

Activ Docs, Restart and CAT&Docs present:

BETWEEN REVOLUTIONS

Romania / Croatia / Qatar / Iran, 2023, 68 min.

A film by
Vlad Petri

PRESS NOTES

Berlinale 2023
Forum
world premiere

Winner DAFilms.com Distribution Award
Docu Talents from the East, Sarajevo Film Festival 2022

Winner Best Pitch Award
dok.incubator preview, IDFA 2022

Winner MME Work in Progress Award
Les Films de Cannes à Bucarest 2021

Stills can be downloaded [here](#)



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LOGLINE

Two friends separated by political revolutions find connection through letters, defying distance and turmoil.

SYNOPSIS

In 1970s Bucharest, Zahra and Maria form a deep friendship while studying at university. As political turmoil brews in Iran, Zahra is forced to return home, leaving Maria behind. Over the next decade, they maintain their connection through a series of letters, chronicling their struggles as women fighting for a voice and their respective countries moving in divergent directions. Despite the distance and obstacles, their longing for each other remains strong.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

BETWEEN REVOLUTIONS is a film made exclusively from archives, which mirrors the lives and destinies of two women, university colleagues and friends, one from Romania and the other from Iran, living in two patriarchal societies.

It is a hybrid film that mixes archives and real documents with fictional elements, having at its core the correspondence between these two women. The text of the letters is inspired by archives from the Secret Police and by the poems of two important female writers from Romania and Iran - Nina Cassian and Forugh Farrokhzad and is written by one of the most talented Romanian contemporary writers - Lavinia Braniște.

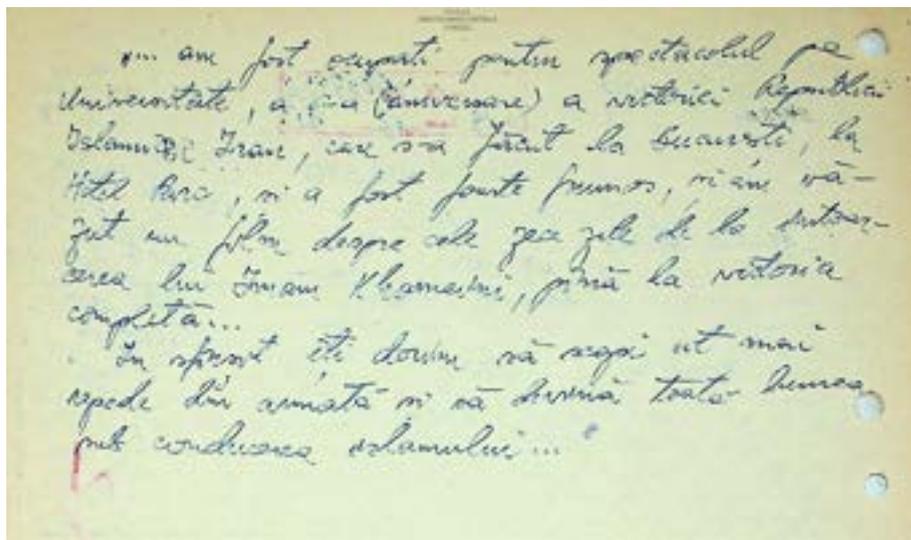
I started working on this film more than 3 years ago, after reading a study about the foreign students living in Romania during the communist period. I was mostly interested in the people who came from the Middle East to study in a closed country like Romania at the end of the 70s and the beginning of the 80s. During those years, Romania had a policy of openness towards countries that were part of the non-aligned movement, encouraging the enrollment of foreign students in exchange for economic and infrastructure projects that involved Romanian workers and engineers.

In addition to the general aspects, I was also interested in the personal stories. I talked at length with my mother about her student years. She was enrolled at the Medicine University in the late 70s. She showed me photographs from her student years, we discussed politics, daily lives and about her colleagues from other countries. I was always curious how Romania was perceived by an outsider during those years, being a communist country, so different from the capitalistic, western societies. Besides this, I wanted to know more about my mother's routine, about her hopes and dreams, about all the hardships a woman had to endure at that time.

I was born in 1979, the year when the Iranian revolution took place and I was 10 years old when the revolution in my country happened, an event that I watched live on TV with my parents. These two events represented for me some kind of historical landmarks and I still believe that the revolution against the Shah's dictatorship in Iran and the one in Romania against the Ceaușescu regime are some of the most important political events of the 20th century. All these things together gradually built up to what is now the film BETWEEN REVOLUTIONS, a film that mixes politics with poetry, intimate stories with state-controlled propaganda, letters with archives.

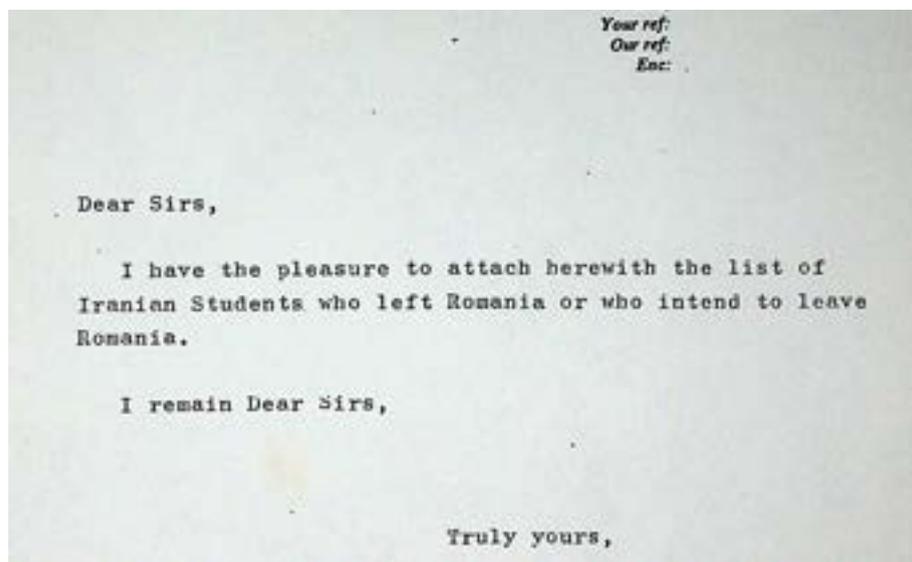
For me BETWEEN REVOLUTIONS is a film about a recent past, which reverberates very strongly with the immediate, current reality. It is a film that presents a subjective, feminine history of two countries and societies that experimented with different political systems, an Islamic and Communist one, in which people were gradually crushed by the repressive political apparatus. It is a film that resonates with the recent events in Iran, where women are fighting again for their rights, just as

they did in 1979. Their cry now, even if not present in the film, expresses what Zahra and Maria also want: "Zan, Zendegi, Azadi!" - "Woman, Life, Freedom!"



... am fost ocupati pentru spectacolul pe
Universitate, a 6-a aniversare a victoriei Republicii
Islamice Iran, care s-a facut la Bucaresti, la
Hotel Park, mi-a fost foarte frumoasa, mi-am va-
zut un film despre cele 10 zile de la intru-
sirea lui Imam Khomeini, pina la victoria
completa...
In speranta ca domnii va ruga ut mai
repede din armata si sa aduceti toate bunurile
sub conducerea islamului...

Letter translation: "We were busy with the show for the 6th anniversary of the victory of the Islamic Republic of Iran, that was held in Bucharest at "Park Hotel" and that was very beautiful. And I saw a film about the 10 days after the return of Imam Khomeini till the final victory... In the end, we wish you to complete your army as soon as possible and we hope that everybody will follow islam" - copy of an intercepted letter written by Iranian students, from the Secret Police.



Your ref:
Our ref:
Enc:

Dear Sirs,

I have the pleasure to attach herewith the list of Iranian Students who left Romania or who intend to leave Romania.

I remain Dear Sirs,

Truly yours,

PRODUCTION NOTES

The archives we used in the film can be included in two main categories: official and personal. Archives about Iran were obtained from the state television, filmmakers, private individuals, as well as from non-Iranians who filmed during the 1979 revolution. In the case of Romania, the archival materials are from the National Film Archive, the National University of Theater and Cinematography, the Film Studio of the Student Culture House and from the Ioan Matei Agapi archive. Most of these images are now shown now for the first time, having been scanned from 35mm and 16mm film, thus giving the film a special texture, fitting into a certain historical period.

During the preparation period the director Vlad Petri searched archives about the revolutions and about the daily lives of people from Iran and Romania, being helped by Stephen Meier, an archival researcher from Germany. He also worked with a person in Iran who found important archives, some of them never before seen, whose identity cannot be disclosed due to security reasons. In Romania, we collaborated with the historian Mihai Burcea, who searched through the Secret Police archives and found documents about foreign students, letters from that period, photographs.

The poems used in the film are:

Mă taie în două / They cut me in two
First published in *Ambitus* (1969)

by Nina Cassian (1924 - 2014)

—

آیه های زمینی / Earthly Verses
باد ما را خواهد برد / The Wind Will Carry Us (Abbas Kiarostami used this poem as a source of inspiration for his landmark film)
Both published in *Another Birth* (1964)

by Forugh Farrokhzad (1934 - 1967)

The letters are based on documents (letters, reports, notes) from the Secret Police (Securitate). They are fictional and are written by Romanian writer Lavinia Braniște.



ABOUT THE TEAM

Vlad Petri // director



Vlad Petri is a film director interested in political and social subjects, often mixing personal images with official archives. His films, at the border between documentary and fiction, have been shown in international film festivals like Berlin, Rotterdam, Sarajevo or Jihlava. He won three Romanian GOPO awards - for Best Debut (2015) and Best Short Documentary film (2021, 2022). His selected filmography includes BETWEEN REVOLUTIONS (2023), THE SAME DREAM (2021, short), THE DEER PASSED IN FRONT OF ME (2020, short) and WHERE ARE YOU BUCHAREST? (2014).

Monica Lăzurean-Gorgan // producer

Monica Lăzurean-Gorgan is an experienced producer and a member of the AMPAS/Oscar, as well as EFA. Monica is the producer of the successful documentary ACASA, MY HOME by Radu Ciorniciuc, winner of the Sundance Cinematography Award and other 40 international awards, delegate producer for TOUCH ME NOT by Adina Pintilie, winner of the Golden Bear at Berlin International Film Festival and co-producer of CHUCK NORRIS VS COMMUNISM by Ilinca Calugareanu.



CREDITS

Director	Vlad Petri
Producer	Monica Lăzurean-Gorgan
Letters written by	Lavinia Braniște
Scriptwriters	Lavinia Braniște Vlad Petri
Text consultant	Shirin Kalantar
With the voices of	Victoria Stoiciu as Maria Ilinca Hărnuț as Zahra
Co-producer	Oliver Sertić
Editors	Dragoș Apetri Cătălin Cristuțiu Vlad Petri
Sound editors	Filip Mureșan Vlad Voinescu
International sales	CAT&Docs

BETWEEN REVOLUTIONS

is produced by

Activ Docs

in co-production with

Restart

Iran (undisclosed)

with the support of

The Romanian National Film Centre

Croatian Audiovisual Centre

supported by

Doha Film Institute

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A film made in collaboration with Romanian National Television / Televiziunea Română

supported by

UPFAR ARGOA

ICR

UCIN

DACIN SARA

This film has been developed with the support of the dok.incubator workshop 2022

Project pitched at FipaDoc Biarritz

Participated in the First Cut Lab @ Transilvania International Film Festival

DAFilms.com Distribution Award at Docu Talents from the East @ Sarajevo Film Festival 2022

Best pitch award @ dok.incubator preview at IDFA 2022

MME award at Work in Progress section of Les Films de Cannes à Bucarest 2021

Work in Progress at One World Romania 2021

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