

Dear filmmakers,

It has now already been a while since the Second Take Festival and my visit to Kabul took place, and according to the Christian calendar in Berlin the new year has begun. Nevertheless, the encounters, conversations and discussions with you are still very present and I fondly remember them. Because we have often been asked, and to make the experiences and debates of Second Take permanently available to persons who were not able to be there, we are currently working on an Internet documentation. It is to feature various contributions from the seminar in Kabul in written form as well as video clips and interviews. We are now almost done working on this documentation, but would like to supplement it with a number of (e-mail) interviews with selected Afghan filmmakers, whom we got to know and learned to esteem during our visits. We therefore worked out various questions regarding the current situation of film production in Afghanistan and would be very happy if you would take part and answer the following catalogue of questions in written form. The whole thing can be approached in a casual and colloquial style, because we are not aiming at an "official representation of the Afghan film scene" but at portraying different, pluralistic and variegated approaches. Our catalogue of questions is structured according to main focuses and summarises individual questions in thematic areas. Of course, we cannot expect our interview partners to answer each of our questions in sequence, but we would be happy if many of the addressed areas were dealt with. Our timeframe is, as always, tight – not least due to upcoming new projects and because of economic necessities. We would therefore be delighted if you could answer by 01/15/2009. If it is not possible for you to participate, we ask you to give us a short feedback or negative reply. Thank you very much.

With best regards from Berlin,

Sandra Schäfer, early January 2009

Questionnaire on film production in Afghanistan

The situation of cinema today

What is the situation of cinema like in Afghanistan? How many and what kinds of cinemas exist and where are they located? Which films are shown? What kind of audience visits the cinemas? Do women and/or families have the opportunity to visit the cinema? What role does the sale of DVDs play? Which films are available? How widespread is national and international television? How do private and state television broadcasters differ? What influence do they have on the production and distribution of cinema films?

Training

How did you personally learn filmmaking, how did you start making films or working as a director (and actress)?

Where and how does one learn to make films? What is university education in Afghanistan like? What role do organisations such as the aid organisation AINA or the initiative of the Varan projects play in training? What opportunities do women have?

Aesthetic influences

What cinematographic influences are significant for your work? Whose films were important for you? What kind of films do you make?

Production

How do you finance your films? With whom do you cooperate in production? What role do international (aid) organisations play in production? Which conditions are connected to cooperating with them? What role do private production firms play? What are the cooperations with national and international television broadcasters like?

Reception

For whom do you make your films? Where are your films shown? How does the audience react? What were the differences in reception in various contexts? What is the relationship between the national and international market for you? And for your colleagues?