

Kismet



HOW TURKISH SOAP OPERAS CHANGE THE WORLD

An inspirational documentary which uncovers the impact of Turkish soap operas across the Arab world and the Balkans, premieres in competition at IDFA this November.

Directed by Nina-Maria Paschalidou (Greece/Cyprus 2013, 52 min). Produced by Forest Troop and Anemon Productions, in co-production with Al Jazeera and ARTE, in association with SVT, Knowledge Network, YLE, RTS, Channel 8, BTV, MRT and CYBC and with the support of the Media Programme of the EU, the Croatian and Bulgarian Film Centres. The film is also co-produced by Martichka Bozhilova for Agitprop in Bulgaria, Sinisa Juridic for Nukleus Film in Croatia and Eva Star Sayre for Veritas Films in the UAE.

KISMET explores the phenomenal success of Turkish soap operas from Turkey to the Middle East, North Africa and the Balkans, capturing their poignant impact on women across the region.

In Istanbul, Cairo and Abu Dhabi, the film discovers how prime time Turkish soaps are breaking taboos and inspiring women to change their lives. In 'Fatmagul', a woman is raped but finds the courage to take her case to court. In 'Life Goes On', a girl is forcibly married to a 70-year-old man. In 'Noor', the protagonist suffers before discovering true romantic love, and in 'Suleiman the Magnificent', our sympathies lie with a Christian slave who becomes the most powerful woman of the Ottoman Empire.

The film uncovers how these melodramas are capturing Muslim audiences by showing how Turkish women handle modernity. Featuring unprecedented secular liberties -extramarital affairs, women struggling to assert themselves in the workplace, divorce- these soaps also question current practices, such as arranged marriages, violence against women, child marriages and honor crimes.

KISMET tells this story by weaving together soap opera excerpts, interviews with the industry's leading creative talent and portraits of female TV viewers across the region.

Traveling to Cairo and Abu Dhabi, the film discovers how Turkish soap operas affect aspirations in the Arab World, especially in light of the failure of the Arab Spring to bring about change. As Samira, an activist in Cairo who participated in the revolution and suffered sexual abuse by army officials, says "we need Turkish TV series like 'Fatmagul' that talk openly about women's rights, break taboos and urge women to speak out." Samira sued the military for sexual abuse and managed to win her case ending virginity tests in Egypt.

In Athens, Mostar and Sofia, where Turkish soaps have uprooted local television series, the film looks at how the soaps are helping to break down negative stereotypes of Muslim men and women, but also encouraging women to connect with traditional family values they feel their society has lost by becoming more European.

Ultimately, **KISMET** discovers how these soap operas are becoming an instrument of 'soft political power' that reflects Turkey's desire to play a paramount role in the region.

Interviews with Turkish TV stars include Songül Öden ('Gümüş / Noor'), Halit Ergenc ('Magnificent Century'), Meryem Uzerli ('Magnificent Century'), Berguzar Korel, ('Thousand and One Nights'), Meltem Miraloglu ('Life goes on') and Beren Saat ('Fatmagul').

The film was pitched at the FORUM of the International Documentary Festival in Amsterdam in November 2012, garnering the support of a spate of international broadcasters and co-producers. It has been picked up from Canadian based distributor Jan Rofekamp at Films Transit International.

TECHNICAL SHEET

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|---------------------------|---|---------------|--|----------------|---|
| TITLE | KISMET | | | | |
| SUBTITLE | HOW TURKISH SOAP OPERAS CHANGE THE WORLD | | | | |
| SYNOPSIS | <p>Turkish soap operas have taken the world by storm, conquering the hearts of millions of viewers in the Middle East, North Africa, the Balkans and Asia. With unprecedented access to the industry's most glamorous actors and creative talent, 'Kismet' unravels the secrets of this phenomenal success that transcends religion and culture.</p> <p>From the lavish production sets of the most popular Turkish soap operas, the film travels to streets and homes in Cairo, Abu Dhabi, Istanbul, Athens, Sofia and Mostar, to discover how these taboo-breaking soaps are helping women across the region to claim their rights and transform their lives.</p> | | | | |
| FORMAT | HD / TV | LENGTH | 48'/52'/70' | ONE-OFF | X |
| GENRE | Documentary (Society-Culture-Politics) | | | | |
| WORLD PREMIERE | IDFA 2013, Mid-Length Competition | | | | |
| MAIN CREDITS | <p>PRODUCED BY: FOREST TROOP AND ANEMON PRODUCTIONS IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH: AI JAZEERA, ARTE, CO-PRODUCED BY: AGITPROP, NUKLEUS FILM, VERITAS FILMS IN ASSOCIATION WITH: SVT, RTS, KNOWLEDGE NETWORK, YLE, CHANNEL 8, BTV, CYBC, MRT WITH THE SUPPORT OF: THE MEDIA PROGRAMME OF THE EU, CROATIAN AUDIOVISUAL CENTRE, BULGARIAN NATIONAL FILM CENTRE CINEMATOGRAPHY: MICHALIS ARISTOMENOPOULOS SOUND: LEANDROS NTOUNIS, NIKOS KONSTANTINOU, HRVOJE PETEK, MOMCHIL BOZHKOV EDITING: THODORIS ARMAOS ORIGINAL SCORE: SPYROS AND MICHALIS MOSCHOUTIS PRODUCTION MANAGER: ELENI CHRISTODOULOU ASSOCIATE PRODUCER TURKEY: HILAL BAKKALOGLU CO-PRODUCERS: MARTICHKA BOZHILOVA, SINISA JURICIC, EVA STAR SAYRE PRODUCERS: REA APOSTOLIDES, YURI AVEROF, NINA MARIA PASCHALIDOU WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY: NINA MARIA PASCHALIDOU</p> | | | | |
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