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LEBANON - synopsis nl + fr

Juni 1982, de Eerste Israëlische-Libanese Oorlog. Een eenzame tank krijgt de opdracht om een vijandige stad op te sporen. In de tank zitten vier Israëlische soldaten: Shmuel, Assi, Herzl en Yigal, jongens van rond de twintig die nooit iets met geweld te maken hebben gehad. Gegrepen door angst en het fundamentele instinct om te overleven, proberen ze wanhopig om zichzelf niet te verliezen in de chaos van de oorlog. De hele film blijft de camera bij vier soldaten in een tank, de kijker ziet alleen wat zij waarnemen.

LEBANON is een (deels) autobiografische film van regisseur Samuel Maoz die er 25 jaar over heeft gedaan om zijn oorlogstrauma te verwerken. Op het 66ste Filmfestival van Venetië van 2009 heeft LEBANON de Gouden Leeuw voor Beste Film gewonnen...

Première guerre du Liban, juin 1982. Quatre garçons de 20 ans, Shmuel le tireur, Assi le commandant, Herzl le chargeur et Yigal le conducteur, sont envoyés à bord d'un tank par l'armée israélienne pour attaquer une ville hostile. Ce ne sont pas des guerriers, ils doivent obéir à des ordres. Ils perdront ainsi leur innocence de la façon la plus brutale qui soit...

LEBANON est un film (partiellement) autobiographique du réalisateur Samuel Maoz qui a eu besoin de 25 ans pour digérer son traumatisme de guerre. Au 66^{ième} Festival du Film de Venise de 2009 LEBANON a gagné le Lion d'Or pour Meilleur Film...

Lengte 93min. / Taal: Hebreeuws, Engels en Arabisch / Durée 93min. / Langue: hébreu, anglais et arabe



LEBANON - cast

Shmulik Yoav Donat
Assi Itay Tiran
Hertzel Oshri Cohen
Yigal Michael Moshonov
Jamil Zohar Strauss
Syrische gevangene/prisonier syrien Dudu Tassa
Libanese moeder/mère libanaise Reymonde Amsellem

LEBANON - crew

Regie en scenario/réalisation et scénario Samuel Maoz
Producenten/producteurs Uri Sabag, Einat Bikel, Moshe Edery, Leon
Edery, David Silber, Benjamina Mirnik, Ilann
Girard
Director of photography Giora Bejach
Montage Arik Lahav-Leibovich
Special effects Pini Klavir
Muziek/musique Alex Claude, Nicolas Becker



LEBANON - Oshri Cohen

Oshri Cohen (1984) begon met acteren als kind in het Beit-Lessin theater in Tel Aviv. Al snel was hij op televisie te zien in verschillende series. Daarnaast speelde hij in films als BONJOUR MONSIEUR SHLOMI, LOST ISLANDS en CAMPFIRE. In 2006 won Cohen de Israelische dramaprijs voor aanstormend talent en een jaar later speelde hij een van de hoofdrollen in het voor een Oscar genomineerde BEAUFORT.

Vandaag de dag maakt hij deel uit van Habima (Het Israelische Nationale Toneel) en schittert hij in het toneelstuk La vie devant soi naar de gelijknamige Franse roman van Emile Ajar (in 1977 legendarisch verfilmd met Simone Signoret in de hoofdrol)

Acteur au théâtre et au cinéma dès son plus jeune âge, Oshri Cohen est nommé comme Meilleur acteur pour son rôle dans 'Beaufort' en 2007 et 'Bonjour Monsieur Shlomi' au Israeli Film Academy Awards. Il était à l'affiche du film 'Agora', d'Alejandro Amenabar. Au présent il est membre de Habima (Le théâtre national d'Israël) et il joue dans la pièce La vie devant soi basé sur le roman d'Emile Ajar.

Filmografie / filmographie

2009LEBANON
2009AGORA
2008LOST ISLANDS
2007BEAUFORT
2003TO BE A STAR
2003BONJOUR MONSIEUR SHLOMI
2001INGIL

LEBANON - Yoav Donat

Yoav Donat (1980) speelde voor zijn rol in LEBANON in de populaire Israelische televisieserie PARASHAT HASHAVU.

Avant son rôle dans LEBANON Yoav Donat (1980) jouait dans la feuilleton à la télé PARASHAT HASHAVU.

Over zijn rol in / ur son role dans LEBANON: "Reading the script of Lebanon was a most moving experience. I was totally drawn in. I felt that someone was sharing the most difficult tests of his life with me. It excited me more than any other script I had ever read. I told myself that it's essential for me to become a part of this creation."

"My powerful desire to participate in the film became even stronger when I met Shmulik. The moment that Shmulik said 'Welcome to Lebanon!' at the end of my fourth audition was one of the happiest moments of my life. The first part I received after completing my acting studies turned out to be the fulfilment of all my dreams!"

Shmuel spoke directly to me as the shots were being filmed, shouting out the horrible thoughts that were supposed to be going through my head: "It's my fault that a paratrooper was killed! What will they tell his mother? That I made a mistake? That I got confused? I'm worthless! I'm a coward! A murderer." He thrust me into an extreme situation and continued relentlessly. At the end of scenes like these, many people on the set were in tears. Everyone knew that it was actually Shmulik shouting at himself."

"Towards the end of the shoot, I was in such a state of emotional oversaturation that I burst out crying. Shmulik comforted me, telling me that he now feels healed through me. When he sees me on his monitor, it arouses empathy within him and he becomes able to forgive himself. I consider it a privilege to have been involved in a process of such profound significance. My participation in Shmulik's healing and in telling his story are vital experiences that will accompany me throughout my life."

LEBANON - Samuel Maoz

Samuel Maoz, ook wel bekend als Shmuel of Shmulik Maoz, heeft een opleiding tot cameraman gevolgd aan de Academy of Art Beit Tzvi in Tel Aviv. Na zijn afstuderen verzorgde hij de art direction voor verschillende film en televisieproducties en heeft hij documentaires geregisseerd voor ARTE, waaronder TOTAL ECLIPSE (2000) met o.a. Yevgenya Dodina. Hiernaast was Maoz betrokken bij tal van televisieseries en toneelstukken.

In 2007 begon Maoz met de voorbereidingen van LEBANON, zijn eerste speelfilm. Hierin verwerkte hij zijn ervaringen als soldaat tijdens de eerste Libanonoorlog uit 1982. Maoz brengt in zijn film de traumatische ervaringen van vier Israëlische soldaten die in een tank een Libanees dorp binnenvallen in beeld.

Op het 66ste Filmfestival van Venetië won Maoz de Gouden Leeuw voor zijn LEBANON.

Samuel Maoz, aussi connu comme Shmuel ou Shmulik Maoz, a suivi une formation d'opérateur de caméra à l'Academy of Art Beit Tzvi à Tel Aviv. Après ses études il faisait la direction artistique de plusieurs films et productions pour la télévision et il réalisait des documentaires pour ARTE, entre autres TOTAL ECLIPSE (2000) avec Yevgenya Dodina. Il collaborait aussi pour plusieurs feuilletons de télévision et des pièces de théâtre.

En 2007 Maoz a commencé avec les préparations de LEBANON son premier long métrage. Dans ce film il traite ses expériences comme soldat pendant la première guerre du Liban de 1982. Maoz raconte l'histoire traumatique de quatre soldats israéliens qui entrent une ville libanaise avec leur char militaire.

Au 66^{ième} Festival du Film de Venise de 2009 LEBANON a gagné le Lion d'Or pour Meilleur Film...



LEBANON - Samuel Maoz over / sur Lebanon

On June 6, 1982, at 6:15 AM, I killed a man for the first time in my life. I did not do so by choice, nor was I ordered to do so. I reacted in an instinctive act of self defense, an act with no emotional or intellectual motivations, only the basic survival instinct that takes no human factors into account, an instinct that forces itself on a person facing a tangible threat of death. On June 6, 1982, I was 20 years old.

Twenty-five years after that miserable morning that opened the Lebanon War, I wrote the script for the film LEBANON.

I wrote LEBANON straight from my gut. No intellectual cognition charged my path. My memory of the events themselves had become dim and blurred. Scripting conventions such as introductions, character backgrounds and dramatic structure did not concern me. What remained fresh and bleeding was the emotional memory. I wrote what I felt.

I wanted to talk about emotional wounds, to tell the story of a slaughtered soul, a story that was not to be found in the body of the plot but derived from deep within it. How the hell could I put that on film? I realized I would have to shatter some basic principles and bend several rigid cinematic fixtures, creating a total experience instead of building a plot.

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The decision to make an experiential movie gave rise to the cinematic concept. My basic principle called for the presentation of a personal, subjective point of view. The audience would not watch the plot unfolding before it but experience it together with the actors. Viewers would not be given any additional information, but would remain stuck with the cast inside the tank, having the same limited view of the war and hearing it only as the actors heard it. We would try to make sure that they could smell it and taste it as well, using the visuals and sound track not only to tell a story but to impact an experience. I realized that I would have to create a total experience to achieve complete emotional comprehension.

LEBANON - gesprek met / entretien avec Samuel Maoz

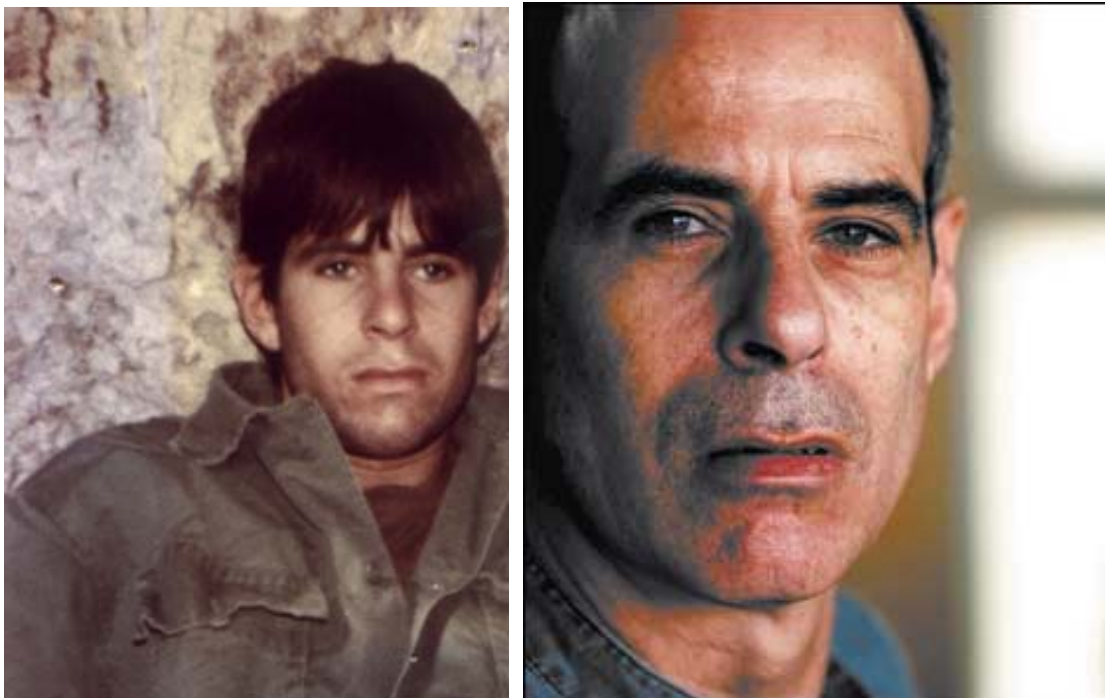
Based on director Samuel Maoz's own experiences as a young conscript during Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, **LEBANON** is a tense and haunting evocation of the very real horrors of war. Having won the Golden Lion for best film at this year's Venice Film Festival, Maoz has now found himself hailed as world cinema's latest hot property, as he discussed when we met earlier this week.

LEBANON is based on your own experiences as a soldier. What prompted you to revisit your own past in this manner?

Basically it was a need - a need to unload, a need to expose war as it really is without all the heroic stuff and the rest of the clichés. And it was probably a need, not to forgive myself necessarily, but... I was involved in the war and that in itself is enough for me to feel guilty to an extent. It's something that I'll always have to deal with.

Do you feel that there's a lot of misunderstanding about Israeli history and politics? Are you trying to address that in any way?

I don't think my film exposes anything that Israeli people didn't know before, but it deals with issues that people don't like to talk about. It's strange because on the whole the audience in Israel think that this is not a political film, and that it should be more political.



Links : Samuel Maoz ten tijde van de Eerste Libanonoorlog, rechts : Maoz nu.

Gauche: Samuel Maoz pendant la première guerre du Liban, droite: Maoz aujourd'hui

Can you talk about your decision to set the film almost entirely inside a tank?

What I wanted to use was my subjective memory. That's the filter through which I intended to tell my story. I soon realised that I couldn't use a classic cinematic structure. I don't want the audience to just understand the film, I want them to feel it. Because in this case feeling is understanding. So I needed to create a concept in which you totally identify with the characters. You see what they see, you know only what they know. I don't want you to think during the film, I want you to feel. Then after the film you can start thinking about what you see. And, this is not something I considered at the time, but I knew that if I talked to peoples' heads I wouldn't change anything. Every war film is basically a naïve or pathetic ambition to stop war! I thought if I attacked from another angle and talked to the stomach and the heart, maybe I could make a small difference.

How did the actors themselves respond to their confinement? Was it a claustrophobic atmosphere on set?

The preparation process was very tough, physically and emotionally. For example in the beginning, every actor was left alone inside a small, dark and very hot container for a few hours. So instead of explaining the claustrophobic experience to the actor, I let him go through it himself. After a while we knocked on the container walls with iron pipes. It's very similar to a sudden attack when someone's shooting at the tank. So I prepared them like that. I tried to create an experience that would bring them close to the situation.

Have things changed for you since winning the Golden Lion at Venice?

It's been very busy! I know that Celluloid Dreams have sold the film all over the world; I'm visiting lots of festivals. It's beyond my dreams. Also lots of suggestions, scary suggestions from the Americans! Meetings with Miramax and Universal. I told myself I'll listen to all these suggestions while I'm travelling around festivals, enjoy it, and then consider my steps. But I'm very hungry now. This is my first feature film, and I'm full of passion. I'm not a young director - I'm not too old but I'm not young either!

You see what they see, you know only what they know. I don't want you to think during the film, I want you to feel...

So you won't be moving straight to Hollywood?

I don't think so. I understand that in Hollywood, for example, the producers have the final cut. That sounds like a nightmare to me! The best thing about the success is that I know that I can raise the money I need for the next film, make it the way I want to, and make a living from directing. You can't ask for more from life!

Bron/Source: Paul O'Callaghan, The Times BFI 53rd London Film Festival

LEBANON - Gouden Leeuw / Lion d'Or

Parijs, 1 september 2009 - De 47-jarige Israëlische regisseur Samuel Maoz heeft zaterdag op het 66ste filmfestival van Venetië de Gouden Leeuw gewonnen voor zijn debuutfilm LEBANON. De Leeuw is de hoofdprijs van het oudste filmfestival ter wereld.

LEBANON speelt zich af op de eerste dag van de Israëlische oorlog tegen Libanon in 1982. De hele film blijft de camera bij vier Israëlische soldaten in een tank. De kijker ziet alleen wat zij waarnemen. Maoz weet zo de angst en de radeloosheid van de vier jonge dienstplichtigen precies invoelbaar te maken.

De film heeft een autobiografische basis. Maoz vocht als twintigjarige dienstplichtige mee in de oorlog, waarin hij, zo verklaarde hij, ook slachtoffers heeft gemaakt. Pas na een diepe persoonlijke crisis was hij in staat om deze film te maken. Het was te pijnlijk om de herinneringen, waaronder die aan „de geur van geschroeid mensenvlees”, op te halen.

"Ik draag de prijs op aan de duizenden mensen ter wereld die zoals ik veilig en wel uit de oorlog zijn gekomen. Zij stellen het klaarblijkelijk goed, zij zijn getrouwd, ze hebben kinderen. Maar in hun binnenste hebben ze moeten leren leven met hun pijn", zei de regisseur toen hij zijn prijs in ontvangst nam.

Huit films ont été récompensés lors de la cérémonie de clôture de la 66e Mostra de Venise. L'Israélien Samuel Maoz a triomphé en remportant le Lion d'or avec Lebanon, un premier film autobiographique "écrit avec ses tripes", qui montre les horreurs de la guerre à travers le viseur d'un tank. "Merci pour ce bonheur", s'est exclamé le cinéaste en recevant son prix des mains du président du jury, l'Américano-Taiwanais Ang Lee. "Je dédie ce prix aux milliers de personnes à travers le monde qui, comme moi, sont revenues de la guerre saines et sauvées. Apparemment, elles vont bien, elles sont mariées, elles ont des enfants, mais à l'intérieur elles ont dû apprendre à vivre avec leur douleur", a-t-il dit.

Dans des déclarations à la télévision publique israélienne, Samuel Maoz a, par la suite, expliqué que son film "permettait de mieux comprendre la complexité de la société israélienne". "Ce n'est pas un film politique et c'est pour cela qu'il s'adresse à tous", a ajouté le réalisateur de ce premier film autobiographique "écrit avec les tripes". "Je suis bouleversé d'avoir obtenu ce prix qui constitue la plus haute distinction internationale décernée jusqu'à ce jour au cinéma israélien", a ajouté le metteur en scène à la télévision israélienne. "Il consacre la percée spectaculaire du cinéma israélien ces dernières années", a-t-il ajouté.



LEBANON

Based on the real-life experiences of writer/director Maoz, this grimly-harrowing piece claustrophobically follows four soldiers stuck inside an Israeli tank which has been immobilised for most of the film in enemy territory on the first day of the Lebanon War in 1982.

Set for a place of honour in world festivals and specialised art cinemas, Lebanon was an unusually long time in the making due to problems securing investment and the technical challenges of shooting an entire film inside a tank. It features some of Israel's brightest young talents, covered in sweat and grime for the most part, convincingly reenacting some of the worst moments of Maoz's life – possibly not in exact detail, but how he remembers them now.

This is obsessively directed by a man who is obviously still fighting the demons of his past. The plot launches straight into the first day of war, a pleasant June morning with a new gunner (Donat) joining the three other members of the tank crew. Assi (Tiran) is the commander, Igal (Moshonov) the driver, and the assistant gunner, Herzl (Cohen), is in charge of ammunition. The tank is quickly dispatched on its first mission – to accompany a paratrooper unit on the way to a Lebanese village that has already been pummeled by the Air Force. No resistance is expected and none should turn up on the road; it's just a routine, easy-going summer stroll.

Of course, nothing happens as expected. On the way to the target, one enemy car makes a charge, the tank gunner freezes and a paratrooper is killed as a result. Another car approaches but this time nobody takes any chances - the gunner pulls the trigger, the car is blown to pieces, and the driver lies, fatally wounded on the road screaming "Peace" before he is shot dead out of pity. This is just an introduction to the real action – the unit and the tank reach the wrong village, they kill civilians who are being used as a shield by terrorists and are hit by an RPG missile shot by a Syrian soldier who shouldn't have been there.

One wounded Syrian is taken prisoner and put inside the tank until they reach a safe haven. Some Phalangists (pro-Israeli Lebanese Christians) are sent in to lead the unit out of the trap it has fallen into. One enters the tank to tell the prisoner in great detail about what is in store for him, while urgent orders to move are stalled for a while as the tank is frighteningly immobilised.

With every new event, the world outside is viewed almost exclusively through the gunner's telescope.

Meanwhile, tension and clashes inside the tank are mounting, with fear and panic growing. The foursome confront the officer in charge of the field operation, Jamil (Strauss). Effectively shot using minimum lighting and wide angles, mostly in close-up, Maoz' script takes the picture a visceral level, where war is assessed purely by the animal reactions of the people exposed to it. Coming after two other successful Israeli war films, Beaufort and Waltz with Bashir, Maoz goes even further in rejecting all political, social or ethical considerations and it is fair to assume that part of the audience might feel seriously alienated by this attitude. But for him, it is a highly personal and intimate portrait of 24 hours in hell, and as such, frighteningly convincing.

The plot never attempts to generate rounded psychological portraits of its protagonists or show them developing throughout the film, but ultimately, this is a bloody page of a private diary far more than a thoughtful reflection on war. A technical tour de force for camera, production designer and editor, uniformly well acted and obsessively directed by a man who is obviously still fighting the demons of his past, this may not qualify as entertainment, in the usual sense of the word, but movies are not always supposed to be fun.

VARIETY

LEBANON

Visceral, torn-from-the-memory filmmaking that packs every punch except one to the heart, "Lebanon" is the boldest and best of the recent mini-wave of Israeli pics ("Beaufort," "Waltz With Bashir") set during conflicts between the two countries. Ironically, writer-director Samuel Maoz's pic, 99.9% of which is set within an Israeli tank, actually has the least to do with Lebanon per se. The story could be set in any tank, any country, any war -- a cinematic Kammerspiel that's as much a formal challenge for its creator as it is a claustrophobic experience for audiences. With fest kudos, arthouse chances look solid.

The only thing "Lebanon" (set on the first day of the 1982 invasion) and "Bashir" (set three months later) have in common is that both films were directed by actual participants, who've carried the emotional scars to this day.

But where "Bashir" helmer Ari Folman extrapolated his experiences into an elaborate structure and animated format, Moaz compresses his own memories into a compact, "Huis Clos"-like drama set over 24 hours in a single location.

The whole film has only three exterior shots, the first of which is of a vast field of droopy sunflowers slightly animated by time-lapse lensing. The viewer is then plunged into the bowels of a lone Israeli tank, at 3 a.m. on the morning of June 6, 1982, as its regular team of three -- cool commander Assi (Itay Tiran), motormouth loader Hertzal (Oshri Cohen) and nervous driver Yigal (Michael Moshonov) -- are joined by new gunner Shmulik (Yoav Donat). All are only in their 20s.

The you-are-there experience commences almost immediately, as the tank trundles across the border and plows through a banana plantation. The outside world is seen only through Shmulik's viewfinder and heard only through the tank's armor plating. When the hatch is occasionally opened, light and sound flood the cramped compartment, but nothing else is seen.

Though the pic is shot in 1.85 and not widescreen, and doesn't have an elaborate soundtrack, sound designer Alex Claude ("Beaufort") and his team do a remarkable job on an evidently low budget, from sloshing water and oil inside the tank to deafening setpieces, such as the sudden shock of coming under heavy fire. A subtly supportive score by Nicolas Becker, which includes almost subliminary sounds on "organic instruments," is a further smart component.

Giora Bejach's lensing, combining 16mm, DV and Red One material into a 35mm print, has a kind of dank beauty in its pools of light cast by a control panel or stray shafts from outside. As the main protags' faces are progressively caked in dirt and sweat, it's sometimes difficult to make out who's talking, but unlike in many other grunt movies, names are helpfully used at frequent intervals.

After they've been briefed by hardass commander Jamil (Zohar Strauss), who lowers himself inside the tank for a chat, the four soon get their first taste of the slow chill of fear. Not for the last time, the tank quartet is temporarily joined by a wounded soldier, putting extra pressure on the protags' relationships, especially between the combative Hertzal and calmer Assi. As the soldiers enter an already bombed city, with orders to clean it of PLO resistance fighters, they find themselves trapped when the tank is incapacitated and they're surrounded by (unseen) Syrian troops.

Pic recalls many other war dramas set in confined spaces -- from Andrzej Wajda's '50s classic, "Kanal," set in the Warsaw sewers, to Zheng Junzhao's 1983 "One and the Eight," set in a pit prison -- with the same blackened, sweat-smearing faces and sense of living incarceration.

With frequent developments outside and visits by Jamil and others, Maoz technically pulls off the feat of keeping the viewer involved during 90 minutes set in a single, cramped location. But he's less successful at forging any emotional bond: Part of the price of deliberately withholding their backstories -- to make them anonymous soldiers -- is that their survival becomes purely a matter of abstract interest.

Whenever the strongly etched and played Jamil is onscreen, or when a crazed Phalangist (Ashraf Barhom) threatens a Syrian hostage (Dudu Tasa) in a disturbing display of psychosis, the dramatic weaknesses of the four main protags are thrown into relief. Performances are OK, but the dialogue is largely functional, and their characters are neither likable nor especially interesting.

It's not a crucial flaw, but it does prevent "Lebanon" from having the emotional clout that would have turned it from a very good dramatic experiment into a great one.