

Film: Raving Iran

Director: Susanne Regina Meures

Release: 29th of September 2016

Following the illegal passion of being a DJ in Iran

Who wants to be a musician in Iran lives a dangerous life, especially when the music genre is against the regimes policies. But despite all restrictions there is a lively electronic music party underground scene in Teheran, the capital of Iran. *Raving Iran* tells the story of the DJ duo Blade&Bread, which is part of that illegal music scene in Iran. The documentary shows their way from Teheran to Switzerland and all the ridiculous bureaucratic obstacles they need to face while releasing their first album.

It's dark in the desert, but provisional light installations blink to the beat of the electronic techno music. The loudly played music turns the remote area in the Iranian desert into a perfect party location. In the surrounding area there is nothing but desert. People are moving their bodies to the electronic beats. It seems like everybody feels free and released.

Behind a simple table with a DJ set on it, we see Anoosh and Arash, the DJ duo Blade&Bread. The scene is dominated by the loud music. Deep techno. This is called a rave – and raves are illegal in Iran. To organise parties, drink alcohol and listen to western music and dress up in western style is highly forbidden in Iran.

To be able to release their album and get permission for live gigs the DJs are in need of a licence. Only the ministry of culture hands out the licence. As Anoosh and Arash go there they fail, because of the despotism of the Iranian state. "A female lead singer? Absolutely impossible. Only in the background and veiled. No western things such as make-up". But as if the lead singer would be the biggest problem, they are not allowed to use English on their cover except for "Made in Iran", because this would promote the country.

The risky filmed scenes show the absurdness of the regime in Iran. Pretended religious driven aspects covert the exaggerate arbitrariness. As there is no legal way to release their album, the DJ duo tries it the illegal way. This is a dangerous plan. Nobody really wants to help them with either printing, playing or selling the album because they are all under permanent police surveillance.

As they try to sell their music, they apply for several music festivals in Europe. Finally they get an invitation to play at the Street Parade in Switzerland. After the struggle of getting a visa they finally make it to Switzerland where the crucial questions arises: stay in Switzerland or go back to Teheran?

The documentary is told authentically and empathically. It feels like you are in the middle of what is happening. The partially blurred shots emphasize the ups and downs during their journey. The chosen background music does not only make the documentary exciting but also highly emotional.

Director information

Susanne Regina Meures is a German film director and journalist who currently lives in Switzerland. From 2002-2006 she studied photography and art-history in London. A few years ago she read an article about illegal desert rave parties in Iran. The fascination for the topic was the starting point for Raving Iran. Over Facebook she researched and contacted over 50 young musicians in Iran and found the DJ duo Blade&Bread who was willing to participate in the documentary.