



Inch 'Allah Dimanche



**A film by Yamina Benguigui
Algeria, 98 Minutes**

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Cast

Zouina

Aïcha, the mother

Malika

Ali

Rachid

Ahmed

Madame Donze, the neighbor

Monsieur Donze, the neighbor

Madame Manant

Melle Briat

Le chauffeur

Fejria Deliba

Rabia Mokeddem

Amina Annabi

Anass Behri

Hamza Dubuïh

Zinedine Soualem

France Darry

Roger Dumas

Marie-France Pisier

Mathilde Seigner

Jalil Lespert

Credits

Director/Writer

Producer

Production Manager

Cinematography

Editing

Production Design

Costume Design

Mixing

Yamina Benguigui

Philippe Dupuis-Mendel

Stella Quef-Gregorz

Antoine Roch

Nadia Ben Rachid

Marc Marmier

Malika Khelfa

Nadia Ben Rachid

Short Synopsis

In 1974, under the “Family Reunion” law, the French government decided to allow the families of Algerian men working in France to legally emigrate to join them. *Inch’Allah Dimanche* tells the story of one such family. After a tearful good-bye to her friends and family in Algeria, Zouina (Fejria Deliba) arrives in France with her three children and moves into a house that her husband has rented for them, filled with the hopes and promises of a new life. However, Zouina’s husband Ahmed fears that his wife’s honor may be threatened in this foreign society and subsequently forbids her to leave the house. Throughout the film, Zouina is physically abused by her husband and emotionally attacked by her caustically “evil” mother-in-law. Zouina’s neighbor, Madame Donze (France Darry), is a xenophobic busybody so obsessed with winning the prize for the best flower garden that she cannot empathize with Zouina and is cruel to her. Meanwhile, a young woman who works in a makeup factory, Nicole (Mathilde Seigner), helps Zouina feel accepted, and sparks her interest in French culture and the new world around her. As the days pass, Zouina finds herself struggling between traditional Algerian values and the rapid feminization and modernization of France. Constantly subject to the tyrannical wrath of her domineering mother-in-law and miles away from her friends and family, Zouina finds her only source of relief is Sunday – the one day that Ahmed and his mother are out of the house – when she takes her children on excursions through the countryside and attempts to come to terms with the difficulties of immigration, integration and an ostensibly impossible sense of independence.

About the Story

Drawing on her own childhood recollections, Yamina Benguigui paints an evocative portrait of a young immigrant woman and her experiences in a new culture. *Inch'Allah Dimanche* – or “Inch’Allah Sunday” - is a moving exploration of the problems Zouina faces and her struggle to gain some measure of independence and dignity despite overwhelming odds. Through evocative imagery and emotionally jarring performances, the film presents a harrowing impression of Algerian family life in 1970s France and challenges the xenophobic tendencies commonly associated with French society. Zouina’s quarrels with her neighbor Madame Donze manifest the clash of Arabic customs with French traditions at a time of burgeoning feminism. The stunning Fejria Deliba gives a convincingly genuine performance that brings centuries of Arabic tradition to life and challenges the obedience to Muslim patriarchy that has kept Algerian women in the shadows throughout history. Benguigui’s meticulous attention to domestic detail and powerful performances by a talented cast serve to create a bittersweet affirmation of hope.

About the Production

Yamina Benguigui based the story of *Inch'Allah Dimanche* on her own experiences with immigration and the struggles for autonomy Algerian women continue to face even today. By making this powerful film, Benguigui sought to bring to the surface a part of French history that has remained quiet for so long. She says: “France didn’t recognize us or talk about us; the countries which we came from didn’t talk about us and knew nothing about us; and our parents were silent, told us nothing. I realized that in France we had this first generation, this first wave of immigrants, who were slowly dying out and vanishing, and it was important for me to stop and capture them, to transcribe their experiences. As the daughter of immigrants, it was important for me that even before moving into fiction, I wanted to capture this memory, and to work with memory.”

Benguigui cites Elia Kazan’s “America America” as the initial inspiration for *Inch'Allah Dimanche*: “That film touched me because it dealt with immigration and the fate of minorities. The story was my story too, that of my parents that no one had ever told the story of the Muslim community on the fringe of French society, totally invisible within the housing projects. Kazan’s film made me aware of the power of images as a means of expression.” Benguigui also recognizes Lakhadar Amina’s film *Chronique des années de braise* which won the Palme d’Or in 1975 as a catalyst for her career: “I don’t know if I’d have dared to try anything without him,” she says of Amina, “He led me from dreams to reality. After all, how could I have dared to dream of the cinema when I didn’t even have the right to control my own destiny?”

Inch'Allah Dimanche emphasizes Zouina’s sense of entrapment in a new world, isolated from all of her friends and relatives and forbidden to leave the home. According to Benguigui, “In France, she’s in prison. It’s at the end that we see Zouina’s true face, her true identity. What the film depicts is her first tottering steps towards her own liberation.” In this mélange of drama, comedy and

adventure, Yamina Benguigui paints a portrait of one immigration experience that is merely a microcosm of the life experiences of all of us. This film teaches us to cherish every day like Inch'Allah Sunday and never lose hope no matter what. As Benguigui tells us, "I wanted to recount a moment in the history of the immigration of Algerian women in France, the mothers of today's second generation, in an intimate, moving and above all sincere way."

Benguigui asserts that she always had Fejria Deliba in mind for the role of Zouina; in fact, she says, "I was thinking of her when I wrote the character. She's a rare and talented actress. She is also an extraordinary woman." Benguigui also explained that, throughout the production of the film, the line between fiction and reality was very thin as the clash between Muslim custom and French tradition that encompasses the film extended to the shooting: "[Fejria Deliba] found herself dealing in the film with the actress playing Aicha who couldn't stand removing her dress to perform a fight scene, telling us both that it was "Rlam" (a sin) [...] This shoot brought all our secrets to the surface, everything that each of us had kept buried, leading to unbelievable osmosis between us."

According to Benguigui, "For me, making films like this is a way of initiating a dialogue. I'm relating a moment in the history of Algerian immigration in France but I'm also relating something that belongs to French society. It's my way of confirming my identity as a filmmaker by telling our stories in the hope that you will then tell yours, which are also ours..."

Festival History

- Toronto International Film Festival winner
FIPRESCI Award
- Marrakech International Film Festival winner
Grand Prix Award
- Bordeaux International Festival for Women in Cinema winner
Audience Prize
Golden Wave Award
- Amiens International Film Festival winner
Special Jury Prize
- Closing Night Film – Women with Vision: On the Move
- Official Selection – Film Society of Lincoln Center: Rendezvous with French Cinema

About the Director

Born in Lille, France on April 9, 1957 to Algerian parents, film director **Yamina Benguigui** is renowned for her penetrating cinematic treatises on gender issues related to the North African immigrant community in France, particularly the Maghreb. Benguigui began her career as assistant to Jean-Daniel Pollet for four years before beginning to write and direct her own films including the documentaries *Women of Islam* in 1994 and *Immigrant Memories—The North African Inheritance* in 1997. It was *The Immigrant Memories- the North African Inheritance* that marked her success in the film industry. This stunning reflection on the memory and the exile of North African immigrants was welcomed favorably by critics and the general public. Since then, Benguigui has realized a series of short films and documentaries including *The Perfumed Garden* (2000), *Pimprenelle* (2000) and *Pas d'histoire! A Look at Everyday Racism* (2000). In 2001, she made her first feature-length fiction film *Inch'Allah Dimanche*. Despite her success, it took Benguigui awhile to be accepted both by her family and the general public as a prominent Algerian female filmmaker. According to her, “It was extremely difficult for me. One price I had to pay was that I had to be willing to cut myself off from my father. My father was not willing for me to follow this career, and it’s only recently that I’ve been able to reestablish contact with him [...] Because you’re cut off to some extent from French society, you have to really impose yourself, you have to really fight to be able to work on subjects like this, subjects and realities that France isn’t necessarily willing to acknowledge. It’s a constant struggle, and you’re constantly juggling several different hats: the hat of a woman, a director, the daughter of immigration. It’s not easy.”

Filmography:

1994 *Women of Islam*

1997 *Immigrant Memories—the North African Inheritance*

2000 *Pas d'histoire! A Look at Everyday Racism*

2000 *The Perfumed Garden*

2000 *Pimprenelle*

2001 *Inch'Allah Dimanche*

About the Cast

Fejria Deliba

Fejria Deliba studied at the School of National Theater in Chaillot under the direction of Antoine Vitez from 1987-1989 and has appeared in myriad theater productions including “La Comédie des Mots” (1990), “La Misère du Monde” (1995) and “Bérénice- Racine” (1994). Yamina Benguigui wrote the role of ‘Zouina’ with actress Fejria Deliba in mind, who’s filmography includes ‘Marie-Line’ (2000), ‘La Bande des quatre’ (1988) and ‘De bruit et de fureur’ (1987). Fejria has also written and directed the short film ‘Le petit chat est mort’ (1992), winner of the French Syndicate of Cinema Critic’s Award.

Filmography, Actress:

2003 *Virus au paradis*

2001 *La Fosse rouge*

2001 *Inch'Allah Dimanche*

1998 Fin août, début septembre (Late August, Early September)

1988 Gang of Four

1988 Sound and Fury (1988)

Filmography, Director:

1991 Le Petit chat est mort

Zinedine Soualem

Born in 1957 in Thiers, Puy-de-Dôme in France, Zinedine Soualem made his theatrical debut in 1983 with *Les Paravents* by Patrice Chéreau. He then pursued a career in theater before appearing on-screen in the 1983 films *La Bête Noire* directed by Patrick Chaput and *Hanna K* directed by Constantin Costa-Gavras. In 1992, he worked with Cédric Klapisch in *Rien du Tout* and continued to work with the filmmaker in other films including *Chacun Cherche son Chat* in 1996 and *Ni Pour ni Contre (bien au contraire)* in 2003. Soualem has appeared in over 75 films and enjoys working under the direction of young filmmakers such as Yamina Benguigui in *Inch'Allah Dimanche*.

Filmography (notable and most recent):

2003 Silver moumoute

2003 La Vie en gros

2003 Ni pour, ni contre (bien au contraire)

2002 L' Auberge espagnole, L' (2002)

2002 Satin rouge

2002 Astérix & Obélix: Mission Cléopâtre

1995 La Haine

About Film Movement

Film Movement is an innovative new film distribution company, created as a solution for millions of consumers across the nation whose access to outstanding film is limited by geography, lifestyle or lack of information. Film Movement acquires award winning independent films from the world's top festivals, which they then release each month of the year to members on DVD through a subscription service, and theatrically through The Film Movement Series. Participating filmmakers are able to reach under-served film fans everywhere through Film Movement.

The Film Movement Series is a new theatrical film series featuring some of the best in original world cinema. Created by the team that invented the groundbreaking Shooting Gallery Film Series, Film Movement will release 6 of its 12 films per year in leading independent cinemas in major US cities to help outstanding filmmakers find the audience they deserve. All films are available to members on DVD upon theatrical release so that they may participate regardless of where they live.

Film Movement has partnered with some of the leading independent theaters in the country to exhibit the Film Series including Quad Cinema in New York, Arc Light & Laemmle in Los Angeles, The Gene Siskel Film Center in Chicago, and the Roxie in San Francisco. The schedule includes the following films:

- April 11 – Wiebke von Carolsfeld's *Marion Bridge*
- June 13 – Eric Eason's *MANITO*
- August 15 – Scott Kennedy's *OT: Our Town*
- October 10 – Rebecca Chaiklin's *The Last Party's Over*
- December TBD- Tjebbo Penning's *Morlang*
- February 2004- Mina Shum's *Long Life, Prosperity and Happiness*