

place was then a hotbed of diseases such as dengue fever, and a locus for parasites, insects and rats. The present residents and the social movements took responsibility for the cleaning up of the building, making it habitable despite infrastructure problems such as a lack of elevators in the 15-storey construction.

Initially, Eliane Caffé, the director, wanted to make a film about refugees, but when she actually met them, she came across an important issue in their lives: the political struggle for their rights, such as to housing. This movie succeeded in helping to connect urban movements, refugees and immigrants – the Homeless Refugees and Immigrants Group (GRIST) was formed during the post-production phase.

Brazilians and foreigners share the same experience of a lack of the economic and bureaucratic conditions necessary to finding housing. In the movie, activist Carmem Silva says: 'Brazilians, foreigners... we are all refugees, we are all fleeing our lack of rights.' The speech of the activist, winner of an award at the International Frontier Movie Festival in Uruguay for her performance, highlights a common denominator between Brazilians and foreigners: the lack of rights. The right to housing is shared by all – Brazilian or not – but the right to fight politically for it is not guaranteed for foreigners; and this movie raises the question of the lack of political rights for foreigners in Brazil.

In one fictional scene, depicting the occupation of Hotel Cambridge, activist Carmen Lucia announces an order of eviction for repossession. In that moment, all the residents are called to fight for their right to housing, taking part in political activities organized by the social movements and in the management of the occupation. In Ahmad Issa's home, a young man refuses to take part in these political activities. The character, played by refugee Qadis Khaled Abu Tahar, justifies his refusal by quoting the prohibition on foreigners taking part in political protests.

The film approaches and discusses many issues and challenges of daily life in a multicultural context. I would like to end this text, though, underlining the merits of this production in showing a challenge – housing – that is common to Brazilians, foreigners and immigrants, and in exploring the differences in political rights among them.

*Mirian Alves de Souza*

*Universidade Federal Fluminense, Núcleo de Estudos do Oriente Médio NEOM*

*Escape from Syria: Rania's Odyssey.* Dir. Rania Mustafa Ali. Prod. Rania Mustafa Ali. The Guardian. 22 mns. Arabic with English subs. 2017.

This short movie shows two important aspects of the intense migratory flows from Syria to Europe. First, it sheds light on the importance of high-tech devices for people on the move. The camera acquires the role of a means of communication and spreads information among an immense group of people. Second, this short testimony also emphasizes the paradoxes of the rules to access the EU. After a series of attempts to

cross the borders, Rania and her friend, Ayam, decide to accomplish their journey by plane to Vienna, and in this way they are able to get to Europe. Rania carries all of us through borders in her journey from the ruins of Kobane directly to Austria. To use the adverb 'directly' could sound like an understatement for a journey that in her footage is depicted as a real odyssey. The final images of the documentary explain why one could talk of a 'direct' flight to Vienna.

At the age of 20 she hasn't 'done anything in life' and before 'the rules for refugees are changed', she aims to grab her opportunity. Her way out of Syria can be divided in three main parts that, at the same time, are related to wider political issues. Rania leaves Kobane and arrives in Turkey. The environment seems urban, safe. The atmosphere creates happiness because of the general excitement of this adventure toward Europe. The moments in the sea are the traumatic ones. She risks drowning in the Mediterranean, travelling in a boat meant to hold 15 people but stuffed with over 50. In the end, they arrive safe in Lesbos, Greece. From Lesbos, they move to Athens without any obstacles. Once out of the boat, they are surprised that 'nobody tries to arrest them.' They cross the border and arrive in Macedonia. There, however, they are stopped and sent back to Greece.

Three figures emerge from the images that Rania shot: smugglers, international volunteers and authorities. The smuggler is depicted as an irresponsible person who, for financial reasons, takes advantage of refugees by letting too many people into the boat to Lesbos. Furthermore, when travelling to Athens they also bought bus tickets to Macedonia; only when in the Greek capital city do they figure out that there is no such bus, and that they were cheated. At the Greek-Macedonian border international volunteers help people cross the frontier: people in their wheelchairs are carried across rivers and muddy fields, showing the most human side of international volunteering. This image contrasts with the one of authorities tear-gassing and beating refugees trying to cross the border.

The landscape changes constantly, and Rania's and Ayam's crossing shows different 'political landscapes': the Turkey-Greece deal; the emergency measures in Lesbos; neighbourhood policies. These are linked to emotions: they try to cross the border with anxiety where fences are high, whereas they cross borders with bravery when the international volunteers' help and support makes them stronger.

It is a story that, apart from sharing emotions visually, brings up several issues through the differing political scenarios and points of view on migration. On a political level, this short movie shows the impacts of European policies in different regions and the paradoxes of the journey, which is finally accomplished through use of fake Bulgarian IDs. Only when Rania and Ayam pretend to be Bulgarian are they able to travel to Vienna by plane. There, they ask for asylum. This short documentary is intense in its narratives, it evokes various and contrasting feelings – as the refugees' odyssey entangles contrasting emotions – and it is worth watching. It has the merit of

indirectly linking local situations and political issues. It shows how EU policies affect the lives of people living real odysseys.

*Valentina Grillo*

*Refugee Outreach & Research Network*

*Fire at Sea [Fuocoammare]*. Dir. Gianfranco Rosi. Prod. Rémi Burah. Curzon Artificial Eye. 114 mns. Italian with English subs. 2016.

The critically acclaimed documentary *Fire at Sea* (Italian *Fuocoammare*, dir. Gianfranco Rosi) is a lyrical film shot at the height of the European 'refugee crisis'. It intercuts the hazardous journey of migrants across the Mediterranean with scenes of mundane life in the Sicilian town of Lampedusa, on a small island roughly one hundred kilometres off the African coast, in the autumn of 2015. The latter part focuses on Samuele, a young boy living with his grandmother, playing outdoors with his friend, seeing the local doctor for minor ailments, and struggling with his English lessons at school.

Recipient of the Golden Bear at the Berlin International Film Festival 2016, *Fire at Sea* not only succeeds in depicting Lampedusa as a backdrop to a vast humanitarian crisis, but also pays homage to its legacy as an ancient fishing town. For as long as they can remember, the inhabitants' main source of income has been the sea. Indeed, 'fire at sea', a reference to a popular Italian song, means no earnings on days of bad weather, as thunderstorms make it too dangerous for the local fishing boats to embark. During the Second World War, as Samuele's grandmother reminisces, it was the naval ships and man-made rumbles that lit up the sea as if the water was burning. Today, the viewer feels compelled to add, it is the thousands of dead bodies of refugees from Africa and the Middle East that symbolically colour the sea red.

The connection of Lampedusa's eventful past to the current crisis is obvious, yet never forced. Indeed, the documentary captivates most when juxtaposing seemingly trivial scenes from Samuele's everyday life as a schoolboy with the abysmal scenes on migrant boats, making them even more shocking and grotesque in contrast. Samuele's mundane tribulations, such as his minor health issues (a lazy eye that prevents him from focusing on what happens immediately around him, just like the rest of the Lampedusians), seem absurd compared to the physical hardships refugees have to endure. Samuele's doctor is the very same local medic who treats the dehydrated, malnourished and often barely alive migrants on their arrival, and who documents their dead bodies, among them pregnant women and little children. The shortness of breath that Samuele complains about, yet his doctor can't find any clear indication for, is graphically visualized on one of the migrant boats, when a young Eritrean helplessly gasps for air after finally being rescued by the Italian coastguard.

However, in all these scenes, the documentary refrains from passing harsh judgement. Atmospheric and subdued in colour and tone, it transports the