



© Ammar Al-Beik

Ammar Al-Beik

LA DOLCE SIRIA

A cinematic letter to Federico Fellini:

Dear Federico, I don't think that this circus from Italy, which is visiting Syria, has ever visited Rimini, your town in the past. This circus is nothing like the one in your childhood. No one can tame the lion here in this tent; it's smashing everyone and everything. Even the clowns with their wide, grotesque, make-up smiles and their cheap colourful costumes, meant to make my brother and me and all the other kids laugh, are terrified. Everybody is running out of the circus. Everyone is leaving their excitement inside and carrying the sadness on their shoulders and the terror in their eyes while sprinting out of the tent. No fireworks around the tent Federico! Neither their mesmerizing colours are there when they explode, nor is the sound of their explosions. Scud and bombs are the fireworks that we recognise my friend! Red is the colour that we see. And everyday here, my friend, the usage of the word 'Mama' becomes less and less; either children die, or mothers.

'Vita' is not 'dolce' in Syria, Federico!

The circus is boring.

And I miss you.

I forgot to tell you this earlier: 'Lion' in Arabic means: 'Al Assad'.
(Ammar Al-Beik)

2014, colour & black/white, DCP, 23 min., Arabic. **Director** Ammar Al-Beik.

Ammar Al-Beik, born in Damascus, Syria in 1972, is an award-winning filmmaker and artist based in Berlin, Germany. His films have been shown at numerous international festivals, including Venice, Locarno, Rotterdam, Yamagata, Busan, and Oberhausen. Represented by Ayyam Gallery since 2008, Al-Beik's artworks have been featured in exhibitions across the world, most recently at Photo Shanghai, China (2014), and are housed in private and public collections such as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

Contact: <http://www.ayyamgallery.com>



© Leila Albayaty

Leila Albayaty

FACE B

The b-side of a record often contains hidden treasures and secrets. When Leila, actress, singer, and director, decides to make her first feature, *Berlin Telegram*, a lot happens between the lines. She says she is auditioning for the film, while in fact she is its director and main protagonist. With a suitcase full of music, she travels between Berlin and Paris and meets musicians and actors on the way. Her story is told as a mysterious hybrid somewhere between autobiography and fiction – poetry, perhaps. Leila decides to steal her own images, to secretly pocket her b-sides to edit a new, even more ambiguous film. How often are you allowed to tell a story? How often can you reassemble your footage? There is no answer to that question. Instead, there is a new film. (Toby Ashraf)

2015, colour & black/white, 39 min., English, French. **Director** Leila Albayaty. **Production** Annabella Nezri, Michel Balagué, Leila Albayaty. **Director of photography** Michel Balagué. **Editor** Violeta Tseli, Leila Albayaty. **Sound mixing** Mikael Barre. **Music** Leila Albayaty, Cristoforo Spoto, Ivan Imperiali, Alain Rylant, Jef Mercelis.

Leila Albayaty is French of Iraqi origin. She is based between Belgium, Germany, Egypt, and France. Her first short film, *VU*, received a special mention at the Berlinale 2009. As well as directing the film, she played the starring role and composed the soundtrack. Building on the experience of this first directing adventure, she went on to make her first feature: *Berlin Telegram* is distributed in Germany by arsenal distribution.

Contact: annabella@kwassa.be