



News Release: 10 August 2026

HRUC teacher's new documentary follows Iranian artists in exile



An award-winning filmmaker and Uxbridge College teacher has released a new documentary exploring the lives of Iranian artists in exile.

Dr Vahid Keshavarz Sarkar started working on his new film, *Butterflies*, when he was studying for his PhD at Brunel University of London. Inspired by his own experience of leaving Iran many years ago, the 60-minute documentary follows 10 artists as they adapt to their exile and come to terms with their new lives.

The film includes dancers, writers, singers, painters, and filmmakers, and examines the effect displacement has on the artists' creative work.

It was a personal mission for Vahid, who now lives in Kingston, to be able to tell these stories, and it is particularly poignant that his daughters narrate the film.

Vahid explained: “The film reflects my own life as an artist who left Iran many years ago. It’s difficult for artists being away from the country where their art was shaped, dealing with a new culture and a new language.

“I want people to see the human side of Iran, following people who have the misfortune of being far from where they belong but are still trying to carry on.

“I always miss home as an artist and I always wanted to go back. I wanted to see if other artists had the same feeling.

“The response was very mixed. One said they felt they had made a mistake by leaving Iran, while another said they now have the freedom to be whoever they want. But they all miss home.”

Vahid joined Uxbridge College, part of HRUC (Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge Colleges), in 2022 and became Course Team Leader for Media last year. He has been making films since he was 10 years old, and currently has a short film and a documentary available on Amazon Prime. He has also won several awards at international film festivals, including Best Short Documentary at the London International Short Film Festival for his film, *Abalon*.

With his real-world experience, he aims to help his students find their own way into the industry.

He said: “I love teaching so much. When I was a student, I had a lecturer who was so kind and so supportive. I learned from him how important it is to have a good teacher, and I use that experience with my own students.

“When you have that passion for what you do, students will see the heart that you’re putting into their classes. I know the process of filmmaking from A to Z and teach using my first-hand experience with scriptwriting, research, and production.

“I’m still in contact with many of my former students and many of them still send me their work to review.”

Vahid is currently looking for distributors for *Butterflies*, which he made with his own company Twins Film Production, and has submitted the documentary to a number of film festivals.

He added: “I hope the film will be shown in cinemas. I hope I can share this journey with as many people as possible.”

Note to editors: Following a merger in 2023, HRUC (Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge Colleges) has rapidly evolved into a thriving educational hub with three colleges and a strong apprenticeship provision. The diverse and aspiring college group now serves nearly 15,000 learners across west and south London, offering a range of courses, including A-Levels, vocational programmes, T-Levels, higher education courses and apprenticeships. The College group also proudly supports over 850 learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), providing tailored programmes and internships to help them thrive.

