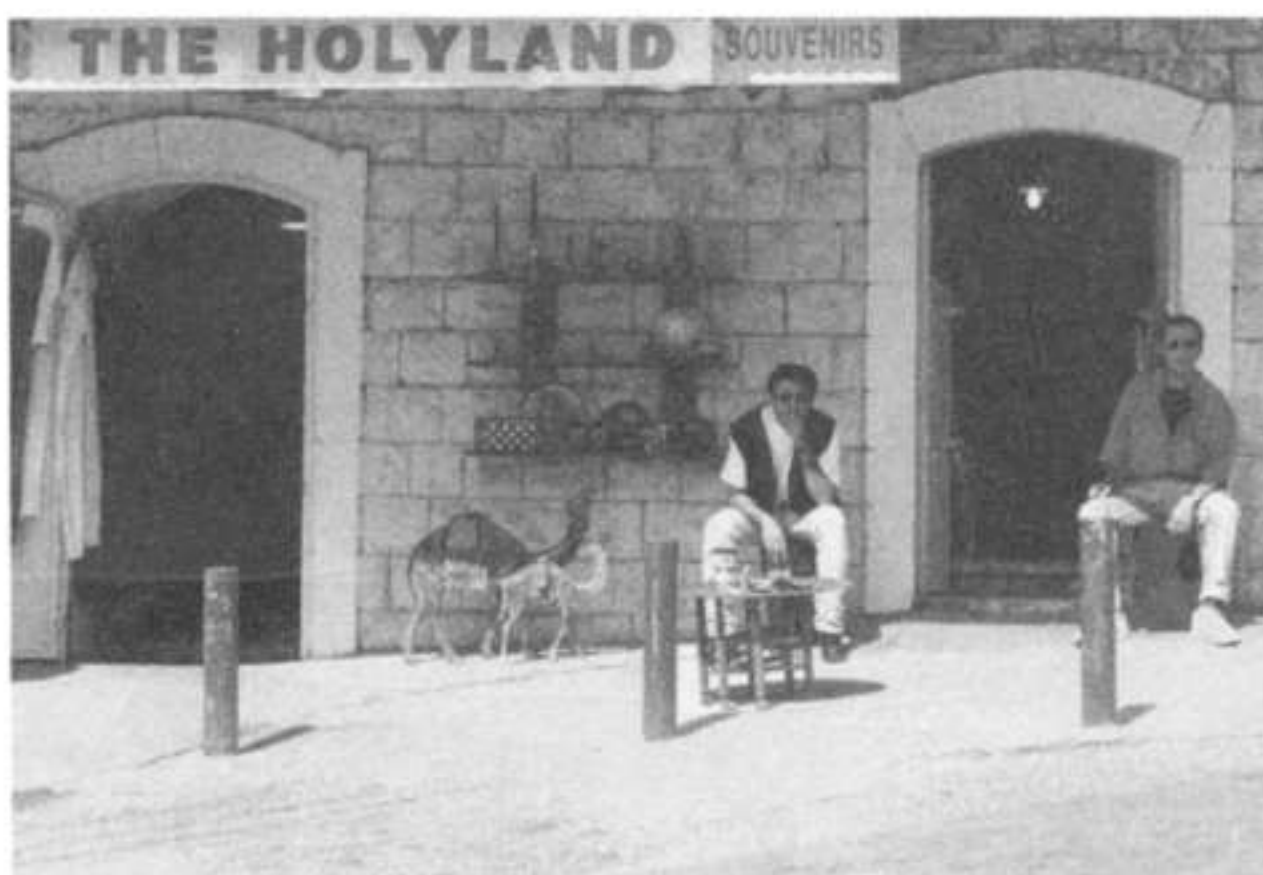


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Chronicle of a Disappearance

Sejil ikhtifá

PALESTINE 1996, 85 min.

DIR/PROD/SCR Elia Suleiman

CAM Marc André Batigne **ED** Anna Ruiz **CAST** Fuad Suleiman, Nazira Suleiman, Ula Tabari, Elia Suleiman, Jamal Daher, Fawaz Eilemi **DISTRIBUTOR** International Film Circuit

Elia Suleiman, a Palestinian who lived in New York, knows exile: Exile is living in your own lost homeland. Thus the director of artistic shorts went back to Israel to shoot his first feature, a witty look at the Palestinian middle class getting on as best it can without a national identity. Suleiman captures the inherent humor in his dreamy characters—these women who, when not peeling garlic, talk about peeling garlic; these men fishing and gossiping—perhaps because a people without humor have been truly dispossessed. Playing on his role as insider/outsider, Suleiman recreates small fictions out of everyday truths, coming back again and again to the stories the Holy Land holds—like his mother's stunning account of a relative's minor perfidy, or an Orthodox priest's lament over the polluted water where Jesus walked—and where now anyone can walk. In Suleiman's deadpan visage and droll cinematic vision, Buster Keaton meets Chantal Akerman; but this perfect deadpan masks profound intent. A false chronology, the film moves from a "Personal Diary" in Nazareth, where nothing happens, to a "Political Diary" in Jerusalem, where everything moves and still nothing happens. "Personal" is receiving a surprise visit from the armed militia in your pajamas; "political" is Suleiman's parents in their comfortable living room, asleep in front of Israeli national television, truly colonized. *Best First Feature, Venice*

Judy Bloch

Selected Filmography: Elia Suleiman (b. Israel, 1960) *Homage by Assassination* (SFIFF 1992)