

Falconry has a history that stretches back over 40 centuries. In the West it was a prevailing passion of the medieval aristocracy, but its prestige continues undiminished in contemporary Arab culture. Three years of observing this form of hunting in the field have made it possible to capture the spirit of a tradition that today allows its practitioners to keep a close rapport with the desert, despite their predominantly urban lifestyle. Our guide to how they cross that threshold is a falconer taking his birds to compete in a tournament in Qatar. In the glaring light of an empty landscape, following flight lines and lures, the film recounts a strange kind of “desert weekend”, in which technological and anthropological microcosms hang in the air, like the falcon, drifting on the irreversible currents of images.

#### ARTIST’S STATEMENT

*“The Challenge”* is a complex film, even if the viewing is fluid and relaxed. Getting to that desert is simple, you take a flight, a guide, you go for a tour of 2 or 3 hours, you ride a camel and then you go back to the city. Stopping and looking carefully is almost impossible. I realized that the life in these new metropolis like Dubai or Doha is for everyone, but not for Bedouins, who keep loving their desert and need to live it fully and intensely. It is a matter of tradition.

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