

## Dar-el-Beida

1996 | 16mm film and video (PAL) | black and white | stereo | 2min 40sec



Made as a contribution to *FilmArt Takes Position: Alien/Nation*.

While *Casablanca* has much to do with male power and friendships, propaganda morality and adventure, *Dar-el-Beida* concerns the harried feelings of being a refugee/outsider, the experiences of those in the background of the Hollywood film. They exist in an atmosphere of threat, always on the move but never getting anywhere; their identity is violated and their nationality arbitrarily changed. In short they are the powerless, dependent on chance, corruption or sexual favours to save them. In *Dar-el-Beida* (the Latinised Arab name for *Casablanca*), Bogie asks, “do you want my advice?” His cynical answer (in *Casablanca*) is the unspoken reality of *Dar-el-Beida*.



In the light of subsequent historical knowledge, the narrative shell of the original film appears extremely innocent, even nostalgic. However, the same storylines are used today to support a continuing insistence on the ethnic purity, territorial expansion and economic domination that appears to many to be an integral part of constructing and maintaining a national identity.

Further text material (PDF): [Text in English, German and French by Christa Blümlinger](#)