

BARUD

A 25' documentary
Written and directed by Mélanie Gouby



SUMMARY

Abdulkader Fattouh is a student at the perfumery school in Versailles who dreams of one day becoming a 'nose'. Access to this elite circle of professionals is limited to a chosen few: there are more astronauts in the world than perfumers. But the young Syrian's determination is rooted in experiences that most of his classmates couldn't even imagine. To get here, Abdulkader has fled war, crossed the Mediterranean, slept rough, and risked his life more than once. *Barud* is an intimate portrait of a young man in pursuit of his dreams, who reinvents himself in the face of adversity, taking us on an olfactory journey from Aleppo to the heart of the luxurious world of French perfumery.

LETTER FROM THE PRODUCER

The profession of the 'nose' is often described as one of the most secretive and mysterious in the world. For Abdulkader, it is his life's dream. To achieve his goal, this young refugee has overcome countless obstacles and carved out a remarkable story.

Mélanie Gouby's film goes beyond depicting Abdulkader's ambition and place in this elitist world of perfumery. It touches on something more intimate: his connection with his origins, the dualism between his life in France and his Syrian roots, his unique journey, and his uncertain future.

Few documentaries examine the profession of the 'nose,' and many talk about immigration-related issues at present. The originality of this project arises from the relationship between these two aspects and its universal yet intimate approach. This is why we believe this documentary will captivate Arte's curious and demanding audience.

When Mélanie told us about her film idea, we were just starting one of our most ambitious projects, Sensory Odyssey, a multi-sensory journey that puts the sense of smell at the heart of the visitor experience. The subject of this film immediately captivated us and fits perfectly into our editorial focus.

We joined the project in 2019, when Mélanie was following Abdulkader's progress in his perfumer training. Most of the film's story was based on this, but we were looking for the best way to add in sequences to depict the past and Abdulkader's memories. We have come to the conclusion that animation is the perfect way to combine the past with the present in our narrative. This visual interpretation will also allow us to poetically integrate the impalpable: the sense of smell.

To make these moments even more intimate and personal to our protagonist, we hope to work with Rama Duwaji, Syrian illustrator, and we have included examples and references from her in this document.

We remain, along with the director, open to discussion about our project and its realisation.

Montse Cerdan et Youenn Le Guen
MARDI8

NARRATIVE AND PRESENTATION

Throughout the film, different smells will trigger olfactory memories for Abdulkader – memories of his childhood, the war, and his journey across Europe. While smelling a raw material with a smoky scent, he will be reminded of the smell of bombings. The Serge Lutens perfume Rahat Loukoum will remind him of working in a shop in Istanbul while waiting to cross the Mediterranean. A field of roses in the south of France will remind him of his grandmother's rose jam.

His olfactory memories will be represented on-screen through a selection of images that play with association, archival footage, and animated sequences. These sequences will be designed to evoke an impression rather than reconstruct specific scenes and will focus on details in the same way that visual memory retains subjective fragments rather than an entire scene. They will be guided by Abdulkader's narration.

The animation gives us total freedom to play with shapes, colours, the transformation of objects and smells to evoke the associated memories. For the animation, we collaborate with Rama Duwaji, a Syrian illustrator and animator. Her approach is strongly influenced by her culture and is thus in total harmony with the subject of this documentary and the desired aesthetic of the animated sequences.

Sequence - Rose Jam

EXT. - A FIELD OF ROSES NEAR GRASSE - DAY

Along with a group of young apprentices also participating in the competition, Abdulkader gathers centifolia roses. The rose field is beautiful. The dew reflects the morning light. Professional pickers gather the flowers and place them in their aprons.

ABDULKADER (V.O.)

In Syria, it may seem a little strange, but we eat roses. Every year, there is a point where we buy roses to make jam.

Abdulkader brings a handful of fresh roses to his nose, closes his eyes, and inhales deeply.

START OF ANIMATION

Abdulkader's memory:

"My grandmother is like an expert on roses. At the market – it's a huge market – she can say exactly which roses are for jam and which are for decoration, just by looking at them. Then she smells them, assesses their colour, and chooses the best ones. She can spend hours there and the criteria are not very clear. She's the only one who knows them. My mother and aunts all go to her house, and everyone makes the jam together. They pick the petals and boil them for a long time in a large saucepan full of water, and then they add sugar and lemon and stir. The smell of roses lingers in the house for days and perfumes the furniture. It's a family moment of sharing and happiness. "

Part of this memory will be narrated by Abdulkader voicing over the animation.

STORYBOARD - ROSE JAM

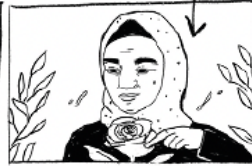
BARUD - MÉLANIE GOUBY



He takes a deep inhale and smells the scent



It transforms & takes him back to the memory of a Rose.



His grandma kneels into frame, tending to garden. Touches rose.



Transition into wide shot of them at a busy Syrian Market.



Close up shot of him helping her carry produce.



Panning shot of all the types of roses.



Grandma approaches Rose seller.



She selects a rose.



She smells them, leaning into frame.



Close up of grandma inspecting rose.



Shot of her caressing the individual petals.



panning shot of them walking to smell all the roses.



quick shot of smelling a rose



a quick shot of her smelling another.



He's watching her in awe, eyes moving.



She smells and looks up in surprise, this is the one!



Wide shot of grandma + mom + aunt sitting by all the roses.



Close up shot of them removing the petals.



Shot of petals falling into boiling pot.



hands come in, pour sugar.



close up of hand squeezing a lemon into pot.



He helps stirring the pot.



Close up of him standing on his tippy toes in kitchen.



Him & his grandma inhale and smell the aroma of the jam.



Transforms into scene of the finished product.



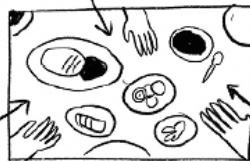
He looks at it proudly and inhales.



Close up of white cheese.



Shot of him + grandma chewing happily.



hands reach in and eat from the feast on the table.



The scent of the food wafts around the house.



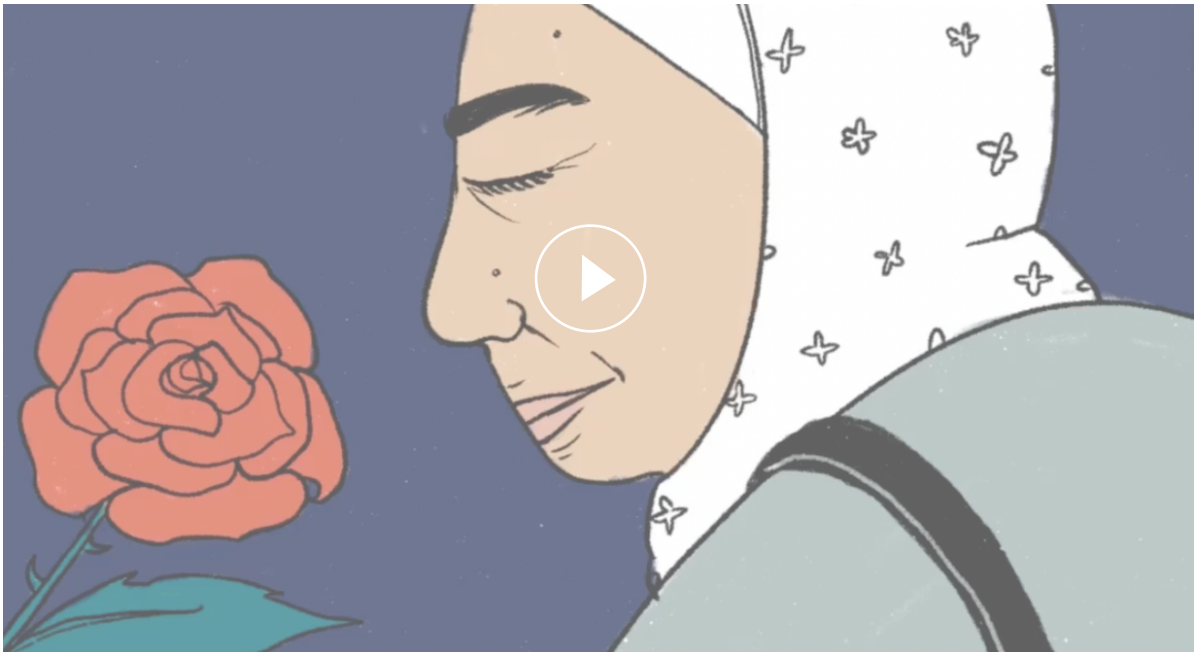
Shot of the family eating and talking happily.



He takes one last deep breath and will always remember these memories.

TRANSFORMS

ANIMATION



COLOURCHART





MOTIVATION

Today, modern perfumery is an undisputed symbol of the French way of life, but it is in fact the result of global trade dating back thousands of years. Perfume's origins can be traced back to Babylonian Mesopotamia, where the existence of the first known perfume-maker, a woman named Tapputi, was discovered on a cuneiform tablet from 1200 BCE. Over the centuries, chemists and merchants travelled the world to find new raw materials and distillation techniques. It has been said, somewhat justifiably, that the world was discovered in the wake of perfume.

Two areas in particular share this heritage: Europe and the Middle East. Over the course of journeys motivated by trade or conquest, travellers brought back expertise as well as flowers and precious ingredients, such as the Damask rose, forming an inextricable sensory link between cultures, rooted in our shared human experience.

Yet for years, immigration – particularly from the Middle East – has invariably been seen as a threat to European culture. Even more so than economic or employment issues, this claim has whipped up emotions and raises the question of the position so-called migrants are assigned in society. In the West, those who succeed in navigating our increasingly strict asylum systems are being asked to keep a low profile, blend in, become perfect replicas of an idealised identity, and work in low-level jobs.

My meeting with Abdulkader Fattouh three years ago was timely. During a visit to Versailles, where I went to high school, a childhood friend introduced us. Abdulkader was staying at her mother's house for two months with the support of Welcome 78, an NGO which puts refugees in touch with volunteer host families. Initially, I was intrigued by this. In a town known for its Catholic conservatism, hundreds of families were voluntarily welcoming refugees into their own homes, showing extraordinary generosity. Through Abdulkader's story, we will meet them.

But it was Abdulkader's story that finally captured my imagination, for two reasons. Firstly, because of its contrast with the media's ubiquitous narrative about refugees and migrants, and secondly, simply because of what it is at its core, without its surrounding context: the universal story of a young man pursuing his dreams.

Ever since our first meeting, Abdulkader has challenged me not to see him as a helpless victim in need of my compassion, but as a fighter. Although the film highlights the difficulties he has had to overcome, he will never be portrayed as a victim. I want to downplay the refugee aspect and highlight the individual, whose needs, hopes, and dreams the viewer can empathise with.

Barud is a film about the invisible bonds that unite us, the human experience and its paradoxes. It is both universal and unique, which is what makes it so rich. It is also a film about the destruction of war and what should not be hindered by exile: the right to believe in oneself, to build, and to rebuild.

ÉQUIPE



Mélanie Gouby

DIRECTOR

Mélanie is an investigative filmmaker and journalist based in London. She has produced and directed documentaries for NBC, TF1, Vice and National Geographic, focusing on the human impact of climate change, conflict, and migration. A former East Africa correspondent for Le Figaro, she is a regular contributor to many English- and French-language publications. From 2011 to 2014, Mélanie lived in Goma, in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, where she covered the M23 rebellion and investigated an oil company's illegal activities in the Virunga National Park for the Oscar-nominated documentary Virunga (Netflix), which won a Peabody and a duPont-Columbia Award.



Youenn Le Guen

DIRECTOR AND CREATOR OF MARDI8

Education

Urban Systems Engineering, University of Technology of Compiègne (UTC) – Cultural Spaces specialism.
Master of Cultural Management, 'Planning, infrastructure and management' at the University of Chile.

References

- Documentaries co-produced with Les Films du Bilboquet: L'Ultimu Sognu by Lisa Reboulleau and Andromedas by Clara Sanz.
- Creator and producer of the Sensory Odyssey project.
- Production of immersive films utilising 3D photogrammetry, Rmn-Grand Palais (Eternal Sites, immersive and 360° films), Marseille History Museum.
- Artistic direction of the Mont Faron Memorial Museum exhibition.



Montse Cerdan

PRODUCTION MANAGER - MARDI8

Education

Master's degree in Film Studies: Audiovisual Production, Université Lumière Lyon 2.
Degree in Filmmaking, Arte 7, Mexico City.

References

- Audiovisual and multimedia production manager: National Museum of Norway, Quai Branly Museum, Museon Arlaten, La Chaise-Dieu Abbey, Maison Éco-Paysanne d'Oléron, La compagnie des Indes, Musée de La Vache qui Rit.
- Assistant director for the short film Julia by Sylvain Loscos (Stone Angels).
- Production assistant (Les Films du Tambour de Soie): Unsung Heroes, A Thousand Girls Like Me, Goodbye Jerusalem.
- Production manager (Paramax Films), filming concerts at Weather Festival 2015 for Arte Concerts.
- Production Assistant (Atopic): feature film Guilty Men by Ivan Gaona (Colombia).



Sensory Odyssey

Situated between entertainment and science, macrocosm and microcosm, Sensory Odyssey is an experience produced by Mardi8, creating a dream-like, multi-sensory, interactive, and immersive environment using 360° ultra-high-definition projections.

Imagined as an olfactory expedition into the heart of the living world, this journey makes use of additional technological devices, connecting the visitor with their immediate surroundings.

In partnership with Projectiles, Expéditions Spectacles and Gwenaël Allan

In collaboration with the French National Museum of Natural History

CO-PRODUCTION



L'Ultimu Sogno - Last Dream in Petra Bianca

In the heart of a Corsican forest at night, a woman dreams of hunting. After killing, as she looks into the eyes of dead wild animals, she can see faces. Those of people who in real life are about to die. This is an ancestral gift that was passed on to her, and comes from the depth of the island. Even though today, no one seems to care about her visions anymore. Because she is a wild woman. A Mazzera... There is only this one shepherd who is still paying attention.

Produced by Eugénie Michel-Villette - Les Films du Bilboquet

Trailer : <https://vimeo.com/358109101/010ba15863>



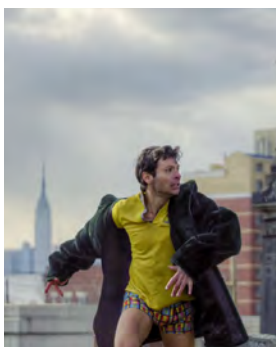
Andromedas

In a small village in La Mancha in Spain, several women are brought together under one roof. 90-year-old Rosita lives with María, an Ecuadorian woman who has been her carer for seven years. Rosita's granddaughter films the unlikely duo she forms with this stranger, giving us a glimpse into the confines of their small world, in which everyone can see a reflection of their own experience.

Produced by Eugénie Michel-Villette - Les Films du Bilboquet

Co-produced by Lyon Capitale TV & Manuel Praena

Extract: <https://vimeo.com/367718021>



Paul Great Again

This short film by Thibaut Oskian takes us to New York and Paris through a mixture of cinematic genres. This project is both original and ambitious.

Co-produced by Thibaut Oskian

MUSEOGRAPHY / MARDI8 INSTITUTIONAL PRODUCTIONS



Age-old cities

ARAB WORLD INSTITUTE

Mosul, Aleppo, Palmyra, and Leptis Magna: the names resonate as symbols of a mythical ancient heritage and brilliant civilisations, but also as so many martyred sites, disfigured by recent conflicts and the madness of a few fanatics. Here they are brought back to life for the exhibition through a virtual immersive journey.

In collaboration with Iconem, UNESCO and Ubisoft.

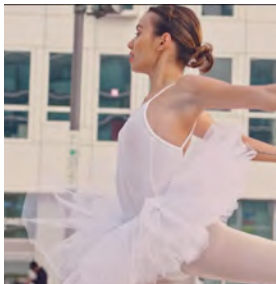
Set design: Sylvain Roca

Director: Olivier L. Brunet

Composition and sound design: Olivier Lafuma

Lighting: Bénédicte Garby

Graphics: Depli Studio



Nous sommes Marseille (We are Marseille)

CITY OF MARSEILLE

Executive production of a 2018 short film.

Collaborators: Thibaut Oskian & Lou Escobar

Link : www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2199682266724339



National Museum of Norway

Production of more than 60 audiovisual and multimedia works and the audio guide for Norway's new National Museum in Oslo, opening in 2022, designed by Kleihues and Schuwerk Gesellschaft von Architekten. The museum will house collections that are scattered across Oslo city centre, currently located in the National Gallery, the Museum of Contemporary Art and the Museum of Industrial Art.



The Olmecs and civilizations of the Gulf of Mexico

MUSÉE DU QUAI BRANLY - JACQUES CHIRAC

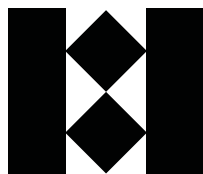
Production of two films for the temporary exhibition The Olmecs and Civilizations of the Gulf of Mexico, from 9th October 2020 to 25th July 2021.

Detailed presentation of the current knowledge of the Olmecs and their civilisation's place in the history of pre-Columbian Mesoamerica, through films made using a combination of illustrations, archives, curator interviews, and various shots of the historical items.

SCHEDULE

Finalisation of righting for post-production	Summer 2021
Storyboard and animation	August - October 2021
Editing	November - December 2021
Post-production	January 2022
Ready for broadcast	February 2022

THANK YOU



mardi8
ARTISANS D'IDÉES

CONTACT

102 rue Breteuil
13006 Marseille

Youenn Le Guen
youenn.leguen@mardi8.com
07 78 25 02 87

Montse Cerdan
montse@mardi8.com
07 52 25 28 36