

## SYNOPSIS

A beautiful short film, *The Architect* invites us into the life of a young boy living in the city of Aleppo in Syria, witnessing the effect of war on his home-town. He rebuilds his city as a modern place, where he wishes to live – his dream for the future.

## RESOURCES

BBC Article

The Guardian Article - Syrian Mobile Film Festival

## POST-SCREENING CONVERSATION QUESTIONS

- 1) The young architect witnesses his town being destroyed, how do you think that makes him feel?
- 2) How is the second city model different to the first one? Why do you think that is? What has changed in the way the young boy sees and re-imagines his home city?
- 3) Imagine if you were rebuilding your city - what would you change and why? What would you keep the same?
- 4) What makes your home-town special to you? How do you feel in your own house, is it a safe space? How might such an experience be different for the young architect and why?

Trailer: <https://vimeo.com/215838027>



## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*"Despite the war and destruction in his city, Mohamad Qutiah still thinks it is the most beautiful city in the world.*

*He dreamed of being an architect long before the bombs of the Assad regime destroyed his school in the Salah al Din district.*

*Using paper, he decides to rebuild his city as he dreams it to be: a city without destroyed houses; a city which has a mono rail, an airport, a rail line and a river.*

*Mohammad has collected remnants of the war in the rubble of houses and schools, incorporating them into his new city, in an attempt to commemorate what has been lost.*

*The city of Aleppo experienced a catastrophic aerial bombing campaign between 2011 and 2015 by the Syrian regime. It became known as the most dangerous city in the world in 2014.*

*This bombing campaign destroyed many schools and left approximately 100,000 children without access to education.*

*These violent campaigns have caused many Syrians to flee their home-country and to become refugees in other countries across the world. Told through the hopeful eyes of a young boy, this film shows some of the reasons that have led Syrians to take the hard decision to leave their country in to order to survive from the bombings, killings, and denial of human rights, freedom, and education."*

**Mujahid Abu Aljoud, Filmmaker**

**Trailer:** <https://vimeo.com/215838027>



## WELCOME TO MY HOME

This exercise involves arts and crafts activities in order to explore notions of home and aims to initiate a process of world-making. This activity complements the storyline of the short film THE ARCHITECT inviting young viewers to critically think about the process of rebuilding one's town in terms of the physical process as well as its symbolic significance.

**Who's it for:** 7- 12 year olds

**Key themes:** Personal stories/drawing/ visual memories/creating one's home You will need: Paper, pens, pencils, craft materials & your imagination!

**Activities:**

1. Use craft materials of your choice to make a replica of your house with as much detail as possible.

**Questions to lead discussion:**

Where's your house, in which area? What is it made of? How does it make you feel? What is your favourite room and why? Is it a small neighbourhood or big? Do you live in a quiet or vibrant area? How do you feel?

2. Take a piece of A4 paper and draw a window frame.

Questions to lead discussion: Imagine that you are looking outside your window- what can you see outside your window? What kind of people live near you? What are their stories? Swap your window frame drawing with the person sat on your right side and talk in pairs about your drawings; are they similar or different?

3. Everyone come together to design and build a city. Each person to contribute by placing their house replica in order to create a new community including all class members.

Questions to lead discussion: What shape/size will your city have? Is it urban or rural? How many people live in it? What makes your city special in your opinion?



## A SPECIAL OBJECT

This exercise involves bringing an object that has a special value and sharing it with others in order to collectively create a Museum of Migration. Prior to the activity, ask young learners to bring an object that they would take with them if they had to leave their houses suddenly and an object that holds significant value for them.

**Who's it for:** 7- 12 year olds

**Key themes:** Personal stories/personal objects/storytelling exchange.

You will need: Special object/table surface/time for discussion.

**Activity:**

In the short film THE ARCHITECT we can see various destroyed houses. Where do you think some of the people who used to live there might have gone? People are often forced to leave their homes suddenly without being able to say goodbye to loved ones or take with them any personal belongings. What personal belonging would you take with you if you had to leave your house? Today we will be creating a Museum of Migration consisting of valuable personal possessions that you've each brought along. Each person will write in a small card one reason why their object is valuable to them. Afterwards, each participant will be asked to place their object and story-card in a circle at the middle of the class. Participants are encouraged to walk around the objects and interact with them and read the corresponding story-cards.

**Questions to lead discussion:** What kind of objects have people chosen to bring along? Has everyone chosen a similar object? Why might this be? Or if the objects are different, how do they all look when put together? Can different people have different meanings of what is a valuable object? What makes an object valuable? Why is the object you chose to bring along valuable to you?

**Find out more:**

<http://www.tracesproject.org/>

