

# Sonita

a creative documentary  
by Rokhsareh Ghaem Maghami  
90 Min. / HD / 2015



## SHORT SYNOPSIS

(90 words)

Sonita is an 18-year-old female, an undocumented Afghan illegal immigrant living in the poor suburbs of Tehran. She is a feisty, spirited, young woman who fights to live the way she wants, as an artist, singer, and musician in spite of all her obstacles she confronts in Iran and her conservative patriarchal family. In harsh contrast to her goal is the plan of her family – strongly advanced by her mother – to make her a bride and sell her to a new family. The price right now is about US\$ 9.000.

## LONG SYNOPSIS

(250 words)

Sonita is an 18-year-old female, an undocumented Afghan illegal immigrant living in the poor suburbs of Tehran. She is a feisty, spirited, young woman who fights to live the way she wants, as an artist, singer, and musician in spite of all her obstacles she confronts in Iran and her conservative patriarchal family. In harsh contrast to her goal is the plan of her family – strongly advanced by her mother – to make her a bride and sell her to a new family. The price right now is about US\$ 9.000.

The main storyline of the film builds around Sonita's struggle to escape a forced marriage. She fights with the dilemma of not losing her family, but still be able to build a life of her own. In order to do so, she needs to obtain resident status, and to record and make video clips for her songs on a miniscule budget. Through this, we witness her family and their dilemmas and get to know her friends and colleagues who are also child laborers in the NGO "House of Affection".

Will Sonita be forced into marriage? Will she succeed in recording her songs? Will her family manage to take her back to Afghanistan? The film unfolds in Sonita's home, at the NGO and in music studios in and around Teheran. Later we will need to travel to her hometown in Afghanistan in order to get ID papers, because there might be a future in the United States...



## CV DIRECTOR / WRITER

### **Rokhsareh Ghaem Maghami**

studied filmmaking and animation in Tehran Art University. Her researches on animated documentary resulted to writing a book, named: "Animated Documentary, a New Way to Express". She has made 6 documentaries and won more than 20 international awards. *Cyanosis* (2007) and *Going up the Stairs* (2011) have a wide international exposure.



### **Going up the Stairs, Documentary, 52min , Iran, 2012**

- Premiered in IDFA 2011
- Nominated for Best Mid-Length documentary in IDFA 2011
- Best Female Directed Documentary, Sheffield doc/fest 2012
- Special Jury Award, EIDF 2012, South Korea

### **Cyanosis, Documentary with animation, 32 Min., Iran, 2007**

- Best student Documentary in Sheffield doc/ fest, UK, 2008
- Diploma of honor for innovation, Grierson award- Sheffield doc/fest 2008
- Silver Nanook for the Best short documentary, Flahertiana documentary festival- 2008- Russia- Perm, 2008
- Best documentary award from Tehran 12th International & 24th National Short Film Festival, 2007
- Best short Documentary, Play Doc, Spain, 2009
- Golden Panda for the most innovative student documentary, China, 2010
- Honor Diploma in New Generation, Doc Leipzig festival , Germany, 2008
- Honor Diploma from 26th International Fajr Film Festival, 2008
- Diploma of Merit of Jury and the Audiences Award in lab10 competition of The 38th edition of Tampere International Short Film Festival, Finland, 2008.
- Winner of diploma of Merit in 48<sup>th</sup> Krakow short film festival, 2008
- Diploma of honor Documentary competition, Fike film festival , Portugal, 2008

## CREDITS

A FILM BY Rokhsareh Ghaem Maghami  
WITH Sonita Alidazeh

PRODUCER Gerd Haag  
CO-PRODUCERS Rokhsareh Ghaem Maghami, Aline Schmid  
CREATIVE PRODUCER Kerstin Krieg  
EDITOR Rune Schweitzer  
DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY Behrouz Badrouj, Ali Mohammad Ghasemi, Mohammad Haddadi, Arastoo Givi, Torben Bernard, Parviz Arefi, Ala Mohseni

SCORE MUSIC Moritz Denis  
MUSIC LAYOUT Guillaume Wuhrmann  
ORIGINAL SONGS BY Sonita Alizadeh, Sepandarmaz Elahi Shirazi

LINE PRODUCER GERMANY Cornelia Kellers  
LINE PRODUCER IRAN Morteza Ebrahimi, Hosein Beshgard  
LINE PRODUCER AFGHANISTAN Ghodsieh Shahnematollahi, Sahra Karimi  
LINE PRODUCER SWITZERLAND Catherine Muller

COMMISSIONING EDITORS NDR/arte: Claudia Cellarius; RTS Radio Télévision Suisse, Unité des films Documentaires: Irène Challand, Gaspard Lamunière; SRG SSR: Sven Wälti, Gregory Catella

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