

and sent back. They show injuries they say the Moroccan border forces inflicted on them, and mourn a killed friend.

In depicting all of this, the film stays completely neutral. There is no commentary and only absolutely necessary background information is provided. The documentary focuses on the individuals, their lives and their stories, and leaves the interpretation to the audience. The film does not assign guilt for the overall situation, nor does it include official Moroccan or European statements pertaining to the situation. Instead it gives faces, names and histories to the faceless mass streaming into Melilla in the initial sequences of the documentary. When the documentary was released, it won several international film prizes and was shown at several film festivals; four years later the film has unfortunately lost nothing of its humanitarian relevance.

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Only the Dead Return Home: Insights into the Kurdish Resistance in Turkey
 [Nur Die Toten Kehren Heim: Einblicke in den kurdischen Widerstand in der
 Türkei]. Dir. Tina Leisch and Ali Çan. Prod. Şahin Okay and Özge Taş. Kinoki.
 81 mns. German with English subs. 2015.

Only the Dead Return Home is a documentary about Kurds from Turkey now living in exile in Europe. Since the 1980s, director Tina Leisch has befriended politically-active Kurds. The idea for a documentary, however, came only after her first trip to the Turkish city of Diyarbakir in 1991, when she learned about the following incident: Once, on a trip to Austria, the mayor of Diyarbakir forgot his suit in a hotel in Vienna. The co-director of this film, Ali Çan, who had been living in Austria for a long time, decided to return the mayor's suit, but was held up at the airport in Istanbul and was denied entry into Turkey. Consequently, he had to stay overnight in the airport transit space, where he happened to be among African refugees, before being sent back the next day to Vienna. This inspired Leisch and Çan to portray the social situation of Turkish Kurds living in Europe.

Over one million Kurds live in exile in Europe, many of them as political refugees who cannot return to Turkey without fear of immediate imprisonment. Kurdish freedom fighters are also prosecuted as terrorists in many EU countries. This documentary shows the lives of these exiled Kurds, as well as their original homes in Kurdistan, to which they cannot return. The film also portrays the Kurdish civil society's resistance against the authoritarian, minority-hostile, Turkish state. In this film, we meet people like the mayor of the city of Nusaybin, who was elected with 80 per cent of the votes, but who is kept under the Turkish police and government's control with threats and intimidation. Moreover, we also meet a liberation movement that is as much inspired by democratic, multi-ethnic and feminist ideals as it is by a struggle for the Kurdish language and culture.



Figure 1 A woman demonstrating, as featured in the film, following the killing of three PKK female fighters in Paris. The sign reads 'We are all Fidan' (which is the name of one of the dead women), Paris, 9 January 2013. © Tina Leisch 2013.



Figure 2 A crowd at a demonstration, as featured in the film, following the killing of three PKK female fighters in Paris. Paris, 9 January 2013. © Tina Leisch 2013.



Figure 3 Signs carried by demonstrators, following the killing of three PKK female political activists in Paris. Paris, 9 January 2013. © Tina Leisch 2013.



Figure 4 Grave of one of the killed PKK women fighters in a cemetery in Tunceli, Turkey. © Tina Leisch 2013.

Therefore, this film clearly takes the side of the Kurdish resistance and shows the stories of Kurdish men and women. It is important, however, to note that the film is neither against Turkey, nor against the people of Turkey, but it is against what it identifies as the centralised, minority-hostile, Turkish state.

Ali Çan is a journalist who had been politically active for many years, for example, by writing for the Kurdish newspaper Özgür *Politika*, and by being the chairperson for 'FEYKOM', which is the umbrella organisation for the Kurdish associations in Austria. As he was not allowed to film in Turkey, he had to work on the film from Vienna. Likewise, Tina Leisch is also a journalist and a political activist. Her first documentary, *Gangster Girls* (2008), received much acclaim at the Vienna Film Festival, as did her film *Roque Dalton, Let's Shoot the Night!*, which was invited to forty international film festivals. This latter film earned the prize for 'Best Documentary Film' at the Cinelasamericas Film Festival in Austin/Texas and at the El Ojo Cojo Film Festival in Madrid and because she is not Kurdish, she is allowed to enter Turkey.

The protagonists of *Only the Dead Return Home* also hail from Austria, as well as Switzerland, Germany and France. Like Çan, many politically-active Kurds in exile cannot enter Turkey. Hence, the concept of the film: the exiles gave Leisch objects, like a red cloth or a book, so that she could take them on a journey to Kurdistan. It is when she sets out to deliver a book from a Kurdish exiled scientist to the library of a women's shelter that she meets the mayor of Nusaybin, who becomes the main protagonist of the film. The film spans five years, and through objects and their journeys, many more stories are told. While the film originally had only a few protagonists, as Leisch meets people connected to the objects she brings from Europe, the number of people and stories portrayed increases exponentially.

On 9 January 2013, the Kurdish political activists Sakine Cansız, Fidan Doğan and Leyla Şaylemezgot were assassinated in the Kurdish Information Office near Gare du Nord, in Paris. Tina Leisch and Ali Çan document this incident up to the repatriation of the bodies to Kurdistan. In their hometown, back in Diyarbakir, many local Kurds take part in the funeral, which culminates in the film's dramatic finale. After all, for many politically active Kurds in exile, this is the only way to return home.

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People of Nowhere. Dir. Lior Sperandeo. Prod.Lior Sperandeo. Inzima Publishing. 119 mns. 2013.

People of Nowhere is a short film of 1'59" by Israeli director Lior Sperandeo. Released in November 2015, it touches upon the issue of the Syrian refugees and their arrival on the island of Lesbos, Greece, north-east of the Aegean Sea. Situated only a few kilometres from Turkey, this location is relevant, as the island houses one of the