

2014-15: Global Islam

Dernier Maquis/Adhen, 2008. Dir. Rabah Ameur-Zaïmeche. Image courtesy of Sarrazink Productions



A Weekend of Film & Video

CO-SPONSORED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FILM & DIGITAL MEDIA, THE OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS, THE DIVISION OF HUMANITIES, COLLEGE 8, COLLEGE 9 & 10, AND THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMANITIES RESEARCH

All events held in the Film and Digital Media Department, Communications 150 (Studio C)

FRIDAY, MAY 29TH

4:00-5:30pm

Videos by **MOUNIR FATMI:**

Mixology (2010), *Technologia* (2010), and *Rain Making* (2004)

Discussion with:

Tarek El Haik,

Assistant Professor, Cinema,
San Francisco State University

and **Peter Limbrick,**

Associate Professor, Film and Digital Media,
UC Santa Cruz

7:00-9:00pm

Feature film: *Dernier Maquis/Adhen*
(France, 2008)

dir. **RABAH AMEUR-ZAÏMECHE**

Discussion with:

Mayanthi Fernando,

Associate Professor, Anthropology,
UC Santa Cruz

and **Peter Limbrick,**

Associate Professor, Film and Digital Media,
UC Santa Cruz



with you.

Image courtesy of Al-Qadiri, from Abu Athiyya (2013)

SATURDAY, MAY 30TH

10:00am-12:30pm

Film screening: *New Muslim Cool* (USA, 2009)

dir. **JENNIFER MAYTORENA-TAYLOR**

Screening and discussion with director

Jennifer Maytorena-Taylor,

Assistant Professor, Film and Digital Media,
UC Santa Cruz

1:30-3:30pm

Videos by **MONIRA AL-QADIRI:**

Abu Athiyya (Father of Pain) (2013), *Behind the Sun* (2013), *Prism* (2007-ongoing).

Viewing and discussion with filmmaker

Monira Al-Qadiri

4:00-6:00pm

Film screening: *Descending with Angels*
(Denmark, 2013)

dir. **CHRISTIAN SUHR**

Screening and discussion with director

Christian Suhr

and **Mayanthi Fernando,**
Associate Professor, Anthropology,
UC Santa Cruz

Image courtesy of Al-Qadiri, from Abu Athiyya (2013)



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MAY 29th, 4-5:30PM | MOUNIR FATMI was born in Tangiers, Morocco in 1970 and lives and works between there and France. He works across a wide variety of media including photography, video, film, sculpture, and installation. Whatever its form, Fatmi's work is invested in a critique of all kinds of ideology, constituting a "lifelong practice that collides East and West, sacred and profane, highbrow and low" (Lillian Davies). Some of Fatmi's work has been subject to censorship and, with essayist Ariel Kyrrou, he has just published a book titled *Ceci n'est pas un blasphème (This is not a blasphemy)* (2015). His solo exhibitions have been shown throughout Europe as well as in New York and the Middle East and he has been awarded several prizes, including the Cairo Biennial Prize in 2010, the Uriöt prize, Amsterdam and the Grand Prize Leopold Sedar Senghor of the 7th Dakar Biennial in 2006.

***Rain Making* (2004, 6min)** presents a view of a mosque minaret amidst a sea of rooftop satellite dishes. To the soundtrack of a prayer heard over scratchy loudspeakers, we watch the fragmented, montage-induced movements of the minaret as clouds sweep by. After the advent of Islam, the power to make rain—previously thought of as caused by the movement of stars—was attributed to *wali* or "rain makers" whose prayers could bring precipitation. *Rain Making* interrogates the relationship between religion, science, natural phenomena, and political leadership.

***Technologia* (2010, 15min)** emerges from Fatmi's major installation *Modern Times, A History of the Machine* (2010), with its overt reference to Charlie Chaplin's 1936 film *Modern Times*. While Chaplin's "Little Tramp" is caught between the giant cogs of the modern factory assembly line, here the viewer is assaulted by spinning circles that combine the ornate circular calligraphy of Arabic text with line drawings that resemble Marcel Duchamp's *Rotoreliefs* designs.

***Mixology* (2010, 11min 4 secs)** continues the play of the *Rotorelief* patterns (which were designed to be spun on turntables), this time in a contemporary DJ's mixing desk. As the Koranic verses play in a dizzying array of patterns, an occasionally cacophonous combination of sounds is heard, mixing machinic noise with snatches of classical music in a violent collision of modern, traditional, Eastern and Western signs and systems. Deliberately provocative in their audio-visual attack, these videos challenge us to think about the relationships of technology, art, religion, devotion, and perception in a globalized world.

MAY 29th, 7-9PM | RABAH AMEUR-ZAÏMECHE was born in Algeria in 1966 and moved to France in 1968. In 1999, he founded Sarrazink Productions and directed his first feature, *Wesh Wesh*, in 2002, followed by *Bled Number One* (2006), which premiered in the "Un Certain Regard" section at the Cannes Film Festival. His most recent film is *History of Judas* (2015), his second historical epic after 2012's *Smuggler's Songs*.

***Dernier Maquis/Adhen* (2008)** is Ameur-Zaïmeche's third film. In a rundown industrial park in the Parisien suburbs, a factory boss, Mao, builds a mosque for his Muslim, mostly African workforce. But he does not consult them before he appoints an imam. Religious tensions cross with questions of economics and labor as his workforce rebels and he threatens to shut down the factory. Shot through with incredible color and handled with formal precision, the film is a beautiful and complex portrait of class, religion, and masculinity in contemporary France.

MAY 30th, 10AM-12:30PM | JENNIFER MAYTORENA TAYLOR is an assistant professor of Film and Digital Media at UC Santa Cruz and an award-winning documentary producer and director of character-based social issue feature films and community journalism projects. Her research interests include long-form and short form filmmaking for emerging platforms, and the intersection of point-of-view storytelling and journalism. Her documentaries and short films have been shown in venues that include PBS, the Sundance Channel, the Sundance, Locarno, Karlovy-Vary, Amsterdam Documentary and Human Rights Film Festivals, as well as the Whitney Museum and New York Museum of Modern Art.

***New Muslim Cool* (2009, 83min)** This film gives audiences an insider's view of a little-known cultural fusion between Muslims and street beats that has been developing since the very beginnings of hip-hop culture. The result is a surprising challenge to stereotypes of both Muslims and urban youth in America that encourages viewers to look critically at the "clash of civilizations" between Islam and the West. (PBS.org)

MAY 30th, 1:30-3:30PM | MONIRA AL QADIRI is a Kuwaiti visual artist who was born in Senegal (1983) and grew up in Kuwait. In 2010, she received a Ph.D. in inter-media art from Tokyo University of the Arts, where her research was focused on the aesthetics of sadness in the Middle-East region and considered poetry, music, art and religious practices. She has held solo exhibitions at the Sultan Gallery, Kuwait (2011 & 2014), and Tokyo Wonder Site, Japan (2009) and has participated in many group shows and film/video festivals.

***Prism* (2007-)** is a video informed by Al Qadiri's interest in space and affect and by her personal background as the child of both Sunni and Shi'ite parents. The work compares the two sides of the Sulaibikhat national cemetery in Kuwait, a cemetery whose Shi'ite graveyard and Sunni graveyard—on opposite sides of a road—have radically different visual characteristics, one colorful, adorned with decoration, and frequently visited; the other empty, with unmarked graves that are devoid of visitors. The work invites us to think about practices of mourning both public and private, and how spirituality manifests itself spatially.

***Abu Athiyya (Father of Pain)* (2013, 6min)** is a music video based on a *mawwal* or lamentation sung by southern Iraqi singer Yas Khodhor. Al Qadiri plays the singer whose grief plays out in an elaborate dance of knives and implied self-punishment. The video's elaborate, ghostly mise-en-scène and beautifully morbid music creates a haunting aesthetic of sadness, the subject of much of Al Qadiri's research and art practice.

***Behind the Sun* (2003, 9min)** "After the first Gulf War in 1991, countless oil fields in Kuwait were set ablaze during the retreat of invading forces. Those months following the war were nothing short of the classic image of a biblical apocalypse: the earth belching fire and the black scorched sky felt like a portrait of hell as it should be, an almost romanticized vision of the end of the world. In this work, amateur VHS video footage of the oil fires is juxtaposed with audio monologues from Islamic television programs of the same period. Trees, waterfalls, mountains, and animals were the visual staple of religious media, and the narration was not that of the Koran, but of Arabic poetry recited by a skilled orator with a deep voice." (Monira Al Qadiri)

MAY 30th, 4-6PM | CHRISTIAN SUHR is an anthropologist and filmmaker whose ongoing project *Descending with Angels* has taken the form of a PhD dissertation and feature-length documentary. The project examines both how Danish Muslims are provided different forms of healing by the psychiatric system and by various types of Islamic exorcism. *Descending with Angels* won the award for Best Documentary Feature at the Berlin Independent Film Festival (February 2015). Suhr has previously directed the award-winning film *Unity through Culture* (RAI, 2011, with Ton Otto), *Ngat is Dead* (DER, 2009, with Ton Otto and Steffen Dalsgaard) and *Want a Camel, Yes* (persona films 2006).

***Descending with Angels* (2013, 75min)** "*Descending with Angels* explores perceptions of illness and healing among Danish Muslims. In particular, I examine categories of mental illnesses that in a Western context often are described by diagnoses such as depression, anxiety, stress, schizophrenia, etc. In an Islamic context many of these illnesses are perceived as divine trials. Often these illnesses are understood as the result of harmful attacks by spirits, evil eyes, or magic. The source of healing is ultimately provided by the divine, which is addressed through the reading of Quranic verses, exorcisms, holy water, or the removal of dirty blood. I explore how these illnesses and their healing are experienced and understood by Muslim healers and patients. In my work I explore how cinematic language and montage can be used creatively to evoke the invisible." (Christian Suhr).

*Program notes by Peter Limbrick, unless indicated otherwise.

Event presented by the:

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