

چرخ گردون

TheRoll

Building Bridges to Connect



Synopsis

It‘s sunny. No clouds. The view of the summit of Mount Damavand is perfect. Up there is Shahin‘s goal. It‘s close, but also intimidatingly far. That‘s why, when the weather turns rough, he gives up. Turns around and descends.

But that was some months ago. Shahin often thinks of that journey back to his home country after being away for so long. These thoughts are now fuelling this most epic voyage of his life:

We see the vibrant nocturnal streets of Manhattan; sights we all know from the screen. But there‘s something different. Something special: A Gym wheel in the middle of all of it.

Shahin, “the falcon”, embarks on foot on his journey from Manhattan to Washington, D.C. He goes alone. And he has done it already: 2384 km he has walked, being his own cameraman. His trusty companion is the Gym wheel “Rocinante”, for Don Quixote‘s horse. It is his pack mule, his camera crane, his sleeping place. They have been travelling companions before, on the journey from Aachen to Teheran, Shahin‘s birth place, and again from Aachen to the Atlantic coast in Spain.

Shahin tells Maiti about the experiences he has made and the people he has met along the way. Shahin knows Maiti since she was small enough to lift into a backflip at Gym wheel practice. He was her mentor for many years. Now they are on a different journey: They are on the train from Aachen to Iran.

A common goal unites them: The summit of Mount Damavand. Shahin really wants to make it this time. They talk about travelling and failing, about the meaning of East and West and about circles, cycles and revolutions.

The United States of America seem to Shahin here a country of decay, there a country of exuberance. He sleeps in the hammock, protected inside his wheel, but he much prefers the occasions where strangers take him in. His hosts are incredible people and their stories move him. An actress. A journalist. A curator. A photographer. An artist who doesn‘t think herself one. A mother who provides shelter to a young woman. He also meets a couple, bike adventurers, who unknowingly get him on American television.

He also remembers his journey from Aachen to Iran, towards the rising sun with trusty Rocinante. He invites us to recognize the East as an important part of our identity and culture and to shape a world in which East and West can coexist and learn from one another.

In the meanwhile, Shahin and Maiti are inching closer to their destination.
Will they make it to the top of Mount Damavand? Will they fail? And is failure always a bad thing?

Shahin‘s archive of excellent high-quality footage is a fantastic basis for a one-of-a-kind-movie. In his “Rollmovie”, he will tell us about his encounters and poetically question our Western oriented, seemingly modern lifestyle.



Treatment

Shahin really got in his head on the mountain. Looking back now, he realizes he could have made it. But a snowfall near the summit of Mount Damavand was enough to make him turn back. The wind howls just like the eerie sounds of a musical saw.

But that was some months ago. Shahin often thinks of that journey back to his home country after being away for so long. These thoughts are now fuelling this most epic voyage of his life:

We see the vibrant nocturnal streets of Manhattan; sights we all know from the screen.
But there's something different. Something special: A Gym wheel in the middle of all of it. And we are inside it, looking out.





Shahin and his Rocinante pass through the streets of Manhattan. New York is exactly what he pictured, but somehow also different. A street musician plays a soulful saxophon solo while the wheel we are in rolls back just far enough to give us a glimpse of the full moon. Shahin feels like he's in a movie. He uses the wheel as a ladder and puts his sticker on a street sign. „If a sticker is there, the wheel was there".

„I will be in Washington in two months but that's not important", he tells Wilma, an actress he meets on the street. „What is important, then?" „To talk to normal people." That is what he came here to do, an Iranian in New York, making everyday connections with ordinary people,

and everyone trying to understand one another. She wishes him good luck, stay safe and tells him he is a brave man.

On the train

Shahin and Maiti are on the train. Maiti, whom he mentored for many years at Gym wheel practise, and with whom he now is travelling to Iran. A common goal unites them: The summit of Mount Damavand. He tells her about his travels.



His travels

Shahin‘s journey so far has spanned Aachen cathedral, Atomium, Eiffel tower, Loire Valley, all the way to the Atlantic coast in Spain, and picking up again in New York.

Nantes

It is night. The cobblestone road and the street signs clearly give away that we are in France. Pink and blue light bounces off the half-timbered houses. Shahin is trying to get a photo when a police car comes by. They approach. „What is the problem?“, a passerby asks. „Le problème, c’est la langue“, says a policeman. A young man interprets. Apparently, the wheel is too big to be rolling around on the pavement. This sets off Shahin a bit. „I have been travelling with the wheel for over a month now. It’s just the police being stupid. But okay, I will go somewhere else“

Permanent Loop

Shahin takes the Ferry to Staten Island. He feels as though he were only just arriving in the US, with his unusual luggage. He passes by the Statue of Liberty at sunset. It feels positively magical. Shahin snaps a photograph. When he arrives, it is dark. He has to camp in a tiny patch of woods by the water. We see his setup: With a bit of tarp thrown on and a hammock inside, the wheel becomes a tent. “I mean, if I am going to bring the Wheel, it will have to serve a function. I don‘t just want to push it in front of me for the sake of it, no, it‘s my camera crane, my pack mule and my sleeping spot.” Packing up in the morning is a hassle. Ships go by.

New Country

The United States of America are exactly that – a country made up in actuality by many very different states. There seem to be new rules in each „New Country“. „Sometimes you pass the border, and you come from hell to paradise.“ Shahin pushes the wheel in front of him as he goes.

Philadelphia

Shahin‘s host is a single mom. Although the house is anything but spacious, he is not the only guest. There is another woman and her child, for whom she provides a home. It‘s a bit crammed, to be honest. But here they all are, and they manage.



Flashback: Spain

In the hostel, Shahin is watching the live broadcast of the Wheel Gymnastics World Championships. Maiti is on location as part of the championship squad. The competition was supposed to have taken place a year earlier in New York, but had to be postponed and is now taking place in Denmark. We see what Wheel Gymnastics really are: A multifaceted sport with many disciplines. Daring flips from the top of the Wheel, spectacular falls, and effortless-looking exercises in the straight-line discipline. The spiral discipline in Wheel Gymnastics is notoriously tricky, requiring so much practice to master that even seasoned gymnasts sometimes end up smacking their wheel into the floor.



Back in the moment

Shahin arrives in Wilmington – president Biden‘s hometown. He pushes Rocinante all

the way up the hill to the Biden residency. There is staff outside. Secret Service. Shahin gives them his card. „Tell him to give me a call, will you?“



Up to Olympus

Shahin meets his hosts, whom he met through „Warm Showers“, a website for wayfarers (usually cyclists) to connect with people who are willing to give up a room or a spot in their garden for a tent, and offer the most important thing, of course: a warm shower. „I have everything I need on the go – but I‘ve really missed a nice warm shower!“, says Shahin.

He asks his hosts about a strange thing he noticed on Maps: On some days, his upcoming journey is marked as being 130km longer than others. 130km on foot – that would cost him about 10 days! And the bicycle-friends do have an answer for him, as Lauri says: „There is a bridge on his route that opens for cyclists only on Weekends. I hear that some people have tried it and gotten a ticket from the police. But everyone has been able to cross so far“. That works for Shahin. „I always think of myself as a cyclist: I have hazard lights and even a license plate.“ He shudders at the thought of the 130 km detour he just escaped. Now he has to hurry, though, to get to the bridge by Sunday. He packs up all his gear and heads out.

Mission Accepted.

On the train, Shahin tells Maiti just how much he has to hurry. „I basically had to run a marathon with the wheel. 26km on the first day and 20km on the second. No sleep. It reminds me ofa huge bridge I crossed in France. It took me an hour. When I got to the bridge, cars with yellow signs showed up and blocked off the road — completely for me! One car in front of me, one behind me. So I walked very fast. I didn’t want to waste their time. But afterward, I was absolutely exhausted.

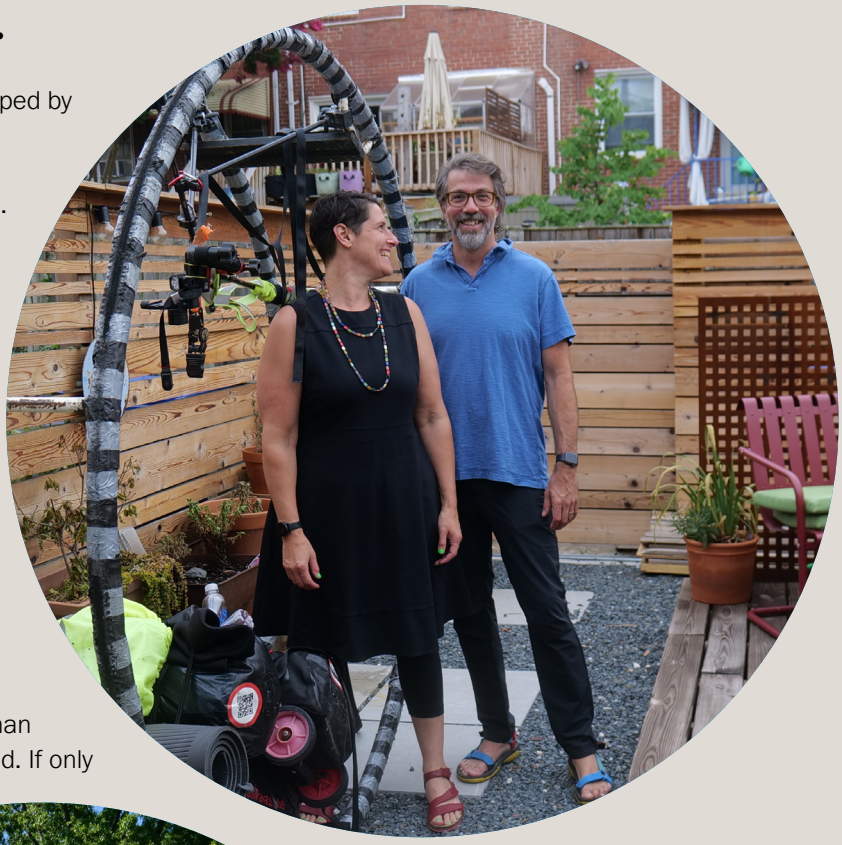
It was New Year’s Eve, and that was the day I finished the EuroVelo 6, the long-distance cycling route. So, in a way, it was a multiple milestone day. But most of all, when you arrive, the last thing you feel like doing is celebrating New Year’s. I spent New Year‘s Eve sleeping.

Back in the moment

At night and in the pouring rain, Shahin has to take a break at a bus stop. The sun is threatening to catch up with him. But he doesn‘t give up. Finally, Shahin reaches the bridge. He pushes the button on the bicycle traffic light.

Mission Completed.

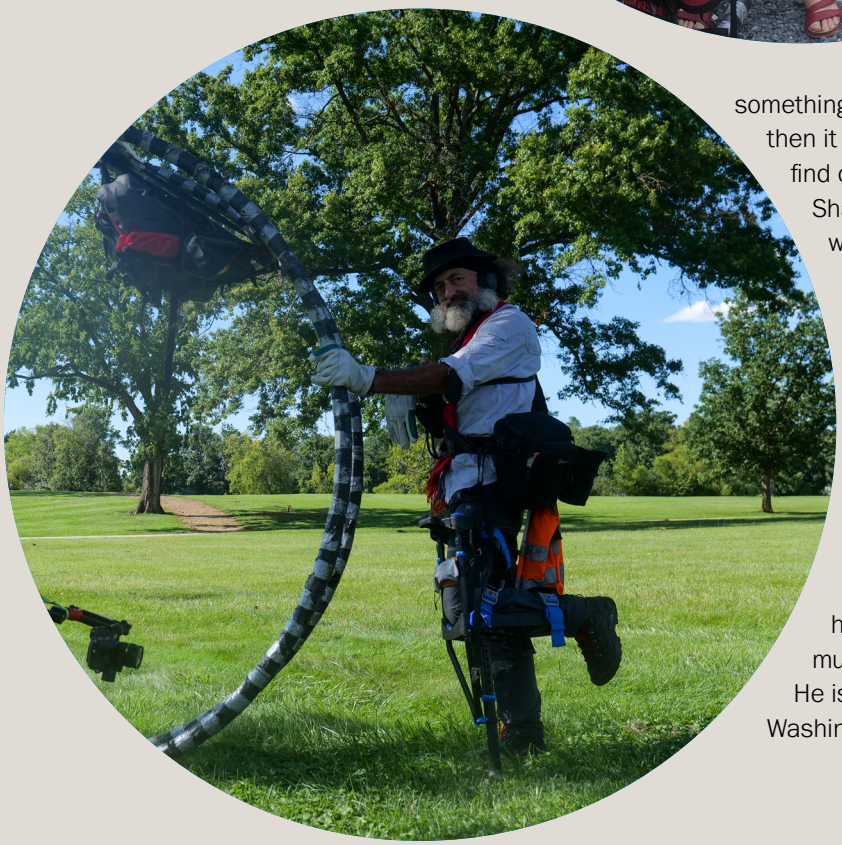
But this isn‘t France. Shahin is stopped by the police right as he reaches the midpoint of the bridge. They tell him he can‘t cross. Shahin is exhausted. Can‘t they finish this conversation on the other side of the bridge? The Good Cop has the last word. He may pass.



After the bridge-debacle, Shahin has gained some fame.
“With the bad comes good, they always come together” He even makes it on the news, and tells America about his art.

Baltimore

Shahin reaches Baltimore sooner than expected. Now he almost feels bored. If only something interesting would happen. And then it does. “Whatever you set out to find on your journey, you will find it“. Shahin climbs on top of the Gym wheel, slips: ligament rupture.



He stays with a gymnast, Margaret. She wants to found a Gym wheel club. At the end of his journey, Shahin will gift her his wheel.

Although Shahin wears a brace to protect his lower leg, allowing him to walk without putting weight on his foot, he finds himself not making much progress on his journey.
He is so close to reaching his goal. Washington, D.C. is only 30 km away.

Low point: The brace is rubbing against Shahin‘s knee each time he takes a step, causing an open wound. Now it‘s raining and a thunderstorm is brewing. The road is flooded. Lightning. It would probably do to get this huge metal Weel out of the elements.

Shahin finally accepts that he has to ask someone to transport his baggage for him. And it pays off. Shahin picks up his pace again and manages to go 7km each day. Makes him proud.

In Washington, D.C., Shahin meets up with friends from Baltimore. Just like he promised, he presents Margaret with the wheel. Only her car is too small to carry it and so it has to stay under a tree right in front of the White House for a few days. „It was there for three days. I was quite pleased the Secret Service didn‘t blow it up.“

Shahin thinks of all the good people he has met on his trip. Most of them he will probably never see again. But that‘s just how it is when you travel: You meet new friends, but lose them just as quickly.

But we‘re not done yet. There is yet a goal to be reached: Mount Damavand. Shahin and Maiti are sitting at the summit. Below them, a message of protest.





Links

Home Page

The Roll: https://the-roll.net

Gym wheel Travel Blogs

Rolleast: https://rolleast.de/
YavashYavash: https://yavashyavash.de/

Character-Reel

RollEast YavashYavash Teaser: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUgfIL2a09k&t=1s

Instagram

RollEast: https://www.instagram.com/rolleast/

THE NEW YORKER

https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/09/12/move-over-diplomats-a-giant-friendship-wheel-rolls-into-town-from-tehran

Deutschlandfunk Kultur

https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/rhoenrad-sportler-und-kuenstler-shahin-tivay-100.html



Style and Structure

Shahin‘s movie tells the story of his journey in the form of a unique “Rollmovie”. It tells us about the stories of the people he met in the USA and calls back at opportune moments to the first stage of his journey in Europe. This facilitates a poetic connection between countries.

Shahin himself filmed his journey on foot from Aachen to Spain, and then from New York to Washington, D.C., resulting in high-quality material.

The train journey with Maiti serves as a framing element, during which Shahin reports to the successful Rhönrad gymnast and long-time friend Maiti about his travels and observations. This creates a layered narrative — a story inside a story inside a story.

This narrative structure also provides insight into Shahin‘s past travels, and thus into the person of the narrator himself.

Shahin‘s perspective as a trained photographer and graphic designer not only led to the success of his photographic travel blogs yavashyavash.de and rolleast.de, but also allows the audience to inhabit Shahin‘s own perspective through his footage.

Baran Nikrah‘s voice accompanies the film with poems ranging from Rilke to Hafez, and Hossein Ghiasi even wrote poems specifically for this film. This emphasizes the film‘s overall poetic character by pairing key scenes with corresponding poems.

Up to five cameras were used (Panasonic Lumix DC-S1H, Panasonic Lumix DC-S5, DJI Mavic 3 Pro Cine, 2 mal Go PRO). The footage is consistently high-resolution, mostly filmed in 6K, sometimes in 4K. Drone footage offers breathtaking views of landscapes and surroundings.

The audio recordings are of high quality, thanks to the consistently used professional microphone: recording devices from the Cologne-based brand Tentacle Sync, and a Sony recording device, even during spontaneous conversations.

The journey even wrote its own music: Shahin met many talented musicians on his travels. They accompany musically his movie. Amongst them are Eendo & Hossein Mansouri, who are well-known for their popular cover of the Iranian song “Sharghi e Ghamgin”. Glen Fabisevich (Tutti Piano Productions), Shahins first host in New York, wrote part of the soundtrack, which has been completed by Aben Faraz.

Alireza Soheili as the editor shares Shahin‘s artistic vision for the movie. Yelena Mc Tague is the scriptwriter. The movie is being produced by the post-production company „WeFadeToGrey“.