Viola Shafik is a renowned film scholar and documentary filmmaker. Her historical work *Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity* (revised edition 2007) is a groundbreaking analysis of genre, political-economy, and film culture. She is also the author of *Popular Egyptian Cinema: Gender, Class and Nation* (2007). Her own films *The Lemon Tree* (1993), *The Mother of Light and Her Daughters* (1999), and *The Planting of the Girls* (1999) have an international audience. Her newest film is a feature length documentary with a working title of *My Name is not Ali*. It explores the life of El Hedi Ben Salem, German filmmaker Rainer Werner Fassbinder's unlucky North-African lover and lead player of *Ali Fear Eats Soul* (1973) who reputedly committed suicide. El Hedi Ben Salem, Rainer Werner Fassbinder's unlucky North-African lover, lead player of *Ali Fear Eats Soul* (1973) has been the subject of a myth: described as a 'cultural miracle' he was said to have terrified film director Fassbinder until he was jilted by him, only to take his own life soon after (sic.).

The real life story of Ben Salem however seems governed not only by misled professional aspirations, congested love and multiple betrayals, but also by the sexualized politics of imagining and possessing the cultural Other.