

Film Review: Zen and the Art of Cinema in ‘24 Frames’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on February 11, 2018 - 11:16am

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CHICAGO – The legendary Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami (“Certified Copy”) passed away in 2016, but he left one more meditation on cinema and illusion, in the artistic “24 Frames.” Yes, it refers to the number of still photos that make up a second of film, but in this case it is also Kiarostami’s observations of stillness in motion.



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

The 24 short films that make up the collection – each four and a half minutes long – supposedly takes a single frame of imagery and imagines the minutes before, after or around the moment. Kiarostami began this experimentation with notable paintings, as he begins the film with a motion aspect of a Pieter Bruegel masterwork. In the rest of the film, the next 23 “frames,” he used his own photography, and breathed life into those still portraits. This includes such zen notions of nature being observed through windows, or errant animals in places where they shouldn’t be. Each frame story is fascinating, creating a thesis between what is projected versus what is real, and becomes a zen calming (with exceptions) force of energy. “24 Frames” is part of the Gene Siskel Film Center’s 28th Iran Festival of Films ([click link below](#)).

In Frame 1, the masterwork of Pieter Bruegel, “The Hunters in the Snow” (1565) slowly comes to life, mostly through following Kiarostami’s pungent sound design, which follows through on the rest of the frames. The effects of “reality” – animal noises, wind, the rushing ocean – are all up front, and in other frames the use of opera and musical stings comment on the unfolding mini-stories.

If there are “themes” of exposition in the frames, it would mostly involve trees, oceans, windows, weather, starkness, linear framing and nature. There are a few frames where people intrude, but it’s always with a modernistic destruction or satire – Frame 15 is a goof on tourists in Paris. For the most part, this is a window into how a filmmaker observes, and communicates.

“24 Frames,” Part of the 28th Iran Festival of Films, runs through February 15th, 2018 at the Gene Siskel Film Center, 164 North State Street in Chicago. For other screenings, see local listings for theaters and show times. For general Gene Siskel Film information and schedules, [click here](#). [22]



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Bird on a Fence in Frame 7 of ‘24 Frames’

Photo credit: Janus Films

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