



Africa Film Special – "New films from North and South Africa"

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INTENSIVE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS WITH NORTH AFRICAN GUESTS

More than 700 cinema-goers attended the first weekend of the Africa Film Special 2013 by FilmInitiativ Köln e.V. to see new feature films, documentaries and short films from North Africa and to discuss them with guests from Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. The film discussion with the two young Egyptian directors **Alia Ayman** and **Mona El Naggar** on Saturday afternoon (14.9) lasted for more than an hour, due to the many questions posed by the audience. It mostly concerned the problems faced by women in modern Egyptian society, in which – according to Alia Ayman – "subjects such as extramarital relationships and sex are still taboo today". An equally heated discussion was held with Egyptian filmmaker Iman Kamel, who on Friday (13.9) presented her portrait of a nomadic woman from the Sinai Peninsula, who attempts to escape the authoritarian patriarchal structure of her society.

To the amazement of the Cologne audience, Tunisian filmmaker **Mahmoud Ben Mahmoud** explained on Saturday evening (14.9) that his feature film "Le Professeur", which centres around a workers' strike in the Tunisian phosphate mines and which can be seen as a modern-day parable of the revolts at the end of 2010, was in fact shot during the time of the Ben Ali dictatorship and was "completed three weeks before he was overthrown". The then Minister of Education and the Arts even agreed to subsidise the film – a sign that there were rifts and opposition even within the Tunisian dictatorial government. The Algerian director **Anis Djaad** painted a gloomy picture of his country on Sunday evening (15.9) not only in his short film "Le Hublot" about two youths with a lack of prospects in the banlieues of Algiers, but also in the discussion that followed. "We shot for a week in this dilapidated satellite town on the outskirts of the capital and it was eerie. There was not a soul to be seen during the day. It was not until the evening that mostly youngsters began to fill the streets, to kill some time smoking, drinking and fighting. The majority of them are unemployed. Algeria is a rich country and could offer a good standard of living with its raw materials, such as oil and natural gas, but the resources are poorly distributed and the thing we are lacking most of all is the freedom to do or not do whatever we want."

The film series continues on Thursday (19.9) with the Algerian-French feature film "Rengaine" before the focus switches from Friday (20.9) to Sunday (22.9) to films and guests from South Africa (**Ntshavheni Waluruli**, **Oliver Schmitz** and **Catherine Henegan**) (For programme listings, see: www.filme-aus-afrika.de)

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