



Maryam Ghorbankarimi (ed.). *ReFocus: The Films of Rakhshan Banietemad*

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REFERENCES

Maryam Ghorbankarimi (ed.). *ReFocus: The Films of Rakhshan Banietemad*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021, 265 pp. (ReFocus: The International Directors Series). ISBN 978-1474477635

- 1 This book provides a valuable addition to scholarship on Iranian cinema by offering an in-depth study of one of Iran's most significant living directors: Rakhshan Banietemad. Although Banietemad has more than earned this status on the strength of her work, which examines the country's sociopolitical conditions from a variety of angles, previous literature has been limited to a handful of book chapters and journal articles. While the existing research has rightly focused on the feminist aspects of Banietemad's films, Ghorbankarimi and her contributors draw on a range of methodological approaches (including semiological analysis, eco-criticism, and sound studies, to name a few) to provide a series of thoughtful readings. These analyses are organized into four sections, grouped thematically to address Banietemad's career from a few overarching angles: one with a brief biography and interview of Banietemad, one on the political implications of her formal techniques, one on her depiction of gender and sexuality, and one on the relationship between reality and artifice in her films.
- 2 The theoretical and methodological perspectives seen throughout these sections present a provocative and informative exploration of Banietemad's career. The discussions of her early films of the nineteen eighties and her documentaries are particularly noteworthy, as these had received less prior attention from scholars than later features such as *Under the Skin of the City* (2001) and *Gilane* (2005). However, the

novel perspectives provided in all of the chapters more than make the case for revisiting previously discussed films. I highly recommend this book to students and scholars in film studies, particularly those with interests in feminist and/or Middle Eastern cinema.

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