

The Square *Al Midan*

Egypt 2013

Directed by
Jehane Noujaim

Directors of Photography
Muhammad Hamdy
Ahmed Hassan
Jehane Noujaim
Cressida Trew

Music
Jonas Colstrup
H.Scott Salinas

108 mins

Contributors

Ahmed Hassan
Khalid Abdalla
Magdy Ashour
Ramy Essam
Aida El Kashef
Ragia Omran

Tonight we are proud to present a screening of *The Square* - a gripping counterpoint to last season's *The Gatekeepers*, and an all too rare opportunity to see a film from Egypt.

Recent Egyptian history is a tale told by a video, or tens of thousands of them, signifying nothing. Discuss. The alternative view, presented in *The Square*, is that the cumulative recorded tumults of Tahrir Square (on cameras, phones, webcams, TV newsreels) signify absolutely everything. You just need the patience to collect and construe them, as Jehane Noujaim's documentary attempts, from the first footage of anti-Mubarak street scuffles to the helicopter shot of the millions-strong anti-Morsi rally, here called the biggest demonstration the world has ever seen. The film's potential weakness turns into its strength. Noujaim had to keep updating. Who thought, in 2011, that one tyrant initialled "M", and his overthrow, would be followed swiftly by another? The pace of history, at once precipitate and open-ended, *is* the story here. The very term "revolution" denotes a turning process: it isn't a button push or a light switch. It will wheel away for as long as it needs, and the chaos and the courage called up in the process are movingly caught here.

Nigel Andrews, Financial Times

British audiences have already had a chance to see two fascinating movies about the ongoing Egyptian revolution. Ibrahim El-Batout's *Winter of Discontent* and Ahmad Abdalla's *Rags and Tatters*, in their different ways, gave piercing insights into its agony and euphoria. Now *The Square* gives an immersive and atmospheric account of what it's like to be plunged into the revolutionary maelstrom of Tahrir Square: a world of passionate dedication and confusion; a torrent of YouTube testimony, shifting alliances and a mysterious sense that the army can go overnight from being the good guys to the bad guys and back again. The lesson is that only the mass physical presence can achieve these dizzying (but short-term) gains: simply retweeting revolutionary sentiment is not enough. And people get killed, by army tanks and bullets. It's a gripping story and the fact that it isn't over only makes it more extraordinary.

Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian

Epitomizes nonfiction film not just as a way to deepen knowledge and understanding, but also as an art form. In this vibrant, lyrical, graphic, sobering and finally soaring testament to aesthetic and political expression, Noujaim consistently provides light where once there was heat.

Ann Hornaday, The Washington Post

Our next screening...
Common People
Tue 3 Feb 2015 8:00pm
Dir: Stewart Alexander & Kerry Skinner
Six stories weave together romance, crisis and adventure on Tooting Common. Comedy drama.

