

THE HUMANS

NO HUMANITY

There are no Syrian refugees
in Turkey

There are no Syrian refugees in Turkey

A film by Oliver Ressler

30 min., 4K, AT/TR 2016

Refugees attempting to enter the European Union play a specific role in the relation between the EU and Turkey. The same European powers that routinely invoke “human rights” to justify military action in Africa and Asia (including the “Middle East”) deny all protection to survivors fleeing the slaughter they order. The EU border regime is responsible for tens of thousands of drownings in the Mediterranean, while Turkey has opened its borders to nearly three million refugees, more than all EU states combined.



“There are no Syrian refugees in Turkey”. Installation view: “Who Throws Whom Overboard?” (solo show), SALT Galata, Istanbul, 2016

The film channels voices that not only go unheard but are quite *unheard-of* in the western “refugee debate” – because if Europe is the center of the world, speakers like these couldn’t possibly exist. They are Syrian refugees who *preferred not to* seek a way into the EU, choosing to continue their lives in Istanbul instead.

The Syrians describe their life as “guests” in the continent’s largest metropolis, which for 500+ years has sheltered survivors of wars and pogroms started by powers to its north and west. One thing they discuss at length is the difficulty of making a living in Istanbul. Another is the reluctance of the EU to admit more than a pitiful number of refugees, whom it treats collectively as a social pathogen, a mobile

hazard to be isolated and “made safe”. All the conversations were recorded in Arabic in the days after the coup attempt in Turkey on 15 July 2016, which therefore also became a topic of the film. Quietly reversing the entire perspective of the “refugee debate”, the film develops a political analysis of Turkish and European politics from the standpoint of Syrian refugees.



“There are no Syrian refugees in Turkey”. Installation view: “Who Throws Whom Overboard?” (solo show), SALT Galata, Istanbul, 2016



“There are no Syrian refugees in Turkey”, still

The speakers are not seen in the film. Their anonymity is maintained as a precaution against repression and unwanted consequences of all kinds.

The interviews are combined with images made from long single shots taken in Istanbul. The words and images are accompanied by an experimental audio composition – produced specifically for the film – which likewise bears witness to conditions of war and terror and to things left unsaid.



"There are no Syrian refugees in Turkey", still



"There are no Syrian refugees in Turkey", still

Director and producer: Oliver Ressler

Cinematography, audio recording and editing: Oliver Ressler

Translator and organizer: Zuhour Mahmoud

Production assistant: Kerem Renda

Color correction and finishing: Rudolf Gottsberger

Sound design and Music: Vinzenz Schwab

The film was commissioned by SALT Galata for Oliver Ressler's solo exhibition "Who Throws Whom Overboard?" and received support from the BKA and the Austrian Cultural Forum in Istanbul.

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