



A FILM BY RUKEN TEKEŞ

# Aether

## FEELING

THE UNSEEN

THE UNHEARD

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Autobahn LONDONPOST 3. ADVANTAGE



DIRECTOR: Rûken TEKEŞ

PRODUCERS: Rûken TEKEŞ, Billur ARIKAN, Gabriele ORICCHIO

CINEMATOGRAPHY: EARTH / Ute FREUND, FIRE / Deniz EYÜBOĞLU-AYDIN,  
AIR / Merle JOTHE, WATER / Andrés LIZANA-PRADO

EDITORS: Rûken TEKEŞ, Marco SPOLETINI

MUSIC: Diler OZER, Metehan DADA

PRODUCTION YEAR: 2019

PRODUCTION COUNTRIES: Turkey, Italy

PRODUCTION COMPANY: Sarya Films

GENRE: Documentary

RUNTIME: 82'

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## SYNOPSIS

A filmmaker's 21-day homage to capture the ethereal essence of her unique ancient homeland soon to be submerged by a hydroelectric dam, AETHER is instinctively carried and driven by emotions, feelings and observations. It reveals the place's truths following its own unencumbered chronology. An invitation to a free-minded voyage into nature's cycle of birth-death-rebirth in the oldest continuously inhabited place on Earth, Hasankeyf.



## DIRECTOR'S BIO

Rûken Tekes - Kurdish, born on 1976 in Diyarbakir / Turkey, lived in Istanbul, Los Angeles, Amsterdam, Athens, Vienna, Venice, Kiev, San Diego and Moscow. She is an international human rights expert worked a number of years for United Nations and following that as lecturing Professor on human rights.

She started script writing and directing on social, political and environmental issues in 2015. Her multi-award winning first short fiction HEVÊRK /THE CIRCLE (2016 / TR) participated in over two-hundred festivals worldwide and nominated for European Film Awards - European Short Film 2017. Her feature documentary debut AETHER (2019 / TR & IT) premiered at Visions Du Réel FF International Competition, awarded for Golden Orange at Antalya Int. FF, continues to be screening and winning awards.

Tekeş is a member of European Film Academy (EFA) and she is the founder of production company Sarya Films Collective, which produces her films and supports women in cinema.



## FILMOGRAPHY

Hevêrk / The Circle - 1st short fiction film (2016 / TR - 14min) nominated for 30th European Film Awards – European Short Film 2017, Best Emerging Director at Chicago Int. Children's FF, German Independence Award at Oldenburg FF, EFA Award at Drama FF, Best Short Film at IF Istanbul FF, Clermont-Ferrand SFF, Montreal FF, Minneapolis Saint Paul FF, + over two hundred film festivals, art centers and schools.

Aether – 1st feature length documentary (2019), world premiere at Visions Du Réel FF International Competition, Golden Orange Jury Award at Antalya Int FF, Jury Award for Creative Storytelling in Kurdish Cinema at Duhok Int FF, Istanbul International FF, Taormina FF, DokuFest FF, DocPoint Helsinki, DocFest Munchen, FIFEQ, Chiayi Art Festival, etc..



## BACKGROUND

Hasankeyf, a land with breathtaking nature, shapes and landscape. A cave-city of ancient Mesopotamia with at least 12,000 years of historical, cultural and ecological significance nestling in the valley of the Tigris River, in the Kurdish part of Turkey. Hasankeyf and the surrounding Tigris valley is recognized to merit as World Heritage Site by UNESCO since 1970s, however till to date not registered by the Turkish State.

In 2019 the area is planned to be flooded by the opening of Ilisu Hydroelectric Dam. A controversial project which will provide a mere fifty years of electricity to the region and strengthen the political power of Turkey over the Middle East. Hasankeyf and surrounding Tigris valley is ranked in 2016 by Europa Nostra in the “Seven Most Endangered” sites in the world. The habitat of an endemic life including hundreds of unique species, 78.000 residents and 3000 nomadic people in and around, along with 400 excavated and unexcavated archaeological sites pertaining to the ancient cultures including Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Meds, Greeks, Romans as well as travelers on the Silk Road and nomads will be lost forever. Yet a new cement-build settlement will accommodate one thousand people and few archeological monuments only...

The filmmaker made a 21-day homage to her ancestral lands for connecting with and capturing its ethereal essence before its total destruction. With a sensorial and meditative approach, focused on the natural elements—water, earth, air and fire—in order to capture something of a primordial connection with this territory and everything that lives in it, be it a tree, a child, a sheep, an ant or a river. She does not seek to explain the stakes of this future annihilation but creates a space in which the spirit of the place can express itself. A space that transcends time and reveals the natural cycles of creation, destruction and rebirth at the heart of the film. AETHER is a free-minded voyage to a mysterious and timeless nature of a site unique in the world.

“...Aether is a delicately drawn, awe-inspiring love letter to loss.”

Meredith Taylor, Filmuforia

“ ...Tekeş creates a space in which the spirit of the place can express itself. A space that transcends time and reveals the natural cycles of creation, destruction and rebirth at the heart of the film...”

Céline Guénot, Visions Du Reel

“A visually stunning film! A personal farewell letter and a reminder that nature will survive all countries, states, people and even mankind...”

Marco Stojilkovic, Cineuropa

“...a film with an absolutely hypnotic effect throughout 82min, displays merciless action in the Kurdish geography without shouting.”

Murat Türker, Bianet



In a flow guided by an ethereal place...

fabula

