

# Visa for one Moment

Hana Makhmalbaf

Nickan  
Publications

# **Visa for one Moment**

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. **Visa for one Moment**

. **Poem**

. **Hana Makhmalbaf**

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## Visa for one Moment

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## **A Poet I Recently Got to Know**

### **Sepideh Jodeyri**

Not long has passed since Hana Makhmalbaf won the jury prize in San Sebastian Film Festival but over four years have passed since the publication of her book “Visa for One Moment”, which she wrote at age 14. The book contains a long poem in Persian, English and French. It was published by Farrokh Negar publications (an affiliate of Karnameh Art and Culture Institute) in spring of 2003 in 2200 copies. 2200 copies as first edition is not a low

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figure yet the long poem of “Visa for One Moment” with its bizarre structure, new look and considerable worldly view has been obscured from the eyes of poetry critics and no significant critique or article that would introduce this particular poem to the serious poetry enthusiasts has been published in these four years. For that reason, many have remained unaware that such a book even existed. Yet, since I believe that a poem, which is essentially poetry, has no expiration date and just like the Mathnawi of Rumi will have something to say even after centuries, I think it is not yet too late to introduce the attributes of Hana Makhmalbaf’s poetry. Reading the poem “Visa for One Moment” apart from the poet’s age at the time of composing, because of its fresh outlook and presentation in a different and strange structure took me so much by surprise that I couldn’t tolerate the four-year silence of the Iranian literary community about this book and the note below is the result of breaking this silence.

## **1. Democracy of the Text**

In the long poem or according to Hana's father, the relatively long poem of "Visa for One Moment", we are faced right from the start with a subject matter, which I refer to as the 'Democracy of the text'. The maneuver of employing three dots (...) throughout the poem and use of words under the dots that the reader can choose to replace the dots or in other words granting the reader the right of word choice, has rendered something like a democratic text rarely seen in Iranian poetry and literature. In dealing with such a text not only the readers but also words have the right to vote and the empty space (three dots) is equally shared by the words.

I STUDY...(THREE DOTS)  
FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
FRENCH  
ENGLISH  
PERSIAN LITERATURE

Of course, the text (poem) at times

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becomes even more democratic. The poet does not suggest the substitute words but leaves it to the reader's discretion.

I STOP STUDYING FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
AND BEGIN TO LOOK FOR 'THREE DOTS'...

...

I WANT A PRESENT FOR ...

Sometimes too the poet-narrator directly asks the reader to expose the identity of the three dots:

WHO IS...?

WHO WAS ...?

WHO WILL BE...?

Using one way dialogues and leaving the words of the opposite party up to the assumption and guessing of the reader has provided another kind of participation for the reader; dialogues such as:

I HAVE LOST ONE OF MY CONTACT LENSES.  
WOULD YOU KINDLY GIVE ME ANOTHER  
ONE?

I WANT TO LOOK IN THE MIRROR.  
HOW MUCH SHOULD I PAY?

## **2. The Psychology of the Text**

One of the functions of the three dots (...) in this poem is to change the feel of the poem, hence changing the psychological effect on the reader:

THAT IS ...  
BEAUTIFUL  
DREADFUL, VERY BAD  
WONDERFUL  
UGLY  
PRETTY  
LOVING / ROMANTIC  
STRANGE/ UNUSUAL

In “Visa for One Moment” often words with contradictory notions have been suggested as substitutes for the three dots. With every one of the words the

poem can be read from start to end and consequently hundreds of different poems with conflicting interpretations and psychological effects are created.

In fact, we can cover the words under the first suggested word for the three dots and read the poem and then do the same with other words to create varying and contradicting versions of the poem, each bearing its own philosophical-psychological weight.

The maneuver may deem a pleasant game yet it does not suffice to just a game but as pointed earlier it renders more of a psychological application because by choosing every new word instead of the previously suggested one, the poem transfers a new spirit and even new weltanschauung to the reader which is different or opposite to the previous word that the reader had opted.

### **3. Ambiguity**

I WOULD HAVE (COMMITTED)...  
SUICIDE/LIVED  
IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE SAKE OF...  
MY SISTER  
MY AUNT  
MY FRIEND.

The function of the three dots in the poem does not conclude to the said instances. Rather, one of its poetic implications is to create ambiguity. For example, in that part of the poem the reader becomes puzzled as to whether the narrator has eventually committed suicide or still living. In other words, is the narrator speaking after suicide and death or is she alive? Aggravating such doubts in the mind of the reader has a completely poetic function and of course, at times the poet-narrator, transfers her own doubts to the reader.

THERE IS A HEAVY TRAFFIC.  
THERE IS NOT.  
THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING.  
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT AT ALL.

#### **4. The Philosophy of the Text**

The poet-narrator in order to find her 'mood' or 'memory' or 'objects' starts to look for the book of lost items. In a way she pairs 'mood' or 'memory' with 'objects'. This matching of all contradictory, different and at times unrelated notions can reveal a certain kind of disappointment in the sense that all objects, feelings and incidences do not concern the poet:

I FEEL LISTLESS

...

I AM TIRED OF MYSELF.

This listlessness and tiredness of the self leads to the poet-narrator's travel away from herself and that is, with a one-way ticket, which indicates the narrator does not want at all to return to herself or her 'present conditions'. She is seeking an outlet to emancipate herself from the boring and monotonous life that has made her indifferent towards everything. This is

how she travels away from herself even for one moment:

I NEED A VISA FOR ONE MOMENT.

She cannot, however, 'reveal her heart' on this journey:

DO YOU SEE WHAT I HAVE TO GO THROUGH  
FOR A MOMENT'S VISA?  
I WENT THROUGH!  
WILL GO THROUGH.

The narrator by changing the verb tenses extends the journey from herself (her identity) to all times. Meanwhile, with this journey she has reached a point where no one understands her language and she herself in order to use the words of the new language-world, starts to stutter:

AH!  
WHERE IS...?  
THE HOTEL.  
WHERE CAN I GET ON...?

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THE SUBWAY

THE BUS

A TAXI.

The narrator universalizes her philosophy to all the cities, countries and nations and herewith creates a text for all readers from any nation with any appearance, STRAIGHT (DRY/GREASY) HAIR, with any ideology, any occupation and for every period; a text that every reader can relate to.

She finally in order to evade her loneliness makes a rendezvous with a third person. A rendezvous that may lead to love. There, where she asks a waiter for “AN EMPTY VASE FOR A PROBABLE ROSE”. Of course that is only a probability.

Another probability is longing for herself and nostalgia of the previous conditions; what we have gotten used to yet crossed it:

I HAVEN'T HAD A DREAM OF MYSELF FOR A LONG TIME.

WHAT NUMBER SHOULD I DIAL TO SEND A  
FAX TO MYSELF?

That is how the text finds philosophical dimensions; a philosophy produced by the narrator's despair of her surrounding new world because the journey and escape from the self has lead to none but loneliness and ailment.

Hence, the poet-narrator decides again to travel away from herself; journey from life to death turning her to the third person:  
SOMEONE HAS DROWNED IN THE SEA.

HE HAS COMMITTED...  
NO ONE TRIED TO...HIM BEFORE HE  
COMMITTED SUICIDE.

SAVE.

Since, however, the text is democratic and relative, it offers another way to the poet-narrator; that she could stay and accede to the pain of life's humdrum and vanity and

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become an ordinary, hassle-free, obedient and quiet person. One who objects to nothing:

OBEYING

EATING

GETTING FAT

JOB, WORK, ROLE, OFFICE, BUREAU,  
COMPANY

ORDER, DISCIPLINE

PAINFUL, TORMENTING.

SOME TIME AGO, RECENTLY, PREVIOUSLY...

All that appears as 'SHORT BIOGRAPHY, CURRICULUM VITAE' of a person who has chosen or is choosing or will choose death.

**2007**

**Tehran**

**Sepideh Jodeyri**

## **Hana in the Eyes of Her Father**

### **Mohsen Makhmalbaf**

Born in the autumn of 1988, Hana Makhmalbaf, quit official school after the second elementary grade at age 8. Like her older sister, Samira who had also quit school earlier, Hana too, took private lessons from her father for 8 years. During her childhood years Hana attended all the classes held at Makhmalbaf Film House, and collaborated in the making of all films made by her family members. She did watercolor and at times still

photography or worked as continuity on film scenes. She continuously wrote short stories and film scripts and had a role in one of her father's films. She made two films by handycam that were numerous screened in international film festivals. Hana spent two months in Afghanistan in the autumn of 2002 accompanying her sister in making a film there. She visited every house in Kabul in search of actors and to unravel the mystery of Afghan woman's chronic state of fear and dread; woman who is still afraid of her gender, of being seen, of becoming sociable, of having an identity card, of being called 'black-head', and of the return of the Taliban, not knowing that often her own husband is a Talib. That he is part of her homeland's deep-rooted culture. The product of Hana's two-month stay in Kabul is a film titled, 'Joy of madness'.

As her father, I believe that such occurrences have nothing to do with genius or things like that. Perhaps, it has to do with luck, much to do with madness, and definitely to

do with education, persistence and effort.

Hana has also studied foreign languages, but sometimes instead of memorizing the words she plays with them and their translation. In her relatively long poem she has played with Persian words as well as words from a book of French colloquial phrases.

I think she was one of the happiest kids in her childhood. Isn't it enough for happiness that she didn't want or was forced to go to an office called school every day or do homework every night but instead had all the time to learn whatever possible? Hana's friends have told her that «one day they will plaster school doors with mud. Let it rain! Let there be mud everywhere. Let...»

**Mohsen Makhmalbaf**  
**Winter, 2002**

**Visa for One Moment**  
**Hana Makhmalbaf**

I study ...<sup>1</sup> `three dots´.  
foreign languages  
French  
English  
Persian literature

And there are books of colloquial phrases  
and conversation all around me. `Three  
dots´ ... arrives impatient and she sits

---

1 Read ... as `three dots´ everywhere in this  
poem.

beside me:

my sister  
my aunt  
my friend

she is bored and begins to thumb through  
the books scattered all around me. In the  
rough rocks of words and idioms discovers  
unhewn sculptures of poetry.  
That `three dots›... is:

beautiful  
dreadful, very bad  
wonderful  
ugly  
pretty  
loving / romantic  
strange / unusual  
What is the name of that...?  
crosswalk  
waterfall  
sea  
mountain.

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Many people climb the mountains. All of us - even those who never climbed the mountains - have seen rocks. But none of us discover unhewn statues in the rough rocks, except for Michelangelo.

...leaves. I stop studying foreign languages and begin to look for `three dots` ... in the book of colloquial phrases and conversation.

I am full of...

motivation

I am full of motivation.

But I am not feeling well.

I am sick.

I have headache.

I've got a fever.

I've caught a cold.

I cough a lot.

My throat hurts.

I have no appetite.

I feel better now.

But I have no motivation.

There should be a pain.

I am suffering from a pain.  
Oh, what a strong motivation I have for  
recovery.

I am ...  
hungry  
thirsty  
tired  
bored  
stupidly happy.  
I would have committed...  
suicide / lived  
if it weren't for the sake of...  
my sister  
my aunt  
my friend.

... has had a headache for many years.  
There is a heavy traffic.  
There is not.  
There is absolutely nothing.  
It is not at all like that.  
I feel listless.

I get on the bus.

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Your good health.

I always forget your name.

A little / a bit / a lot / a great deal.

Help me! I am lost.

Police officer!

Where is the bureau for lost objects?

I've lost...

my patience

my memory

myself.

An accident.

There has been an accident.

Her / His hands have broken.

She / He received a blow on the eyes.

Is this a cerebral hemorrhage?

Is he / she badly hurt?

I have wounded (cut) myself.

I've got...

blisters

burns

infection / pus.

Call an ambulance please.

Call the police.

I am an offender.

I've lost one of my contact lenses.

Would you kindly give me another one?

I want to look in the mirror.

How much should I pay?

What day is today?

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Sixth of April

Fourth of August

We will leave on May 5.

Early in the morning

The day after tomorrow

Two days ago

During the week

Even on holidays

The birth day

Merry Christmas

With best wishes.

Holidays have already begun.

I am tired of myself.

I travel away from myself.

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With a one-way ticket.

Entrance!

Exit!

The customs

Check-point

I fasten the seat-belt

Flight

Landing

Identity slip

Visa.

I wish to stay for...

one month

one week

one day

one hour

one moment.

I need a visa for one moment.

The passport controller doesn't speak the  
passenger's language.

Can you help me? Sir/ Madam/ Miss.

Not so loud please!

I have had a hard time putting the baby to  
sleep. What a polluted air!

Can you help me? Miss/ Madam/ Sir?

What can I do for you?  
To become a translator.  
You talk so fast that I can't understand you.  
To spell  
To explain  
To repeat  
Please speak slowly.  
We don't understand each others language.  
-Where are you from?  
Where am I from?  
Do you have a map of the world with you?  
Please show ... to me.  
the phrase  
the idiom  
the word  
the expression.  
Do you have a dictionary (a lexicon)?  
Identity?  
Nationality?  
Religion?  
No, never.  
I can never open my suitcase.  
I can't expose the contents of my heart to  
people at an airport.  
Not even for him, my gentle companion.

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Not even for you, the polite customs officer.

Why don't you understand?

This is all for personal purposes.

These are...

short stockings

swimming suit

bras

blouse

socks

handbag

tight skirt

panty-hose

bed-shirt

ties

buttons

slide-fastener

needle and yarn.

Do you see what I have to go through for a moment's visa?

I went through!

will go through.

Present

Present perfect

Past perfect

Past continuous

Past  
Future  
All that happened in one moment.

Ah!  
where is...?  
the hotel.  
Where can I get on...?  
the subway  
the bus  
a taxi.  
I am in...  
a hurry.  
Faster please  
To the left  
To the right  
Turn around, I feel dizzy.

Reservations, Hello!  
-Hello! Good afternoon. Are you an Iranian?  
I am a political asylum-seeker.  
Good afternoon! I am just a tourist.  
Excuse me, I need a... room...  
quiet

## Visa for one Moment

for one month

for a week

for one day

for an hour

What is the room fare for one moment?

-Name?

Traveler

-Signature

...

Give me the key to the room, please.

I'll have my meals in the room.

Every evening

Every week

Every Day

Radio / TV

Without meals

Dark / small

Cold / warm

Noise

Heating system, Oh operator!

-For bed and breakfast

Be quiet!

No, thanks. I don't want it.

Do you have...?

an ash-tray?  
a lighter?  
bedsheets?  
an iron?  
elevator?  
toilet?  
hair-dryer?  
I need a ... room.  
cheaper

Can you get me ... on the phone?  
-There is no answer, Sir/ Madam/ Miss!  
-Please hold on.  
How much should I pay for a ... conversation?  
How much stamp should I put on a letter  
to...?

This ... doesn't work:  
light-bulb  
radio  
TV  
telephone  
heating system  
The water is not hot.  
The window (door) won't open

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The water-tap leaks.  
I am not satisfied with the room.  
...broke down.  
The light-bulb  
The light-switch

Monsieur, Mister! Oh operator, excuse me.  
I can't hear you.  
Why doesn't any crank-caller call me?  
Can I make ... for 5 o'clock?  
an appointment  
I want to dye my hair.  
I am in...  
a hurry  
Please part my hair on the left / right side.  
No, I had better let it fall on the forehead.  
I want a shampoo for straight (dry / greasy)  
hair.  
I don't need a hair spray.  
Please shave my face.  
I am in a hurry.  
I have an appointment in ... at six.  
the restaurant  
Waiter, get me...  
the menu, please

two forks  
two plates  
two bottles  
two tumblers  
two cups  
two spoons  
two napkins  
and an empty vase for a probable rose  
I want some...

vinegar

garlic

wine

milk

sugar

bread

and

salt

That's enough, thanks a lot. I am on diet.

I'll pay with a credit card

It's still valid.

Sir, Madam, Miss!

I would like something made of gold / silver.

I want a present for...

Not too expensive

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A small delicate thing

ear-rings

necklace

Is this made of...?

gold

silver

Is it gold-plated?

Is it silver-plated?

How many carats is it?

I need ... camera.

an automatic

a simple

a cheap

Six snap-shots

Single-portrait

With flowing hair

With a back-light

Gazing to the camera

With `no movement please`

With a souvenir framing

Good or bad, I am going to tear it.

I don't look like my photographs.

I never look like my photographs.

Operator! I can't hear you.

We don't seem to be properly connected.  
You don't want me to hold on.  
I haven't had a dream of myself for a long  
time.  
What number should I dial to send a fax to  
myself?

We are interested in...

antiques

history

religion

art

fashions

But I want to go to a...

ballet

concert

opera

theater

Is there ... for tonight?

any ticket

Two seats in the hall

For Friday or Tuesday

Not too far away from the stage.

Thanks, one seat would be enough.

Why am I feeling dizzy?

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Excuse me, where is...  
the toilet.

They don't dispense medicine without the  
doctor's prescription.

I need some...

sleeping pills

aspirin

alcohol

cream

ampoule

syrup.

To have a pain.

I have a headache.

A bad headache.

A migraine

Pain.

Pain.

Pain.

I am suffering from a pain.

This is how much I owe you.

I have paid the bill.

I am leaving tomorrow morning.

-Don't leave ... please. We were quite

satisfied with you.

-A 20 percent discount for your loneliness.

I was quite satisfied here, too.

By the way, what was my address here?

To have no more money left.

To come out.

Police officer!

Would you please help me set up my tent  
on...?

the sidewalk

Setting up tents here is prohibited.

I'll go to...

the beach

I am tired of myself.

I travel away from myself.

With a one-way ticket.

The sea is calm today.

There is a gentle breeze.

... is blue like the sky.

The sea

The high tide

The low tide.

I want to hire...

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a boat with outboard engine  
a row-boat  
a sail-boat  
a pair of skis  
Is the weather...?  
good.

Someone has drowned in the sea.  
He has committed...  
No one tried to ... him before he committed-  
suicide.

save

Who is...?

Who was...?

Who will be ...?

Engineer, builder, architect

Artist

Painter

Poet

...

When did ... live?

Some time ago, recently, previously.

Birth, emergence

Coming into the world, being born.

Naked, bare, crying.

Name, title, surname.

Short biography, curriculum vitae:

Obeying

Eating

Getting fat

Job, work, role, office, bureau, company.

Order, discipline

Painful, tormenting

Some time ago, recently, previously...

Hana ... 2002

Spring

Autumn

Winter

## Biography

### **Hana Makhmalbaf:**

Born on December the 3rd, 1988 in Tehran. At age 7, she acted in Mohsen Makhmalbaf's, her father, film titled "A moment Of Innocence".

Hana has also published her first book of poetry 'Visa for One Moment' in 2003. She has been continuously working in Makhmalbaf Family films as Still Photographer, Script Supervisor and Assistant Director. She studied Cinema in

Makhmalbaf Film School for 8 years before she graduated at the age 16.

At age 8, she made her first short film with a handycam camera titled "The Day My Aunt Was ill". The film received international attention at Locarno Film Festival in 1997 when she was only 9 years old.

At age 14, Hana shot a documentary titled "Joy of Madness" in Afghanistan. This film premiered at Venice Film Festival 2003 and received 3 international awards.

At the age 18, she made her first feature "Buddha Collapsed Out Of Shame" in Bamian of Afghanistan. The film went to receive enormous reception around the world receiving many prestigious awards including: «Crystal Bear» from Berlin Film Festival 2008, Special «Peace Award» Berlin Film Festival 2008, «Grand Jury Award» San Sebastian Film Festival 2007, The TVE Award "La Otra Mirada" Spanish TV Spain 2007, Unicef «Paolo Ungari» special award

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Rome Film Festival 2007, «Daniel Langlois Innovation Prize» Festival du nouveau cinéma Montreal 2007, «Woman & Equality Award» Thessaloniki Film Festival 2007 ..... and has been nominated to receive the Best Asian Film Award from Hong Kong Film Festival 2008.

Buddha Collapsed Out Of Shame was released in 60 theatres in France, 40 theatres in Spain and 20 theatres in Japan simultaneously. However, the film was not allowed a screening in Hana's homeland in Iran.

Hana's most recent film «Green Days» looks at the incidents during the 2009 presidential election in Iran. The film was selected for the official section of Venice film festival and received «Bravery Award» of the festival.

«Visa For A Moment» is the title of the book of poetry by Hana which was published in three different languages in 2003.

Director:

Buddha collapsed out of shame. (Feature Film)

Short films & Documentaries:

1. Green Days (Feature Film)
2. Samira & non professional actors (Documentary)
3. Joy of Madness. (Documentary)
4. The day my aunt was ill. (Short Film)
5. Doggy Life. (Short Film)

Editor:

The President, By Mohsen Makhmalbaf, 2014

:Assistant Director

The President, By Mohsen Makhmalbaf, 2014

Still Photographer

Books:

Book of Poems «Visa for one moment» 2003

## Visa for one Moment

### Jury:

1. Tbilisi International Film Festival, Georgia 2010
2. Berlin International Film Festival 2010
3. CPH:DOX Denmark international film festival 2009
4. Lisbon international film festival, Portugal, 2009
5. Spirit of Fire International Film Festival, Siberia, 2009

### International Awards:

- «1. Best Film Award» From the Beirut International Film Festival, Lebanon, 2011 (for the film A Doggy Life)
- «2. Best Director Award» From Human Rights International Film Festival, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan 2010 (for the film Green Days)
- «3. Human Right Award» for courageous commitment in defending of human rights of women from Terre des Femmes (Tuebingen) film festival, Germany (for the film Green Days)

4. Bravery Award From the 66th Venice International Film Festival, Italy, 2009( for the film Green Days)

5. «Ecumenical jury» the 38th Molodist Film Festival, Ukraine, 2008( for the film Buddha collapsed out of shame)

6. «Cine-club» (FICC jury) the 38th Molodist Film Festival, Ukraine, 2008(for the film Buddha collapsed out of shame)

«7. Golden Deer»the 38th Molodist Film Festival, Ukraine, 2008(for the film Buddha collapsed out of shame)

8. «Silver Mirror» The South Film Festival, Norway, 2008 (for the film Buddha collapsed out of shame)

9. «Founders Prize», the 4th Traverse City Film Festival, USA, 2008 (Buddha collapsed out of shame)

10. «Special Jury Prize», the 14th

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International Film Festival of Cinema Author, Morocco , 2008 (for the film Buddha collapsed out of shame)

11. «Best Film FIPRESCI Award», 11th Flying Broom International Women's Film Festival Ankara, Turkey, 2008(for the film Buddha collapsed out of shame)

12. «ENI Windows on the World Prize» for the Best Feature Film, African Asian and Latin American Film Festival of Milan, Italy, 2008  
(for the film Buddha collapsed out of shame)

13. «Special Award», Association Club de las 25, Spain, 2008 (for the film Buddha collapsed out of shame)

14. «Special Peace Award», Berlin Film Festival, Germany, 2008 (for the film Buddha collapsed out of shame)

15. «Crystal Bear», Berlin Film Festival, Germany, 2008( for the film Buddha

collapsed out of shame)

16. «Discovery Prize», Sarlat Film Festival, France, 2007(for the film Buddha collapsed out of shame)

17. «Woman & Equality Award», Thessaloniki Film Festival, Greece, 2007(for the film Buddha collapsed out of shame)

18. «Daniel Langlois Innovation Prize», Festival du nouveau cinéma in Montreal 2007(for the film Buddha collapsed out of shame)

19. Unicef «Paolo Ungari» special award, Rome International Film Festival 2007(for the film Buddha collapsed out of shame)

20. The TVE Award “La Otra Mirada” by Spanish TV, San Sebastian International Film Festival 2007(for the film Buddha collapsed out of shame)

21. The Special Jury Prize From the 55th

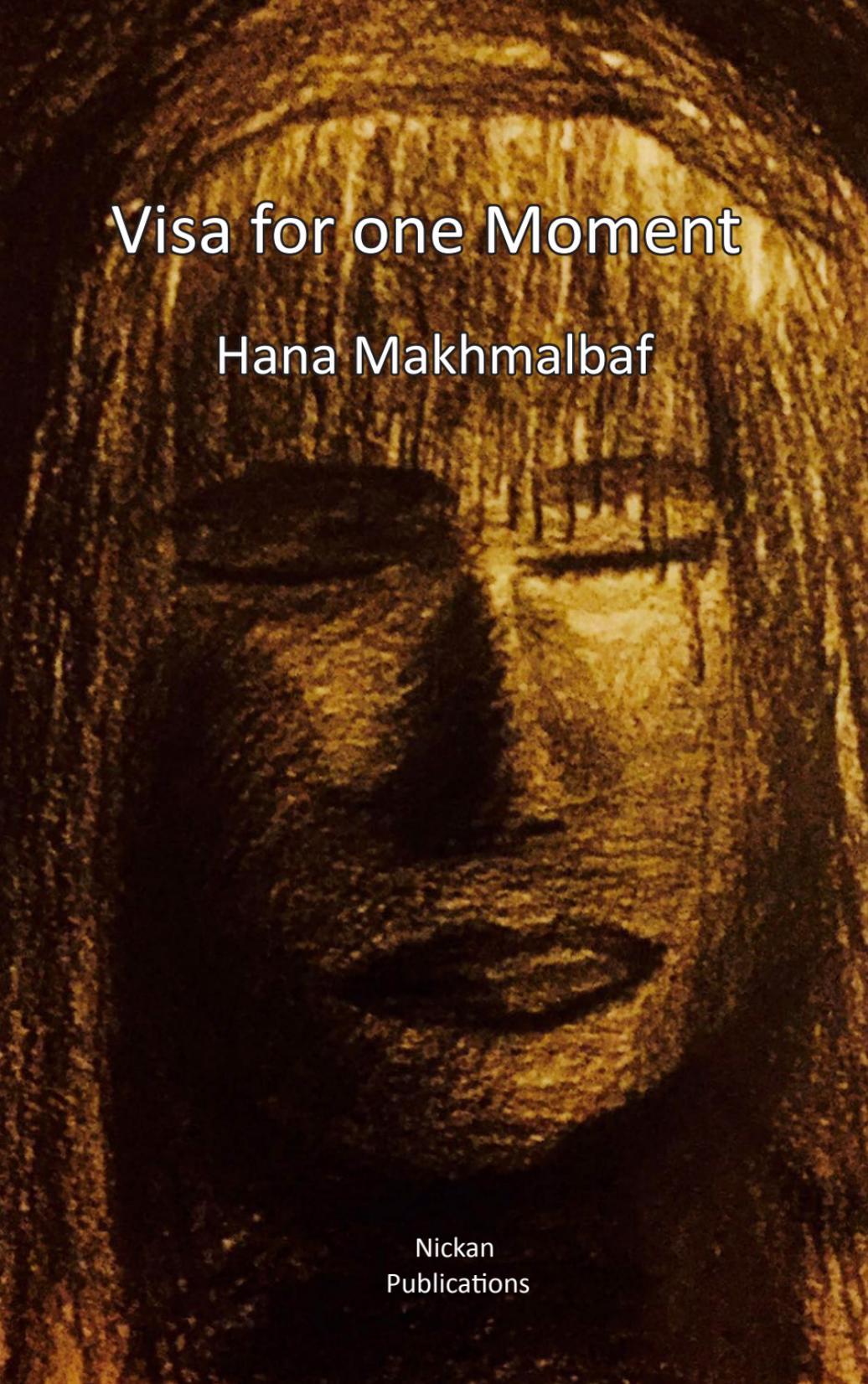
Visa for one Moment

San Sebastian International Film Festival,  
Spain, 2007(for the film Buddha collapsed  
out of shame)

22. The Special Jury Prize in the 4th  
International Film Festival of Tokyo Filmex  
2003( for the film Joy of madness)

23. Special Mention Award from  
Associazione Cultrale le tre Ghinee in  
Venice Film Festival 2003(for the film Joy  
of madness)

24. The youngest filmmaker on the world  
from Venice international Film Festival  
2003 (for the film Joy of madness)



# Visa for one Moment

Hana Makhmalbaf

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Publications