

EXIT PRODUCTIONS & STILL MOVING PRESENT

QUINZAINÉ
DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT
CANNES 2019

A FILM BY ALA EDDINE SLIM

TLAMESS

طلامس

ABDULLAH
MINIAWY

SOUHIR
BEN AMARA



TLAMESS

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SYNOPSIS

S is a young soldier in the Tunisian desert. When his mother dies, he gets a week's leave and goes back home. But he never returns to the barracks and becomes the target of a manhunt through the backstreets of his working-class neighborhood, before vanishing into the mountains. Several years later, F, a young woman married to a rich businessman finds out that she's pregnant. One morning, she leaves her luxurious villa and disappears into the forest.



DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Ala Eddine Slim is a Tunisian filmmaker. He has directed several short films, art videos and feature films, selected and multi-awarded in many international film festivals (Clermont-Ferrand, Grand Prix FID Marseille 2012 for “Babylon”, Lion of the Future, Best Technical Contribution at the Venice Film Festival 2016, and Tanit d’Or at JCC 2016 for “The Last of Us”). “Tlamesh” is his second fiction film, a Franco-Tunisian co-production supported by the Franco-Tunisian fund, the Tunisian Ministry of Culture Fund, the Aide aux Cinemas du Monde of the CNC and the World Cinema Fund Europe.

DIRECTOR'S INTERVIEW

Can you present *Tlameess* in just a few words?

The film is a continuation of my prior films and it's a kind of final door, if you will, that I am shutting before moving on to a different territory. *Tlameess* marks the end of a cycle and I'm happy to be turning the page with this film.

Starting with a basic question, where did you get the idea for the film?

I wanted to continue to explore the idea of a diptych as I did in my previous film, "The Last of Us," but going further into the separation between the two chapters of the film. In 2017, I experienced something very important in my personal life which became the main force driving the writing of the story. At first, I had planned on making another film, but sometimes in life incidents happen which lead you down more stimulating paths.

How did you develop the screenplay? What were the stages of writing?

The writing was wrapped up very quickly (in less than 15 days), but afterwards I returned and reworked several sections. For me, a screenplay is never set in stone; it changes at each stage of making a film. Naturally I keep, almost always, the main outline, but while making the film, nothing of what I have written is sacred. Also, the locations that are scouted have a big influence on details and modifications. Then, working with the rest of the crew (actors and tech) can equally impact the process and trigger more changes. In the end, the film is rewritten up to and including the editing process, and I find this approach very conducive to creativity.

You're one of the founding members of Exit Productions, one of the first independent production companies in Tunisia. Can you tell us about the kind of cinema you're defending in Tunisia right now?

Exit productions was one of the first organizations, entirely comprised of

young people at the time, to produce and support entirely independent films. This occurred during the spread of digital tools (2005) that facilitated, in part, filmmaking. Today, there are several filmmakers who continue to make films outside State structures and among these filmmakers is a true excitement and energy to freely make their films, a real desire to make Cinema. Documentaries spearhead this enthusiasm, but there are also an increasing number of young filmmakers who are ready to take on feature-length fiction, bringing together the synergy of peoples' energy and enthusiasm, even if there is very little money. This said, you have to know that in Tunisia there isn't a solid film market or a variety of options in terms of state financing. Everyone comes up with their own production strategy.

When did your other Tunisian partners join in the production of *Tlameess*? Were they, along with Still Moving, there from the beginning?

All my partners from my previous films stayed with me for *Tlameess* right from the very beginning. Everyone brought their expertise, either in Tunisia or France, to put the film on the right path. Exit Productions, Still Moving, Inside Productions and Madbox Studios, through their wonderful representatives (Ali Hassouna, Juliette Lepoutre, Pierre Menahem, Chawki Knis, Amine Messadi and Moncef Taleb, as well as others) were all great companions throughout the adventure.

What financing did you find?

The film was financed by the Tunisian National Center of Cinema and Image, The French National Center for Cinema (CNC), the Tunisian Minister of Culture, the World Cinema Fund (Berlinale), as well as private partners such as The Kamel Lazaar Foundation in Tunisia, among others.

How did you choose your actors? What were the criteria? Was the fact that they all come from North Africa a conscious choice on your part?

I don't hold castings for my leading roles. I choose my actors through

encounters. Abdullah Miniawy, who plays the male lead, isn't actually an actor. He's an Egyptian musician whom I invited in 2017 for the opening of an event centered around documentaries that I organized in southern Tunisia, in a mining region. That's how we met. Months later, I asked him if he wanted to try acting in the film and he was game. He's a man who likes challenges and proposals. That's how that came about. The actress Souhir Ben Amara is a friend whom I greatly appreciate and deeply respect. She is very well known in Tunisia and I always imagine her for my female characters. I have to admit that this is the first time I have a woman in one of the film's main roles, despite my great love for women in general. I like to gather people from different walks of life, go beyond geographical boundaries and bring to life the idea that we are all part of the same planet Cinema. No more borders, no more lands, no more territories, except imagination. And so, I have an Egyptian actor, a Tunisian actress and an Algerian actor, Khaled Ben Aissa, who is an old friend, a director and an actor. I don't believe in cinema that is confined to a region, cinema is more generous and infinite than a geographical category.

Where and when did you shoot the film? Were there any difficulties in particular during the shoot? Anecdotes? Did you put a special method together?

The shoot lasted almost two months from Dec 2018 to mid-February 2019. The main difficulty was a considerable lack of funding. We didn't have enough money to start pre-production preparation or for the shoot, but everyone, producers and the crew, as well as various service providers agreed to make sacrifices and a special effort. We started in the south, in a dry region to end up in Tunisia's northernmost region, on the Mediterranean coast. Since most of the people involved had known each other for quite a while and had already worked on other films together, there was a sort of smoothness and instant understanding in the work approach, which allowed us to save a lot of time.

In the end, does the movie correspond with what you had in mind at the beginning?

Thankfully not. Moreover, I don't like to know too much ahead of time what will be captured or filmed. I am certain about the starting and finishing point, but when it comes to getting there, I like to experiment. After, there are certain takes and sequences that are very specific from the beginning. I like digging deeper when there are obstacles, it provokes a kind of intellectual exercise that I need. It changes and mutates all the time.

What are you expecting from this selection at the Directors' Fortnight?

To discover other creative universes, make new encounters with the public, professionals, everyone who is a film lover. Afterwards, it's also a festival where you are among many great directors that I very much admire. All in all, it's pretty cool.

Interview by Patrice Carré (Le Film Français)

CAST & CREW

With	Abdullah MINIAWY Souhir BEN AMARA Khaled BEN AISSA
Director	Ala Eddine SLIM
Screenplay	Ala Eddine SLIM
Director of Photography	Amine MESSADI
Sound :	Moncef TALEB
Set :	Malek GNAOUI
Editor :	Ala Eddine SLIM
Music :	Oiseaux-Tempête
Production companies:	Exit Productions and Still Moving
Coproduction companies:	Inside Productions and Madbox Studios
Producers :	Ala Eddine SLIM, Juliette LEPOUTRE, Ali HASSOUNA, Chawki KNIS & Pierre MENAHEM
With the support of	Franco-Tunisian fund from CNC & CNCI the Tunisian Ministry of Culture Fund the Aide aux Cinemas du Monde of the CNC World Cinema Fund Europe The Kamel Lazaar Foundation & la SACEM



TECHNICAL DETAILS

Sound Format	5.1
Ratio	1.85
Running Time	120'
Original Version	Arabic
Year of Production	2019
Countries of Production	Tunisia, France



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l'image animée



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