



Sandra Schaefer // **Stagings** Kabul, Film & Production of Representation

'In *Stagings. Kabul, Film & Production of Representation*, author, artist and filmmaker Sandra Schäfer brings up the question of media and political images of "Afghanistan". City and cinema create stages for the counter-production of representation, for new definitions and reinterpretations of gender roles and power relations.

Stagings addresses urban issues "beyond the civitas" but also keeps an eye on cultural production, image politics and media strategies. Highlighted films, international exhibitions and festivals explore the resistive role of gender politics in Afghanistan, with a secondary aim of undermining the instrumentalization of the "women's question" for interventionist-political purposes. The book also presents photographs, film stills and related documents from the past forty years.

A rich docu-fictional range is spanned, from a staged demonstration re-enacting historical protests of women against the Taliban regime to real protests against the new Afghan family law. Interviews with Kabul filmmaker and women rights activist Diana Saeqeb, award winning filmmaker Siddiq Barmak, and Afghan-Canadian journalist and filmmaker Nelofer Pazira reflect gender issues and current work. Film critic Madeleine Bernstorff examines the film *Passing the Rainbow* by Sandra Schäfer and Elfe Brandenburger. Portraits of actresses Aiqela Rezaie (*Five in the Afternoon* by Samira Makhmalbaf) and Hamida Refah (*Kite Runner* by Marc Foster) and the martial arts film director Saba Sahar provide insight to the landscape of film production in Kabul.

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