



FILM REVIEW

Memoirs of a Diasporic Filmmaker

By Raneem Turjman



Hind Shoufani's documentary film, *Trip Along Exodus*, chronicles the life of her father, the Palestinian revolutionary, Elias Shoufani. This film gives the audience an exclusive inside access to prominent political events such as the inauguration of Yasser Arafat and Black September, as well as the Lebanese civil war, while also showing the complexity of mixing politics with family affairs.

Though the film's content is politically heavy, Hind Shoufani manages to make it an intimate affair to truly understand her father, his history, and the history of the homeland – Palestine. The film is layered with sounds and visuals that one needs to stay alert to so as not to miss anything. Shoufani utilizes old family photos and video tapes as well as archival news footage, and appears in the film a few times herself. She is also the voice-over narrator of the film

and often recites her own poetry. All these elements combined produce a unique experience of personal memory that exemplifies Shoufani's identity as seen through her idiosyncratic style of directing.

As one views the film, it is important to remember that Shoufani is a diasporic filmmaker, giving her a unique perspective on "home." Because of their traumatic collective experiences, Palestinians in the diaspora often feel attached to their homeland and have the desire and the longing for home. Hind Shoufani is able to connect with this home through her father as well as through archival material and home movies. More often than not, diasporic filmmakers' first films are either documentaries or experimental: a journey of self-discovery. It is fascinating that *Trip Along Exodus*

brilliantly embodies both of these characteristics.

What keeps the memory – and the Palestinian struggle – alive, is the experience that is constantly being erased from within Palestinians' midst. The quick pace of the film as well as Shoufani's sometimes-erratic handheld repeat shot often mimics the process of recollecting a memory. Elias Shoufani's experiences seep into the

subconscious and are embodied by the viewer. This reliance on memory due to the collective traumatic occurrence sustains Palestinian identity and strengthens the connection to the homeland and the resistance to exile. Again, this is an extremely political film portrayed in a most personal manner. In a way, this film serves to preserve the memory of her father as well as Palestinian history. Though the



film is intense in its political content, Shoufani's style and imagery allow the viewer to follow with ease. There's never a dull moment in the film. That's a promise.

Trip Along Exodus will premiere in Palestine at Al Quds Cinema/Yabous Cultural Centre on September 24, 2015, at 8:00 p.m.

Based in Jerusalem, Raneem Turjman is a cinema coordinator by day and an independent filmmaker by night. She holds a master's degree in cinema studies from the Savannah College of Art and Design. Her current favorite film is Jim Jarmusch's Only Lovers Left Alive.

Links to the Trailer

<https://vimeo.com/113191029>

<https://vimeo.com/112111458>



Life is a long filmstrip, especially the life of a revolutionist! Raneem Turjman discusses Hind Shoufani's attempt to explore new dimensions of her father Elias Shoufani's struggle for freedom through an inspiring documentary *Trip Along Exodus*.