

## Art & Culture

### OPINION

## Hollywood froze out founding mother of cinema

By Matthew Wills\*

Alice Guy (1873-1968) was the first woman film director. She worked for French pioneer Leon Gaumont as a secretary in 1896 before she moved into production. Guy was bored, however, by Gaumont's films, essentially very short documentaries expressing the novelty of the moving image: Street scenes, marching troops, trains arriving at stations.

As historian Susan Hayward tells it, Gaumont was more interested in the technology than what it could produce. "Guy found the repetitiveness [of his films] irksome and decided she could do something better. She submitted a couple of short comedies to Gaumont and he gave her the go-ahead [almost absent-mindedly, according to Guy]," writes Hayward.



According to [daily.jstor.org](http://daily.jstor.org), Guy may very well have been the only female filmmaker for the next decade, during which she directed or produced hundreds of films ranging from one to thirty minutes in length. As "filmmaker, artistic director and studio and location sets manager all rolled into one" in the days before the multi-reel feature-length film, Guy was a key figure in the birth of the fiction film, the form that eventually trumped documentaries the world over. Hayward lists Guy's innovations: Using scripts; having rehearsals, stressing "natural" performances; deploying trick photography; shooting in studio and on location; and, beginning in 1900, experimenting with sound (Gaumont's Chronophone synchronized phonograph and film).

In 1907, Guy resigned from Gaumont's production company and married fellow Gaumont employee Herbert Blaché. Generally known afterwards as Alice Guy-Blaché, she journeyed with her husband to New York City. In 1910 the Blachés started their own company, Solax, with Alice as director general. They did well enough to have a new studio built in Fort Lee, New Jersey in 1911.

Solax had two strong years, then both Blachés worked for hire into the teens. In 1914, Guy-Blaché wrote, "It has long been a source of wonder to me that many women have not seized upon the wonderful opportunity offered to them by the motion picture art ... Of all the arts, there is probably none in which they can make such splendid use of talents so much more natural to a woman than to a man and so necessary to its perfection." And yet, when the couple arrived in Hollywood in 1918, they found few opportunities for women behind the camera.

Karen Ward Mahar, in her analysis of the "rise and fall of the woman filmmaker" between 1896 and 1928, argues that the consolidating industry forced women out of behind-the-camera jobs because it gendered those occupations as male. Sex-typing of work in Hollywood would end up allowing for woman screenwriters and continuity workers (aka "script girls"), but little else – besides, obviously, the women on screen. Understanding how filmmaking became masculinized is particularly important with regard to Hollywood, because those who create American movies wield immense cultural power. Once women were excluded from that power in the 1920s, they did not reappear in significant numbers until the 1970s.

Mahar notes that Guy-Blaché had been "regularly singled out between 1910 and 1913 as one of the guiding lights of the industry." Hollywood, however, was not interested in Madame Blaché's light. Mahar also writes, "Women needed male partners to gain access to all the necessary segments of the industry." She notes that Guy-Blaché had experienced this while running Solax with her husband – despite being in a position of leadership, she was not welcome at distributor's meetings, "because, as her husband alleged, her presence would embarrass the men."

Alice Guy-Blaché split up with her husband in 1920 and returned to France in 1922. She never made another movie.

\*Matthew Wills has advanced degrees in library science and film studies. He has published in *Poetry*, *Huffington Post*, and *Nature Conservancy Magazine*.

# IRAN DAILY

License Holder: Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA)  
 Managing Director: Sadreddin Mousavi  
 Editor-in-Chief: Kambakhsh Khalaji  
 Editorial Dept. Tel: +98 21 88755761-2  
 Editorial Dept. Fax: +98 21 88761809  
 Subscription Dept. Tel: +98 21 88748800  
 ICPI Publisher: +98 21 88548992, 5  
 Advertising Dept. Tel & Email: +98 21 88500617- irandaily@iranaghihi.com  
 Website: www.iran-daily.com  
 Email: newpaper@iran-daily.com  
 irandaily@icpi.ir  
 Printing House: Iran Cultural & Press Institute

Add.: Iran Cultural & Press Institute, #208 Khorramshahr Avenue Tehran/Iran

Iran Daily has no responsibility whatsoever for the advertisements and promotional material printed in the newspaper.

## Tehran, Tbilisi to expand cultural ties



In a meeting between Iran's cultural attaché in Tbilisi, Hamid Mostafavi, and the director of Giorgi Leonidze State Museum of Literature, Lasha Bakradze, they discussed the expansion of cultural and artistic cooperation.

During the meeting, both sides talked about holding photo exhibitions on Tehran-Tbilisi historic relations, IRNA reported.

Referring to the cultural and historic relations between Iran and Georgia, Mostafavi said the presence of various works and documents in museums, libraries, scientific and research centers of both countries paves the way for conducting further joint programs and holding scientific seminars as well as exhibitions.

Given the shared areas of interest between the Georgian museum and Iran's Golestan Palace, Mostafavi suggested holding photo exhibitions to introduce historic relations between Iran and Georgia.

Bakradze, for his part, welcomed the proposal and voiced his readiness for maintaining joint cooperation, especially in holding the exhibition.

He also expressed hope for both countries to continue friendly ties in the future.

The museum was founded in 1930 upon the initiative of David Arsenishvili, a legendary museum-founder, who also was the creator of Tbilisi Theater Museum, and later the famous Andrej Rublov Museum in Moscow.

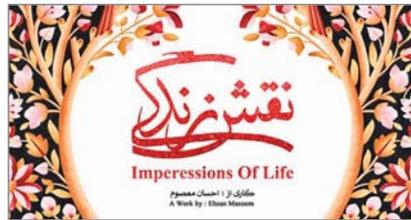
Earlier, the Archbishop of Georgia Elijah II said that relations between Iran and Georgia have been flourishing throughout history.

## Iran's 'Impressions of Life' to compete at French festival

Iranian animation 'Impressions of Life' was selected to vie at the 9th edition of FREDD Festival Film, Recherche et Développement Durable, in Toulouse and Occitanie Region, France. Directed by Ehsan Masoom, the animation is inspired by the design of carpets woven in Kerman, a traditional Persian design dating back to the 14th century, ifilm.tv.com wrote.

The director tries to show the destruction of ancient cultural heritage by human beings.

The animation also shows how the destruction of nature results in the creation of a modern world, which is associated with



high-rise buildings, cars and urban traffic.

The festival will show the films made after 2017 and linked

with the main theme, "Biodiversity," or sustainable development in ecology, social economy, energy, human rights and poetry.



Iranian artist Pooya Jamali is holding an exhibition of painting and performance at Tehran's Khat-e Sefid Gallery until March 15, 2019.

## Women dominate Man Booker International Prize nomination longlist

Women and indies dominate this year's Man Booker International Prize longlist, with last year's winner Olga Tokarczuk appearing again. Indie publishers make up the majority of the 13-strong list, with just two titles from the larger conglomerates.

This year's longlist features 'Celestial Bodies' (Sandstone Press) by Jokha Alharthi, translated by Marilyn Booth from Arabic; 'Love In The New Millennium' (Yale University Press) by Can Xue, translated by Annelise Finegan Wasmoen from Chinese and 'The Years' (Fitzcarraldo Editions) by Annie Ernaux, translated by Alison Strayer from French, the bookseller.com reported.

'At Dusk' (Scribe) by Hwang Sok-yong, translated by Sora Kim-Russell from Korean; 'Jokes for the Gunman' (Granta Portobello) by Mazen Maarouf, translated by Jonathan Wright from Arabic and 'Four Soldiers' (Granta Portobello) by Hubert Mingarell, translated by Sam Taylor from French, also made the longlist.

Marion Poschmann's 'The Pine Islands' (Profile, Serpent's Tail) translated by Jen Calleja from German; 'Mouthful of Birds' (OneWorld) by Samanta Schweblin, translated by Megan McDowell from Spanish, and Sara Stridsberg's 'The Faculty of Dreams' (Quercus, MacLehose Press), translated by Deborah Bragan-Turner from Swedish are also recognized, alongside 'Drive Your Plow Over The Bones Of The Dead' (Fitzcarraldo Editions) written by Olga Tokarczuk and translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones from Polish.

'The Shape of the Ruins' (Quercus, Maclehorse Press) by Juan Gabriel Vásquez, translated by Anne McLellan from Spanish; 'The Death of Murat Idrissi' (Scribe UK) by Tommy Wieringa, translated by Sam Garrett from Dutch and 'The Remainder' (And Other Stories) by Alia Trabucco Zerán, translated by Sophie Hughes from Spanish round off the longlist.

The shortlist of six books will be announced on April 9, and the winner of the £50,000 prize will be announced on May 21.



Polish author Olga Tokarczuk after winning the Man Booker International Prize 2018.

### Weather

