

Bour is Beautiful! Maghrebi-French filmmaking



A retrospective of Maghrebi-French Cinema curated by Carrie Tarr and produced by ArteEast in New York.

Dounia, by Zaida Ghorab-Volta.

France, 1997, 17 minutes

Synopsis:

Dounia is the 20-year-old daughter of an Algerian couple living in France. One morning after her night shift at the hospital, she finds her father waiting at home for her. He is drunk and forbids her to go back to work, but Dounia refuses to give in...

Filmmaker's Biography:

Born in 1966, Zaida Ghorab-Volta graduated with a degree in film studies from the Université Paris VII in 1986 and has built a rich career working as an actor, writer and director in film and theater. She wrote and directed the short fiction film *Souviens-toi de moi* in 1996 and co-directed *Le Manège du métro Saint-Paul* with Gilles Volta in 1997. She has acted in many films, including Romain Goupil's *Sa vie à elle* (1996) and André Téchiné's *Les Innocents*. She directed three films in 1997—*Dounia*, *Chantal* and *On s'aime, on se donne la main*—and her first feature, *Laisse un peu d'amour*, in 1998, followed by *Never Been to London* (1999), *Vattelot-sur-Mer* (1999), *Jeunesse dorée* (2001), *Nationale 1* (co-directed with Eve Heinrich, 2002) and *Marie et le loup* (2003).

Credits:

Cast: Zaida Ghorab-Volta, Zahra Benaïssa, Cherif Cherfi
Writer: Zaida Ghorab-Volta
Producer: Nathalie Mesuret
Cinematographers: Emmanuelle le Fur, Hélène Louvart
Editor: Hélène Aubert
Sound: André Rigaut

My Lost Home (Ma Maison Perdue), by Kamal El Mahouti.

France, 2002, 19 minutes

Synopsis:

On the eve of the demolition of a housing project in Saint-Denis, France, Moroccan-born filmmaker Kamal El Mahouti revisits the place where he lived from the age of six. His delicate, impressionistic document probes the graffiti-covered walls, broken windows and empty stairwells of a bleak apartment block to retrieve the memories of an immigrant family, its difficulties and its rituals.

Filmmaker's Biography:

Kamal El Mahouti is a French writer and director of Moroccan descent. Born in Casablanca in 1963, El Mahouti moved to France at the age of six. He studied film at the Université Paris VIII, where he completed the 16mm short *Once Upon a Time, the 14th of July 1945 (Il était une fois le 14 juillet 1945)*. In 2002 he directed *My Lost Home (Ma Maison perdue)*; it was selected for screening at the *Exodes de l'Écran Festival* in Saint-Denis and the *Biennale des Cinémas Arabes* held at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris. In 2005, with the help of a CNC grant, he finished the script *The Past Is Dead (Lifat Mat)*; he is currently finishing shooting this feature. In April 2006, he initiated a film festival, *Panorama des Cinémas du Maroc et du Maghreb*, in Saint-Denis, Paris. This event was a great public and critical success and will see its third edition in April 2008.

Credits:

Cast: Lachen El Mahouti, Kamal El Mahouti, Adel Zekraoui
Writer: Kamal El Mahouti
Producer: Kamal El Mahouti, Indigènes Films
Cinematographer: Kamal El Mahouti
Editor: Claudine Dupont, Dominique Bertou
Sound: Sandrine Mercier

Memories of October 17 (Mémoires du 17 Octobre), by Faiza Guene and Bernard Richard.

France, 2002, 17 minutes

Synopsis:

On the evening of October 17, 1961, the French police brutally repressed a peaceful demonstration supporting Algerian independence. Hundreds of Maghrebi immigrants died in police attacks, dozens were thrown into the Seine and more died in detention centers. The police, however, reported only two deaths. This powerful film unearths the painful memories of witnesses, keeping alive the memory of a massacre that French officialdom would like us to forget.

Filmmaker's Biography:

Faiza Guene was born in France to Algerian parents and grew up in the housing project of Courtilières, where she still lives. After the huge success of her first novel, *Just Like Tomorrow*, she was offered a position by the government as a spokesperson on positive discrimination. She turned it down. It was, she says, "totally opposed to all the republican values I grew up with and which I adhere to. Society has always asked me to assert my French nationality, which I've done, and now I'm told to 'integrate'. I don't get it. I was born here, so it goes without saying that I'm integrated."

She is a member of *Les Engraineurs*, a young people's filmmaking association in Courtilières. Her other short films include *La Zonzonnière* (1999), about a girl imprisoned by her father, and *RTT: Réduction du Temps de Travail* (2002), about the reduced working week.

Credits:

Producers: Jerome Polidor, Association les Engraineurs
Cinematographers: Jerome Polidor, Yoan de Montgrand
Editors: Bernard Richard, Faiza Guene, Jean-Luc Einaudi