

lot to say about the class that Farahani, Godard and Golestan all belong to: the high bourgeoisie. The dialectically contrasting self-portraits that emerge from the weekly exchanges (which all take place on Fridays — thus the title, derived from one of Godard’s sign-off statements) are brutally different in both décor and styles of self-presentation: Golestan, director of *Brick and Mirror* (1964) and *The Iranian Crown Jewels* (1965) — both masterpieces that brilliantly skewer the greed and pretensions of the ruling class — presents himself like a sultan in palatial surroundings, clearly enunciating all his arguments; Godard presents himself simply and modestly, as if he were a peasant, even though what he has to say about his distrust of language sometimes borders on the incomprehensible.

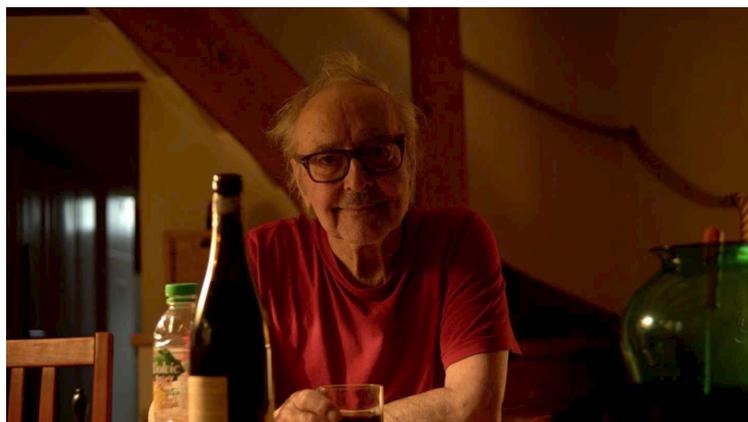
I suspect that the wisest thing Godard ever said to me came in our first interview, in 1980. “People like to think of themselves as stations or terminals,” he said, “not as trains or planes between airports. I like to think of myself as an airplane, not an airport.”

I asked him, “So that people should use you to get certain places and then get off?”

“Yes. I’ll work much more on that in my next film.”

As with many of Godard’s pronouncements, I’m not entirely sure I know what he meant by this. But what I can use is perfectly clear. It’s the fact that texts and movies are vehicles that take us places, and the destinations of those who make them don’t have to be the same as the destinations of those who climb into those vehicles. I’m a maker of some of those vehicles, which others use to take them where they (not I) want to go, and I’m someone who takes the vehicles of others (Godard’s, for instance), which take me where I want to go. I think that’s more or less what poetry does. ♦

# Acropolis Cinema presents:



January 19, 2023 – 2220 Arts + Archives

# ABOUT THE FILM

Last month, Acropolis celebrated the life and legacy of Jean-Luc Godard with a double-bill of rarely seen films by and about the late French-Swiss master. The tribute continues with Mitra Farahani's elegiac portrait of Godard's final years and the long-distance correspondence he struck up over this time with the great, if lesser known, Iranian director and novelist Ebrahim Golestan (*Brick and Mirror*), now 100 years old and living in a castle in England.

In taking up his producer Mitra Farahani's playful challenge—to see where this much-belated correspondence would lead them—Godard, ever the devilish imp, began sending Golestan a series of cryptic and gnomic fragments of text and image, always signing off “See You Friday, Robinson!” in punning reference to Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe*. These messages in a bottle, cast out from the isolation of his home in Rolle, Switzerland, comprise some of Godard's concluding and yet (as ever) inconclusive statements on language, cinema, politics, death, regret, and love. Golestan replied in turn with his own profoundly moving and subversively funny thoughts on these big existential questions, as well as on the mundanities and frustrations of old age.

Winner of the Special Jury prize in the Encounters section at the 2022 Berlinale, *See You Friday, Robinson* forms a loose trilogy with Farahani's previous portraits of artists in late career: Behjat Sadr in *Behjat Sadr: Time Suspended* (2006) and Bahman Mohassess in *Fifi Howls from Happiness* (2013). Farahani is also the co-producer of Godard's *The Image Book* (2022), and his forthcoming film *Scénario*, and she has been instrumental in the restoration of films by Ebrahim Golestan and Forough Farrokhzad, including their masterful collaboration *The House Is Black* (1962).

96 min. | France/Switzerland | 2022

## Dear Godard by Nicolas Rapold

*The following article was originally published by the New York Times, December 14, 2022*

In “See You Friday, Robinson,” Mitra Farahani orchestrates a freewheeling correspondence between Ebrahim Golestan, the Iranian director and writer, and Jean-Luc Godard, who spent 60-plus years reinventing cinema. The playfully profound film connects the pair through word and image, as they exchange emails, putter, and ponder, one in Sussex, England, the other in Rolle, Switzerland. Farahani's quiet conversations with her parents about family, aging, and mortality.

Farahani marries homebody scenes to a Godardian style of compressed reflections and audiovisual flourishes. Golestan, a retiring figure in a Gothic mansion, puzzles over

Godard's sometimes nutty-sounding koans, which arrive with attachments such as Goya's “Saturn Devouring His Son,” a clip from the dolphin-dog friendship film “Zeus and Roxanne,” and selfies.

Godard is by turns merry and moody, with intimations of mortality in his ruminations; a touching camaraderie emerges when both men weather hospital visits. Godard's laundry-draped domesticity is endearing, and his hands-on approach to working with images — watching and making them — remains invigorating.

Golestan, a key figure in Iran's pre-revolutionary cognoscenti linked to the poet Forough Farrokhzad, yields the perspective of a monumental exile: impressed by Godard but readily skeptical. “It's fine if he's saying something brilliant that I don't get,” he says, musing on Godard's Christian upbringing and whether he has a female companion. His letters sound more traditionally discursive than Godard's, suggesting a greater contrast between modernist sensibilities.

With Godard's recent death, Farahani (who co-produced Godard's film “The Image Book”) also gives us a fond remembrance, like a drink with an old friend who never stopped thinking onscreen.

## Jean-Luc Godard as Airplane by Jonathan Rosenbaum

*The following is an excerpt of an article originally published by New Lines Magazine, September 13, 2022*

In striking contrast to the sweet and sour reflections that we read or hear from American journalists about Godard's death, grumbling almost as much as they say Godard did, *Libération* brought out a celebratory 28-page special issue in color devoted exclusively to Godard only a day [after his death], including contributions from such Americans as Jim Jarmusch and Daniel Mendelsohn. The fact that the box office “performance” of Godard's late features was reportedly even worse in France than it was in the U.S. only proves that marketplace value has little or nothing to do with the love of art, and that there's no way of gauging the latter via the former, especially insofar as the intensity of the love and the qualities of the audience experiencing and expressing it aren't even remotely quantifiable.

I suspect that the future final look at Godard that many of us will have and remember is Mitra Farahani's startling *À Vendredi, Robinson* (*See You Friday, Robinson*), which just opened in Paris (and which I was lucky enough to see last summer at Il Cinema Ritrovato in Bologna). A staged internet encounter between two nonagenarian New Wave pioneers — Jean-Luc Godard of the French New Wave and Ebrahim Golestan of the First Iranian New Wave — who meet one another only digitally, thanks to the filmmaker (an Iranian woman based in Europe), this abrasive, Godardian feature, whatever its intentions, has a