

# Peterborough Arts Cinema

Films that make you think

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> September at 19:30

**The Salesman** (2016) Forushande

PG-13 | 2h 4min Iran

**Director;** Asghar Farhadi

**Stars;** Taraneh Alidoosti, Shahab

Hosseini, Mina Sadati

Forced to leave their collapsing house, Ranaa and Emad, an Iranian couple who happen to be performers rehearsing for Arthur Miller's "Death of a Salesman" rent a new apartment from one of their fellow performers. Unaware of the fact that the previous tenant had been a woman of ill repute having many clients, they settle down. By a nasty turn of events one of the clients pays a visit to the apartment one night while Ranaa is alone at home taking a bath and the aftermath turns the peaceful life of the couple upside down.

**Oscar Winner; Best Foreign Film**



Farhadi [won his second Oscar for The Salesman](#), about a couple whose relationship is thrown into disarray after an intruder surprises the wife in the shower. The story is influenced by Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. The win has put him on a shortlist of elite directors who have won an Oscar in the foreign film category more than once, including Federico Fellini and Ingmar Bergman. Farhadi boycotted the ceremony in Los Angeles "out of respect for the people of my country and those of other six nations" affected by Donald [Trump's travel ban](#) on seven predominantly Muslim countries, which he said "have been disrespected by the inhumane law that bans entry of immigrants to the US".

Instead he sent two Iranian-Americans to pick up the award and read his message. They were Firouz Naderi, a former Nasa scientist who was the project manager for the Mars exploration and Anousheh Ansari, the first self-funded woman in the world to have gone into space. In 2006, Ansari grabbed global headlines after becoming the first Iranian in space and also the first woman tourist to visit the international space station.

"There are quite a number of prominent Iranian-Americans here that he could have asked," Naderi told reporters moments after the two collected the award. "I think the reason that he chose the two of us ... is if you go away from the Earth and look back at the Earth, you don't see any of the borders or the lines, you just see the one whole beautiful Earth."

At the Oscars, Ansari read Farhadi's message to the audience's applause. "Dividing the world into the 'us' and 'our enemies' categories creates fear. A deceitful justification for aggression and war. These wars prevent democracy and human rights in countries which have themselves been victims of aggression. "Film-makers can turn their cameras to capture shared human qualities and break stereotypes of various nationalities and religions. They create empathy between us and others. An empathy which we need today more than ever."

Farhadi's reference to "us" and the "enemies", seen as a condemnation of Trump's policies, also appeared to carry a message to politicians inside Iran. In January, when he announced the reasons behind his decision to boycott the Oscars, he targeted hardliners both in [Iran](#) and the US. "This is not just limited to the United States; in my country hardliners are the same. For years on both sides of the ocean, groups of hardliners have tried to present to their people unrealistic and fearful images of various nations and cultures in order to turn their differences into disagreements, their disagreements into enmities and their enmities into fears," he said in a statement in [the New York Times](#). "Instilling fear in the people is an important tool used to justify extremist and fanatic behaviour by narrow-minded individuals."

At the Oscars ceremony, Ansari wore a scarf around her body that depicted a map of her birthplace, the Iranian city of Mashhad, as seen from space. In remarks made to reporters after the speech, she said not coming to the Oscars was a difficult decision for Farhadi. "It was very difficult, as you know this would be his second Oscar, and he would be the fourth foreign film-maker to receive two Oscars, it was a big deal for him. I think not coming he felt that it's very important to make the statement that he made," she said. Naderi said: "When you want to stand on your principles, you have to make hard choices, and he just made one."

Edited by Alex O'Reilly

