

HOUSE IN THE FIELDS



TIGMI N IGREN

World Premiere
International Film Festival
Berlinale – Forum 2017

A film by
Tala Hadid

Morocco, Qatar | 2017 | 86 min | HD | 1:1.85 | 5.1 |
Amazigh | Creative Documentary



Director

Tala Hadid

Cinematography

Tala Hadid

Produced by

Tala Hadid, Larbi Idmansour

Co-produced by

Umaru Embalo, Tommaso Cammarano

Executive Produced by

Joslyn Barnes, Sawsan Asfari, Maya Sanbar

Associate produced by

Lisa Kleiner Chanoff

Sound Editor

Thomas Robert

Sound Mix

Jean-Guy Veran

Made with the support of the Final Cut in Venice workshop, the Doha Film Institute, the IDFA Bertha Fund, and the Peter S Reed Foundation.

SYNOPSIS

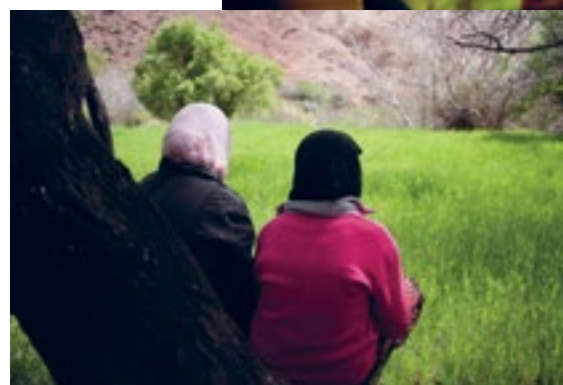
House in the Fields is a film that examines the life of an isolated rural Amazigh community in the south- west region of the High Atlas Mountains. The thousand-year history of the Amazigh in Morocco has been, for the most part, recounted, preserved and transmitted by bards and storytellers in oral form among Tamazight speaking pastoral communities. *House in the Fields* continues this tradition of transmission, in an audiovisual form, in an attempt to faithfully document and present a portrait of a village and community that has remained unchanged for hundreds of years despite being confronted with the rapidly changing sociopolitical realities of the country at large. The film follows the lives' of certain villagers, most specifically two teenage sisters, one who must give up school to prepare for her wedding, and the other who dreams of being a judge.



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

House in the Fields is the first film of a triptych set in Morocco, that starts in the Atlas Mountains, journeys through Casablanca and finishes beyond the borders. The film examines the life of an isolated rural Amazigh community in the South-west region of the High Atlas Mountains. The thousand-year history of the Amazigh in Morocco has been, for the most part, recounted, preserved and transmitted by bards and storytellers in oral form among Tamazight speaking pastoral communities. *House in the Fields* continues this tradition of transmission, in an audiovisual form, in an attempt to faithfully document and present a portrait of a village and community that has remained unchanged for hundreds of years despite being confronted with the rapidly changing sociopolitical realities of the country at large. The film follows the lives of certain villagers, most specifically two teenage sisters, Fatima, who must give up school to prepare for her wedding, and Khadija, who dreams of being a judge. A portrait of an individual is also a portrait of a family, of a community, of a people and of a nation. In the remote and isolated farming communities of the High Atlas Mountains what is key is the social body of the "village". And yet, within the heart of each person in this body politic, lie dreams and aspirations, fears and regrets. *House in the Fields* is at once a tableau of a community and an intimate portrait of individuals. It is a chronicle of a vanishing way of life that is not only profoundly defined by the relation between man and nature, but also holds the key to an entire heritage of local dialects, rituals and culture. Living, sharing bread with and filming these farmers over the course of five years also meant an intimate participation in their lives. And they in turn, participated in the construction of their own representation. Realities, as filmmaker Jean Rouch reminds us, are always co-constructed, and the presence of the camera, like the presence of the filmmaker, naturally stimulates, modifies and catalyzes. People respond by revealing themselves, and begin, eventually, to participate in their own "story-telling". This participatory aspect of the film is central to its essence. What is also particular in the experience of living with and filming individuals over the course of a long period, due perhaps in part to a certain intimacy and comfort between photographer, camera and subject, is that spaces are opened up, wherein the parallel unfolding

of time, duration and reality merge to create what can only be described as moments that transcend the pure recording of reality, moments of "poiesis", moments where, again, people participate in the construction of the telling of their story, in the creation of their myths. In the words of Deleuze: "The author must not, then, make himself into the ethnologist of his people, nor himself invent a fiction which would be one more private story: for every personal fiction, like every impersonal myth, is on the side of the 'masters'... There remains the possibility of the author providing himself with 'intercessors', that is, of taking real and not fictional characters, but putting these very characters in the condition of 'making up fiction', of, making 'legends', of 'story-telling'. The author takes a step towards his characters, but the characters take a step towards the author: double becoming. Story-telling is not an impersonal myth, but neither is it a personal fiction: it is a word in act, a speech-act through which the character continually crosses the boundary which would separate his private business from politics, and which itself produces collective utterances." *Gilles Deleuze, Cinema 2. The Time-Image – Editions de Minuit, 1985*



DIRECTOR BIOGRAPHY

Writer/Director/Photographer Tala Hadid made her first film *Sacred Poet on Pier Paolo Pasolini*. The author of several short films, she completed *Tes Cheveux Noirs Ihsan* which received an Academy Award, and won the Panorama Best Short Film Award at the Berlin Film Festival. It went on to win several prizes including the Kodak/Cinecolor Prize, Best film and Best actress award at the Tangiers National Film Festival and awards from the Global Film Initiative, the Milos Forman grant, and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts. Hadid's work has screened, among other venues, at the MoMA in New York City, *L'Institut du Monde Arabe* in Paris, the *Goteberg Kunsthalle* in Sweden, the *Goethe Institute/Cairo*, the *Los Angeles County Museum*, la *Cinémathèque Française* in Paris and the *Photographer's Gallery* in London. In 2010/2011 Hadid worked on her long term project *Heterotopia*, a series of photographs documenting life in a New York City brothel. In the autumn of 2013, the Fine Art photography publisher Stern published a volume of a selection of Hadid's photographs as part of its Stern Fotografie Portfolio series of emerging photographers. In 2014, Hadid completed work on *Itarr el Layl* (The Narrow Frame of Midnight). The award-winning film premiered at the Toronto film Festival and went on to screen at numerous film festivals and venues around the world, including the Lincoln Center in New York, the Rome Film Festival, London Film Festival and the Walker Arts Center.



Tala Hadid
Photo by Adam Putnam

FILMOGRAPHY

Itar el Layl/The Narrow Frame of Midnight

Morocco/France/UK/Qatar
2014

Tes Cheveux Noirs Ihsan/ Your Dark Hair Ihsan

Morocco
2005

Windsleepers

Russia
2001

Kodaks

USA
2000

Sacred Poet: a portrait of Pier Paolo Pasolini

Italy/France
1996

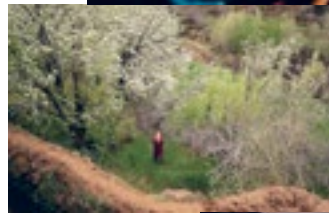


AMAZIGH HISTORY

The history of the *Imazighen* (North Africa's indigenous people) in Morocco can be traced back thousands of years; their myths and legends extending back to the Proto-Mediterraneans. Kingdoms were founded during classical antiquity and interacted with Jewish, Phoenician, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Vandal and Byzantine cultures until the Arab conquest and the subsequent adaptation and conversion to Islam. According to social anthropologist, Michel Peyron, for Morocco's rural *Amazigh* speaking populations, religion has consistently played a key role in ordering social, political and economic life. In these societies saints, also called *Murabitin* or *Igurramen*, helped to maintain political order in what is conventionally seen to be a tribal system of social ordering essentially based on kinship and egalitarianism.

WOMEN IN THE ATLAS

Though the film is a collective portrait of a community, it essentially concentrates on the relationship between two young sisters, Fatima and Khadija. Fatima, the eldest, was pulled out of school when her family decided that she must dedicate her time to labor and farm work. She is also betrothed to a young man from a neighboring village and in the film we see her life, before she becomes a bride, through the eyes of her younger sister, Khadija. For the two sisters, education was one of the highlights of their young lives. Khadija dreams of becoming a lawyer or judge, though is unsure if she will continue with school or have to forsake her education. Duties take precedence, and their fates are linked not just to tradition and to the community, but to the socio-economic exigencies of life in the rural mountains.



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INTERNATIONAL SALES

Alpha Violet
www.alphaviolet.com
info@alphaviolet.com

Virginie Devesa
Cell: +33 6 2041 1137

Keiko Funato
Cell: +33 6 2983 5108

INTERNATIONAL PUBLICIST

The PR Factory
www.theprfactory.com

Marie-France Dupagne
mariefrance@theprfactory.com
Cell: +32 477 62 67 70

Barbara Van Lombeek
barbara@theprfactory.com
Cell: +32 486 54 64 80



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