



Karlovy Vary
International Film Festival
Crystal Globe Competition

WINNER OF THE GRAND PRIX

A First Generation Films / Sweet Delight Pictures production

SUMMER WITH HOPE

Written and Directed by Sadaf Foroughi

Starring

Leili Rashidi

Mehdi Ghorbani

Alireza Kamali

Benyamin Peyrovani

Amin Jafari, Director of Photography

Sadaf Foroughi, Production Designer

Golfam Saidi, Costume Designer

Kiarash Anvari, Editor

Saman Majd Vafaei, Colorist and Visual Designer

Emily Kulasa, Executive Producer

Jennifer Shin, Co-Producer

Music by Soheil Peyghambari

Produced by

Kiarash Anvari, Christina Piovesan, Sadaf Foroughi

Executive Producer Justine Whyte

Produced with the participation of the Canadian Film Centre. Developed with the assistance of The Harold Greenberg Fund. With the support of Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec.

SUMMER WITH HOPE

...the sea is filled with irretrievable consequences

A prestigious competition sets the stage for a conspiracy of collusion between two young swimmers, family members, and their communities.

SYNOPSIS

Young swimmer, Omid (whose name means “Hope” in Persian), along with his mother, Leili, and uncle, Saadi, have each placed their individual fates on one vital upcoming swimming competition. In the days and hours before the meet, however, the consequences of failure become clear for each – all of which falls heavily on Omid’s shoulders as a responsibility he refuses to bear.

As their community jealously and steadily erodes the family’s façade, layer by layer, to find whatever weakness they can, the family itself also begins to crumble like sand under the weight of the encroaching tide.

The second film in Sadaf Foroughi’s planned trilogy, **SUMMER WITH HOPE** examines the pressure-filled expectations of a new generation, for both themselves and their families, as they explore beckoning horizons and newly discovered freedoms. Set against the backdrop of a traditional patriarchal society where tendencies that contradict accepted norms are met with fierce-yet-cloaked resistance, **SUMMER WITH HOPE** is a classic tragedy of real-world proportions.

Summer With Hope (TECHNICAL DETAILS)

Country of Production: Canada, Iran

Runtime: 100 minutes, Color

Screening formats: 4K 24fps DCI scope DCP

Aspect Ratio: 2.39:1

Camera: ARRI Alexa

Sound Mix: 5.1

Spoken language: Persian

Subtitles: French and English

Closed Captions: English

Lens used: Cooke Anamorphic

Principle Location: Iran

Clip 1

<https://vimeo.com/726350941>

Clip 2

<https://vimeo.com/726356714>

Clip 3

<https://vimeo.com/726357563>

Clip 4

<https://vimeo.com/726357661>

Stills, with captions/credits: <https://bit.ly/3OJ4nN3>

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/742517277>

SUMMER WITH HOPE

Writer/Director's Note, Sadaf Foroughi

Loosely inspired by Anton Chekhov's play, 'The Seagull', and with a nod to Bergman's Summer with Monika, from which the name of my film is also adapted, **SUMMER WITH HOPE** (In Persian, the name of my main character in the film, Omid, means 'Hope') is the second part of a trilogy that started with my previous film Ava (2017): A trilogy on the theme of the Mother/Child relationship.

SUMMER WITH HOPE is a drama set against the backdrop of a traditional patriarchal society that depicts the interdependence of a single mother and her teenage son who struggles for his voice, but his sexual inclinations go against socially accepted norms.

The mother must constantly prove to the community around her that she fulfills her duties as a parent to her son. Otherwise, she must return to a life she did not want to pursue. Additionally, her son, Omid, is a teenage swimmer with big dreams that Society's institutions, including his family, try to stifle and suppress. The film investigates how our internal driving forces can lose weight in a society where external determinants have become so overwhelming. The film examines the behaviors of a family as a miniature of a larger community.

Children and women have always been my concerns. I want to study them and the effects that family and society have on their growth and life because I think both of these groups have a significant impact on building the future of society.

Examining the place of women within society is also crucial for me, perhaps due to my experience living in the environment in which I grew up. I was also raised by a mother who always made her decisions based on what made me and my sister happiest within the limits of that environment.

On the other hand, I tend to study the phenomenon of motherhood. Does a mother have the right and the possibility to live for herself? And if so, what effect will it have on her children?

I consider **SUMMER WITH HOPE** a classic drama in that it explores the issue of jealousy. Jealousy is the basis of many historical tragedies, from Abel and Cain in the biblical Book of Genesis to Sophocles' 'Oedipus Rex', in which the titular character is jealous of his father's love for his mother, and Shakespeare's 'King Lear', in which jealousy between two brothers of different parenting occurs.

However, in this film, I raised this issue in the relationship between a teenager and his young uncle (his mother's brother). The son does not have his father's love and does everything to maintain his mother's love, and the uncle does everything to be able to arouse his sister's admiration. Eventually, the game of showing the "winning cards" to the "mother/sister" reaches a point where it forms a catastrophe.

My interest is to put my characters in the most difficult and complex existential conditions, within the framework of a simple story of a life to which we can all more or less feel close. Within this simple framework, I challenge myself to create a dramatic situation and at the same time portray my characters in the most layered way possible, so that I can have a behavioral approach to them.

As I believe that the spectators complete the film, I try to leave room for their interpretations. Rather than trying to over-dramatize the situations in the film, I design the film interactively in terms of visual structure and story, so viewers can decipher the codes and stay active throughout the film.

In my previous film, Ava, I wrote the script in the form of a musical variation. Since I do not believe in degrading the characters of my story from their human status to their social function, I equally chose an

aesthetic that is compatible with the idea of musical variation to add an artistic layer to the film and to go beyond the social situations presented in the story.

I see my films in different layers and only one of those different layers is the story. From the moment the idea for **SUMMER WITH HOPE** began to form in my mind, I envisioned a haiku-like structure. That's why I think Roland Barthes' description of the haiku may well express my feelings about **SUMMER WITH HOPE**: "Undevelopable: everything is given, without provoking the desire for or even the possibility of a rhetorical expansion... we may (we must) speak of an intense immobility."

Yet, in **SUMMER WITH HOPE**, unlike the haiku, there is no such immobility in appearance. Also, unlike the haiku, which hides movement within itself, like an oyster having a pearl inside, the film, despite its vibrant appearance -- striving to achieve a dream, a goal, win a contest -- has a frightening and Kafkaesque stillness at its core, which is rooted in prejudice, tradition, human wickedness, and suppressed desires.

I build my characters and design the story based on their existential complexities, without imposing anything from the outside. I take a lot of time to work with my actors to add human layers to the characters they are going to play. Also to form the right connection between them.!! conceive the characters as people full of hidden secrets so that something in them can be discovered and the viewers can share this discovery.!!And as the film progresses, the characters' existential layers and personality complexes are gradually uncovered, in the hopes that the characters will linger in the viewer's mind for a bit longer than the film's roughly 100 minutes.

The atmosphere is another layer that must have its specific language. That's why I prefer to spend time in pre-production to make sure that I get everything I have in mind. I find the filming locations myself, places

that are defined both in the natural space and in the artificial and decorative space, all in the structure and the singular language of the film that I make. The choice of colors in the frames is done in the same way and all the shots and staging are pre-designed and storyboarded.

Each scene in the script is visually expressed within the meaning of the film's story and atmosphere, and there is no repetitive shot in the film. Because everything changes every moment, so a repetitive shot is a setback that disrupts the flow of the film time.

The script is divided into visual paragraphs. When necessary, and this interests me more often, I conceive the scenes in the form of long takes so that with the help of the mise-en-scene the shifts of both feeling and mood can be effectively conveyed to the audience: Not with quick cuts that take away the viewer's ability to think and be present.

I think it's only at the end of a dramatic sentence that I have to change the camera angle. In this case, long takes maintain events' thematic, emotional, psychological, and temporal continuity. It creates a sort of suffocating sensation. And the camera movement, scene selection, staging, and composition are all designed with the story in mind. Placing the camera in front of the actors creates a sense of immediacy. All this is in the hope that the spectator, without knowing what and how will only receive a sensation.

The family depicted in the film alone has no identity. In this regard, when designing the close-ups, we used a lens that helps us depict each of the characters separately and on a lonely island. Blurred background views are softer and foreground-focused views are sharper than usual. It was an attempt to translate what each character experiences into the story world. This type of lens also captures the vastness of nature with great depth of field. The burden of existence against virgin nature which, despite all human troubles, remains mysterious in its infinity and never ceases to be reborn.

Besides cinema, poetry, literature, and theatrical literature, the source of inspiration in the structure of my films are my artistic experiences in dance, music and classical painting, some of which took shape during my childhood and my adolescence, then took on a more serious form during my university years, when I studied plastic arts and then film.

I have a great interest in painting and photography, and in cases where the atmosphere of my favorite works of art is in line with the atmosphere of my film, I draw inspiration from them. In my opinion, it is a living and current work composed of elements that refer to other works of art and other films. This approach gives a sense of heredity to the film and makes it a living phenomenon.

SUMMER WITH HOPE

Notes on Production, Producer/Editor Kiarash Anvari

Sadaf and I have worked together for almost 20 years, since we were both film students at the University of Provence, France. We each helped the other prepare our thesis and collaborated on short films and documentaries that we made during those years.

In 2009, we moved to Montreal. Despite all the difficulties of migrating to a new country, we tried our best to stay in our true lineage and find our voice in our new surroundings. We founded our company, Sweet Delight Pictures, and continued our efforts to make short films and documentaries, producing and collaborating on each other's films under our sweet and delightful cooperation, intending to create our feature films.

In 2016, we were finally able to produce our first feature film, *The Pot and The Oak*. The film premiered in the Bright Future Competition section of the International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) in 2017 and thus gave us the confidence to produce our next feature film, *Ava*.

With *Ava*'s success at the 2017 Toronto International Film Festival (Best Canadian First Feature Film - Honorable Mention & International Critics' Award (FIPRESCI) - Discovery) and subsequently at the Canadian Screen Awards (Nominated in 9 categories, awarded John Dunning Best First Feature Film Award & Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role; also named one of the top 5 emerging production companies in Canada at the 2017 Canadian Media Producers Association (CMPA) Awards (Indiescreen Awards), we embarked with great confidence on producing our third film, **SUMMER WITH HOPE**. But this time, it seemed there was to be a harder path in our destiny than the previous two times.

In the summer of 2018 and after the success of *Ava*, the Canadian Film Center approached Sadaf with an offer to participate in the production of

her next film, **SUMMER WITH HOPE**. In November 2019, we were on our way to Iran with the support of the Canadian Film Center to begin pre-production there, after the necessary coordination with our Toronto-based production partner, Christina Piovesan of First Generation Films.

Our pre-production in Iran took longer than usual due to obtaining the necessary licenses to shoot and produce the film. One of the benefits of this lengthy pre-production was that it allowed Sadaf to have detailed and quality communication with her cast and crew so that she could convey her ideas to them in a highly developed way.

As in her previous film, she had this chance to carefully select her entire cast, then spent days and months rehearsing with them, analyzing the script in detail, and shaping their characters in long rehearsal sessions.

In this film, Sadaf had Leili Rashidi in mind for the role of the mother from the very beginning of the scriptwriting process. Leili Rashidi had previously collaborated with Sadaf in *Ava* and appeared in the role of the school principal. Therefore, the casting and audition took place based on the selection of actors who could create a harmonious and attractive combination in the film next to Leili. Also, similar to *Ava*, for which we were looking for a teenage actress who could play the violin, in *Summer With Hope* we were seeking a teenage actor who could swim skillfully. And that made finding our main actor challenging.

Additionally, as in her previous film, Sadaf had a detailed shot list and storyboard, as well as many references to paintings and photographs, showing her ideas of how to tell her story in a visually effective way, which she has discussed carefully and in detail with his cinematographer during their long and fruitful meetings. This accuracy is found in the shot-by-shot of the film, as well as in the type of lighting and the choice of lenses. I must point out that for aesthetic reasons, the film was shot with Cooke Anamorphic lenses, which made for a nice and elegant combination with the ARRI Alexa camera used for filming.

The film was shot in northern Iran. Another advantage of this pre-production expansion was that Sadaf was able to travel to different parts of northern Iran multiple times and carefully choose each of the filming locations herself. Therefore, when you see the film, you will encounter a collection of the most pristine and beautiful landscapes which, in addition to their outward beauty, are embedded in the heart of the film and are in harmony with its atmosphere and content.

Unlike pre-production, the production of **SUMMER WITH HOPE** went quickly due to the preparations mentioned above. In addition, I, as the film editor, worked very closely with Sadaf on the film to bring her ideas of storytelling and cinematic rhythm to fruition. Sadaf has her sensibilities when it comes to film editing. She pays particular attention to each frame, and nothing, even the smallest things, escapes her precise eye, which makes this collaboration with her both difficult and pleasant. I must say that as the editor of this film and her previous film, *Ava*, I learned a lot working with her.

Now, while Sadaf fleshes out the idea for the third part of her trilogy, we have two more projects in development, one of which is a children-and-war-themed drama written and directed by Sadaf. And the other is a *Romeo and Juliet*-like tragedy about an Iranian priest and his love for a Muslim woman, written and directed by me, for which this time Sadaf will help me as a creative producer.

SUMMER WITH HOPE

About the Filmmakers

Sadaf Foroughi, writer/director

Sadaf Foroughi began her career in 2003, creating and producing short films, documentaries, and video arts. As an alumnus of the Berlinale Talent Campus, class of 2005, she was selected to participate in the short film project "Why Democracy?", and the documentary film she made for this purpose, *Féminin, Masculin* (2007), was nominated for Best Non-European Film at the Grand Off-European Off Film Awards in Warsaw and won Best Short Film at the annual Oxford Brooks University Film and Music Festival. She co-wrote, produced, and starred in Kiarash Anvari's debut feature film *The Pot and the Oak* (2017), which had its world premiere in the Bright Future Competition section of the 2017 Rotterdam International Film Festival. Foroughi's *AVA* (2017) premiered at the 2017 Toronto International Film Festival and received an honorable mention as the best Canadian first feature film and the Discovery section FIPRESCI prize. With 9 nominations at the 2018 Canadian Screen Awards, *AVA* was awarded as the best first film of the year, and also the best actress in a supporting role. Sadaf holds a master's degree in film studies from the University of Provence and a degree in film production from the New York Film Academy. She is the co-founder of Montreal production company Sweet Delight Pictures and was nominated for the Emerging Producer Award as part of the 2017 Canadian Media Producers Association Indie Screen Award. *SUMMER WITH HOPE* is her second feature film.

Kiarash Anvari, producer/editor

Kiarash Anvari began his career as a filmmaker in 1998, creating and producing short films, documentaries, and experimental films and videos. He is the co-founder of Montreal production company Sweet Delight Pictures and was nominated for the Emerging Producer Award as part of the 2017 Canadian Media Producers Association Indie Screen Awards. He directed his first feature film *The Pot and The Oak* in 2017. The film premiered in the Bright Future Competition section of the Rotterdam International Film Festival the same year and was nominated for the Bright Future Award, the FIPRESCI Award, and the Netpac Award. In addition to other nominations the film received at other festivals, it won the ReelWorld Award for Outstanding Feature Film at the 2019 Toronto ReelWorld Film Festival. He produced and edited the 2017 TIFF Award-winning film, *AVA*, written and directed by Sadaf Foroughi. *AVA* was nominated for 9 major awards at the 2018 Canadian Screen Awards, including two nominations for Kiarash for Best Achievement in Editing and Best Picture. With *AVA*, he was also nominated for Best Youth Feature at the 2018 Asia Pacific Screen Awards. He is an alumnus of the Berlinale Talent Campus, class of 2004, and the Young Artist in Residency program at the Berlin Akademie der Künste. He holds a bachelor's degree in film and television production from Sooreh University in Tehran and a master's degree in film studies from the University of Provence, France.

Christina Piovesan, Producer

Christina Piovesan has produced a dozen feature films including FRENCH EXIT which earned a 2020 Best Actress Golden Globe nomination. Other films include THE NEST by Sean Durkin, the upcoming INFINITY POOL by Brandon Cronenberg and A GOOD PERSON by Zach Braff for MGM. Under her production banner First Generation Films, Christina is actively producing television series including Jeff Lemire's ESSEX COUNTY which is in pre- production for ITV Studios and CBC. FGF's first animated series PINECONE AND PONY based on Kate Beaton's NYT best-selling children's book recently launched on Apple TV+. FGF just announced a half hour tween live action series for HBO Max and Wildbrain called HOME SWEET ROME which begins production in the fall in Rome. Christina is a member of the Canadian Media Producers Association and the Producers Guild of America. She was thrilled to be invited as part of the class of 2022 into the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Science.

SUMMER WITH HOPE

Selected Reviews

Variety [Guy Lodge]

<https://variety.com/2022/film/reviews/summer-with-hope-review-1235311144/>

ScreenDaily [Neil Young]

<https://www.screendaily.com/reviews/summer-with-hope-karlovy-vary-review/5172489.article>

The Film Verdict [Deborah Young]

<https://thefilmverdict.com/summer-with-hope/>

The Reviews Hub [Richard Maguire]

<https://www.thereviewshub.com/summer-with-hope-bfi-london-film-festival-2022/>

Filmcarnage.com

<https://filmcarnage.com/2022/10/13/review-summer-with-hope/>