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In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain

Larissa Sansour, Søren Lind

2015, DCP, color, 29 min., Arabic. **Producer** Ali Roche, Maggie Ellis. **Production companies** Spike Film and Video (Bristol, Great Britain), Film London Artists' Moving Image Network (London, Great Britain). **Screenplay** Søren Lind. **Director of photography** Thomas Fryd. **Production design** Simon Godfrey. **Costumes** Line Frank. **Sound** Tom Sedgwick. **Music** Aida Nadeem. **Sound design** Luke David Harris. **Editor** Daniel Martinez, William Dybeck Sørensen. **Visual effects** Henrik Bach Christensen. **World sales** mec film. **With** Pooneh Hajimohammadi (Resistance Leader), Anna Aldridge (Girl), Leyla Ertosun (Girl), Larissa Sansour (Resistance Leader, voice), Carol Sansour (Psychiatrist, voice).

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In a temporal twist, as suggested by its title, *In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain* tells the story of an intervention into the future perception of a territory's political history.

A self-proclaimed narrative resistance group makes underground deposits of elaborate porcelain – suggested to belong to an entirely fictional civilization. Their aim is to influence history and support future claims to their vanishing lands. Once unearthed, the buried tableware will prove the existence of this counterfeit people. By implementing a myth of its own, their work becomes a historical intervention – de facto creating a nation.

The film takes the form of a fictional video essay, combining live motion and CGI, and taking clues from archeology, politics, and science fiction. A voice-over based on an interview between a psychiatrist and the leader of the narrative resistance group about her thoughts on myth and fiction as constitutive for fact, history, and documentary reveals the philosophy and ideas behind the group's actions.

Central to my practice is the tug and pull between fiction and reality in a Middle Eastern context. In several pieces over the past years, I have been exploring not only the sci-fi genre, but also the comic book superhero. Both forms have an inherent ability to communicate the most fundamental ambitions of a people or a civilization in a way that is naturally inspired by, but never hampered or restricted by a non-fictional reality.

Also, despite its high production value and glossy imagery, sci-fi tends to allow for a specific kind of almost nostalgic framing of the topic at hand. Even the slickest sci-fi almost invariably carries within it a sense of retro, ideas of the future tend to appear standard and cliché at the same time as they come across as visionary.

In the case of Palestine, there is an eternal sense of forecasting statehood, independence, and the end of occupation. The ambitious ideas that we hope to achieve have long since become so repetitive that the odd mix of nostalgia and accomplishment that the sci-fi genre often embodies lends itself well to the topic.

Larissa Sansour

Larissa Sansour, born in 1973 in East Jerusalem, Palestine, currently lives and works in London, UK. She studied fine arts in London, New York, and Copenhagen. Her work is interdisciplinary, immersed in the current political dialogue, and utilizes video, photography, installation, the book form, and the internet. Central to her work is the tug and pull between fiction and reality. Sansour's work has been featured in biennials and exhibited at international venues.

Films

2005: *Bethlehem Bandolero* (5 min.). 2006: *Happy Days* (3 min.). 2007: *Soup Over Bethlehem* (10 min.). 2008: *Run Lara Run* (2 min.), *SBARA* (9 min.). 2009: *A Space Exodus* (5 min.). 2011: *Falafel Road* (in collaboration with Oreet Ashery, 60 min.), *Trespass the Salt* (in collaboration with Youmna Chlala, 10 min.). 2012: *Feast of the Inhabitants* (15 min.), *Nation Estate* (9 min.). 2015: *In the Future They Ate From the Finest Porcelain* (Forum Expanded, 29 min.).

Søren Lind, born 1970, is a Danish author who lives and works in London, UK. He writes children's books and literary fiction. With a background in philosophy, Lind wrote books on mind, language, and understanding before turning to fiction. He has published a novel, collections of short stories and children's books, amongst others "A Story about Absolutely Nothing" (2012), "Men in Pieces" (2014), "A Story about Everything" (2015). In addition to his literary production, Lind is also a visual artist and writes short film scripts.

Films

2008: *Blinded by the Sun* (30 min.). 2012: *Nation Estate* (co-directed by, 9 min.). 2015: *In the Future They Ate from the Finest Porcelain*.