



WERE  
DENGÊ  
Min

ASI FILM PRESENTS

# WERE DENGÊ MIN

(COME TO MY VOICE)

A film by  
**Hüseyin Karabey**

Berlinale  
 64<sup>th</sup> Internationale  
Filmfestspiele  
Berlin  
Generation



# SYNOPSIS

In a snowy Kurdish mountain village, in the east of Turkey, an old woman Berfé and her young granddaughter Jiyan are troubled when the only man in the household, Temo, the son of one and the father of the other, is arrested and taken into custody by the local gendarmerie. The Commanding Officer has got the information that the villagers are hiding guns from them. It is announced that all the men in the village will be kept arrested until their family resigns and hands over the guns they are hiding. But the real trouble is there are no guns, at least to the knowledge of these two blameless women. With all desperation and desolation, Berfé and Jiyan will have to embark on a long journey in search of a gun which they could exchange for their beloved Temo. But how will their innocence and naivety find a way out of a system that will, by and by, pull them into the sullied world of an interminable conflict?





# INTERVIEW

with Hüseyin Karabey

**Your film starts as a story told by a Dengbej (Kurdish travelling storyteller). Can you tell us a little about this cultural aspect?**

The Kurdish culture is based on oral literature. The “Dengbej” who is a travelling storyteller, is a peasant with exceptional capacity of memory and a beautiful voice. They are nomadic; they travel from village to village, as the vehicle of a people whose voice is often suppressed. They help our culture live, our history evolve and our memory last through the telling of their epic poems to villagers.

**What was the reason for you to choose to tell the story of Berfe and Jiyan through the narration of a Dengbej?**

This is the narrative device I intend to use to « tell » this tale. All throughout the film, the story is punctuated with the songs of the Dengbejs, anecdotes told by the characters and the common habit of storytelling in a traditional way. This way, it enables me to talk about a very tough reality using a third-person voice, thus creating a distance and objectivity as well as a “popular” aspect. Transmission could be easier, and the film and its story, even though based on hard facts, could be accepted by a wide audience.

**This is a film about harsh realities of Kurdish-Turkish conflict, but it has also comical elements. What do you want to tell us about this war?**

In the last 30 years there has been an ongoing “hidden” war situation in Turkey. Many suffer from this war. I want to show through Grandmother Berfê’s story how absurd the war could be. There are a lot of tragic-comic situations in this film: for me, when a political decision is made by a high official based not on the individual but on a “group”, it is bound to create this kind of tragic-comic stories. The military commander in the film decides to punish the whole village because he believes that they are hiding guns from him. But in the end not only does his decision not to solve the problem but make it worse than ever.







### **How can films contribute to peace?**

I believe that if I can manage to tell these tragic-comic stories of this terrible “hidden” war, then others could empathize with a region whose people have suffered for so long and are suffering from this situation. Maybe also, by sharing this knowledge, we could also help find solutions to this conflict.

### **The central image of the film is a gun but ironically, opposing the basic Chekhovian rule, it never goes off. Why is that?**

I want to show images of guns as a simple, even pitiful commodity. When Grandmother Berfê and her granddaughter try to find guns, these violent weapons become something else in their hands. They don’t know how to use them and have no desire to use them but as tools to save their beloved Temo.

### **To finish, what would you like to add?**

This film tells the stories of ordinary characters whom we seldom meet on screen. I am not interested in making a hard-nosed political statement about a situation because we know that a bad situation entails loss and suffering on both sides. That’s why I prefer to use a device and story that could bring both laughter and tears, and hopefully, leave food for thought for the audience when they leave the theatre. I sincerely hope that through the journey of these two women with the blind Dengbejs we will also discover many things about ourselves and the world we’re living in.





## ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

Born in 1970, **Hüseyin Karabey** has been making films since 1996. He graduated from the Cinema-TV department of Marmara University in 2001. His involvement in the democracy movement in the 90s and his background as a documentarian determined the style and the content of his subsequent film work.

Despite the challenging subject matter of many of his previous documentaries and short films, Karabey's work has been shown through a number of alternative channels. "Gitmek – My Marlon and Brando" is his first feature film; it was selected for 37th Rotterdam International Film Festival and did its North American premiere at 6th New York Tribeca International Film Festival where it brought Hüseyin Karabey the Best Director award. To this date, the film has been screened in 36 international film festivals and won numerous awards.

He was involved as Artistic Director in the production of an Omnibus project entitled "Do not Forget me Istanbul" where 6 internationally renowned directors each shoot a short segment about the city

## Selected Filmography

2012 – **Bir Hayatı Masal gibi Anlatmak / Life as a Fabel a Narrative**  
(Documentary – 34 min)

"Audience Award Best Documentary - Boston Turkish Film Festival-US"

2011 – **Unutma Beni İstanbul / Do Not Forget Me Istanbul**  
(Fiction Feature – 118 min)

"Best Film - Rabat Film Festival-Morocco"

Los Angeles 7th annual South East European Film Festival

"Honorable Mention and Cinematography Jury's Feature Award"

Malatya International Film Festival "Best Actress"

2010 - **Hiç Bir Karanlık Unutturamaz / No Darkness Can Make Us Forget**  
(Animation – 11 min)

"Best Animation - Istanbul International Short Film Festival - 2011"

"Best Animation - Adana International Golden Boll Film Festival - 2011"

"Best Animation - Pomegranate Film Festival - Toronto - 2011"

2008 - **Gitmek: Benim Marlon ve Brandom / My Marlon and Brando**  
(Fiction feature – 90 mins –HD)

"Tribeca Film Festival, USA (2008): Best New Narrative Filmmaker Award "

"Istanbul Film Festival, Turkey (2008): Best Actress Award "

"Jerusalem Film Festival, Israel (2008): FIPRESCI Award"

"Sarajevo Film Festival, Bosnia and Herzegovina (2008): Best Actress Award "

"Tokyo International Film Festival, Japan (2008) Best Asian-Middle Eastern Award"

"Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival, Turkey (2008) Best Supporting Actor" "Rotterdam Film Festival, the Netherlands (2008)"

2004- **Pina ile Bir Nefes / Pina Bausch Istanbul, "Breath"**  
(Documentary – 45 min. –Dvcam)

2001- **Sessiz Ölüm / Silent Death**  
(Docudrama 85 min –Dvcam)

"Prize for Tomorrow's Cinema Emile Cantillon"

1999- **Boran**

(Short film – 30 min – 35mm)

8. Tel-Aviv International Student Film Festival, - ISRAIL- 2000 "BestFilm"

8.Festival Chileno Internacional del Cortometraje – CHILE – 2000 "Best Film"

7.Corto Imola Festival Internazionale Cortometraggio – ITALY – 2000 " Special Jury Price "

5. Ismailia International Film Festival – EGYPT - 2001 "Special Jury Price "

Festival Internacional Tres Continentes del Documental – ARJANTINA - 2002 "Special Jury Price "



## CAST

Feride GEZER	Berfe
Melek ÜLGER	Jiyan
Tuncay AKDEMİR	Temo
Muhsin TOKÇU	Yaşlı Dengbej (Old Dengbej)
Ali TEKBAŞ	Mendo
Kadir İLTER	Ruhat
Murat ÇATALBAŞ	Er Osman
S. Emrah ÖZDEMİR	Uzman Çavuş Halil (Lieutenant)
Nazmi Sinan Mıhçı	Komutan (Commander)

## CREW

Director	HÜSEYİN KARABEY
Writer	HÜSEYİN KARABEY, ABİDİN PARILTI
Director of Photography	ANNE MISSELWITZ
Production Designer	FATİH ÖZÇELİK, HÜLYA KARAKAŞ
Sound	MIROSLAV BABIC
Editor	BAPTISTE GACON
Casting	EZGİ BALTAŞ
Music Composer	SERHAT BOSTANCI, ALİ TEKBAŞ, A.İMRAN ERİN
1st Assistant Director	BARIŞ HANCIOĞULLARI
Line Producer	REŞAT AYAZ
Co-Producers	ALEXANDER RIS, ELIE & ELIA MEIROVITZ
Producers	HÜSEYİN KARABEY, EMRE YEKSAN
Co Produced by	cine plus Filmproduktion GmbH FRANK EVERS, HELGE NEUBRONNER ANDREAS EICHER

## TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

2014, Color  
Length: 90 min  
Exhibition Format: DVD, Blu-ray, HD CAM, DIGI BETA, DCP  
Aspect Ratio: 16:9 or 1.85  
Shooting Format: HD  
Sound: 5.1 Audio Mix  
English, French, Germany Subtitles Available





# CONTACT

**Emre Yeksan** (Asi Film)  
Elmadağ cad. 6/3 Şişli 34373 Istanbul  
t 90 212 225 3944  
emre@yeksan.com  
www.asifilm.com

a si

KOPRUCI BULUSMALAR  
KOPRUCI BULUSMALAR  
KOPRUCI BULUSMALAR

NML

MDM  
Media Development

CNC



medienboard  
Berlin-Brandenburg



CineLink  
Sarajevo Film Festival

