



H2: The Occupation Lab

Directed by Idit Avrahami, Noam Sheizaf

Produced by Hilla Medalia, Paul Cadieux

Feature documentary 94/52 min



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LOGLINE

How a one-kilometer long street in Hebron fuels the entire Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

Segregated, highly surveilled, heavily filmed and intensely guarded: H2 uncovers the ways in which a single neighborhood in Hebron fuels the entire Israeli-Palestinian conflict. 54 years of military occupation, told through the story of a one-kilometer long street.

SYNOPSIS

H2 is the name given to the eastern part of Hebron - the only Palestinian city with a Jewish settlement in it. Here, along a one-Kilometer road, lies the holy Cave of the Patriarchs, where Jews and Muslims believe their common father, Abraham, is buried. This is where the massacre of 1929, known as "year zero" of the conflict, took place; where the Jewish settlement movement was born, and where the policy of ethnic separation was first implemented by the military.

Through rare archive footage and interviews with Hebron's military commanders, H2: The Occupation Lab tells the story of a place that is both a microcosm of the entire conflict and a test site for the methods of control Israel is implementing throughout the West Bank.

DIRECTORS' STATEMENT



In the photo: Filming Inside the cave of the Patriarchs.

The event that turned our attention to Hebron happened on March 24, 2016, when a couple of Palestinians tried to stab Israeli soldiers at the entrance to a settlers' compound in H2. One soldier was wounded, while his friends shot the attackers. Ten minutes later, as one of the wounded Palestinians was still lying on the ground (along our street), an army medic approached and killed him from close range. This event was captured on camera from multiple angles, and created a political storm in Israel, which ended in the resignation of the minister of defense, who insisted on putting the medic on trial.

The Azaria Affair - as it became known in Israel - happened in the old city of Hebron, in H2. As we researched this affair, we came to realize that the unique feature in it was its location and how it has been the most filmed place in the Middle East for years.

Walking and filming in H2 left us in awe of the surreal reality that has become the norm there. Trying to understand it led us back and forth from its past to its present through the unbelievable stories this place and its people have to tell. The more we researched the more it became clear that there is a unique cinematic way to tell the story of this place and of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as it is reflected in this one-kilometer-long street in the heart of Hebron.

We both grew up hearing about Hebron and its history and were drawn to it for years: Noam has served in the city as an IDF officer, and Idit has roots in the town's ancient Jewish community. Returning to Hebron years later, and witnessing the changes on the ground, was a shocking experience.

However, we also feel an urgency that goes beyond our personal connection to this place, it is about our political activism and point of view and our understanding that the story of Hebron is crucial and not told or discussed enough. Noam is the co-funder of '+972 Magazine', an independent magazine run by a group of Israeli and Palestinian journalists, providing fresh, in-depth reporting and analysis directly from the ground in Israel-Palestine. Idit worked in Haaretz newspaper and her first documentary "The Boy Who Died of Fear" told the story of the death of a Palestinian boy in the hands of a Jewish settler in the west bank.

We believe films can help make sense of the world and change it for the better. Hebron holds the key to understanding the failures of the past - and the risks of the future.

In a world that manipulates and controls people through technological means, military power, fences and walls, H2 feels like a message from a dystopian future – and not one just aimed at Israelis and Palestinians. It shows what happens when institutions fail, when the law gives way to power, when religious extremism is becoming a political resource, and when equality gives way to ethnic control. And it demonstrates the urgent need for a new kind of political thinking - one which is founded on equal rights, respect and cooperation.

Our film aims to go beyond describing this reality. We want to put H2 in historical and political context – to understand how the choices of individuals led us here, and where they might take us in the future. We believe that such an understanding is the only way to move forward, to a better future.

BIOS

Idit Avrahami – Director

Idit Avrahami is the director and co-creator of several documentary series and films that have been screened in Israel's leading TV channels and gained critical acclaim. Her short documentary 'Institutional Abduction' (2019) showed at the Venice Biennale 2019. Idit was a journalist and newspaper editor, serving as a reporter and as the head of Haaretz news desk. She graduated with honors from the Sam Spiegel Film and Television School in Jerusalem and currently teaches Documentary Film Direction there.

Noam Sheizaf – Director

Noam Sheizaf is a documentary filmmaker and scriptwriter. Noam was the director of "Meshulam", head of research and content for Dror Moreh's 'The Corridors of Power', 'The Human Factor'; and scriptwriter for 'Lieberman' (Dir. Nurit Keidar) Noam was an editor and writer for Israeli daily papers, and the founder of the online magazine "+972".

Hilla Medalia – Producer

Peabody Award-winning filmmaker and producer has received four Emmy® nominations. Her projects have garnered critical acclaim and screened internationally in theaters and on television including HBO, MTV, BBC, Netflix and ARTE. Her range of titles include: 'Innocence' 2022 (Venice International Film Festival), 'H2: The Occupation Lab' 2022 (DocAviv), 'The Reason Why' 2021 (Jerusalem Film Festival), 'Love & Stuff' 2020 (HotDocs, DOCNYC), 'Leftover Women' 2019 (Tribeca, ARTE), 'Transkids' 2019 (a 5 episode series for yesDocu and film), 'The Oslo Diaries' 2018 (Sundance, HBO), 'Muhi - Generally Temporary' 2017 (San Francisco Film Festival, Hot Docs), 'Censored Voices' 2015, (Sundance Film Festival and Berlinale), 'The Go Go Boys' 2014 (Cannes Film Festival), 'Web Junkie' 2014 (Sundance Film Festival, POV, BBC), 'Dancing in Jaffa' 2013 (Tribeca, IFC Sundance selects), 'Numbered' 2012 (ARTE), 'After the Storm' 2009 (MTV), 'To Die in Jerusalem' 2007 (HBO). Hilla is a member of the American Academy of Film and Television and she holds an M.A. from Southern Illinois University.

Paul Cadieux – Co-Producer

Paul Cadieux is one of Canada's leading and most active film and television producers. Among numerous other awards, he has won a Genie Award for Best Motion Picture for the Oscar-nominated LES TRIPLETTES DE BELLEVILLE. In his more than three decades as a producer, co-producer, executive producer and distributor, Paul often prefers to operate out of the limelight yet has been centrally involved in dozens of major Canadian and international projects. His more recent documentary accomplishments include: P.S. JERUSALEM (TIFF 2016, Berlin 2017), THE SETTLERS (Sundance 2017). A SISTER'S SONG (DocNYC, IDFA, DocAviv, RIDM), GAZA & ADVOCATE (SUNDANCE 2019).

MAIN CREDITS

Directors	Idit Avrahami Noam Sheizaf
Producers	Hilla Medalia Paul Cadieux
Executive Producers	Serge Gordey Martin Laurent Hanne Phlypo Maryse Rouillard Isabelle Legault Rinat Klein
Production Companies	Medalia Productions FilmOption International
Editor	Erez Laufer
Director of Photography	Avner Shahaf
Research	Idit Avrahami Noam Sheizaf
Script	Noam Sheizaf Idit Avrahami
Sound Design	Martin Cadieux-Rouillard
Original Music	Eric Shaw

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