

ben O deęilim / I'm not him / Je ne suis pas lui 2013**124mn**

Written & directed by Tayfun Pirselimoglu

Cast	Ercan Kesal Maryam Zaree	Nihat Ayse
Writer & Director	Tayfun Pirselimoglu	
Image	Andreas Sinanos	
Art design	Natali Yeres	
Editor	Ali Aga	
Sound	Fatih Aydogdu	
Sound design	Frédéric Théry	
Music	Giorgos Koumendakis	
Production	Zuzi Film (Turkey), Bad Crowd (Greece) Arizona Productions (France), Bredok (Germany)	
Coproducers	Demirkol (Turkey) & Graal (Greece)	
Producers	Veysel Ipek, Nikos Moustakas, Guillaume de Seille, Irfan & Inci Demirkol, Mustafa Dok, Konstantina Stavrianou	
Sales & festivals	Arizona Productions (guillaume@arizonafilms.net)	

Produced with the participation of Turkish Ministry of Culture, CNC & Eurimages

Synopsis

Middle-aged unmarried loner Nihat works in a hospital canteen. When young colleague Ayse invites him to her house for dinner, he accepts despite the rumours that her husband Necip is in jail for a serious offence. When Nihat sees a wedding photograph, he notices that Ayse's imprisoned husband looks an awful lot like him. The awkward relationship that ensues changes Nihat's life more profoundly than he could ever have foreseen.

Bio-filmography Tayfun Pirselimoglu

He graduated from Middle East Technical University in Ankara, after which he went to Vienna and studied painting in Academy of Applied Arts. He held various exhibitions in different cities of the world.

Pirselimoglu is also the author of four novels and two story books.

Pirselimoglu started his cinema career as a script writer and wrote various short and long feature film scripts. His debut as a director is a short film Dayım/My Uncle. He shot his first long feature Hiçbir yerde/Innowhereland in 2002 and continued his career with a trilogy (Rıza/Pus/Saç) all awarded.

Dayım/My Uncle 1999-short film

Il Silenzio e'Doro/Silent is Golden 2002-short film

Hiçbir yerde/Innowhereland 2002 (Thessaloniki, Busan, Trieste, Belgrade)

Rıza/Rıza 2007 (Berlinale Forum, Buenos Aires, Sofia, Montpellier)

Pus/Haze 2009 (Berlinale Forum, Istanbul, Adana)

Saç/Hair 2010 (Locarno, Toronto, Antalya, Montpellier)

Ben O Deęilim/I'm not Him 2013 (Roma & Nantes)

www.benodegilim.com

www.tayfunpirselimoglu.com

Where do you come from (education and film background)?

It's a weird story. I studied Metallurgical Engineering in Ankara and worked as an engineer for a short while. Then I moved to Vienna. I studied painting at the Universität für angewandte Kunst in Vienna where some of the most distinguished Austrian masters were teaching. I studied under Wolfgang Hutter, one of the best-known names in fantastic realism. During that period I had exhibitions in Vienna, Istanbul and Budapest. My first novel *Tales from the Desert* was also published during my stay in Vienna.

My career in cinema started with scriptwriting. I wrote scripts for shorts and feature films and when I moved back to Istanbul I also worked as an art director. I shot my first short *Dayım/My Uncle* in 1999 and my first feature in 2001: *Hiçbir yerde/Innowhereland*, a Turkish-German coproduction.

Did you write a novel with the same story before or is it an original script? What is your relationship with literature?

This is an original script. But if you read my novels and stories attentively, you will find some traces of this motive. Taking over or stealing someone else's identity is an irresistible idea, and it pops up in my stories from time to time. This script is totally based on this concept and it was created specifically for this film project.

I started to write stories when I was very young and I published a literature magazine with a friend after we graduated from university. I wrote and made drawings for various art magazines in Istanbul. My first novel, *Çöl Masalları*, is a story of a man who meets bizarre characters with bizarre stories in a desert, was published in 1996.

Is the identity issue a metaphor of the situation of Turkey today? Could it be seen as a political critique?

Yes. Identity is a very important issue today in Turkey. To be the other or to be treated as the other is a crucial problem. It is rooted in political and religious considerations and it is a big burden on the country. There is an allegory hidden in the story which viewers can see if they have a critical eye.

You seem to portray much of the Turkish men today. Women are just sidebars then?

Not at all. My first film *Hiçbir yerde/Innowhereland* tells the story of a mother who tries to find her lost son. There were a lot of missing people -no one knows the exact number- after the 1980s and today there are mothers whose sons or daughters went missing, who get together in Istanbul on Saturdays. Some of these mothers were in *Hiçbir yerde/Innowhereland* and the authorities tried to ban the film.

Did you know/worked with these two actors before? How was the experience?

Ercan Kesal is a friend of mine and we worked together before, in *Saç /Hair* in which he had a small role. Besides, he is the husband of Nazan Kesal who played the leading role in the same film. I knew his performances and I always admired his perception of acting. Maryam Zaree was suggested by Nikos Moustakas, one of the producers of the project, during a painful search. I watched Maryam's films and some of her TV performances. I don't like or trust auditions. I believe in catching the right spirit. After a short conversation I decided to work with her. I'm really happy with their brilliant performances; both of them accomplished really difficult work.

In all your films dialogues are minimalistic. Is it because you prefer to use a visual language?

I don't like indiscreet films that express their purpose explicitly. I even find that somehow abusive, it doesn't offer the viewers the chance of their own perception. Anyone who accepts cinema as an art form, should accept that there are many different ways of expression. I want to offer an intuitive form of expression, not an evident one.

Would you mind if the film was classified as a genre film? Suspense/thriller/noir or fantastic?

Funny to say: maybe it belongs to all the genres you mentioned.

Which major film festivals invited your previous films?

All of my films -including shorts- were invited to-, and screened at various festivals including Venice, Berlin, Locarno, Busan, Toronto, Bafici etc.

What relation did you have with Italy in the past? Do you have favourite Italian films or directors?

I shot my second short *Il Silenzio è d'Oro*, in Capalbio, Grosseto. The first award I ever won – in 1999 for *Dayım /My Uncle* - was at the Capalbio Festival. Some of my favourite writers and directors are Italian: Calvino, Buzzati, Pasolini, Antonioni.

Any new project, film or non-film?

Yes, there is a new film project. I've just finished the first draft of the script. I'm preparing for my new exhibition which will be held in Istanbul in December and my new novel will be published in November.