From Serbia to Iran: The Global Lens Film Series Continues Th... http://blogs.commercialappeal.com/the_bloodshot_eye/2010/05/...
A Serbian production inspired by the seemingly unending conflict in the Balkans, "Ordinary People" -- no relation, obviously, to the Robert Redford/Mary Tyler Moore angstfest -- could be described as a calm movie about terror. Grounded in reality, it nonetheless feels allegorical -- a languid, sun-drenched nightmare.

Meanwhile, "My Tehran for Sale" -- shot entirely on location in the Iranian capital -- couldn't be more specific in its depiction of a thriving if embattled subculture of artists, intellectuals and partiers in a modern Mideast metropolis. Yet the film's broader concerns are universal, and its characters wouldn't be out of place in Midtown Memphis. This movie, too, takes on the aspect of a nightmare, as its protagonist -- a woman ostracized by the family that disapproves of her sexual liberation and her artistic inclinations -- finds life increasingly untenable and fragile in what should be her beloved homeland.

"Ordinary People" -- which screens at 7 tonight (May 27) and at 2 p.m. Thursday, June 3 --and "My Tehran for Sale" -- which you can see at 2 p.m. Sunday, May 30, and at 2 p.m. Friday, June 4 -- are the next two offerings in the Global Lens film series, which then continues with an additional six recent international releases through July 29 at the Memphis Brooks Museum of Art.

Like many foreign-language films, these movies open a window on parts of the world most Americans see only through news reports. Yes, that's a cliché observation, but I'll forgive myself, because these films, for all their artistic ambitions, demonstrate the truth found in such clichés as "All men are brothers" and "It's a small world, after all." It's hard to imagine anybody exposed to the films of China, Iran and Mexico (for example) continuing to demonize those cultures.