



Transit Dubai

Director: Ineke Smits, The Netherlands, 2008, 72 minutes

"There seems to be this attitude inside of Dubai that anything is possible. People come here and it's like the new America... You come here to make your dreams come true."

– Roberto Lopardo, photography teacher

In the heart of the Middle East, a modern city has rapidly become the tourism and high-end real estate development centre of the area. For many, Dubai holds the promise of boundless opportunity and unprecedented economic growth. But no city can exist without a population, and Dubai's population is unique; more than 80% of its inhabitants are temporary immigrants of European, Asian, American as well as Middle Eastern origin.

Whether it be to earn fast money, to spend a life of exclusivity, to labour 7 days a week to support the family home, or to live under liberties afforded by a more modern, morally flexible Middle Eastern city, they all eventually want to go home. Everyone, except for the few locals who have no choice but to watch as their hometown grows into whatever the future may bring. Swedish women explain how their lives have changed since moving to Dubai; they now have time to look after their children since local women clean their houses and there's no financial reason for them to work outside the home. But they aren't necessarily happy.

Western influences have changed the locals too, with things like Bluetooth-enabled flirting penetrating a once-solid sexual divide.

Through the eyes of four photography students, we step through the glittering façade of a city that, despite its plush beachfront villas, ultra-luxe retail, and incredible artificial islands, might just be a mirage.

DIRECTOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Ineke Smits studied Fine Arts at the Rotterdam Art Academy, then specialised in directing at the National Film and Television School in England. She completed her directing degree in 1993. In 2002 she received a Nipkow Fellowship to work in Berlin, and in 2004 she developed the first draft of *The House of my Fathers* at the Binger Institute in Amsterdam. In 2004 she founded production company Volya Films with Denis Vaslin. For 12 years Ineke has been working on a regular basis in Georgia. Aside from directing and writing fiction and documentary films, she is a script advisor.

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