

local films et A Perte de Vue
en coproduction avec Awman Production
present

NOMADS

رُحَّل

a film by
Olivier Cousse

Synopsis

Hossein, a teenage boy who is connected to the increasingly globalized world, dreams of a freer future far from his native Tangier. His mother Naïma, however, is determined not to let him follow in his brothers' tragic footsteps, and takes him to the south against his will. In this new setting he gets his first taste of romantic love and disillusionment, and eventually reconnects with his mother, whose devotion he had previously shunned.



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Interview with the director

Why is a French writer/director telling a Moroccan story?

I spent my early childhood in Morocco until, suddenly, I was snatched away. Have I gotten over the separation from this country and my mother, whose memory takes me right back, and who was taken so tragically, so soon? Have I finally granted her the full status, autonomy and consideration she deserved, shaped by a Mediterranean culture in which mothers were mothers before they became women, after bullying and neglecting her as a self-centered, possessive, jealous teenager in pursuit of life's desires?

Many years went by before I went back to Morocco. I don't know which memory I went there to revive, but I was instantly moved by the mothers there. They have a strength my mother lacked - a sort of age-old hardiness - but their silent pain and sacrifice are the same. On the other hand, I couldn't find my younger self in any of the boys, especially in light of their constant, intense desire to leave the country, whereas I had so wanted to stay.

I was at the foot of the Atlas, where I had lived as a child, when I saw a neighbour crying. I asked why, and was told that her son had just drowned while attempting to migrate to Europe. As my findings continued, I realized I wanted to tell a story. Guided by emotional and sensory memories (as opposed to factual), I took up where I left off, the wrenching departure. The approach isn't nostalgic; rather, it's about hope embracing the present, and new love. Once upon a time, in the land of my childhood, there was another mother and another son...

Hossein and Naïma

Hossein, age 17, has unwavering hope for the future. But like the whole globally connected generation, he impatiently yearns for a richer existence and is hypnotized by the Western myth of material happiness that has won over his country yet kept him at a distance. The boy dreams of living elsewhere, not as some Westerners would imagine it - the irresistible pull of their attractive, model world - but as a kind of resignation, with no other choice. His mother, Naïma, is just the opposite: firmly grounded in reality, she doesn't believe that homelands are determined by ill fate, and sees the virtue in compromise.

To me, the mother and son represent grace and heroism. Young Hossein is graceful in diving whole-heartedly into the confident current of life, until he's poisoned by disillusion; Naïma is heroic in her utter devotion to her children, all the while knowing they are condemned by their dreams. She constantly renews her selfless commitment, to the depths of her inescapable solitude, when sacrifice made her go so far - too far, rather. Each character has his way of confronting reality, keeping dissatisfaction and frustration at bay, in trying times, searching. Their frustration is social, economic, and emotional, both for Naïma, a widow, and Hossein, who is new to love; in this cultural context, relationships between boys and girls are subject to separation, suspicion, and taboo.



The Trip to the South

To the two main characters, the trip south doesn't evoke a fantasy land, where transformation is sure to ensue; it is simply a new context offering new possibilities, perhaps new helplessness as well. Naïma sees the prospect of conquering illiteracy. Hossein gains new experience through Delphine, a French girl who frees him from the constraints of local taboos perpetuated by the seductive Najet - then promptly leaves him. The alternatives are limited.

Only when they return to Tangier does Naïma reinforce her premonition of a new kind of emancipation, free of dependence on men as the only alternative to managing her destiny. She had long felt she must leave this city to protect her son, but only now Hossein, swept up in the bitterness of the increasingly hostile world, infused with relentless rage, returns to his mother's bosom - once neglected, now welcomed as a place of rest and virtuous affection. As a younger teenager, he hadn't been able to appreciate this. And finally, against all hope, his big brother comes home, his expatriate dreams crushed. Just in time, he reels in his little brother who's drifting, about to sink, carried off by the torment of his dreams.



A Word About Exile

This film is not specifically about leaving one's homeland; however, I wanted to enrich the often incomplete, biased image of expatriates by exploring some other aspects: the suffering of those who stay behind; the sense that there's no other option, though one would prefer to be closer to family; and the imperious need to leave, as a new, globalized world offers dreams of freedom, and freedom to experiment, which are often out of reach in one's native country. I also wanted to depict mankind in a free space, before illegitimate forces overtake it, and the wisdom of those who don't believe in fate. Does a twisted lottery decide where we're born? Should we fight or flee?

A Cast of Ingenues

It took months of preparation and research to find the young people who play the three brothers, cousins and friends. None of them had any acting experience. We were rewarded with some wonderful surprises. These new talents are part of the soul of the film, alongside outstanding established actors who took on the challenge of trying different combinations until we found the best.

Modern, Uncompromising Scenery

Extensive research was done here too. Thousands of kilometers were travelled, if only to find the perfect southern farm. There were no tourist clichés. There was no strict representation of a particular region. In Tangier, we constantly avoided the marked, common traces of colonialism, aiming instead for a modern-day depiction of Moroccan daily life.



Olivier Coussemaeq, director & scriptwriter

Olivier COUSSEMACQ was an assistant director for 12 years, for both television and film. He worked briefly as an assistant film editor. He directed television series, mostly for the French channels TF1 and M6. His first film, *PAROLES EN LIBERTE SURVEILLÉE*, was a documentary about the living conditions of convicts serving long-term sentences in French prisons. This film was selected at the Cinéma du réel festival in Paris.

Three short films followed: *PAS PERDUS* (which earned Jacques Penot the Prix de Interprétation Masculine at the Clermont-Ferrand International Film Festival), *LE LARBIN*, and *LA CONCIERGE EST DANS L'ASCENSEUR*, a comedy with Omar Sy and Catherine Jacob, which appeared several times on television.

He later wrote the thriller *TRAQUEE* directed by Steve Suissa, then decided to concentrate on screenwriting. His script *LE DESERT DE LA MEMOIRE* received a special mention from the jury for the Grand Prize for Best Screenplay (Sopadin). He was also selected by Emergence, the International Summer Film University, for the screenplay *CORPS ETRANGERS*.

In 2009, he directed *L'ENFANCE DU MAL* (SWEET EVIL), his first feature film, which marked the beginning of his collaboration with Nicolas Brevière and Local Films, and allowed young Anaïs Demoustier to win the Women's Interpretation Award in International Film Festival Karlovy Vary. *NOMADS* is his second feature film for Local Films. Two other feature films are currently being developed:

LA BEAUTE DU GESTE, winner of the Beaumarchais association, for Good Fortune Films and Urban Factory, with backing from EAVE and Pictanovo; *LE COMBAT*, for Local Films.



Jalila Talemsi, actress

After training at the prestigious Higher Institute of Dramatic Art in Rabat, Jalila Talemsi made her stage debut in Federico Garcia Lorca's *COMEDIE SANS TITRE*, directed by Roberto Cerda, playing the role of the actress. She then played the role of the tragedian in the play *EN ATTENDANT QUE LA NEIGE TOMBE*, written and directed by Jean Baptiste Demarigny.

She appears on television in comedy series, TV movies, and currently plays the role of the journalist in the soap opera *ALOUSTADAFONE*, directed by Naser Lahwir.

Her film career began with *ECHEC ET MAT*, directed by Othmane Naciri, in the role of Zohra.

She was voted Best Actress in Morocco and Egypt for her performance in *ANDROMAN, DE SANG ET DE CHARBON*, Azlarabe Alaoui.

Easily moving from cinema to theater, she returns to the latter immediately following the filming of *NOMADS* by Olivier Coussemaeq, for a remarkable interpretation in *LES BONNES* by Jean Genet, staged in Paris by Jawad Alassadi.





Cast

Hossein	Jamil Idrissi
Naïma	Jalila Talemsi
Aunt Zahra	Asmaa El Hadrami
Uncle Mokhtar	Mohamed Quatib
Farid	Saïd El Mokhtari
Najet	Rim Fethi
Delphine	Pauline Discry
Abdessamad	Soufiane Loukrissi
Mohamed	Hossein Senby
Karima	Fadwa Taleb
Young Belgian	Hamza Kadri
Hamid	Solaiman Rossi
Omar	Aymane Rhalib

with the friendly participation of Mohamed Nadif

Crew

Director & Scriptwriter	Olivier Coussemacq
Producers	Colette Quesson & Nicolas Brevière
Coproducer	Mohamed Nadif
Production manager	Rachida Saadi
First assistant director	Amina Saadi
Composer	Sarah Murcia
Cinematographer	Jean-Pierre Renaudat
Sound Operator	Nicolas Waschkowski
Editor	Julien Cadilhac
Color Grader	Pierre Bouchon
Sound Editor	Corinne Gigon
Sound Mixer	Frédéric Hamelin
Costume Designer	Anissa Reggab
Set Designer	Abdelmajid Aït Faqih





NOMADS by Olivier Coussemacq

France / Morocco 2018 - 87' - 4K - 2,35 - Color - Visa N°120.953

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This film received a sales advance ("avance sur recettes") from the Moroccan Film Center, backing from the Brittany region, partnership with the CNC, and the participation of TV5 Monde and the CNC.

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