

UCN Student Press

WALTZ WITH BASHIR

An emotional dance with the ethics of war

By Suzy McGillicuddy



DIRECTOR & WRITER: ARI FOLMAN

RELEASE YEAR: 2008

GENRE: ANIMATED DOCUMENTARY

COUNTRY: ISREAL

4 out of 4

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T** In this stunning animated documentary, director Ari Folman offers a memoir shaped by his own experience as a 19 year old Israeli soldier fighting in Lebanon. With his memory of the of the war suppressed to only recurring nightmares and fuzz snippets, Folman pieces together flashbacks shared by fellow Israeli soldiers in order to confront his past.



For anyone interested in the concept of trauma and psychotherapy *Waltz with Bashir* is a fascinating animated documentary where Folman gets to unravel his repressed memories. *Waltz with Bashir* is composed of scenes where Folman is talking with his army friends accompanied by animated flashbacks. The movie first filmed a series of interviews of Folman and his wartime friends (some portrayed by voice actors). Once the conversations have been recorded Folman and a team of artists created a storyboard that linked together the conversation and flashbacks. Both two- and three-dimensional animation was used with flash animation to bring the men's memories and dreams to life as well as animating the interview footage. It is hard to imagine a documentary being animation but one great example is when Folman is in the backseat of a taxi traveling to the Amsterdam airport. As he gazes out the window the countryside changes from rural Holland to blasted-out Beirut, this is a lost memory emerging from the rubble of his past. The audience gets to see present-day Folman and his thoughts in one scene. The use of animation gives Folman the creative freedom to tell his story and present it in as a medium that not restricted by budgets. With only a \$2 million budgets the method of animation allows for surrealist imagery without expensive special effects. Even though Folman recovering his memories is a huge part of this documentary, the film is ultimately about the madness of war and the madness that occurs in a combat zone. War madness is not a new concept, but the vivid animation paired with a great soundtrack creates a fresh take on a documentary. Overall *Waltz with Bashir* shows the guilt and trauma one faces when surviving a war through captivating animations that make the audience forget they're watching a documentary. *Waltz with Bashir* is fantastic and mesmerizing but it is not for someone who wants to escape life through cinema as the movie tackles the theme of innocent lost lives and who is to blame.

