

Berlin at prime time: Arabic TV series puts German capital in starring role

The German capital is making its way to the TV sets of viewers in Arab countries

Berlin, 22 April 2015 In Berlin, one of the most successful production companies in the Arabic-speaking world is filming a 30-part TV series in Berlin, named “Memory of a Paper” (“Zakira Min Waraq” in Arabic). This could have a decisive impact on tourism to Berlin in the years to come.

Burkhard Kieker, CEO of *visitBerlin*, remarks: “*visitBerlin* has been able to convince a major production company from Kuwait to film a series here in Berlin. As it will be aired during prime time in Ramadan, we can expect this to have a tremendous advertising effect for our city.”

The film project is unique because it is one of the most elaborate productions of an Arab film team ever made abroad. No Arab production in Europe has previously lasted more than a week; this series is being filmed in Berlin for a total of seven weeks.

The series (30 episodes of 45 minutes each) will be broadcast during Ramadan from 18 June to 16 July 2015, the prime TV viewing season in the Arab world with the highest viewership numbers. The series is being made by Sabbah Pictures from Dubai in cooperation with Bridge Media, which is responsible for the production in Germany. The series will run every day of the holy season and has so far already been sold to four Arab TV stations, including the market leader MBC. As a result, 220 million viewers in the Gulf States and other Arab countries will be reached by the series.

Story: The series will focus on the lives of Arab students in Berlin and how cultures come together. A group of Kuwaiti students, studying at the Humboldt University, gains experience with the foreign culture, lifestyle and nightlife of Berlin. 50 per cent of the scenes were filmed in Berlin’s cityscape. The series features twelve Kuwaiti film stars, each with large social media fan bases, including Shojoon Al Hajri (1.7 million Instagram followers), Fatma Alsafi (1.7 million) and Somoud Al Kandari (1.6 million).

The filming has been taking place since 9 March at various well-known sights around the city, including the Brandenburg Gate and the Gendarmenmarkt, as well as the Humboldt University and the Vivantes Hospital. The city appears in the first 28 episodes of the 30-episode series. Filming is expected to wrap up in Berlin by 26 April.

The Arab Gulf states are an important growth market for Berlin’s tourism. 2014 saw a 25 per cent jump in the number of overnight stays made by guests from the Arabic-speaking countries. In addition to lifestyle and family, many guests from the Gulf States come to Berlin for health care. Information in Arabic about tourism in Berlin is available at visitBerlin.de/ar and health.visitBerlin.com.

(2,803 characters)

visitBerlin / Berlin Tourismus & Kongress GmbH

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Facts on Arabic-language TV series “Memory of a Paper”

Locations in Berlin (*in alphabetical order*)

Brandenburg Gate
Club der Visionäre
Frankfurter Allee
Gendarmenmarkt
Hotels: Hotel Palace and Titanic Deluxe Berlin
Humboldt University
Köpenick Old Town
Kurfürstendamm
Neue Heimat
Schiffbauerdamm
Charlottenburg Palace
Prenzlauer Berg street scenes
Tiergarten, Teehaus im Englischen Garten, Café am neuen See
Urbanufer
Vivantes Hospital

Film Crew

Director: Ali Al Ali
Producers: Amer Sabbah (Dubai), Sam Hasner (Deutschland)
Actors/Kuwaiti film stars: Abdullah Ahmmed, Hamad Al Ashkanani, Shojoon Al Hajri, Samoud Alkandaei, Mohammad Almusalam, Fatma Alsafi, Abdullah Altararwah, Abdullah Al Saif, Reem Erhama, Ali Kakooli, Shejoun Mohammad, Abdullah Tulaihi

Each scene always involves 30-40 people on set, including about 30 from the Arab states as well as a 12-member German team; latest camera technology

Filming period

9 March to 26 April 2015, shooting 6 days/week, up to 16 hours per day

Broadcast

18 June to 16 July 2015 at prime time

visitBerlin

"We know Berlin." Berlin Tourismus & Kongress GmbH, under the brand *visitBerlin*, has been using that knowledge since 1993 to promote Berlin all over the world as a great travel destination. *visitBerlin*'s Berlin Convention Office markets the many convention and meeting options offered by the German capital. After London and Paris, Berlin is the third-most popular European city for tourism, with 28.7 million overnight stays in the German capital during 2014. Berlin is also one of the most popular destinations for conventions and meetings and has been among the top five for ten years now. As a tour operator, *visitBerlin* offers a wide range of travel packages and also issues the official tourist ticket, the Berlin WelcomeCard. *visitBerlin* operates six Berlin Tourist Infos. The Berlin Service Center (Tel. +49(0)30-25 00 25) provides information on the complete spectrum of tourist services in Berlin. At visitBerlin.com, you can access information about Germany's capital in 14 languages.

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