

# Sheba Arts

## **Women of Freedom Square**

(Version 1)

**Dramaturg**

**Fereshteh Mozaffari**

## ACT ONE, SCENE ONE

*The stage is half lit when audience enter. There is a camera on stage connected to the projection. Every time Maria talks to the camera, we see her image on screen. (represents TV) Soundscape plays as audience enter. Lights up. Maria, a western journalist appears on stage while holding a mic. She stands behind the camera.*

Good Afternoon and welcome to the first of our series of six documentaries looking at how women contribute to daily life in some of the world's major capital cities. I will be meeting and interviewing women from all walks of life and discussing the roles they play in the family, fashion, retail and in sport, education and politics. This is Maria Gomez reporting for the World News from the vibrant city of Tehran in Iran.

*She moves to the other side. Her phone rings:*

Maria: Hello? Hi Azi, how's it going? Sorry? An underground fashion show? No, you know I can't talk about that – it's a political hot potato! It's too much of a risk. Anyway, we'll talk later, OK? Bye.

*She leaves the stage.*

## ACT ONE SCENE TWO – THE FASHION SHOW VENUE

*Fatemeh enters the stage in her costume. She wears hijab and eye mask.*

سلام. خوش اومدید. لطفا گوش کنید چند نکته هست که باید بهشون توجه کنید. اول از همه در خونه از این ساعت بسته میشه. و رفت و آمد ممنوعه. لطفا عکس و فیلم نگیرید به خاطر امنیت خودتون. اگه یه وقت پلیس در زد وانمود کنید که جشن تولده. یه وقت چیزی درباره فشن شو نگید. سری اول این نمایش لباس های مهمونیه که طراحی خودمه. در بخش دوم یه رقص با کلاه داریم برای فان. و بعدش لباس هایی که بچه ها خودشون طراحی کردند و روش با خطاطی پیام های قشنگی نوشتند. ممنون از همکاری شما عزیزان و امیدوارم که از این نمایش لذت ببرید.

***Sub: Hello ladies. Please listen to my announcements - they are very important. First of all, keep the doors shut at all times. No pictures or filming please. If the police knock the door, I will answer. please remain calm. Remember we are here for a birthday party. No mention of the fashion show otherwise you know where we will end up! We will have 3 shows tonight. First we will showcase the dresses designed by me. Then we will have a hat dance just to cheer you up. And the third and most important part of tonight show is calligraphy designed dresses made by the women themselves. I hope you enjoy it.***

*Music plays. Ladies enter one by one showing off their costumes. They do 2 minutes of traditional dance and then 2 minutes of hat dance when suddenly a police siren goes off and we see a shadow of a policeman on the screen. Women put shawls over their heads and start singing happy birthday in Farsi.*

*تولد تولد تولدت مبارک*

*مبارک مبارک تولدت مبارک*

پس کادوها کجاست؟ مجلس عیاشی راه انداختید؟ همسایه ها گفتند خیلی سر و صدا کردین. همه پلیس: که اینطور. جشن تولده ها؟  
بازداشت. راه بیفتید. یالا. یالا

**Subtitle: Policeman: So, you have a birthday party ha? I can't see any Birthday presents. Your neighbours have complained about the noise. You need to come with me. You are under arrest. All of you! Hurry Up! Move!**

*Women leave the stage in a panic. Sound of jail door being slammed.*

### **ACT ONE SCENE 3**

*Phone rings before Maria enters the stage.*

Hi Azi – yes, I'm just about to start reporting, so I can't talk for long. You what! What happened? What in heaven's name? For dressing up and having fun? Surely not?

Maria (to camera) I'm here reporting from Tehran, where women are known for their elegant sense of style. But you will probably not be aware of their fashion sense unless you visit them in their family homes, as the countries laws relating to hijab dictates that women display public modesty at all times.

*Silence.*

*She approaches a woman in the audience.*

Maria: Good afternoon, I'm from World News – could I just ask you. Do you wear designer clothes at home?

The woman doesn't reply.

Maria (back to camera) Shortly will be visiting the renowned Vanak Square neighbourhood of Tehran and talking to some of the designers who work there. But first back to Ben Johnson in the studio.

*She leaves the stage.*

## ACT TOW SCENE 1: COURT

*A footage appears on the screen, showing a woman standing on a box, waving the hijab at the end of a stick like a white flag. It lasts for a few seconds. A dim light. The shadow of a man, the judge, appears on screen (not sure how we are going to achieve this) Sepideh enters with a chair and put it under the spotlight. She sits on it. She has black hijab on. (the chair stays on stage throughout this act)*

قاضی: اسم؟

**Sub: Name?**

آزاده محمودی

**Azadeh Mahmoodi**

قاضی: اتهام شما کشف حجاب در ملاء عام و تشویق زنها به منکراته. روسری تو زدی سر چوب رفتی رو بلندی که چه غلطی بکنی؟ فکر کردی که تو این نظام اسلامی می تونی هر کاری دلت خواست بکنی؟ خون شهدا رو پایمال کنی؟ آیا به خانواده شهدا فکر کردی وقتی این کارو کردی؟

**Sub: You are charged with removing your hijab in public. Do you think this is acceptable in an Islamic country? Did you mean to disrespect our martyrs by doing so? Did you think about their families and how upset they would get?**

آزاده: قصد من توهین به شهدا نبود جناب قاضی.

**Sub: I had no intention of insulting the martyrs.**

پس چرا عکستو فرستادی آمریکا برای کمپین آزادیهای یواشکی؟ میدونی جرم همکاری با دولتهای متخاصم چیه؟ اعدام.

سکوت

تو بازجویام که به رابطه نامشروع اعتراف کردی

**Sub: So why did you send your photo to My Stealthy Freedom campaign? Do you know what the punishment is for such an act? Execution. You confessed to illegal sex activity during the interrogations!**

آزاده: رابطه نامشروع؟ جناب آقای قاضی ایشون نامزدم هستن قراره ازدواج کنیم

**Sub: That's not right your honour, I had only been with my fiancé. and we are soon to be married.**

قاضی: عقد نامه دارید؟ اگه ندارید غیر شرعیه و حکمش شلاق. حتما با خلیا رابطه نامشروع داشتی.

**Sub: Do you have any Nikah documentation? If not, according to Sharia you will be subject to 72 lashes.**

آزاده میخواد از خودش دفاع کنه هر بار میخواد چیزی بگه قاضی تشر می زنه.

قاضی: برو منتظر حکمت باش اقلا ده سال حبس میگیری

**Judge: Go back to your cell to await our verdict. The punishment is a minimum of 10 years.**

## **ACT TWO, SCENE 2**

*Light up with a touch of red light. Maria enters.*

**Maria:** Later we will be reporting on the most popular bakery in Tehran and the women who work there, but first I would like to talk a little bit about women in sport in this city. In many countries in this part of the world, it is taboo for women to attend stadium events, a right which we in the UK take for granted. Whilst some countries are now lifting such restrictions, others still do not allow them to do so!

*She leaves the stage. Back to blue spotlight.*

## **ACT TWO, SCENE 3 COURT**

*A short clip of images of Iranian women disguising themselves as men.*

*Shadow of judge on screen.*

پگاه روی صندلی می نشیند. سکوت طولانی

قاضی: اسم؟

**Judge: name?**

پگاه ایرانی

**Pegah Irani**

شما جرمت اینه که با لباس مردانه وارد استادیوم شدی. شما نمی دونی ورود به استادیوم برای خانمها ممنوعه؟ قصدت چی بود از این کار؟ از کی پول گرفتی؟ از آمریکا؟؟

**You are charged with impersonating a male in order to gain entry into a public stadium. Who paid you to do this? America? Do you not know entering stadium is banned for women?**

نه جناب قاضی از کسی پول نگرفتم

**Your honour nobody paid me anything.**

اعترافات اینجا هست؟ این امضای شما نیست؟

**We have your confession document here, is this not your signature?**

سکوت silence

جناب قاضی منو شکنجه کردن. مجبورم کردن اعتراف کنم.

**Your honour, they tortured me. These confessions are false.**

قاضی: کی شکنجه کرد؟

**Who are you accusing of torture?**

## سکوت

لادن: من سه ماه انفرادی بودم. برای چی؟ فقط برای یه ریش گذاشتن؟ پدرم از غصه من سخته کرد خودم ناراحتی قلبی گرفتم

***I have been in solitary confinement for 3 months. Why? For wearing a moustache. My father has now had a stroke, and all this is causing me heart palpitation.***

قاضی: پرسیدم کی شکنجه کرد؟

***I am asking again; who tortured you?***

لادن: نمیدونم. خیلیها بودن صورتهاشون رو ندیدم. هر روز با چشم بند می بردنم یه اتاقی

***I dunno your honour. There were many of them. I couldn't see their face they blindfolded me.***

چه کار می کردن؟

***What did they do?***

یعنی شما نمی دونید چی کار می کنن تو زندان؟

***Do you not know what is happening in prisons?***

قاضی: از من سوال نکن. این منم که سوال می پرسم پرسیدم چی کارت کردن توی زندان.

***You don't ask questions. It's me who is asking I asked what did they do to you?***

silence سکوت

لادن (با گریه): لباسامو از تنم درآوردن، بهم توهین کردن، تحقیرم کردن. به کف پاهام شلاق زدن. تهدید کردن که اعدام می کنند. برادرمو می کشن. این به نظرتون درسته؟؟

***They stripped me they insulted me they beat me on the soles of my feet until I could no longer stand. Look your honour. They threatened to execute me, kill my brother. Is this acceptable your honour?***

قاضی: می تونی این ها رو ثابت کنی؟

***you are making big accusations what evidence do you have?***

جای زخم ها روی بدنم هست جناب قاضی می تونید ببینید

***can show you the scars on my body***

قاضی: خودزنی کردی؟ از کجا معلوم که دروغ سر هم نمی کنی تا به نظام اسلامی تهمت بزنی؟ جرمت سنگین تر شد با این تهمت ها. بر می گردی زندان تا دادگاه بعدی.

***How do I know that they are not the result of self-harm? Do you have witnesses? You are telling lies against Islamic system and you are making it more dangerous for yourself. You go back to your cell and await your next court appearance.***

لادن: نه آقای قاضی لطفا منو برم نگردونید. من بر نمی گردم زندان/ منو بکشید اما برم نگردونید. اصلا اعدام کنید راحت بشم. بکشیدم

***Please don't send me back to jail. I'm not going to go back to jail. Kill me and free me. I don't want to go back to jail. Hang me. Hang me.***

ببریدش

Take her.

**ACT TWO SCENE 4**

*Light up. PHONE RINGS. Maria on stage.*

**Maria:** Azi – say that again! Yes, I read about people doing this, but I thought.... Well to be honest, I don't know what I thought. But Pegah, TORTURED? How in heaven's name can that be justified?

**Maria to camera (now looking visibly uncomfortable):** It's summer solstice here in Tehran, a time when the hot weather drives many families to the Caspian Sea for rest and recuperation and to enjoy the cooler ocean breeze during June and July. Family life is very important here in Iran and women either like to entertain guests in their homes or they go out into the mountains for picnics with their extended families (Maria doesn't look too impressed at this point!). Shortly I will be talking to some of the women who live here about their role in the family.

*Maria leaves the stage.*

**ACT TWO SCENE 5: COURT**

*Back to blue spotlight. Fatemeh sits on the chair.*

قاضی: نفر بعدی. خانم فاطمه دودکار

***Mrs Fatemeh Doodkar***

بله جناب قاضی

***Yes, your honour***

قاضی: حالتون خوبه خواهرم؟

***How is my sister today?***

فاطمه (با تردید)

خیلی ممنون

***Not too bad. Thank you***

اتهام شما برگزاری فشن فشو هست. به چه علت به چنین کاری کردی خواهرم؟ از شما خانم محجبه بعیده. دور از شان شماست.

***You have been arrested for organising a fashion show. You are like my sister, let me give you a piece of advice: this is undignified for someone in your position.***

جناب قاضی ما کار بدی نمی کردیم یه مجلس زنونه بود.

***your honour, I didn't do anything wrong it was a female only event.***

قاضی: شما از خانواده شهدا هستید درسته/ برادر شما شهید شده درسته؟ شما نباید از این جور بی بند و باری ها دفاع کنید. به جای تشویق بی حجابی و لهو و لعب، شما باید نهی از منکر کنید.

**Well done. System has been kind to you only because your family has served the system, and you brother was martyred in the war. As a Muslim women, you should not encourage such behaviour but instead pass on the teaching of Islam.**

فاطمه: من خودم مسلمونم و با حجابم چطوری می تونم تشویق بی حجابی و فحشا کرده باشم؟

**I am a Muslim woman your honour. In what way am I supporting the removal of hijab?**

سکوت

قاضی: مرحبا پس تعهد بدید که هم خودتون و بقیه خانواده در چنین مجالسی شرکت نمی کنید و همیشه به حجاب پای بندید. بعدش آزادید.

**You sign this order and you undertake that you or no member of your family will take part in activities of a similar nature in the future. And you will also comply to hijab. Then you will be free to go.**

من نمی تونم از طرف خانواده م تعهد بدم جناب قاضی. هر کس مسنول اعمال خودشه.

**I will not sign that on behalf of my family my honour.**

سکوت

که اینطور. پس وثیقه تون باطل شد می رید زندان.

**then go back to your cell and wait for the judgement**

فاطمه: به چه جرمی.

## **ACT 2 SCENE 6**

**Maris enters while talking to the phone**

**Maria: But Azi, tell me this: how can I make a documentary, if I can't report what is really happening to women in here? I know that, but a documentary is supposed to reflect real life! It's for your ears only, I'm not at all happy about it.**

**Maria goes to stand behind the camera and starts to speak, but instead she just shrugs and leaves the stage.**

## **ACT 3 SCENE 7**

**A short film about Donya and her charity work in Iran. She enters, sits on the chair as she struggles to fix her hijab.**

**Name?**

اسم

دنیا لطفی



## Donya Lotfi

قاضی مکث طولانی و صدایش را صاف می کند: شما جرمت تبلیغ بین زلزله زده هاست. شما برای چی رفتی کرمانشاه؟ مگه شما هلال احمری؟ اینجا اعتراف کردی که پول گرفتی.

***You are being accused of trying to overthrow the Islamic system by promoting enemy's propaganda in areas affected by earthquake. Why did you travel to Kermanshah? Are you Red Cross? You confessed that you raised money for this.***

دنیا: بله پول گرفتم ولی از خیریه. با پولش برای مردم کانکس خریدیم برای بچه ها کتاب و لباس خریدیم

***Yes, we raised fund through our charity in London. We used the money to construct temporary housing for the families affected by the earthquake, We used the money to buy books and clothes for their kids.***

قاضی: خیریه از انگلیس؟ جرمت سنگینه. از کشورهای بیگانه پول گرفتی که براندازی نرم کنی؟

***Charity from England? Your making it very difficult by this confession. To promote a soft revolution? Do you think we don't know what you are up to?***

دنیا: براندازی نرم؟ به چی متهم شدم؟ ببخشید می تونم مترجم تقاضا کنم؟

***Sorry, I can't understand fully what you are accusing me of, can I have an interpreter?***

Judge: what sort of Iranian are you that can't not speak Farsi properly

*Silence سکوت*

***Ana speaks English and judge replies in Farsi***

Ana: I haven't received the money from any officials , Iranian people in the UK have raised this fund to help the earthquake affected families and I'm just delivering their request on behalf of the charity

قاضی: چرا پول رو ندادی به هلال احمر؟ پس کارت ایراد داره معلومه یک ریگی به کفشت هست.

***Why didn't you give the money to the Rec Cross? Or the government? You must have been up to something.***

Ana: because the people who donated their money wanted to make sure that it will be directly delivered those families

قاضی: یعنی آگه به دولت بدی نمی رسه به دست مردم؟ جرمت همینطوری سنگین هست با تبلیغ علیه نظام سنگین ترش می کنی. برمی گردی زندان تا حکمت به دستت برسه.

***Are you saying if you gave the money to our charities, it will not be given to those families? You are making things difficult for yourself. You will return to prison till you receive a final decision.***

Ana: Your honour. I need to return to the UK to my family. I am a university student and will miss my classes.

پس خانواده ات باید بهای آزادی تو بدن

*So your family has to pay the price for your freedom.*

## ACT 2 SCENE 8

*White light turns to blue as she talks.*

Maria: I am now standing outside the Gerdoo bakery in Tehran, which is famous throughout this country for its sweets and pastries. (images of Bakery on screen) Take a look at these – mouth watering eh?

*(She listens intently to someone in her earpiece and then addresses the camera with growing anger)*

I was supposed to be interviewing Mrs Ghafoor who makes these wonderful delicacies, but now it appears that I am only allowed to interview her husband. This is becoming ridiculous. Why am I not allowed to report anything about women in this damn country?

*She switches off her microphone angrily and moves to leave the stage, when the shadow of a policeman appears on screen trying to grab her mic. She resists.*

## **Blackout.**

Maria: What the hell are you doing? Arresting me? Why? For being a woman? Get your hands off me!

## ACT 3- SCENE ONE – THE PRISON CELL

*Dim light. Sound of door slam*

*Women stumble into the prison cell one by one. Geli enters last. (we hear a jail door slam and a voice over Be Quiet). The other prisoners are scared and won't notice Maria for some time, then start to taunt her.*

آزاده: این اینجا چی کار می کنه این خارجیه

*Sub: Why is she doing here? She is a foreigner*

پگاه: فک کنم جاسوسه

*I think she is a spy*

فاطمه: نه من اینو دیدمش. خبرنگاره. یه روز توی نونوایی دیدمش میخواست گزارش بگیره. ولی ول کرد رفت.

*I know who she is. She is a journalist. I saw her in a bakery once, she was trying to film but then she left.*

**Maria: I'm not a spy!!**

**Pegah: what are you doing here then?**

**Maria: I'm so sorry. I know what you have been doing but I had been told not to get involved with anything controversial.**

*سکوت*

*فاطمه: حیف شد. قسمت سوم فشن شو هیچوقت اجرا نشد.*

**Fatehem: we didn't get around to the part of the fashion show.**

*Silence.*

**Maria: I'd like to know more about guys now.**

*.Each time one of them performs her monologue and stands in the dark. The light is on the person who performs next.*

**Azadeh Story:**

When I was a child, I so wanted a bike. But I was a girl and I was not allowed to have one because I was a girl. I grew up and went to school. They told me to wear hijab. I was seven years old. Once I was nearly thrown out of school for not wearing it properly. I was always told off for not fully committing to hijab. Once I was nearly thrown out of school for not wearing hijab properly. My parents were summoned and had to guarantee that I would conform in future in every way – even to cut my nails to the correct length. I began to suffer from anxiety. I was terrified I might be expelled. Time passed. I went to university. This time I was stopped at the entrance and commanded to wear an oversized manteaux. The staff would criticise me for wearing make-up, or if my hair slipped from my scarf. My parents were always pleading with me to obey the rules.

When I finished the university, I began looking for work, but in every interview I had, they told me that my Hijab was not correct. It seems that all my problems stem from hijab! That's why I decided to do something about it. I don't want my nieces go through the same thing. It's my body and no-one has any right to tell me what to wear.

**Pegah Story:**

Since I was a little girl, I have always been a bit of a tomboy and I wanted to be a footballer. I was always playing football with the boys on our street. My parents didn't really mind, but they WERE worried about what might happen to me in the future. We did sports at school, but only basketball or volleyball. I only wanted to play football, but I was only allowed to play in our garden, where nobody could see me, except on family holidays, when I could play with my cousins. They were boys and always went to matches at the local stadium, but I couldn't go with them as women weren't allowed in. I later heard about a group of women

who disguise themselves as men to get into stadiums. I decided to do the same thing, but I was arrested straight away and ended up here. That won't stop me though – I'll simply try again!

### Fatemeh Story:

When I was a child I liked to become a singer. But in this country, a woman is not supposed to sing. So my wish never came true. Today I am here because I stood up to defend women's right. I want my daughter and every woman to have freedom of choice. No one should be allowed to fore their opinions on us. Every human being has to be able to choose their path in life. I am from a martyr family, but my brother sacrificed himself because he thought we will have a better future. He will be surprised to see me in jail for taking part in a women's show.

### Donya Story in English.

My childhood was very much divided between my early years in Iran and the other half adapting to the new culture that is my home now in the UK. I remember always feeling confused as to how everything was divided between genders. Specially having to grow up here and learning that I do have a choice and right to fight for my freedom, it makes me even more aware of the crisis that is limiting basic human rights which is why I decided to take part in making the smallest contribution to the earth quake affected areas in Iran.

I have no idea where I belong now... I believe here is my home, with my family, with my friends. So when they ask me where are you from, I say London, because that's where I learnt how to ride a bike in primary school, and have the confidence to expect the same treatment as my male friends in secondary school, but when I'm then responded with "no, where are you REALLY from?" that's when I start questioning myself.

I have memories, oppressed memories, and that type of cognitive trauma is embedded in my blood, affecting my everyday... I've been trying to break free from it ever since...

### Maria's Story

Look at me, What do you see?

A woman at the top of her career ?

But can you see my experiences span three continents and at least three generations?

When you look at this skirt, can you recognise the innocence of a small child bundled up in bright woollen clothes negotiating the steep mountains of the Andes on the back of a donkey led by her mother – my grandmother?

Can you see that charming cotton trader with a woman in every port, who brought the children of his mistress to the UK and left their mother – my grandmother - behind?

Can you detect her bitterness, constantly scrubbing the word “whore” from the white walls of her home, and her anguish that her own children can no longer speak her native Spanish?

In my blouse, can you see the feat and bravery of the Norwegian Merchant Navy sailor teetering on the rigs of ships in the icy Liverpool docks? Or the shame and sadness of his wife, the Irish cleaner, when she asks her young children, my uncles and aunts to stake out the local pub to claim their father’s wages, before he drinks them all away?

*(She stands up, throws her manteaux to the ground and lets down her hair, turning to the audience as she does so.)* Does my white hair remind you of the Shamanic wisdom of indigenous people, who have had their land stolen by rich corporates?

Look at me and tell me truthfully.

Perhaps you still can’t see any of this, because all you can see is a privileged white journalist, not the struggles of countless women throughout history, and their fight for equal rights and individual freedom. Do you think my culture is really any different from yours? Women everywhere are still fighting for everything. The women in my family had to overcome poverty and cultural restrictions to make my life easier. I had to hide my background to get my job at World News, where family connections are important. My family did not allow creativity. My sister was an artist and the family rejected her. My job is precious to me. I fought to get it, and it proves that women can overcome the challenges of their heritage.

*All are standing now. We hear the soundscape again for 20 seconds.*

لادن: نمی خوام ساکت بشم نمی خوام خفه شم

Pegah: I don’t want to be quiet. I don’t want to shut up.

فاطمه: بدنم مال مال خودته

همه با هم: بدنم مال خودمه

Azadeh: My body is my own

All together: I own my body

*With every shouting, the shadow on screen gets more distorted and then disappears*

دنیا: ما آزادیم هیچ کس نمی تونه آزادیمونو بگیره.

we are free رو به ماریا:

Maris: that’s true. We are free.

من آزادم

All: I am free I am free I am free I am free

we are free.

***my body is my own***

***نهنم مال خودمه***

***i own my mind***

**THE END**