



*from Abdul
to Leila*

*A film by
Leila Alabyaty*



Volte Films & Dérives present

from Abdul to Leila

A film by
Leila Albayaty

THIS FILM PARTICIPATED TO

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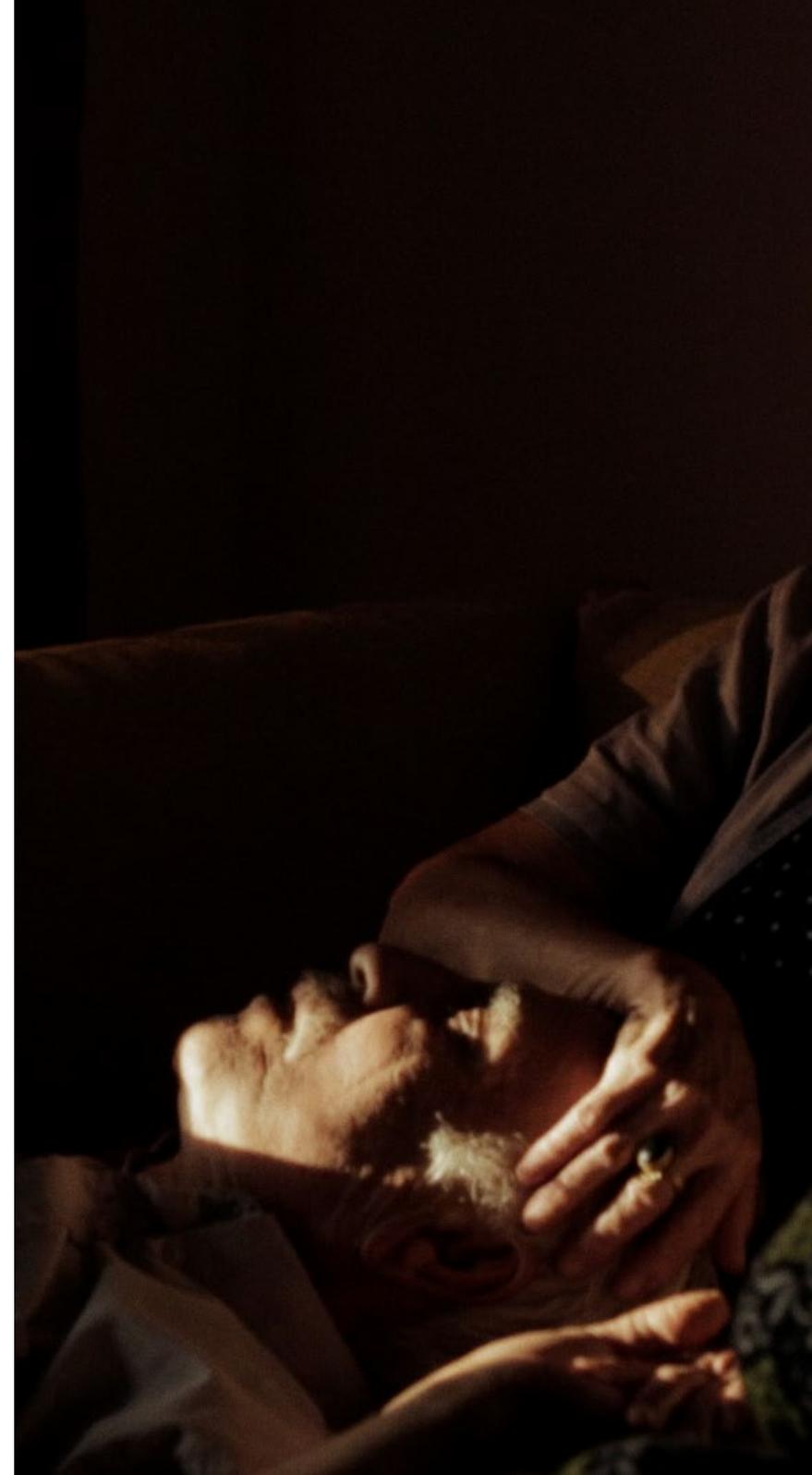
Die Beauftragte de Bundesregierung für Kultur und Medien-BKM, Centre du cinéma et de l'audiovisuel de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, Medienboard Berlin Brandenburg, Arab Fund for Art and Culture - AFAC, Doha Film Institute, Filmkunsterring, Goethe Institute of Cairo, French Institute of Tunis

[Film's website](#) | [Film's Facebook page](#)

It is the story of a young woman who, after a trauma and several years of exile, sets out to trace the political past of her father, a dissident of Saddam Hussein's regime. It is an investigation and a musical journey to the heart of today's Arab world, its language and its implosion...

SYNOPSIS

After an accident that causes her to lose her memory and several years of exile, a young Franco-Iraqi woman reconnects with her family to understand who she is. Reunited in the family home in the south of France, Leila confronts her father, Abdul, with his own past, the Iraq war, and decides to learn Arabic to put into song the poems he wrote to her. The language and the music gradually open the way to long-suppressed memories and lead her to discover her origins and the Arab world. The odyssey of a woman who sings her story to reinvent herself, inhabited by an irrepressible desire to live.



ABOUT THE FILM

It is a film about a family story. That of Leila Albayaty, Franco-Iraqi. But Iraq is a knife in the throat. She threw herself into Iraq at the age of 18, when the country was under embargo and no planes were landing. She went there, unstoppable, in a rage to discover her father's country.

But what happened there dug a deep hole, a gash. The only thing left to do was to run away. To die. To be hit by a car. and since she didn't die in this accident to forget everything, to become an amnesiac.

This film begins when Leila, after a long voluntary exile abroad, after having lived everywhere and nowhere, that is, wherever she wouldn't be forced to speak French or to testify about herself, decides to make the journey again. To go back to her country — this double culture — by accessing it through the Arabic language, through the history of her father, a former member of the Baath party. Her father began to write songs in Arabic about freedom, revolution and women choosing their own destiny.

Leila takes the daring step of singing her own voice-overs. She is like a troubairitz, a contemporary troubadour or an Arab poetess who sings and composes the episodes of her story. And, to our own surprise, we are taken with her on this journey, where she gradually abandons English and French for Arabic, a language she doesn't know, where she runs and bumps into all the things no one had ever wanted to teach her or tell her.

Ultimately, through a very personal, intimate and obstinate use of cinematic language, the director proposes a way of being reborn. To be reborn to oneself, indeed, as one would expect in a film that traces a return to one's roots. But also rebirth from horror. The film is not only a quest for identity, but also a work of post-traumatic healing, through the need to reassemble the parts of oneself, to regain the ability to be alive, to leave fear behind and to reach a form of joy and power that allows one to sing «I am a free woman».

Julie Gilbert, screenwriter and playwright.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I prefer singing to talking.

When I was young, Abdul, my father, used to talk to me all the time about Iraq, the country he had to flee.

A former member of the Baas party before Saddam Hussein came to power, he became his opponent, then exiled for years, and took refuge in France at 35 and met my French mother. I grew up in France and as a teenager I had many conflicts with my father.

At 18, without his support, I decided to go alone to Iraq.

I discovered another world, the love of my family but also the violence of a society affected by years of dictatorships, wars and sanctions.

When I returned to France, I was completely out of step, I couldn't talk about it.

I was hit by a car and almost died. I was hospitalized for a year and lost the memory of the preceding few years.

My refuge became the cinema and the music.

I was ashamed of my amnesia, ashamed of not recognising people, ashamed of the forgotten stories. I ran away from France to stop thinking about it. I constructed my denial, composed songs, and filmed to transform the reality.

I did not talk about my past and hid my Arab origins. Fifteen years later, my father wrote me texts in Arabic about exile, women's freedom... I didn't speak his language and had kept myself away from my family.

The 2015 attacks in France were a real shock. From then on, I could no longer bear my denial and I got closer to my parents. I decided to make this film, to reopen the wounds of my Iraqi history, to understand my identity problems. Singing my father's words pushed me to learn Arabic and to meet the Middle East. I spent several years in France, Berlin and Cairo filming the puzzle of my history. This return to my origins led me to become interested in geopolitics, the causes of wars and to get closer to the refugees with whom I could finally talk.

When editing, I decided to draw what I couldn't say, to mix genres from documentary to fiction, from French to Arabic, to sing my voice-over.

Leila Albayaty

BIOGRAPHY



Leila Albayaty is a French-Iraqi singer, composer, film director, scenarist and actress, based in Brussels and Berlin.

Her first short film, **VU**, had its world premiere at the **Berlinale 2009**, where it received a **special mention of jury**. As well as directing the film, she played the starring role and composed the soundtrack. Building on the experience of this first directing adventure, she went on to make her first feature, **BERLIN TELEGRAM** that went at more than **30 festivals** around the world and was shown in the Arab world premiere at the Dubai Film Festival. It won **TV5 award for Best Francophone Film** at Tous Ecrans Geneva, and the **Best Cinematography at Achtung Berlin**.

In 2015, she directed **FACE B**, a docu-fiction musical of 40' which had its world premiere at the **Berlinale Forum Expanded 2015**.

BERLIN TELEGRAM and **FACE B** are distributed by **Arsenal** in Germany

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Website](#)

FILMOGRAPHY



VU, 25' (2009)
Short fiction

Berlinale (Germany) Special Jury Mention
IndieLisboa (Portugal)
Molodist (Ukraine)
Palich (Serbia)

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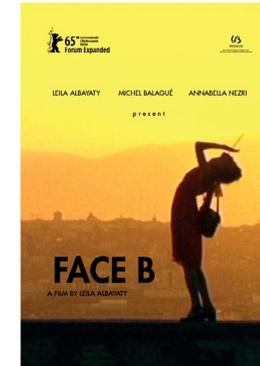


BERLIN TELEGRAM, 80' (2012)
Feature film

Festival of Dubaï in Arabic competition (Dubai)
Opening in the Goethe Institut in Cairo (Egypt)
Gulf Film festival (Dubai)
Arabic Film Festival in Rotterdam (Holland)
Festival de films d'auteurs de Rabat (Morocco)
World Premiere in Mons (Belgium)
Indielisbao (Portugal)
Women Films (Chainai-Inde)
Tübingen (Allemagne)
Cinémania (Quebec)
Mar del Plata (Argentina)
Festival le 7ème Continent (Paris)
Achtung Berlin (Germany)
Festival Alfilm (Berlin)
Festival de Rabat (Maroc)

Prix TV5 : Meilleur film francophone
Tous Ecrans, Genève : Prix Meilleure Cinématographie
Achtung Berlin
Distributed by Arsenal

[Click here for the trailer](#)
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FACE B, 40' (2015)
Medium length docudrama

Berlinale Forum expanded 2015 (Germany)
Mexico Distrital (Mexico)
Berlin Art Film Festival (Germany)
Créteil Women's Film Festival (France).

Distributed by Arsenal

[Click here for the trailer](#)
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TECHNICAL INFO

2022

Feature film - Fiction/Documentary/Musical

Colour - 92min - 16:9 / Stereo 5.1 - DCP - EN and FR subs

With

Leila Albayaty
Abdul Albayaty
Simone Albayaty
Dalia Naous

Director's assistants

Zoé Nutchey
David Deboudt

Image

Jonathan Bricheux
Zoé Nutchey

Editing

Barbara Bossuet

Sound

Nicolas Pommier

Sound Editing

Gabor Ripli

Mixing

Mikaël Barre

Colour Grading

Sergi Sanchez

Original music and Drawings

Leila Albayaty

Lyrics

Abdul Ilah Albayaty
Leila Albayaty

TRACKLISTING

[Vrai Faux](#) [01.31]

Flame [02.38]

Mon père m'a appelée [02.20]

Je vais en France [01.49]

[Yallah Sahebni](#) [02.15]

18 ans [01.48]

L'écharpe [01.38]

The road to the right [01.49]

J'en ai marre de mon père [01.36]

Repeat to fade [01.55]

Amnesia [02.04]

Limatha [01.24]

Wahdi [02.36]

Oumi [01.34]

Geographia [01.55]

[Folana](#) [01.32]

Sahebni [02.22]

Folana Pizz [01.55]

Moutakhaliba [02.45]

Baha [02.46]

Ana Hura Intro [01.44]

[Ana Hura](#) [05.15]

Lyrics : Abdul Ilah Albayaty and Leila Albayaty.

Composed and arranged by Leila Albayaty, Amélie Legrand, Kouzylarsen,
Hassan Al Hanafy, Romain Rossi, Mohamed Baaz.

Additional songs by Marie Laure Bérault, Maurice Louca, Wassim Mukdad.





SONG

أنا حر
دمي من بغداد
أنا قطعة من الجمرة
أسأل أجدادي
انا ثورة
أنا أغني لبلدي
أنا أغني لبلدي

أنا حر
أنا لا أقبل سيد
أنا قطعة من الجمرة
من بيني وبيتك
انا ثورة
غدا سيكون جديدا

أنا حر
أنا قطعة من الجمرة
انا ثورة
أنا ثمين

I'm free
My blood is from Baghdad
I am a piece of ember
ask my ancestors
i am a revolution
I sing for my country
I sing for my country

I'm free
I do not accept a master
I am a piece of ember
Who builds and innovates
i am a revolution
Tomorrow will be new

I'm free
I am a piece of ember
i am a revolution
i am precious

Je suis libre
Mon sang est de Baghdad
AJe suis un morceau de braise
Demande à mes ancêtres
Je suis une révolution
Je chante pour mon pays
Je chante pour mon pays

Je suis libre
Je n'accepte pas un maître
Je suis un morceau de braise
Qui construit et innove
Je suis une révolution
Demain sera nouveau

Je suis libre
Je suis un morceau de braise
Je suis une révolution
Je suis précieuse

ANA HURA JE SUIS LIBRE

Ana Hura
Dam ei Baghdadi
Ana Jamra
Is el Ajdadi
Ana Thowra
Breni Li Bledi
Breni Li Bledi

Ana Hura
Ma akhbel say id
Ana Jamra
Bibni wa bchaid
Ana Thowra
Boukra ha djdid

Ana Hura
Ana Jamra
Ana Thowra
Ana Dorra

[Click here to listen](#)

Lyrics by Abdul Albaty

Composed by Leila Albaty

Voice: Leila Albaty

Piano: Hekmat AlkassarSythetisor

Bass, drums: Mohammed Bazz

Arranged and produced by Mohammed Baaz

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CONTACTS

VOLTE FILMS

Michel Balagué

Weichsel Str. 9 — 12043 Berlin

michel@volte-films.com

+49 16096625161

volte-films.com

DÉRIVES

Julie Freres

Rue de Mulhouse, 36 — 4020 Liège

info@derives.be

+32 43424939

www.derives.be