



Lift Like a Girl Ash ya Captain

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Mayye Zayed
Denmark, Egypt, Germany 2020
95 min, Colour

Egyptian filmmaker Mayye Zayed is the founder of Cléo Media, a production and distribution company based in Alexandria. After studying telecommunications and electronics engineering, she attended the filmmaking workshop of the Jesuit Cultural Centre of Alexandria in 2009. As a Fulbright Scholar she went to the U.S. in 2011/12 where she studied cinema and media studies at Wellesley College and Innovations in Documentary at MIT. She is the recipient of Film Independent's Global Media Makers Fellowship in 2017 and 2019 and an alumna of Berlinale Talents and Documentary Campus Masterschool, among others. "Lift Like a Girl" is Mayye Zayed's first feature documentary.

Language Arabic **Producer** Mayye Zayed
Cinematographer Mohamad El-Hadidi
Editor Sara Abdallah **Colour Correction**
Chrystel Elias **Sound** Samir Nabil,
Brian Dyrby, Kristoffer Salting **Script**
Mayye Zayed **Music** Marian Mentrup
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In einem staubigen Wohnviertel nahe des Hafens von Alexandria befindet sich das „Sportstudio“ von Captain Ramadan. Der ehemalige Profithlet coachte hier über zwanzig Jahre lang junge Frauen im Gewichtheben – unter anderen auch seine Tochter Nahla, die erste ägyptische Weltmeisterin. Ein außerordentlich nahes Porträt dieses Einzelkämpfers, der ohne jegliche Staatshilfe den sportlichen Nachwuchs Ägyptens zur Weltklasse hob, rückt zudem eine zweite Protagonistin in den Fokus: die junge Asmaa.

Mayye Zayed begleitet vier Jahre lang die anfangs 14-jährige Schülerin des Captains. In ihrem roten Popeye-der-Seemann-T-Shirt bahnt sie sich mithilfe ihres Lehrers den Weg zu Wettkämpfen der globalen Oberliga. Behutsam entfaltet sich die Geschichte der inneren Höhen und Tiefen der introvertierten jungen Frau, deren Gefühlslagen die Kamera ohne viele Worte präzise einfängt. Die Dramaturgie der chronologischen Erzählung folgt den Ereignissen in bester Direct-Cinema-Manier und passt sich dem Rhythmus des Lebens – und des Todes – auf bemerkenswerte Weise an. Es entsteht das Porträt einer ungewöhnlichen Beziehung und einer rauen Umgebung, die den Beteiligten nicht nur physische Stärke abverlangt.

— Captain Ramadan's "gym" is located in a dusty residential area near the port of Alexandria. This is where the former professional athlete has coached young women in weightlifting for over twenty years – including his daughter Nahla, the first Egyptian world champion. An extraordinarily intimate portrait of this lone fighter who without any state support raised Egypt's young athletes to world class level, which also puts the focus on a second protagonist: young Asmaa.

Mayye Zayed has followed the Captain's student, who was fourteen at the start, for four years. Wearing a red Popeye t-shirt and backed by her coach, she fights her way to the global top league matches. The story of the inner highs and lows of the introverted young woman unfolds gently as the camera captures her emotional states precisely without many words. The dramaturgy of the chronological narrative follows the events in the best direct cinema manner, impressively adapting to the rhythm of life – and death. The result is the portrait of an unusual relationship and of a harsh environment that demands more than physical strength from the participants.

Borjana Gaković