

CINEMIEN Film & Video Distribution
Amsteldijk 10
1074 HP Amsterdam
t. 020 – 577 6010
www.cinemien.nl
info@cinemien.nl

ABC Distribution
Kaasstraat 4
2000 Antwerpen
t. 03 – 231 0931
www.abc-distribution.be
info@abc-distribution.be

presenteren / présenter:

Sabah



EEN FILM VAN / UN FILM DE RUBA NADDA

Persmappen en beeldmateriaal van al onze actuele titels kunnen gedownload van onze site:

www.cinemien.nl of www.abc-distribution.be

Link door naar PERS en vul in; gebruikersnaam: 'pers', wachtwoord: 'cinemien'

SABAH – synopsis (NL)

Sabah (Arsinée Khanjian) is een slimme en mooie Canadese moslima die net veertig is geworden. Door haar toewijding aan haar liefhebbende maar intense familie heeft ze de afgelopen twintig jaar nauwelijks een privéleven gehad. Plotseling krijgt ze een gek idee: ze besluit een badpak te kopen en stiekem te gaan zwemmen. In het zwembad ontmoet ze Stephen (Shawn Doyle): een lange, knappe en aardige man die beslist geen moslim is. Haar familie mag niet weten dat ze uitgaat met een Canadees en ze verzint allemaal smoesjes om haar relatie verborgen te houden. Stephen heeft al snel genoeg van deze kinderachtige spelletjes en vindt dat ze hem aan haar familie moet voorstellen. Uiteindelijk kiest Sabah ervoor haar familie in te lichten over haar nieuwe vriend. Kan zij rekenen op hun liefde en steun?



SABAH

90 min. / 35mm / Kleur / Dolby Surround / Engels gesproken / Canada 2005

Kijkwijzer: 

Nederlandse theatrale distributie: Cinemien
Belgische theatrale distributie: ABC Distribution
DVD uitbreng : Homescreen

SABAH – synopsis (FR)

Sabah est issue d'une famille syrienne musulmane très conservatrice, qui a immigré à Toronto il y a plus de vingt ans. Vivant avec sa mère veuve, elle reçoit de son frère aîné, le très contrôlant Majid, une maigre pitance pour son travail de servante auprès des siens.

Pour fêter ses quarante ans, Sabah se paye une douceur en se rendant à la piscine publique intérieure du quartier. Elle y fait la connaissance du charpentier Stephen et en tombe peu à peu amoureuse. Débute alors entre eux une idylle clandestine, Sabah ne pouvant absolument pas révéler à sa famille sa passion pour un non-musulman.

Mais lorsque la vérité éclate, elle décide de tenir tête pour la première fois à Majid et à sa mère afin de vivre son amour comme elle l'entend.



SABAH

90 min. / 35mm / couleur / Dolby Surround / dialogues en anglais / Canada 2005

La sortie théâtrale aux Pays-Bas: Cinemien

La sortie théâtrale en Belgique: ABC Distribution

La sortie sur DVD : Homescreen

SABAH - crew

Regie / réalisation	: Ruba Nadda
Scenario / scénario	: Ruba Nadda
Director of Photography	: Luc Montpellier, C.S.C.
Muziek / musique	: Geoff Bennett, Longo Hai, Ben Johannesen
Geluid / son	: Mark Gingras
Montage	: Teresa Hannigan
Producent / producteur	: Tracey Boulton
Co-Producer	: Paul Scherzer
Line Producer	: Stephen Paniccia
Production Manager	: Jason Gwozdz
Make-up	: Heidi Armstrong
Casting	: Jenny Lewis

SABAH - cast

Sabah	: Arsinée Khanjian
Stephen	: Shawn Doyle
Majid	: Jeff Seymour
Amal	: Kathryn Winslow
Mustafa	: David Alpay
Um Mouhammed	: Setta Keshishian
Shaheera	: Roula Said
Souhaire	: Fadia Nadda

SABAH – over regisseuse / sur le réalisatrice Ruba Nadda

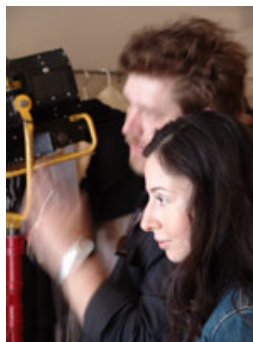
Ruba Nadda (1972) is een internationaal hooggewaardeerde schrijfster, regisseuse en producente. Ze is geboren in Montreal (Canada) en is van Arabische afkomst. Ze heeft met haar familie in verschillende Canadese steden gewoond voordat ze zich in Toronto vestigde.

Nadat ze afstudeerde aan York Universiteit, vervolgde ze haar opleiding aan de prestigieuze Tisch School of the Arts in New York, in filmproductie. Eenmaal terug in Toronto begon ze meteen aan haar carrière als filmmaker.

Ze heeft 16 films geschreven, geproduceerd en geregisseerd. Onder meer: **SABAH** (2005), **AADAN** (2004), **UNSETTLED** (2001), **I ALWAYS COME TO YOU** (2000), **BLUE TURNING GREY OVER YOU** (1999), **BLACK SEPTEMBER** (1999), **I WOULD SUFFER COLD HANDS FOR YOU** (1999), **LAILA** (1999), **SLUT** (1999), **DAMASCUS NIGHTS** (1998), **THE WIND BLOWS TOWARDS ME PARTICULARLY** (1998) **SO FAR GONE** (1998) **DO NOTHING** (1997), **WET HEAT DRIFTS THROUGH THE AFTERNOON** (1997), **INTERSTATE LOVE STORY** (1997) en **LOST WOMAN STORY** (1997).

Haar 12 korte films zijn de laatste vijf jaar op meer dan 450 film festivals vertoond. Er zijn al ruim 20 retrospectieven gewijd aan haar werk in onder andere Princeton (Universiteit), Rotterdam, Stockholm, Wenen, Würzburg, Austin, San Francisco, Regina, Edmonton, Ottawa en Toronto.

Ruba Nadda schrijft tevens fictieverhalen die wereldwijd zijn gepubliceerd in verschillende dag- en weekbladen.



Ruba Nadda est une auteur, réalisatrice et productrice internationalement renommée. Elle est née à Montréal (Canada) et est d'origine arabe. Avec sa famille, elle a vécu dans plusieurs villes à Canada avant qu'elle se soit finalement établie à Toronto en 1989.

Elle a étudié la littérature à l'université de York et a été ensuite acceptée dans l'école prestigieuse Tisch School of the Arts à New York pour y étudier la production de film. Quand elle est retournée à Toronto, elle a immédiatement commencé sa carrière de réalisatrice.

Elle a écrit, produit et réalisé 16 FILMS, dont : **SABAH** (2005), **AADAN** (2004), **UNSETTLED** (2001), **I ALWAYS COME TO YOU** (2000), **BLUE TURNING GREY OVER YOU** (1999), **BLACK SEPTEMBER** (1999), **I WOULD SUFFER COLD HANDS FOR YOU** (1999), **LAILA** (1999), **SLUT** (1999), **DAMASCUS NIGHTS** (1998), **THE WIND BLOWS TOWARDS ME PARTICULARLY** (1998) **SO FAR GONE** (1998) **DO NOTHING**

(1997), **WET HEAT DRIFTS THROUGH THE AFTERNOON** (1997), **INTERSTATE LOVE STORY** (1997) et **LOST WOMAN STORY** (1997).

Ses 12 courts métrages ont été montrés à plus de 450 festivals de film partout dans le monde. Elle a eu plus de 20 rétrospectives de son travail montrées dans de nombreuses villes, entre autres : Rotterdam, Stockholm, Vienne, Wurtzbourg, Austin, San Francisco, Regina, Edmonton, Ottawa, le Moyen-Orient, Toronto, et l'université de Princeton.

En tant qu'auteur de fiction, Ruba Nadda a eu de nombreuses histoires courtes éditées dans plus de 400 journaux à travers le monde.

SABAH – Production notes

SABAH is a project that is very close to my heart. I have always been interested in telling the stories of Arabs living in North America. More and more, Arabs and Muslims are portrayed as inherently hostile to the values of the Western world. In these times it is even more important that stories like **SABAH**, stories that show how Arabs actually live in the West, be available. A love story between an Arab Muslim woman and a non-Muslim man brings to the forefront the difficulties immigrant communities face in trying to build a life in North America. For me it is important to bring this to the screen without resorting to familiar stereotypes.

As a love story, **SABAH** brings these cultural conflicts to the screen in a hopeful and humorous way. The conflicts are not just between the lovers, but also between the lovers and their own backgrounds and between different understandings of what love is. The heroine, Sabah, finally finds the courage to take control of her life after having spent much of her adult years in the service of her family. This requires her to finally challenge the way they have lived for many years. While taking this stand she decides for herself how to best negotiate these cultural differences, and finally allows herself to fall in love for the first time in her life.

I'd made my share of gritty, grim tales of love lost in a bleak Toronto. With my early work, I had stories I desperately wanted to tell and little money to tell them. When tackling my first big project, I wanted to do something different for **SABAH**. With **SABAH** I wanted to explore themes of hope, faith, longing and whimsical first love. To bring that across, I wanted to make a very classically beautiful-looking film. My biggest challenge was ensuring I shot on film and that I found the right people to help me get the look I wanted.

The idea for **SABAH** originated back when I was in my final year at York University. On the bus, heading home was a young veiled woman in black. You could only see her eyes. As I sat watching this Muslim woman whose experience in Canada was clearly so different from mine, I thought about how she handled sexual urges, sexual feelings. Then I wondered what if she were to fall in love with someone who *wasn't* Muslim. I mean really fall in love with someone she wouldn't be allowed to see. How would this happen? Would she do all the stupid things that people do when they fall in love, when you feel your emotions, your brain and your actions are out of control? Would she turn her back on these feelings? As I boarded the subway heading downtown, I had an image in my head of a veiled woman passionately kissing a very western looking man in the middle of the street. The idea stayed with me for years. From that image **SABAH** was born.

The idea changed somewhat over the years. When I finally began working on the script, I decided the story would be more interesting if Sabah were a little older. For an older woman, the pressures of family expectations are greater since everyone's roles have already been defined. At the same time, the temptation to follow your heart is also greater because you begin to feel that you might not get another chance.

After having completed the treatment and received some development money from Telefilm, I contacted Atom Egoyan and Simone Urdl, who had long been supporters of my previous films. I contacted Arsinée Khanjian as well since I had always been a huge fan of her work and had long seen her as the only actor who could play the leading role of Sabah. In April 2002, Atom and Simone liked the script I had done and officially came on board as my executive producers. My world quickly changed. I had always felt like an outsider to the industry. With the faith and support of my executive producers, I knew I could make this film. From there, I quickly hooked up with Tracey Boulton, a producer who was just as passionate in telling the story of **SABAH** and together we set out to make this film.

SABAH takes place in the spring in downtown Toronto. Immigrants, including my parents often see Toronto as a city filled with great opportunities. They love the beauty of the city. They see the clean and well kept streets, the marble floors in the shopping malls, the well maintained flowers in parks, and the order.

I spent a month designing the film with Luc Montpellier, my DOP, and Jonathan Dueck, my production designer. Together we considered how every single shot; every frame of the film could look. The three of us knew we had a very limited shooting schedule and we had some pretty ambitious locations. We knew we had to have everything covered and planned out. There was no room for error. That hard work paid off once we got to set. Luc had designed a book for all the crew that included the shot list, schedule, notes so that everyone could be literally on the same page. We were always on time and when we saw the rushes, we couldn't believe how crisp and beautiful the film was turning out to be.

My formal film training was minimal. I spent two months studying film production in New York and I came back to Toronto and just started making films. It was tough because I learned the hard way, with many shorts of mine not turning out the way I wanted. I spent my own money financing film after film, sending them out to festivals, having successes and then failures as well. But this experience turned out to be beneficial and in making so many films, I prepared myself for the day I would have the opportunity to make the project **SABAH** happen. What I had at the end of the day was plenty of on set experience shooting and working with crews and casts.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON PRODUCTION

I remember the night right before filming. A bunch of us from the film went out for dinner to celebrate the starting of principal photography the next day. All evening, I had brazenly bragged about how unworried I felt. Then driving back home on Bathurst Street with my sister, Fadia, we looked over and thought, hey, who the hell is shooting here? Then I maniacally pulled over and we got out of the car. Those trucks and trailers and orange cones were ours! I kicked over a cone to

prove to myself that this was actually happening. Fadia and I will never forget that feeling. It hit us so hard at that moment. It hit us that we were making a movie. A movie I had been working on for years. In retrospect, I wish I had stolen the cone!

God has always been on my side with weather. I've shot so many films outside and I have never been caught in anything I haven't needed for my film. Even with SABAH, I remember shooting a sequence outside at Trinity Bellwoods and the skies had become an intense blue. It was thundering and even though it was only five in the afternoon, it had become increasingly dark. As soon as I yelled cut and a wrap for the day, it started to rain and hail. It was a great way to not only end the day, but also the first week of principal photography.

There is a scene in SABAH where Arsinee and Setta are at an open food market buying tomatoes. This was a source of concern for us because we couldn't afford to shoot in a real bustling marketplace. So we basically took over the front yard of a corner house and Jonathan, my production designer built it up like a busy, beautiful market. Well, it looked so real that a passer-by -while we were shooting a scene, entered the market and started picking out some groceries. We had to cut because we were all laughing so hard ! There are so many obstacles in making a film. It's all the way you look at it. You have to always remain positive. There's always a way to get what you want.

While casting with Jenny Lewis, Tracey and I were becoming desperate looking for a house large enough to shoot in but also with Middle Eastern aesthetics! We were at the Arab community centre holding auditions when a mother and daughter came in. Arabs tend to be very helpful and generous and we were lamenting our problem. They quickly put us in touch with Habib Salloum, a food critic for the Toronto Star and a man from Syria who owned an authentic and stunning house. We called him on the spot and he quickly invited us over for tea. We were stunned when we entered. His wife and daughter, Muna were so kind and welcoming and so incredibly supportive, they immediately offered us to shoot in their home. Their furniture, antiques, and rugs -everything was from Damascus, Syria. I thought I had died and gone to heaven. The family from SABAH is Arab, specifically from Damascus, Syria.

ON ARAB CULTURE

There are so many different sides to both Arab culture and Islam. From the very beginning of my filmmaking career, I wanted to show a completely new and different side to my culture, a side I was very familiar with but that the world rarely saw. The side that I wanted to show had nothing to do with terrorism, abuse or honour killings. I am sure all of those things exist around the world, but for me and my family and friends here in Toronto and the Middle East, we were sick of stereotypes. I wanted audiences to see another side of Middle Eastern culture. So I set out to tell a story about cross-cultural love, acceptance and the many challenges immigrant families face when they come to Canada. These struggles are often portrayed as a choice that must be made between preserving cultural traditions and accepting Western values. But it's actually much more complicated than that. Everyone, regardless of cultural background, has to make judgments every day about how they make their own personal set of values fit with those of the society around them. Most people make

exceptions from time to time. Making exceptions is not the same as giving up your culture. It is simply a part of living in a multicultural society like Canada.

With **Sabah**, I quite deliberately left out any direct reference to terrorism, 9/11, the conflict in Palestine and the difficulties that Arab-Canadians face as a result of these events. I think there is an expectation that an Arab filmmaker must address these issues head-on, even from those who are sympathetic to the difficulties that Arabs face in North America. To some extent, the Arab who must deal with the constant suspicion of being a terrorist has also become a stereotype. I think we need to resist the idea that 9/11 has to define what it means to be an Arab in North America. There is so much more to it than that!

ON SHOOTING IN TORONTO

The city of Toronto has always been a prominent part of my films. My family first arrived in Toronto 14 years ago after having lived in various small towns all over Canada as well as in Damascus. Of all the places I've lived, Toronto has felt most like home. With **SABAH** I was adamant about showing Toronto as beautiful, classy and elegant. So many films have portrayed this city as bland, dirty and grim. Toronto is not that to me, my family and many immigrants living in it. Many new Canadians love this city. They love the skyline, the gardens, the patios and the order. They see this city as a land of peace, opportunity and hope. For Sabah, I wanted to show Toronto the beautiful. So I went after the most beautiful locations I could find such as St. Lawrence Market, Queen Street, Trinity Bellwoods Park, St. James Park at Jarvis and King. Sabah is a Toronto film; and when the lovers finally come together for a kiss at Front and Jarvis with the city looming behind them, that is the most perfect location.

SABAH – Cast

Arsinée Khanjian (1958) is een prijswinnende actrice die vele internationale producties op haar naam heeft staan. Ze speelde onder andere in Catherine Breillats zeer provocerende **A MA SOEUR!** (ook bekend als **FAT GIRL**), Olivier Assayas' **IRMA VEP** en **LATE AUGUST, EARLY SEPTEMBER** en Michael Haneke's **CODE INCONNU**, tegenover Juliette Binoche.



Arsinée speelde ook in Don Kellars debuut **LAST NIGHT**. Ze is in Noord-Amerika het bekendst vanwege haar samenwerking met haar regisserende echtgenoot Atom Egoyan. Ze speelt de hoofdrollen in zijn films **EXOTICA**, **THE SWEET HEREFTER** en **FELICIA'S JOURNEY**. Ze heeft de film **CALENDAR** geproduceerd met Egoyan, waarin ze ook samen acteerden. Daarnaast is Khanjian actief in het theater en speelde ze in verschillende Canadese TV series.

Arsinée Khanjian est une actrice renommée qui a beaucoup de productions internationales à son actif. Elle a joué entre autres dans le film provoquant **A MA SOEUR!** de Catherine Breillat, **IRMA VEP**

et **LATE AUGUST** d'Olivier Assayas, **EARLY SEPTEMBER** et **CODE INCONNU** de Michael Haneke, avec Juliette Binoche.

Arsinée a aussi joué dans le début de Don Kellar, **LAST NIGHT**. Elle est connue en Amérique du Nord pour sa coopération avec son mari, le réalisateur Atom Egoyan. Elle joue les rôles principaux dans ses films **EXOTICA**, **THE SWEET HEREAFTER** et **FELICIA'S JOURNEY**. Elle a produit le film **CALENDAR**, dans lequel elle joue ensemble avec Egoyan.

Khanjian est également active dans le théâtre et elle a joué dans différents feuilletons à la télé canadienne.

Shawn Doyle (1968)– Stephan



Shawn Doyle kwam al op jonge leeftijd in aanraking met het theater. Zijn vader Jerry was lid van een reizend theatergezelschap. Doyle verhuisde naar Toronto om theater te studeren aan de York Universiteit. Maar hij ging elke zomer terug naar zijn geboortedorp Wabush. Hier kreeg hij zijn eerste rol in de Stephenville's Festival productie van **STEPDANCE**. Hierna speelde hij in de Festival producties van **SONS OF ULSTER**, **WEST SIDE STORY**, **DEATH TRAP**, en **DEMOCRACY**.

Sindsdien heeft Doyle een indrukwekkende lijst van televisie-, film- en theateroptredens op zijn naam staan. Zijn bekendste filmrollen zijn in **THE MAJESTIC**, met Jim Carrey; **DON'T SAY A WORD**, met Michael Douglas; **CLETIS TOUT**, met Christian Slater; **FREQUENCY**, met Dennis Quaid; **KNOCKAROUND GUYS**, met John Malkovich, Dennis Hopper en Vin Diesel; Renny Harlin's **LONG KISS GOODNIGHT** met Samuel L. Jackson en Geena Davis; en **PAPERTRAIL**.

Shawn Doyle a déjà entré en contact avec le théâtre quand il était très jeune. Son père Jerry était membre d'une troupe ambulante. Doyle a déménagé vers Toronto pour étudier le théâtre à l'université York. Mais chaque été, il retournait vers son village natal Wabush. Il y a obtenu son premier rôle dans la production du Stephenville's Festival de **STEPDANCE**. Après, il a joué dans les productions de festival de **SONS OF ULSTER**, de **WEST SIDE STORY**, **DEATH TRAP**, et **DEMOCRACY**.

Doyle a une liste impressionnante de rôles de télévision, de film et de théâtre à son actif. Ses rôles de film les plus connus sont dans **THE MAJESTIC**, avec Jim Carrey; **DON'T SAY A WORD**, avec Michael Douglas; **CLETIS TOUT**, avec Christian Slater; **FREQUENCY**, avec Dennis Quaid; **KNOCKAROUND GUYS**, avec John Malkovich, Dennis Hopper et Vin Diesel; **LONG KISS GOODNIGHT** de Renny Harlin avec Samuel L. Jackson et Geena Davis; et **PAPERTRAIL**.

SABAH – Awards

De 50e editie van de **Semana de Cine de Valladolid** in Spanje heeft Ruba Nadda onderscheiden met de **Premio de la Juventud** voor de film Sabah (buiten de officiële selectie) op het festival.

Le 50ième édition de la **Semana de Cine de Valladolid** en Espagne a honoré Ruba Nadda du **Premio de la Juventud** pour le film Sabah (pas dans la sélection officielle).

"As another female director, crowned with a Premio de la Juventud for her film Sabah (outside official section) at the Festival, Ruba Nadda said: "There exist many women in the whole world, not only Muslim women, who sacrifice their life (for others)". In the setting of the beautiful surrounding nature, it seems rather 'unnatural', incongruous, if not absurd, that these women should suffer such injustice, harsh destiny completely outside their control and imposed on them by (often incorrectly interpreted) 2000 year old books..."