



Presents

IN BETWEEN

(*BAR BAHAR*)

A film by Maysaloun Hamoud

“(a) sparkling, taboo-breaking first feature” – Deborah Young, *The Hollywood Reporter*



Israel / 2016 / Drama / Hebrew, Arabic with English Subtitles
103 min / 2.40: 1 / 2.0 and 5.1 Surround Sound

**Opens January 5th at Landmark Sunshine Cinema in New York City
& January 12th at Laemmle Ahrya Fine Arts in Los Angeles**

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ASSETS

Official Trailer: <https://youtu.be/-pgGL7F6Wu0>

Downloadable hi-res images:

<http://www.filmmovement.com/filmcatalog/index.asp?MerchandiseID=560>

SYNOPSIS

Lalia (Mouna Hawa), Salma (Sana Jammeli), and Nur (Shaden Kanboura) share an apartment in the vibrant heart of Tel Aviv. Lalia, a criminal lawyer with a wicked wit, loves to burn off her workday stress in the underground club scene. Salma, slightly more subdued, is a DJ and bartender. Nur is a younger, religious Muslim girl who moves into the apartment in order to study at the university. Nur is both intrigued and intimidated by her two sophisticated roommates. When her conservative fiancé visits, he is horrified by her secular friends, entreating her to hasten their marriage, leave Tel Aviv, and assume her rightful role as a wife. She refuses, and his violent rebuttal leaves all of the women shaken. Salma and Lalia also face turmoil: Lalia has found love with a modern Muslim man whose acceptance proves less than unconditional, and Salma discovers that her Christian family in a northern Galilean village is not as liberal as they claim. These three very different women find themselves doing the same balancing act between tradition and modernity, citizenship and culture, fealty and freedom.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

In Arab-Israeli female director Maysaloun Hamoud's feature debut, three Palestinian women sharing an apartment in the heart of Tel Aviv find themselves doing the same balancing act between tradition and modernity, citizenship and culture, fealty and freedom. Lalia, a criminal lawyer, loves to burn off her workday stress in the underground club scene. Salma, a DJ and bartender, starts a budding relationship with a female medical intern. And their new roommate Nur is a younger, religious Muslim university student whose conservative fiancé is horrified by her secular friends.

LOGLINE

Three Palestinian women living in an apartment in Tel Aviv try to find a balance between traditional and modern culture.



SELECT PRESS FOR *IN BETWEEN*

"After watching Maysaloun Hamoud's sparkling, taboo-breaking first feature **IN BETWEEN** (*Bar Bahar*), audiences will have to seriously update their ideas about the lifestyle of Palestinian women in Israel."- Deborah Young, *The Hollywood Reporter*

"While films and TV series about the trials and tribulations of female friends living, loving, and working in a big city may be fairly common, Arab-Israeli writer-director Maysaloun Hamoud refreshes the genre's tropes with her energetic feature debut **IN BETWEEN**....While the entire cast is aces, the three leads, and the chemistry among them, are especially fine."- Alissa Simon, *Variety*

"**IN BETWEEN**'s central trio also illuminates the firm bond between women under threat from the same forces...[and] provides a glimpse of the battle faced by women of a younger generation with a crucial fighting spirit."- Sarah Ward, *Screen Daily*

"**IN BETWEEN** hails from Israel, and is one of the best recent films to come out of that country, or anywhere for that matter. It works as both a cri de coeur and the movie equivalent of a page-turner."- Kent Turner, *Film Forward*

"The film is a delight, and was one of the highlights of TIFF 2016." – Alex Heeney, *Seventh Row*

"The storytelling, character development and acting are mesmerizing" – Michael Jacobs, *Atlanta Jewish Times*

"**IN BETWEEN** is a vibrant, modern, and sometimes heartbreaking story of three Palestinian women sharing an apartment in Tel Aviv....**IN BETWEEN** focuses on the bounds of sisterhood and the strength it takes to forge one's own path with the confidence to be exactly who you are." – Adam Lubitow, *Rochester City-News*



CREDITS

CAST

Lalia	Mouna Hawa
Salma	Sana Jammelih
Nur	Shaden Kanboura
Ziad	Mahmoud Shalaby
Wissam	Henry Andrawes
Salah	Aiman Sohel Daw
Qays	Riahd Sliman
Dunya	Ahlam Canaan
Rabia	Ferass Naser
Salma's mother	Khawlah Dipsy
Salma's father	Suhail Hadad
Nur's father	Eyad Sheety
George	Amir Khuri



CREW

Director	Maysaloun Hamoud
Producer	Shlomi Elkabetz
Screenplay	Maysaloun Hamoud
Co-Producer	Galith Cahlon Tony Copti Sandrine Brauer
Costumes	Catherine Van Bree
Cinematography	Itai Gross
Editors	Lev Goldser Nili Feller
Original Music	MG Saad

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Born in Budapest in 1982, Palestinian writer and director Maysaloun Hamoud grew up in Dier Hanna, a village in northern Israel. After completing her B.A in Middle Eastern History at the Hebrew University and graduating with a master's degree in history from the University of Jerusalem, she decided to study filmmaking at the Minshar School of Art in Tel Aviv, graduating with distinction. She has been living in Jaffa for the past 8 years.

FILMOGRAPHY (SHORT FILMS)

- 2012 – SALMA
- 2010 – SCENT OF MORNING
- 2009 – SHADES OF LIGHT



DIRECTOR'S INTERVIEW

i24NEWS's Kaid Abu Latif spoke with Maysaloun Hamoud about her movie and the new Palestinian avant-garde.

How was IN BETWEEN born?

We were at an important historical point in time, just at the beginning of the formation of the new Palestinian cultural scene, with groundbreaking parallel revolutions in the Arab world around us. We felt it was time to come up with a new voice. Now, we told ourselves, the existing order is being brought down and new and healthy societies are being built, societies which can promote citizens from the grim reality, as we know it, since the beginning of the era of nation-states. With this spirit the idea for the film was born.

Is the movie based on your personal experiences of living between Tel Aviv and Jaffa?

The realism of the film's cinematic language means it remains faithful to the world it represents. What the protagonists perceive as normal – the pubs they hang out at, the dress code, the way they talk – is actually Tel Aviv's Palestinian underground scene.

And since I'm part of that scene, you could say I captured my life in the film. The plot lines don't closely match my biography but I drew inspiration from the things around me and real people in my life. The milieu captured in the film didn't come out of nowhere, it runs parallel to similar scenes across the Arab world, in cities such as Beirut, Cairo, Amman, Tunis and others.

Being the child of a Communist Party member, my earliest memories are of my father carrying me on his shoulders during the May Day parade. No doubt this has affected and created many influences. Books by Emil Habibi, Darwish, Tawfik Ziad, Ghassan Kanafani, Naji al-Ali, and Márquez were accessible at my home, as were other milestones of Arab and world culture.

Can you describe what you mean by "Palestinian avant-garde"?

I mean by that the community of young Palestinians, the oldest of whom are in their thirties. They live in an urban space, mostly in Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Haifa and Jerusalem. It's made up of the trailblazer generation, who paved the way, and the generation who are 10 years younger and followed in their footsteps. The vast majority, if not all, of the trailblazers experienced the events of October 2000 as teenagers; it was their big conscious-forming moment. In retrospective, you could say these young people were molded in the years following the October 2000 events, at universities and in the activist community which was on fire during the second Intifada.

Students and young activists, cadres of Arab political parties in the country, flooded the streets in demonstrations and strikes which were marked by a secular and free spirited struggle. The struggle was heterogeneous, girls and boys were equally active, and the struggle did not confine itself only to the national aspects. Questions concerning sexual liberation, sexual identities and feminist consciousness were an integral part of the social experience that allowed the scene to grow.

By the way, these youngsters grew up as I did - on the classical Arab poetry of al-Mutnabbi and Abo Nawas, which I quote in the film, as well as many others like the national modern poets, Muzaffar al-Nawab, Mahmoud Darwish, and Adonis, who deal with freedom as a fundamental part of their writings.

It takes great boldness to deal with sexuality and homosexuality in the Arab world. To what extent were you bothered by the question of acceptance of the film and its issues?

Once you express your world view and your manifest, there's no turning back. Either do something real or don't do it at all. At least that is the way I see things.

The youthful spirit of the Arab Spring did not pass over Palestine/Israel. We were all there with our souls. In one moment cries of "*Kefaya*" (Arabic for "Enough") left the mouths of millions of young people who were tired of the old biases based on oppression, patriarchy, sexism, exclusion, repression of homosexuality and the perpetuation of traditional codes that were aimed at securing the existing order.

The "Enough!" is an expression of a conscious change that is happening in the younger generation. This generation can no longer continue playing with codes that aren't relevant anymore. We must put things on the table, as long as we continue to sweep the fears under the carpet, the carpet will rise and we will all stumble into the darkness that overshadows our freedom. If we don't shake out the carpet and deal with things now it will be too late and degeneration will conquer.

If the question is whether I am afraid of hostile reactions to the film, I can say that I am not naïve, and I'm sure there will be "stigmatizing" following the film, and even hostility towards me personally, but that's part of the price that has to be paid for changing consciousness, which is the reason I make films. I am concerned about the degree to which the film is accepted only in respect to its ability to create a lively dialogue around the issues it deals with. Whether or not this will happen, I do not know.

Did you try to present a new type of Arab femininity or Palestinian feminism through the film?

I think it's time to bring more Palestinian female representations to Palestinian cinematography. The stereotype of a woman always being someone's mother, sister, or daughter has already ignited itself. There is a new era which is opening up - one in which a woman is staged in the center and not just behind the male characters.

In most cases, the direct political story is the one of importance, the one in which Palestinian women are usually represented as being victimized. I want to show that women exist among us, but are, at the same time, transparent in cinematic imagery. The film presents a range of female figures, young and old, town and country dwellers, more traditional and less traditional, while ensuring real femininity and not just one model of beauty.

My heroines bring their dreams to the screen. Sexuality, activism, and liberation from men can be feminist even if that word does not necessarily define them. Many religious women act in a feminist way without calling it that, it doesn't really matter. The point is that each one can free herself in her own way and she doesn't have to be liberal or secular to be freed.

The film is almost entirely in Arabic, but much of the crew who worked on it did not speak Arabic, how did it work in practice?

I knew I was going to juggle between the two languages, because working with the actors was in Arabic and with the crew, it was mostly Hebrew. At first it was a bit strange that Arabic got the focus, and there were those who felt threatened, as if someone pulled the rug from under their feet, because they did not know the language and didn't understand everything that was going on. But slowly it began to be fun because the crew knew the script and gradually started to realize what was going on in between the shots. And even those who felt animosity started to use the language.

At the end of filming, Arabic became common, and I was thrilled that I managed to break this barrier and it was good for everyone.

Where do you "place" the film in relation to other contemporary films made in the Arab world?

An Arab New Wave has begun to emerge. As we have been influenced by the spirit of the Arab Spring and because we are similar to many friends in the Arab world we can see a new wave of realism also in Tunisia and Lebanon and Amman, with emphasis on freedom and liberation. This thread links artists despite the geographical distance. Today, with the Internet being a world of its own, close relationships are formed and collaborations are happening.

AWARDS

- Young Talent Award, chosen by Kering Women in Motion Award-winner Isabelle Huppert presented at 2017 Cannes International Film Festival
- Winner – NETPAC Award, 2016 Toronto International Film Festival
- Winner – Best Film, 2016 San Sebastián International Film Festival
- Winner – Best Debut Feature, 2016 Haifa International Film Festival
- Winner – Fedeora Award for Artistic Achievement in an Israeli, Feature Film, 2016 Haifa International Film Festival, recognizing the three main actresses
- Winner – New Directors Award, 2017 Kosmorama-Trondheim International Film Festival
- Winner – FIPRESCI Prize, 2017 Istanbul International Film Festival
- Winner – Jury Award, Narrative Feature 2017 Berkshire International Film Festival
- Winner – Special Jury Prize, Jeonju International Film Festival

SELECT FESTIVALS

- 2016 Toronto International Film Festival
- 2016 San Sebastián International Film Festival
- 2016 Haifa International Film Festival
- 2016 Zagreb Film Festival
- 2017 Palm Springs International Film Festival
- 2017 Göteborg International Film Festival
- 2017 Miami Jewish Film Festival
- 2017 Atlanta Jewish Film Festival
- 2017 Santa Barbara International Film Festival
- 2017 Glasgow Film Festival
- 2017 Kosmorama-Trondheim International Film Festival
- 2017 Cleveland International Film Festival
- 2017 Sarasota Film Festival
- 2017 Istanbul International Film Festival
- 2017 Chicago Palestinian Film Festival
- 2017 Berkshire International Film Festival
- 2017 Jeonju International Film Festival
- 2017 Outfest Los Angeles LGBT Film Festival
- 2017 Odessa International Film Festival
- 2017 San Francisco Jewish Film Festival



ABOUT FILM MOVEMENT

Film Movement is a North American distributor of award-winning independent and foreign films based in New York City, which recently celebrated its 15th Anniversary with a month-long film series at the Museum of the Moving Image. As a company, Film Movement has released more than 250 feature films and shorts culled from prestigious film festivals worldwide, and last year it had its first Academy-Award®-nominated film, Naji Abu Nowar's THEEB. Film Movement's theatrical distribution strategy has evolved to include promising American independent films, documentaries, and an even stronger slate of foreign art house titles. Its catalog includes titles by directors such as Hirokazu Kore-eda, Maren Ade, Jessica Hausner, Andrei Konchalovsky, Andrzej Wajda, Diane Kurys, Ciro Guerra and Melanie Laurent. In 2015, Film Movement launched its reissue label Film Movement Classics, featuring new restorations released theatrically as well as on Blu-ray and DVD, including films by such noted directors as Eric Rohmer, Peter Greenaway, Bille August, Marleen Gorris, Takeshi Kitano, Arturo Ripstein, and Ettore Scola. For more information, please visit www.filmmovement.com.