## Women's Cinema: From Tangiers to Tehran

*At Ciné Lumière (– see above for venue details); Rich Mix and Ritzy (– see Central for venue details), ArtZone, Leighton House Museum and The London Film School. Runs until Sat March 1.*

### Wednesday 27

6.30: Ciné Lumière: **La Nouba des Femmes du Mont Chenoua (The Song of the Women of Mount Chenoua)** (15) *(Assia Djebar, 1978, Algeria) Noweir Sawson, Mohamed Haymour. 115 mins. Subtitles.* Djebar's film is a meditation on memory and history, patterned stylistically to reflect the musical form of the Andalousian Nouba.

7.00: Ritzy: **Salad House (Salata Baladi)** (15) *(Nadia Kamel, 2007, Egypt/Fr/Switz) 105 mins. Subtitles.*

8.45: Ciné Lumière: **Hidden Faces (Sakli Yuzler)** (15) (Handan Ipekci, 2007, Turk/Ger) Senay Aydin, Istar Gökseven, Berk Hakman. 127 mins. Subtitles. Followed by Q&A with the director.

### Thursday 28

6.30: Ciné Lumière: **The Kite** (15) *(Randa Chahal-Sabbag, 2003, Fr/Lebanon) Flavia Bechara, Ziad Rahbani, Randa Asmar. 80 mins. Subtitles.* Sketchy but sweet fable of a 16-year-old Lebanese girl crossing the fenced-off tracks into Israeli-annexed territory when she's married off to her cousin Samy; conducting a silent protest against the entire arrangement, she instead wiles away the days mooning about a similarly whimsical young crossing guard. The film sometimes plays loose with its explanations, but the haziness becomes rather fetching come the boldly fanciful ending. Preceded by screening of 'Like Twenty Impossibles' *(Annemarie Jacir, 2003, Pal/Isr) 17 mins.*

7.00: Ritzy: **The Sleeping Child (L'Enfant Endormi)** (15) *(Yasmine Kassari, 2005, Belg/Mor) Rachidas Brakni, Mounia Osfour, Nermine Elhaggar. 95 mins. Subtitles.*

7.00: Rich Mix: **Bitter Water** (12A) *(Maysoon Pachachi, Noura Sakkaf, 2002, GB, Palestine) 76 mins.* 'I can't even remember how to pray.' This is one effect of spending 50 years in a Palestinian refugee camp. Five million (70 per cent of the population) live in the diaspora, many in the 59 crowded camps of the region, where they face life-long unemployment, discrimination and hunger. There are no soldiers in frame, no demolished houses, but the sense of lingering violence is pandemic. Spending time in several Beirut settlements, including the Bourj Il Barajneh camp, the film, free of score and voice-over, simply listens to the exiles, to their views of the intifada, to their desire to leave (the long alleyways like a labyrinth without release). Recording the telling everyday details, the documentary is an essential act of witness to lives in a limbo of loss and anger without redress. Think of the elderly man, his soul quietly rent, who has lost five sons and his wife, axed to pieces at a Phalangist roadblock and bagged into the sea. 'A homeland without sacrifice is impossible,' he says, and dreams of pastoral return. But when? Followed by Q&A with Pachachi and Alexander.

8.30: Ciné Lumière: **Dunia** (15) *(Jocelyne Saab, 2005, Egypt/Fr/Leb) Hanan Turk, Mohamed Mounir, Aida Riad. 112 mins.* Dunia is a young woman living in Cairo, studying ecstasy in Sufi love poetry and traditional belly dancing who struggles artustically to express herself in a repressive society which has inhibited her desire. Tutored by a controversial intellectual, Dr Beshir (Egyptian singer Mounir), Dunia fights for personal and sexual liberation against a heavy set of traditions. Dealing with the controversial and difficult subject of female circumcision, Saad sensitively and beautifully potrays the search for female sexuality and independence. (Sonya Barber)

### Friday 29

7.00: Rich Mix: **Tangiers to Tehran Artists' Films** Films include 'Saphir' *(Zineb Sedira, Alg/Fr/GB)*, 'Passage' *(Shirin Neshat/Philip Glass', US/Iran)*, 'District of the Post Office' *(Rosalind Nashashibi, 2002, GB/Pal)*, 'Brick Sellers of Kabul' *(Lida Abdul)* and 'Measures of Distance' *(Mona Hatoum)*. + Q&A with Sedira and Lilly Ladjevardi.

### Saturday 1

5.00: Rich Mix (£7, concs £6, £5.50): **Tangiers to Tehran: For Young Audiences** 'The Lost Film' *(Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, 2005, Yemen) 29 mins.*

+ **A Stranger in Her Own City** *(Khadija Al Salami, 2005, Yemen) Documentary. 30 mins. Subtitles.* East battles West in director Khadija Al Salami's portrait of cultural and ideological polarisation on the dusty streets of old town Sanaa in Yemen. Here, popular 13 year old Najmia flies in the face of Islamic and ancestral tradition by refusing to wear the veil adopted by her female counterparts, at once embracing westernised notions of equality and defying the patriarchal Islamic society to which she belongs. While there may be an element of truth in her belief that 'wearing the veil is like wearing a straight-jacket,' the likeable Najmia's easy dismissal of age-old Islamic custom elicits a strained tolerance from her teenage companions. 'Only American women go out like that!' one of them yells affably, yet it's an affability caught between acceptance and incredulity, tempered only by the patient – and correct – belief that age will carry in its wake an inevitable acquiescence to the rigid doctrines of Islam. (Jason Carter) + Q&A with Leila Mroueh and Lawrence Joffe.

8.00: Rich Mix (£7, concs £6, £5.50): **Cut and Paste (Qas wa Lask)** (12A) *(Hala Khalil, 2006, Egypt) Hanan Turk, Shereef Mouneer, Fathi Abdel. 105 mins. Subtitles.*

maker's painter husband, her family and friends, including a remembrance of disappeared poet Daed Haddad, a line of whose poetry gives the film its title. Underlying the interview footage is an emphasis is on the power of poetry, art, literature and – by implication – film to give insight into the indefinable place the Syrian 'homeland' has for both exiles and those who hace remained on its troubled soil. (WH)