. Music, and especially western music, has been virtually banned in Iran over the past thirty years. That's why the music scene is mainly underground. When I entered the basements of downtown Tehran to listen to music, I discovered a strange, fascinating world. A world of musicians who are invisible to most inhabitants of the city. Musicians who are at risk of being arrested by the police."*

The Movies that Matter Festival offers a varied programme of sixty human rights movies and documentaries, as well as an elaborate "in-depth" programme. Besides film screenings, debates, talk shows with international guests, exhibitions and music performances will be featured.

The festival's partners include Amnesty International, Stichting DOEN, Hivos-NCDO Cultuurfonds, the city of the Hague and the Dutch Ministry of Justice. Broadcaster VARA and newspaper Trouw act as media sponsors.

www.moviesthatmatterfestival.nl

From 1 April 2010 *No One Knows About Persian Cats* will be launched in Dutch cinemas by film distributor Cinéart.

END OF PRESS RELEASE

Media presentation NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT PERSIAN CATS: Tuesday 26 January as of 15.15 pm in Filmtheater Rialto, Ceintuurbaan 338, Amsterdam **Please register by sending an email to: info@cinéart.nl**

For more information about the Movies that Matter Festival, please contact:
Herrie/ Noortje van de Sande
+31 (0)20-4868212
info@herrieschoppers.nl

For more information about *No One Knows about Persian Cats*:
Cinéart / Noor Pelsers & Janneke De Jong
+31 (0)20-5308848
noor@cinéart.nl, janneke@cinéart.nl

Director Bahman Ghobadi, main guest at the Movies that Matter Festival, will also be in the Netherlands from Saturday 30 January to Wednesday 3 February, during the **IFFR** (27 Jan – 7 Feb). Protagonists Ashkan Koshanzad and Negar Sheghahi will attend the **Music Freedom Day** in the Hague (4 March)
