

OFFICIAL SELECTION
UN CERTAIN REGARD
FESTIVAL DE CANNES

DJEGA

CHILDREN OF SARAJEVO
ENFANTS DE SARAJEVO

a film by AIDA BEGIĆ

Rahima, 23 ans, et son frère Nedim, 14 ans, sont des orphelins de la guerre de Bosnie. Ils vivent à Sarajevo, dans cette société transitoire qui a perdu toute compassion pour les enfants de ceux qui sont morts pendant le siège de la ville. Après une adolescence délinquante, Rahima a trouvé un réconfort dans l'Islam, elle espère que Nedim suivra ses pas. Tout se complique le jour où à l'école, celui-ci se bat avec le fils d'un puissant ministre du pays. Cet incident déclenche une série d'événements qui conduiront Rahima à découvrir la double vie de son jeune frère...



NOTE D'INTENTION DE LA RÉALISATRICE

GENESE

PREMIERES NEIGES, mon premier long métrage, racontait l'histoire d'un groupe de femmes qui avaient perdu tous leurs hommes lors des massacres en Bosnie de l'Est. Le récit suivait leur lutte pour survivre après la guerre, en 1997.

Durant le développement de PREMIERES NEIGES, nous avons beaucoup parlé de ce que nous appelions "le rêve bosnien". A cette période, nous croyions en la reconstruction de notre société. Lorsque j'ai envisagé le sujet de mon second film, j'ai essayé de comprendre dans quelle sorte de société nous vivions aujourd'hui, ce qui avait changé depuis l'époque où nous développions PREMIERES NEIGES... J'ai alors réalisé qu'aujourd'hui nous ne croyons plus à cette reconstruction et que nous avons remplacé nos rêves par nos souvenirs.

J'ai remarqué que quand mes amis et moi discutions de la guerre, nous en parlions toujours de manière particulièrement vive, passionnée. Je me suis alors demandé si le temps de la guerre n'avait pas été la seule période pendant laquelle nous avions véritablement vécu. Notre vie pendant la guerre était-elle vraiment meilleure ou avons-nous ce sentiment parce cette époque est maintenant derrière nous ? Les gens étaient-ils vraiment plus humains pendant cette période, qui fut la plus difficile de l'histoire de notre ville, ou a-t-on ce sentiment aujourd'hui parce que nous étions alors tous exactement dans la même situation désespérée ? Que penser de ceux d'entre nous qui n'ont même plus de souvenirs de ce que ma génération appelle "la vie normale" d'avant la guerre ?

TRANSITION

La transition est un moment de transformation. Elle implique le changement, la métamorphose, ce qui ne revêt pas toujours une connotation négative. Mais la Bosnie est dans une période de transition qu'elle n'arrive pas àachever depuis seize ans déjà. Un sentiment dominant d'impuissance et une incapacité à envisager le futur en résultent. Près de vingt ans après la fin de la guerre, nous vivons encore dans un "présent" infini et avons toujours peur du futur.

Comme dans presque tous les pays qui connaissent ce destin, la transition est un terreau pour le maintien de l'injustice, de la corruption, de la violence et de beaucoup d'autres phénomènes sociaux néfastes. Ceux qui étaient en bas de l'échelle sociale sont parfois devenus riches très rapidement et ont des positions influentes, alors que d'autres qui ont refusé d'accepter les nouvelles règles du jeu les ont remplacés tout en bas de l'échelle.

CHACUN EST "L'AUTRE"

Au restaurant où elle travaille, les collègues de Rahima se comportent comme une famille dysfonctionnelle, où chacun à sa façon diffère de la norme sociale. Portant le voile, Rahima est automatiquement marginalisée, car les préjugés à l'égard des femmes voilées sont les mêmes à Sarajevo que dans le reste du monde. Bien qu'elle porte le foulard, Rahima n'est pas si différente des filles de son âge - chez elle, elle écoute la même musique, elle aime, hait, fait des erreurs et vit sa vie comme les autres filles "normales". Mais à cause de ses convictions religieuses, elle est perçue comme "l'autre", comme étant "différente" et est discriminée. Le chef cuisinier, Davor, appartient à la minorité croate et est homosexuel. Son appartenance ethnique et sa sexualité le placent dans la

Rahima (23) and Nedim (14) are orphans of the Bosnian war. They live in Sarajevo, a transitional society that has lost its moral compass, including in the way it treats children of the people who were killed fighting for the freedom of their city. After crime-prone adolescent years, Rahima has found comfort in Islam and she hopes her brother will follow in her footsteps. Everything becomes more difficult the day Nedim gets into a fistfight at school with the son of a local strongman. This incident triggers a chain of events leading Rahima to discover that her young brother leads a double life...



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

GENESIS

SNOW, my first feature film, was a story about a group of women whose male family members had been killed in war-time massacres in eastern Bosnia. It followed their struggle to survive in 1997, the immediate post-war period.

While working on SNOW, we talked a lot about something we called "Bosnian dream". At that time, we had a dream and we believed in reconstruction of our society. When I was contemplating what my second feature film could be about, I was trying to find out what kind of a society we live in today, what has changed since the time we worked on SNOW. I realized that we do not believe in the reconstruction of our society anymore and that we had replaced dreams with memories.

I noticed that when my friends and I start talking about the war, we suddenly become passionate and lively. I started to wonder if the war time was not the only period of our life when we had truly lived. I wonder if our life during the war was really better than our life today or does it just feel that way because the war is something that we had left behind. Were people really more human in the most difficult period in the history of our city or it just felt that way because we were all equally miserable? And what about those of us who have no recollection of what my generation refers to as "normal (pre-war) life"?

TRANSITION

Transition is the state of transformation. It implies change, metamorphosis and does not necessarily have a negative connotation. However, in Bosnia, transition lasts for sixteen years already. For sixteen years we have been unable to overcome the phase of transition from one state to another. The result of this is a prevailing sense of helplessness and inability to think about and plan for the future. Nearly two decades after the war, we live in an endless "today" and are afraid to look into a "tomorrow".

As in most other countries with similar destiny, transition is proving to be a perfect breeding ground for injustice, corruption, violence and many other negative social phenomena. People who used to be at the bottom of the social ladder have become rich overnight and have reached the positions of power while others who refused to accept the new dirty "rules of the game" have replaced them at the bottom.

EVERYONE IS THE 'OTHER'

Rahima's work colleagues behave as a dysfunctional family, united on the account of each being different in some way from the socially prescribed norm. Rahima wears a headscarf and this automatically qualifies her for social marginality because the prejudice about women who practice hijab is equally strong in Sarajevo as elsewhere in the world. But although she wears a headscarf, Rahima is not much different from other girls of her age - at home, she listens to the same music as her peers, she loves, hates, makes mistakes and lives her life just like other "normal" girls do. Still, because of her religious convictions she is perceived as "the other", as "different" and is therefore discriminated against. The restaurant chef, Davor, is a member

of the minority Croat population and is also a homosexual. Davor's ethnic identity and his sexual orientation earn him a place on the list of "unaccepted". Waiter Dino is a junky, restaurant manager Vedrana is cruel because her husband embraced radical teaching of Islam known as Wahhabism and had taken their children away from her...

There is an interesting Sufi tale about two birds - a raven and a pigeon - who become best friends. When everyone starts to wonder what the two birds that are so different from one another might have in common, they notice that each is missing a leg. Just like the two birds, the restaurant employees are united by their shared pain and shortcomings.

MEMORY

Most of the people all over the planet have some idea of what a war looks like. They picture it based on images they see on TV. TV images create something we could describe as "a general picture of war". But the people who have the real experience of war see a different picture. Because during the war, people do or at least try to live their life as if the situation were normal.

During the Sarajevo siege, for example, we produced theatre performances and films, we organized parties, we celebrated our birthdays. Children played just like they do everywhere in the world. There is a huge archive of video materials filmed by the Sarajevo citizens during the siege. What these images show is personal, simple, human side of the war. They are much closer to the personal experience and memory of war than what you can see on TV. Ordinary peoples' war-time videos show what regular life was like during the siege and are closest to our intimate memories of that time which are difficult to explain in words. These are the images/memories of horror, but also of beauty. They show that resistance with guns is not the only form of resistance. Showing strength and ability to live normally in abnormal times is also a form of resistance.

Basically, using ordinary peoples' war-time video archives to illustrate Rahima's memories, I want to share and explore the intimate recollections of one of the hardest situations a person can live through. The film plot justifies this, but I came to this decision also because I personally feel need to talk about my own experience and memory of war.

Can someone whose past is as traumatic as Rahima's find humanity and how? In solving her problem, will she opt for construction or destruction?

CONTRAST

I see contrast as the key feature of the film's visual identity. Contrast between rich and poor, between life and death, past and present, reality and illusion, freedom and imprisonment. Paradoxically, all these things coexist in DJECA. The main character, from whose point of view the story is told, is a microcosm of all the above contrasts. Rahima is the paradigm of the confusing post-war reality. By following the main character, using shoulder-held camera style, I want the observer to join this young woman on her travel through emotions.

CONTRASTES

Le contraste est pour moi l'élément clé de l'identité visuelle du film. Contraste entre riches et pauvres, entre vie et mort, passé et présent, réalité et illusion, liberté et emprisonnement. Paradoxalement, tout cela coexiste dans DJECA. Le personnage principal, dont le film suit le point de vue, rassemble tous ces contrastes. Rahima est le paradigme de cette réalité complexe de la période d'après-guerre. En suivant le personnage principal, caméra à l'épaule, j'ai souhaité que le spectateur rejoigne la jeune femme dans son voyage à travers ses émotions.



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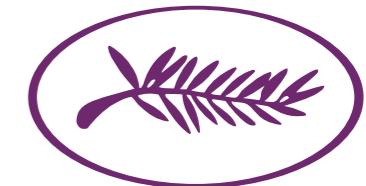
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2012 - Bosnian - 35MM / DCP - 90mn - Color - 1:85 - Dolby SRD

Aida Begić was born in Sarajevo in 1976. She graduated directing at Sarajevo Academy of Performing Arts in 2000. Her graduation film FIRST DEATH EXPERIENCE was presented at The Cinefondation Official Selection of 2001 Cannes Film Festival and won numerous awards at festivals worldwide. In 2003 she wrote and directed her second short film NORTH WENT MAD. Her debut feature film SNOW was shown at Cannes 2008 - Semaine de la critique and won the Grand Prix and numerous following awards all around the world. Aida Begić is teaching directing at The Academy of Performing Arts Sarajevo and has directed numerous documentaries, commercials, videos and promotional films. In 2009 she founded an independent production company FILM HOUSE. Her second feature film DJECA (Children of Sarajevo) is selected in Un Certain Regard - Official Selection of the Cannes Film Festival 2012.

Marija Pikić Rahima
Ismir Gagula Nedim
Nikola Đuričko Tarik
Staša Dukić Selma
Velibor Topić Meliċ

Director **Aida Begić**
Screenplay **Aida Begić**
Photography **Erol Zubčević**
Sound **Igor Čamo**
Editing **Miralem Zubčević**
Costumes **Sanja Džeba**
Set Designer **Sanda Popovac**
Producer **Aida Begić / FILM HOUSE SARAJEVO**
Co-producers
Benny Drechsel & Karsten Stöter / ROH FILM
François d'Artemare / LES FILMS DE L'APRES-MIDI
Semih Kaplanoglu / KAPLAN FILM



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