

# TrepaNation

a film by amMarX al-Beik



Montage in

*collaboration*

with the  
souls

of  
my mother  
and father

مونتاژ



Karlovy Vary  
International Film Festival  
Proxima Competition



# Screenings of **TrepaNation** at the 59th Karlovy Vary International Film Festival

10.7.2025 - 18:00 - **Small Hall** - Official / Q&A ♦ 11.7.2025 - 15:00 - **Cas Cinema** - Official / Q&A ♦ 12.7.2025 - 20:00 - **Cinema B** - Official ♦ 12.7.2025 - 13:00 - **Lazne III** - Official



## Synopsis

**G**ermany, September 2014. A Syrian refugee camp has opened on the outskirts of Berlin. Visual artist and filmmaker Ammar al-Beik has a cubicle assigned to him for seven months and, in order to survive here, he has to film, document, and rebel against the conditions of life in exile, and also against the established rules of documentaries and features. His phone camera is always switched on; he transforms his tiny room and the entire dismal compound into a universe with its own laws. Ammar's explosive film is the result of ten years of editing; the intensive autobiography intersects the history of Europe and the Middle East, and film history, too. The singular cinematographic form is flanked with memorable individuals who, like exiled Ammar al-Beik, are merely searching for freedom and truth.

Karel Och

# Triangle of Salvation

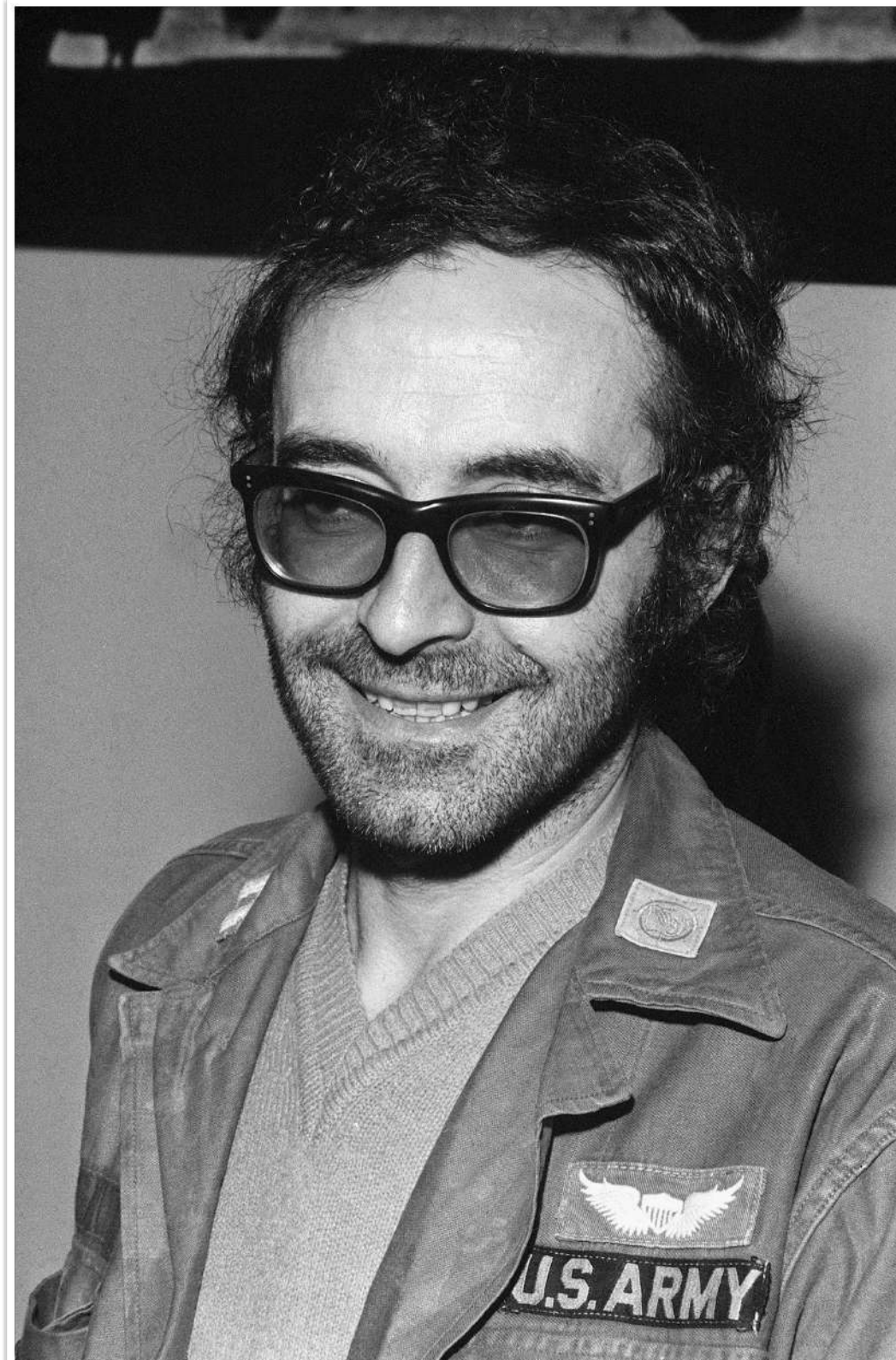
**Cinema = Father ♦ Mother = Gather**

Alexander Kluge ♦ Diego Maradona ♦ Jean-Luc Godard





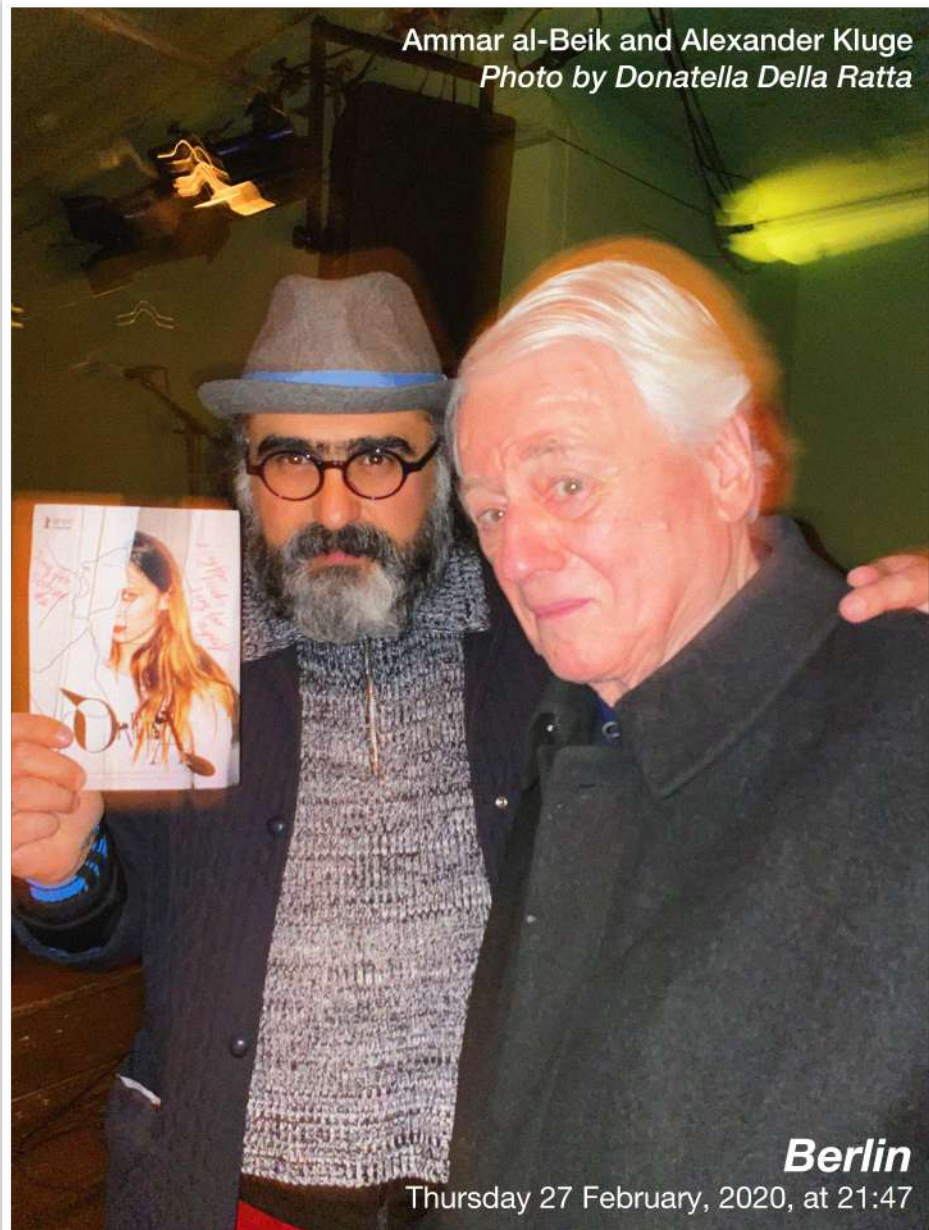
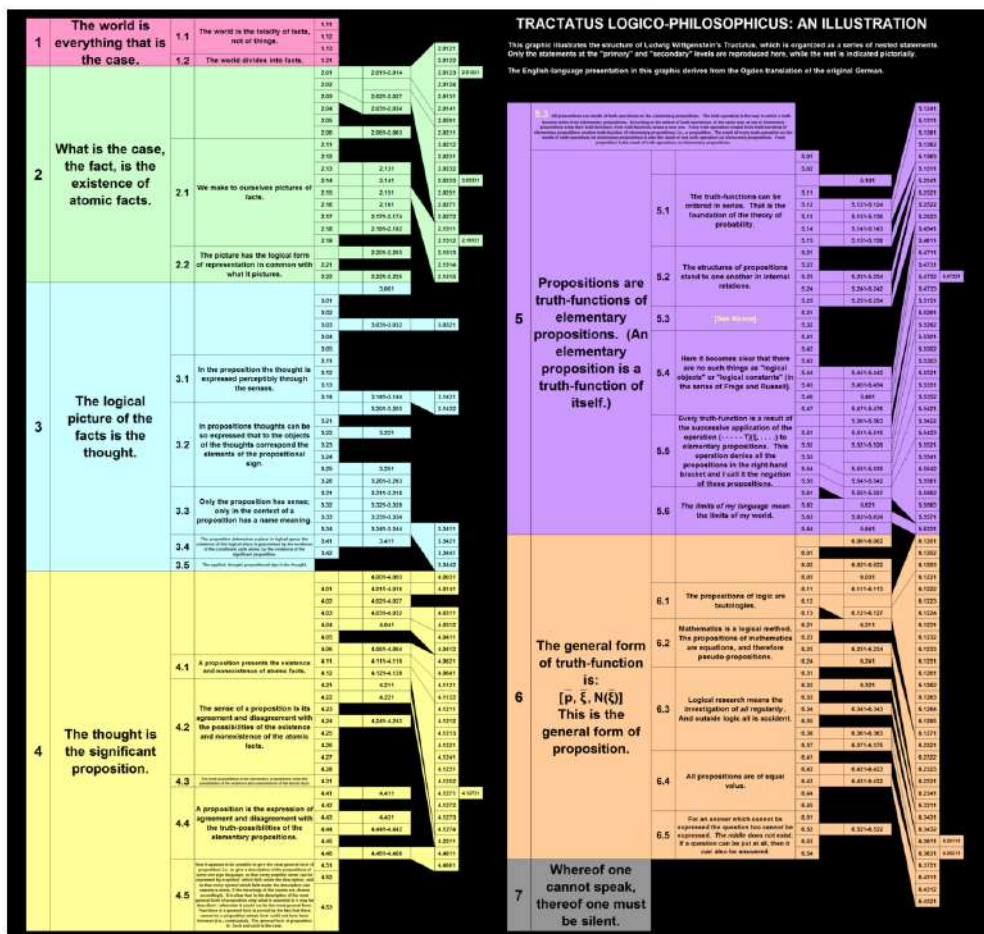
## JEAN-LUC GODARD





ALEXANDER KLUGE

WE PLAY TOGETHER L O V E R F R E M D U N G S E F F E K T

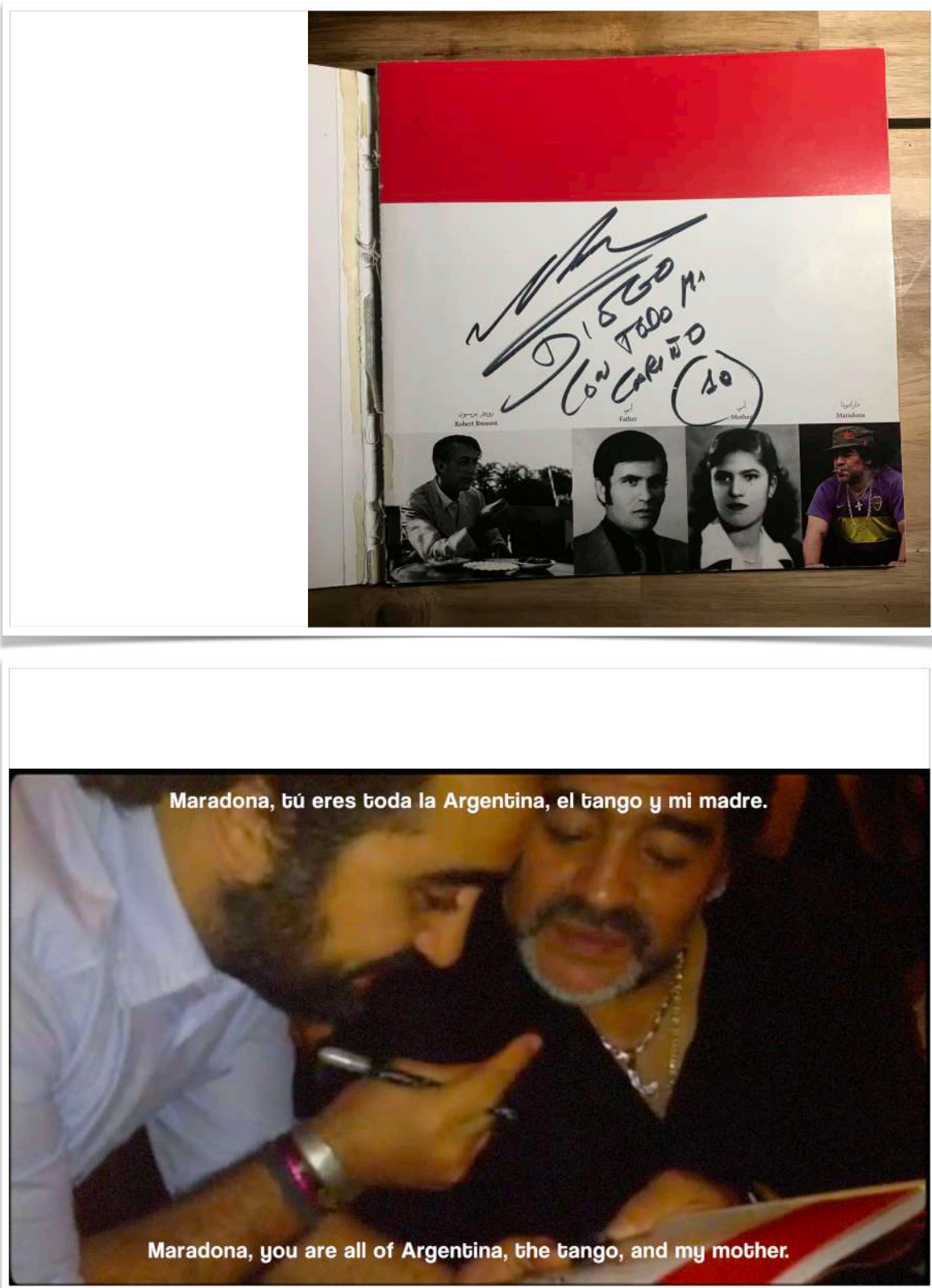


Ammar al-Beik and Alexander Kluge  
Photo by Donatella Della Ratta

Berlin  
Thursday 27 February, 2020, at 21:47



DIEGO MARADONA



Maradona, tú eres toda la Argentina, el tango y mi madre.

Maradona, you are all of Argentina, the tango, and my mother.

# BIOGRAPHY

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Ammar al-Beik (b. 1972, Damascus) is an award-winning filmmaker and conceptual artist based in Marseille. He has been granted political asylum in two countries—Germany in 2014 and France in 2023.

Widely regarded as a pioneer of independent cinema in Syria, he began his filmmaking journey in 1995 with the short *Light Harvest*, and has since developed a distinct body of work situated at the intersection of personal memory, political rupture, and poetic form.

A foundational figure in Syria's conceptual art movement, al-Beik has presented his films at the Venice Film Festival on two occasions: in 2006 with *I Am the One Who Brings Flowers to Her Grave* (co-directed and co-produced with Hala Alabdalla), and again in 2011 with *The Sun's Incubator*—the first film to emerge from the Syrian revolution, which received the Jury Award at the Busan International Short Film Festival (BISFF) in 2012.

Following *The Sun's Incubator*, he developed a trilogy centered on the revolution: *The Sun's Incubator*, *La Dolce Siria*, and *Kaleidoscope*. His films have been officially selected and screened at major international film festivals, including:

- Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (KVIFF)
- Venice Film Festival (La Biennale di Venezia)
- Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale)
- Locarno Film Festival (Locarno)
- International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR)
- Yamagata International Documentary Film Festival (YIDFF)
- Festival des 3 Continents, Nantes
- Cinéma du Réel, Paris
- Oberhausen International Short Film Festival (ISFF)
- São Paulo International Film Festival
- Singapore International Film Festival (SGIFF)
- FIDMarseille
- Carthage Film Festival (JCC)
- Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF)

## Selected Awards

- Doc/It Award, Venice Film Festival, Italy (2006)
- Bronze Muhr Award, Dubai International Film Festival (DIFF), UAE (2006)
- Jury Prize, Busan International Short Film Festival (BISFF), South Korea (2012)
- Golden Award, Tétouan International Mediterranean Film Festival, Morocco (2007)
- Jury Prize, Brisbane Asia Pacific Film Festival (BAPFF), Australia (2002)
- Special Award, International Federation of Film Societies (IFSS), Switzerland (2002)
- Jury Award, Tunisian International Short Film Days (ISFDays), Tunisia (2001)
- Jury Award, Ismailia International Film Festival, Egypt (2001)
- Golden Award, Arab Film Festival Rotterdam (AFFR), Netherlands (2007)
- Jury Award, Independent Arab Screen Film Festival (IASFF), Qatar (2001)

## Exhibitions & Collections

In addition to his cinematic work, al-Beik has exhibited widely in contemporary art contexts. Notable solo exhibitions include:

- One to Free, a major retrospective at Haus am Waldsee, Berlin (2019), curated by Dr. Katja Blomberg
- Damascus, Museum Neukölln, Berlin (2017), curated by Dr. Udo Gößwald
- Lost Images, Eye Filmmuseum, Amsterdam (2016), curated by Donatella Della Ratta

His works have also been featured in international group exhibitions such as:

- Photo Shanghai, China (2014)
- FotoFest Biennial, USA (2014)
- Samsung Blue Square and Busan Museum of Art, South Korea (2014)

They are held in major public and private collections, including:

- Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), USA
- The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), USA



# FILMOGRAPHY

- **2025** - *TrepaNation* (222 min)
- **2015** - *Kaleidoscope* (20 min)
- **2014** - *La Dolce Siria* (24 min)
- **2011** - *The Sun's Incubator* (11 min)
- **2008** - *Samia* (40 min)
- **2007** - *I Am the One Who Brings Flowers to Her Grave* (105 min)
- **2003** - *Clapper* (58 min)
- **2002** - *The River of Gold* (15 min)
- **2002** - *Boulevard Al Assad* (1 min)
- **2002** - *My Ear Can See* (8 min)
- **2002** - *When I Color My Fish* (5 min)
- **2001** - *16mm* (2 min)
- **2000** - *They Were Here* (8 min)
- **1995** - *Light Harvest* (3 min)



## Clapper - Paolo Dall'oglio

### Where are you now, my friend?

You walked into Raqqa on your own feet, carrying your intention like a cross on your back—seeking dialogue in a land where chants blur into gunfire.

You said the regime's shells falling on the Umayyad Mosque didn't frighten you. Landmarks can be rebuilt, you told us. But when tyrants linger, it's the spirit that crumbles.

You became a foreigner in a country you honored more than its rulers ever did.

They expelled you for "exceeding your church duties," unaware that you had transcended all roles—to become a voice of love without conditions, and a believer that revolution is not rage, but hope.

The last words we heard from you were:

**"I'm in a liberated city, and people are moving freely and in peace."**

Then you fell silent.

And the city went quiet with you, as if the path to the Monastery of Saint Moses still whispers:

**"From this point on, the visit is spiritual... Thank you for remaining silent."**



# CREDITS ♦ TECHNICAL INFORMATION ♦ FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE FRAME RATE EQUALS SOUL

**Author Of The Original Work** ♦ Based on layered traumas of forced displacement and exile experienced globally.

**Director** ♦ Ammar al-Beik

**Director Of Photography** ♦ Ammar al-Beik, using a small mobile phone camera in September 2014, once the "PRO" camera was safely locked away in the comforting darkness of a metal cabinet.

**Editor** ♦ Ammar al-Beik, in collaboration with the souls of my father and mother.

**Sound Designer** ♦ (every hiss, hum, and awkward silence crafted by hand – or rather, by ear – no AI was harmed in the process)

**Leading Actors** ♦ My comrades, the true stars of the refugee camp: Alexander Kluge, Jean-Luc Godard, Diego Maradona.

**Running Time** ♦ 222 minutes (plus a few meticulously calculated seconds and frames – they insisted on staying)

**Colour Format** ♦ Colour (but black & white occasionally sneaks in – we don't stop it)

**Original Languages** ♦ Arabic, German, French, Dari, Filipino, Czech

**Year Of Production** ♦ Completed on July 10, 2025 – just in time for its world premiere at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival; had that date not existed, work would likely still be ongoing.

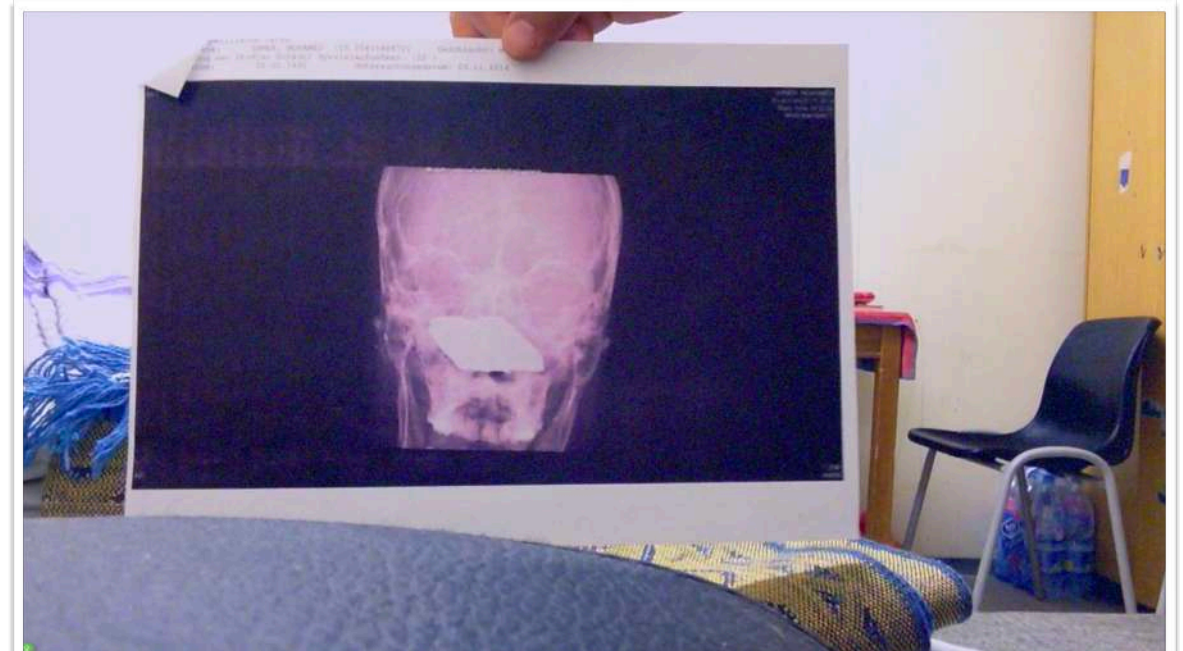
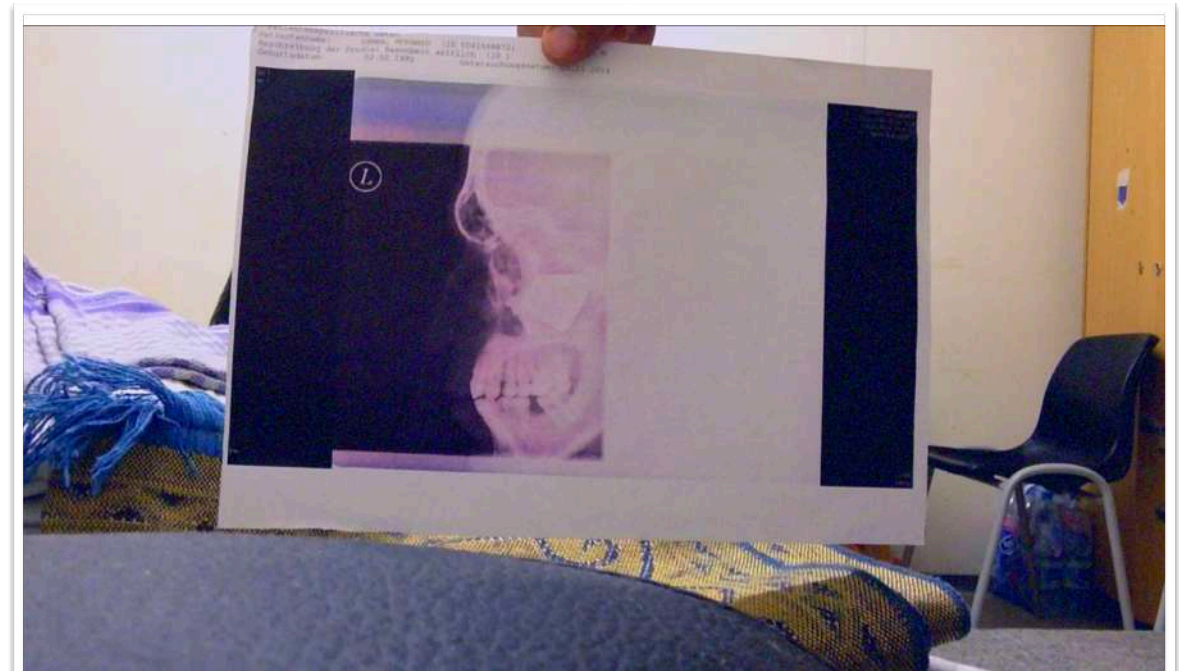
**Production Countries** ♦ Syria, Germany, France

**Framerate** ♦ Godard said "cinema is truth at 24 fps." We shot at 30, lived at 7, remembered at 60. Truth was never consistent – and the frame is just as powerful when it births only a single image: one still frame, one to free.

**Image Aspect** ♦ 1:1.85

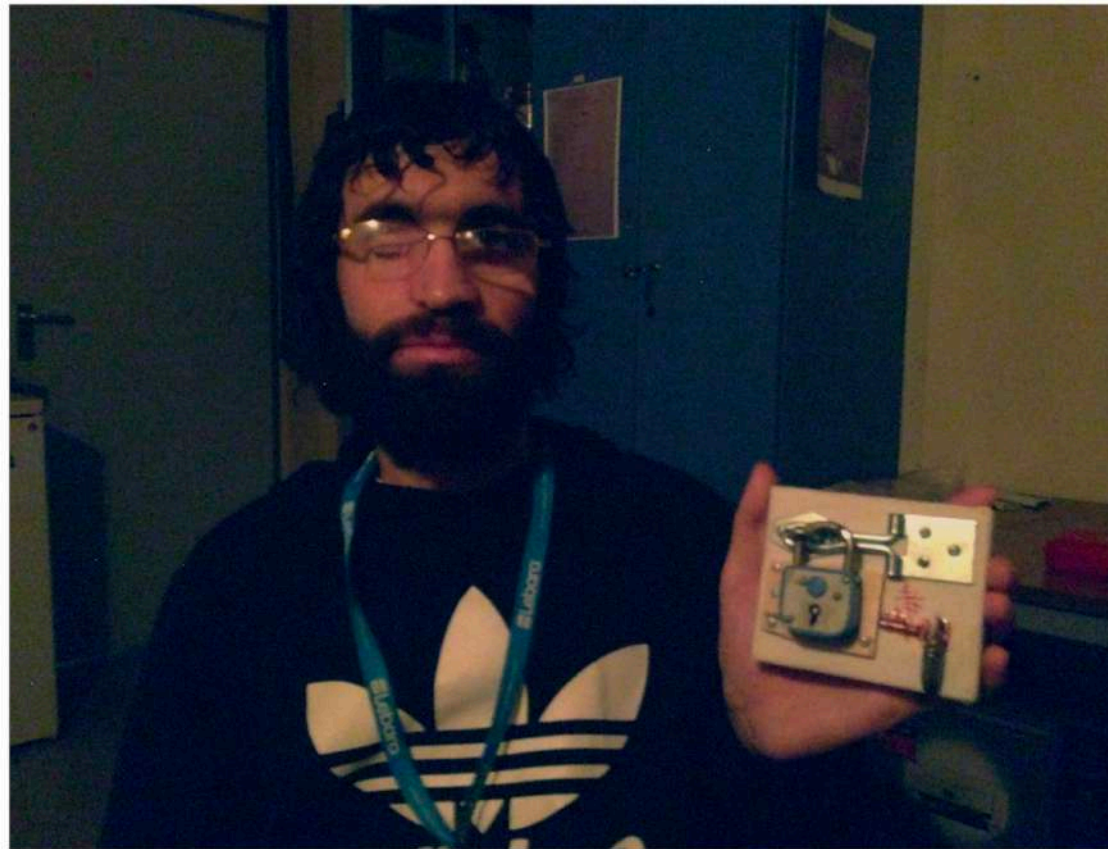
**Image Resolution** ♦ 3996 × 2160 – high enough to pixelate memory, but some ghosts were never in focus.

**Film Format** ♦ Quicktime, obviously. DCP? Yes and no. 35mm? Don't even ask. 12K NEVER..!





An die Nachgeborenen ♦ To Those Born After



Love Locks of Syria, part of Luciano Benetton's collection



Ammar & Abu Ali – Berlin, Thursday 29 January 2015



## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT ♦ FOR EXILE AND THE EXILED, NOT FOR LOVERS OF PITCHING

In Berlin I was armed with my triangle of salvation, a triangle born from both personal and collective trauma, intertwined not only with my fellow Syrians in the refugee camp but with refugees from many lands, regardless of their nationalities, races, or ethnicities, who also lived in that same camp – our old camp on the outskirts of Berlin, which the German government hesitated to dismantle for many years until it finally did, and was eventually turned into a second-hand car market, a graveyard of repainted car bodies on wheels. My triangle was drawn in the heart of pain, inked with hope – an existential, intellectual triangle of survival held together by three of my most beloved men – supporting pillars as solid as steel.

In one corner of the base stood Jean-Luc Godard, in the opposite corner stood Alexander Kluge, and at the apex of the triangle was the hand of God on earth, Diego Maradona. I wasn't merely one of the millions or perhaps billions who admired Godard from a distance. I offered him my Damascene prayer beads made of black stone and inlaid with silver – my companion in Berlin – and placed seven kisses on his left hand – the leftist hand – during the time of Corona. Seven kisses in three seconds. Seventy-two frames. In return, he gave me his thanks and his rare smile, a childlike smile, and much more that I will reveal in my upcoming film about him.

Nor was I merely one of the billions who adored Maradona. I signed a copy of my book for him and he signed another copy of my book for me. I kissed his hand and he kissed mine. I felt strength, not shame, in his kiss to my hand. That is what fair play looks like – on the field and off the white screen, the big screen, the screen of independent cinema. Maradona planted strength in my left foot and in my brain. He is also the hero of my upcoming film about the World Cup in Russia, a long film in a single shot – three hours long – a film embroidered with solitude and fair play.

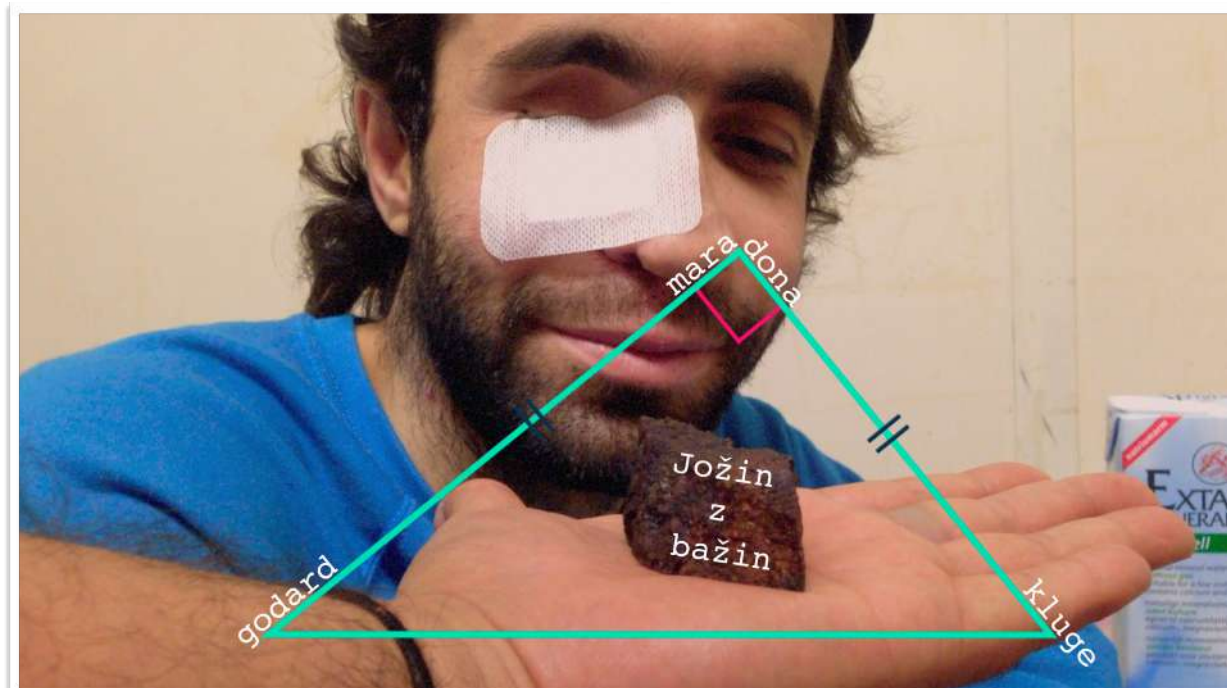
As for Kluge, the philosopher of German modernity, he became my radar of understanding. He gave me symbols and shortcuts made in Germany, and his film *The Power of Emotion* honored me by appearing in selected excerpts as a guest within mine. Alexander Kluge taught me what "Made in Germany" truly means, just as Bertolt Brecht, Nina Hagen, Dirk Schönberger, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Friedrich Nietzsche did.

This triangle, which was visually born atop a trash heap behind the camp kitchen – a halal triangle on the remains of non-halal food from slaughtered and electrocuted animals – exhausted me before I could understand it, before I could draw it, before I could finally embody it. But it gifted me, in the final stages of editing, something indescribable: the joy of catching a shrapnel fragment, a pyramidal piece of font metal from an exploded landmine, hidden in the face of my camp comrade Abu Ali. Abu Ali gifted me, for twenty-two seconds, the joy of capturing that fragment – and for the rest of my life, the joy of grasping wisdom.

Cinema and football share the same field, and my friend Lorenzo can testify to that. At minute 03:27:36:21, in the very last moments before leaving our Waste Land – not just the camp, but the emotional and existential terrain it represented – *Jožin z bažin* is ready to depart. Escaping once again from the zoo, heading back to Prague, and from there to Carlsbad, where he will bear witness to the world premiere.

In the triangle drawn by exile, the shrapnel is not a remnant of violence, but a primordial form of wisdom. And the monster who escaped from the garden of order has returned to witness the birth of an image. Walter Benjamin once reminded us that what we call 'civilization' often carries, between its lines, the quiet trace of destruction. His words still echo – not as a judgment, but as a lens.

Thesen über den Begriff der Geschichte (Theses on the Philosophy of History) – Walter Benjamin.



ごちそうさまでした。amMarX