

HIAM ABBASS
DIAMAND ABOU ABBOUD
JULIETTE NAVIS



67^e Internationale
Filmfestspiele
Berlin
Panorama

INSYRIATED

A FILM BY PHILIPPE VAN LEEUW

ALTITUDE 100 SE LIAISON CINÉMATOGRAPHIQUE PRÉSENTENT HIAM ABBASS, DIAMAND ABOU ABBOUD, JULIETTE NAVIS, MOHSEN ABBAS, MOUSTAPHA AL KAR, ELIAS KHATTER, ALISSAR KASHADOL, NINAR HALABI, MOHAMMAD JIHAD SLEIK • **INSYRIATED** • UN FILM DE PHILIPPE VAN LEEUW SCÉNARIO PHILIPPE VAN LEEUW PRODUIT PAR GUILLAUME MALANDRIN ET SERGE ZEITOUN
MUSIQUE ORIGINALE JEAN-LUC FAFCHAMPS MAJE VIRGINIE SURDET RÉGIEUR KATHY LEBRUN MONTAGE CLAUDY KOUKOU SON CHADI ROUKOZ PAUL HEYMANS, ALEX BOUSSE ASSISTANT RÉALISATEUR JEAN-FRANÇOIS RAVAGNAN DIRECTION DE PRODUCTION SOPHIE CASSE, MARIANNE KATRA COOPÉRATION PHILIPPE VAN LEEUW PRODUIT PAR TOMAS LEYERS ET PIERRE SARRAF PRODUCTEURS ASSOCIÉS PHILIPPE LOÛGE, JACQUES HENRI ET OLIVIER BRONCKART UNE CO-PRODUCTION ALTITUDE 100 PRODU, LIAISON CINÉMATOGRAPHIQUE, NE A BEYROUTH FILMS, MINDS MEET, VERSUS PRODUCTION, VOD ET BETV AVEC LE CADEAU DU CENTRE DU CINÉMA ET DE L'AUDIOVISUEL DE LA FÉDÉRATION WALLONNE-BRUXELLES, DU FONDS AUDIOVISUEL DE FLANDRE (VAF) ET DE LA COOPÉRATION BELGE AU DÉVELOPPEMENT - IGO, SERVICE PUBLIC FÉDÉRAL AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES, COMMERCE ÉTRANGER ET COOPÉRATION AU DÉVELOPPEMENT AVEC LE SOUTIEN DE EURIMAGES AVEC LA PARTICIPATION DE L'AIDE AUX CINÉMAS DU MONDE - CENTRE NATIONAL DU CINÉMA ET DE L'IMAGE ANIMÉE - MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES ET DU DÉVELOPPEMENT INTERNATIONAL - INSTITUT FRANÇAIS AVEC LE CADEAU TAX SHELTER DU GOUVERNEMENT FÉDÉRAL BELGE INVER TAX SHELTER VENTES INTERNATIONALES FILMS BOITIQUE

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INSYRIATED

A film by **PHILIPPE VAN LEEUW**

War in Damascus. Trapped inside their home, should a family sacrifice one of its members to protect the others ?

85 minutes • HD • Color • Arabic

© Altitude100 - Liaison Cinématographique - Minds Meet - Né à Beyrouth Films

SCREENINGS AT THE BERLINALE

Official screening

Saturday 11/02 - 20:00 - CinemaxX 7 (all accreditations)

Additional screenings

Sunday 12/02 - 22:45 - CineStar 3

Monday 13/02 - 14:00 - International

Friday 17/02 - 20:00 - CinemaxX 7

Sunday 19/02 - 22:30 - Cubix 7+8



SYNOPSIS

Trapped inside her house in a city under siege, Oum Yazan, mother of three, turned her flat into a safe harbor for her family and neighbors, trying to protect them from the war outside. When bombs threaten to destroy the building, when snipers turn the courtyards into deadly zones, and burglars break in to claim their dreadful bounties, maintaining the thin balance of routine inside the walls becomes a matter of life and death.

CAST

Oum Yazan	Hiam ABBASS
Halima	Diamand ABOU ABOUD
Delhani	Juliette NAVIS
Abou Monzer	Mohsen ABBAS
Samir	Moustapha AL KAR
Yazan	Mohammad JIHAD SLEIK
Yara	Alissar KAGHADOU
Aliya	Ninar HALABI
Karim	Elias KHATTER

CREW

Director - Screenplay	Philippe VAN LEEUW
Original score	Jean-Luc FAFCHAMPS
Cinematography	Virginie SURDEJ
Set design	Kathy LEBRUN
Sound recording	Chadi ROUKOZ
Costumes	Claire DUBIEN
Make-up	Muriëlle VERCRUYSSSE
Assistant director	Jean-François RAVAGNON
Editing	Gladys JOUJOU
Sound editing	Paul HEYMANS
Mix	Alek GOOSSE
Producers	Guillaume MALANDRIN & Serge ZEITOUN
Producers	Altitude100 Production & Liaison
	Cinématographique
in coproduction with	Minds Meet, Versus Production,
	VOO et Be tv
	Né à Beyrouth Films
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Distribution Belgium	O'Brother Distribution

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With the help of the **Tax Shelter of the Federal Government of Belgium, d'Inver Tax Shelter**



PHILIPPE VAN LEEUW

Born in Brussels, Philippe Van Leeuw studied at INSAS before moving to Los Angeles, where he studied cinematography at the American Film Institute. Among his teachers were legendary cinematographers Sven Nykvist and Conrad Hall.

Upon his return to Europe, he took on the role as director of photography for feature documentaries, institutional films as well as in advertising. It was during these collaborations that he came to meet director Bruno Dumont, who would direct “La vie de Jésus”, Philippe Van Leeuw’s feature film debut as cinematographer. From here on he dedicated his career to fiction, lensing several films, television features and short films. Among his contributions are two features films by Laurent Achard, “Plus Qu’Hier, Moins Que Demain” and “Le Dernier des Fous”, “Les Bureaux de Dieu” by Claire Simon and recently “Stable, Unstable” by Mahmoud Hojeij.

Meanwhile, Van Leeuw also finds time for his interest in writing and photography. His dedication to social and poetic films has lead him to his directorial debut, THE DAY GOD WALKED AWAY (2009). INSYRIATED is His second feature film as director.

Awards: Kutxa-New Directors Award, San Sebastian IFF 2009 – Grand Prix, Bratislava IFF 2009 – Best Actress Award, Thessaloniki IFF 2009 – Best Actress Award, Bratislava IFF 2009 – Discovery Award Namur FIFF 2009 – Toronto 2009 – FACE Award Istanbul IFF 2010 – Best Film, Best Director, Best Actress Nairobi KIFF 2010 – Grand Prix 15th Forum for European Cinema Lodz 2010 – Winner of The Groupama-Gan Fondation for Cinéma 2007 – Best Screenplay Audience Award Angers Premiers Plans Festival 2008



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

One day, in December 2012, a Syrian friend from Damascus told me that for the past three weeks, her father had been blocked inside his apartment in Aleppo, with no telephone or any means of communication because of the bombings and the war devastating the city. I pictured this lonely man, a prisoner in his own home, and I imagined others like him, trying to survive one day at a time.

This is the story of a family trapped inside its own home because of the war raging outside.

This project was driven by a sense of emergency. In an effort to react quickly, I decided from the beginning that there would be only one location, the apartment, and a time span of 24 hours so as to try to understand what animates ordinary people propelled into extraordinary circumstances - no heroes, but people simply reacting to the situation they are going through.

What I seek to communicate is the frailty and the force we are all capable of in a situation of distress. The instinct that gives us the strength to fight for survival and the drive for self-preservation at the expense of the needs of others stem from the same vital impulses and moral failings.

Yet there are no judgments or moral stances imposed, only facts laid to expose a bare reality.

To ensure the authenticity of the script I had written, I sought the advice of Syrians in exile, particularly those of fellow filmmakers Hala Mohammad and Meyar Al Roomy, and I relied on my own knowledge of the region. I have stayed and worked regularly in Lebanon for the past few years. The two nations share a common culture and customs, as they now unfortunately share the experience of civil war.

The film is intended as an immersive experience. The apartment feels like a bubble about to explode, the



shadows are ominous, the outside world seems unreachable, forbidden. It is as if the characters are sitting on a volcano, short-tempered, jumpy, selfish, and yet trying to show empathy and compassion for their companions. *Panic Room* by David Fincher is a good reference in terms of tension, but here there are no tricks, no special effects, it is just a plain look at the drama of the situation.

As in my previous film, *The Day God Walked Away*, I feel strongly about avoiding any hint of indulgence or voyeurism in the way I approach violence. Like Jacques Tourneur, I believe that the less one sees, the better. I think that one is more susceptible to a sense of realism and emotion when, instead of looking away, one tries to see but doesn't see anything or so little that one must make up the missing images mentally. Only then can any kind of emotion including terror truly be experienced from the screen. Also, the sound has its own ability to evoke images, often stronger and more vibrant than images themselves. The violent actions described in the film are thus more acoustic than visual.

Still, I always try to express a notion visually instead of using dialogues to convey it. To me, faces and body language should tell it all.

Except for Hiam Abbass (the mother) and Diamand Bou Abboud (Halima), the actors are all Syrian refugees. As Juliette Navis (Delhani) doesn't speak Arabic, she was coached to produce her dialogues phonetically.

The uprising of the Syrian people started six years ago, and the war has been raging for well over five years now while the rest of the world has done nothing to stop it. The Syrians seeking refuge in Europe right now have had no choice but to abandon their homes and country. They all come from places and situations for which we lack images.

Beyond the Syrian disaster today and others, past and present, I want to shine a light on the dignity of civilian populations that are ever more implicated in modern conflicts.



HIAM ABBASS OUM YAZAN

Hiam Abbass was acclaimed for her performance opposite Academy Award nominee Richard Jenkins in Thomas McCarthy's *The Visitor*.

She was born in Nazareth, but it was after moving to Paris that she began her acting career in movies. Her feature films have since included Raja Amari's *Satin rouge*; Hany Abu-Assad's Academy Award-nominated *Paradise Now*, Steven Spielberg's *Munich*, Amos Gitai's *Free Zone* and *Disengagement*, Eran Riklis' *The Syrian Bride* and *Lemon Tree*. For the latter Ms. Abbass won a European Film Award nomination, an Israeli Film Academy Award and the APSA award for best actress.

Abbass has written and directed three short films, *Le pain* (in which she also starred), *La Danse éternelle*, and *Les Donne della Vucciria* and signed her first feature *Inheritance* in 2012 where she plays one of the roles.

She also acted in Cherien Dabis' *Amreeka*, and May in *The Summer*, Dima Elhorr's *Every Day Is A Holiday*, Jim Jarmush's *The Limits Of Control*, Patrice Chereau's *Persecutions*, Julian Schnabel's *Miral*, starring in the role of real-life heroine Hind Hussein, also in *I Am Slave* by Gabriel Range, *The Source des Femmes* by Radu Mihileanu, *Une Bouteille à la Mer* by Thierry Binisti, *Rock the Casbah* by Laila Marrakchi, *Exodus* by Ridley Scott, *Degradee* by Arab and Tarzan Nasser, *A Mon Age Je Me Cache Encore Pour Fumer* by Rayhana, *Blade Runner 2049* by Denis Villeneuve and *Succession* (HBO Show) by Adam McKay.



DIAMAND ABOU ABBOUD **HALIMA**

Diamand Abou Abboud has a Masters degree in acting and directing from the Lebanese University, Fine Arts Institute, Theatre and Cinema department where she's been teaching for 2 years.

She wrote and directed her short film "Point Virgule" which has won the special jury award at the European film festival in Beirut. She also wrote and directed the play "The Zeros" and she co-wrote the feature film "Void". She featured in around 13 theatre plays, 6 feature films and several TV series as well as short films in and outside of Lebanon.

In Theatre: Mouaakoun; 7 contre Thèbes; l'Île Des chevres; Ayyam Roubaayiat Al Khayyam; Harad; Aal Dora; Aal Makaad Wara; Retours; Sar Lezim Nehke; Shi Gharib ; Reasons To Be Pretty; Ekht Rjeil; and now she is in a tour in France in a French play, an adaptation of "Le Quatrième Mur" de "Sorj Chalandon".

In Cinema: Beirut Open City; Here Comes the Rain; Stable Unstable; Void; Insyriated; The Insult.

Diamand also received on her work Lebanese and International Awards:

- Murex d'Or for Best Actress in cinema for her roles in "Void" and "Stable Unstable"
- Best Actress for her role in "Void" from the Lebanese Movie Guide Awards
- Best Actress for her role in "Void" from "Al Dakhla Film Festival" Morocco
- Best Script for "Void" from "Malmö Arab film Festival" Sweden
- Murex d'Or for Best Supporting Actress for her role in "Sajina"
- Special Jury Award from the "European Film Festival" for her short film "Point Virgule"



JULIETTE NAVIS DELHANI

Juliette Navis is an actress and theatre director based in Paris. She graduated from the Conservatoire National Supérieur d'Art Dramatique de Paris where she met Arpad Schilling with whom she has worked regularly since 2006 in France and in Hungary, namely in *Apology of an Escapologist*, *Père Courage*, *Laborotel*, and *The Party*.

She is a founding member of the theatre collective *La Vie Brève* with whom she played in Robert Plankett at the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris, *Nous Brûlons* as well as *Le Gout du Faux*, all directed by Jeanne Candel. Building upon Arpad Schilling's methodology where a dramaturgy is born of a series of exchanges between the propositions of the actors-as-authors and the framework decided by the director, she develops projects of collective creation of theatre and cinematic forms.

For the cinema, she has held roles in films by Cédric Klapisch (*Paris* and *Ma part du gâteau*), Etienne Chatiliez (*Agathe Cléry*), Thomas Lilti (*Hippocrate*) and Eric Baudelaire (*The Ugly One*, *Letters to Max*).

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