

LIBRISFILMS AND BAYA FILMS PRESENT



GIORNATE
DEGLI AUTORI
VENICE DAYS

HARRAGAS

A FILM BY MERZAK ALLOUACHE

حرقا قس





INTERVIEW WITH MERZAK ALLOUACHE

**“LEAVING IS CALLED BURNING,
BURNING YOUR ID, BURNING ACROSS BORDERS,
BURNING YOUR LIFE IF NEEDS BE,
AS LONG AS YOU LEAVE.”**

Harragas means “to burn”. Before they leave, potential illegal immigrants burn their ID papers so the coastguards won’t know where they are from.

I decided to write this story after doing research through eye witness accounts, articles in the press and encounters with various people on the subject of this completely new human tragedy affecting Algeria. The Harragas phenomenon has grown to reach catastrophic proportions in the last few years. Harragas are mostly young people who, for various reasons, risk their lives to make it secretly across the Mediterranean. Young people make up 80% of the Algerian population. Their thirst for life is hampered by daily hardships and unemployment, and they will do anything, however reckless, in order to live elsewhere.

When I began writing the script, I had no idea that the problem would develop on such a scale to become a national issue. And even if some people claim that talking about the Harragas and immigration in general is merely a trend, I think dozens of movies, plays and TV shows would be needed to discuss the problem and explain the reasons and dangers, and to warn young people of the risks they run. As in my previous films, I set out to recount a human adventure, because the dramatic odyssey these young people undertake touches me deeply.

Harragas is shot in a documentary style and set in a region where the story it tells takes place. Working with Hi-Def cameras gave me greater freedom in my direction and greater flexibility in shooting.

As much of the movie takes place on a boat out at sea, we needed an extremely mobile crew.

I chose to shoot another major part of my film on the beaches of Mostaganem, from where “burners” regularly set off in their attempt to reach Spain. I also did my first audition with the young actors of the local theatre. Most of the cast comes from the region.

This film is another step in my reflections on the strange love-hate relationship between Algeria and France. And on the phenomenon of immigration, which continues to grow in Algeria even though it is an oil-rich country.

Harragas follows on from my other films about Algerian youth, their difficulties, doubts and hopes for a better life.

I just shot a film during the Pan-African Festival in Algiers, whose subject once more is Algeria's youth. It's the story of a group of young stage actors, desperate for happiness and new experiences and creations, but who run into the daily problem of the slow-moving, omnipresent bureaucracy and a limited arts policy.

After that will come La Marche, to be shot in France.

The film deals with the relatively unknown “Arab March” of 1983, through which second-generation immigrants tried to peacefully protest a wave of hate crimes, while making a plea for cultural equality.

The march was organized by a group of young men in the Minguettes housing project in Lyon, involved walking around the whole of France and concluded with a massive demonstration in Paris.



MOSTAGANEM, 200KM FROM ALGIERS ON THE COAST. HASSAN, A SMUGGLER, CAREFULLY PREPARES WITH THE UTMOST SECRECY, A GROUP OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS TO CROSS TO SPAIN. TEN "BURNERS" WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE TRIP. HARRAGAS IS THE ODYSSEY OF A GROUP THAT ILLEGALLY CROSSED THE MEDITERRANEAN TO SOUTHERN SPAIN, THE GATEWAY TO THE COVETED EUROPEAN ELDERADO.

RACHID NABIL ASLI
MUSTAPHA SAMIR EL HAKIM
NASSER SEDDIK BENYAGOUR
IMÈNE LAMIA BOUSSEKINE

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CINEMATOGRAPHY PHILIPPE GUILBERT
EDITOR SYLVIE GADMER
SOUND PHILIPPE BOUCHEZ
DIRECTOR'S ASSISTANT DIMITRI LINDER
CONTINUITY ANNE MARIE GARCIA
SOUND EDITOR MOURAD LOUANCHI
RE-RECORDING MIXER FRANÇOIS GROULT
ORIGINAL SCORE DAVID HADJADJ

HAKIM MOHAMED TAKERRET
HASSAN OKACHA TOUITA
TAHAR ABDELKADER MOHAMED
ALI ABDELATIF BENHAMED

PRODUCTION MANAGER MARC FONTANEL
PRODUCED BY LIBRISFILMS AND BAYA FILMS
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER JEAN-LUC VAN DAMME
WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE CULTURE MINISTRY OF ALGERIA,
RÉGION LANGUEDOC ROUSSILLON
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FRANCE 2, CENTRE NATIONAL DE LA CINÉMATOGRAPHIE
WITH THE PARTNERSHIP OF AIGLE AZUR

LIBRISFILMS - BAYA FILMS / FRANCE - ALGERIA / 2009 / FEATURE / 103' / 35 MM / ARABIC - FRENCH



BORN IN ALGIERS, MERZAK ALLOUACHE GRADUATED FROM IDHEC FILM SCHOOL IN PARIS IN 1967. IN 1976, HE SHOT HIS FIRST FEATURE, OMAR GATLATO, WHICH SCREENED IN THE DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT SIDEBAR OF THE CANNES FESTIVAL. HIS SECOND MOVIE, LES AVENTURES D'UN HÉROS (1977) WAS AWARDED THE GOLDEN THANIT AT THE CARTHAGE FILM FESTIVAL. UN AMOUR À PARIS WON THE «PERSPECTIVES DU CINÉMA FRANÇAIS» PRIZE AT THE CANNES FESTIVAL. AFTER BAB-EL-OUED CITY (1986), WHICH WON THE INTERNATIONAL CRITICS' PRIZE AT CANNES AND THE GRAND PRIX INSTITUT DU MONDE ARABE AT THE 2ND FESTIVAL OF ARAB CINEMA IN PARIS, IT BECAME TEMPORARILY IMPOSSIBLE FOR MERZAK ALLOUACHE TO RETURN TO ALGERIA. HE THEN SHOT SALUT COUSIN, "AS A BREATHING SPACE, BRINGING THE COMEDY OUT OF THE UNDERLYING DRAMA" AS HE SAYS, FOR HE IS DEEPLY AWARE OF "THE INCREDIBLE DISTANCE THAT SEPARATES BROTHERS LIVING ON OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN." SALUT COUSIN WAS SHOWN AT MANY INTERNATIONAL FESTIVALS AND WON, AMONG OTHER AWARDS, THE ARAB CRITICS' PRIZE AT DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT IN CANNES IN 1996. CHOUCHOU, WAS RELEASED IN 2003 AND BECAME A MAJOR COMMERCIAL SUCCESS.

2004 BAB EL WEB
2003 CHOUCHOU
2001 UN AUTRE MONDE
1995 SALUT COUSIN; INTERDIT DE CAMERER !

1994 BAB EL-OUED CITY
1986 UN AMOUR A PARIS
1983 L'HOMME QUI REGARDAIT LES FENETRES
1976 OMAR GATLATO; LES AVENTURES D'UN HEROS

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