



*pico*films

present

TAHRIR

LIBERATION SQUARE

A film by

Stefano Savona

World Premiere Locarno Film Festival 2011

Press screening:

Saturday August 6 - 9.00 am - Palavideo

Official screenings:

Saturday August 6 - 7.00 pm - Auditorium Fevi

Sunday August 7 - 9.00 am - Altra Sala

www.tahrir-liberationsquare.com

PRESS IN LOCARNO

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CREDITS

Directed and Photographed by Stefano Savona

Edited by Penelope Bortoluzzi

Sound Editing and Mixing by Jean Mallet

Produced by Penelope Bortoluzzi and Marco Alessi

A coproduction Picofilms and Dugong

With the participation of
Rai 3

Alter Ego - Cécile Lestrade
Périphérie - Centre de création cinématographique

France, Italy 2011

Duration 91'

Original Language: Arab

Subtitles: Eng, Fra, Ita

Format: DCP 24 f/s



SYNOPSIS

From facebook thumbs up to the battle of stones, a history of hope, fear, despair, anger, pride and elation, Tahrir is the real-time chronicle of the two most exciting weeks in the history of modern Egypt as lived by their protagonists.

Since the 25th of January, together with thousands other Egyptian citizens, Noha, Ahmed and Elsayed have been involved in a massive movement of street protest for political freedom. By the end of the first week of urban guerrilla and brutal state reprisal it has become nothing less than a revolution to overcome Mubarak's regime. Day after day, sleepless night after sleepless night, until the capitulation of the defeated pharaoh, the film follows these young and unexpected heroes along their fierce fight to win their liberty.

STEFANO SAVONA BIOGRAPHY

Stefano Savona was born in Palermo in 1969. He studied archeology and anthropology in Rome and participated in various excavations in Sudan, Egypt, Turkey and Israel. Having worked as a freelance photographer since 1995, in 1999 he switched his principal area of activity to directing and producing documentaries and video installations such as D-Day (2005, Centre Pompidou, Paris). His feature length documentary Notes from a Kurdish Rebel, 2006, received a nomination for a David di Donatello.

"Piombo fuso" ("Cast Lead", 2009) was selected to the Locarno Film Festival - Cinéastes du présent and won the Special Jury Prize.

Since 2009 he has been collecting the hundreds testimonies of Il Pane di San Giuseppe, a visual history archive dedicated to the living memory of 100 years of rural civilization in Sicily.

In 2010, Savona and Penelope Bortoluzzi founded the Paris-based production house Picofilms.

In 2011, he also produced and directed "Palazzo delle Aquile", winner of the Grand Prix of the Cinéma du Réel Festival 2011.

FILMOGRAPHY (selected)

- 2011 Palazzo delle Aquile
documentary 128' — production Picofilms (with the collaboration of the Associazione Corso Salani)
Grand Prix du Cinéma du Réel
Human Rights Award BAFICI (Buenos Aires)
Special Mention IndieLisboa (Lisbon)
Selection Acid Cannes 2011
- 2010 Spezzacatene
documentary, 82' — production Lotus/Pulsemedia/Regione Sicilia
Torino Film Festival
États Généraux du Film Documentaire, Lussas
- 2009 Cast Lead
documentary , 80' — production: Pulsemedia, Italy
in association with RAI
Special Jury Prize, Filmmakers of the Present, Locarno Film Festival
Mention Prix de l'Image, RIDM, Montréal
Best Documentary, Annecy Cinéma Italien
Munich Film Festival, États Généraux du Film Documentaire Lussas, Dubai Film Festival
- 2006 Notes from a Kurdish Rebel
documentary, 80' — production: JBA Production, Francia/ Minimum Fax, Italy
in association with ARTE France (Grand Format), YLE Finland
Grand Prix du Jury, S.C.A.M., Cinéma du Réel 2006, Parigi
Nomination, David di Donatello 2006, Best documentary
Prix Casa Rossa, Best Italian Documentary 2006 -2007
Official Selection, Viennale Film Festival
Genziana d'oro, Trento Film Festival
Jury Special Mention, Mostra del Nuovo Cinema, Pesaro.
- 2006 On the Same Boat,
short documentary, 11'
Festival dei Popoli, Florence
États Généraux du Film Documentaire, Lussas
- 2002 A Mirrored Border
documentary, 72'
production Maat, Tipota
Special Jury Prize, Torino Film Festival 2002
Cinéma du Réel 2003, Paris



INTERVIEW WITH STEFANO SAVONA

What moved you to go to Egypt to film the revolution?

Over the past twenty years, I have gone to Cairo almost every year and, like everybody who know and visit Egypt, I never expected the events of late January, early February 2011. On January 29, after hours in front of the al-Jazeera website, glued to the fragmentary and low-resolution online chronicle of the Egyptian Revolution, I decided to go there and see from close up who was on Tahrir Square, who were the thousands of people challenging the regime's state of emergency laws. I wanted to understand what exactly they wanted, what their political orientation and their symbolic points of reference were, how they imagined their future. Tahrir Square offered a unique opportunity to film the full scope of Egyptian society, people from all backgrounds and social classes, together for the first time, united in the sole cause of bringing down dictatorship, barricaded on this huge square where police and the thugs of the regime could not enter.

Your documentaries are often shot in "extreme" situations. How does this film line up with your career as a filmmaker?

I have known Egypt well for years, but it is equally important to say that I have been waiting for years to film a situation of this type. Ever since I did my film about the Kurdish guerrillas of the PKK I started to center my work on the political dimension of existence as a specific component of the human condition. The guerrilla fighters were young men and women whose lives were completely deprived of any private, intimate spaces. They constantly expressed themselves in the public sphere, in an existence dominated day and night by discussions, by words. After this experience in Kurdistan, I was looking to find and film situations in which individuals, even though they are not professional politicians, become profoundly involved in a collective action. The Egyptians Revolution was in this sense a unique opportunity: I could witness of the political reawakening of a generation of youth that has lived all their lives under a dictatorship and that has to learn to discuss, to listen, to confront each other in the space of an occupied public square where people even forgot to sleep in order to continue a political discussion of the future. The regime's violence, the attacks by the its thugs only increase the force of the protest: brutality attacks the word, but the word wins.

Your film was shot in its entirety during the days of revolution. Do you think it can also communicate something about the present and future developments of the situation in Egypt?

It's easy to say that in Egypt, five months after those incredible days everything is still in limbo, that the situation is complex and risky, that we are still a long way from the realization of the goals of the protests and the arrival of democracy. The demonstrations continue, the young protagonists of my film are still taking to the streets to make the military understand that they haven't gone back to sleep. But what my film wants to get across is that at any rate an event like this leaves an indelible and unchangeable mark; only cinema has the means to capture this fleeting aspect, show the electrifying spectacle of a revolution and bear witness to its irreversibility, whatever happens next. Only cinema and documentaries can capture those moments in which freedom appears in its pure state: a sense of completeness that nestles in conversations, in the relationships that are being forged with others by the strength of words. In this sense, nothing was ever more free than Tahrir Square where complete strangers organized long debates, where after 30 years anybody could express themselves and nothing and nobody could cut off this stream of words. Documentary film is the ideal medium to account for the arresting power of collective action. Literature and journalism can speak of the details, but there is something more fleeting and ephemeral that only cinema can fixate and collect. The people on Tahrir Square were not simply a crowd, they are individuals who together became aware of their collective strength. They are a group that acts with one voice. "One hand", as one of the many slogans of this revolution put it.

