

24images and **Close Up Films** present

a film by **BOUTHEYNA BOUSLAMA**



looking for the man with the camera



SYNOPSIS

Looking for the man with the camera is a journey that takes the narrator from Geneva to the Syrian border, relentlessly looking for her childhood friend, a missing Syrian media activist. During the three years search we witness different stages of hope, fear and despair, where the search of a beloved one transcends the political and military chaos. Through the narrator's and her friend's involvement in film making, it is a self reflective questioning of war image and its role for memory and as a witness against war crimes.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

In 2015 the Syrian website *Zaman al Wasl* published around 55,000 pictures of unrecognizable totally disfigured 11,000 men killed under torture inside this Syrian presidents. I found myself like many others looking for their beloved ones scrolling through the pictures, Trying desperately to recognize a human face Within dry blood and petrification, till nausea Knocks me down. What led to that is the day

when I had left my studio in Geneva and my students in its art university and moved to Istanbul for work, there I stumbled upon a part of my childhood and my history. I found out that a Syrian childhood friend of mine, who became a media activist, was detained by the regime and went missing behind bars. When you come from a background of Arabic heritage you keep deep inside of you a fragment of oppression, Hafez el Assad's oppression, Bachar's oppression, Ben Ali's, or even the oppression of the traffic policeman who arrests you arbitrarily. The sources are so different but the heritage is the same, the seed is strong and that fragment grows with you. And then the concept of disappearance in prison or after integration is the foundation that holds the system and it installs a mental and emotional subjugation.

Looking for the man with the camera is born from terror and love. The love for someone I hadn't seen in 20 years yet I still have a strange feeling of loyalty towards him, a visceral need to bring justice to his memory because the man with the camera disappeared as a witness trying to save our memory. I made this film because I firmly believe it is the right thing to do, making this film is a necessity. This firm belief goes way back, probably to the year 1991, I was nine years old and my parents were expats in Qatar, we were living in Doha when the gulf war started. Iraq invaded Kuwait and the United States invaded Iraq and we all know what happened later and still see today the consequences. We all remember the images on CNN of the American airstrikes in blurry black and white almost like a video game. But for me, I remember another side of that story. I remember the noise made by fighter jets when breaking the wall of sound, I remember the shortage of diapers and baby milk for my little brother and sister. I remember curfews, and when they closed the school, and how we were scared of chemical attacks, I remember all the strange diseases we had because the water in the shower, that came from the sea, was contaminated by undeclared chemical weapons tested in the area. This film pays homage to those who contributed to writing our history and tries to do the same.



TECHNICAL AND ARTISTICAL SHEET

INTERNATIONAL TITLE : Looking for the man with the camera

FRENCH TITLE : À la recherche de l'homme à la caméra

ARABIC TITLE : رحلة البحث عن أسامة الهبالي

GENRE : documentary

LENGTH : 76 minutes

LANGUAGES : three versions French-English-Arabic

SUBTITLES : French-English

PRODUCTION COUNTRY : France/Switzerland

WRITER AND DIRECTOR : Boutheyna Bouslama

IMAGE AND SOUND : Boutheyna Bouslama

EDITING : Boutheyna Bouslama, Giuliano Papacchioli

ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK : Murat Öztürk, Barış Güvenenler

SOUND MIXING: Hakan Iğsız

PRODUCERS : Farid Rezkallah, Annie Ohayon Dekel

COPRODUCERS : Joelle Bertossa, Marion Chollet

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DOHA film institute

L'Office Fédéral de la Culture OFC (DFI, Suisse)





BOUTHEYNA BOUSLAMA

DIRECTOR

Born in Paris from Tunisian parents in 1982, Boutheyna Bouslama is a filmmaker and a visual artist who lives and works between Istanbul, Paris and Geneva.

She studied Visual arts in The Monaco Art School then in 2010 she obtained her Masters with a double major in Visual Arts and Cinema from the University of Art and Design of Geneva (HEAD-Geneva). She worked as a teaching assistant / lecturer in the Visual Arts department in HEAD-Geneva.

Her main topics are based on personal archives and experiences creating collective memory, always reflective on the current society.

Her work in Istanbul focuses mainly on documentary photography and videos, including her first long length documentary film, between Syria and Turkey.

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