

Press Kit

mec film presents

MY DREAM HOUSE (BEIT CHALOMOTAI)

A film by Ran Tal
Israel 2005

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World Sales

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Images for download : www.mecfilm.de

Jury statement

For the director's ability to enliven an abstract idea - relating the dream of building a home as a vision for a peaceful life in Israel, which has been thwarted by history; succeeds as an ambitious visualisation of the complex issues of daily life in Israel.

Mayor Award DocAviv

(Jury: Klaus Eder, Mike Maggiore, Thomas Balmes, Ronit Matalon, Yaov Shamir)

Short Notice

My Dream House had its World Premiere at DocAviv, the Tel Aviv International Documentary Film Festival, and was awarded with the MAYOR AWARD and the BEST SOUND DESIGN Award. The film follows the stories of four families from different parts of Israel trying to build their own "Dream House". This process forces them to deal with their identity, their past and their hope for a safer and better future.

Synopsis

Four families in Israel/Palestine built their Dream Houses. This process confronts them with the wounds of their past and takes us to their dreams for a better future:

Kalman was born to Holocaust survivors in a refugee camp in Cyprus after World War II, his first house in Israel was a house left by the Arab community in Haifa.

Zaki is the son of Palestinian refugees who were expelled from their village in the Israeli War of Independence, the Palestinian Naqba of 1948. He and his family live only few miles away from the ruins of their former home.

Michal, daughter of Israeli settlers in Sinai, saw the bulldozers destroy her beloved home during the evacuation from Sinai in 1982 and Rina never had a private home in the Kibbutz where she grew up.

Through these personal stories Tal creates a sensitive kaleidoscope of Israeli society at the beginning of the new Millennium.

Festivals

DocAviv 2005

Awards

MAYOR Award, DokAviv 2005

BEST Sound Design, DokAviv 2005

Director's biography

Ran Tal was born in 1963 in the North of Israel. He studied Cinema and Television at Tel Aviv University. Since then he is doing fiction and documentary films as an independent director and producer. In the last few years Ran Tal is teaching documentary film in various film schools. His films deal with the essence of Israeli politics through social and historical phenomenon.

filmography (selection)

- Mati and Danny break up (1992, 12')
- Merchant of Feelings (1994, 35')
- Skin Deep (1996, 40') together with Etgar Keret
- 67 Ben Tsvi Road (1998, 45')
- Total Love (1999, 90')
- Prosthesis (1999, 25')
- A non white Jewish (2000, 30')
- My Dream House (2005, 57')

Credits

Director	Ran Tal
Producer	Ran Tal
Cinematography	Ari Amit, Ran Tal
Editor	Tali Goldenberg
Music	Ran Bagno
Miniature	Hila Rosenberg
Sound Design	Aviv Aldema

Israel 2005, 57 minutes, Beta SP, Stereo, Hebrew and Arabic with English subtitles

Director's Statement

The film "My Dream House", takes apart and reassembles the term "House" – in a land of immigrants like Israel.

In this film, I was trying to picture the Israeli tragedy through the individual's dreams, I searched the personal memory of the "childhood home" to find the great historical story. The film shows the connection between the most private and intimate "Home" to the general and national "House".

The different families, all come from different backgrounds, each with their own private dream of a "House with a white picket fence", makes a versatile human mosaic of hopes, ambitions and also aches and scars that will never heal. Through these families I try to come to a deeper and wider understanding of the Israeli being.

Israeli documentary film-making and the Middle East Conflict

Over the last years a large number of Israeli documentaries about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was shown all over the world. We got used to images usually shot by film-makers that criticise, or fundamentally oppose, the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza as well as the discrimination of Palestinians inside Israel. In recent years there is a new development of film-making that discusses the conflict on a different level. In the reflection of personal and collective memory of various aspects of Israeli life, in which the conflict often plays a role, it becomes an integral part of day-to-day life rather than an excluded question one has to deal with. In many cases the spectator realises the present of the conflict only in a second reading of the film. Subjects of the films range from the situation of Mizrahim (Arab Jews in Israel) over prostitution and drug-use to questions of exile and migration, to give only a few examples.

Interview with Ran Tal

How did the idea for the film come up?

I was always fascinated with houses and buildings, not just with the artistic elements but rather the stories they hold inside the walls. I knew that the film had to follow either the death (demolition) or the birth (building) in a house life, and chose the more optimistic moment.

My first dream was to follow a skyscraper which holds in the process of its creation all the elements of the present Israel, but I realised that it would take more than five or seven years, so I went to my second idea - a family house a family dream.

Can you say something about the making off the film?

The film originally started with a desire to examine the middle class, the Israeli bourgeoisie, but then - like it always in this part of the world - another war is started and I felt that the new tiles and very expensive toilet were not what I was looking for. The film changed to the roots of the dreams: Where they come from? On which ground they are founded? I had to change the characters and the film started to deal with questions of identity, politics and history.

What is the social class we see in the film now? Is it common in Israel to built your own house? Who can effort it?

The film's characters belong to the lowest middle class in Israel. They are self employed or academics, the low prices take them to the periphery where the land is less expensive. One of the most common dream in Israel is to build a private house, as a sign that "you did it".

Most of the people can't afford it and if you want to follow your dream you have to leave the center to north or to the south.

Your film is very political. Yet it differs a lot from the vast majority of Israeli films that we see abroad. Unlike the other films that are more reportages, My Dream House is very cinematic. The story is told through images, there is no comment in the film and no obvious lesson. What was your idea behind this artistic approach?

I try to deal with two different sides of a house and translate them to images and to a cinema - the first one is the material and physical side. When you build a house you need many low-tech action to actually make it happen, in the end of your dream it is always a worker with a hammer or any other basis tools, muscles and sweat who did it. The second side and the less visual one, it is about what we put into this pile of woods. I tried to combine

these two elements in the film, the material and the spiritual and to find the tension between them.

Is there a shift in Israeli political film-making towards a different or new narrative?

The stories in Israel and Palestine are usually so strong that most of the films just try to follow the protagonist as close as possible in order to get the good stuff. I guess that sometime it is the right choice. But I agree that we lose many other elements in the narrative and in the form. Since I avoid in my films to take the perspective of the news cameras, I have to look for other ways to tell my stories. I try to reach reality in cinematic tools. In "My Dream House" I tried to film the fantasy and the fears, of my heroes. And that is what makes it interesting.

Talking about narrative and form: You decided to visualise the fantasies of the couples by building miniatures. Even more, the miniatures come to life through sound. The catch the spectator in very intimate dreams at the same time they show a repetitive pattern of fantasy. When was your idea of the miniatures born? What was your initial intention?

The idea of building the dreams came in a first place. The conflict is between the fantasy and reality, and the miniatures are the way to feel and identify with their dreams. It took four months to build the miniatures, and we did it after we had the sound, so we actually made the dreams come alive. It was one of the challenges in the film, and I am happy that it works.

about mec film

mec film is a Distributor and World Sales Agent who specializes on innovative and aesthetically outstanding films exclusively from the Middle East. We focus on artistic quality and present films that offer a different perspective on the region.

The company was founded in 2002 by Irit Neidhardt and is based in Muenster, Germany. Each year we release one to two of the finest full length films from the Middle East in German theatres year and pick up to four short and medium length art and documentary films for World Sales.

In 2005 we started a DVD-edition of selected work from the catalogue. For sales to academic and research libraries we work with prestigious agent Harrassowitz.

Irit Neidhardt was awarded with a governmental business award for the growth concept of mec film, of which co-production is a major element.

Among the films released in German theatres are

- Academy Award Nominee PROMISES by BZ Goldberg, Justine Shapiro, Carlos Bolado
- RANA'S WEDDING by Hany Abu Assad, which opened the Semaine de la Critique in Cannes in 2002
- ROUTE 181 - Fragments of Journey in Palestine-Israel by award winning directors Michel Khleifi and Eyal Sivan.
- Tawfik Abu Wael's full length feature film ATASH, winner of the Critic's Award of the Semaine de la Critique Cannes 2004
- Amos Gitai's NEWS FROM HOME which had its World Premiere at Berlinale 2006 (theatrical opening September 2006)

mec film is the World Sales Agent of Tawfik Abu Wael's internationally successful short film DIARY OF A MALE WHORE and European Sales Agent for Annemarie Jacir's award winning LIKE TWENTY IMPOSSIBLES.