

# THE LADIES' ROOM

A film by Mahnaz Afzali



Documentary, 2003  
55 min, Video, Color  
Iran/Subtitled

## Credits

Scriptwriter, Photography & Director: Mahnaz Afzali  
Editor: Bahman Kiarostami  
Producers: Hassan Poor-Shirazi & Mahnaz Afzali



## Synopsis

Directed by the acclaimed Iranian actress Mahnaz Afzali and filmed entirely inside a ladies washroom in a public park in Tehran, *The Ladies' Room* (also known as *The Ladies*) shatters Western preconceptions of Iranian women. Populated by addicts, prostitutes, runaway girls and others who simply enjoy the camaraderie and atmosphere, *The Ladies' Room* becomes one of the few places where women feel comfortable enough to smoke cigarettes, discuss taboo subjects and remove their veils. Maryam is an epileptic who reveals the brutal circumstances that drove her to heroin addiction and self-mutilation; Sepideh describes her fraught relationship with her mother and her struggle to get back on her feet; and the old woman who runs the bathroom alternately offers tough love and a shoulder to cry on. Raw and provocative, this engrossing film is a remarkable verité look at the hidden lives of Iranian women.

***"An amazing testament. [Afzali] steps into the background and lets these women, who are second-class citizens in Iran, be themselves—totally unrestrained and surprisingly progressive."***  
— Mary Kerr, Programming Director, SILVERDOCS

## Festivals

- Int'l Documentary Film Festival, Amsterdam (IDFA)
- Int'l Documentary Film Festival, Munich
- SILVERDOCS AFI/Discovery Channel Documentary Festival
- Pusan International Film Festival
- The Montreal Int'l Festival of New Cinema and New Media
- Gene Siskel Film Center of Chicago

## Director's Biography

Born in 1964 in Tehran, Mahnaz Afzali is a well-known cinema and TV actress who has played in ten feature films and three TV series. She directed her first film, *No Witness*, a documentary in 2000. *The Ladies' Room* is her second film.