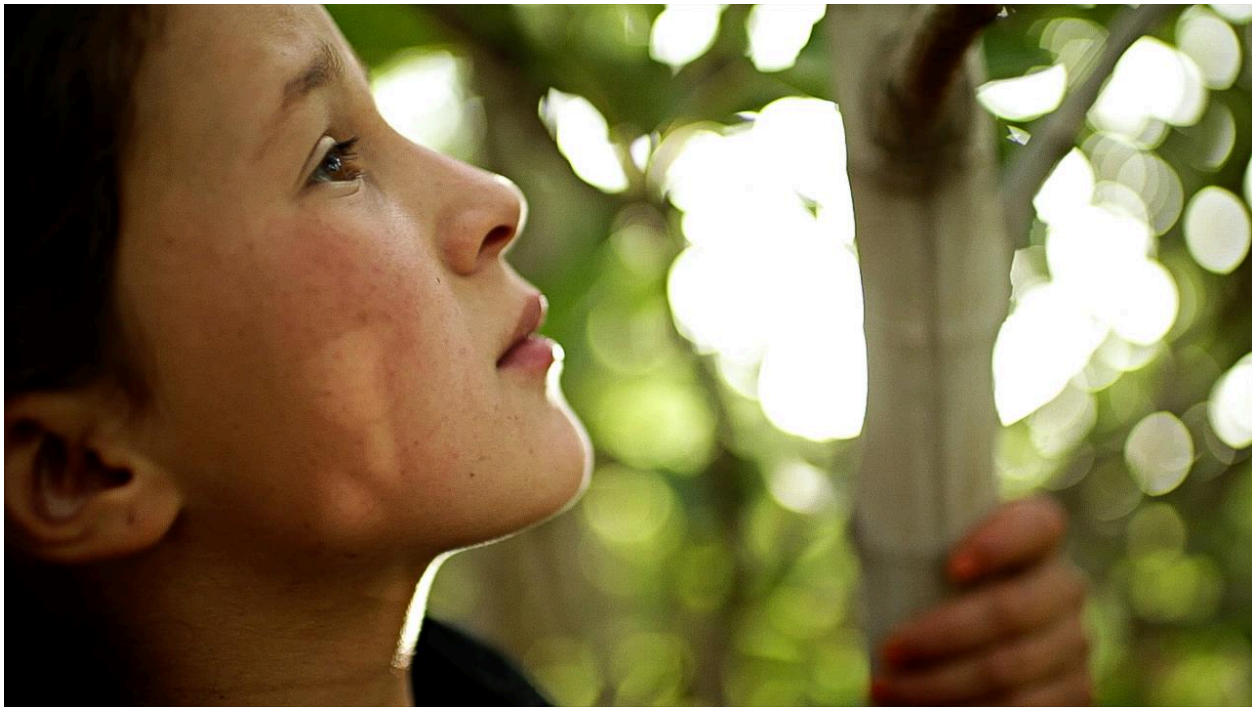
# HOUSE IN THE FIELDS

## Viewing Guide



Tala Hadid

color, 86 min, 2017

Tamazight with English and French subtitles

Documentary
Educational Resources

**Trailer**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDaAgeBrivk

**Elements of Film**

- Analyzing Film - Teaching Intro from the ORIAS *World In Film* summer institute for teachers
- Shot Styles from the ORIAS *World In Film* summer institute for teachers
- The Kuleshov Effect - short clip from *The Cutting Edge: The Magic of Movie Editing*, directed by Wendy Apple, 2005.

**People**

Tala Hadid (director/cinematographer/editor), Khadija, Fatima, Tletmes (mom), Mohamed (dad), Grandma, the girls' brothers, Fatima's fiance, Loutar player

**Places**

A village in the southwest region of the High Atlas Mountains, Morocco

**Film Excerpts**

If you don't have time to view the full film in class, here are a few powerful short clips to use:

Khadija introduces her mother and sister, shows women's work: 3:25- 8:19.
Father's background: 8:20-10:52
Khadija's bad dream: 15 - 16:32
Khadija' brother: 20:14 - 23:24
Vegetable market: 24:105
Visiting Grandmother: 26:45
Khadija & friend's conversation about changing womens' rights in Morocco: 29:30 - 36:00
Fatima's monologue about her coming marriage 47:40 - 50:30
Mother & father sing 'O Almond, Let's Drink Tea': 51:00 - 54:22
Fatima's wedding activities: 1:00:07 - 1:00:18

**Analyzing the Film as Text**

1. What types of sounds (both human and natural) do you hear in the environment, and how do they contribute to the film's atmosphere?
2. How is cinematography used to convey story? (example: extreme close-ups on faces, camera angles, etc.) How do these visual techniques influence how you feel about the characters?
3. How is silence used in the film, and how, if at all, does your imagination 'fill in blanks' during periods of silence?
4. What audio motifs are used to communicate the idea of the passage of time?
5. How does the filmmaker visually capture the landscape we're in, and what clues might these shots give about the community itself?

**Viewing for Historical & geographical Context**

1. How might geography and landscape shape the culture and daily life of this village?
2. What kinds of opportunities have men had in the village in the past?
3. The two largest groups of people in Morocco are Arabs and Amazigh. What are the origins of each group and how have they related to each other?
4. How have the Amazigh people in this story partnered with their environment and the geography to retain their culture and traditions?

**Viewing for Cultural Context**

1. How is singing used throughout the film? Who is being addressed through song, and what does it tell you about this group of people? What stories are being told through song?
2. What are some of the daily rituals that the characters engage in throughout the film? Why do you think the director chose to capture these particular rituals?
3. How is the experience of the passing of Time conveyed in the film, and what does it tell you about the cultural values of this group of people?
4. What are the funny symbols between segments of the film? Learn about the origins and current uses of those symbols and compare it with Arabic script.
5. Notice the tools that are used by the characters to complete daily tasks: for example to collect water or to process grain. What do these tools tell you about the lifestyle in this region?
6. How does the film portray the tensions between “modernity” and “tradition”?
7. What are some of the repeated phrases or motifs in the songs sung throughout the film?
8. How do the characters relate to / speak about the cities in Morocco in comparison to the village?

**Post-Discussion or post-second viewing reflection**

1. Why do you think it's important that this story is told?

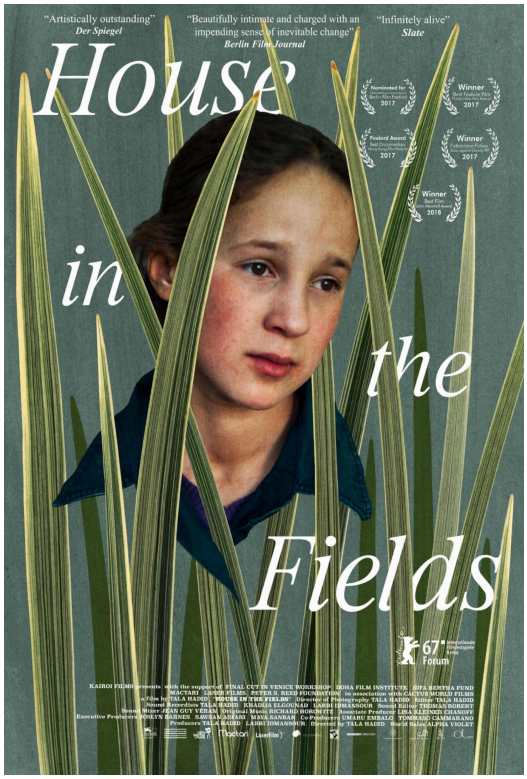
2. What did you miss, misunderstand, or not fully understand when you first watched the film? What did you learn that expanded your understanding or challenged your preconceived ideas?

**Additional Resources**

- **"The Camera as Guest: A conversation with Tala Hadid on House in the Fields,"** interview
- https://ittosjournal.wordpress.com/2022/07/29/a-traditional-moroccan-berber-wedding/ Information on an Amazigh wedding

- **Recommended children's books set in Morocco:**
  The Ghoul by Taghreed Najjar, illustrated by Hassan Mansara, translated by Michel Moushabek (Crocodile Books, 2019) (K-3)
  The Butter Man by Elizabeth Alalaou and Ali Alalou, (Charlesbridge Publishing, 2008)(K-3)
  Travelling Man: The Journey of ibn Battuta, 1325-1354 by James Rumford (Houghton Mifflin, 2001) (Picture Book)
  Ibn Battuta: The Journey of a Medieval Muslim by Edouardo Albert (Kube Publishing, 2019) (Middle Grade)

- **Lesson plans on Morocco:**
  https://cmes.arizona.edu/ap-human-geography-case-studies-morocco
  https://cmes.arizona.edu/examining-modern-morocco-through-murals-and-migration
  https://cmes.arizona.edu/migrations-across-morocco-hs
  https://cmes.arizona.edu/morocco-and-muslim-jewish-relations
  https://cmes.arizona.edu/morocco-understanding-through-elements
  https://cmes.arizona.edu/migrating-morocco-0
  https://cmes.arizona.edu/migrations-across-morocco-community-college-researchwriting-assignment
  https://cmes.arizona.edu/jews-move-migration-moroccan-jews
  https://cmes.arizona.edu/marvels-morocco (temporarily inactive)




**To order the film:**
https://store.der.org/house-in-the-fields-p991.aspx

**Or contact:**
orders@der.org

**For more information:**

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