

Present Tense

A feature film by Belmin Söylemez

Press Kit

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Synopsis

A young unemployed woman applies to a fortune-telling café lying that she has experience. While she reads the coffee cups of different women, she also tries to find a way out herself.

Divorced, disconnected from her family, about to be thrown out of her flat, she is surrounded with troubles. Her mind is made up: she will escape to America. But how? She needs money, papers and a visa.

Through the shapes emerging in coffee cups, she expresses her own frustrations and desires to match those of the customers. Will she be able to get away from present tense and try her luck for the future?

Credits

Directed by: Belmin Söylemez

Written by: Belmin Söylemez & Haşmet Topalođlu

Director of Photography: Peter Roehsler

Art Director: Revan Barlas

Edited by: Ali Aga & Belmin Söylemez

Sound: Seçkin Kaştaş

Music and Sound Design: Cenker Kökten

Casting: Ezgi Baltaş

Producer: Haşmet Topalođlu

Production Company: Filmbüfe Film Production

Main Cast: Sanem Öge , Şenay Aydın, Ozan Bilen

Cast: Nesrin Yıldırım, Erdi Kement, Suat Oktan, Ayça Damgacı, Nalan Kuruçim, Sezin Bozacı, Elif Ongan Tekçe, Aliye Karahan, Hüseyin Akdağ, Funda Özgüç, Mustafa Çiçek, Mesut Yılmaz, Kemal Ciciođlu, Sevil Demirci, Aysun Sayın, Alpaslan Akkuş, Fazilet Onat, Berna Nemli, Meknuze Özgüle, Heves Atasoy, Defne Andaç Tozan, Ramazan Yet, Grup Mübin.

Running Time: 110 minutes

Production Year: 2012



About the Cast

“Present Tense” tells the story of a young woman who wants to escape life in Istanbul and start from scratch in another country.

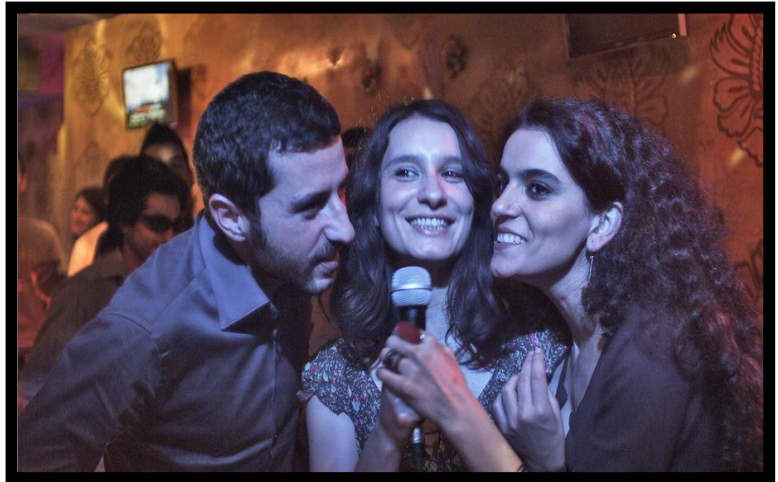
The main character Mina is played by Sanem Öge, a young and promising actress known for her theater appearances. She has worked with many important names of the theater world in Turkey, and received the ‘Actress of the Year’ award in the 2011 Theater Awards.

Her performance as Mina in ‘Present Tense’ has brought her the ‘Best Actress’ award at the, 31st İstanbul Film Festival, National Competition, 2012.

Fazi, the young but experienced fortune teller, is played by Şenay Aydın, winner of a best newcomer award for her previous cinema appearance in ‘Hidden Faces’ by Handan İpekçi. She has also played in films like “A Marketplace” by Ben Hopkins, and the Palestinian guerilla in the populer TV series ‘Öyle bir Geçer Zaman ki’ on the Turkish TV Channel D.

Tayfun, the young café owner is played by Ozan Bilen, who started his film career as a child actor in the late 80’s, and went on to act in well-known films as ‘Kader’(Destiny) by Zeki Demirkubuz.

The casting was done by casting director Ezgi Baltaş.



Production Notes

Produced by Haşmet Topaloğlu and directed by Belmin Söylemez, “Present Tense” is the first feature film production of Filmbüfe Film Production Company.



The shooting of “Present Tense” was set in Istanbul. The café and its surroundings was in the central Beyoğlu area (*on the European side*) and Mina’s house was in Kadıköy (*on the Asian side*). Both neighbourhoods have typical characteristics of the city.

Other locations included gated communities in the outskirts and modern business centers.

Art director Revan Barlas created an atmosphere by using colours and tones to match the characters’ inner world.



The film was shot by acclaimed Austrian director of photography Peter Roehsler in RED 4K format.

The first stage of post production took place in Istanbul. The editing was done by editor Ali Aga and director Belmin Söylemez.

While the editing was still going on, the film received the post production fund of the Ministry of Culture, Turkey.

The sound design was done in Melodika Sound Studio, Istanbul. Sound designer Cenker Kökten also composed the music of the film. The final mix was done by Serdar Öngören.

The colour grading and DCP mastering took place in Graal Studio, Athens. Acclaimed colour grader Nikos Panteris (*who has worked with masters such as Theo Angelopolous*) did the colour grading of “Present Tense”. The DCP mastering was done by Yiannis Zaharoyiannis. Konstantina Stavrianou was the post production manager.



Director's Statement

In “Present Tense” we see life in Istanbul through the eyes of a young woman.

Mina believes that life has been unkind to her. There is no friends, no job, no joy for her in Istanbul, simply no future. She wants to escape to USA and start from zero; a familiar feeling to most of us. Many young people share the same desire: to escape abroad and not to look back.

Mina tries her luck in coffee fortune-reading. Not by telling cliches but by reflecting her unfulfilled desires and future dreams through fortune reading. However, in time she discovers that the desperations and expectations of other people are not different than hers.

She also finds a different kind of friendship in the outgoing fortune teller Fazi, and the rebellious young boss, Tayfun. They take her out of her shell.

Coffee fortune telling is a very old tradition in Turkey which roots back to shamanistic tradition. Women prefer it as a social tool, as a form of gossip. Fortune-teller cafes are a haven of escape from uncertainty, anxiety, the unstable atmosphere that surrounds our life today. For Mina it becomes a tool, to communicate and to share. It serves as a reflection of her psychology, as well as a visual tool.

My intention was to create an atmosphere by using visuals to match Mina's inner world. The empty building where she lives, the lonely garden by her window, the neighbourhood near the sea, the dream-like background at the cafe and other locations all reflect the changes in her psychology. These are details and textures of Istanbul which are doomed to disappear soon.

Belmin Söylemez, *director*

Belmin Söylemez Biography

Born in Istanbul. She worked as copy writer, editor, producer for companies like ARD German TV (Istanbul Office) and BBA (Independent Press Agency Istanbul). She made music videos and promotion films as a director and producer. Her short films and documentaries have been screened in international film festivals like Toronto, Göteborg, Sarajevo and received a number of awards nationally and internationally. Her films were broadcasted on TV Channels such as ARTE France/Germany, SVT (Sweden), YLE (Finland) SBS (Australia). Her films have also participated in exhibitions such as “Call me Istanbul”, ZKM Karlsruhe, Germany and `Free Kick` - the 9th Istanbul Biennial.

Present Tense is her first feature film.

Filmography

‘State of Sleep’ 1999 short film

‘The Moustache’ 2000 documentary

‘ZAP!’ 2000 short film

‘Waves’ 2001 short film

‘Windows’ 2002 short film

‘The Picture of My Life’ 2003 video

‘34 Taxi’ documentary 2005

‘What a *Beautiful* Democracy!’ documentary 2008 (co-director)

See www.belminsoylemez.com for more info about the films and awards

‘Present Tense’ Festivals

Belmin Söylemez’s debut feature film ‘Present Tense’ had its national premiere at the National Competition of the 31st İstanbul Film Festival (March 31st-April 15th, 2012). The leading actress Sanem Öge won the ‘Best Actress’ award at the National Competition.

The national premiere of ‘Present Tense’ took place on April 13th 2012 in Atlas Movie Theater, Beyoğlu, İstanbul. The screening was followed by a QA with the director, producer, actors and members of the crew.

The International Premiere of ‘Present Tense’ took place at the 18. Sarajevo International Film Festival, in the International Competition. The premiere was on the July 9th 2012 in the National Theater of Sarajevo. A press conference with the director, producer and actresses was held on the same day.

Present Tense Website:

www.presenttensemovie.com

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