



— SILENT STORMS



FESTIVAL INTERNATIONAL
DU FILM INDÉPENDANT
DE BORDEAUX

A Film by Dania Reymond-Boughenou

PRESSKIT



— SILENT STORMS

84 MIN

FRANCE, BELGIUM

2024

2.39:1

DOLBY 5.1

FRENCH, ARABIC

SCREENINGS IN MARRAKECH

TUE. DEC 3rd, 11:00 AM @ PALAIS DE

CONGRÈS — SALLE DES MINISTRES

WED. DEC 4th, 6:30 PM @ CINEMA LE COLISÉE

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— SYNOPSIS

Strange storms of yellow dust fall on a town. Nacer, a 45-year-old journalist, is covering the phenomenon. As he observes the appearance of supernatural events, his dead wife Fajar comes back as nothing happened.

Faced with increasingly threatening storms, Nacer must unravel a haunting past from dark years everyone wanted to forget.



— THE BLACK DECADE IN A FEW DATES



MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS OF JUNE 21, 1990

For the first time in Algeria's history, multiple parties were allowed to run. The FIS, the Islamist party, emerged as the clear winner, securing several municipalities, including the city of Algiers. On the façades of the city halls it won, the republican motto was replaced by "Islamic Municipality."

DECEMBER 26, 1991

The FIS wins the first round of legislative elections and it looks like they will win the 2nd round.

JANUARY 11-12, 1992

President Chadli Bendjedid is forced to resign under pressure from army generals, who subsequently annul the first round of the legislative elections. This annulment was seen as a coup d'état by FIS supporters, who took up arms and faced severe repression.

FEBRUARY 9, 1992

A state of emergency is declared. Attacks against law enforcement and civilians increase.

JULY 8, 1999

The Civil Concord Law submitted by President Abdelaziz Bouteflika is adopted by parliament. It allows for the reintegration of insurgents who renounce their weapons to return to civilian life, and grants amnesty to those who have supported their networks.

AUGUST 15, 2005

The law was amended to provide for the definitive dropping of charges against repentants not guilty of blood crimes. Thousands of Islamists abandoned the armed struggle.

A CONVERSATION WITH DANIA REYMOND- BOUGHENOU

'Silent Storms' is your first film. What led you to want to tell this story?

My first short film, *Le Jardin d'essai* (2016), produced and shot in Algiers, made me question my connection to Algeria. I began writing a sequel, eager to continue this work. Very quickly, an image came to me: yellow sand spread over the ground, without my fully grasping its meaning. Gradually, my main character became a journalist and he started investigating. Through him, I realized the film was about the Black Decade. I felt the need to give form, color, and texture to this period that had remained a blind spot in my memory.

Yet Algeria is never mentioned. You set the film in a fictional country with its own references, flag, president... Why?

This is not what I initially intended, and it was a difficult decision to make. A few months

before filming, even though we had made significant progress in our preparations, we realized that we would not be able to shoot in Algeria. Despite the efforts of the teams and of my producers, we still had no guarantee of obtaining permits, no Algerian funding, and above all, the economic context, marked by the post-Covid period and the war in Ukraine, was particularly unfavorable. At that point, the feasibility of making the film in Algeria was out of the question. We decided to go to Morocco, which has made it easy to accommodate film shoots. But this profoundly challenged the project. As someone who is very attached to reality, I couldn't pretend that Casablanca was Algiers.; it didn't work, it didn't make sense. The solution was to imagine this fictional land and fully embrace it. I thought, "OK, we're going to the land of oblivion!" — and this was not unreasonable given the film's theme, which tells the story of mourning and memory.

This brings the film closer to a tale...

Yes, if it had been shot in Algiers, the film would certainly have been very different; this move grounded it in a more dreamlike universe and accentuated its fantastical aspect. Yet, paradoxically, genre and fantasy are not my primary references. It came with this very visual yellow sand that imposed itself on me.

There is a storm and ghosts, but you go against the usual codes of disaster or horror films. Your ghosts are very gentle, for example.

The idea of gentleness seemed important to me. While writing, the ghosts appeared in a very gentle way. I was stuck because I couldn't understand Fajar's character or truly inhabit her. One night, I woke up with a start, realizing that she was dead and didn't know it. That's where the blockage came from: I was trying to write her as if she were alive. I understood that the journey of the film would be to make this character realize as gently as possible she was no longer part of the world of the living and to accompany her in her departure.

This yellow cloud that imposes itself on the living is a way of making visible all that has been partly rendered invisible. First, this war, which was a war of shadows, and then all those dead who were disregarded by the amnesty law. By hindering the work of justice and memory,

the departure rituals of these dead remained incomplete; they "left improperly" and, in a way, they haunt us.

Using the fantastic allowed us to look at what has not been sufficiently acknowledged and addressed by institutions. Storms, at least, can't easily be swept under the rug!

You filmed in Morocco, but the cast remained Algerian.

For the main roles, yes. We brought in about twenty Algerian actors, which wasn't easy given that the border between the two countries is closed. We had to supplement the cast by finding actors in the border area, specifically in the Oujda region, where the dialect is close to Algerian Arabic.

How did Camélia Jordana join the project?

Camélia joined the project rather late. Sometimes, all it takes is a bit of luck to make everything fall into place at the right time. My producers contacted her agent, and she read the script within 24 hours. Her connection to Algeria, through her family history, is very strong. I was looking for a young woman who was comfortable in her femininity, sensual, lively, and deeply grounded—not a passive or ghostly character. From the moment we met, it was clear that she was the Fajar we needed. I was moved by who she is, what she embodies, her



vitality, her presence, and her great generosity in her work. I found that same generosity in Khaled Benaïssa, who plays Nacer. He too was greatly committed to this work, which awakened his memories of the 1990s in Algiers.

Your film tells the story of a past that won't go away, of a man who can't come to terms with his grief. What was so special about this "black decade" and what were its consequences?

Algeria was marked by a war that began in 1991 when the army annulled the legislative elections won by the Islamists, who then took up arms. They initially targeted law enforcement and state representatives, but very quickly, the entire civil society became a target. For 10 years, the war degenerated with attacks, massacres, a very dark and chaotic period. To end this conflict, Bouteflika (president from 1999 to 2019) decided to grant amnesty to Islamists who renounced arms and had no blood on their hands. This put an end to armed violence, but many questions were left unanswered.

The story of my character, Nacer, is emblematic of the complexity of the situation. He lost his wife and is constantly trying to find her killer. When he succeeds, he is confronted by his desire for vengeance, which cannot be satisfied by his desire for justice...because justice is not sufficiently involved. Its role was greatly minimized by the amnesty law.

Nacer has to deal with Fajar's ghost on his own. The film begins when he gives up on revenge. It's a film about mourning.

You left Algeria in 1994 during this black decade. How did your personal story influence the film?

It influenced it indirectly. I was living in Algiers and was 11 years old when I left; it was

in 1994, and the country was entering a very complicated phase. I witnessed the political events through the adults' discussions, their emotions, the rise of violence outside, and the very tangible feeling of fear in the atmosphere. We left within a week. Suddenly, we were in France, and all of that was behind us. We had to create a new life, and the rest remained dormant. Little by little I took a step back and realized that all of this was directly relevant to me, both literally and figuratively.

Can cinema help in addressing history?

I believe that cinema is relevant in this context; it helped me face the situation. The camera allowed me to see Fajar, to look at what she embodies from our history. In fact, many contemporary Algerian films deal with this period; and it's an important issue for a whole generation.

Will your film be seen in Algeria?

I hope so; otherwise, I might have to smuggle in pirated DVDs (laughs)! I certainly hope to obtain a visa and have it distributed as widely as possible.



— BIOGRAPHY DANIA REYMOND-BOUGHENOU

Dania Reymond-Boughenou is a Franco-Algerian filmmaker, she was born in Algiers in 1982. Her family left the country in 1994 during the black decade to settle in Marseille. There, she began her studies at the Ecole des Beaux-arts and continued at Fresnoy - Studio national des arts contemporains. Her medium-length feature *“Le jardin d'essai”*, shot in Algiers in 2016 was shown at several festivals including Angers, Brive, Cinemed and Belfort, and won several awards. In 2022 her short film *“Constellation de la Rouguière”* was selected for the national competition at the Clermont-Ferrand Short Film Festival and nominated to the César for Best Documentary Short. Her debut feature *“Silent Storms”* World Premiered in 2024 at FIFIB and is selected in the Official Competition at Marrakech International Film Festival.



— FILMOGRAPHY DANIA REYMOND-BOUGHENOU

2021	<i>Constellation de la Rouguiere</i> Short Film — FID Marseille, Clermont Ferrand IFF 2021 and Official selection Cesar Academy Awards 2023
2016	<i>Le Jardin D'essai</i> Medium Length — Angers, Brive, Cinemed and Belfort
2016	<i>La Tempête</i> Short Film — Clermont-Ferrand IFF
2012	<i>Jeanne</i> Short Film — FID Marseille





— CAST

Nacer

Khaled BENAÏSSA

Fajar

Camélia JORDANA

Sharazade

Shirine BOUTELLA

Yacine

Mehdi RAMDANI

CREW

Director	Dania Reymond-Boughenou
Screenplay	Dania Reymond-Boughenou, Virginie Legeay with the collaboration of Vincent POYMIRO
Director of Photography	Augustin Barbaroux
1st Assistant Director	Tigrane Avedikian
Production Design	Jean-François Sturm
Script Supervisor	Virginie Cheval
Production Manager	Louis Houdoin
Casting	Julie Allione
Costume Design	Zakia Essouci
Makeup Design	Ghizlaine Nejjar
Editing	Julie Naas
VFX	François Houbart, Gilles Muntun
Sound	Marie Paulus
Sound Edit	Valérie Le Docte
Sound Mix	Aline Gavroy
Original Music	Dan Levy
Color Grading	Loup Brenta
Post-production	Olan Bowland
Producers	Jérémy Forni, Camille Chandellier
Coproducers	Julie Esparbes, Annabelle Bouzom
Countries	France, Belgium
French Distributor	The Jokers Films
International Sales	Best Friend Forever



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