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SCARS OF A PUTSCH

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*Like so many pieces of a puzzle, testimonies, stories, but also old photographs and archive footage come together in **Scars of a Putsch** to form an important chapter of contemporary history. At the [Berlinale 2025](#), Forum Special section.*

A past that is still alive

There are scars that, with the passage of time, leave almost no trace. Other types of scars, on the other hand, are still clearly visible after many, many years, and are often quite painful. Just like the scars of Abidin Ertuğrul, of Turkish origin, who has been living in Vienna for many years now, after moving here in the early eighties. He is therefore the protagonist of the documentary **Scars of a Putsch**, made by Nathalie Borgers (Abidin's wife) and presented as a world premiere at the [Berlinale 2025](#), in the **Forum Special** section.

The director's camera focuses on Abidin's chest. Some scars from gunshot wounds are still visible. More than forty years have passed since Abidin was attacked by a group of fascist militants in Turkey. Shortly afterwards, he would leave his country forever. And so, little by little, his story and that of some of his friends and family members who, together with him, experienced the 1980 putsch, come to life on the movie screen, taking us by the hand into a world and into many realities that we have often heard of, but whose details are completely unknown to many.

Like so many pieces of a puzzle, therefore, testimonies, stories, but also old photographs and archive footage make up in **Scars of a Putsch** an important chapter of contemporary history, the recent history of a nation, Turkey, which despite having apparently taken a more liberal path with President Kenan Evren, lives in a situation in which authoritarianism is still the absolute protagonist. A situation that often has many more dark sides than what one can learn from reading newspapers or listening to the news.

During the first few minutes of **Scars of a Putsch**, Nathalie Borgers looks fondly at some photographs dating back to the time when her husband was still a child. Another photograph, on the other hand, portrays him at the time of university, still in hospital after being attacked by the group of militants, and surrounded by friends. Many of them, however, had a very different fate from his, and some even spent their best years in prison, while their mothers demonstrated for their release (particularly tender and resilient is the mother of one of them, also interviewed by Borgers, still clear-headed and dynamic at the age of ninety-two and who, after telling her story in front of the camera, dedicates herself to gymnastics).

In **Scars of a Putsch**, therefore, all these stories acquire their own three-dimensionality on the movie screen. Just like a small collage made with pieces of cloth and depicting a little girl in traditional dress, glued on a letter written by a young girl forced to become an adult prematurely. Nathalie Borgers has therefore given us a harsh and painful, but also at times poetic and moving story. A journey into a world that those who have lived in since birth, despite everything, have never stopped loving. And who knows what it will be like to return home, among the reassuring olive trees, after a long, long time.