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Afro-Iranian Lives

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New Film

Afro-Iranian Lives

By Dr. Behnaz A. Mirzai

(DVD, English, color, 2007, 46 min).

Description from the Publisher:

Afro-Iranian Lives is a documentary produced and directed by Dr. Behnaz Mirzai. Born and raised in Iran, Mirzai moved to Canada in 1997, where she studied slavery and the African Diaspora in Iran. Since then, she has conducted extensive research in European and Iranian archives, fieldwork and interviews in Iran, and published numerous academic articles resulting in this documentary. The movie explores the history of the African slave trade as well as African cultural tradition in Iran, and pays particular attention to socio-economic activities, performances and rituals of the descendants of African slaves in rural and urban communities in the provinces of Sistan va Baluchistan, Hurmuzgan, and Khuzestan. Mirzai's aim was to visualize the lives of Afro-Iranians, who were widely scattered throughout southern regions along the Persian Gulf, and at the same time could preserve and blend African cultural heritage with local religious and traditional elements. By producing this documentary, she intended to demonstrate both the diversity of Iranian society as well as the reconstruction of a new identity of African communities in Iran.



"A fascinating documentary on a fascinating subject. Afro-Iranian culture has been largely neglected by both black diasporic studies and Middle Eastern studies, but no longer. Behnaz Mirzai's film explains the historical background of Afro-Iranian culture, originally a legacy of the slave trade, and then proceeds to show us some of its intimate and personal aspects, including the startling zar possession ceremonies." -- Dr. Barry Keith Grant, Professor of Film Studies and Popular Culture, Brock University.