



World Premiere: Locarno International Film Festival 2017 (Semaine de la Critique)

Synopsis:

Hissa Hilal is the voice from behind the veil: Her weapon is her word. Hissa is a self-taught writer and she says what she thinks. She decides to take part in the "Million's Poet" show, an Abu-Dhabi based Multi-Million Dollar TV show. It is the Arab world's biggest poetry competition, and it is dominated by men. Hissa works herself up, becoming the first woman in the finals. In her poems she criticizes the patriarchal Arab society and she attacks one of the most notorious Saudi clerics for his extremist fatwas, live, in front of 75 million viewers.

We'll never see Hissa's face. Like the majority of Saudi women, Hissa is covered from head to toe. She is not allowed to drive a car. She doesn't own a passport. And she requires consent from her husband for any sort of activity.

Coming out of nowhere, the housewife Hissa is suddenly breaking news in the biggest Western and Arab media.

How did she gain the knowledge and the courage to step on stage and risk her life?

This is Hissa's story.

Short director's statement:

Hissa Hilal is a contradiction. She appears covered in black, her face is hardly visible and she could be perceived as a fanatic religious Muslim. But all of this is not the case. Hissa is a Saudi woman with four children who was born into a traditional Bedouin family in a desert tent. It's only natural for her to wear a burqa. This is a film about a woman who grabs the opportunity to speak out and to talk against religious extremism to stand for a peaceful Islam.

Crew:

Directed by:

Stefanie Brockhaus

Andreas Wolff

Produced by:

Andreas Wolff

Commissioning Editors:

Claudia Tronnier, ZDF/Das Kleine Fernsehspiel

Lucas Schmidt, ZDF/Das Kleine Fernsehspiel

Kathrin Brinkmann, ZDF/ARTE

Cinematography:

Tobias Tempel

Stefanie Brockhaus

Film Editing:

Hansjörg Weissbrich

Anja Pohl

Music:

Sebastian Zenke

Sound Design:

Christoph von Schönburg

Re-Recording Mixer:

Michael Hinreiner

Associate Producer:

Amr Alkahtani

Faculty Advisor HFF:

Prof. Heiner Stadler

Technical Data:

Screening Format: DCP/25p/16:9

Shooting Format: HD (Multiple Cameras)