IT MUST BE HEAVEN
DIRECTED BY ELIA SULEIMAN
FESTIVAL DE CANNES
COMPETITION
2019 OFFICIAL SELECTION

IT MUST BE HEAVEN
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97 MIN – FRANCE, QATAR, GERMANY, CANADA, TURKEY, PALESTINE – 2019 – SCOPE – 5.1

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SYNOPSIS

ES escapes from Palestine seeking an alternative homeland, only to find that Palestine is trailing behind him. The promise of a new life turns into a comedy of errors: however far he travels, from Paris to New York, something always reminds him of home.

From award-winning director Elia Suleiman, a comic saga exploring identity, nationality and belonging, in which ES asks the fundamental question: where is the place we can truly call home?
“The man who finds his homeland sweet is still a tender beginner; he to whom every soil is as his native one is already strong; but he is perfect to whom the entire world is a foreign land. The tender soul has fixed his love on one spot in the world; the strong man has extended his love to all places; the perfect man has extinguished his.”
Hugh of Saint Victor

“Where do the birds fly after the last sky?”
Mahmoud Darwich
If my previous films tried to present Palestine as a microcosm of the world; my new film *It Must Be Heaven* tries to show the world as if it were a microcosm of Palestine.

*It Must Be Heaven* shows ordinary everyday situations of people across the world living in a climate of geopolitical global tension. And the violence erupting in one place is similar to the violence erupting in another. Images and sounds containing this violence or tension are being felt in all the world centers and not, as in the past, just somewhere in the far corners of the world. There are checkpoints in each country at airports and in shopping malls. Police sirens and security alarms are no longer intermittent but constant.

Rather than focus on the ‘larger’ picture constantly bombarded by the mass media, always generalized, masked and falsified, *It Must Be Heaven* depicts the moment in the margin, the trivial, or that which is usually out of focus. Consequently, it approaches what is intimate, tender and touching. It’s the personal and human stories that are based on identification which raise questions and raise hope.

As in my previous films, there is little dialogue; what is spoken is more like monologue to infuse rhythm and musicality. Otherwise the narrative of the film is knitted from a subliminal montage; scenes that are composed from choreographic movements; burlesque drawn from the world of the absurd; images that open up to the poetry of silence, which is at the heart of cinematic language.

Elia Suleiman
FILMOGRAPHY

2019  IT MUST BE HEAVEN 97'
      Official Selection – In Competition – Cannes 2019

2012  7 DAYS IN HAVANAE – segment « Diary of a Beginner » 17'
      Official Selection - Un Certain Regard – Cannes 2012

2009  THE TIME THAT REMAINS 105'
      Official Selection – In Competition – Cannes 2009

2007  CHACUN SON CINÉMA – segment « Irtebak » 3'
      Short film for the 60th anniversary of the Festival de Cannes

2002  DIVINE INTERVENTION 92'
      Jury Prize – Cannes 2002

2000  CYBER PALESTINE 16'
      Directors’ Fortnight – Cannes 2001

1998  THE ARAB DREAM 30'
      Order for Arte Télévision, for the end of the Millenium 2000

1996  CHRONICLE OF A DISAPPEARANCE 84'
      Best First Film Prize - Venice 1996

1992  HOMAGE BY ASSASSINATION 28'
      Rockefeller Award – USA 1993

1991  INTRODUCTION TO THE END OF AN ARGUMENT 45'
      Best Experimental Documentary – USA 1992
CAST

ELIA SULEIMAN as himself

NAZARETH
NEIGHBOUR SON & FATHER  Tarik KOPTI and Kareem GHNEIM
WAITER  George KHLEIFI
BROTHERS & SISTER  Ali SULIMAN, Fares MUQABAA, Yasmine HAJ
BISHOP  Nael KANJ
BEDOUIN WOMAN  Asmaa AZAIZY

PARIS
MAN IN THE METRO  Grégoire COLIN
PRODUCER  Vincent MARAVAL
AMBULANCE CREW  Claire DUMAS and Antoine CHOLET
HOMELESS MAN  Eric CORNET
JAPANESE couple  Yumi NARITA and Kengo SAITO

NEW-YORK
CARD READER  Stephen McHATTIE
FEMEN  Raïa HAÏDAR
MASTER OF CEREMONIES  Fadi SAKR
TAXI DRIVER  Kwasi SONGUI
TEACHER  Guy SPRUNG
PRODUCER  Nancy GRANT
AIRPORT SECURITY  Alain DAHAN
And Gael GARCÍA BERNAL as himself
CREW

Written & directed by Elia SULEIMAN
DP Sofian EL FANI
Editor Véronique LANGE
Sound recordist Johannes DOBERENZ
Sound editors Gwennolé LE BORGNE, Olivier TOUCHE, Laure Anne DARRAS
Sound mixer Lars GINZEL
Production designer Caroline ADLER
Costume designers Alexia CRISP-JONES, Éric POIRIER
Executive producers Fatma HASSAN ALREMAIHI, Hanaa ISSA
Produced by Édouard WEIL, Laurine PELASSY, Elia SULEIMAN, Thanassis KARATHANOS, Martin HAMPEL, Serge NOËL
Coproduced by Zeynep OZBATUR ATAKAN, Georges SCHOUCAIR
Production companies RECTANGLE PRODUCTIONS, NAZIRA FILMS, PALLAS FILM, POSSIBLES MEDIA, ZEYN FILM
In association with DOHA FILM INSTITUTE
In coproduction with ZDF/ARTE, TURKISH RADIO TELEVISION CORPORATION (TRT), CN3 PRODUCTIONS
With the support of EURIMAGES, MITTELDEUTSCHE MEDIENFÖRDERUNG, SODEC QUÉBEC, QUÉBEC CRÉDIT D’IMPÔT CINÉMA ET TÉLÉVISION – GESTION SODEC, CANADA CRÉDIT D’IMPÔT POUR LA PRODUCTION, CINÉMATOGRAPHIQUE OU MAGNÉTOSCOPIQUE CANADIENNE, AIDE AUX CINÉMAS DU MONDE – CNC – INSTITUT FRANÇAIS, CENTRE NATIONAL DU CINÉMA ET DE L’IMAGE ANIMÉE, FFA – FILMFÖRDERUNGSANSTALT, TELEFILM CANADA
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