

Searching for **Tarab**

A Documentary by

Sandra Gysi & Ahmed Abdel Mohsen

With

Laurence Yadi, Nicolas Cantillon

Press Kit

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/714956962>



Searching for Tarab

Written and directed by Sandra Gysi & Ahmed Abdel Mohsen

Cinematography

Additional Cinematography

Editing

Music

Sound Design

Sound Mix

Sound Studio

Picture Design

Graphics & Title Design

Narration

Translation & Subtitles

Poster Design

Producers

Ahmed Abdel Mohsen, Sandra Gysi, Khalid Awad

Mahmoud Eissa, Julia Bünter, Ibrahim Abla

Ahmed Abdel Mohsen, Sandra Gysi

Jacques Mantica, Sir Richard Bishop

Maruan Youssef

Ramón Orza

ganzerplatz, Zurich

Ahmad Abosaada

Sandra Gysi, Maruan Youssef

Phil Hayes

donkeyshot filmproduction, AJS Craker

Sandrine Pelletier

Sophie Lugon-Moulin, Rachel Lam, Sandra Gysi, Ahmed Abdel Mohsen

Cast

Choreographers

Composers

Arabic Music Specialist

Compagnie 7273 Dancers

Laurence Yadi, Nicolas Cantillon, Karima Mansour

Jacques Mantica, Sir Richard Bishop

Nahla Mattar

Luc Bénard, Rosanne Briens, Nicolas Cantillon, Gildas Diquero, Ryan Djojokarso, Karima El Amrani, Victoria Hoyland, Lola Kervroedan, Aline Lopes, Margaux Monetti, Melissa Ugolini, Laurence Yadi

Students of

The Cairo Contemporary Dance Centre (CCDC)



Searching for Tarab

by Sandra Gysi & Ahmed Abdel Mohsen
Documentary 52min / Switzerland, Egypt 2022

The Film was shot between 2013 and 2022 in Cairo, Geneva and Monaco

Original Version	English / French / Arabic
Subtitles	English / French
National Premiere in Switzerland	19. June 2022 at Festival International du Film Oriental de Genève (FIFOG)
Trailer	https://vimeo.com/714956962
Website with Press kit / pictures for download	https://donkeyshot.ch/anew/en/tarab/
Screener	Vimeo screener on request at info@donkeyshot.ch
A production of	donkeyshot filmproduction Zurich / Compagnie 7273 Geneva
Supported by	Arab Bank (Switzerland) Ltd. / Pro Helvetia Cairo / Canton of Geneva / Swiss Confederation for Transformation Projects.
ISAN	0000-0006-518D-0000-8-0000-0000-D
Contact Film	donkeyshot filmproduction gmbh, Hohlstrasse 4, 8004 Zurich Switzerland, info@donkeyshot.ch , www.donkeyshot.ch
Contact Dance	Compagnie 7273, c/o Emporte-pièces, Rue de Montbrillant 30 1201 Genève, Switzerland, sophie@cie7273.com , www.cie7273.com



Logline

Two dancers from Geneva are confronted with numerous artistic and political challenges as they attempt to transform Tarab – the oriental musical concept – into an occidental dance performance.

Synopsis short

Laurence Yadi and Nicolas Cantillon from the Geneva-based dance company 7273 go on a research trip to post-revolutionary Cairo to delve into the world of «tarab», the Arabic expression for ecstasy evoked by music. As they attempt to transform the oriental musical concept into an occidental dance performance, they are confronted with numerous challenges.

Synopsis long

In 2013, Laurence Yadi and Nicolas Cantillon from the international acclaimed, Geneva-based dance company 7273 set off on a research trip to Cairo to delve into the world of «tarab», the Arabic expression for ecstasy evoked by music. While they get to know the rhythm of the mega-city, they meet with the culture scene and learn about Oum Kalthoum – the «grande dame» of Arab music – who managed to carry the audience away with her voice and trigger «tarab».

While Laurence and Nicolas move their bodies between the notes as if playing the Oud - an instrument without frets - they encounter the difficulties of post-revolutionary Cairo: The newly gained freedom is crumbling between fears of an Islamist state and of falling back into a military regime. This affects not only their research trip, but above all the Egyptian people and thus also the local dance scene.

Back in Geneva, they attempt to transform «tarab» into their own interpretation, the dance performance called Tarab. When they meet the dancers and the musicians, they are confronted with numerous challenges: The premiere is about to fail. At the end, Tarab meets with international success, but still the dream of performing in Cairo remains unfulfilled due of the political situation. It is not until 2018, that Tarab returns to the place where it all began.

The documentary impressively follows the creative process with all its ups and downs, while the interweaving of the various cinematic threads creates a dense picture of «tarab»: From the oriental musical concept to an occidental dance performance.

Biofilmography of Sandra Gysi

Born 1969 in Aarau, Switzerland. Master of Arts in social anthropology, film science and German literature at University of Zurich, Switzerland. Since 1995 regular sojourns in Egypt, Sudan etc., studies of the Arab language.

As a film director and producer she realises various documentaries and fictions in Switzerland, Egypt, India and Sudan since 2000. She further works as project manager and realised several exhibitions with artists from Switzerland, Africa and the Arab World. She is Co-Founder of Swiss Initiative – culture projects, Zurich, and FEKRA Cultural Center, Aswan / Egypt, and donkeyshot filmproduction (www.donkeyshot.ch), Zurich.

Sandra Gysi lives in Zurich and Cairo.



Personal Prizes / residencies

- 2017 Artists residency for six month in Cairo by the residency programme for artists of the «Conference of Swiss Cities»
2011 Winner «Werkbeitrag» (Work Contribution), section film by Aargauer Kuratorium, Switzerland

Filmography (Selection)

- 2022 **«Searching for Tarab»**
Documentary 80', Co-directing with Ahmed Abdel-Mohsen, Production: donkeyshot filmproduction Zurich / Company 7273 Geneva
- 2021 **«MAHATAH – Side Stories from Main Stations»**
Documentary 80', Co-directing with Ahmed Abdel-Mohsen, Production: RECK Filmproduktion Zurich
- 2021 **«The Factory, Paintings by Fathi Afifi»**
(in postproduction), Documentary. 17', Egypt, Production: donkeyshot filmproduction Zurich
- 2019 **«Kosh itfarg»**
Music-Video 2'13", Egypt, Production: donkeyshot filmproduction Zurich
- 2018 **«Artist (working title)»**
Documentary project by Mats Staub. Interviews with artists from all disciplines from Egypt, Switzerland, India (Interviews, editing), Production: Pro Helvetia
- 2017 **«INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S MEET on Nonviolence and Peace»**
Documentary report. 40', India, Production: RECK Filmproduktion Zurich
- 2015 **«Comédie Humaine – An Encounter between Art and Architecture»**
Documentary 52', Co-directing with Ahmed Abdel Mohsen. Production: donkeyshot filmproduction Zurich
- 2015 **«Sira: an ancient Epos, interpreted in a modern Way»**
Reportage Egypt, Swiss Television SRF, Kulturplatz 5'20'', 2015
- 2012 **«Laila, Hala und Karima – A Year in Revolutionary Cairo»**
Documentary 52' by Ahmed Abdel Mohsen & Eduard Erne, 52' (Production, second Camera)
Production: donkeyshot filmproduction Zurich. In Coproduction with: Swiss Television SRF (Sternstunden) and 3sat.
- 2012 **«NDOX»**
Music-Video 3' (Editing) by Flurina Rothenberger (Schweiz) & Gora Mbaye aka Goormak (Senegal)
Winner Greenpeace Photo Award, Production: donkeyshot filmproduction Zurich
- 2011 **«SIRA – Songs of the Crescent Moon»**
Documentary. 77', Co-directing with Ahmed Abdel Mohsen, www.sira-film.com
Production: RECK Filmproduktion Zurich
World Premiere: Visions du réel, Nyon, Switzerland, International competition (2011), shown in more than 25 festivals around the world. Prizes: International Film Festival Innsbruck, Austria; Winner Best Documentary; Al Jazeera Film Festival, Doha, Qatar; Nomination «Bester Film»
- 2010 **«Rithaa – Ein Jenseitsreigen II»**
Multimedia Music-theatre 60' by Mela Meierhans about Islamic death rituals, (experimental films and documentaries).
Production: donkeyshot filmproduction Zurich, Premiere: Haus der Kulturen Berlin
- 2007 **«Madson Junior – Kinderstar in Afrika»**
Documentary 7' about a young African singer
- 2005 **«Salah Hassouna, an Egyptian Artist»**
Documentary. 28', Völkerkundemuseum der Universität Zürich
- 2005 **«Away to God»**
Dok. 22' by Ahmed Abdel Mohsen about Holy Festivals in Egypt (Assistant to the Director, second Camera)
- 2003 **«Break-up under the Morning Star, a Festival at the Dani in West Papua»**,
Documentary 47', Festival: Entwicklungspolitische Filmtage Linz, Austria

Biofilmography of Ahmed Abdel Mohsen

Born 1974 in Aswan, Switzerland. Studied media studies and journalism at the Faculty of Art, South Valley University in Egypt and film directing at F+F Zurich, Switzerland, school of art and media design, where he also worked after his graduation. As a director and producer he realises various fiction and documentary films.

Ahmed Abdel Mohsen is the founder of Swiss Initiative – culture projects, Zurich, Karmakol International Festival, Sudan, and FEKRA CULTURAL CENTER, Aswan, Egypt, and Co-Founder of donkeyshot filmproduction Zurich (www.donkeyshot.ch). Ahmed Abdel Mohsen lives in Zurich and Cairo.



Filmography (Selection)

- 2022 **«Searching for Tarab»**
Documentary 80', Co-directing with Sandra Gysi, Production: donkeyshot filmproduction Zurich / Company 7273 Geneva
- 2021 **«MAHATAH – Side Stories from Main Stations»**,
Documentary 80', Co-directing with Sandra Gysi, Production: RECK Filmproduktion Zurich
- 2021 **«Almaz»**
Short fiction 30' by Mia Bittar, Sudan (Producer)
- 2021 **«Sukar»** (in Production),
Short fiction by Mohamed Hanafi, Sudan (Producer, Editing)
- 2020 **«El Nas Fe Belady»**
Music-Video, Performer: Mohamed Mounir 4'46", Egypt (Director, Editing)
- 2017 **«Imam»**
Short fiction 44' by Mia Bittar, Sudan (Producer, Editing)
- 2015 **«Comédie Humaine – An Encounter between Art and Architecture»**
Documentary 52', Co-directing with Sandra Gysi (Director, DOP, Editing)
Production: donkeyshot filmproduction Zurich
- 2014 **«Tit for Tat»**
Animation 4', Co-directing with Achim Gansner;
Production: donkeyshot filmproduction Zurich
- 2012 **«Laila, Hala und Karima – A Year in Revolutionary Cairo»**
Documentary 52', Co-directing with Eduard Erne, 52' (Directing, DOP, Editing)
Production: donkeyshot filmproduction Zurich. In Coproduction with the Swiss Television SRF (Sternstunden) and 3sat.
- 2011 **«SIRA – Songs of the Crescent Moon»**
Documentary 77', Co-directing with Sandra Gysi, www.sira-film.com
Production: RECK Filmproduktion Zurich
World Premiere: Visions du réel, Nyon, Switzerland, International competition (2011), shown in more than 25 festivals around the world. Prizes: International Film Festival Innsbruck, Austria; Winner Best Documentary; Al Jazeera Film Festival, Doha, Qatar; Nomination «Bester Film»
- 2009 **«Laisser-passer»**
Documentary 60' by Ghamkin Saleh (Editing); Production: Arta Film Zürich
- 2008 **«In between»**
Multimedia Dance-Show with Maya Farner (Directing, Editing; DOP), Premiere Theater Winterthur
- 2006 **«Fragments of Paradise»**
Multimedia Dance-Show with Maya Farner (Directing, Editing; DOP), Premiere Kaufleuten Zürich
- 2005 **«Away to God»**
Documentary 22' über Heiligenfeste in Ägypten (Directing, Editing; DOP)
- 2004 **«Rahim»**
Short Fiction 6', Schweiz (Directing, DOP)

Compagnie 7273: Laurence Yadi and Nicolas Cantillon

Since the creation of Compagnie 7273 (2003), Laurence Yadi and Nicolas Cantillon have developed a dance style that invites the body to continuously and endlessly unravel. Their research is inspired by the specific Arabic music system of maqâm. Each maqâm describes a “tonal-spatial factor” or a set of musical notes and the relationship between them. It allows the musician to play in-between the notes and gives him the opportunity to express himself. Named Multi styles FuittFuitt by the choreographers themselves, the transfer of this technique into the body ables the movements to weave into each other in a wavy, spiralled and hypnotic dance.

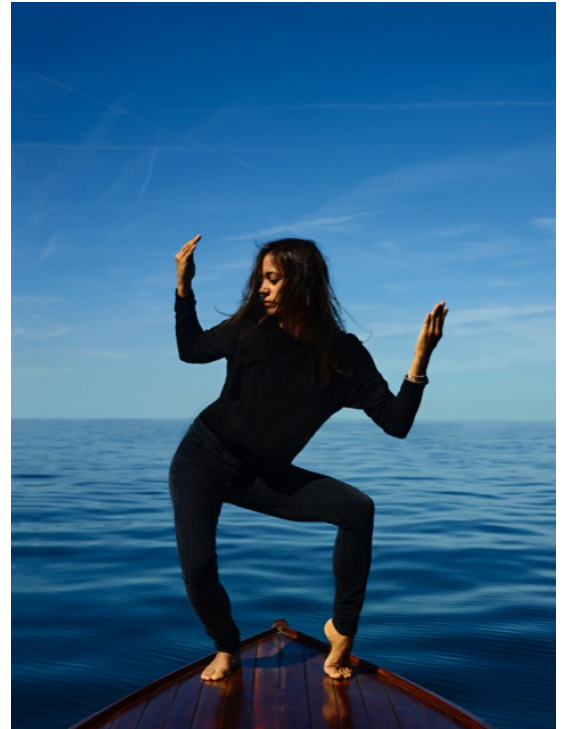
Through their career, Laurence Yadi and Nicolas Cantillon created about 20 pieces: from silent ones to danced-concerts, from duets to group pieces, all of which they toured internationally (Africa, Asia, United-states, Europe, Middle- East, North Africa and Russia). The choreographers regularly give sessions of workshops in Switzerland and abroad. They are also invited to teach the Multi styles FuittFuitt to young dancers in professional training. In 2014, they published a book, diary for some or guide on the practice of the Multi styles

FuittFuitt for others, the ways to approach it are endless. Laurence Yadi and Nicolas Cantillon won several awards: the Swiss Prize for Dance and Choreography, and the Fondation Liechti for the Arts’.

« Tarab » expresses the groove of the Middle East in Arabic. It is obtained through the execution of the Maqam, a musical system bound to the Muslim religion, known from China to the Maghreb. Each individual country or region has a unique manner to play the Maqam.

Each maqam describes “tonal-spatial factor” or set of musical notes and the relationships between them. It allows the musician to play in-between the notes and gives him the opportunity to express himself. To find an original way of playing the Maqam requests both rigor and imagination. The transfer of this technique to the body is at the origin of Laurence Yadi and Nicolas Cantillon’s choreographic research since 2003. It is what they call the Multi styles FuittFuitt.

www.cie7273.com



donkeyshot flmproduction gmbh

donkeyshot flmproduction gmbh, based in Zurich, produces short flms, documentaries and flmic documentaries on (inter)cultural and socio-political themes, experimental videos and multimedia installations as free productions or on commission.

In addition to flm productions, donkeyshot flmproduction gmbh initiates and realises intercultural projects mainly in the Middle East and cooperates with local and international organisations.



www.donkeyshot.ch

Filmography (selection)

- 2022 **«Searching for Tarab»** documentary 52' , by Sandra Gysi and Ahmed Abdel Mohsen
- 2021 **«MAHATAH – Side Stories from Main Stations»** Documentary 80', by Sandra Gysi and Ahmed Abdel Mohsen, Production: RECK Filmproduktion Zurich (Executive production Cairo)
- 2021 **«Almaz»** Short flm, Fiction 30' , by Mia Bittar, Sudan
- 2019 **Kosh itfarg** Video-Clip, 2'13' , Egypt, by Doudoo
- 2017 **«Iman»** Short flm, Fiction 45' , by Mia Bittar, Sudan
- 2015 **«Comédie Humaine – An encounter between art and architecture»** Documentary 52', by Ahmed Abdel Mohsen and Sandra Gysi
- 2015 **«NDOX»**, Video-Clip by Flurina Rothenberger & Gora Mbaye, 3'07" Winner public award of Greenpeace Photo Award
- 2014 **«Tit For Tat»** Animation 3'50", by Ahmed Abdel Mohsen and Achim Gansner
- 2012 **«Laila, Hala und Karima – A year in revolutionary Cairo»** TV Documentary 52', by Ahmed Abdel Mohsen and Eduard Erne
- 2010 **«Rithaa – Tales of the Hereafter II»** Multimedial Music-Theater by Mela Meierhans about Islamic dead rituals, 60' , Switzerland Documentary visuals by Sandra Gysi and Ahmed Abdel Mohsen
Premiere: Berliner Festspiele, Märzmusik, HKW Berlin