PRESS KIT

The Roll - Building Bridges to Connect

A film by Shahin Tivay Sadatolhosseini

Directed by Shahin Tivay Sadatolhosseini
Produced by Robert Maaser and Anke Scharrahs
Edited by Alireza Soheili

RollMovie 92 min
Germany/Iran
2026

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Logline

Shahin and Maiti, enthusiastic gym wheel gymnasts, travel by train from Germany to Iran, where they plan to climb the country's highest mountain. During the journey, Shahin tells Maiti in flashbacks about the encounters he had during his journey on foot with his gym wheel from Germany to the USA. This journey, 2,384 km long, was his art project YavashYavash (SlowlySlowly), with which he built bridges between people and countries, filming his encounters as a one-man cameraman with five professional cameras and creating this unique RollMovie.

Synopsis

The Roll intertwines two parallel journeys, a slow one on foot from east to west - from Aachen to Washington DC - and a fast one from west to east by train - from Aachen to Tehran. The main protagonist, Shahin - an artist, photographer, choreographer -, walks from Aachen (Germany) to Washington DC (USA) rolling an unusual traveling vehicle in front of him: a 2-m high gymnastic wheel. He is traveling with his multi-layered art project YavashYavash (SlowlySlowly) to meet people and encourage them to think about the important issues of our time.
A train journey to Iran to climb Iran’s highest mountain serves as a framing element, during which Shahin tells successful gym wheel gymnast and long-time friend Maiti about his encounters and observations. In his RollMovie, he tells us about his encounters: A young couple on the Loire who are preserving an old printing workshop. An organic champagne producer. An artist in Nantes who doesn‘t think herself one. A mother in Baltimore who provides shelter to a young woman. A couple of bicycle enthusiast in Delaware…

Shahin Tivay Sadatolhosseini
Director, camera, protagonist, writer, producer

Shahin has been working as a freelance photographer, media designer, choreographer and artist in Aachen for 30 years. He has been a gym wheel acrobat since his arrival in Germany as a teenager and has choreographed shows and trained young gymnasts for decades. With his art project RollEast, he walked from Aachen to Tehran with his gym wheel in 2015-2017, and from Aachen to Washington DC in 2021/22, filming this journey professionally.

Robert Maaser
Producer

Robert is an international actor, writer and producer based in Berlin and London who has been working in film & television since 2014. Some of his credits include films like Mission Impossible: Rogue Nation, From the world of John Wick: Ballerina, Blood & Gold, The Machine and the Oscar winning film 1917. As a former World Champion in Wheel Gymnastics himself, this project has always been something special and very personal to him.

Alireza Soheili
Editor

Alireza is a documentary editor with over two decades of experience in visual storytelling. Deeply rooted in Iranian culture and art, his approach to editing reflects an Eastern sensibility — not merely technical, but philosophical and introspective. Through a fusion of image, sound, and thought, he transforms reality into a poetic and meditative cinematic language. His mastery of narrative and structure turns each film into an authentic and enduring experience.

Maryam Sepehri
Film consultant
Maryam Sepehri is an award-winning Iranian-American documentary filmmaker, writer, and photographer with over two decades of experience exploring cultural complexity and human resilience through visual storytelling. Her films have screened internationally and at leading U.S. universities, engaging audiences in dialogue around displacement, exile, and the transformative power of memory.

Anke Scharrahs
Camera, co-producer
Anke has been working as a freelance conservator for 30 years in museums worldwide and specializes in the research and conservation of wood paneling in and from Syrian homes. For decades, she has been committed to building bridges between people. She supported Shahin's project and filmed during its course.

Baran Nikrah
Voice artist, recitation of the poems
Baran is a narrator, TV and stage presenter and inventor. She holds a Ph.D. in physics, is a filmmaker, and is currently one of the most prominent voices in Iranian poetry. Because of the film The Roll's distinctive poetic imagery, she was eager to be part of the project.

Sina Doorandishan
Editing consultant
Iranian film editor, director, art designer, university lecturer. Editor of acclaimed films such as Delta X (dir. Alireza Amini) and Kajal (dir. Nima Yaar), as well as popular reality shows including Shab-haye Mafia and others. Artistic director of Mandaniha and The Fantastic Four (IRIB Nasim). Winner of a Special Jury Mention at the Valencia International Film and Art Festival for Vaght-e Penhan.

Yelena Mc Tague
Script-writer
Yelena, also a gym wheel gymnast herself, is currently pursuing a degree in Graphic Design at the University of Applied Sciences Aachen, where she is specializing in scriptwriting and filmmaking. Her academic work reflects a talent for communicating complex ideas through visual storytelling.

Aben Faraz
Soundtrack
Aben has been working as a film composer in Iran since 2011 and has produced seven television series, six feature films, two documentaries, and five short films. His short film Gosfand has won numerous awards at festivals. For the soundtrack of "The Roll," he combined Iranian percussion instruments with Western music to create a close fusion of Eastern and Western sounds.

Maiti Münchgesang
Protagonist
Maiti, a gymnast on the wheel and a physician, has known Shahin since childhood. When she planned a medical internship in Iran, they traveled there together by train. While Maiti reached a high point in her athletic career in 2022 with the Gym Wheel World Championships in Denmark, Shahin cheered her on from afar – and then suggested a joint adventure with another athletic challenge: climbing the highest mountain in Iran.

WeFadeToGrey
Post-production
WeFadeToGrey, founded in 2008, is a full-service post-production company that took over post-production for The Roll. They express their great interest in participating in the post-production of The Roll. Since 2022 they supported the project with their expertise in technical advice and editing preparation.

Mehrdad Barati
Sound design
Mehrdad is a sound designer and re-recording mixer who has been working in film and audiovisual post-production since 2017. He is passionate about creating immersive soundscapes and views sound as a powerful narrative tool that lends depth, emotion, and life to a film. Among his works are Sasha-ye nakook, Gorbeh Siah, and Junks & Dolls.

Director statement Shahin Tivay Sadatolhosseini

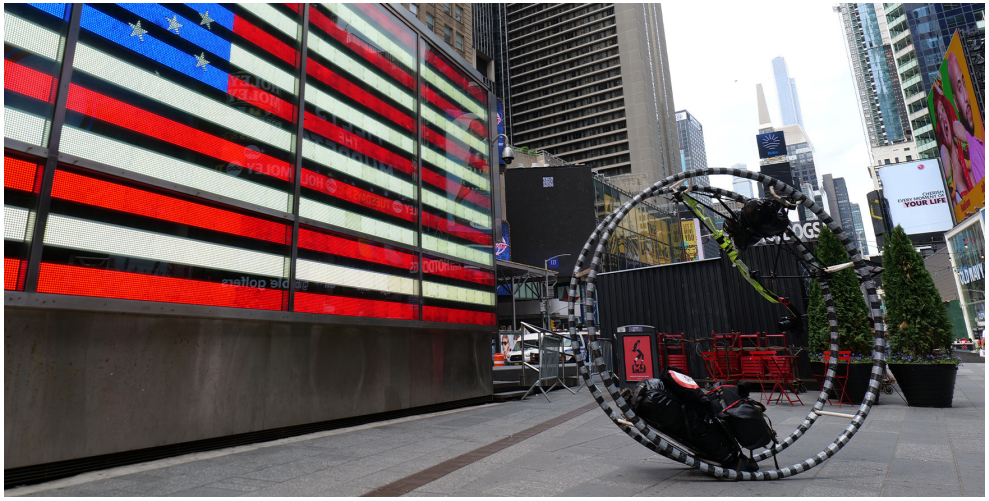
I have been a passionate cinephile since my earliest youth, explored cinematic means of expression during my studies as a media designer, followed Iranian, as well as international film art for decades, and have cherished the dream of making a special film since my childhood. My film The Roll, in its very own visual language, shall make a difference, make people think, change things for the better in society and on this planet. 30 years of work as a photographer, designer and choreographer have honed my understanding of image composition, visual language, movement, music and sound. All these elements have flowed into the creation of my RollMovie, and are linked to the theme of the circle, which I have been exploring as an artist for many years and in various visual media.
My endeavor to connect people who live in states that declare themselves great enemies of each other - such as the USA and Iran - and to overcome these externally imposed borders has long been the goal of my work as an artist. As the developments of recent months show: this topic is more relevant than ever.

Producer Statement Robert Maaser

This project combines my childhood with my professional career in the film business. Never have I ever thought of becoming an actor even though I‘ve always been an artist on stage. It‘s a really rare and beautiful experience that you can combine two completely different chapters of your life with each other. Gymnastic Wheel as a sport has been my possibility to travel the world at a very young age learning about different cultures. It was my physical language to communicate with other people without knowing a single word of their language. And in today’s world, I want to tell moving stories where love, kindness and respect for each other with a child-like curiosity for all things different are the main message. We‘re all in this together no matter what you look like, where you’re from or what your beliefs are and sometimes people tend to forget that, unfortunately. This project is a gentle reminder that the world is a mix of all colors, not just black and white. And that openness and kindness are the languages everyone understands.

LOGOI – Institute for Philosophy and Discourse
Support, distribution

LOGOI – Institute for Philosophy and Discourse is an interdisciplinary cultural institute based in Aachen, Germany, founded in 2008. Over the years, LOGOI has developed and hosted a wide range of interdisciplinary educational and cultural events with a strong focus on societal and philosophical discourse. These have included lectures, exhibitions, workshops, and philosophical salons with distinguished guests such as author Siri Hustvedt and classical guitarist Ana Vidovic. LOGOI has shown two solo exhibitions by Shahin Tivay Sadatolhosseini, in which he presented his unique art projects RollEast in 2020 and YavashYavash in 2024. His work aims to foster cross-cultural dialogue that goes beyond political diplomacy, emphasizing direct human encounters and shared experiences. Shahin's efforts to convey these encounters through film offer a powerful means of cultural exchange and international understanding. LOGOI collaborates with cinemas and cultural venues to spread Shahin's inspiring vision of international understanding and human connection.



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Links

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

RollEast: https://rolleast.de/

YavashYavash: https://yavashyavash.de/

THE NEW YORKER

Instagram

The Roll Teaser

Technical information

Up to five cameras were used (Panasonic Lumix DC-S1H, Panasonic Lumix DC-S5, DJI Mavic 3 Pro Cine, two Go PROs). Shahin mostly filmed the various angles himself, using these five cameras simultaneously.
One camera was mounted on a tripod inside the spinning gym wheel, thus capturing the view from inside the gym wheel itself.
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.