OFFICIAL SELECTION
INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL ROTTERDAM 2026

Why Do I See You In Everything?

International Title: Why Do I See You In Everything?

Original Title: لماذا أراكِ في كلِّ شيء؟

Production country: Belgium

Language: Arabic

Subtitles: English

Running time: 70 minutes

Aspect ratio: 3:2

Color / Digital / DCP

Production company: Hilife Cinematography

Directed by Rand Abou Fakher

Screenplay by Rand Abou Fakher and Qusay Awad

Cast: Nabil Altawil and Qusay Awad

Cinematography by Hans Bruch

Editing by Ameer Fakher Eldin, Lawrence Foley and Rand Abou Fakher

Sound by Ziad Moukarzel and Alejandro Rivas Cottle

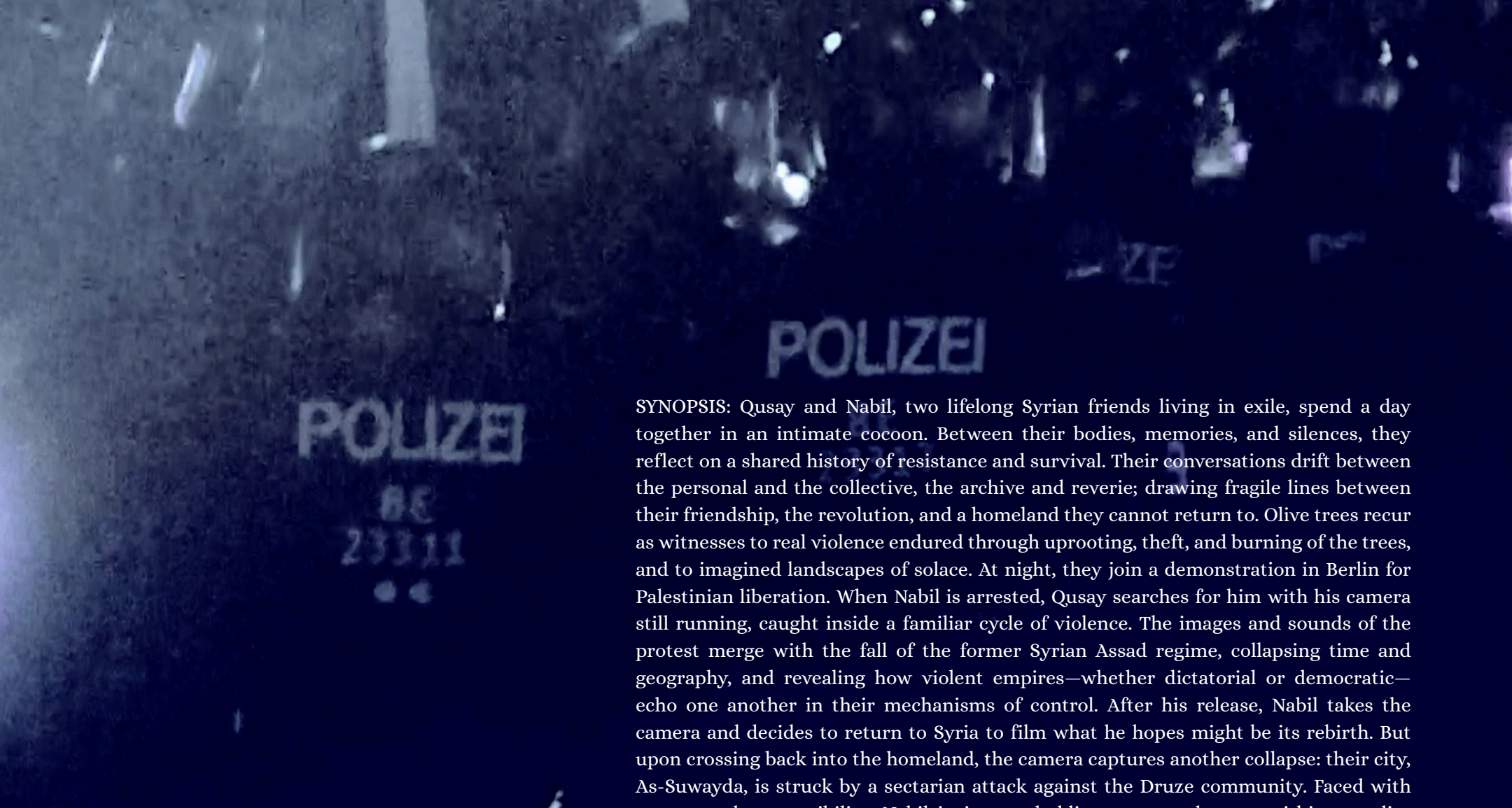
Music by Khyam Allami

Costume design by Nabil Altawil

Produced by Rand Abou Fakher and Rosa Galguera Ortega

Production company: Hilife Cinematography

LOGLINE: In their intimate cocoon between archive and reverie, two lifelong Syrian friends remake a day into a lifetime. When one crosses back into the homeland to record its rebirth, the lens captures another fall. Yet tenderness persists, quietly undoing the hardness history expects them to bear.



SYNOPSIS: Qusay and Nabil, two lifelong Syrian friends living in exile, spend a day together in an intimate cocoon. Between their bodies, memories, and silences, they reflect on a shared history of resistance and survival. Their conversations drift between the personal and the collective, the archive and reverie; drawing fragile lines between their friendship, the revolution, and a homeland they cannot return to. Olive trees recur as witnesses to real violence endured through uprooting, theft, and burning of the trees, and to imagined landscapes of solace. At night, they join a demonstration in Berlin for Palestinian liberation. When Nabil is arrested, Qusay searches for him with his camera still running, caught inside a familiar cycle of violence. The images and sounds of the protest merge with the fall of the former Syrian Assad regime, collapsing time and geography, and revealing how violent empires—whether dictatorial or democratic—echo one another in their mechanisms of control. After his release, Nabil takes the camera and decides to return to Syria to film what he hopes might be its rebirth. But upon crossing back into the homeland, the camera captures another collapse: their city, As-Suwayda, is struck by a sectarian attack against the Druze community. Faced with unexpected responsibility, Nabil insists on holding onto tenderness within a reality governed by weapons and death, while Qusay follows from afar. What persists is their bond, quietly undoing the hardness that history demands they carry. The peaceful archive dissolves into a dream, and tenderness emerges as an act of resistance.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE: This film was born from grief and hope at once, at a time when death had become ordinary, whether close or distant, personal or mediated. I found myself asking not only how violence happens, but how it becomes reasonable, acceptable, almost inevitable. How did we arrive at a world where taking life feels so easy? I am guided by a thought shared by Syrian artist Sulafa Hijazi: a body capable of giving life can never decide to take life so lightly. Our world, however, continues to be shaped by patriarchal systems that define masculinity through violence, turning men into fighters and rendering tenderness abnormal. This distortion has not only normalized death, it has emptied life of meaning. I wanted to approach these questions not only from a feminist perspective, but also from a queer one. I chose to work with two Arab men to challenge dominant images of masculinity and to reclaim bodies that are among the most dehumanized of our time. By placing the protagonists in an intimate cocoon, the film reveals a contrast between who they are: gentle, uncertain, vulnerable , tender, reflective, and deeply connected, and how they are treated by systems of violence outside. For them, these systems collapse into one another, operating through similar logics of control, surveillance, and fear. The film does not compare histories, but observes how power repeats itself through different forms. The film questions what we accept as normal. Why is it normal to see young men holding weapons, even at a very young age, but not to see them touching each other with care? How do we step back from this distortion? How do we continue without abandoning hope? Land and body are inseparable here. Trees and humans suffer and resist together. Memory moves through soil, through skin, through images. The film transformed as history shifted. The fall of the Syrian regime reopened the possibility of return, only to reveal new forms of violence. When one of the protagonists filmed from within an attack in our hometown, the archive became something else: a responsibility, a continuation. While the peaceful moments filmed just before the attack got treated as an archive that becomes a dream where hope and tenderness is what the protagonists hold onto. The camera in this film is wary, careful and never neutral; chosen by answers to many ethical questions that sometimes gave me sleepless nights. Showing a victim's body was the last thing I ever imagined myself doing as a filmmaker. When violence becomes overwhelming, the film turns instead toward time, toward breath, toward gestures of care. This is not a film about what happened. It is about what refuses to disappear. For poetry cannot undo the void, nor can the void dim love's light, nor can love soothe every wound, but no wound could ever silence a dream.

Rand Abou Fakher is a Syrian filmmaker and multidisciplinary artist. She began her artistic journey as a flautist at the Conservatory of Damascus before expanding her practice into the audiovisual arts in Brussels. Her first short film, Braided Love (2018), premiered at the Sarajevo Film Festival, and her follow-up, So We Live (2020), premiered at Berlinale Shorts and went on to receive several awards at international festivals. Since 2021, Rand has also worked as a film programmer and currently curates for ALFILM in Berlin. Most recently she directed, wrote and produced the hybrid documentary feature Why Do I See You in Everything?, which will premiere at Rotterdam International Film Festival 2026. Meanwhile she is developing her debut fiction project On the Way to Forgive I Forgot Myself, which had participated in Torino ScriptLab 2024. Rand's work grows from observation and emotion, finding expression in intimate and poetic forms.

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