

Locarno 2005 In Competition - Toronto 2005 Discovery

A Perfect Day

by Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige

France/Lebanon - 2005 - 88min - 35mm - Colour

Stuck in a traffic jam, Malek catches a fleeting glance of the beautiful Zeina the woman he loves. Tapping text messages into his mobile phone he desperately tries to get through to her, but it's clear, she no longer wants to see him. She vanishes into the throng of midday Beirut traffic.

The young man has a syndrome which interrupts his breathing during sleep. Whenever he stops moving, he dozes off adding to his disorientation. His mother Claudia has still not accepted his father's disappearance after 15 years. She stays at home should her husband return, Malek drives around the city alone in his car. Each of them trying to live with a void of lost love.

But today may be the "perfect day" to lay their ghosts to rest. Malek is taking his hesitant mother to declare her husband officially dead in the "absence of a body". And that evening, in a trendy nightclub where the young of Beirut go to dance and forget their troubles, Zeina looks ready to give Malek a second shot at the love he so yearns for.

Directed by: Joana HADJITHOMAS and Khalil JOREIGE

Screenplay: Joana HADJITHOMAS and Khalil JOREIGE

Photography: Jeanne LAPOIRIE

Editing: Tina BAZ- LE GAL

Sound: Guillaume LE BRAZ, Sylvain MALBRAN, Olivier GOINARD

Music: Scrambled Eggs - Soap Kills

Art direction: Sophie KHAYAT

Cast:

Ziad SAAD (Malek)

Julia KASSAR (Claudia)

Alexandra KAHWAGI (Zeina)

a
a film by Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige
PERFECT
DAY




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DIRECTORS'

NOTE

This is a personal story. The uncle of Khalil is one of the 17,000 persons reported missing in Beirut during the war. They left their homes one morning, one evening, and never came back. Where are they? Beirut is a small city in the midst of reconstruction, the ground is constantly being excavated and yet nothing has been found. No mass graves, no traces. For us, the trauma of disappearance has not faded with time. It is an abyss, a chasm, and at the same time a wealth of possibilities.

Is it necessary to forget, or to the contrary, by denying our phantoms do we risk denying ourselves, becoming like the living-dead who no longer see, no longer hear, and no longer feel?

It is also the story of a generation, ours, which Malek belongs to. Young people with humdrum existences who let themselves be carried along by daily life. Trapped between the guilt of a dark past that is difficult to assume and the anguish of an uncertain future in a politically unstable region, how can they live in the present, love, construct, find their place in society?

Things are in a state of latency, the present is hard to live in, or else lived out "hysterically" in the nights of Beirut, nights where people go out to forget themselves, lose themselves. They go to clubs and bars in search of a community, to try to find a rhythm, to reclaim their bodies and those of others.

It is a film shot in the cut. Reality is not reconstituted. On the contrary, we decided to insert ourselves into reality, filming in public places in a documentary-like manner. At times the shots are stolen, provoked. We created situations to capture this energy, to enable the story to come to pass.

"A Perfect Day" is a film about sensations, atmosphere, mind frames, wrong tracks and vivid situations in the fascinating and paradoxical town that is Beirut today.

BIOGRAPHY

FILMOGRAPHY

Born in Beirut in 1969, Khalil and Joana have worked together as both artists and filmmakers, shooting fiction films and documentaries.

In 1999, they wrote and directed their first fiction feature film "Al Bayt el zaher" (Around the Pink House), a Franco-Canadian-Lebanese co-production.

Then in 2000 they made "Khiam", a 52-minute documentary, and in 2003 they presented a documentary essay: "El film el mafkoud" (The Lost Film).

These two documentaries were shown at a large number of film festivals as well as in numerous art centers and international museums.

At the end of 2003, they returned to fiction with a short feature film entitled "Ramad" (Ashes) which was selected for the 2005 Cesar Awards.

In addition, they are the creators of various art installations that have been exhibited in galleries and institutions around the world.

They are both teachers in Beirut, Joana teaches screenwriting, Khalil esthetics and experimental video.

Their work focuses on the themes of latency, the emergence of the individual in community societies, the relationship to images, to representations, of the difficulty of living in the present, of writing History.

"A Perfect Day" is their second feature film.

1999	Around the Pink House - FEATURE FILM
2000	Khiam - DOCUMENTARY
2003	The Lost Film - DOCUMENTARY
2003	Ashes - SHORT FILM
2005	A Perfect Day - FEATURE FILM

