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## **Filmmakers Lior Shamriz**



Israeli director Lior Shamriz exchanged the Middle East for Kreuzberg and produces here Movies on the international scene in the city, featuring even a Babylonian king.

"Cinema is dead." This is the first sentence which is said in the movie "Japan Japan" by Lior Shamriz. As often is the case, also here the sentence sets the beginning of a revival, the native of Israel, living in Berlin for six years, reinventing cinema by means of improvisation, the game and the digital processing. "The cinema is for young people", according to "Japan Japan" immediately afterwards, and this aspect solves Shamriz definitely also for himself. The Israel Film Festival shows three extended work by him under the heading "Filmmaker in Focus", including the latest "A Low Life Mythology", a love story mediated by screens in the artistic bohemian Berlin.

I meet Lior Shamriz for an interview at a cafe in Graefekiez, very near his office on Kottbusser Damm, which is also his home address. He's in high spirit, after a few sentences it bursts literally out of it. "I had a great summer" "Private or artistic reasons?" I ask back, and still speaking, it is already clear to me that this is a false choice. For one course is related to the other, and all artifice Movies of Lior Shamriz act always as if they were originated directly from life. Even in a film where one encounters a Babylonian king on a balcony.

And it also apparent for Shamriz himself: "I want to show my life, my relationships with my friends. Of the idea of the Berlin Boheme I am, however, critical and I hope that this is clear for the viewer of my film". He's already drinking his second cup of coffee and doesn't forget in between to mention that this is one of the positive effect of changes in the Area: There are more and more places where you can get a good coffee. In "A Low Life Mythology" Shamriz tells of the relationship between Mana, a film student, who drops out

of the university, and Asten who works in a bar. The story is enhanced by films that are constantly running on computer screens and are critically viewed. "For the first time I was able to pay the participants a bit," says Shamriz who has always worked before with a low or "No Budget". "Japan, Japan 'has cost 200 Euros. A hundred for the tapes and a hundred for the sushi restaurant where shot a scene". Then came "Saturn Returns" who cost 2,000 Euros, in which Kreuzkölln is the intersection of American and Israeli identity search. Throughout the years, Shamriz has also worked continually with Imri Kahn, who acts as a screenwriter and actor. "We were also a pair of long, it was always more than films. I hope that we will work together again soon", says Shamriz, implying at least one personal story behind one of the films.

Since the topic is now on the table is, I allow myself to ask whether he sees himself as a gay filmmaker. With his reply Lior Shamriz tried to evade categorisation: "I am openly gay, I love to see men on the canvas, but with "Japan Japan" as an example, in addition to the sexual identity, it is especially the issue of (non-) belonging to certain places, which has central importance in Shamriz. Berlin is with him, not least a transit point, a place of temporary connections, and the same goes for his stories, which often have a loose form, are moving ahead episodic and seek no reduced meaning. The question of identity arises at Israel Film Festival thus very particularly in a further respect.

What is his relationship to Israel? "I was born there, but I do not want it to be fixed. I am not a Zionist, and I see Zionism as a major problem. It is very important to me that the people who see in such a festival my films, know that. " The parents of Shamriz originate from Iran and from Iraq (the father of Shiraz, the mother of Basra). The family is so cut off due to the political situation in the Middle East from their home. Lior Shamriz also could not travel to the places of its origin. "Of course I'm curious. But I'm curious about a lot of places." He then called another special aspect of its origin, where it is especially situated: "I was born on the Mediterranean, where one can come under rocket fire on a great beach, if you're unlucky." That he, as a result, did not become a supporter of a conflict but rather an artist, is perhaps thanks to his discovery of Cinema around the age of 17, in what later became his passion.

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