



THE DEPARTURE | BARNEY PRODUCTION & MONT FLEURI PRODUCTION

# THE DEPARTURE

Saïd Hamich Benlarbi | France & Morocco | 25' | 2020

Original language : Arabic, French | English & French subtitles | Color | 1.85 | 5.1 | DCP & HD files



## Synopsis

Morocco, 2004. Adil, aged 11, spends the summer playing with his friends and waiting for his idol, Olympic runner Hicham El Guerrouj, to compete in his last Games.

The arrival of his father and older brother from France for a few days will mark him forever.

[Trailer](#)

## Director & Screenwriter



### Saïd Hamich Benlarbi

Saïd Hamich was born in 1986 in Fez (Morocco).

He is a graduate of the production department of national French film school La Fémis and winner of the Lagardère Foundation Prize.

He was executive producer on several films including *Hope* by Boris Lojkine, *Neither Heaven Nor Earth* by Clement Cogitore, *Sofia* by Meryem Benm'Barek or *Home Front* by Lucas Blevaux. He produced some thirty shorts and several feature films such as *Much Loved* by Nabil Ayouch – in coproduction -, *Northern Wind* by Walid Mattar and *Volubilis* by Faouzi Bensaïdi.

*Return to Bollene*, his first film as a director, nominee for Louis-Delluc Prize for best first film, was released theatrically in 2018.



# Intention

« With *The Departure*, I continue in a certain way to my «return,» to a place where I once lived and that I once left; and that has shaped me. I'm telling a story about very special week in my life. It was in this week that I stopped being a child and found myself guided by the harsh laws of adults, which stipulated that my future be better off in France than in Morocco, my native land. My mother was resigned to it, my departure was recorded. I was nine years old and it was a terrible tearing away.

I wanted to tie the memory of Adil to the historic event that was the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004, when Hicham El Guerrouj, the national star, won his first Olympic title after two traumatic failures for all of Morocco. These factual, historical events face the memory and elusive emotion of Adil's story. Yet it is also this opposition that gives it a form of truth and validity.

In *The Departure*, my only material is memory, my neighborhood having changed so much that it is unrecognizable today. There is no documentary footage used, no pictures. In my home, just as in the homes of many others in French suburban life, there has never been. I rely on some stubborn memories that time could not erase; the arrival of the idling car of my father, for example.



My story unfolds in new city districts under construction, massively invested in by immigrants. The scene seems to be a fascinating playground for a child but also one for a director. Its scattered buildings create interesting perspectives and a relative vacuum. A city like a life that you build, and build, and build.

While writing this film, I was influenced by two films about childhood which impressed me as a spectator. *The Bicycle Thief* by Vittorio De Sica and *Kes* by Ken Loach, two films of incredible poetic and social force and that are inspirational guides for this project. »

# Festivals

Flickers Rhode Island Film Festival - USA | 2020

FIFIB - France | **Best Original Score** | 2020

FIFF Namur - Belgium | **Best Directing  
& Best Cinematography** | 2020

CINEMED - France | 2020

FICFA Festival International du Film  
Français en Acadie - Canada | 2020

Festival de Sarlat - France | 2020

Cinémania - Canada | 2020

Cinemamed Bruxelles - Belgium | 2020

Passaggi d'Autore - Italy | 2020

Festival Dakar Court - Senegal | 2020

Festival Ciné Junior - France  
| **Best short of the +11 age group** | 2021

Festival du court métrage de  
Clermont Ferrand - France | 2021

Cleveland International Film Festival - USA | 2021

Festival Ciné Jeune de l'Aisne - France |  
**Best short - European competition** | 2021

Aubagne Music & Cinema - France |  
**Best live action short** | 2021

Festival Gabès - Tunisia | 2021

Go Short Nijmegen - The Netherlands | 2021

Sarasota Film Festival - USA |  
**Best international narrative short** | 2021

Toronto Arab Film Festival - Canada | 2021

Mo&Frieze Children's Film Festival - Germany  
| **ECFA Short Award** | 2021

Palm Springs Shorfest - USA |  
**Audience Award** | 2021

Huesca International  
Film Festival - Spain | 2021

Cine Africano de Tarifa - Spain | 2021

Nova Frontier Film Festival - USA | **Best Actor** | 2021

Concerto Film Festival - Italy | 2021

Festival International du Film Oriental  
de Genève - Switzerland | 2021

Aflam du Sud - Belgium | 2021

Leiden Shorts - The Netherlands | 2021

Festival Court en plein air de Grenoble - France | **Grand  
Prix** | 2021

Postira Seaside - Croatia | 2021



## Artistic distribution

Ayman Rachdane, Fatima Attif, Younes El Khalfaoui, Ayman El Khalfaoui, Abderrazak El Hansaly, Jassim Lotfi

## Technical distribution

**PRODUCER** Sophie Penson

**PRODUCTION COMPANIES** Barney Production, Mont Fleuri Production

**DIRECTOR, SCREENWRITER** Saïd Hamich Benlarbi

**DOP** Marine Atlan

**EDITOR** Xavier Sirven

**SOUND** Hugo Deguillard, Margot Testemale, Fanny Weinzaepflen

**ORIGINAL SCORE** Vitor Araújo

# Contact

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Private screeners can be provided upon request.



Mont Fleuri  
مون فلوري

SHORT  
CUTS



