

# IN BETWEEN (Bar Bahar)

**Palestine (2016)** 103 minutes

**Director:** Maysaloun Hamoud

**Cast:** Mouna Hawa (Laila), Shaden Kanboura (Nour)  
Sana Jammalieh (Salma), Henry Andrawes (Wissam)



**Screening 17 October 2018 at Swindon Arts Centre**

## Synopsis

When devout university student Nour moves in with successful lawyer Laila and club DJ Salma, she is shocked by their lifestyle. As Laila fights to retain her freedom in the face of a new relationship, Salma falls for beautiful trainee doctor Dounia, a romance she must hide from her family. Nour is set for an arranged marriage to Wissam, an exemplary member of the community who may not be as respectable as he appears. *In Between* follows the lives of these strong, independent Palestinian-Israeli women in Tel Aviv. Away from the constraints of their families and enforced tradition, they find themselves 'in between' the free and unfettered modern lives they aspire to lead and the restrictions imposed on them by a blinkered and besieged society.

## Reviews



Laila and Salma live and party hard in their Tel Aviv flat where they're joined by a third, Nour, a hijab-wearing young woman who's finishing her education and is engaged to be married.

All three are living 'in between' in Israel, a society where their status as Arab women among the majority Jewish population is rather problematic. They're also 'in between' a world where they can do as they please and a conservative Arab culture that expects women to behave modestly and to defer to men.

Laila may have met the man of her dreams in Ziad while Salma, whose parents are desperate to marry her off, begins a lesbian romance. Dowdy Nour has a seriously controlling fiancé.

As the struggles of love and life swirl around, all three women form deep bonds of friendship and solidarity. The performances are superb and the final scene of all three women sticking together in the face of adversity is sublime.

*Bruce DeMara, Toronto Star*

Palestinian director Maysaloun Hamoud received a huge backlash in her home country with the release of her debut feature film: a *fatwa* was even issued against her. Why all the fuss? *In Between* is about three Israeli-Palestinian women living in a flat in Tel Aviv: party animals Laila and Salma, and the more traditional Nour. It features drugs, booze, a lot of partying and some lesbianism. Little wonder that it wasn't a hit with the conservative Muslim community.

*In Between* is a great film. The performances are fantastic - as the gorgeous, headstrong Laila, Mouna Hawa is mesmerising. It's not always uplifting but it is compassionate and intelligent. When the central characters tell douchebags to go take a hike, I defy anyone in the audience not to do a little whoop for these inspiring young women. But the biggest cheer should go to the brilliant Maysaloun Hamoud for bringing this story to our screens.

*Gail Tolley, Time Out*

## Film Facts

- First-time writer/director Maysaloun Hamoud's exhilarating depiction of the lives of 'liberated' Palestinian women in Israel earned her the first Palestinian *fatwa* in 70 years.
- The film's music comes from the 'scene', an underground movement of young Palestinians living in Israel, composed of the generation of the second *Intifada* and that of the Arab Spring. United around music, in artist collectives such as Jazar Crew, their goal is to emancipate themselves from the conflict and forge a new collective identity through mostly electronic music. The movement has grown since 2011 to the point that it now has its own festival, **Palest'In & Out**, in Palestine and in Paris.