



## Short Films I

Mohamed Afifi, Ahmed Bouanani, Abdelmajid R'chich, Mohamed Abderrahman Tazi

In the decades after it was founded in 1944, the Centre Cinématographique Marocain (CCM) produced newsreels for screening in theatres before the main feature. Mohamed Afifi, Ahmed Bouanani, Abdelmajid R'chich and Mohamed Abderrahman Tazi were filmmakers working at the CCM after the country gained independence for whom film was an art form. Afifi was the oldest, while Bouanani, R'chich and Tazi knew each other from their student days at the IDHEC (Institut des hautes études cinématographiques) in Paris. Afifi was the first to dare to subvert a newsreel commission to create an auteurist meditation. Visually captivating, *Men Lahm wa Salb* (1959) films a day in the life of the Casablanca port, without dialogue or voiceover, with the images flowing to the rhythm of music, while *Sitta wa Thaniat 'Ashar* (1968) is a study of the Casablanca light between the hours 6 and 12. *Al-'Awdah li Agadir* (1967) films the reconstruction of Agadir after the earthquake that almost destroyed the entire city and is akin to a modernist constructivist moving image tableau. Bouanani's first short *Tarfaya Aw Masseurat Sha'er* (1966) is adapted from a 15th century poem by a legendary Moroccan bard.

Rasha Salti

# Men Lahm wa Salb

## De chair et d'acier

Mohamed Afifi

**Production company** Centre Cinématographique Marocain (CCM, Rabat, Morocco). **Director** Mohamed Afifi. **Director of photography** Bernard Taizant. **Editor** Mohamed Afifi.

1959, 35 mm, black/white. 15 min. Without dialogue.

**Mohamed Afifi** was born in 1933 in Casablanca, Morocco. He studied at the Institut des hautes études cinématographiques (IDHEC) in Paris until 1957. That same year, he began working for the Centre Cinématographique Marocain (CCM). He was the director of the theatre of Casablanca from 1962 until 1967. He founded the distribution company Promo Films in the late 1960s and was active in various Moroccan and international film associations. In addition to being a film director and distributor, he also worked as a writer and journalist. Mohamed Afifi died in 2014.

### Films

1959: *Men Lahm wa Salb / De chair et d'acier* (15 min.). 1960: *Image d'Orient*. 1967: *Al-'Awdah li Agadir / Retour à Agadir* (11 min.).

# Tarfaya Aw Masseurat Sha'er

## Tarfaya ou La marche d'un poète

Ahmed Bouanani

**Production company** Centre Cinématographique Marocain (CCM, Rabat, Morocco). **Director** Ahmed Bouanani. **Director of photography** Mohamed Abderrahaman Tazi. **Editor** Ahmed Bouanani. **Sound** Majid Rechiche. **Music** M'barak Chergaul. **With** Ahmed Maji, Abdeslam Sefrioul.

1966, 35 mm, black/white. 20 min. Arabic.

**Ahmed Bouanani** was born in 1938 in Casablanca, Morocco. He studied Film at the Institut des hautes études cinématographiques (IDHEC) in Paris. He made a series of short films in the 1960s, and in 1970 co-founded the production company Sigma 3 along with Hamid Benani, Mohamed Abderrahman Tazi, and Mohamed Sekkat. In addition to directing his own films, Bouanani also worked as an editor and screenwriter for other Moroccan directors. He was also a writer and published several volumes of poetry. His one full-length film, *Al-Sarab / Le Mirage*, was made in 1979. Ahmed Bouanani died in 2011 in Demnate, Morocco.

### Films

1966: *Tarfaya Aw Masseurat Sha'er / Tarfaya ou La marche d'un poète* (20 min.). 1968: *Sitta wa Thaniat 'Ashar / Six et douze* (18 min.). 1971: *Thakirah Arba'at 'Ashar / Mémoire 14* (24 min.). 1977: *Al-Manabe' al-Arba'a / Les quatre sources* (35 min.). 1980: *Al-Sarab / Le Mirage / The Mirage* (100 min.). 1981: *Carte de visite* (30 min.). 1982: *Casablanca, bilan et perspectives* (50 min.), *Sidi Kacem ou le rameau d'Olivier* (11 min.). 1984: *L'Enfant, la torture et l'ordinateur* (15 min.), *Complexe sportif Mohammed V de Casablanca* (22 min.). 1991: *Raconte-moi Meknès* (16 min.).

### An ethos of the documentary film

Bouanani was unable to view the Sahara except from a poetic perspective. The film's title makes the double reference clear: Tarfaya is a place that evokes images pointing to the mythology of the desert, the sea and the encounter with the Other; the 'March of a Poet', in turn, points to the theme of an odyssey, of aimless roaming: the vast desert is a constant invitation to travel, to meditate, to find inspiration.

The physical images unleash the rhetorical images. The film cannot elude this approach: the short film's form adapts to the content.

This is not a pure documentary film – but also no feature film; its style is shaped by what I would like to call an ethos of the documentary film. The camera is never obtrusive: the film is twenty minutes long, but the viewer thinks it is longer, because he adjusts to the temporal logic of its theme. From the first picture onwards, the direction is predetermined: the people and objects are filmed with empathy. The camera accompanies this community that is becoming settled.

The child stands at the centre of the story; later we follow the grown-up boy in his search for this great poet who is to make him receptive to the magic of words. This search for poetic inspiration reads like a parable of the young filmmaker seeking aesthetic inspiration. Doesn't the young Khaled trekking through the desert mirror a young generation of filmmakers who are trying to transpose the universal language of cinema to their own culture? At the end of his journey, Khaled arrives too late. The poet he has sought so urgently is no longer there; what remains is a ritualised symbol of trivial ceremonies (which is why Khaled refuses to see the blood of the sacrificed animal). But his search was not in vain; it is his initiation. The young poet has found his voice himself. Like the young filmmaker.

Mohammed Bakrim

<http://assaiss-tifaouine.blogspot.de/2016/12/tarfaya-ou-la-marche-dun-poete-il-y.html>

## Al-'Awdah li Agadir

### Retour à Agadir

Mohamed Afifi

Director Mohamed Afifi.

1967, 35 mm, black/white. 12 min. Without dialogue.

### The rebirth of the city

A visual and auditory poem in black-and-white, devoted to the city of martyrs. The project is from a time when cinema had the institutional task of producing national images. There was no television yet; movies were expected to capture the important moments of the life of the nation. Agadir had just been struck by a terrible earthquake, one of the most murderous in history, with more than 15,000 dead. The whole country got involved in clearing the dust and iron debris away. Afifi's camera filmed this 'resurrection' of Agadir: a rebirth and return to life. The result is overwhelming; by the way, the film won the bronze Tanit award at the 1968 film festival in Carthage. Its style is very special: it points to something that could be called an artistic documentary film.

Mohammed Bakrim

<http://assaiss-tifaouine.blogspot.de/2014/05/retour-agadir.html>

Mohamed Afifi was born in 1933 in Casablanca, Morocco. He studied at the Institut des hautes études cinématographiques (IDHEC) in Paris until 1957. That same year, he began working for the Centre Cinématographique Marocain (CCM). He was the director of the theatre of Casablanca from 1962 until 1967. He founded the distribution company Promo Films in the late 1960s and was active in various Moroccan and international film associations. In addition to being a film director and distributor, he also worked as a writer and journalist. Mohamed Afifi died in 2014.

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1959: *Men Lahm wa Salb / De chair et d'acier* (15 min.). 1960: *Image d'Orient*. 1967: *Al-'Awdah li Agadir / Retour à Agadir* (11 min.)..

# Sitta wa Thaniat 'Ashar

Six et douze

Ahmed Bouanani, Abdelmajid R'chich, Mohamed Abderrahman Tazi

**Production company** Centre Cinématographique Marocain (CCM, Rabat, Morocco). **Directed by** Ahmed Bouanani, Abdelmajid R'chich, Mohamed Abderrahman Tazi. **Editor** Ahmed Bouanani.

1968, 35 mm, black/white. 18 min. Without dialogue.

## A study of Casablanca light

We chose images throughout a city – moments – (...) absence and solitude of wet cobblestones at a dull party that has ended (...) suddenly the shade – suddenly a gesture, a footstep – the sea or the silence – the silence or the cry – the waiting or the dread – sleep or insomnia – a sign of light surges – a heart caught up between two digits, our faces in the storm, the two white-hot figures carved on foreheads, eyes, bodies spinning round like magnets in the storm.

*Abderrahman Tazi, Ahmed Bouanani, Abdelmajid R'chich*

**Ahmed Bouanani** was born in 1938 in Casablanca, Morocco. He studied Film at the Institut des hautes études cinématographiques (IDHEC) in Paris. He made a series of short films in the 1960s, and in 1970 co-founded the production company Sigma 3 along with Hamid Benani, Mohamed Abderrahman Tazi, and Mohamed Sekkat. In addition to directing his own films, Bouanani also worked as an editor and screenwriter for other Moroccan directors. He was also a writer and published several volumes of poetry. His one full-length film, *Al-Sarab / Le Mirage*, was made in 1979. Ahmed Bouanani died in 2011 in Demnate, Morocco.

**Abdelmajid R'chich** was born in 1942 in Kenitra, Morocco. He graduated from the Institut des hautes études cinématographiques (IDHEC) in Paris in 1963. He began his filmmaking career as a cinematographer on several short films produced by the Centre Cinématographique Marocain (CCM) and then joined the Université libre in Brussels, where he began studying Anthropology and Art History. In the years that followed, R'chich worked as a director of photography, producer, director and technical director in Morocco. He made his first film, *Sitta wa Thaniat 'Ashar*, along with Mohamed Abderrahman Tazi and Ahmed Bouanani, in 1968. In 1987, R'chich founded the production company Puma Production.

**Mohamed Abderrahman Tazi** was born in 1942 in Rabat, Morocco. He completed a degree in Cinematography from the Institut des hautes études cinématographiques (IDHEC) in Paris in 1963. From 1974 to 1975, he studied Audio-Visual Communication at Syracuse University in the United States. Tazi began working for the Centre Cinématographique Marocain (CCM) in 1964, when he also began working as a screenwriter, producer, and cinematographer for other films (including on the film *Wechma*, directed by Hamid Benani). In 1970, Tazi co-founded the production company Sigma 3 along with Ahmed Bouanani, Hamid Benani, and Mohamed Sekkat. After launching his own production company, Arts et

Techniques Audiovisuels, in 1980, he made his first full-length film, *Ibn al-sabil / Le grand voyage*, in 1981. In addition to working as a director, he also produces films for Moroccan television.

## Films

**Ahmed Bouanani:** 1966: *Tarfaya Aw Masseurat Sha'er / Tarfaya ou La marche d'un poète* (20 min.). 1968: *Sitta wa Thaniat 'Ashar / Six et douze* (18 min.). 1971: *Thakirah Arba'at 'Ashar / Mémoire 14* (24 min.). 1977: *Al-Manabe' al-Arba'a / Les quatre sources* (35 min.). 1980: *Al-Sarab / Le Mirage / The Mirage* (100 min.). 1981: *Carte de visite* (30 min.). 1982: *Casablanca, bilan et perspectives* (50 min.), *Sidi Kacem ou le rameau d'Olivier* (11 min.). 1984: *L'Enfant, la torture et l'ordinateur* (15 min.), *Complexe sportif Mohammed V de Casablanca* (22 min.). 1991: *Raconte-moi Meknès* (16 min.).

**Abdelmajid R'chich:** 1968: *Sitta wa Thaniat 'Ashar* (18 min.). 1970: *Forêt* (17 min.). 1971: *Al-Boraq / Shining* (27 min.). 1999: *Histoire d'une rose* (85 min.). 2005: *Ailes brisées* (90 min.).

**Mohamed Abderrahman Tazi:** 1968: *Sitta wa Thaniat 'Ashar / Six et douze* (18 min.). 1981: *Ibn al-sabil / Le grand Voyage* (73 min.). 1988: *Badis* (92 min.). 1993: *Al-bakhz an zauj imraati / À la Recherche du mari de ma femme* (88 min.). 1997: *Lalla Hobby* (94 min.). 2003: *Jarat Abu Musa / Les Voisines d'Abou Moussa* (122 min.). 2005: *Les Tourments de Houssein*. 2011: *Houssein et Safia*. 2013: *Al Bayra / La vieille jeune fille* (87 min.). 2015: *Attarkiya / La Promotion*.