

DIRECTION

ARPA FILMS PRESENTS

# ERASMUS IN GAZA

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A FILM BY CHIARA AVESANI & MATTEO DELBÒ

ARPA FILMS



Feltrinelli  
Real Cinema



الوثائقية

JAVA FILMS

## SYNOPSIS:

Riccardo, an Italian final-year medical student, is going on Erasmus. The destination: Gaza, a war zone. His friends are shocked. However, it is important to him as he wants to become a war surgeon and is writing his thesis on explosive bullet wounds. Entering Gaza is not easy, he needs permission from three different authorities: the Israeli army, the Palestinian Authority and the Hamas.

Upon arrival at the Islamic University, he is welcomed by the chancellor and interviewed by the local and international media. Riccardo starts to feel the pressure: his experience will determine the success of the exchange programme. The imminence of war doesn't help and he starts suffering panic attacks.

This improves as Riccardo makes friends with some young Palestinians, who advise him how to handle his anxiety. But when war is rekindled, Riccardo has to make many difficult choices. In crossing the border between Israel and the Strip, Riccardo also crossed the boundary between adolescence and adulthood, a journey of personal struggle that will test whether or not he truly has the strength to pursue his dreams.

FESTIVALS SELECTIONS SO FAR: DocsValencia - SPAIN (screenings on 12th and 13th May 2022), Millenium Film Festival - BELGIUM (screening on 12th May 2022 ), Docs Barcelona - SPAIN ( screening on 27th May 2022)

First TV Broadcast in the world: Al Jazeera (arabic-subtitled version) on 5th June 2022 ( to be confirmed)

- Genres:

Documentary, Current Affairs, Politics, Medicine

- Runtime:

1 hour 28 minutes 21 seconds

- Completion Date:

June 10, 2021

- Country of Origin:

Spain

- Country of Filming:

Israel, Italy, State of Palestine

- Language:

Arabic, English, Italian

- Shooting Format:

Digital

- Aspect Ratio:

16:9

- Film Color:

Color

Director Biographies and filmographies - Chiara Avesani, Matteo Delbò

Chiara Avesani is a journalist. For many years, she has worked for RAI in investigative programs such as Agorà or Report. As a freelance, she has collaborated with Al Jazeera covering stories on the migrant exodus. She participated in Compass, a foreign policy program, and America Tonight, a showcase for thought-provoking reports.

She also worked as a correspondent for Sky News from Mosul. In 2016, Chiara teamed with Delbò for the project Frontline of peace, an ongoing web documentary series on the Iraqi civil society efforts to rebuild their country. Ghadeer is the first story of the project.

#### CHIARA AVESANI'S FILMOGRAPHY

- Ghadeer, back to the fight on the frontline for peace (2019). Short documentary (6'). Directed by Chiara Avesani and Matteo Delbò. Awards: World Press Photo, 3rd Prize in the Digital Storytelling Contest.

- Reports for Sky News (2018). Produced by Sky News. Directed by Chiara Avesani: "Isis Wives" (3') & "Two faces of Mosul" (8'49')

Matteo Delbò is a filmmaker. After graduating from the National Film School in Rome, he won the "David di Donatello" Award for best short film. For a long time he did live broadcasts for the first Italian digital newspaper il Corriere della Sera, following natural catastrophes, demonstrations and migrant rescue operations for the 2013 operation "Mare Nostrum". Delbò has also worked for Al Jazeera in the program Witness and for Sky News from Mosul. There he teamed with Avesani and together they directed Ghadeer. Recently, he was DOP in One More Jump. Delbò now works for RAI.

#### MATTEO DELBÒ'S FILMOGRAPHY

One more jump (2019). Documentary (83'). Directed by Emanuele Gerosa. DOP Matteo Delbò. Produced by GraffitiDoc, Amka Films [...]. Awards: Rome Film Fest 2019 "Alice nella città"; one of 25 documentaries nominated for the Prix Europa 202; Premio speciale della Giuria at the Salina Doc Fest, Prize of the Russian Guild of Film Critics at 16th at Kazan Film Festival (Russia) ; premio Cinema AMoRe al 68° Trento Film Festival 2020

Teaser: <https://vimeo.com/342236750>

Far East (2017). Short Documentary (26'). Directed by Matteo Delbò and Manuele Mandolesi. Produced by H24.

#### Directors Statement

Since the very first time we heard about Riccardo, we found his story incredibly captivating: he is the first Western exchange student in Gaza.

He enrolls in Erasmus: the European study abroad programme that is now expanding its reach beyond EU borders to Israel, the West Bank and, for the first time, Gaza.

Riccardo has the typical student abroad experience, living daily life in Gaza, moving beyond the image that is traditionally shown in the media which tends to focus on the spectacle of the conflict.

Riccardo meets other students his age and enjoys hanging out with them. Like most of his peers, he is still trying to figure out what career to take on in the future. From this point of view, Riccardo's story has all the elements of any other universal educational story of a young man as he navigates the path towards adulthood.

Riccardo also represents a bridge to bring Western audience closer to everyday life in Gaza and empathize. Usually foreigners enter Gaza either to teach or to bring aid: Riccardo is the

first Western student going to Gaza merely to learn. In this sense, we believe our film overthrows a huge amount of stereotypes.

Moreover, the friendships that Riccardo establishes in Gaza draw out various cultural aspects that generate ironic and affectionate conversations.

This film gives us the chance to show young people in Gaza who are full of life and positivity despite the hardships caused by closed borders and war. Furthermore, thanks to Riccardo we are granted access to places in Gaza rarely shown by the media such as the Islamic University or the Faculty of Medicine. We will also be welcomed into the heart of Adam's family, part of Gaza's bourgeoisie, a private household inaccessible to cameras.

Together with this young man –close to graduating– we will try to narrate an educational journey in order to highlight how the curiosity of the unknown and exchange of knowledge are the only keys left to tear down walls, survive violence and, above all, remain human.