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FESTIVAL DE CANNES

After the battle

بعد الموقعة

A FILM BY YOUSRY NASRALLAH

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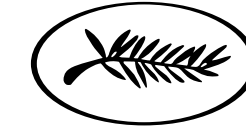
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A FILM BY YOUSRY NASRALLAH

DCP & 35 mm - Ratio: 1.85 - Sound: 5.1 and Dolby Digital - Color - Egypt/France - 2012 - 122 minutes

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IN CANNES

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Mahmoud is one of the “Tahrir square knights” who, on 2nd February 2011, manipulated by Mubarak’s regime, charged against the young revolutionaries. Beaten, humiliated, unemployed, ostracised in his neighbourhood near the Pyramids, Mahmoud and his family are losing their footing... It is then that he meets Reem, a young Egyptian divorcee, modern and secular, who works in advertising. Reem is a militant revolutionary and lives in a nice neighbourhood in Cairo. Their meeting will change their lives...





WHY TELL THE STORY OF THE ARAB REVOLUTIONS IN THE CINEMA?

We learnt of the Arab uprising through one simple image. A long distance, fixed image of Tahrir square, that showed a huge crowd of humans, seen from afar, so tiny. They moved about and sometimes collided with each other. We could imagine the clashes, batons, barricades. This image, that was played over and over on television channels throughout the world for weeks, was the only image people had access to outside of Egypt. From time to time, the world caught a glimpse of other images posted by internet bloggers courageous enough to do so. But it was always that same cliché. It was abstract, distorted, showing the "good" and the "evil". At times other images reached us, transmitted by the braver bloggers, but they always stayed within the same clichés, where we were cast as the "good revolutionary", the "bad oppressor", the women (all of them emancipated) and intellectuals (all of them secular)...

Confronted with this deceptive image that does not reveal the whole truth, citizens of the world could only feel frustration. They landed up not being able to connect to this revolution that was being played out on their screens. Never had the thinking of Marshall Mac Luhan seemed so pertinent. The image on television was a cold, detached one.

Further to that, when we were spoken to, in the West, about Egypt and its Tahrir square revolution, it was always in an imperative tone. The imperative of "thinking" these revolutions. The revolutions became a topic for discussion and intellectual analysis. We were all so convinced that we knew all about these revolutions, because we were so well informed thanks to the TV images and the role played by social networking websites. Last year, analyzing the Arab revolutions became everyone's favorite business. Fixed opinions were formed. Sides were taken. A fiery debate began between those who embraced the "good" Arab revolution, and those who thought it was "bad". It was the pessimists versus

the optimists; the progressionists versus the conservatives; the post-moderns and the post-post-moderns, people had to choose their camp!

Sadly, these two ways of thinking could neither satisfy the heart nor the soul. It all sounded so fake, so empty, so imperative.

That's the reason why we, apparently coming from different perspectives, committed ourselves to this Egyptian adventure. And actually, as globalizationists as well. It was all about sweeping the borders keeping us at a distance from the revolution at Tahrir square: psychological boundaries, stereotypes, ideological naivety, ethnocentric prejudice... At the center of this confusion of signs and of minds, film seemed to us the most appropriate expression, the most powerful expression, allowing us to speak of, see, witness and hear the world's movements. That's how the meeting between reality and fiction that we sought came about. As an aesthetic as much as political choice.

This project, telling the story of the Arab revolutions through film brought us - as luck would have it - to Yousry Nasrallah. A bridge was created between Cairo and Europe, between intellectuals and artists, anxious and sometimes cut off from the world, in spite of the "Facebook illusion". The cinematic expression of this conscious, committed and coherent artist, whose work bears his trademark high ethics as well as intellectual standards, appeared rich on an educational level and full of promise. Much more so than a certain democratic illusion which in the absence of history and tradition, stays an abstract and unrealistic objective, especially when confronted with the violence of class differences and religious prejudice.

Georges-Marc Benamou and Jérôme Clément

INTERVIEW WITH YOUSRY NASRALLAH

My film is a fiction

HOW DID AFTER THE BATTLE COME INTO BEING?

In January 2011, I had just finished putting everything into place to shoot a screenplay, I was really pleased with it and had signed a contract with the Egyptian producer, Walid El-Kurdi at New Century. And then came the revolution. It was impossible to carry on regardless. I visited director friends of mine on their shoots, and quickly realized that they were all far more interested in what was happening on the street. A new mood for change was in the air and we had to act upon it.

WHY?

It was obvious to me. My references were Rossellini's first films, and his way of portraying current events through fiction. *Rome Open City*, *Paisan* and *Germany Year Zero* managed to relay the wider historical dimension as well as the personal dimension, and cover one event through a fictional narrative. *The Greatest Love* revealed the torn soul of a country, a country that found itself on the wrong side of history, a country that lost its dignity. But what really affected me about our revolution was the chant "Bread, Freedom, Human Dignity" that we heard repeated each day. How do you manage to have all of those three things? How do you retrieve lost human dignity? This is especially difficult to regain for those who, at some stage, have been on the wrong side.

JUST AFTER THE FALL OF MUBARAK, YOU PARTICIPATED IN THE COLLECTIVE FILM 18 DAYS. HOW DID YOU DEVISE YOUR SHORT FILM INTERIOR / EXTERIOR?

It was my immediate response to the events. It also looked at this fundamental issue: the relationship between the individual and the society. In one way or another, this is a recurrent theme in all of my films ever since *Summer Thefts*. I only realized this when making *Scheherazade*, *Tell Me a Story*. All my films are based on fears that I must face up to and banish forever. Fear of the family in *Summer Thefts*, fear of women in *Mercedes*, fear of Islamists in *On Boys, Girls and the Veil*, fear of the city in the film of the same name, fear of the Palestinian problem as a mean of repression and blackmail in *The Gate of Sun...* fear of fear itself in *Aquarium* and in *Scheherazade, Tell Me a Story...* it was in fact... fear of the audience. And, I think, a fear of feeling obliged to reinforce everyone's opinion. And, in this latest film it is my concerns about the revolution. History can be frightening; it can crush you.

IS THERE A LINK BETWEEN THE SHORT FILM AND THE FEATURE-LENGTH FILM?

Interior / Exterior also served to inspire *After the Battle*. It takes place just after the "Battle of the Camels" on Tahrir Square on the 2nd February. I must have seen on television the images of those horses and camels charging at least 150 times. I was sure that those men on their backs were armed. I was about to include these images in my short

film when I realized, to my surprise, that they were not armed and that those who received the most severe beatings were the riders. To make things worse, I knew some of those people, I had worked with them on my film *On Boys, Girls and the Veil* at Nazlet El Samman, their village. It felt strange that these people whom I had loved were now considered to be the evil perpetrators. It was then that I realized that they had been used and manipulated twice over: by being sent to attack the protestors on the square ; by distracting the media attention away from the events that followed and that were far more serious and included petrol bombs being thrown at the protestors and snipers shooting at them. But this reality was never spoken about. Everyone was focused on the camels and the horses. I knew then that I had to make a film using these events as my starting point. I went to see my Egyptian producer, and he asked me to show him the script. But there wasn't one. All I knew then was that I wanted the film to cover events starting with the Constitutional referendum on the 19th March and finishing with the elections planned for September. Miraculously, both the Egyptian producer and the French producer, Georges-Marc Benamou agreed. In France, Georges-Marc wanted Jérôme Clément to be involved. He had been such a great support to me and added a certain sensitivity when I made *The Gate of Sun*. They all said, "Go on, do it, and we'll see what happens later." It was a first for me.

IN THE END, HOW MUCH TIME DID THE FILMING TAKE?

We spent 46 days filming over a period of 8 months. The actors and crew all agreed to remain on call throughout this 8-month period and not to do anything else, even though there were sometimes big gaps between filming.

YOU SPENT A LOT OF TIME AT TAHRIR SQUARE DURING THE EVENTS. WHAT DID YOU WITNESS?

Firstly, the euphoria of the people in the square and their unforgettable energy and excitement. But at the same time there was something that didn't seem quite right: it was difficult to believe in the coming together of the people and the army in a common cause. It is the army that owns this country, it is the army that controls it, that has run it so badly, ever since Nasser. I wondered if the people really believed what they were seeing or if this was all just pretence. I could see a problem looming on the horizon: the plan for a new constitution to be decided by a referendum on the 19th March. In my opinion, this was a makeshift constitution that would solve nothing. The Islamists were forcing this into being and were using it to dupe the people.

I also witnessed on the 9th March, ironically International Women's Day, Egyptian women being violently attacked and beaten. These attacks were carried out by Islamists who claimed that a woman's voice should not be heard. This became the starting point for my film.

...





DID YOU WATCH A LOT OF THE IMAGES THAT WERE AVAILABLE ON VIDEO-SHARING WEBSITES AND ON THE TELEVISION?

Not really. It was when I began working on the film that I gathered together a huge amount of visual material and that was when I first discovered all those images. But they did not play a big part in my film. Most of the research was done in Nazlet El-Samman through discussions and workshops involving the inhabitants and the actors. The screenplay co-writer Omar Shama and myself then wrote the scenes based upon their accounts of events. Never as a continuous narrative, just noted down in bits. The actors would say to me “Where is this film heading?” – “I don’t know...” And I didn’t know, in fact, that was until the events that took place in Maspero, Cairo.

WHAT HAPPENED THERE?

On the 9th of October, a big demonstration was organized in Maspero after two Copt churches had been burnt down in the south of Egypt, near Assouan. It was a peaceful demonstration which many Muslims also attended. The army launched an indiscriminate attack on the crowd, shooting at people and running people over with their tanks. 30 people were killed in front of the television building, while at the same time the Egyptian official television was urging the public to attack Christians. The significance of that day was very clear. It destroyed any remaining belief that people might have had in the army. I realized then that this event marked the endpoint in the story my film would tell.

EVEN THOUGH THERE WAS NO SCRIPT, DID YOU HAVE A NARRATIVE STARTING POINT?

Yes. Phaedra (who plays Dina) runs an animal protection league and Bassem Samra (who plays Mahmoud) is a horseman, and they told me that animals in Nazlet El-Samman were dying because the camel drivers were sending their animals to slaughter. The camel drivers were no longer able to feed them due to the lack of tourists because of the unrest. I went to see these dying animals and the story took its inspiration from there. Other themes followed on from this, for example, the similarities between training animals and “bringing knowledge to the masses”.

WHO ARE THE ACTORS?

I met Bassem Samra back in 1991 when I was working on the film *Cairo As Told By Youssef Chahine*. Since then, he has been in many of my films including *On Boys, Girls and the Veil* and in *The City* in which he played the lead part. Today, he is a big star in Egyptian cinema. So is Menna Chalaby who plays Reem, and Salah Abdallah who plays Hadj Abdallah. The latter is also a star in the theatres and on television. Nahed El-Sebaï, who plays Fatma, is also an experienced actress. She played one of the lead roles in *Scheherazade, Tell Me a Story*. All of them agreed to be part of this experiment even though we had no idea where we were going or how long it was going to take.

WHY WAS A WALL BUILT BETWEEN NAZLET EL-SAMMAN AND THE PYRAMIDS?

To make the inhabitants of Nazlet El-Samman leave their home. To stop them having access to the Pyramids, the very place they work. To take away the inhabitants’ income and so force them to leave in order to reclaim the land which is very valuable. But this intimidation did not make them leave. Sadate had given them the land so they had every right to it. They could not be evicted, they had to be forced to leave. Ever since Unesco has shown an interest in this land as an area of archaeological interest, the land is now valued at 5000\$ per square meter while the government was offering 500 Egyptian pounds, the equivalent to 80\$...

HOW DOES ONE GO ABOUT FILMING IN NAZLET EL-SAMMAN?

The inhabitants have known me now for 20 years. And they know Bassem. We were made to feel very welcome by the inhabitants. They are in the film. There are no extras or secondary roles played by outsiders, all those who interact with the main characters, all those who participate in the meetings, the people with whom Bassem races etc. are the people of Nazlet El-Samman. The party that we see at the beginning of the film was organized by them, in accordance with their traditions.

DID FILMING TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE EVENTS THAT WERE SHAKING EGYPT AT THE TIME?

The way we worked was heavily influenced by real-life events, we reacted to what was happening. But we also created situations, by organizing workshops for discussion between the film crew and the residents of Nazlet El-Samman. We even went as far as organizing public meetings which sparked debates and spawned ideas. The inhabitants contributed a great deal to the film, and how we told the story. They had things to say, and they needed to be able to do that. How we directed this was sorted out as we worked. All the words spoken were scripted, but sometimes only the night before filming, or even just an hour before.

ONCE YOU MADE THE DECISION TO END THE FILM WITH THE EVENTS IN MASPERO, WHAT HAPPENED NEXT?

I arranged the film so that it would cover the period from the 9th March to the 9th October. This meant that I deleted a lot of the scenes we shot. I literally sculpted the film out of the considerable amount of images I had shot, without worrying too much about the chronology nor how all of this would link together. We had a wall covered in post-it notes, each one corresponded to a different scene, and we organized them into what seemed like the best sequence. There are times when a character is not wearing the same t-shirt from one sequence to the next, but who cares! There is a logic in the narrative, which is far more important. Once finished, I realized that there were a few scenes missing that were necessary to hold the film together. We filmed those scenes in January.

THERE IS A DOCUMENTARY ASPECT TO THE FILM, IN TOUCH WITH REALITY, AND YET IT IS ALSO VERY CONTRIVED. IT IS OBVIOUS THAT THE MAIN CHARACTERS ARE ACTORS WORKING WITHIN THE FRAME OF A MISE-EN-SCENE.

This mixing of real life and artifice is essential for me. Even my documentary *On Boys, Girls and the Veil* was very well lit, and it was obviously contrived. In *After the Battle* I wanted to avoid it looking like a documentary film at all costs. It is a fiction, and it's important that people know it. I believe that in turbulent times, which in fact is most of the time, but particularly in the middle of a revolution, only fiction enables us to see things a little clearer and helps us begin to understand. Fiction forces us to think, and to look at the complexity of each character, and beyond just what they proclaim. This is also true even when you introduce elements of reality: we filmed real demonstrations, the television footage is real footage that was broadcast at the time etc. I was surrounded by wonderful actors, an amazing director of photography, Samir Bahsan, and an entire neighbourhood ready to work with me. It would have been foolish not to build on that.

WHAT CAMERA DID YOU USE?

An Arriflex Alexa, a very good HD digital camera. It would have been impossible to shoot a film like this in 35 mm, otherwise I would have done it. The demonstrations were filmed using a Canon 5D. There are a few sequences that were shot on a very small camera. I like this mix of image quality.

WERE THERE THINGS THAT YOU WOULD HAVE LIKED TO HAVE FILMED BUT WERE UNABLE TO?

Yes. In Tahrir Square we were set upon, and had to stop filming. It was the 8th July, just after the "Balloon Theatre incident". The families of the martyrs of the revolution had gathered in the square. They were set upon by troublemakers... plain-clothed police. They were then arrested by the army and sentenced by military tribunals. The demonstration on the 8th was a mess. Originally it had been organized to protest against the phoney Constitution. The Muslim Brotherhood said that they were willing to demonstrate in support of the martyrs' families but in turn they forbid anyone to mention the Constitution. We were there to film the scene when Fatma meets Reem in Tahrir Square. The atmosphere was incredibly tense between the police and the demonstrators. That is when we, the film crew, were attacked. Primarily, they attacked the women amongst us. They insulted Menna and called her a whore, and scorned her for the films she had acted in. I don't know who they were. We had to leave, as I didn't want to put any of the women in danger. It happened on another occasion too. Near the Square as well.

We also weren't allowed to film inside mosques, which was never the case before. There was official censorship too. In the spring of 2011 the controls were relaxed, but since then strict censorship is back in place. The revolution is not over yet...

HAS THE REVOLUTION REALLY BEGUN YET?

No, not yet. But what has begun is a desire for revolution. The possibility of a different life. That is what this film is about.

Interview by Jean-Michel Frodon



TIMELINE OF THE EGYPTIAN REVOLUTION



25th JANUARY 2011. National Police Day. Tens of thousands of Egyptians take part in peaceful demonstrations in Tahrir square, Cairo, against Mubarak's dictatorship and police brutality. Demonstrations are also held in Alexandria, Mansura, Tanta... The police finally disperse the protesters using tear gas and water cannons.

29th JANUARY. In a TV appearance, Hosni Mubarak dissolves his government and promises reforms. Omar Suleiman is appointed Vice-president. Protesters call for Mubarak's resignation.

30th JANUARY. Protests intensify and Cairo Museum is pillaged. Protesters protect the museum. More and more tourists leave the country.

31st JANUARY. The Egyptian army announces that it will not use force against the protesters.

1st FEBRUARY. The "one million march" peacefully reaches its goal in all Egypt. Hundreds of thousands of protesters assemble in Tahrir square in Cairo. In a second TV appearance, Hosni Mubarak announces that he will not run in the September presidential election.

2nd FEBRUARY. The "Battle of the Camels". Pro-Mubarak forces attack anti-regime protesters in Tahrir square and violent confrontations ensue. Among the violent pro-Mubarak forces, camel and horse riders from Nazlet El-Samman – a Bedouin community established in the 19th century at the foot of the Giza pyramids – are accused of being paid to start riots. The camel and horse riders are very quickly repelled by anti-Mubarak protesters. That same night, marksmen are placed on top of buildings around Tahrir Square. They shoot the protesters. The marksmen's identities have not yet been established.

4th FEBRUARY. Christians protect Muslims during the Friday prayer in Tahrir square.

5th FEBRUARY. Members of the executive committee of the ruling Democratic National Party (NDP), including Gamal Mubarak, Hosni Mubarak's son, resign.

6th FEBRUARY. The Muslim Brotherhood agrees to take part in the dialogue between Vice-president Omar Suleiman and the opposition.

10th FEBRUARY. Following several statements from senior officials in the Egyptian government and army, the entire country expects Hosni Mubarak to announce his resignation over the evening. But the Egyptian President just states that he will be delegating in Vice-president Omar Suleiman.

11th FEBRUARY. Omar Suleiman announces Hosni Mubarak's resignation on TV. Mubarak, who has been in power for almost thirty years, leaves for Sharm el Sheik, in Sinai.

AFTER MUBARAK. The roadmap announced by the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces consists in holding a referendum on certain amendments to the Constitution. Liberal and left-wing parties demand a new constitution, meeting the revolution's claims, but their demands are not met. Islamist parties state that voting YES equals voting for Islam... After the Constitution, the second stage is the legislative election held in September, followed by the election of a new President in November. The liberal parties oppose the roadmap proposed by the Supreme Court of the Armed Forces, whereas Islamists fully adhere.

8th MARCH 2011. International Women's Day. Feminist militants are harassed in Tahrir square.

19th MARCH. Referendum over the Constitution. 78% vote YES.

MARCH-OCTOBER. Relationships among the revolutionaries become increasingly poisoned. The Supreme Court of the Armed Forces gives particular relevance to Islamist parties, and in April starts to cast doubt on all the main figures in the revolution. About 12,000 people are judged by military courts.

AUGUST. The military attack NGOs.

9th OCTOBER. Coptic Christians and Muslims demonstrate before the TV House in Maspero. An anchorwoman on official TV calls on the people to "protect the army from assault by fanatical Christians". The demonstration is attacked by the military as well as by armed civilians. The result of "Black Sunday" is 34 casualties and several dozens injured.



THE NAZLET WALL

Nazlet El-Samman (literally, "Quails' Slope") is a village at the foot of the Giza pyramids. It is home to about 50,000 people, all of whom are related to each other, and most of whom make a living from tourism.

In 2002, an Archaeological Site Directorate project envisaged evicting Nazlet residents in order to turn the area into a touristic site. One of the first measures taken was the building of a wall more than 16 km long between the village of Nazlet and the Pyramids. The villages protested against the wall on several occasions, as they would become increasingly impoverished as tourists' access to their shops and horse stables would become more and more difficult. Horse and camel rider access to the Pyramids would also become almost impossible.



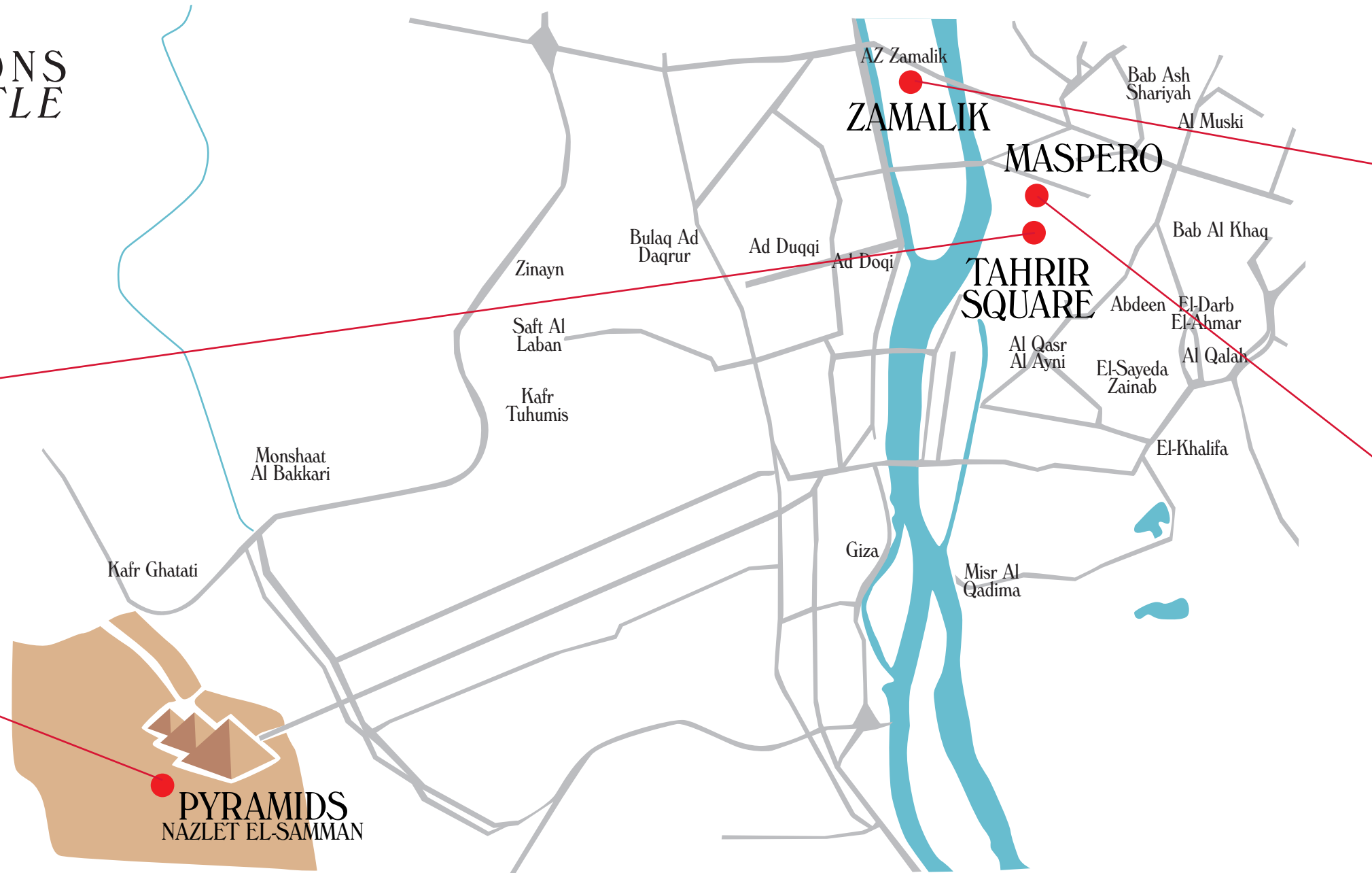
CAIRO, THE LOCATIONS OF AFTER THE BATTLE



Tahrir square



Mahmoud's home in Nazlet El-Samman



Reem's home in Zamalik's fashionable districts



Bloody repression of Maspero's demonstration



YOUSRY NASRALLAH

FILMOGRAPHY

2012 AFTER THE BATTLE

Cannes 2012 - Official Competition

2011 INTERIOR/EXTERIOR

Short film included in collective film 18 DAYS (Tamantashar yom)

Cannes 2011 - Official Selection - Out of Competition

Egypt Critics Awards 2011: Best Film, Best Actress

2009 SCHEHERAZADE, TELL ME A STORY (Ehky ya Scheherazade)

Venice 2009 - Official Selection

Toronto 2009 - Official Selection

2008 THE AQUARIUM (Genenet al asmak)

Berlinale 2008 - Panorama

2004 THE GATE OF SUN (Bab el Chams)

Cannes Official Selection 2004 - Out of Competition

New York 2004

1999 THE CITY (El Medina)

Locarno 1999 - Jury Special Prize

Journées cinématographiques de Carthage 1999 - Best Actor award for Bassem Samra

New Directors/New Films 1999

1995 ON BOYS, GIRLS AND THE VEIL (Sobyan wa banat) Documentary

Locarno 1995 - Sony Award

1993 MERCEDES

Locarno 1993

1988 SUMMER THEFTS

Cannes 1988 - Directors' Fortnight

Locarno 1988

Born in Cairo in 1952, Yousry Nasrallah was educated at the Cairo German School before reading Economics and Political Science in Cairo University. In 1973, he was accepted to the Cairo Film Institute. In 1978, he left for Lebanon, where he would live for four years and become a journalist for As-Safir newspaper.

After 1980, Yousry Nasrallah started working exclusively in film making. He was a production assistant in Volker Schlöndroff's *Circle of Deceit* (shot in Bayreuth in 1981), then an assistant director in Youssef Chahine's *Memory*. In 1985, he co-wrote and was the assistant director in Youssef Chahine's *Adieu Bonaparte*. In 1987, he wrote and directed his first film, *Summer Thefts*, co-produced by Youssef Chahine. This film won many awards, and is regarded as one of the works that most contributed to the renewal of Egyptian cinema.

In 1988-1990, he co-wrote and co-directed Youssef Chahine's *Alexandria*. In 1991 he co-directed *Cairo* by Youssef Chahine. In 1993 he directed *Mercedes*, which was highly praised by critics. In 1994, he directed two short films, *The Extra* and *One Day with Youssef Chahine* for the programme "A particular cinema day", produced by Canal +.

In 1995, he directed a documentary film, *On Boys, Girls, and the Veil*, which won many awards. In 1999, he directed *The City*, co-produced by Arte, which won the Jury's Special Prize at Locarno Festival. In 2001, he wrote the script for *Gate of Sun* with Elias Khoury, adapted from the latter's novel.

YOUSRY NASRALLAH, POPULAR AND CHEEKY (1)

An Egyptian filmmaker who, in 20 years and 6 films, has become a very great storyteller. Both fully Eastern and fully knowledgeable about European cinema, both recognisable and completely foreign, Yousry Nasrallah's films are political and sensual, joyful and introspective. Each of his films is an epic, a saga, a historical novel, an intimate film, a great show. Each of his films deals with people's lives and collective history. Each of his films is about human beings and the world. In 1988, *Summer Thefts*, his first feature film, delved into the daily life of a family of landowners in 1961, at the time of President Nasser's nationalisation decrees. Selected for the Directors' Fortnight, the film premiered a few months later at Belfort Festival. In 2004, *Gate of Sun*, an epic about the history of Palestinian fighters through the lives of some of them, was officially selected for Cannes Festival. Between these two films, he shot *Mercedes* in 1993, and *The City* in 2000, as well as a documentary, *On Boys, Girls, and the Veil* in 1995, which dealt with contemporary reality, and allowed us to discover actor Bassem Samra, whom we are always happy to see. *Aquarium*, which premiered at Berlin Festival, portrays two lonely lives, contemporary and universal, in the city of Cairo, depicted as a snapshot. [...] »

(1) From the Belfort International Film Festival catalogue, 2009

THE ACTORS



MENNA CHALABY (REEM)

The daughter of actress and dancer Zizi Mostafa, her acting career started in 2001, in Radwan El Kachef's *The Magician*. She very quickly established herself as one of the most promising actresses in Egyptian cinema. She has worked in more than 25 films, including the beautiful *I Love Cinema* by Oussama Fawzi (2004), *Downtown Girls* by Mohamed Khan (2005), and *Chaos* by Youssef Chahine (2007).



BASSEM SAMRA (MAHMOUD)

His acting career started in 1991, when he played a small role in *Cairo* by Youssef Chahine. In 1993, he acted in Yousry Nasrallah's *Mercedes*. He would go on to work with Nasrallah in *On Boys, Girls, and the Veil* (1995) and in *The City* (1999). His performance in the latter film won the Best Actor award in Carthage Film Festival. He established himself as one of the great Egyptian actors playing the role of Abd in Marwan Hamed's *The Yacoubian Building*.



NAHED EL SEBAÏ (FATMA)

The youngest daughter of two great Egyptian actors (Farid Chawki and Hoda Sultan), her acting career started in 2004 when she played a small role in Ihab Lamei's *At First Glance*, then in Ahmed Rashwan's *Basra*. In 2009, she worked in Yousry Nasrallah's *Scheherazade*, *Tell Me A Story*, and then worked in Mohamed Diab's *678* in 2010.



SALAH ABDALLAH (HAJ ABDALLAH)

A great stage and television actor, he has acted in more than 30 films, including the beautiful *A Citizen*, *A Cop*, and *A Thief*, and Daoud Abdelsayed's *Letters from the Sea*.



PHAEDRA (DINA)

A Jordanian director, decorator, and costumier, her acting career started in 1999 under the pseudonym Farrah in Daoud Abdelsayed's *Land of Fear*. She has also worked under the names Farrah and Phaedra El Masry.



ABDALLAH ET MOMEN MEDHAT (ABDALLAH ET MOMEN)

The sons of one of the best horse trainers in Egypt, Nasrallah saw them play their favourite game in Nazlet El Samman: horse and trainer. Faced with cameras, they displayed a natural ease and grace which seduced the entire film crew.



SIÈCLE PRODUCTIONS

Siècle Productions was founded by Georges-Marc Benamou with the aim of being part of the great tradition of openness in French cinema, open to all kinds of cinema, whatever its origin.

In line with this philosophy, Siècle Productions entered Yousry Nasrallah's film *After the Battle* into competition for the 2012 Cannes Film Festival, with the desire to look at the Arab revolutions in a different light. It is about cinema telling the story of current events, in a more intimate way than journalism or debate can. It is about looking at events from the inside. It is as much an aesthetic stance as a political one.

In the near future, in much the same vein, Siècle will present a co-production with CTV (Tunis). This is the most recent film by Nouri Bouzid *Hidden Beauties*.

Several important cinematographic encounters preceded the creation of Siècle Productions: a film-homage to Jean Vigo *A Propos de Nice* (a collective film by Abbas Kiarostami, Raymond Depardon, Costa-Gavras, Claire Denis, Catherine Breillat, Pavel Lounguine and Raoul Ruiz, produced by Georges-Marc Benamou and François Margolin); a participation in Robert Guediguian's film *The Last Mitterrand* (the adaptation of Georges-Marc Benamou's book) and the adaptation with Milos Forman of another novel by Georges-Marc Benamou "The Ghost of Munich".

Siècle Productions intends to continue along this editorial line, giving precedence to art-house cinema from France and elsewhere. In preparation notably: *Alias Caracalla*, a film by Alain Tasma, the adaptation for France 3 and ARTE of Daniel Cordier's book (Gallimard ed.) and *Un juif pour l'exemple/Sombre Printemps*, an adaptation of Jacques Chessex's book (Grasset ed.), starring Michael Lonsdale, Bruno Ganz and Gilbert Melki.

Contact

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NEW CENTURY PRODUCTION AND DOLLAR FILM

New Century is currently considered to be one of the most important film production companies in Egypt. Walid El Kurdi, its founder and director, is the son of Ismael El Kurdi – a pioneer in Arab film distribution – who founded Dollar Film over 60 years ago.

In the 2000s, Walid El Kurdi, driven by his love of cinema, founded New Century Production, a subsidiary of Dollar Film, and went on to produce a series of great films such as *The Seventh Sense*, *True Dreams*, *Micky's Family*, *Bibo and Beshir*, as well as *678* by Mohamed Diab (to be premiered in Paris on 30th May 2012) and *Asmaa* by Amr Salama. Most of these films have won prizes at European and American film festivals.

New Century Production aims to produce 8 high quality films per year, and create a link between a national and international audience.

CREW

Director : Yousry Nasrallah
Screenplay : Yousry Nasrallah and Omar Schama
Produced by Walid El-Kordy (Egypt) and Georges-Marc Benamou (France)
Associate Producer : Jérôme Clément
Executive Producer : Amal El Hamouly
Line Producer : Ahmad Badawy
Image : Samir Bahsan
Editing : Mona Rabi
Sound : Ibrahim Dessouky
Original score : Tamer Karawan
Sound editing : François Wargnier and Boris Chapelle
Mix : Christophe Vingtrinier
Production Managers : Elisabeth Mergui-Rampazzo (France), Ahmad Youssef (Egypt)
Art Director : Mohamed Atteya
Costumes : Nahed Nasrallah

A France/Egypt Production : Siècle Productions/Studio 37/New Century/
Dollar Film / France 3 Cinéma
With the participation of France Télévisions
With the support of La Région Ile-de-France
With the participation of SANAD
The Post-Production Fund of the Abu Dhabi Film Festival-United Arab Emirates

