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مؤسسة الدوحة للأفلام
DOHA FILM INSTITUTE

Catalogue 2023



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Qumra

**A Space for New
Voices in Cinema**

10-15 March, 2023

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Cultural Partners

Qatar Museums

Qatar Museums (QM), the nation's preeminent institution for art and culture, provides authentic and inspiring cultural experiences through a growing network of museums, heritage sites, festivals, public art installations, and programmes. QM preserves, restores, and expands the nation's cultural offerings and historical sites, sharing art and culture from Qatar, the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia (MENASA) region with the world and enriching the lives of citizens, residents, and visitors.

Under the patronage of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and led by its Chairperson, Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, QM has made Qatar a vibrant centre for the arts, culture, and education in the Middle East and beyond. QM is integral to the goal of developing an innovative, diverse, and progressive nation, bringing people together to ignite new thinking, spark critical cultural conversations, educate and encourage environmental stewardship and sustainable practices,

and amplify the voices of Qatar's people. Since its founding in 2005, QM has overseen the Museum of Islamic Art and MIA Park, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, the National Museum of Qatar, QM Gallery Al Riwaq, QM Gallery Katara and the 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum. Future museums include Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar, Qatar Auto Museum, Art Mill Museum and the Lusail Museum.

Through its newly created Creative Hub, QM also initiates and supports projects—such as the Fire Station Artist in Residence, the Tasweer Qatar Photo Festival, the creative hub for innovation, fashion and design M7, and Liwan Design Studios and Labs —that nurture artistic talent and create opportunities to build a strong and sustainable cultural infrastructure.

Animating everything that Qatar Museums does is an authentic connection to Qatar and its heritage, a steadfast commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, and a belief in creating value through invention.

Museum of Islamic Art

Founded in 2008, the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) was one of the first projects initiated by QM. Designed by the renowned Chinese American architect I. M. Pei, the MIA is a globally acclaimed museum that stands majestically on Doha's Corniche, with panoramic views of the city's waterfront. The museum showcases Qatar's world-class collections of Islamic art spanning some 1,400 years. Representing the full scope of Islamic art from the 7th to the 20th centuries, the MIA collection includes manuscripts, ceramics, metal, glass, ivory, textiles, wood, and precious stones. The works have been collected from three continents, including countries across the Middle East, and reaching as far as Spain and China. MIA presents a changing programme of exhibitions illustrating the heritage of the Islamic world, as well as extensive educational activities for school children and families, making the museum a vital part of the community. The MIA has become a popular museum in the region and internationally, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors annually. Dr. Julia Gonnella has served as director of the museum since 2017.

Sarajevo Film Festival

In 1995, towards the end of the four-year-long Siege of Sarajevo, the Obala Art Centre initiated the Sarajevo Film Festival with the aim of helping to reconstruct civil society and retain the cosmopolitan spirit of its city. Today, almost three decades later, it is a trailblazing film festival with a special focus on the region of Southeast Europe that shines an international spotlight on the region's talent, their current films and future projects. High-quality programming, a strong industry segment, and an educational and networking platform for young filmmakers attract the international film industry, film authors and media representatives to the event, along with a public audience of more than 100,000. Together, this makes it a leading film festival in Southeast Europe. In a territory of more than 140 million inhabitants, the Sarajevo Film Festival serves as a common platform for film businesses, setting the future standards for festival organisation, film promotion and presentation in Southeast Europe. By partnering with the Doha Film Institute, we are connecting our region to the Arab world and opening up new cooperation possibilities that will ultimately enhance creativity and intercultural dialogue.



**HE Sheikha Al Mayassa
bint Hamad bin Khalifa
Al Thani**

Chairperson,
Doha Film Institute

A vibrant creative industry is an essential component of a strong healthy economy, and recent events have made support for the arts and culture sector more important than ever. The global pandemic has increased financial and networking challenges for creative professionals in elevating their art and reaching wider geographies.

The Doha Film Institute has been delivering an important mandate over the past 12 years to identify, develop and build a thriving cinema ecosystem in the region and beyond. As an artform that resonates across geographic, cultural, and linguistic global communities, cinema is a tool for positive change, especially when championed by young minds with fresh ideas and innovative approaches to storytelling.

Qumra is a platform for new voices in cinema where new ideas are showcased; promising new talent are mentored by accomplished professionals; communities of peers and industry experts; and foundations are cemented to support an exciting and enduring cinematic community. Their guiding lights in this journey—the Qumra Masters—have carved their own unique paths in cinema, overcoming every challenge and leaving an inimitable imprint on the world.

The 44 selected projects from across the world are a testament to the strong creative ecosystem we have built here in Qatar to support emerging promising creative talent through their script-to-screen journey.

Qumra is a unique model that enables young talent to identify and embrace their strengths, turn challenges into opportunities, and evolve as exceptional film professionals capable of translating authentic stories into captivating films that resonate with audiences across geographies and cultures.

The founding mission of the Doha Film Institute has been to celebrate talent, promote artistic excellence, and create a robust cinematic ecosystem that transcends boundaries. Qumra 2023 reflects this mission in the diversity of the participants, and highlights Qatar's emphasis on amplifying under-represented and unrepresented voices.

Qatar has a rich history and legacy of extending patronage to arts and culture, particularly in nurturing new generations of creative talent. This will continue to guide us as we seek to build a bright future where more young people are inspired and supported to realise their aspirations and dreams to be storytellers who bring diverse perspectives to the world.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to Qumra 2023, where I invite you to feel the magic of cinema unite us all and create positive impact.



**Fatma Hassan
Alremaihi**

Chief Executive Officer,
Doha Film Institute

Director, Qumra

Welcome to the ninth edition of Qumra, the Doha Film Institute's annual industry incubator event. It is a great honour for me to welcome you to Doha and to the return of in-person events at Qumra, which I can proudly say has paved the way for several emerging filmmakers to realise their true potential to create standout films that have proven to be some of the best in the world.

As a specially curated space dedicated to new voices in cinema, Qumra underlines our unwavering commitment to nurture promising new talent. This was essential to the preservation of a thriving and productive creative community through the recent challenging years.

Adapting to new realities, we ensured that Qumra continued uninterrupted at a time when creative connection and support mattered most by pivoting to an innovative online format. This expanded the reach of Qumra beyond time and space constraints. This year's hybrid edition of Qumra will continue to offer filmmakers unforgettable experiences and unprecedented access to the world's foremost film experts.

The 44 selected projects at Qumra demonstrate the power of storytelling—of how tales rooted in one's milieu can present honest new perspectives that help build cultural bridges, dispelling stereotypes, inaccurate truths, and misrepresentations. The stories underscore the power of human connection to enable us to rise above challenges, to honour our commonalities, and to respect our differences.

We are especially grateful to our Qumra Masters, five icons of cinema who are synonymous with creative excellence and have inspired audiences and talented filmmakers around the world. Each Master brings exceptional expertise in different areas of film to provide Qumra delegates with invaluable professional guidance. We salute these incredible individuals and applaud the generous contribution of their valuable time and energy to developing our future cinematic heroes.

As the region's definitive platform for identifying, developing and promoting independent talent in cinema, Qumra provides insight and guidance on every aspect of filmmaking for participants. Through workshops, masterclasses and screenings, the event opens doors and connects filmmakers to accomplished film experts to expand opportunities and bring their projects to global audiences.

The Doha Film Institute remains dedicated to investing in a bright and promising future of cinema in Qatar and the region and continuing to provide important opportunities for filmmakers through Qumra. I thank you all for your contribution to realising our vision of a vibrant global creative community, and hope you find many moments of inspiration over this coming week.



Elia Suleiman

Artistic Advisor,
Doha Film Institute

As for myself and, I believe, for many of us, it's been welcome news that we are back, physically speaking, to the annual Qumra program. The time is ripe, to say the least, for taking a short break from the incessant reminders of recent times, of how vulnerable and self-destructive humanity can be. A retreat away from the haunting ghosts of plagues, wars, natural and ecological disasters, and economic hardships is more than needed – not that we could forget. A place out of place, a temporary recluse as such, can motivate our artistic and critical capacities as well as recharge our creative process. This is a place where we can share our diverse modes of storytelling and renew our ways of seeing. A place from where we can say, time and again, that cinema has a say.



Hanaa Issa

Director of Strategy
and Development
Qumra Deputy Director

It's been so long since we could truly come together in person. So Qumra this year is for us double the celebration—incredible cinema on a big screen and incredible people in the flesh.

These fierce changes that destabilized our world recently have perhaps made us more resilient, more attentive, more aware, and hopefully more humble, grateful and generous. And nothing has embodied these values more beautifully than with our remarkable group of people at DFI and with our family of collaborators worldwide.

So, I hope this gathering at Qumra will bring you the grand inspiration and meaning it brings us, and perhaps yet another change, but this one, like a pleasant surprise, will transform you. Qumra is a community. May we continue to build it together.

Qumra Masters

DFI is proud to present our Qumra Masters for 2023, a group of five internationally renowned filmmakers who will share with us their creative insights.

Between them, they have helped create some of the most critically acclaimed examples of contemporary cinema and will offer their invaluable advice and experience through a series of thought-provoking and inspirational Master Classes.

Our Qumra Masters for this year include distinguished directors, a renowned costume designer, award-winning screenwriters and producers.

Qumra Master Class Moderator



Richard Peña was the Programme Director of the Film Society of Lincoln Center and the Director of the New York Film Festival from 1988 until 2012. At the Film Society, Peña organised retrospectives of many film artists, as well as major film series devoted to numerous national cinemas. Together with Unifrance, in 1995, he created Rendez-Vous with French Cinema, the leading American showcase for new French cinema. He is Professor of Film and Media Studies at Columbia University, where he specialises in film theory and international cinema and has served as a Visiting Professor at the Sorbonne, Beijing University, UNAM-Mexico City and the University of São Paulo. He also currently hosts WNET/Channel 13's weekly 'Reel 13'.

Sir Christopher Hampton

Sir Christopher Hampton is a multi-award-winning British playwright, screenwriter, and director known for his thought-provoking and emotionally resonant works. Born in 1946 in London, Hampton began his accomplished career at eighteen with the play 'When Did You Last See My Mother?'—making him the youngest playwright on record to have a show in the West End. Hampton's work quickly gained recognition and acclaim, with plays such as 'The Philanthropist', 'Savages', 'Tales from Hollywood', 'Les Liaisons Dangereuses', 'White Chameleon', 'A German Life' and 'Visit from an Unknown Woman'.

In addition to his work as a playwright and screenwriter, Hampton has also been a director and translator, bringing works by playwrights such as Ibsen, Molière, von Horváth, Chekhov, Yasmina Reza, and Florian Zeller to the English-speaking stage. His plays, musicals and translations have so far garnered four Tony Awards, three Olivier Awards, five Evening Standard Awards and the New York Drama Critics' Circle Award.

Hampton is equally prolific in writing for film with an incredible slate of screenplays that include



'Dangerous Liaisons' (1988), 'The Quiet American' (2002), 'Atonement' (2007) 'A Dangerous Method' (2011), 'The Father' (2020) and 'The Son' (2022). In recognition for his work in film and television, Hampton has received two Academy Awards, three BAFTAs, a European Film Award, a Writers' Guild of America Award, the Prix Italia, a Special Jury Award at the Cannes Film Festival, Hollywood Screenwriter of the Year, and The Collateral Award at the Venice Film Festival for Best Literary Adaptation.

Throughout his career, Hampton has tackled a wide range of subject matter, from political satire to psychological drama. A proven master of the written word, he is

celebrated for his ability to delve deep into the human psyche and explore complex themes such as power, desire, and morality. Hampton's work is an inspiration to many aspiring writers, and his innate ability to tell stories that truly resonate with audiences is a testament to his talents as a storyteller and dedication to his craft.



David Parfitt

David Parfitt is an independent film, TV and theatre producer who has had a legendary career in the entertainment industry spanning over 30 years. He is known for his passion for storytelling and ability to bring complex and nuanced characters to life on screen. Prior to producing, Parfitt enjoyed a career as an actor before co-founding the Renaissance Theatre Company with Kenneth Branagh. In 1988 Parfitt and Branagh joined with business partner Stephen Evans to form Renaissance Films. They went on to produce the Academy Award-winning 'Henry V' (1989) and the contemporary comedy 'Peter's Friends' (1992). Continuing Renaissance's interest in the

classics, they also produced the successful film version of 'Much Ado about Nothing' (1993) and the Academy Award-nominated short 'Swan Song' (1991).

Parfitt briefly left Renaissance to co-produce 'Mary Shelley's Frankenstein' (1994) before returning to the re-formed company to produce the hugely successful films 'The Madness of King George' (1994), nominated for four Academy Awards, the highly acclaimed 'Twelfth Night' (1996), directed by Trevor Nunn and 'The Wings of the Dove' (1997) starring Helena Bonham Carter which was also nominated for four Academy Awards. In 1998, Parfitt produced the multi-award-winning 'Shakespeare in Love',

winner of seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture and four BAFTA Awards, including Best Film. In 2010 he produced the BAFTA and Oscar-nominated 'My Week with Marilyn', followed in 2011 by Tom Stoppard's award-winning adaptation of 'Parade's End' for BBC and HBO. Parfitt was Executive Producer on the world's first hand-painted animated feature film, the DFI-supported 'Loving Vincent', which was nominated for both BAFTA and Academy Awards in the Animation category.

Most recently, Parfitt produced 'The Father' (2020), which was written by Florian Zeller and fellow Qumra Master, Sir Christopher Hampton. The poignant film starring Anthony Hopkins and Olivia Colman was nominated for numerous awards, winning two Academy Awards and two BAFTAs. Parfitt has produced some of the most critically acclaimed and commercially successful films of the last few decades. He has also held prestigious roles in the industry, such as Chairman of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) from 2008–2010 and Chair of Film London from 2010–2017. Throughout his career, he has been celebrated for his ability to find and nurture new talent and his determination to bring unique and compelling stories to the screen.



Lynne Ramsay

Lynne Ramsay is an award-winning Scottish filmmaker known for her unique visual style and powerful storytelling. Born in Glasgow, Scotland, Ramsay initially studied fine art and photography at Napier College, Edinburgh. Discovering her passion for filmmaking after seeing Maya Deren's film 'Meshes of the Afternoon' (1943), she went on to study cinematography and direction at the National Film and Television School in Beaconsfield, England. Ramsay began making short films in college and immediately established herself as a rising star in the industry with her graduation short 'Small Deaths'. The film won the Jury Prize for Best Short Film at Cannes Film Festival

in 1996, followed soon after by 'Gasman', which won the same prize in 1998.

Transitioning to the longer form, Ramsay had a similar meteoric rise, winning a BAFTA award for Most Promising Newcomer for her haunting debut feature 'Ratcatcher' (1999). She then went on to direct 'Morvern Callar' (2002), a psychological drama which received a slew of awards, including two at Cannes. In 2011, Ramsay directed the highly acclaimed film 'We Need to Talk About Kevin', which starred 2018 Qumra Master, Tilda Swinton and John C. Reilly. The film explored the complex relationship between a mother and her son and received widespread critical praise and

recognition, including a Palme d'Or nomination —solidifying Ramsay's reputation as a filmmaker with a unique and uncompromising vision.

Ramsay's most recent feature film, 'You Were Never Really Here' (2017), starred Joaquin Phoenix as a traumatised veteran turned mercenary. The film was lauded for its atmospheric cinematography, powerful performances, and uncompromising vision—earning Ramsay another Palme d'Or nomination, the Best Screenplay Award and Phoenix the Best Actor Award at Cannes Film Festival in 2017. Throughout her career, Ramsay has proved herself as a filmmaker who is unafraid to tackle difficult and unconventional subject matter. She is celebrated worldwide for her ability to create deeply emotional and impactful stories that truly resonate with viewers.

Jacqueline West

Jacqueline West is a visionary costume designer who has brought to life some of the most memorable characters in contemporary cinema. She has earned a remarkable four Academy Award nominations for her work on 'Dune' (2021), 'The Revenant' (2015), 'The Curious Case of Benjamin Button' (2008) and 'Quills' (2000). For 'Dune' and 'Benjamin Button', she also received BAFTA and Costume Designer Guild Award nominations, winning the Costume Designer Guild Award for Sci-Fi/Fantasy for 'Dune'. West received another Costume Designer Guild Award nomination for 'Argo' (2012).

After graduating from the University of California at Berkeley, West followed in the footsteps of her mother, a popular avant-garde fashion designer in the 1940s and 50s. From 1988 to 1997, West ran her own company and designed a nationally acclaimed clothing line—going on to own retail stores in the Bay Area and contemporary departments in Barney's New York and Tokyo. West's first foray into film, as a creative consultant on 'Henry and June' (1990), was the start of a long relationship with award-winning director Phillip Kaufman. This led to future projects with such illustrious filmmakers as Terrence Malick, David Fincher, Alejandro González



Iñárritu, Ben Affleck, Denis Villeneuve, and Martin Scorsese.

With an eye for detail and an unwavering commitment to authenticity, Jacqueline has a reputation for creating costumes that not only look stunning but also serve to truly enhance the story being told. She has done five films with Malick starting with 'The New World' (2005) and including 'The Tree of Life' (2011), 'To the Wonder' (2012), and 'Knight of Cups' (2015). She has also designed 'Live by Night' (2016) for Ben Affleck, 'The Gambler' (2014) for Rupert Wyatt, 'Water for Elephants' (2011) for Francis Lawrence, 'The Social Network' (2010) for David Fincher, and 'State of Play' (2009) for Kevin MacDonal amongst others.

West recently designed Martin Scorsese's 'Killers of the Flower Moon' and 'Dune: Part II' for Denis Villeneuve. Her unique style and dedication to her craft have made her one of the most sought-after designers in the world, and her work continues to inspire and captivate audiences.

Michael Winterbottom

Michael Winterbottom is a critically acclaimed British filmmaker known for his diverse body of work that ranges from unconventional narratives to hard-hitting social commentary. Born in 1961 in Blackburn, England, Winterbottom began his career in British television, going on to direct the BAFTA-winning mini-series 'Family' (1994) and long-running and much-lauded 'The Trip' (2010–2020).

Winterbottom transitioned to film in the early 1990s and quickly established himself as an innovative director and writer—known for his unconventional approach to storytelling, often blending genres and utilising non-linear narratives in his films. His early work, including 'Butterfly Kiss' (1995) and 'Go Now' (1995), showcased his willingness to experiment with both form and style. He continued to push the boundaries of conventional filmmaking with films like 'Welcome to Sarajevo' (1997) and '24 Hour Party People' (2002), which entwined elements of drama, comedy, and documentary.

In addition to his unique style, Winterbottom is also known for his socially conscious films, which often tackle issues such as political injustice, poverty, and human rights. Such films include 'In This



World' (2002), which followed the journey of two Afghan refugees as they make their way from Pakistan to London, 'The Road to Guantanamo' (2006), a dramatised account of the experiences of three British Muslims who were imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay and the heartrending 'Eleven Days in May' (2022), which documents the bleak reality of life in Gaza today.

Winterbottom has received numerous awards for his work, including a BAFTA and Golden

Berlin Bear Award for 'In This World' (2002), a Silver Berlin Bear Award for 'The Road to Guantanamo' (2006) and the François Chalais Award at Cannes Film Festival for 'A Mighty Heart' (2007). He has also been nominated three times for the Palme d'Or for '24 Hour Party People' (2002), 'Wonderland' (1999) and 'Welcome to Sarajevo' (1997). Winterbottom's work has consistently been recognised for its unparalleled style, thought-provoking subject matter, and ability to both engage and entertain audiences.

Qumra Screenings

This year, we are proud to showcase a selection of eight remarkable feature-length films from the region and beyond as our Qumra Screenings—all of which were made with the support of the Doha Film Institute.

The Dam

'Le Barrage' / France, Sudan, Lebanon, Germany, Serbia, Qatar / Arabic / 2022 / 80 mins



World-renowned visual artist Ali Cherri's feature debut, 'The Dam', is an allegorical tale set in the shadows of the imposing Merowe Dam in Northern Sudan. We follow the life of Sudanese brick-maker Maher as he toils in the sun all day—secretly escaping to the desert to work on his own personal project of similar magnitude. As he constructs his mysterious mud tower, revolution is in the air around him, with broadcasts and talk of protests erupting against the dictatorship of Omar Al-Bashir. While the Sudanese people rise to claim their freedom, his creation slowly starts to take on a life of its own...

While a standalone film, 'The Dam' is the third part of a trilogy of works from the director, which he has entitled as a "geography of violence". The other two being his critically-acclaimed shorts 'The Disquiet', which explored Lebanon's history of earthquakes, and 'The Digger', which followed the custodian of a neolithic necropolis in the UAE. Moving away from the documentary aesthetic of his earlier films, Cherri embraces a more poetic realism style as a compelling way to tell a very personal story of imagination set against the broader backdrop of politics and the Sudanese revolution.



Born in Beirut, **Ali Cherri** is a visual artist and filmmaker living in Paris. Combining films, videos, sculptures and installation, his work examines the construction of historical narratives. Ali is the Artist in Residence at the National Gallery in London (2021/22) and has been awarded with the Silver Lion for promising artist at the 59th International Art Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia (2022). His short films 'The Disquiet' and 'The Digger' have been shown in prominent film festivals. 'The Dam', a fiction shot in Sudan during the revolution, is his debut feature film.

Director: **Ali Cherri**
Producer: **Janja Kralj**
Screenwriter: **Ali Cherri, Geoffroy Grison, Bertrand Bonello**
Cinematographer: **Bassem Fayad**
Editor: **Isabelle Manquillet, Nelly Quettier**
Music: **ROB**
Cast: **Maher El Khair**
Production: **KinoElektron**
Sales: **Indie Sales**

Faya Dayi

Ethiopia, USA, Qatar / Oromifa, Harari, Amharic / 2021 / 118 mins



'Faya Dayi' is a uniquely beautiful, award-winning documentary that explores the widespread use of khat in Ethiopia. While Sufi Muslim communities traditionally used the khat leaf for religious purposes, it has now become a popular daily ritual across all spectrums of society and the country's most lucrative cash crop. The film takes us on a spiritual journey through the prism of the khat trade, offering a sensory window into the aspirations of the unemployed and oppressed youth and elders alike for whom chewing khat to achieve Merkhana (the high of khat) has become a radical escape, a space of socialisation and revolt against oppressive forces. For many, Merkhana is the only place where their hopes, dreams and aspirations can live.

At the centre of the film is Mohammed, a fourteen-year-old who works as an errand boy in Harar. The khat-chewing lifestyle of the adults surrounding Mohammed and the inherent political pressures against oppressed Oromo youth like him, lead him to dream of reuniting with his mother, who "took the boat" across the Red Sea to Saudi Arabia in search of work when he was a small boy. He often speaks internally to her as a survival mechanism to ward off his loneliness. Through his eyes, we meet the dwellers of Harar and Mohammed's friends in the khat farming community who are instrumental in shaping his decision to finally take the treacherous journey to join his mother across the Red Sea.



Jessica Beshir is a Mexican-Ethiopian writer, director, producer and cinematographer based in Brooklyn. Her feature debut, 'Faya Dayi', premiered at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival and has screened worldwide, including at the Rotterdam Film Festival, New Directors/

New Films, Camerimage and Hot Docs, to name a few. 'Faya Dayi' won the Grand Jury Prize & FIPRESCI Award at Visions du Reel, the Grand Jury Award at Full Frame Film Festival, and the Cinematography Award at DOC NYC, among others. 'Faya Dayi' garnered nominations from the Gotham Awards, IDA Awards, Cinema Eye Honors, ASC awards and won the 2022 Truer Than Fiction Award at the Independent Spirit Awards. Her early short films, 'Hairat, He Who Dances on Wood' and 'Heroin' have played in festivals and museums, including at IDFA, Kurzfilmtage Winterthur, Eye Film Museum & MoMI. Beshir has been honoured with grant support from the Sundance Film Institute, the Doha Film Institute, and the Jerome Foundation.

Director / Screenwriter / Producer / Cinematographer:

Jessica Beshir

Editor: **Jeanne Applegate, Dustin Waldman**

Sound Design: **Tom Efinger**

With: **Mohammed Arif, Hashim Abdi, Ibrahim**

Mohammed, Biniam Yonas

Production: **Merkhana Films**

Sales: **Cinetic Media**

The Last Queen

'El Akhira' / Algeria, France, KSA, Qatar, Taiwan / Arabic / 2022 / 113 mins



Algeria, 1516. Aruj Barbarossa, one of the most notorious pirates in history, frees Algiers from the tyranny of the Spanish and seizes power over the kingdom. But rumour has it he murdered the King Salim Toumi, despite their seeming alliance. After his ascension to power, Barbarossa quickly proposes marriage to the slain king's beautiful wife—Queen Zaphira. Strong-willed and resolute, she breaks with tradition and chooses her own destiny, fighting for her autonomy, her beloved son and her nation. Between history and legend, this woman's journey tells of a struggle, of personal and political turmoil endured for the sake of Algiers.

Led by exceptional female performances, Algeria's first costume drama, 'The Last Queen,' is a fascinating historical drama—although Zaphira's actual existence and exact role is still a hotly contested topic amongst Algerian historians to this day. Regardless, its story is Shakespearean in scale and intrigue, exploring a crucial period in time for the North African nation that has never been done before in film. Between its impressive action scenes and well-choreographed battles lies a very human story of political intrigue, betrayals and power that paints a rich portrait of a now-legendary female figure.



Adila Bendimerad is an Algerian actress, scriptwriter, director and producer, based in Algiers. In 2011, the actress ('The Repentant', 'The Rooftops', 'Normal' by Merzak Allouache, 'Still Burning' by Georges Hachem) created the company Taj Intaj in Algiers to promote young

Algerian talent. Her production of 'The Days Before' (2013) by Karim Moussaoui received worldwide acclaim, from Locarno Festival to her nomination for a César. 'Kindil El Bahr' (2016) by Damien Ounouri was selected for Cannes Directors' Fortnight. In co-production with Agat Films / Ex Nihilo (France), she produced 'The Last Queen', which she co-wrote and co-directed with Ounouri and in which she also takes on the lead role as Queen Zaphira.



Damien Ounouri is an Algerian director based in Algiers. He studied cinema theory, developing its practical application as a self-taught skill. His documentary 'Fidai' (2012), co-produced by the Chinese director Jia Zhang-Ke, had its premiere at the Toronto TIFF and was shown in

cinemas throughout France. His medium-length film 'Kindil El Bahr' (2016) had its premiere at Cannes Directors' Fortnight and was broadcast on ARTE. He also directs video-clips and commercials, teaches at cinematographic workshops, and is Associate Producer for Taj Intaj (Algeria). 'The Last Queen' is his first full-length feature film.

Director / Screenwriter: **Adila Bendimerad, Damien Ounouri**
Cinematographer: **Shadi Chaaban**
Editor: **Mathieu Laclau, Yann-Shan Tsai**
Music: **Evgueni and Sacha Galperine**
Cast: **Adila Bendimerad, Dali Benssalah, Tahar Zaoui, Imen Noel**
Production: **Taj Intaj (Algeria), Agat Films (France)**
Sales: **The Party Film Sales**

Mediterranean Fever

'Humma albh'r almutawassit' / Palestine, Germany, France, Cyprus, Qatar / Arabic / 2022 / 108 mins



Winner of the best screenplay award in Cannes' Un Certain Regard section last year, the darkly comedic 'Mediterranean Fever' explores the complicated friendship between two starkly different neighbours in Haifa. An aspiring writer, Waleed lives with his wife and children. Spending most of his day staring at a blank computer screen in search of inspiration for his book, Waleed struggles with mental illness that even his therapist seems unable to alleviate. After a chance encounter with his new neighbour, Jalal—the pair develop an unlikely bond. Seeing in Jalal the potential of source material for his novel, Waleed joins him eagerly on his daily errands into an increasingly dangerous world of petty crime.

As Waleed delves deeper into Jalal's criminal activity, the true motives behind their growing relationship are not as they first appear. Their friend/enemy dynamic gives the film an ingenious level of charm and sly wit, portrayed perfectly with incredible performances from the two leads, Amer Hlehel and Ashraf Farah. Full of black humour and surprising twists, critically-acclaimed filmmaker Maha Haj keeps us guessing until the very end in this unpredictably captivating comedy about masculinity, mental health and loneliness.



Maha Haj was born in Nazareth in 1970. She graduated from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in English and Arabic literature. Her cinematic experience was derived from her work as an artistic designer in the productions of 'The Time That Remains' by Elia Suleiman, 'The Attack' by Ziad Douairi, as well as 'On the Hill' by Rafael Natjari. She wrote and directed the short film 'Oranges' (2009) and the documentary 'Behind These Walls' (2010). In 2015 she shot her first feature film 'Personal Affairs', which was selected in the 2016 Cannes Film Festival's Official Selection (Un Certain Regard) and critically acclaimed. The film also won the Haifa Film Festival's Best Feature Award in 2016 and the Mediterranean Film Festival of Montpellier's Critics' Award, among others.

Director / Screenwriter: **Maha Haj**

Producer: **Baher Agbariya**

Cinematographer: **Antoine Héberlé AFC**

Editor: **Véronique Lange**

Music: **Munder Odeh**

Cast: **Amer Hlehel, Ashraf Farah, Anat Hadid, Samir Elias, Cynthia Saleem**

Production: **Majdal Films, Pallas Film, Still Moving, Amp Filmworks**

Sales: **Luxbox**

Memoria

Colombia, Thailand, UK, Mexico, France, Germany, Qatar / Spanish, English / 2021 / 136 mins



A mesmerizing and surreal film that follows the journey of Jessica, a Scottish woman played by the brilliant Tilda Swinton, who visits Colombia to see her ailing sister. There she befriends Agnes, an archaeologist studying human remains discovered within a tunnel under construction. However, Jessica's life takes an unexpected turn when she begins to experience strange and inexplicable sounds that only she appears to hear. As she delves deeper into the eerie occurrences around her, Jessica meets a variety of characters who add to the enigmatic nature of her journey by offering their own take on the unexplainable phenomena she's experiencing.

Director Apichatpong Weerasethakul creates a dreamlike atmosphere with stunning visuals and a truly immersive soundscape, perfectly complementing the film's mysterious narrative. Through sweeping shots of Colombia's landscapes and intricate details of everyday objects, 'Memoria' immerses the viewer in its richly textured world. As Jessica grapples with the unknown and the limits of human understanding, the film becomes a fascinating exploration of memory, perception, and the supernatural. 'Memoria' is a challenging and unconventional film that requires patience and an openness to interpretive storytelling, but its compelling narrative, outstanding performances, and striking visual and audio landscapes make it a rewarding experience for those willing to engage with it on its own terms.



Apichatpong Weerasethakul is recognised as one of the most original voices in contemporary cinema. His previous seven feature films, short films, installations, and his recent live performance have won him widespread international recognition and numerous

awards, including the Cannes Palme d'Or in 2010 with 'Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives'. His 'Tropical Malady' won the Cannes Competition Jury Prize in 2004, and 'Blissfully Yours' won the Cannes Un Certain Regard Award in 2002. 'Syndromes and a Century' (2006) was recognised as one of the best films of the last decade in several 2010 polls. 'Mysterious Object at Noon' (2000), his first feature, has been restored by Martin Scorsese's World Cinema Foundation. Lyrical and often fascinatingly mysterious, his film works are non-linear, dealing with memory and, in subtle ways, invoking personal politics and social issues. 'Memoria' is his first feature to be shot outside Thailand and with an international cast.

Director / Screenwriter / Producer:

Apichatpong Weerasethakul

Cinematographer: **Sayombhu Mukdeeprom**

Editor: **Lee Chatametikool**

Music: **César López**

Cast: **Tilda Swinton, Elkin Díaz, Jeanne Balibar,**

Juan Pablo Urrego

Production: **Burning S.A.S, Kick The Machine, Illuminations Films (Past Lives)**

Riverbed

'Birket El Arous' / Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic / 2022 / 80 mins



A visually engrossing and thought-provoking narrative, 'Riverbed' recently earned three awards at the 44th Cairo International Film Festival. The film tells the story of Salma and her returning daughter Thuraya, and their attempt to preserve, maintain and reconstruct their lives with and against each other. Salma survived many years by protecting her independence—she reached her peace through letting go of any attachments. But the past does not let go of Salma and brings back Thuraya, defeated, divorced, and pregnant. At its heart, 'Riverbed' revolves compellingly around the unfulfilled dreams of two women and their strained relationship with each other.

Through the portrayal of Salma—played with deft wistfulness by Lebanese actress Carole Abboud—and her estranged daughter, the film explores the unspoken burden that women are often forced to bear when they find themselves on the wrong side of societal expectations. The story portrays an inherited loss and a wound that cannot be healed by apologies or forgiveness. Our two protagonists go tête-à-tête in a house with a tumultuous history, as the film explores the limits of verbal communication when there is little chance of reconciling the present with the past. Although estranged, together, they each confront their shared disillusionment with the expectations of love, marriage, and motherhood they once hoped for in this absorbing maternal melodrama.



Bassem Breche is an Emmy award-winning scriptwriter and director. Since 2007, Breche has directed three short films—'Both' (2007), premiering at Cannes' Critics week, 'Ziu' (2013) and 'Free Range' (2014). Breche has written several series and films, including 'Shankaboot' (2009), 'Fasateen' (2012), 'The Little Drop' (2015), 'Undocumented' (2018), 'Alephia' (2019), 'Vertu' (2020) and 'Hell's Gate' (2021). Breche is the founder/director of Scenario Beirut. 'Riverbed' is Breche's debut film.

Director / Screenwriter: **Bassem Breche**

Screenwriter: **Ghassan Salhab**

Producer: **Jana Wehbe**

Cinematographer: **Nadim Saoma**

Editor: **Rana Sabbagha**

Music: **Sharif Sehnaoui**

Cast: **Carole Abboud, Omayya Malaeb, Rabih El Zahr, Fadia El Tannir**

Production: **The Attic, Metafora Production**

Tug of War

'Vuta N'Kuvute' / Tanzania, South Africa, Germany, Qatar / Swahili, English / 2022 / 90 mins



Set in 1950s colonial-era Zanzibar, 'Tug of War' follows a pair of star-crossed lovers Denge, a young but ardent political revolutionary and Yasmine, a runaway bride fleeing an arranged marriage. In their forbidden romance, they are united in their commitment to the revolution for an independent Zanzibar as well as to their love for one another. Joined by Yasmin's confidant Mwajuma, the trio journey through the island's diverse communities that—although demarcated by superficial British racial classifications, are unified through their shared cultural roots. Based on the award-winning Swahili novel by Adam Shafi, 'Tug of War' paints an engrossing portrait of Zanzibarian history and its struggle for independence from colonial rule.

A coming-of-age political drama about love and resistance, the film is intensely rich in texture, passion and colour—from the vibrant traditional taarab soundtrack to the vivid period costuming. Our two freedom fighters, played charismatically by Gudrun Columbus Mwanyika and Ikhlas Gafur Vora, also have incredible on-screen chemistry. Through an overarching story of universal love, 'Tug of War' offers a deeper, more refined narrative about oppression and subservience in a colonised society. A place where even the bravest and most independent of thought struggle to find a secure foothold on their confiscated land.



Amil Shivji was born in Tanzania and is a filmmaker and lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam. He believes in using images to challenge the powers that be, in particular, deconstructing urban facades of development and emphasizing the strength and struggles of marginalized

communities. Amil has written, directed and produced short films that have participated in Rotterdam and FESPACO, winning the People's Choice Award in Zanzibar and Best Director in Africa. His feature directorial debut 'T-Junction' (2017), opened Zanzibar International Film Festival, winning three awards. He has a Master's in Fine Arts from York University in Toronto.

Director: **Amil Shivji**

Producer: **Steven Markovitz, Amil Shivji**

Screenwriter: **Amil Shivji, Jenna Bass**

Cinematographer: **Zenn Van Zyl**

Editor: **Nadia Ben Rachid, Matthew Swanepoel**

Music: **Amine Bouhafa, Amélie Legrand**

Cast: **Gudrun Columbus Mwanyika, Ikhlas Gafur Vora**

Under the Fig Trees

Tunisia, France, Switzerland, Germany, Qatar / Arabic / 2022 / 94 mins



In Northern Tunisia, the Kasra region is known for its beautifully arcadian fig plantations. There we join a group of girls as they pick fruit during their summer break from school. Taking place over the course of a day, 'Under the Fig Trees' presents an intergenerational dialogue between these teens and the older folk on the farm as they work the summer harvest, catch feelings, attempt to understand each other, and navigate the complicated terrain of building deeper ties. An absorbing and radiant coming-of-age drama, the film offers an engaging slice of sisterhood, rural life and broader Tunisian society.

Skillfully directed and replete with authentic performances by the largely greenhorn cast, we witness the group's flirtations, dramas and budding love lives unfold in the Tunisian sun. The film's deftly crafted intimate shots come from the director Erige Sehiri's experience as a documentary filmmaker with her critically acclaimed 'Railway Men' (2018). As sweet as the figs themselves, these intimate interactions reveal each protagonist's differing characters and their opinions on life, love and marriage. Tunisia's official submission in the 2023 Oscars for Best International Feature Film, the film is an elegant and immersive experience that centres on the experiences of young women as they navigate through a world on the fence between tradition and modernity.



Erige Sehiri is a Tunisian French director and producer. A former journalist, she started her career as a documentary filmmaker. Her breakout feature documentary, 'Railway Men', which presented the daily struggle of railway workers against the failures of the

national railways, remained for six weeks in Tunisian theatres. In 2022, she wrote, directed, and produced her first fiction feature, 'Under the Fig Trees', which won several awards at the Venice International Film Festival's Final Cut and joined the selection of the 54th Director's Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival. It was also selected to be Tunisia's official submission in the 2023 Oscars for Best International Feature Film.

Director: **Erige Sehiri**

Producer: **Erige Sehiri, Didar Domehri**

Screenwriter: **Erige Sehiri, Ghalya Lacroix, Peggy Hamann**

Cinematographer: **Frida Marzouk**

Editor: **Ghalya Lacroix, Hafedh Laaridhi, Malek Kammoun**

Music: **Amine Bouhafa**

Cast: **Fide Fdhili, Feten Fdhili, Ameni Fdhili, Samar**

Sifi, Leila Ouhebi

Production: **Henia Production, Maneki Films, Akka Films,**

In Good Company

Distribution: **MAD Solutions, Luxbox**

Qumra Projects

Qumra is designed to provide creative and professional support to directors and producers attached to twenty-six features, seven series and eleven short film projects in development, production, and post-production, both fiction and documentary.

The primary motive of this gathering of creative film professionals is to contribute to the development of emerging voices in cinema, with a special focus on first and second-time filmmakers.

This year, our Qumra Projects include a number of emerging filmmakers from Qatar, as well as regional and international recipients from the Institute's Funding and Training Programmes.

Development

Feature Narrative

El Bastardiya (Once Upon a Time in Tripoli) by Abdullah Al-Ghaly

The Other Wife (Working Title) by Meriem Mesraoua

Perfumed with Mint by Muhammed Hamdy

Weedestine by Said Zagha

Director / Screenwriter:

Abdullah Al-Ghaly

Producer:

Hala Lotfy**Company Profile:**

Hassala Films is an Egyptian production collective based in Cairo. It was formed in 2011 by a group of independent filmmakers who share the same thoughts of working in low-budget forms to produce feature projects (fiction and documentary) with challenging content and artistic value. In 2012, Hassala released its first feature film 'Coming Forth by Day', directed and produced by Hala Lotfy, which won many international awards, such as the FIPRESCI prize and Best Director from the Arab World in ADF 2012—its European premiere was in Berlinale FORUM 2013. Hassala is producing a number of feature debut documentaries, and all received funds from major funding initiatives in the Arab world and beyond, including AFAC, SANAD, IDFA, Hot Docs, Doha Film Institute, Robert Bosch Stiftung, IMS and Screen Institute Beirut. Hassala is a founding member of the Euro-Mediterranean distributors' network (Medis), which was launched in 2012 in association with the Euromed Audiovisual Program III. Hassala was also a founding member of the Arab Film Market, which was established in Cannes in 2013.

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El Bastardiya

(Once Upon a Time in Tripoli)

Libya, Egypt, France, Qatar / Arabic, English

Genre: **Comedy, Crime, Drama, Thriller**Themes: **Immigration, Violence, Social Issues, Civil War**

In the midst of anarchy in chaotic Libya, three friends try to survive in Tripoli, where violence is the rule of the land. A close-up story of the transformation of three ordinary young Libyans into murderers.



Murad, a young jobless engineer, works instead as a salesman. His father, a truck driver for an oil company, is kidnapped by the militants who demand a hefty ransom to be paid within three weeks, or they will kill him. With no means to pay the ransom, Murad enlists the help of his friends Salem and Ali. The trio weighs up their options, ultimately deciding to collect the ransom illegally amidst the surrounding chaos. Their attempts at robbing a bank fail, as do a jewellery store heist that ends up with them losing their loot to neighbourhood gunmen following a chase.

They then kidnap a rich man for ransom without knowing he is a foreign ambassador in Libya. Fearing things are getting out of hand and becoming stuck amid a diplomatic crisis; they release him. Facing mounting pressure, they attempt to turn the tables by kidnapping the father's kidnappers and demanding a ransom from the militia. When the militia refuses and threatens them, the trio finds themselves in a deeper crisis. With no other options, they resort to smuggling illegal African immigrants to Europe to secure the release of Murad's father.

Abdullah Al-Ghaly

Abdullah Al-Ghaly is a Libyan writer, editor and director born in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1985. He studied filmmaking and animation at

Cairo Cinema Institute and graduated with honours in 2007. In 2009, he made his directorial debut with the short experimental 'Times' produced by The Egyptian Film Center. In 2011, he co-founded Hassala films, a collective to support young talented filmmakers to achieve their projects. In 2010 he edited the feature documentary 'Talaat Harb' by the renowned Egyptian director Sayed Said produced by The Egyptian Film Center. In 2011 he began working on his feature documentary (Cairo - Ar-rehebat). In 2014 he edited the feature documentary 'The Egyptian Caricature' by Sherif Al-Moghazy, produced by Al Jazeera documentary channel. In 2016 he collaborated with Hala Lotfy co-writing her second feature 'The Bridge'. In 2017 he co-wrote the TV Drama series 'Haza Al Masaa' by Tamer Mohsen. In 2018 he edited the long documentary 'Yossef Edris' by Sherif Al-Moghazy, produced by Al Jazeera documentary channel. In 2021 he co-wrote the TV Drama series 'Gooma Fares as-Sahra'.

Hala Lotfy

Hala Lotfy is an Egyptian director, producer, and founder of Hassala Films collective. She graduated from the faculty of economics

and political science at Cairo University. Lotfy studied filmmaking at the Cairo Film Institute and graduated with honours in 1999. Her feature fiction debut 'Coming Forth by Day' premiered at Abu Dhabi Film Festival 2012; its European premiere was at the FORUM in Berlinale 2013. The film won many awards, including the FIPRESCI, and Best Director from the Arab World at Abu Dhabi FF, and was screened in more than 50 film festivals around the world. The film joined the "Greatest 100 Arab Films" list by Dubai IFF. As a producer, she produced her feature debut, 'Coming Forth by Day', and between 2013–2022, she produced nine feature-length documentaries, including 'Om Ghayeb' by Nadine Salib, 'Little Eagles' by Mohammad Rashad, 'On the Fence' by Nesrine AlZayyat and 'Light Upon Light' by the Danish director Christian Suhr. In 2018 she produced the feature fiction 'Ext. / Night' by Ahmad Abdalla.

Director's Note

The Tripoli I recall from my childhood is so unlike the Tripoli of these days, or in other words, the post-2011 Tripoli. The idea of this film came to me at the outbreak of the second civil war in Libya, which lasted from 2014 to 2020. The outbreak of the war was also when I last visited Tripoli. What my family and I have gone through then is what inspired the events of this film. Three years after the revolution, weapons had become widespread across the city. Militants and gunmen all over the streets became part of the daily scene. Currently, there is no modern, feature Libyan film portraying the lives of Libyans and what goes on in their country. So Libya remains a virgin land in terms of film making. I want to share with the world a story inspired by the daily happenings in the streets of Tripoli, as the lives of its inhabitants are full of dramatic stories, and the story of this film specifically is inspired by real events that my father and brother lived in Tripoli, as well as Libyan citizens living through the same events every day with militia members terrorising the streets.

Financial InformationTotal Budget: **\$917,164**Secured Financing: **\$125,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- Cairo Film Connection, Egypt
- Red Sea Fund, KSA

Project Requirements:

- Broadcasters
- Distributors
- Financing
- Gap Funding
- Sales

Director / Screenwriter:

Meriem Mesraoua

Screenwriter:

Amel Bedani

Producer:

François d'Artemare**Company Profile:**

Les Films de l'Après-Midi has produced and co-produced films from all over the world, including Bosnia ('Snow' by Aida Begic - Critics's week Grand Prix Award, Cannes 2008 - 'Children Of Sarajevo' - Mention of the Jury Un Certain Regard, Cannes 2012), Angola ('The Hero' by Zeze Gamboa - World Cinema Dramatic Jury Prize at Sundance 2005), Portugal ('Montanha' by João Salaviza - Venice 2015 - 'Saint George' by Marco Martins - Venice 2016), Romania ('One Floor Below' by Radu Muntean - Un Certain Regard, Cannes 2015 - 'Alice T.' - Locarno 2018), Bangladesh ('Made In Bangladesh' by Rubaiyat Hossein - TIFF 2019), Tunisia ('Noura Dreams' by Hinde Boujemaa - TIFF 2019), and France ('I Want To Talk About Duras' by Claire Simon - San Sebastian 2021).

Contact:

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François d'Artemare

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The Other Wife

(Working Title)**France, Qatar, Algeria / Arabic**Genre: **Drama**Themes: **Social Issues**

By adopting extreme measures to save the illusory refuge of her marriage, Salima is confronted with the fragility of her long-preserved image.



With the sudden realization that her situation may shift overnight, Salima (55) finds herself with no safety net outside of her shaky marriage. With the tools at her disposal and unbeknownst to all, Salima deploys a scheme to try to control the circumstances that dictate her condition—only to be confronted with the fragility of her situation.

Meriem Mesraoua

Meriem Mesraoua grew up between Algeria, France and Qatar. A graduate of Northwestern University, her work explores issues of identity,

power dynamics, and the internalized gaze. In 2020, her short film 'À fleur de peau (Under Her Skin)' debuted at the Venice Film Festival. Meriem is currently developing her first feature film, 'The Other Wife' (working title).

François d'Artemare

François d'Artemare established in 1996 the Portuguese film company Filmes do Tejo, which now has

a library of more than 70 titles and among them many debut films such as Margarida Cardoso's, Serge Trefaut's, Inês de Medeiros's and João Salaviza's. He produced with the Paris-based company—Les Films de l'Après-Midi—he founded in 2001, three features by Manoel de Oliveira—'Christopher Columbus, The Enigma' (Venice 2007), 'Eccentricities Of A Blonde-haired Girl' (Berlin 2009), 'The Strange Case Of Angelica' (Un Certain Regard, Cannes 2010).

Director's Note

This project portrays a woman willing to resort to extreme measures to save the illusory refuge of her marriage. Salima (55) acts and sees herself primarily through the prism of her family - an image reflected back to her by society. With the threat of the dissolution of her marriage, she finds herself without any form of protection, financial autonomy or concrete alternative. In a context where with limited support outside the family structure, Salima attempts to control her circumstances by going further into self-denial and self-destruction - which ultimately confronts her to the fragility of her long-preserved condition. Salima is a character in full control of her choices, who pushes her convictions to the point of underlining her own contradiction: a woman whose self-sacrifice works to her own detriment and that of others. Built around the themes of sacrifice, transmission and control, this is an exploration of the place of the institution and the power dynamics within the family structure. The institution imposes principles, a code and a sense of duty, which sometimes reduce a person to a role or a function. How do individuals internalize, endure and perpetuate these patterns? Here, the aim is to explore a woman's resilience in the face of insidious forms of abuse, both suffered and perpetuated.

Financial InformationTotal Budget: **\$850,000**

Project Requirements:

- Co-producers
- Financing
- Sales

Director / Screenwriter:

Muhammed Hamdy

Producer:

Farès Ladjimi**Company Profile:**

Supernova Films was founded to offer young filmmakers the means to express their vision of the world. The company keeps searching for and supporting singular points of view and films. They have produced several fiction films and documentaries, most recently, 'Ashkal' by Youssef Chebbi, which premiered in Director's Fortnight at Cannes in 2022.

Contact:

Farès Ladjimi

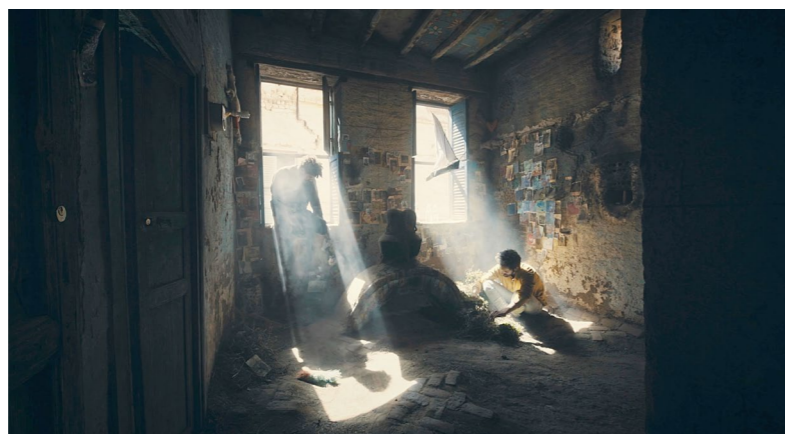
fares@supernovafilms.fr

Perfumed with Mint

Egypt, France, Qatar, Brazil / Arabic

Genre: **Drama, Science Fiction**Themes: **Social Issues, Violence**

Lurking through their city's remains, old friends reunite in a nightmare where mint sprouts out of their bodies. Relentlessly chased by ruthless shadows, will the companions escape the maze, or will they endlessly hide in empty streets filled with memories?



Alaa, a struggling doctor, gets a visit from a 'Sensor', whose superpowers can't help her find her missing son. They make a deal in which he searches for the young man in the hospital morgue where he works, and in return, she dries Alaa's love letter that has somehow been cursed to be soaked. In the hospital, he encounters his past—a ghost, a plant—he can't tell. He soon believes it is his old friend Mahdy with mint sprouting out of his head. Mahdy has brought trouble, and without much time to hesitate, Alaa has to run with his old friend rather than rat him out.

Alaa and Mahdy are without shelter, while the mint smell attracts forces that want to abduct them. Now the fugitives are chased throughout their deteriorating city. They are led through a series of disturbing encounters with former comrades. Those who were once bonded by devotion are now estranged, faithless, and reeking of mint. Will the two friends find a way out of this nightmare, endlessly chased by memories of loss? Or will they be left to dry, waiting and hiding in the streets where they once lived peacefully?

Muhammed Hamdy

Muhammad Hamdy is an Emmy Award-winning cinematographer from Cairo. He shot and co-produced the

Oscar-nominated film 'The Square', which premiered at Sundance, and won the Audience Award for World Cinema, as well as the People's Choice Awards in Toronto (2013). Hamdy also shot 'We are the Giants' (2014), 'The Trials of Spring' (2015) and 'Olmo & The Seagull' (2015), which won the Best Nordic Dox Award at CPH:DOX, best documentary, Rio Film Festival. Hamdy studied filmmaking at New York Film Academy and has shot multiple TV Specials and commercials for various networks like BBC, HBO, Hulu, and Netflix.

Farès Ladjimi

Farès Ladjimi has been producing films since 2007. He aims to offer unique young creators the means to express their

vision of cinema. Now, more than ever, he continues supporting filmmakers and their films, identifying new talents and cinematic voices from the world. To date, he has produced or co-produced over 15 feature films. He is a member of the Ace network, and most of his films have premiered in internationally renowned festivals such as Cannes, Venice, Berlin, and Toronto.

Director's Note

In its simplest form, 'Perfumed with Mint' is about two friends who are tragically trapped in a survival conundrum. This story represents a generation that is contaminated with doubts about what awaits them - this generates a fear that becomes a contagious illness among them. Paranoia does not demand context; it denounces itself by existing. People that I love are scared, people that I respect are scared, and I am not above that. I feel my subjects; I connect with them on many levels; I understand the wounds that their bodies are not showing and yet are more painful than the ones that bleed. I understand their scared bodies that are living on guard, and I feel how exhausting that must be. My story is a ghost story. However, the ghost isn't a spooky creature, moving through walls, but can be as delicate as a mint leaf. An uncanny world that allows these excruciating emotions to rise again and expose their wounds. Perhaps what matters is connecting with those who have been forced to sacrifice—and honour them by humming their agonising whispers.

Financial InformationTotal Budget: **\$464,000**Secured Financing: **\$269,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- AFAC, Lebanon
- BCP - Art Prize, Lebanon
- Blast Film, Tunisia
- Busca Vida Filmes, Brazil
- CNC - Aide aux Cinémas du Monde, France
- Take Shelter, France

Project Requirements:

- Broadcasters
- Co-producers
- Financing
- Sales
- SFX (on set effects)

Director / Screenwriter:

Said Zagha

Producer:

Myriam Sassine, Linda Mutawi

Company Profile:

Fikra is a production company that focuses on developing and producing films with an intercultural dimension, especially between Scandinavia and the MENA region. Except for our own projects in development and production, we are also active as creative co-producers and executive producers on several international films, the most recent being Tarik Saleh's latest film 'Boy From Heaven', which was part of the main competition in the Cannes film festival 2022.

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Weedestine

Palestine, Jordan, KSA, Qatar, Sweden / Arabic, Hebrew

Genre: **Thriller, Neo-noir, Revenge**

Themes: **Politics, Social Issues, Violence**

Abbas, a self-righteous, middle-aged car mechanic living in Palestine's lawless "Area-C", where marijuana cultivation is thriving, will do anything to avenge his older son's death. But Abbas's task proves lethal when his younger son's plans get in the way.



Abbas (48) is a self-righteous mechanic living in a West Bank village of the lawless Area-C, a fractured region where the Palestinian Authority (PA) needs Israel's permission to enter. Abbas' town is known for growing marijuana and smuggling it into Israel, and his brother-in-law, Ahmad (55), is the village's drug lord. Abbas resents Ahmad after his eldest son was killed by Israeli soldiers while smuggling drugs for him. When Abbas suspects his younger son Hammoud (22) of working for Ahmad, he hatches a vengeful plan to get Ahmad arrested outside of Area-C. But his plan backfires, and Hammoud is arrested instead.

Abbas tells the arresting officer, Hussen (41), that he can snitch on Ahmad if Hammoud is released. With enough information, Hussen can seek permission to enter the village and destroy Ahmad's business. When Abbas learns about Hussen's willingness to overlook Ahmad's business for a bribe, he's overwhelmed with vengeance. Abbas partners with a carjacker to steal Hussen's cash on his way out of the village. But the heist goes horribly wrong. Hammoud double-crosses Abbas and steals the money, putting himself in grave danger and prompting Hussen to go after him. Abbas must reevaluate his priorities and save Hammoud from impending doom.

Said Zagha



Said Zagha is a Palestinian screenwriter and director with a BA in film and English from Kenyon College

and an MA in Screenwriting from the London Film School. His 2021 short, 'Lovesick in the West Bank' premiered at the Academy-qualifying Urbanworld and Tampere Festivals. His 2016 dramedy 'Five Boys and a Wheel' went on to play at 40+ festivals worldwide, winning three awards. Said is developing his debut feature, 'Weedestine', a Palestine-set revenge thriller, which received development and production support from Jordan's Royal Film Commission. It has been selected at several labs, including EAVE and DFI's Hezayah. Said is a Berlinale Talents alumnus (2020).

Myriam Sassine



Myriam Sassine majored in audiovisual studies and received an MA in Cinema Research. In 2010, she joined About

Productions producing several features and documentaries such as 'Costa Brava, Lebanon' by Mounia Akl (Venice Film Festival Official Selection / TIFF 2021), 'All This Victory' by Ahmad Ghossein (Venice Critics Week 2019), '1982' by Oualid Mouaness (TIFF 2019), 'Panoptic' by Rana Eid (Locarno 2017) and 'Amal' by Mohamed Siam (Idfa 2017). From 2016 to

2020, she was the COO of Schortcut Films dedicated to co-producing international films such as 'Félicité' by Alain Gomis and 'Beauty and the Dogs' by Kaouther Ben Hania. Since 2021, she's the artistic director of Beirut Cinema Platform, Beirut DC's co-production platform. Myriam teaches film production at the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (ALBA) and ESA Business School. She's also a producing mentor for several institutions such as Doha Film Institute, Produire au Sud Agadir, Full Circle Lab Nouvelle Aquitaine and Hot Docs Blue Ice Lab.

Linda Mutawi



Linda Mutawi is a film producer, based in Sweden. She has been working in the film industry for over 22 years in

different capacities focusing mainly on producing, but she has also been a film commissioner and manager of a film fund. Linda moved to Sweden in 2013, where she co-founded Fikra, a Stockholm-based company focused on developing and producing creative cross-cultural projects between Scandinavia and the Middle East. She also works regularly with Atmo—one of Sweden's most acclaimed production companies, where she has played an integral role in the producing team on their three most recent award-winning films; 'The Nile Hilton Incident' (2017) directed by Tarik Saleh, winner of the Sundance Film festival Grand Jury prize, 'Swoon' (2019) by Mårilind& Stein, and the most recent Palme D'or nominated

feature film 'Boy from Heaven' (2022) by Tarik Saleh, which is shortlisted for the Oscars 2023 in the Best Foreign Language category. Linda participated in the Producers Guild of America Diversity Workshop in Los Angeles in 2012, and most recently graduated from the prestigious EAVE producers Workshop in 2022.

Director's Note

A few years back, the Palestinian security forces arrested my brother in Ramallah while smoking rolled tobacco. They wouldn't believe that his cigarette didn't contain marijuana. My father and I couldn't reach the police station because Israel had blocked several roads in the area. My brother was tortured and released. He left a month later to study in Europe and never returned. I followed suit. This painful moment gave birth to 'Weedestine', a story of being stuck between a rock and a hard place. To heighten the stakes, I set the story in the West Bank's fraught Area-C, where the Palestinian security forces need Israel's permission to enter. It's a fractured land, where people have started growing weed as a means of living. Meanwhile, the Palestinian police engage in arbitrary measures to give the impression of "law and order". What happens when chaos is orchestrated? The story of Weedestine is a microcosm for all of Palestine: people stop playing by the rules when they realise that the game is rigged. Weedestine is an elevated genre film utilising the form of a neo-noir thriller with touches of dark humour to amplify the absurdity of life in such a chaotic dark place.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$800,000**

Secured Financing: **\$185,701**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- AFAC, Lebanon
- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- Red Sea Film Fund, KSA
- Royal Film Commission, Jordan

Project Requirements:

- Artistic Direction
- Co-producers
- Distributors
- Financing
- Pre-sales

Development

Feature Documentary or Essay

Fouledh by Mehdi Hmili

The Myth of Mahmoud by Mayar Hamdan

Souraya Mon Amour (Working Title) by Nicolas Khoury

The Woman I Never Called Mum by Sabrina Idiri Chemloul

Director:

Mehdi Hmili, Abdallah Chamekh

Producer:

Moufida Fedhila, Donato Rotunno

Company Profile:

Yol Film House is a leading Tunisian film production company that creates innovative and award-winning fiction and documentary films. The company's aim is to deliver impactful stories that inspire and engage audiences, pushing boundaries of traditional storytelling and exploring new creative forms of expression. The company supports talented individuals from Tunisia and the Arab world by providing co-production and distribution opportunities, allowing them to showcase their unique perspectives and stories to a global audience. The company's films have received recognition at esteemed film festivals such as the Locarno Film Festival, Cannes Film Festival, Red Sea Film Festival, Berlinale, Cairo International Film Festival, Zurich FF, and Sarajevo FF, showcasing the company's dedication to elevating the voices of talented filmmakers and delivering impactful stories.

Contact:

Moufida Fedhila

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Donato Rotunno

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Fouledh

Tunisia, France, Luxembourg, Qatar / Arabic

Genre: **Drama**

Themes: **Social Issues, Human Rights, Politics**

In the largest steel factory in Tunisia, two workers who suffer from psychological and physical disorders are haunted by the loss of their colleague. In a tense social and political atmosphere, their struggle will help them overcome their pain.



In the largest steel factory in Tunisia, on the edge of being privatised, two workers suffer from physical and psychological disorders after their close colleague died in the explosion of an oven in front of their eyes. While they try to overcome their trauma, we discover the intimacy of these two workers—Batfing, the young rap singer and drug addict who claims to see ghosts and Fethi, the former cinema projectionist who is losing his view.

Then begins a long descent into hell for the two workers, who gradually detach themselves from the real world and question the meaning of life and the sacrifice they make to provide for their families. Conceived as a long funeral poem and divided into three chapters—Hell, Purgatory and Paradise—the film follows two generations of steelworkers who survive in a factory of terror, waiting for a national renaissance.

Mehdi Hmili



Mehdi Hmili, a Tunisian director, producer, and screenwriter, trained in film in Paris. Alongside Moufida Fedhila, he founded "Yol Film

House," a Tunis-based production company that has produced award-winning fiction and documentary films screened in international festivals, including Cannes, Berlinale, Zurich Film Festival, Red Sea Film Festival. In 2019, he participated in La Fabrique Cinéma du Monde at Cannes Film Festival with the feature documentary, 'Fouledh'. His second feature film, 'Streams', which he directed and co-produced, premiered at the 74th Locarno Film Festival and earned critical acclaim, including Best Director Award at the 12th Malmö Arab Film Festival, Best Acting Performance at the 43rd Cairo International Film Festival, and Jury Award at the 27th Kolkata International Film Festival. Mehdi is a prominent figure in the new generation of Tunisian filmmakers and producers, and he is a major player in the current Tunisian cinematographic landscape. As a Torino Film Lab Alumni and showrunner of 'All About Adam', a true-story-inspired fiction, he continues to challenge filmmaking boundaries and captivate global audiences with compelling stories.

Moufida Fedhila



Moufida Fedhila is a Tunisian producer, director, and screenwriter. She produced and directed several award-winning fiction

and documentary films that were selected for prestigious international film festivals. Her latest production, 'Streams', directed by Mehdi Hmili, premiered at the Locarno Film Festival and won numerous awards for Best Film, Best Director, Best Acting Performance, Best Music and The Jury Award. Her film 'Aya' has also garnered critical acclaim, with over 200 festival selections and winning awards, including the Golden Tanit. The film has been acquired by Netflix. Moufida also serves as a jury member in several film festivals, including the 44th Cairo International Film Festival and Trophées Francophones du Cinéma. She has also chaired the short films competition at Gabes Film Festival and served as a jury member for Culture Solidaire (Kamel Lazaar Foundation). Her work has been the subject of academic studies and publications, including the 'Narratives of Social Protest: Personal and Political' at Columbia University (New York), and she is a Global Media Makers Alumna. Moufida Fedhila is a prominent figure in the Tunisian artistic and cultural landscape.

Donato Rotunno



Donato Rotunno was born in Luxembourg in 1966 and graduated from IAD in Belgium in 1992. He founded Tarantula Luxembourg in 1995,

through which, to date, he has produced over 30 feature films. His career as a film director started with his graduation film 'Nebbiolo Rosso' and continued with documentaries on specific themes to Luxembourg, including immigration ('Terra Mia Terra Nostra', 'Les Mesures Du Rectangle'), multi-cultural society ('Blà Blà Blà'); questioning the role of politics with 'André et Les Voix Dissidentes', and the

relationship between contemporary art and film through 'Making of a Picture, Landscape with a Corpse, Dreams Have a Language'. His first fiction film, 'In a Dark Place', won the award for best artistic contribution at the Lëtzeburger Filmpräis in 2007. His second film, 'Baby(A)Lone', an adaptation of the novel 'Amok' by Tullio Forgiarini, was selected in many international film festivals and was chosen to represent Luxembourg at the 88th Academy Awards for Best foreign language film award. 'Io Sto Bene' is his third feature.

Director's Note

'Fouledh' is a chiaroscuro film that blends hyper-realistic aesthetics with poetic sequences. The film delves deep into the psychological states of its characters, using texture, colour, and framing to reveal the subtleties of light and shadow. The camera work is assertive, with each shot meticulously framed to create a sense of tension and urgency. The characters enter and exit the frame, leaving a haunting void that reinforces the film's existential themes. The soundscape, a fusion of organic and mechanical sounds, heightens the sense of unease and underscores the surreal reality depicted in the film. Through the filmmaking process, the camera will capture these dualities, with the men in contrast to the factory. The contrast between the noise of the machines and the silence of the characters will capture their feelings and exhaustion with dignity and tenderness. 'Fouledh' is a unique and imaginative work that challenges the viewer's perception of reality.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$345,000**

Secured Financing: **\$275,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- AFAC Fund, Lebanon
- Al Jazeera Documentary, Qatar
- CNC, France
- CNCI, Tunisia
- Doha Film Institute, Qatar

- El Gouna Film Festival, Egypt
- Film Fund Luxembourg, Luxembourg
- OIF - Fonds Image de la Francophonie, France
- Tarantula Luxembourg, Luxembourg
- TV France 3 Paca, France
- Volte Film, France
- Yol Film House, Tunisia

Project Requirements:

- Broadcasters
- Co-producers
- Distributors
- Festivals
- Gap Funding
- Sales

Director / Screenwriter:

Mayar Hamdan

Producer:

Shaima Al-Tamimi

Contact:

Mayar Hamdan

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Shaima Al-Tamimi

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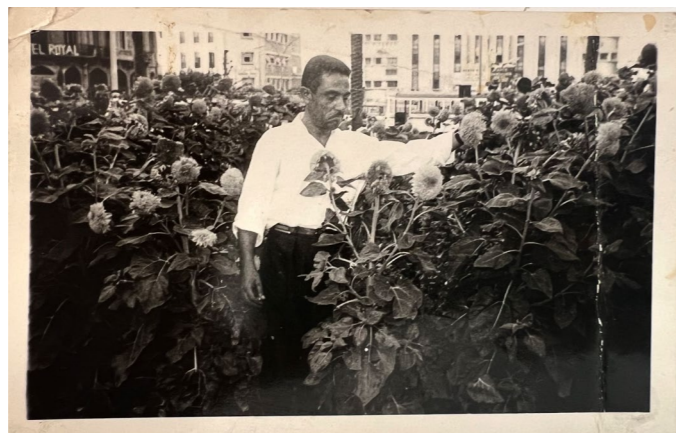
The Myth of Mahmoud

Qatar, Palestine / Arabic, English

Genre: **Comedy, Drama, History**Themes: **Art, Death, Immigration, Social Issues, Politics**

Developed as Part of the Documentary Lab with Rithy Panh

Mahmoud Said, a Palestinian man, dies at 93 years old after attempting to build a home in a transient city, Doha. His granddaughter, now struggling with her own displacement journey, sets out to make an absurdist architectural documentary that explores life, death, and displacement.



Mahmoud Said moved to Doha, Qatar, at the age of 24 from Gaza, Palestine, in the hopes of building a new home for himself and his family. Only to find that, like the Myth of Sisyphus, he is destined to roll the displacement boulder up the hill for the duration of his life. His granddaughter, Mayar Hamdan, attempts to document his displacement struggles in an architectural documentary, but soon enough realises that she herself is not prepared to flood the gates of her generational traumas.

Four years after Mayar gave up on the documentary and moved to Los Angeles, California, Mahmoud passed away at the age of 93, still struggling with his residency status. He passes down the boulder to his family, who now have to continue on to find a new home. Mayar sets off to continue her documentary—examining her own displacement struggles, the homeland, life, death, and the absurdity of it all.

Mayar Hamdan

A Palestinian transmedia storyteller and multiplatform filmmaker with a strong eye for design, Mayar

Hamdan has worked on a variety of projects, ranging from video games to films to video installations. Hamdan's work is defined as the interdisciplinary exploration of migration, displacement, and feminist themes expressed through the canopy of colour theory. She obtained an MFA in Art and Technology at the California Institute of the Arts. During her time at CalArts she worked on her debut interactive 360° feature film *Al-Mashata*. Hamdan worked for multiple mobile gaming companies as an interactive game writer and animator in Barcelona, Spain. Additionally, she worked on the Doha Film Institute's Film Training and Development team. During that time, Hamdan directed, wrote, developed, and produced several independent projects, most notably 'Beit Byoot' (2019), which can be streamed on SundanceTV, and 'Don't Get Too Comfortable' (2021), which premiered at the Venice International Film Festival. Hamdan is currently based in Los Angeles, CA, and is the Lead Narrative Designer at Lunacy Studios, an independent new media producer (Cinema, CR, AR, VR, & XR), Creative Director of FilmMena, & Northwestern University Studio20Q's Industry Advisor. She is currently in production on her first feature-length absurdist architectural documentary.

Shaima Al-Tamimi

Shaima Al-Tamimi is a Yemeni-East African visual storyteller based in the GCC. Her work is inspired by social and cultural

issues reflective of her own personal story. She explores themes relating to patterns and impacts of migration, identity, and culinary culture. Through the mediums of photography, film, and writing - and via a deeply-rooted documentary approach - Shaima merges historical and family archives with present-day portraits and visuals to create vivid narratives, offering a unique perspective on the life stories of her subjects. She was a PSJ 2020 Fellow at the Magnum Foundation, where she developed her multimedia film 'Don't Get Too Comfortable', which was nominated for the Orizzonti Award for Best Short film at Venice International Film Festival (La Biennale). It was the first Yemeni film to have participated at Venice to date (hopefully not the last). The film is an expansion of her long-term project 'As if we never came' supported by the Arab Documentary Photography program via AFAC. It has received additional support from Women Photograph + Nikon USA and the Prince Claus Fund. Her work has been featured in Vice Arabia, CNN, Hype Beast Art, Gulf Photo Plus, Art 29, JDEED Magazine, Khaleejjesque Magazine, and Doha News.

Director's Note

The main theme of this film is absurdism, from the visual aesthetic of the film to the philosophical ideology behind it. When I think of my grandfather's 60+ year journey in Doha, I think of Albert Camus' 'The Myth of Sisyphus' wherein Camus uses the Greek legend of Sisyphus who is condemned by the gods for eternity to repeatedly roll a boulder up a hill only to have it roll down again once he got it to the top. He uses this as a metaphor for the individual's persistent struggle against the essential absurdity of life. If, as for Sisyphus, suicide is not a possible response, the only alternative is to rebel by rejoicing in the act of rolling the boulder up the hill. Camus further argues that with the joyful acceptance of the struggle against defeat, the individual gains definition and identity. As my family moves out of their Doha home, I find myself questioning the curse of being Palestinian, whether we should continue to roll the boulder up the hill and all stay together in the transient city, like my grandfather, or if we should instead choose nationalistic suicide and become citizens of other countries and never live as a whole once again.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$200,000**Secured Financing: **\$7,000**

Project Requirements:

- Co-producers
- Development Funds
- Creative Advice
- Financing
- VOD Platforms

Director / Screenwriter:

Nicolas Khoury

Contact:

Nicolas Khoury

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Souraya Mon Amour

(Working Title)

Lebanon, Qatar / French, Arabic

Genre: **Biography, Psychological**

Themes: **Art, Death, Identity, Social Issues, War, Exile, Relations**

An introspection of Souraya Baghdadi through her relationship with her deceased husband, Maroun Baghdadi.



Excerpts from the film 'Little Wars', an old correspondence, and other family and personal archives intertwined with virtual zoom meetings of the present are used to look into the dynamic of the relationship that unites Souraya Baghdadi to her late husband, Maroun Baghdadi. Souraya entered the world of cinema in 1981 when she played the leading role in the film 'Little Wars' by Maroun, selected at Cannes in 1982. After the film, they got married and exiled to Paris, where they remained together until the mysterious death of the famous Lebanese director in December 1993. Today, thirty years later, this film portrays Souraya through the presence of Maroun in her life but also through his absence.

Nicolas Khoury



Nicolas Khoury graduated in film and audiovisual studies from the Lebanese Academy of Fine Arts (ALBA) in 2010. He is an

independent documentary filmmaker and film editor living and working in Beirut, Lebanon. His filmography includes three independent medium-length films that won awards at multiple festivals. In 2018, his short independent documentary 'Résonances' won the best short documentary at It's All True Film Festival, Brazil and the Tanit D'or of the best short documentary in Journées Cinématographiques de Carthage, Tunis. 'Fiasco' is his first long documentary that premiered in CPH:DOX and won two awards at Cairo International Film Festival 2021.

Director's Note

The human and personal experience of Souraya's life echoed many questions in my own personal life. By diving into the relationship with her late husband, Maroun Baghdadi and all its complexities, I came to discover a new aspect of the civil war in Lebanon. I was born in the early 90s when Maroun died. So there was the period of Maroun's life, my current period and the only connection to him; Souraya, an artist who is the centre of the story because of her unique experience. The documentary will also tackle various dimensions ranging from Souraya herself, to her relationship with Maroun but also the social and cultural dimension between France and Lebanon, the historical dimension of the war in Lebanon, its consequences after 30 years while tackling global subjects such as art, cinema, war, trauma, exile, loneliness, forgiveness, body and meditation...

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$375,000**

Secured Financing: **\$7,500**

Project Requirements:

- Co-producers
- Development Funds
- Financing
- Pitching Advice
- Pre-production Advice

Director:
Sabrina Idiri Chemloul

Producer:
Delphine Morel

Company Profile:

TS Productions has been producing fiction and documentary films since 1986. The company has already produced 60 documentaries. TS productions received the gold FIPA 2018 for the film 'En équilibre' by A. Bassis and P. Auffray and the audiovisual prize SCAM 2018 for 'City of Dreams' by S. Faigenbaum. Two of its productions were recently screened at the Vision du reel festival; 'Home Sweet Home' by Nadine Naous and 'De Cendres et de Braises' by Marion Ott. The long-feature documentary 'Les Enfants Terribles' by Ahmet Cupur received the jury prize at Vision du Reel in 2021.

Contact:
Delphine Morel
dmorel@tsproductions.net

The Woman I Never Called Mum

'Celle à qui je n'ai jamais dit maman' / Algeria, France, Qatar / French, Arabic
Genre: **Biography, History**
Themes: **Childhood, Identity, Immigration, Women's Issues**

Fatima (73) is retired and lives alone in Oran, Algeria. She's never done the right thing. She had a daughter out of wedlock and could not keep her. And, strangely, Fatima can't speak Arabic. So she has built her own bubble in this Algeria she still loves dearly. Fatima is my mother. She is that woman I never called mum.



Because I was born out of wedlock, my birth was kept secret initially. I was raised by my aunt in France until I was 10. Then I was taken back to Algeria. I thought it was only for the summer, but I was to live there for five years with my mother and grandmother. Then I was sent back to France when I was 15. From then on, my relationship with my mother became one of letter-writing across land and sea. It went on for years until Skype replaced our correspondence. While my mother has lived like a prisoner in her apartment in Oran, I have lived wherever I decide—with or without a residence permit.

To make this film, I will move back into my mother's apartment for a few months. Here, where she has lived since her teens, I film our relationship. Our communication seeks to strike a balance between her voice, which wavers, and mine, which sometimes takes up too much room. I parse my memories of the few years we lived together. And I relive that difficult time when I was an unhappy child who rejected her. My project is that she should finally tell me about her life, her secret pregnancy in Algiers, and why she chose separation. As an artist, I want to rewrite our fragmented story using letters, old photographs and my personal film archives.

Sabrina Idiri Chemloul



A member of the Experimental Cinema Workshop (L'Etna), Sabrina Idiri Chemloul directed her first short film in 2002 and pursued her

career in Canada and the United States, where she directed another short film. She collaborated as a script supervisor on various independent feature films and television shows while starting to write her own screenplays. Her first feature screenplay received a rewriting grant from the French Centre National de la Cinématographie and was further developed at the screenwriting residencies Atelier Grand Nord (Canada, 2016) and Méditalents (France, Morocco, 2016). She showcased a video installation as part of a contemporary art exhibition at La Maison des Arts, from June to November 2021, in Malakoff, South Paris. Her last short film is currently screened in the short film program Court-Circuit by Arte, France.

Delphine Morel



Delphine Morel studied political sciences at the I.E.P of Paris and screenwriting in Los Angeles at UCLA. A producer and

filmmaker since 1997, Delphine has a track record for universal stories told by foreign directors. She has produced over 40 documentaries for TV and Cinema, which have been shown in such festivals as IDFA, DokLeipzig, Cinema du Réel, Viennale, IFF Rotterdam, and she has also directed 5 documentaries. She joined TS Productions in 2009 and collaborates with the producer C. Loiseau.

Director's Note

My work investigates the mother-daughter bond and separation through family archives and video diaries, to articulate the unspoken. By entwining traces of our past lives – be they letters, photographs or footage – with our conversations so as to bring forth the important stages of Fatima's life, the film becomes a meeting place for fragments of life which, though they may be far removed in time, place and experience, nevertheless resonate. Paths cross, separate, and meet again. Birth out of wedlock is the ultimate fault in a society which functions with the institution of marriage as its central pillar. But what also emerges through Fatima is the movement of Algerian society as it slowly feels its way towards its own sense of freedom. Together, through the force of our desire for love and peace, we reclaim the story of our relationship from the damage caused by social taboos. Day by day, the outlines of a new territory emerge, the territory of Fatima's life and mine. It is border-free, a poetic geography of intimacy, where the bond between mother and daughter heals and expresses itself free of old wounds.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$250,000**
Secured Financing: **\$7,500**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- AFAC, Lebanon
- CNC, France
- Doha Film Institute, Qatar

Project Requirements:

- Co-producers
- Creative Advice
- Pre-production Advice
- Pre-sales
- TV Broadcasters

In Production

Feature Narrative

Sink by Zain Duraie

The Station by Sara Ishaq

Thank You for Banking with Us! by Laila Abbas

Director / Screenwriter:

Zain Duraie

Producer:

Alaa Alasad

Company Profile:

Tabi360 was founded in 2018 by producer Alaa Alasad and writer/director Khalid Abu Sharif who partnered with a clear vision; creating a film industry in Jordan by telling local stories and supporting local talents. Tabi360 local and regional producers have worked on many projects across the media spectrum, from documentary to fiction, digital content to animation, and everything in between. His latest work 'Television' was nominated for the Student Oscars. Other projects include 'Give Up The Ghost' by Zain Duraie, which premiered at the Venice International Film Festival in 2019 and won Best Arab Short Film at the El Gouna film festival. Presently, Tabi360 producers are co-producing multiple short films and documentaries, such as 'From The Mountain' by Faisal Attrache, which will have its MENA premiere at the Red Sea Film Festival. Tabi360 added value comes into play with their continuous partnership alongside the leading environmental film consultancy in the region, Greener Screen, which helps tabi360 producers implement green practices in production, and in "planet-placement".

Contact:

Alaa Alasad

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Sink

Jordan, France, Sweden, Qatar / Arabic

Genre: **Drama**

Themes: **Motherhood, Psychological, Coming-of-Age**

Suffocated by motherhood and her mundane life, Nadia's life begins to slowly change when she finds herself sinking into her teenage son's undiagnosed mental illness.



Nadia (40) is a wife and mother to three children. Through her seemingly perfect life, she struggles with her marriage and identity, which also causes her to be distant from her role as a mother. Nadia has a close friendship with her eldest son Basil (17), a high school senior known to be at the top of his class. He's always been peculiar and antisocial. One day, Basil is triggered at school and gets into serious trouble, resulting in his suspension. Nadia is on the verge of burnout as she tries to find the energy to care for him in her own way, ensuring he focuses on his health and exams.

Things progress for the worse as she juggles between managing her own self-crisis and his dark, playful state of mind. Only to find herself slowly sinking into his undiagnosed mental illness while her denial of the truth about him grows further. As Basil's mental health deteriorates, his manic and elated moods push his mother to experience beautiful feelings of liberation that she hasn't felt in a very long time, prodding her to reconnect with herself. Soon, the situation begins to spin out of control.

Zain Duraie



Zain Duraie is a writer/director. Her debut film 'Horizon' had its world premiere in 2013 at Palm Springs Shorts Fest and won

Best of the Fest Selects. Her last short film, 'Give Up the Ghost' was officially selected in 2019 at the La Biennale Di Venezia main shorts competition and won El Gouna Prize for Best Arab short and the Vimeo Staff Pick award at the Palm Springs Shorts Fest.

Alaa Alasad



Alaa Alasad is the founder of Tabi360, a production house where he produces and co-produces fiction and non-fiction films. In his career,

he has worked with many renowned filmmakers, including Academy-Award-winning producer Andres Vicente Gomez on the Saudi-Spanish production 'Born A King'. Alasad has several notable credits as a producer, such as 'Give Up The Ghost', a short film which premiered at Venice International Film Festival, and 'Television' which is currently nominated for the Student Oscars. His other films toured prestigious film festivals like San Sebastian and Tallinn. His latest commercial work was for the Saudi remake of the Spanish film 'Campeones', which hit theatres in 2021.

Director's Note

No parent in this world is naturally prepared to admit that their child is suffering from a serious mental condition. Unfortunately, we are still living in a world where mental illness is a major stigma. This is a story that explores the love between a mother and her child, and the healing that is found through acceptance and nurturing hope, no matter how dark it gets. I chose to comment on motherhood and explore a thin line between the mother's own self-crisis and mild depression, along with her son's serious and undiagnosed mental illness, while his deteriorating situation somehow allows her a sense of freedom and a feeling of vitality that she hadn't felt in a long time. From my own experience, I've found that love and acceptance are the only way out of this ordeal. It sheds light on the importance of getting psychiatric help for adolescents, despite the apparent risks, which are, more often than not, overpowered by the risks of inaction. Ultimately, this story speaks for families and mothers in the Arab world who regularly deal with this without acknowledging or helping their kids in the right way.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$1,200,000**
Secured Financing: **\$250,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- Jordan Film Fund, Jordan
- Malmo Arab Film Festival, Sweden
- Swedish Film Institute, Sweden

Project Requirements:

- Co-producers
- Festivals
- Financing
- Marketing Advice
- International Sales

Director / Screenwriter:

Sara Ishaq

Screenwriter / Producer:

Nadia Eliewat

Company Profile:

Screen Project is a Film & TV Production Company based in Amman, Jordan, established in (2015) by creative producer, screenwriter and story editor Nadia Eliewat. Nadia handpicks stories from all over the Arab world, working closely and creatively with writers and directors from the early development stages until distribution. Screen Project is well connected with a diverse network of worldwide professionals, cultivated through Nadia's various experiences in the region as a filmmaker, a university professor and a consultant for Dubai Film Market – the business and trade hub of Dubai International Film Festival.

Setara Films is the Yemen-based film production company of director Sara Ishaq, through which she co-produces her own films. The first production of Setara Films was Sara's Oscar-nominated short documentary, 'Karama Has No Walls' (2012) and award-winning feature documentary, 'The Mulberry House' (2013), as well as Sara's independent WIP films, 'Sheba's Daughter', 'The Station' and 'Untitled Yemen Project' (co-directed with Sonia Kennebeck).

Contact:

Nadia Eliewat

neliewat@screenproject.net

The Station

'Al Mahattah' / Yemen, Jordan, France, The Netherlands, Qatar/ Arabic

Genre: **Drama**

Themes: **Childhood, Social Issues, Human Rights, Women's Issues**

In a war-torn village in Yemen, pacifist Layal runs a women-only petrol station to shield her younger brother from the war. The unexpected arrival of their estranged sister puts the siblings at risk and pushes their relationship to a breaking point.



Layal runs a women-only petrol station in a gender-segregated, war-torn village in Yemen. It's the inherited home in which Layal shields her 12-year-old brother Laith from recruitment and the war raging outside the station's gates. Prepubescent Laith, however, is growing eager to escape the suffocating and emasculating walls of this women-only world. Today, Layal's estranged older sister Zainab arrives and poses a threat to Layal's home and fuels Laith's desire to become a man in the 'real world'. Challenged by the demands of impatient women customers and Laith's ever-growing eagerness to leave the station, the relationship between the three siblings reaches a breaking point.

Sara Ishaq



Sara Ishaq is a Yemeni-Scottish filmmaker who received an Oscar and BAFTA nominations for her short documentary,

'Karama Has No Walls' (2012), while she was studying for an MFA in Film Directing at the Edinburgh College of Art (2011). Her second award-winning documentary feature, 'The Mulberry House' (2013) premiered at (IDFA) and was released both theatrically and aired on Al Jazeera English. Sara is developing her first fiction feature, 'The Station', which was presented at the L'Atelier at the Cannes Film Festival in 2020. Sara is the co-founder of Comra Academy, a Yemen-based film foundation for creative film training, from which some of Yemen's most exciting new film talent has emerged since 2017. In 2022, Sara joined the International Coalition for Filmmakers at Risk in Amsterdam as coordinator, an organisation founded by the International Documentary Festival of Amsterdam, International Festival of Rotterdam and European Film Academy in 2020.

Nadia Eliewat



Nadia Eliewat is a Jordanian producer and screenwriter. In 2015, she established Screen Project production company in Jordan. In 2022, she joined

the UAE-based Ta Films as a CEO and Creative Producer to build the company's slate alongside the industry's veterans Sangeeta Desai and Shivani Pandya. Nadia is best known for producing and co-writing the Lebanese box-office hit 'Mahbas (Solitaire)' (2016), with over 110,000 admissions in the MENA release, the Jordanian film 'When Monaliza Smiled' (2012) and the first OSN original feature 'Yellow Bus' (2023). In development is the Yemeni feature 'The Station', by Sara Ishaq which has received several funds, including HBF, DFI, Jordan Film Fund and was part of Cannes' L'Atelier (2020). And two feature films by the Saudi filmmaker Mujtaba Saeed, 'Drowning' and 'Mecca-Berlin'. In 2017, Nadia managed Dubai Film Market; the business hub of Dubai Film Festival. She was also an Associate Professor of Film at the American University in Dubai (2010-2017).

Director's Note

During the early months of Yemen's war in 2015, my sister's and I frequented a petrol station in the heart of my hometown, Sana'a, which supplied fuel to women only. This seemingly progressive initiative turned out to be a measure to keep women segregated from men during long hours of waiting. It was in this bustling, women-only microcosm of the Station—where women from various backgrounds socialised, shared food and car-schooled their children—that I heard diverse stories of war life, economic struggles, political division leading to divorce and 'martyred' relatives, as well as positive stories of survival, weddings and births. Inspired by this unique setup and stories of incredible resilience, the concept for 'the Station' was born. 'The Station' is not as much a film about war as it is about its consequences and how economic desperation, social pressure, patriarchy, ideological indoctrination and political polarisation can tear apart even the most precious human relationships. Through the story of three siblings—a drama woven together with moments of humour—we tackle serious universal issues of child recruitment, motherhood and dealing with loss through the perspective of women and young boys who continue to live and laugh even after experiencing unimaginable loss.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$1,500,000**
Secured Financing: **\$300,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Asia Pacific Screen Awards, Asia Pacific
- BADYA Palm Hills Award | Cairo Film Connection, Egypt
- Cinema Emerging Talent Award | Holland Film Meeting, The Netherlands
- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- Hubert Bals Fund + Europe, The Netherlands
- Hubert Bals Fund + Netherlands Film Fund, The Netherlands
- Hubert Bals Fund | Script and Project Development Bright Future, The Netherlands
- Jordan Film Fund, Jordan
- Wouter Barendrecht Award | CineMart, The Netherlands

Project Requirements:

- Casting / Actors
- Financing
- Gap Funding
- Pre-sales
- Sales

Director / Screenwriter:

Laila Abbas

Producer:

Roshanak Behesht Nedjad

Company Profile:

Berlin and Leipzig based, the award-winning In Good Company was founded in 2015 and focuses on international co-productions, aiming to create films that entertain on a smart level. Therefore, storytelling is in the foreground, as well as an understanding of who the audiences of the respective films are and how to reach them. We develop in German and English language, but that does not exclude anything, if the story fits. In Good Company has an extensive international network within the film industry that guarantees additional resources and access to talents and financing.

Contact:

Roshanak Behesht Nedjad

roshi@ingoodcompany.de

Thank You for Banking with Us!

Germany, Palestine, Qatar / Arabic

Genre: **Drama, Comedy**

Themes: **Women's Issues**

In a legal system that favours men, specifically economically, two bickering and poor sisters overcome their differences in order to beat the system. They successfully concoct a scheme and finally get a chance to start over.



The father of the poor and bickering sisters Mariam and Noura dies and unexpectedly leaves a large sum of money in the bank. According to the law, their brother can claim half of the money because he's the male sibling. Enraged by the injustice, the sisters decide to put their differences aside and join forces in concocting a scheme to get their hands on the money before their brother finds out about their father's death.

Laila Abbas



Laila Abbas started her career in television. With a degree in Business Administration, she dealt

with the huge responsibilities of the TV world for over five years. But her passion to tell stories drove her to pursue writing and filmmaking. She was awarded the Said Foundation scholarship to do her Masters in Film & TV Producing at Royal Holloway University in the UK. Laila then worked as an instructor at the Institute of Modern Media at Al Quds University for six years and also worked with multiple organizations as a screenwriting and filmmaking trainer.

Roshanak Behesht Nedjad



Roshanak has produced films since 1999, with over 40 international awards, among them the German Film Award in

Gold, the Golden Leopard and the Prix Europe Iris. In 2012, Roshanak ventured into Serious Games for children and won the 2016 German Computer Game Award for Best Serious Game. Under the label In Good Company, she started a new enterprise with a focus on international co-productions, with an emphasis on international features, aiming to entertain on a smart level. Roshanak also works as an expert and consultant for various institutions and training organisations such as EAVE, Berlinale, DFFB, Cannes et al. She is a member of the German as well as the European Film Academy.

Director's Note

Heist film? Drama? Comedy? All of it! Mariam and Noura don't exist in reality. But to me, they're living and breathing creatures. Neither polished nor glamorous, honest and politically and religiously incorrect, they're average women with real-life qualities. I feel very close to them because they are like my sisters and me. We are faced with a society where women are not equal. In families with both sons and daughters, the male gets double what the female gets. That's why the women in this story have to take matters into their own hands. If real women can't beat the system, let fictional women lead the way. Although this story could very well take place in any other Muslim country, being set in Palestine adds another dimension. Palestine brings its own absurdities, complications and farcicality. Palestinian women and men are equal in the eyes of occupation but unequal in the eyes of Palestinian law. When Mariam tells her brother she's thinking of divorcing her husband, he responds by saying the country is going through rough times. The two sisters embark on a desperate journey to find a man's voice. In the end, they find their own voice.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$1,079,345**
Secured Financing: **\$780,523**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- AFAC, Lebanon
- ART, MENA
- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- Farbfilm, Germany
- Filmkraft, Norway
- Hubert-Bals-Plus-Europe, The Netherlands
- MDM - Middle German FilmFund, Germany
- Metafora, Qatar/Turkey
- Palestine Film Lab, Palestine
- Red Sea Fund, KSA

Project Requirements:

- Distributors
- Financing
- Gap Funding
- VOD Platforms

In Production

Feature Documentary or Essay

West of May by Sarah Srage

Women of My Life by Zahraa Ghandour

Director:
Sarah Srage

Producer:
Fabrice Marache

Company Profile:

As a cooperative film production company, L'atelier Documentaire favours the expression of authors driven by a strong cinematographic, social or political commitment. The Sarl/Scic documentary workshop was created in 2007. We produce arthouse films for television and cinema. Some productions include, 'A pas Aveugles' by Christophe Cognet (2021), Berlinale (Forum) and Berlinale Summer Special, CPH:DOX (Copenhagen); General Assembly documentaire (Lussas), FIDMarseille); MKR Award for Best documentary; Special Mention Jihlava Documentary Film Festival; 'Le Temps des Forêts' by François-Xavier Drouet (2018), Grand Prix de la Semaine de la critique Festival de Locarno, Prix du public au Verzio human rights festival (Hongrie), Meilleur documentaire Tournai Ramdam Festival (Belgique), Grand Prix Festival della Lessinia (Vérone), Meilleur documentaire au Mediteraneo festival (Italie), Mention spéciale au Festival; 'Signes de Nuit à Berlin Iranian' by Mehran Tamadon (2014), Grand Prix de la Compétition internationale à Cinéma du Réel, Festival de Berlin (forum), Prix Buyens-Chagoll à Visions du Réel (Nyon), Prix spécial du jury à Documenta Madrid, Prix du public aux rencontres cinématographiques de Gardanne, Mention spéciale aux Rencontres de Cerbère.

Contact:
Fabrice Marache
contact@atelier-documentaire.fr

West of May

'A l'ouest de mai' / Lebanon, France, Qatar / Arabic

Genre: **Comedy, Drama, History, War**

Themes: **Politics, Social Issues, Violence, Women's Issues, Religion**

A chronicle following the fate of a fisherman's family in the heart of a working-class neighbourhood in Beirut. Behind the affection that unites this home, and despite ideological disputes, 'West of May' narrates the fractures that run through a contemporary Lebanese society.



In 'West of May', I want to describe Lebanon through the portrait of the Alayli family. This family, from the working class neighbourhood of Aiché Bakkar in Beirut, is challenged by the surges of the country's contemporary history—the economic crisis, the civil society uprising, and more recently, the explosion of August 4, 2020, which devastated part of the city. The strong bonds between father, mother and son are tested by ideological discord. In my eyes, the Alayli family is a synthesis of this country.

The battle of Sakiet Al Janzir in 2008 deeply affected Naknouk's son, Ahmad, to the point that as an adult, and despite the chagrin and opposition of his father and mother, converted to Shi'ism and developed a fascination for Hezbollah. He turned against his father and his original confession, Sunnism. Sawsan, the mother, finds herself between the father and the son, protecting the latter against the former but taking a political stand against both. She defends the values of the Lebanese civil society. Despite the deep political and ideological disagreements, father, mother, and son continue to live together, under the same roof, in joy and good humour.

Sarah Srage



Sarah Srage was born in Beirut in 1986. After obtaining her French baccalaureate in literature, she studied visual

arts at ALBA. In 2007, she obtained a scholarship for the Fusion Arts program, organised by the US Embassy in Lebanon, in screenwriting, at the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles. She worked in television as a director in Lebanon. In 2009, she moved to Paris to continue her studies at the Beaux-Arts de Paris in the studio of Elsa Cayo. In 2012, Sarah trained for a year in documentary cinema in Ardèche, at the Lussas School. She graduated from the Beaux-Arts de Paris in 2014 with the congratulations of the jury. Her career in Lebanon, in terms of art and cinema, enabled her to direct her first film 'Children of Beirut' (2017). It was selected at the Cinéma du Réel festival, in the First Films competition and was showcased in several festivals. In 2020, Sarah became a visual arts teacher in the Paris region and is part of the collective Les Marchandes de Tapis.

Fabrice Marache



After studying Cinema and Political Sciences, Fabrice Marache became interested in documentaries, first as a director before setting

up a cooperative production company dedicated to the genre in 2007—L'atelier Documentaire. He produced, among other things: 2022—'Barail' by Denis Cointe FID, General States of Lussas. 2020—'Ahlam by Sahlan' by Lucas Vernier, What remains of Syria before the disaster? Audience Award and Diversity Prize at Traces de vie (Clermont Ferrand), Cinémas du Réel (Paris), Documed. 2018—'Les Proies' by Marine de Contes, 1st Prize in the French competition at the Cinémas du Réel festival (Paris/Beaubourg), Viennale, True/False (USA) Sheffield Doc Festival, Frames of representation (London). 2017—'Children of Beirut' by Sarah Srage, with the support of Nouvelle-Aquitaine, the CNC, and the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture, Cinémas du réel (Paris/Beaubourg), Etats généraux du film documentaire (Lussas), and AFAC (Beirut).

Director's Note

I want to film the Alayli family in their most intimate moments, to bring out the particularity of each member within the family circle. I will be able to film this chronicle very closely in their conflicting relationships because I share a great deal of trust with every member. In 'West of May', I want to forge a shared ground where the Alayli family and I try to overcome our social and political differences. A closed-door setting worthy of a Shakespearean tragedy. The classic disagreements within a family are amplified by the explosive situation in Lebanon. Will they be able to continue their political cohabitation under the same roof? Is it still possible to live together in a country so torn by opposing ideologies? This is also my country, though I view it from a distance. Of course, the distance does not lessen the pain of seeing loved ones fall apart. But it does protect and enlighten. How can I take a clear view of a situation that's becoming increasingly distressing?

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$150,000**
Secured Financing: **\$65,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- CNC, France
- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine, France
- Tenk Platform, France

Project Requirements:

- Broadcasters
- Distributors
- Festivals
- Financing
- Pre-sales

Director / Producer:
Zahraa Ghandour

Producer:
Hanna Markkanen

Company Profile:

Karada Films is an emerging film production company in Baghdad focused on narrative and documentary cinematic projects as well as old film rehabilitation in Iraq and abroad. It was established by Zahraa Ghandour, Tarek Turkey, Samir Jamal Al-Din, and Ali Al-Fatlawi. The four partners have worked over the past decade to achieve different international cinematic projects and finally met to establish Karada Films, which contributes to the role in the renaissance of Iraqi cinema today and aims to create original stories with local creative experiences while ensuring a pure identity in various films. The company works with joint production in Arab, European countries, and the United States.

Since 1994 and in love with local stories with a global impact, we have survived only by producing high-end documentaries. Films that engage audiences all over the world. In an era where traditional media is in a deep crisis, the genre of documentaries is stronger and more needed than ever. We feel that energy from the daily emails, tweets, and posts we receive. WG Film has extensive experience working with films as a tool to create change. Films produced by WG Film have been selected for festivals like IDFA, Sundance, Berlinale, Cannes, Hot Docs, SXSW, and CPH:DOX.

Contact:
Zahraa Ghandour
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Women of My Life

Iraq, Sweden, Qatar / Arabic

Genre: **Drama**

Themes: **Death, Women's Issues, Violence, Politics**

Director Zahraa witnessed violence against women from early on. In a dreamy journey today, she interrogates the past in search of a lost childhood friend, confronts fears and nightmares, and works with other women to imagine a better future.



Zahraa (30) revisits an incident that took place at her aunt Hayat's (65) house in Baghdad twenty years ago when her childhood friend Noor disappeared. She witnessed Noor being violently dragged out to the street and later found out that she was abandoned in front of a mosque and left to an unknown destiny. Zahraa embarks on a search to find Noor after two decades—confronting her fears, secrets, and the possible association of her aunt Hayat with the crime, the midwife who helped bring both girls into the world.

She digs deep in Hayat's house, where thousands of babies were born, hoping to strike a memory that leads her closer to Noor. Through the layered search, Zahraa must navigate her trauma and reality where the death and disappearance of women are happening daily in Iraq. She challenges reality by imagining a life free of fear and raises questions: How possible is it to find Noor; is she even alive? How does one break out of this cycle of fear? The story takes different routes between realist and imaginary worlds to draw a personal cinematic portrait of the state of women in a traumatised and repressed society.

Zahraa Ghandour



Zahraa is a filmmaker, producer, and independent actor. She is the executive producer and co-founder of Karada

films production company based in Baghdad. Starting her career as a writer, TV presenter, and TV documentaries director, she also built a freelance career as a director and producer for the past decade for formats by UNDP, Al Araby TV, BBC Arabic, Breakthrough Media Productions, and others. Years later, she successfully started acting, winning several international awards for roles in productions like 'The Journey', 'Baghdad In My Shadow', and 'Baghdad Central' on Channel 4 and Hulu. She has written and directed 'I Dream', an experimental short film. In 2018, Zahraa attended intensive courses at MET Film School in Berlin. She is one of the International Emerging Film Talents Association's (IEFTA) Global Film Expression initiative winners in 2021.

Hanna Markkanen



Hanna is a producer at WG Film in Malmö, Sweden. Since joining WG in 2018, she has worked closely on the entire slate

of WG's projects together with producer Margarete Jangård. Her first film as a producer, 'Daughters' by Jenifer Malmqvist, premiered at CPH:DOX and Visions du Reel 2022. She is currently working on several projects in development and production as a producer. Hanna has also been working as a festival programmer and coordinator at Savonlinna International Nature Film Festival in Finland since 2016. Before joining WG Film, she was a production assistant at the Peabody Award-Winning documentary non-profit the Why Foundation, working with Mette Hoffmann Meyer, and a festival assistant at the Edinburgh International Film Festival. She has an MA in Film & Media Studies from the University of Copenhagen and an undergraduate degree in Film & TV Studies from the University of Glasgow.

Director's Note

This story has been living with me since the day I was born. It kept on triggering me throughout the years. I believe everything I have undergone in life thus far has brought me to make this film today, to tell my own story stepping from all that I had to carry on my shoulder of years of fear. It's challenging to make a film about our reality as women in Iraq. We have only raised our voice to call for life for a short while, yet our calls are confronted with rejection. Making this film will honour our vision and our experience. The creative team working on this film is a local Iraqi one. We all belong to an emerging generation in Iraqi filmmaking, and we are building our experiences together, to express ourselves and produce a representation of the identity which we feel is the last of what has been left after all the crises. I feel privileged to be able to share my story and to have the trust of other women with theirs. I'm also aware that it's a huge responsibility. This is not a popular project nor a safe one, but it is a necessary one.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$437,337**
Secured Financing: **\$99,500**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- AFAC Development Fund, Lebanon
- DMZ Industry, South Korea
- French Institute Iraq, Iraq
- IMS International Media Support, Denmark
- Inmaat Foundation Film Development Grant, USA
- Malmö Arab Film Festival SFI Development Award, Sweden
- MAQAM Production, Egypt/Iraq
- Red Sea Development Fund, KSA

Project Requirements:

- Broadcasters
- Editing Advice
- Financing
- Marketing Advice
- Post-production Advice

Work-in-Progress

Feature Narrative

Dead Dog by Sarah Francis

Motherhood by Meryam Joobeur

Director / Screenwriter / Producer:

Sarah Francis

Producer:

Lara Abou Saifan

Company Profile:

Placeless Films is committed to producing and supporting short & feature films that bring social and/or human issues to the fore. We will develop and produce projects that have the potential to create, nurture and grow positive change in the world. Films produced/co-produced by Placeless Films and Lara Abou Saifan include: 'Super. Full.' by Niam Itani (Venice 2011), 'Transit Game' by Anna Fahr (2014), 'Twice Upon A Time' by Niam Itani (Edinburgh 2016), 'Tshweesh' by Feyrouz Serhal (Locarno 2017), and 'Counting Tiles' by Cynthia Choucair (Rotterdam 2018).

Contact:

Lara Abou Saifan
Lsaifan@gmail.com

Dead Dog

Lebanon, France, Qatar / Arabic

Genre: **Drama**

Themes: **Immigration, Women's Issues, Social Issues**

Temporarily reunited in the same space, a middle-aged couple faces the dysfunctional status of their relationship and their inability to break the cycle they've become trapped in.



Aida, a 47-year-old woman living in Beirut, learns that Walid, her husband who lives and works abroad, is secretly returning to his empty family house in the mountains. Taken aback, she decides to surprise him there. Temporarily reunited in that space, they both hide things from each other and face the dysfunctional status of their relationship. A narrator punctuates the depiction of these four days as if describing an archive found in the character's belongings.

Sarah Francis



Sarah Francis grew up and studied in Beirut. She worked as a film director, editor and content researcher for various production companies and

regional museums. In 2013 she produced and directed her first feature film, 'Birds of September', which premiered in the CPH:DOX main competition and then screened in numerous festivals and museums (Art of the Real Lincoln Center (NY), Stedelijk Museum (NL), Doxa (Ca), DMZ Docs (South Korea), etc.) and received several awards. Her works also include short films and videos ('Nawal's Rituals', produced by Ashkal Alwan, 2014). Her second feature film 'As Above so below' (2020) premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2020. 'Dead Dog' is her third feature film, and the closest to the fiction genre.

Lara Abou Saifan



Lara Abou Saifan is a Palestinian/Lebanese producer, line producer, production manager and content producer based in Beirut.

She holds credits in major regional and international networks. Holding a BA in Communication Arts, she is also a graduate of several competitive creative producing programs like Eurodoc, the Rotterdam Producers Lab, Produire au Sud, Global Media Makers through Film Independent in Los Angeles, among others. Lara produces through her company Placeless Films, and also alone.

Director's Note

'Dead Dog' is the intimate story of a dysfunctional couple and their inability to communicate or to make important decisions. The film depicts the fallout of a momentum. Its mood is that of a melody played by one single instrument. What happens when a situation that has once reached its peak tumbles down and repeats itself until exhaustion, without panache but with acceptance? Brief flare-ups of anger, jolts of hope, risible sentimental outbursts. There may also remain tenderness. Resignation too. Dead Dog is melancholic, minimalist and sometimes absurd. While the characters face their issues with seriousness, sometimes in a desperate way. Is life 'big', and does it contain infinite possibilities, or is it small, very small? To which extent are we the masters of our own lives? Are they brave or cowardly? Could they have been happier? The characters are sometimes strong and sometimes pathetic. After the defeats and victories of the past decades, what can they possibly hope for? Here, a personal, silent evaluation takes place.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$315,415**
Secured Financing: **\$104,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Beirut DC, Lebanon
- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- Fonds Image de La Francophonie, France
- Little Lizard Films, Lebanon

Project Requirements:

- Distributors
- Festivals
- Financing
- Gap Funding
- Sales

Director / Screenwriter:
Meryam Joobeur

Producer:
Nadim Cheikhrouha,
Marcia Gracia Turgeon

Contact:
Nadim Cheikhrouha
nadim.cheikhrouha@gmail.com

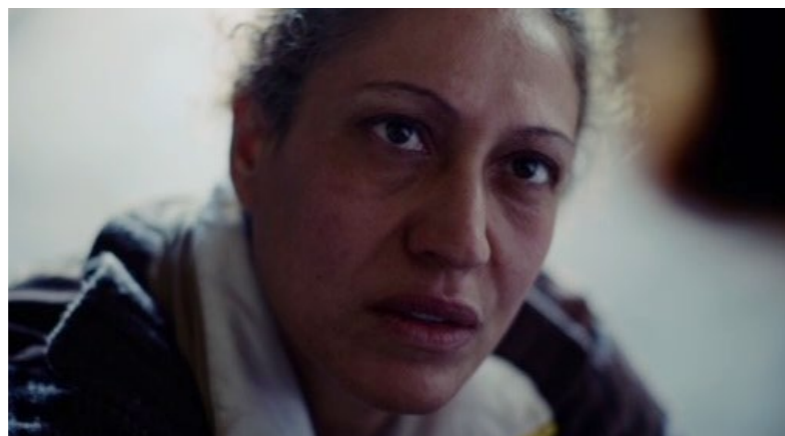
Marcia Gracia Turgeon
maria@midilanuit.com

Sales Agent:
Luxbox

Motherhood

Tunisia, France, Canada, Qatar / Arabic
Genre: **Drama, Mystery**
Themes: **Women's Issues, Youth, Social Issues, Death**

'Motherhood' is the story of a mother who blinds herself to the darkness in her son's soul. Through her eyes, we see how an individual's inner darkness can emanate outward to consume an entire community.



Aicha (45), a Tunisian mother gifted with prophetic dreams, lives in the isolated north of Tunisia with her husband Brahim (50) and young son Adam (11). The family lives in anguish after the departure of the eldest sons, Mehdi (20) and Amine (19), to the violent embrace of the Islamic State in Syria. Months later, Mehdi returns home accompanied by his pregnant Syrian wife Reem (18). Mehdi and Reem's arrival triggers old wounds and mysterious happenings across the village.

Meryam Joobeur



Meryam Joobeur is an Academy Award-nominated Tunisian-American writer / director / producer, based in Montréal, Canada.

Her work includes both documentary and fiction. Her short films 'Gods, Weeds and Revolutions' (2012) and 'Born in the Maelstrom' (2017), starring Sasha Lane, screened in dozens of national and international festivals. Her Academy nominated short 'Brotherhood' (2018) screened at 150+ festivals and won 75 international prizes.

Nadim Cheikhrouha



Paris based Tanit Films was founded in April 2014 by Franco-Tunisian producer Nadim Cheikhrouha. Tanit Films is

the culmination of over twenty years of experience in the film industry. Through Tanit Films, Nadim has helped bring to life some of the most acclaimed and important films to come out of the Arab and African world in recent years including 'Hedi' and 'Weldi' by Mohamed Ben Attia, 'Fatima' by Philippe Faucon, 'Burning Hope' by Lotfi Achour and 'Beauty And The Dogs' by Kaouther Ben Henia.

Marcia Gracia Turgeon



Founded in 2010, Midi La Nuit is focused on producing audacious and visually evocative cinema. The

company is led by award-winning director/producer Annick Blanc and two-time Academy Award-nominated producer Maria Gracia Turgeon. Together they've produced highly successful short films, including 'Brotherhood' (92nd Oscar nominee, Best Canadian Short TIFF 2018, Sundance 2018), 'Fauve' (91st Oscar nominee, Sundance Special Jury Award 2018, Telluride 2018), 'Lost Paradise Lost' (Nomination Prix Iris 2018), 'How Tommy Lemenchick Became A Grade 7 Legend' (Tribeca 2018), 'Predrink' (Best Canadian Short TIFF 2017), 'Tout simplement' (Grand prix FNC 2016), 'Surveillant' (Sundance, Grand Prix San Francisco 2011) and 'Acrobat' (Locarno 2012). Along with Meryam Joobeur's 'Motherhood' they are developing Annick Blanc's feature film 'The Great North'.

Director's Note

The idea for 'Motherhood' originated in 2016 when I learned that Tunisian men make up the largest percentage of ISIS foreign fighters. This surprised me, because growing up in Tunisia, I never experienced Islamic extremism. My intuition told me family dynamics were at the heart of the phenomenon. So, I sought to explore the subject through the lens of a family drama. I decided to first do a short film as a way to start exploring this theme. This decision resulted in my Academy-Award-nominated short film 'Brotherhood', the tragic story of a father who fails to see the light in his son's character. Now with 'Motherhood', I want to tell the story of a mother who blinds herself to the darkness in her son's soul. Through Aicha's eyes, we see how an individual's inner darkness can emanate outward to consume an entire community. 'Motherhood' appears at first to be a social realist drama. As the story progresses, however, increasingly fantastical elements start to emerge. Then by the end of the film, the audience is immersed in a full-blown dark-fantasy universe. This genre-blending allows me to develop the dramatic themes—the danger of overprotective love, and the repercussions of repression and violence against women—using more evocative cinematic language. I want the film to haunt the viewer, provoking a sober look at the darkness in one's own family. My hope is that, by having honest introspection on ourselves and the people we love, we can all lift our communities into the light.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$1,300,000**
Secured Financing: **\$1,200,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- CNC, France
- CNI, Tunisia
- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- Eurimages, France
- Luxbox, France
- Ministry of Culture, Tunisia
- OIF, France
- Sodec, Canada

Project Requirements:

- Broadcasters
- Distributors
- Gap Funding
- Marketing Advice
- VOD Platforms

Work-in-Progress

Feature Documentary or Essay

River of Toads by Juan Carlos Núñez Chavarría

The Forgotten (Working Title) by Ghada Terawi

Director / Screenwriter:
Juan Carlos Núñez Chavarría

Producer:
Dalia Rocío Reyes Campos

Company Profile:

Dalia Reyes founded the Chulada Films Production company, specialising in non-fiction filmmaking. She is currently the producer of 'Mi No Lugar', directed by Isis Ahumada, which premiered at the Morelia International Film Festival. Also, she is producing 'El Eco', directed by Tatiana Huezo (2023), which premiered at the Berlinale in Encounters, a competitive section devoted to new cinematic visions.

Contact:
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 dalia.reyes.campos@gmail.com

River of Toads

'Río de Sapos' / Mexico, Qatar / Spanish
 Genre: **Indigenous Worldview**
 Themes: **Death, Identity, Religion, Nature, Culture**

A sensory documentary about a family of healers who maintain the ancient practice of the cult of death in a small town in Veracruz, Mexico. The film is an experimental ethnographic look at the world of hidden ceremonies and an intimate approach with its faithful.



A sensorial portrait that follows the traditional healer Francisca Hernandez, an inhabitant of a small town in Veracruz, Mexico. She belongs to a family of healers, midwives and exorcists, who celebrate a ritual every year on the first Friday of March, dedicated to Holy Death. The inhabitants of the town say that on that date, at midnight, an energy portal opens where the forces of good and evil collide, and the ideal energy for various types of physical and spiritual healing is released.

This celebration takes place for 24 continuous hours in the Owl Charm Temple, built by Francisca and her family, in the middle of a nearby mountain. Various indigenous and peasant communities arrive there to celebrate the ritual every year. This place becomes a meeting point where food, conversations, and problems are shared, people sing and dance, the body is healed, and the soul is cleansed. The documentary mixes the experience of the ceremonies with an exploration of the magical realism of the territory, which preserves particular traditions and ways of life, where interaction with nature, myths and legends are part of deep Mexico.

Juan Carlos Núñez Chavarría



Juan Carlos Núñez Chavarría studied communication, audiovisual languages and photography. He has participated in international

workshops focused on documentary films, such as the IDFA Academy, DocuLab, Conecta and BoliviaLab. He was the coordinator of the 'Ambulante' festival and collaborator of the German television ARDtv. He has been a fellow of the Ford Foundation and the National Fund for Culture and the Arts in Mexico. As a director, his debut film 'Swift Feet' toured more than 30 festivals in 15 countries and obtained 5 international distinctions. He currently collaborates with the Chilean association Red Mediación Artística, and directs the Kiltro Cinema forum.

Dalia Rocío Reyes Campos



Dalia Rocío Reyes Campos studied for a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies from the National University

of Mexico and a scriptwriting bachelor's degree from the Mexican Cinematographic Studies Center (CCC). She also obtained a Master's Degree in Social and Documentary from Barcelona University (ESCAC). 'Bath of Life/Baño de Vida' (2016) was her debut as a director. Dalia founded Chulada Films, a production company dedicated to non-fiction cinema. In 2021 she was nominated for the Ariel Award for best art design for the movie 'Identifying Features / Sin Señas Particulares' (2020), directed by Fernanda Valadez.

Director's Note

'River of Toads' proposes a meditative experience in time and space, and does not intend that the spectator understand anything in particular, but rather that he should enter in sync with the sounds and the images. We explore sensitivity, attention to the landscape, and empathy with what is observed, allowing time to percolate through each shot. Filmed in Los Tuxtlas in Veracruz, Mexico, in one of the last tropical jungles in the northern part of the American continent, we enter upon a remote territory with people and communities that preserve traditions and a particular way of life, where interaction with nature is profound. This project explores the roots of my own subjectivity in the way I relate to the theme of healing, given that my great-grandparents practised folk-medicine throughout their lives in the city where I was born. I am intrigued by a certain attitude of supremacy among dominant religions and how they oppress and discredit the beliefs of ethnic minorities. By contrast, we took on the task of researching the meanings behind these hidden ceremonies and seeking out the archaic rituals that gave rise to them.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$228,324**
 Secured Financing: **\$179,631**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Chemistry Lab, Mexico
- Chulada Films, Mexico
- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- Filmo Estudios, Chile
- FONCA, Mexico
- Grifo de Luz, Mexico
- Ojo de Venado Cinema, Mexico
- Splendor Omnia, Mexico

Project Requirements:

- Distributors
- Editing Advice
- Festivals
- Post-production Advice
- Sales

Director / Screenwriter:

Ghada Terawi

Producer:

May Odeh

Company Profile:

Odeh Films is a production company aiming to produce and distribute creative documentary and fiction films. May Odeh is a director and producer best known for 'Hanging Gardens' (2022), '1000 Fires' (2021), '200 Meters' (2020), 'Maradona's Legs' (2019), 'In Vitor' (2019), 'Gaza by Her' (2017), 'The Crossing' (2017), 'Drawing for Better Dreams' (2015), 'Diaries' (2011), 'Roshmia' (2014), and 'Izriqaaq' (2013).

Contact:

May Odeh

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The Forgotten

Palestine, Qatar, UAE / Arabic, Japanese, English

Genre: **Biography, Drama, History**

Themes: **Human Rights, Identity, Politics, Social Issues**

A journey in the life of Kozo, a Japanese freedom fighter and member of the Japanese Red Army, who gave up his life in Japan to join the Palestinian Liberation Movement.



A journey in the life of Kozo Okamoto, a Japanese freedom fighter and member of the Japanese Red Army, who gave up his life in Japan to join the Palestinian liberation movement. The film knits together a map of Okamoto's journey through stories of Palestinian and Japanese people who passed through Kozo's life. Living the romantic dream of being a "world revolutionary" was a stage in Okamoto's life, but being the lone survivor of the Lod Airport Operation in 1972 was a turning point. Interrogation in Israeli jails, a trial, and 13 years in Israeli prison formed the person he is now.

Being freed from prison after a prisoner-exchange deal between Israel and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in 1985 took him on another journey, where he faced loss, insecurity, guilt, and betrayal. 'The Forgotten' seeks to reveal Okamoto's life journey, which is full of contradictions—ups and downs, waiting and hope, pain and frustration. This journey will be told by Ghada, the film director, who is the daughter of two Palestinian fighters. The idea of revolution was part of her childhood, history, and personality. Although the film will tell the story of Kozo Okamoto, his past and present, it will also shed light on the current Palestinian struggles and challenges as seen from the director's point of view.

Ghada Terawi



Ghada Terawi was born to Palestinian militants in Beirut in 1972. She grew up between Beirut, Tunis and Cairo, and graduated

from the American University of Cairo with a BA in International Relations. She currently lives in Palestine. Terawi began working in the field of documentary filmmaking in 1998 and produced her first film, 'Staying Alive', in 2001. Her other films include 'What's Next' (2003), 'The Way Back Home' (2006), 'The Last Station' (2007), 'Golden Pomegranate Seeds' (2009), 'On Air' (2011) and 'The Storyteller' (2013).

May Odeh



May Odeh is a Palestinian producer and filmmaker. Her recent feature as a producer is 'Hanging

Gardens', which premiered in 2022 at Venice Film Festival. Odeh was known for producing '200 Meters' by Ameen Nayfeh, which received 27 awards worldwide and was Jordan's official submission for the Academy Awards for Best Foreign Language Film. In 2020, Odeh was named by Variety as MENA Talent of the Year. May has a master's degree in film from Lillehammer University in Norway, and graduated from EAVE 2016. She is a member of The European Film Academy and The Asia Pacific Academy. Odeh curates and organizes various film programs, including Palestine Film Platform and Mobile Cinema—which aims to tour around villages and communities in Area C to screen entertainment films for families and kids. Recently, Zorana Mušikić and May Odeh founded Mayana Films based in Berlin and Munich. Both producers have collaborated before by co-producing the short film 'Maradona's Legs' in 2019 by Palestinian director Firas Khoury. Mayana Films is a hub for intriguing stories in the framework of independent international cinema.

Director's Note

As a daughter of two Palestinian militants, the idea of revolution was part of my childhood, history and personality. I was born in Beirut, Lebanon, during the 1970s—the period when the idea of "liberation" was very dominant. Many Palestinians joined the Liberation movement, leaving their country, families & loved ones for the sake of one idea; the Liberation of Palestine. When I was young, I remember how proud, enthusiastic, and active the Palestinians were. Contrary to what I see now in the eyes of those who lived and worked with the liberation movement. Most of those people, including my father, feel helpless and are very pessimistic. When I saw my father, my uncle and others talking about the era of the late '60s & '70s, I could see how their eyes shine, and after a few sentences, I could feel pain in their throats! All this made me think about our situation as Palestinians and how lost and forgotten we became. The same situation as the Japanese Kozo Okamoto, who also left his family, country and life for the sake of a liberation movement. And how he ended up forgotten in a foreign country. These symbolic parallels were the underlying motivation to pursue the work on this film. As maybe one day I/we can find our compass again.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$328,000**
Secured Financing: **\$168,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- 2M Moroccan TV, Morocco
- AFAC, Lebanon
- Busan International Film Festival, South Korea
- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- Dubai Film Connection, UAE
- Palestine TV, Palestine
- SANAD Development Fund, UAE

Project Requirements:

- Creative Advice
- Distributors
- Gap Funding
- Post-production Advice
- Sales

Picture Lock

Feature Narrative

Backstage by Afef Ben Mahmoud and Khalil Benkirane

Brief History of a Family by Jianjie Lin

Hounds by Kamal Lazraq

If Only I Could Hibernate by Zoljargal Purevdash

Tiger Stripes by Amanda Nell Eu

Director:
Afef Ben Mahmoud, Khalil Benkirane

Screenwriter:
Afef Ben Mahmoud

Producer:
Khalil Benkirane

Company Profile:

Lycia Productions was initially created to produce films to be directed by Khalil Benkirane and Afef Ben Mahmoud and then by other filmmakers, be they fictional or documentary, with a focus on contemporary subjects, sociocultural issues, through a clear strategy and in its own terms, to develop and produce bold, independent projects by pushing the artistic limits, with sincerity and freedom of creation. Lycia started by participating in the making of the documentary 'Before The Dying of The Light' by Ali Essafi, which world premiered in 2020 at the Tangier Festival, where it won the Grand Prize for Documentary films, followed by the International Premiere in competition at IDFA. Then Lycia co-produced Nouri Bouzid's latest film, 'The Scarecrows', which world premiered in the official selection of the 2019 Venice Film Festival. Lycia is producing 'Backstage' directed by Afef Ben Mahmoud and Khalil Benkirane. The film is currently in the post-production stage and will be ready by early summer.

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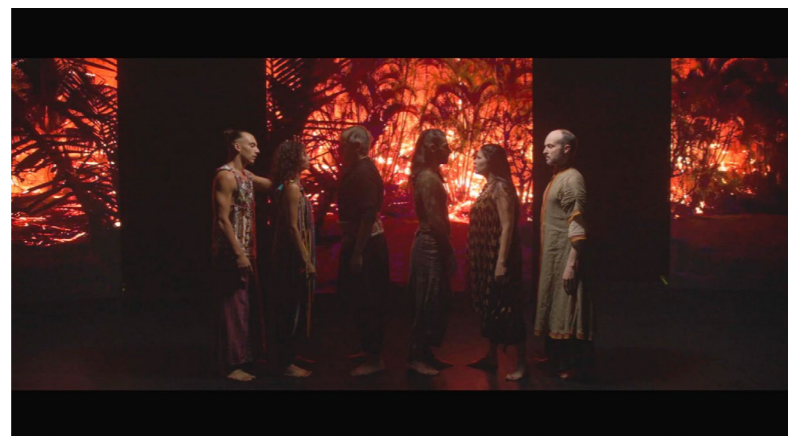
Backstage

Morocco, Tunisia, Belgium, France, Qatar / Arabic, French / 2023 / 98 mins

Genre: **Drama**

Themes: **Culture, Identity, Immigration, Dance**

Aida, a member of a contemporary dance troupe touring Morocco, provokes Hedi during a performance, who injures her onstage—triggering a series of events over a long night through a forest on the way to the next village's doctor.



The contemporary dance troupe "Without Borders" is concluding a Moroccan tour. During the penultimate performance in a small Atlas town, Aida provokes Hedi, her life partner on and off the stage, who injures her under the horrified eyes of the other members of the troupe, and without the audience noticing. They have to seek urgent medical attention and take to the road to the next village to the only doctor available in the area, in hopes of saving the last show—or will she be replaced by Nawel, the troupe choreographer who stopped performing ten years ago?

On the way, a monkey crosses their path, and the bus goes into a skid, miraculously stopping by the lower side of the road! Without a spare tire, now the troupe is stuck in the middle of the forest. A road movie journey commences as the troupe decides to walk through the woods to reach the village. Through their journey, the true face of each of our characters reveals itself. Finally, after a long, arduous night, they arrive at the doctor's house in the early morning hours, and the new day hails a different dynamic in the company.

Afef Ben Mahmoud



Following studies in management, Afef Ben Mahmoud obtained a diploma in scriptwriting and direction

in 2008, then a Master of Research in Image Design. In parallel to her studies, Afef started directing short films while having devoted herself, from a very young age, to an artistic career as a dancer and actress. She began her career by taking part in musical shows under the direction of Fadhel Jaziri. Since, Afef has devoted herself to her acting career and has participated in numerous theatre, film and television productions. Afef has held leading roles under the direction of great Tunisian directors, such as in 'Making Of' and 'The Scarecrows' by Nouri Bouzid, awarded in many international festivals. Recently, Afef created Mésanges Films, a production company, and produced Nouri Bouzid's latest film, 'The Scarecrows', in which she also plays one of the lead roles. The film had its world premiere in official selection at the 2019 Venice Film Festival in the Sconfini section, where it won the Human Rights Award. Since then, Mésanges Films has been working on the film 'Backstage', which she is co-directing and co-producing.

Khalil Benkirane



After studying cinema, Khalil oversaw Cinemayaat, the San Francisco Arab Film Festival, from 1998 to 2002. The following year,

he returned to Morocco and directed his first feature-length documentary, 'The White Thread', which he also produced, about Cheb i Sabbah, a World Music DJ who takes Moroccan traditional music, through a "contemporization" process to bring it back to life in a revisited form for new audiences, in both the West and the East. In 2008, he moved to Qatar and worked for Al Jazeera Children's Channel, where he produced 76 documentary and fiction films. In 2011, Khalil joined the Doha Film Institute to oversee the film grant programme. Khalil recently co-produced with Lycia Productions, Nouri Bouzid's latest film, 'The Scarecrows', which world premiered in the official selection of the 2019 Venice Film Festival. Lycia Productions contributed as well to 'Before The Dying of The Light' by Ali Essafi, which world premiered in 2020 at the Tangier Festival, where it won the Grand Prize for Documentary films, followed by the International Premiere in competition at IDFA.

Director's Note

Afef spent much of her youth as a professional on stage between dance and theatre. From stage to stage, from one country to another, she was lucky enough to have several families. Travelling together, eating, sleeping, crying, laughing... Unforgettable moments of life that marked her forever. As Afef was writing the script and discussing it together, we realised that we were driven by the same ideas of directing, a very complementary cinematic vision and a common interest in the different subjects dealt with in 'Backstage'. Our desire to co-direct the film was thus born. In 'Backstage', we wanted to recreate this singular dance troupe life and, above all, through a very particular aspect of the world of the stage where the settling of scores between two partners, which under no circumstances can be seen by either the spectator nor the director. But the show must always go on and, mainly offstage, is where the real drama plays out, which is why we decided to put our camera there to delve into the life of a dance troupe.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$1,350,000**
Secured Financing: **\$1,100,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- CCM Morocco
- CNC/CNCI, France
- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- Metafora Production, Qatar
- Red Sea Film Fund, KSA
- Sørfond, Norway
- Tax Shelter, Belgium

Project Requirements:

- Festivals
- Gap Funding
- Sales
- TV Broadcasters
- VOD Platforms

Director:
Jianjie Lin

Producer:
Ying Lou

Company Profile:

First Light Films is founded with the goal of producing artistically daring and commercially viable auteur-driven films for a global audience. By nurturing close relationships with emerging directors who have a strong vision, we seek to create stories and characters which reflect and transcend time and culture.

Contact:

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Ying Lou

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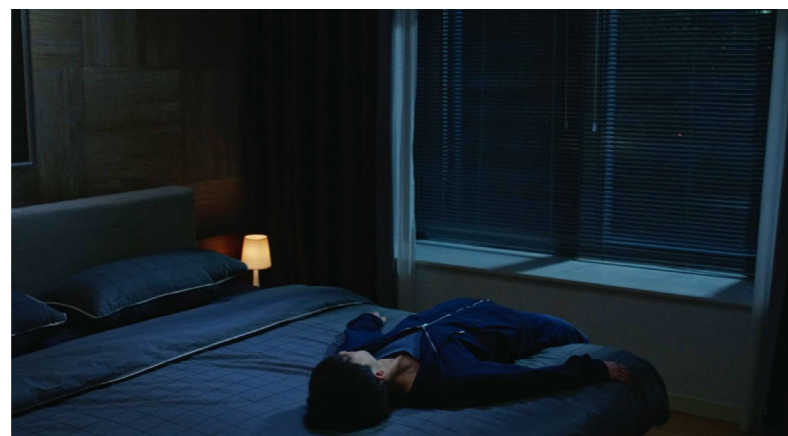
Brief History of a Family

China, Denmark, France, Qatar / Chinese / 2023 / 99 min

Genre: **Drama, Mystery, Thriller**

Themes: **Coming-of-Age, Education, Social Issues, Women's Issues**

Post-one-child China, the fate of a middle-class family becomes intertwined with a mysterious new friend of their only son.



An incident on the playground brings two high school boys who are worlds apart together—the outgoing and candid Wei, and the quiet yet observant Shuo. As their friendship evolves, Wei introduces Shuo to his father, a cell biologist, and his mother, a former flight attendant. Learning that Shuo comes from a broken home, the family welcomes this underprivileged kid with enigmatic charm.

Slowly integrating himself into Wei's family life, Shuo soon discovers that their middle-class existence is shadowed by unspoken secrets, unmet expectations, and untended emotions. An incident further complicates their lives in unexpected ways.

Jianjie Lin



After obtaining a bachelor's degree in bioinformatics, Jianjie Lin's passion for deciphering human existence led him to

filmmaking. He received his MFA degree from the NYU Tisch School of the Arts. His short films, 'A Visit' (2015), a satire about corruption and vanity, and 'Gu' (2017), about a family's last reunion at court, were screened at many international film festivals. His latest short film, 'Hippopotami' (in post-production), looks at the harshness and absurdity of life through the eyes of a little girl. 'Brief History of a Family', his debut feature film, won a co-production award at TorinoFilmLab in 2018. It is supported by CNC Aides aux Cinémas du Monde, Région Île-de-France, the Danish Film Institute and Doha Film Institute.

Ying Lou



With over a decade of experience in the world's leading investment banks and media organizations, Ying Lou returned to

China in late 2015 to pursue a new career in entertainment. After serving as special assistant to the CEO of iQIYI.com, where she devised investment strategies and helped launch the company's Taiwan business, Ms Lou moved to head the international division of Pegasus Media Group, where she oversaw several US-China co-production movie and TV projects. Ms Lou is now founder and CEO of Paradigm Shift Entertainment which specializes in film and TV production in both China and abroad. In addition to working with rising filmmakers in China, she is developing several Hollywood projects exploring the Asian American experience. Ms Lou graduated from China's most prestigious Peking University with double bachelor's degrees in Economics and Political Science. She received her MBA from Columbia University in New York City.

Director's Note

Having majored in biology as an undergraduate, I've always been fascinated by the idea that the micro world often holds a mirror to the macro world. In this film, I examine a family both as a living cell going through changes on multiple levels, and as a cell of our evolving society which inevitably shapes the psyche and sentiments of its people. When Wei's family's seemingly harmonious middle-class existence is disrupted by Wei's mysterious friend Shuo, they see a chance to establish new homeostasis. While doing so, the undercurrent of their relationship surfaces; collective and individual needs clash; the boundaries of physical space and emotions are blurred. Even though I did not set out to make a genre film, genre found its way into my writing and filming—not as boxes to put the film in, but as a way to delve into the characters' minds and their ambiguous relationships, to create a mysteriously seductive tone, and to invite the audience to look beyond what they see, listen beyond what they hear.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$1,705,078**
Secured Financing: **\$1,605,280**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- CNC Aides aux Cinémas du Monde, France
- Danish Film Institute, Denmark
- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- Eternity Nice Culture Media, China
- First Light Films, China
- Région Île-de-France, France
- Richard Vague Production Fund, USA
- TorinoFilmLab, Italy

Project Requirements:

- Distributors
- Gap Funding
- Marketing Advice
- Sales
- TV Broadcasters

Director:

Kamal Lazraq

Producer:

Saïd Hamich Benlarbi, Diana Elbaum**Company Profile:**

Barney Production was founded by Saïd Hamich Benlarbi, a graduate from La Fémis film school in Paris, in 2009, with the aim of championing sensitive and committed filmmakers. In 2011 the company won the Lagardère Foundation prize. In 2013, he founded the company Mont Fleuri Production in Morocco. Barney Production co-produced 'Much Loved' by Nabil Ayouch (Directors' Fortnight, Cannes 2015) and produced 'Northern Wind' by Walid Mattar, 'Volubilis' by Faouzi Bensaïdi (Venice Days 2017), 'Return to Bollène' by Saïd Hamich Benlarbi (Louis Delluc Film Prize Nominee 2018) and 'Zanka Contact' by Ismaël El Iraki (Best Actress Orizzonti Award - Venice Film Festival 2020, Special Mention from the Jury - Cinemed 2020), as well as around 30 short films by authors such as Leyla Bouzid, Steve Achiepo, Kamal Lazraq and Vincent Tricon, with whom collaboration on feature films is ongoing. Steve Achiepo's feature film 'Slumlord' was released in February 2023. Faouzi Bensaïdi's 'Deserts' and Kamal Lazraq's 'Hounds' are in post-production.

Contact:

Saïd Hamich Benlarbi

said@barneyproduction.com

Sales Agent:

Charades

Hounds

'Les Meutes' / France, Morocco, Belgium, Qatar / Arabic / 2023 / 100 min

Genre: **Drama**Themes: **Social Issues**

In the working-class suburbs of Casablanca, father and son Hassan and Issam, struggle to survive from day to day. They get by on small-time deals and running errands for local gangs, until one night—they are asked to carry out an abduction.



In the working-class suburbs of Casablanca, father and son—Hassan and Issam are trying to make ends meet, doing odd jobs for a local mobster. One night, a man they were meant to kidnap accidentally dies in the trunk of their car. Hassan and Issam find themselves with a corpse to dispose of, and so begins a long night roaming the seedier parts of the city.

Kamal Lazraq

Kamal Lazraq is a Moroccan director born in 1984 in Casablanca. He graduated from La Femis in Paris, and his graduation

film, 'Drari', won the second prize of the Cinefondation at the Cannes Film Festival, and the Grand Prize for short films at the Entrevues Festival in Belfort (France). In 2014, his short film 'The Man with a Dog', produced by Barney Production, was awarded worldwide. 'Hounds' is his first feature film.

Saïd Hamich Benlarbi

A graduate of La Fémis and winner of the Lagardère Foundation Prize, Saïd Hamich Benlarbi is a French-Moroccan

director and producer. He founded Barney Production in Paris in 2009 and Mont Fleuri Production in Casablanca in 2013.

Saïd Hamich Benlarbi collaborated with filmmakers such as Philippe Faucon (Harkis), Nabil Ayouch (Much Loved), Meriem Ben Mbarek (Sofia), Clément Cogitore (The Wakhan Front) and Faouzi Bensaïdi (Volubilis, Deserts). He is currently producing the first films of Steve Achiepo (Slumlord: release in 2023), Kamal Lazraq (Hounds: in post-production) and Camille Lugan (The Book of Joy: in preparation).

Sophie Penson

Sophie Penson joined Barney Production as a producer and development officer in 2016 after studies at La Fémis. She

has produced short films by Saïd Hamich Benlarbi, Ilias El Faris, Camille Lugan, Randa Maroufi and Vincent Tricon, and has collaborated on the production of the feature-length films 'Slumlord', 'Deserts' and, currently, 'La Mer au loin' and the series 'Let the Earth Burn'.

Director's Note

'Hounds' tells the story of Hassan and Issam, father and son. Their assignment takes us on a desperate journey across the city in a sort of urban road movie. The action takes place over the course of one night, from sunset to sunrise, which makes it easier to enact absurd, excessive or dreamlike situations. Their oppressive nocturnal escapade depicts the world of the underprivileged, people living by their wits on the margins of society, sometimes alongside abundant wealth. Rejects, who, having nothing more to lose, at times resort to violence or even to a form of bestiality. The story is also that of a father-son relationship. Caught in an unfathomable spiral, Hassan and Issam confront one another but also become aware of the almost indestructible bond that unites them.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$1,355,000**Secured Financing: **\$1,305,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- AFAC (Arab Fund For Arts And Culture), Lebanon
- Avance sur recettes du Centre Cinématographique Marocain, Morocco
- CNC et de l'Institut Français (Aide aux cinémas du monde), France
- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- Fondation GAN, France
- Fonds Wallonie Bruxelles, Tax Shelter, Belgium
- Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (Fonds images de la Francophonie), France
- Red Sea Fund, KSA
- Sofica Cinémages 17, France

Project Requirements:

- Broadcasters
- Editing Advice
- Festivals
- TV Broadcasters
- VOD Platforms

Director / Screenwriter / Producer:
Zoljargal Purevdash

Producer:
Frédéric Corvez, Maéva Savinien

Company Profile:

Urban Factory produces films by talented directors from all around the world without restriction on genre or budget. Among our recent releases are 'Plan 75' by Chie Hayakawa, a French-Japanese-Philippine production which had its World Premiere at the Festival de Cannes 2022, Official Selection, Un Certain Regard and which won the Camera d'Or Special Mention prize. 'Francesca i l'amor' by Alba Sotorra, a French-Spanish production which had its World Premiere at Festival de Malaga in 2022. There is also a French-Brazilian co-production 'Good Manners', directed by Juliana Rojas and Marco Dutra, a French-Argentine coproduction 'La Luz incidente' by Ariel Rotter, and 'The Benefit of the Doubt' by Samuel Tilman.

Amygdala Films is an independent film production company based in Ulaanbaatar. Our previous short films were screened and won awards at international film festivals. Currently, we are working on our first feature film 'If Only I Could Hibernate'. We aim to produce visually told modern Mongolian stories.

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Zoljargal Purevdash
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Sales Agent:
Urban Sales

If Only I Could Hibernate

'Baavgai Bolohson' / Mongolia, France, Switzerland, Qatar / Arabic, Mongolian / 2022 / 98 mins

Genre: **Drama**

Themes: **Coming-of-Age, Education, Poverty, Social Issues, Environment**

A poor but prideful teenager is determined to win a Physics contest for a scholarship, but his illiterate mother leaves him with his siblings in the middle of winter. He tries to keep his siblings warm while preparing for the competition.



A poor but prideful teenager, Ulzii, lives in the yurt area of Ulaanbaatar with his mother and siblings. The physics teacher who recently transferred to his school notices Ulzii's talent in physics and encourages him to participate in competitions. Ulzii takes part and receives a prize for his excellent problem-solving skills and discovers that the winner of the national competition will receive a coveted scholarship. Ulzii's mother finds a job in pine collecting and suggests that the family move back to the countryside.

Ulzii strongly objects to his illiterate mother's decision and stays with his siblings. In the extreme cold of winter, while training for the national physics competition, Ulzii wanders the yurt looking for things to burn in their stove each night so he can keep his siblings warm. Many people would be happy to help Ulzii if he asked—the old neighbour, his teacher, and his aunt—but Ulzii's pride keeps him from asking for help. When Ulzii's younger sibling contracts pneumonia and his beloved dog freezes to death, he realises he's only a powerless child. He requests help and goes to the Khovd Province to take part in the national competition.

Zoljargal Purevdash



Zoljargal Purevdash is a Mongolian filmmaker who studied filmmaking in Japan. Her short films were

screened at Locarno Film Festival, Short Shorts Film Festival & Asia, etc. Recently, her short film 'Stairs' won the first prize at the Chicago International Children's Film Festival and entered the 94th Oscars Award. She is an alumna of Talents Tokyo and the Asian Film Academy. She just picture-locked her first feature film 'If Only I Could Hibernate', which received the Talents Tokyo Award and Next Masters Support Grant. It also has presented at Hong Kong-Asian Film Financing Forum and Locarno Open Doors Hub.

Maéva Savinien



After studying film production and acting, Maeva started her career in 2011 as a production assistant in Paris (at Kidam) and Los

Angeles (Voltage Pictures) before flying to Shanghai in 2013, where she spent 7 years of her life. In China, she produced documentaries, web series, commercials, and animations, and she worked as a unit production manager on French feature films shot in Asia, such as 'Minuscules, the mandibles from far away', directed by Hélène Giraud and Thomas Szabo. In 2019, she moved back to France and joined Urban Factory, where she is in charge of films in-development, production and post-production. Recently, her produced fiction film 'Plan 75' by Chie Hayakawa was selected for Festival de Cannes 2022 and won Caméra d'Or Special Mention.

Director's Note

I grew up in the yurt district of Ulaanbaatar, where people burn coal to heat their homes during the brutally cold winters, making Ulaanbaatar one of the most polluted cities in the world. During 2017, apartment residents organised protests called "Eliminate the pollution", and social media was filled with hateful comments such as "You're Poisoning Us!", "Ban Coal in Ulaanbaatar", "Send Migrated Nomads Back to the Countryside" etc. However, no one in the yurt district burns coal, car tires, or plastic bags on purpose in an attempt to poison someone. We breathe poverty, not smoke. But people don't get it and are fighting actively against air pollution, which is just a symptom of poverty. I find it such nonsense and a waste of power. The education gap between the poor and rich is unbearably extreme. The real solution to air pollution is good education, and I want people to take action for it. Modern Mongolian society should fight more to give an equal education to every child.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$375,000**
Secured Financing: **\$315,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Amygdala Films, Mongolia
- Australian Embassy in Mongolia, Mongolia
- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- Kite Mongolia LLC, Mongolia
- Korea Standart LLC, Mongolia
- Lantuun Dohio NGO, Mongolia
- Mongolian Education Foundation, Mongolia
- Mongolian Fintek Group, Mongolia
- Paris Regional Fund, France
- Swiss Development Agency, Switzerland
- Talents Tokyo - Next Masters Support Grant, Japan
- Urban Factory, France
- Urban Sales, France

Project Requirements:

- Distributors
- Festivals
- Marketing Advice
- TV Broadcasters
- VOD Platforms

Director:
Amanda Nell Eu

Producer:
Foo Fei Ling

Company Profile:

Founded by Amanda Nell Eu and Foo Fei Ling in Malaysia, Ghost Grrrl Pictures is a young film company producing female-centric stories coming from the South East Asian region. The aim of the company is to represent strong, feared and misunderstood females in cinema—from colossal monsters to tough little girls who just cannot fit in.

Contact:
Foo Fei Ling
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Tiger Stripes

'Tunjuk Belang' / Malaysia, Taiwan, Singapore, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Indonesia, Qatar / Malay / 2022 / 94 mins

Genre: **Drama, Horror**

Themes: **Coming-of-Age, Women's Issues, Youth**

Zaffan experiences puberty, discovering a terrifying secret about her physical self. As she is further provoked by her own community, she soon learns that embracing her true self is the only answer to her freedom.



Zaffan is a rebellious and carefree girl until she starts to experience horrifying physical changes to her body. She develops a hideous rash, bleeds from her fingernails and clumps of hair fall from her head. Struggling to maintain being normal at school, Zaffan is in denial of her inevitable changes and tries to cover herself. Zaffan's friends, however, attack her, when all hysteria breaks loose—one by one, teenage girls drop to the floors in fits, turning it into a spread of mass hysteria across the school.

Rumours of a dark figure in the toilets have caused fear to take over the primary school, and a visiting Medical Officer appoints himself in command—his sole mission is to drive away the demon that is haunting them. He soon discovers that Zaffan may be the root of their problems and steps in to perform an exorcism on her. The whole community watches as the Medical Officer uses extreme methods to shame and physically hurt Zaffan. And like a tiger who has been dragged out of its habitat and poked because we fear it, because we don't know it—Zaffan decides to finally reveal her true self, her wrath, rage and her beauty, to everyone.

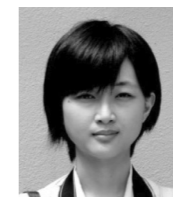
Amanda Nell Eu



Having graduated from the London Film School with an MA in Filmmaking, Amanda has directed short films based in

the UK and also Malaysia. Her short 'Lagi Senang Jaga Sekandang Lembu', premiered in competition at the Venice International Film Festival (2017). The film has continued to travel and win awards in many other international festivals, including receiving a Special Mention at the International Short Film Festival Clermont-Ferrand (2018). Amanda is an alumna of Berlinale Talents Campus and Locarno Filmmakers Academy. She is working on her first feature film Tiger Stripes, set in Malaysia. In her work, she likes to explore the female body and identity within the context of South East Asia.

Foo Fei Ling



Foo Fei Ling is an independent filmmaker born and raised in Kuala Lumpur. Fei is an alumna of Berlinale Talent Campus,

Rotterdam Lab and EAVE Ties That Bind. She had worked with many filmmakers of Malaysian New Waves. She is producing a feature entitled 'Tiger Stripes' with writer-director Amanda Nell Eu. In 2019 Fei and Amanda set up Ghost Grrrl Pictures, a film company to produce female-centric stories from the South East Asian region.

Director's Note

Myths and folktales in Malaysia were cautionary tales told to me as a child, inflicting fear and fascination on my imagination. Returning to these stories as an adult, however, I realised that most of these villains, these monsters, were women. These tales of monstrous women were tales of outcasts—apparently grotesque women who had intuition, ugly women who had goals and hideous women who knew what they craved for. These characters were far from the socially accepted concept of an 'ideal' woman. They were instead aggressive and strong in their own ways, labelled to be unnatural, to be monsters. But these were characters that I could relate to, and women that I found respect for, because I too am a large, ugly and frightening creature. This story is a parable about the struggle to reveal your wild nature, individuality and independence, and to embrace the strength that it gives you. Zaffan is experiencing something in herself that is inherently who she is and something she cannot change. Her journey is how her community perceives her and the choices she has to make to either stay hidden in fear and shame or express her power and freedom.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$1,155,783**
Secured Financing: **\$1,155,783**

- Confirmed Financial Partners:
- Akanga Film Asia, Singapore
 - Doha Film Institute, Qatar
 - Flash Forward Ent., Taiwan
 - Ghost Grrrl Pictures, Malaysia
 - Kawankawan Media, Indonesia
 - PRPL, The Netherlands
 - Still Moving, France
 - Weydemann Bros., Germany

- Project Requirements:
- Marketing Advice
 - Sales

Picture Lock

Feature Documentary or Essay

After the Bridge by Davide Rizzo and Marzia Toscano

Bye Bye Tiberias by Lina Soualem

Machtat by Sonia Ben Slama

Monisme by Riar Rizaldi

Director / Screenwriter:
Davide Rizzo, Marzia Toscano

Producer:
Adam Selo, Olga Torrico

Company Profile:

Sayonara Film is a production film company founded by Adam Selo and Olga Torrico in 2016 to produce modern, complex and meaningful works with a particular focus on creative documentaries. In 2017, Sayonara co-produced '13.11' an anthology series of six shorts, shot in six European countries, launched internationally by Repubblica TV, Le Soir and El Pais. Two episodes of the series were acquired by France Télévision. Among Sayonara latest works are the documentary 'Les Aigles de Carthage' by Adriano Valerio, co-produced with France and Tunisia, the short 'Gas Station' by Olga Torrico, nominated for David di Donatello and acquired by Rai and France TV, that both premiered in Venice within the 35th Critic's Week. In 2021 Sayonara co-produced 'The Nightwalk' with the French Films Grand Huit. The film premiered at Clermont Ferrand International Short Film Festival, won the Canal Plus Award and was nominated for Césars 2021.

Contact:
Adam Selo, Olga Torrico
sayonarafilm16@gmail.com

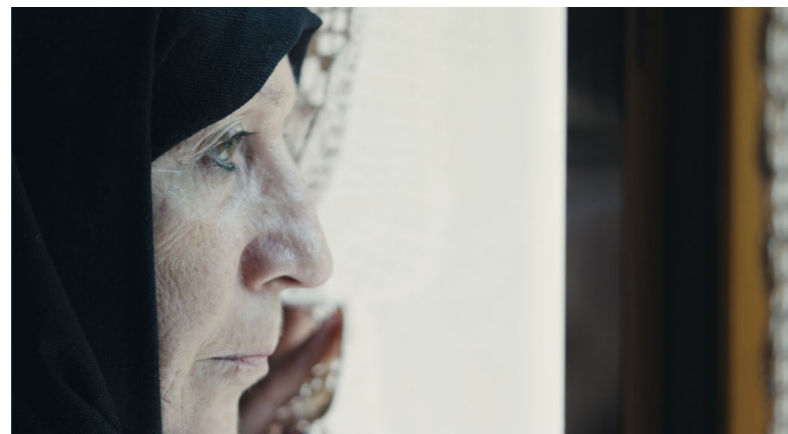
After the Bridge

Italy, Qatar / Italian / 2023 / 65 min

Genre: **Drama**

Themes: **Religion, Social Issues, Women's Issues, Identity, Current Affairs**

On June 3 2017, Valeria Collina's life is shaken by the death of her son Youssef, one of the three jihadist terrorists who killed eight people on London Bridge. Valeria finds herself mourning and having to put her life back together.



Valeria Collina, an Italian woman who converted to Islam, returned to live in Italy in the summer of 2015 after twenty years in Morocco. Two years later, her life is shaken by the death of her young son Youssef, a member of the jihadist command who caused eight deaths on London Bridge on June 3 2017. Twenty-four hours later, as the attackers' names are released, her small house in the hills of Bologna is swarmed by television crews from around the world. Valeria, in a state of shock, publicly condemns the actions of her son and decides not to attend his funeral. Following the confusion of those first few days, Valeria finds herself alone in the quiet of her house, having to put her life back together.

Davide Rizzo



Davide Rizzo is an Italian director and producer. In 2004 he founded Elenfant Film, with which he realizes innovative works, focusing

especially on human rights and collective memory. In 2008 he directed a doc series, 'Brustulein', presented in Bologna at Cinema Ritrovato, at the Torino Film Festival and at Italian Cinema London. In 2011 he made the documentary 'Old Cinema: Bologna Melodrama', which won the Arkipel Award in Jakarta (2013) and Doc Under 30 in Bologna (2013). 'A Western Movie Without Horses', was presented at Biografilm Festival in 2017. The same year he directed a short film, 'Anna & Bassam', part of the series '13.11', that he also produced and was selected and awarded in many festivals worldwide.

Marzia Toscano



Marzia Toscano is an Italian director. In 2017 she directed her first documentary, 'A Western Movie Without Horses',

written and directed together with Davide Rizzo, a film on the visionary filmmaker Mauro Mingardi. The screenplay was a finalist at Premio Solinas 2012. The film, produced by Elenfant Film, Imago Orbis and Maxman Coop, had its theatrical release in October 2017.

Adam Selo



Adam Selo is an award-winning director, producer and distributor born in 1979. After graduating in cinema studies, he founded Elenfant

Film, an independent film production company in Bologna, Italy. Since 2010, he has also distributed shorts to film festivals, winning prizes internationally. In 2016 he founded the production company Sayonara Film with which he produced several award-winning fictional shorts and short docs.

Olga Torrico



Olga Torrico is an Italian director and producer. She studies between Rome, Paris, Bologna and Valencia, graduating in

languages and literature, and specializing in film studies. Since 2014, she has been part of Elenfant Distribution, working as a shorts distributor. In 2016, with Adam Selo, she founded the production company Sayonara Film, with which she produces shorts and creative documentaries. In 2020 she wrote and directed her first short 'Gas Station', which premiered at the Critics' Week in Venice and was nominated for David di Donatello in 2021. Her second short 'La Robe' premiered at Edinburgh International Festival in 2022.

Director's Note

'After the Bridge' is a film about the mourning of the mother of a jihadist terrorist son. A son who is both a victim and executioner. The film talks about the three years after the death of Youssef in the life of Valeria Collina, a journey into the feelings of a mother living the worst thing one can imagine, the loss of a child. For five years, we dedicated ourselves completely to this film, the delicate material demanding time and continual presence. Our artistic and documentarian démarche required a long phase of development, in which we built a special access to Valeria and established a sincere relationship with her. We intend to understand what happened in Valeria's and Youssef's past, presenting facts without acquiescing to empty sensationalism, or the presumption of finding unambiguous answers, always respecting the humanity of our character. The figure of Valeria Collina immediately attracted our attention. In a world where different religious beliefs live side by side, Valeria represents an interesting point of view on how these values can blend into one another by living in peace. A life story that leads to an in-depth reflection on the themes such as the dialogue between religions, terrorism and love.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$225,124.00**
Secured Financing: **\$195,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Al Jazeera Documentary, Qatar
- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- Emilia Romagna Film Commission, Italy
- MIC, Italy
- Rai, Italy

Project Requirements:

- Distributors
- Festivals
- Sales
- VOD Platforms
- TV Broadcasters

Director:
Lina Soualem

Producer:
Jean-Marie Nizan

Company Profile:

Beall Productions is a production company imagined in 2012 by a collective of directors and producers. The company provides delegated or executive production for numerous documentaries, short programmes and magazines, both for television (Canal +, Arte France, OCS, Ciné +, Paris Première, TV5 Monde, etc.), for cultural organisations (Rmn-Grand Palais, The City of Science and Industry, The Louvre Museum and UniFrance) and for theatre/cinema. Since its creation, the company has built solid foundations with the core business of its founders: a production company turned towards culture and, in particular, cinema and its links with society. Today, it continues to develop with a double desire to open up to projects more directly linked to history, society and the discovery of the world, and to new authors and directors.

Contact:
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Jean-Marie Nizan
jean-marie@beall.fr

Bye Bye Tiberias

France, Palestine, Belgium, Qatar / Arabic, French / 2023 / 80 min
Genre: **Drama**
Themes: **Women's Issues, Immigration, Identity, Art, Culture**

Thirty years ago, Palestinian actress Hiam Abbass left her native village Deir Hanna in Galilee, to follow her acting dream in France. Her daughter Lina questions her mother's bold choices and how the women in her family, whom she left behind, have influenced her life.



Thirty years ago, Hiam left her native Palestinian village Deir Hanna in Galilee—where she grew up with her grandmother Um Ali, her mother Neemat and her seven sisters—to pursue her dream of becoming an actress in Paris. The place where her daughter Lina was born, thirty-two years ago. Despite her departure, Hiam took Lina to her village every summer during her childhood, and all their trips were filmed. As Lina looks back at these videotapes from the nineties, she starts questioning her mother's bold choices, her chosen exile and the way the women of her family, whom she left behind, have influenced her life.

The personal journey of each woman figure in the film takes us back to a time slot in history. Despite their dispersed Palestinian identity in different territories, they have taken control over their destinies and influenced the world around them. The film, set between past and present, pieces together images shot today, family footage and historical archives. It explores the transmission of memory, space, know-how, femininity and resistance. It's a voyage through the different lives of Palestinian women for whom dispossession has become the norm and resilience a daily background music.

Lina Soualem



Lina Soualem is a French-Palestinian-Algerian filmmaker and actress born and based in Paris. After studying History

and Political Science at La Sorbonne University, Lina worked as a programmer for film festivals. Lina's debut feature documentary 'Their Algeria' (Visions du Réel 2020), received several awards at international film festivals. Lina acted in three feature films directed by Hafsia Herzi, Hiam Abbass and Rayhana. She is currently developing her second feature documentary 'Bye Bye Tiberias', and works as an author of fictions, documentaries and TV series.

Jean-Marie Nizan



Jean-Marie Nizan, after studying architecture, turned to moving images. He directed TV shows, music recordings, and

short programmes and supervised the production of DVDs for StudioCanal. He is the author and director of documentaries on cinema and culture. Since 2016, within Beall productions, he has produced films of all formats for cinema and television, including Arte, Canal+, France Television, OCS as well as Ciné+. He also produces films for public institutions such as the Grand Palais and the Paris Opera.

Director's Note

My presence in the film is that of a fourth generation of women, the first to be born outside of Palestine. I naturally carry in me the memory of the women of my family and the history that has been forced upon them. Through Hiam, Um Ali, Neemat and my aunts, I wish to seize the personal, historical and visual legacies that have been offered to me to question them, confront them, and knit the bonds between them in order to answer a question that has been tormenting me—how does a woman find her place in the world? The stories unfolding here are not simply a matter of transmission from woman to woman or from mother to daughter. The stories passed on by these women weave the history of a people deprived of their identity. A people bound to constantly reinvent themselves. This is a story about vanished places, life-changing experiences and dispersed memories.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$394,853**
Secured Financing: **\$266,480**

- Confirmed Financial Partners:
- AFAC (Arab Fund for Art and Culture), Lebanon
 - Arte, France
 - CNC (Centre National du Cinéma), France
 - Doha Film Institute, Qatar
 - IMS, Denmark
 - Procirep-Angoa, France

- Project Requirements:
- Broadcasters
 - Creative Advice
 - Distributors
 - Festivals
 - Gap Funding
 - Marketing Advice
 - Sales

Director / Screenwriter:

Sonia Ben Slama

Producer:

Tania El Khoury**Company Profile:**

Khamsin Films was founded in 2017 by Tania El Khoury with the aim to facilitate the production of films from the Arab World by supporting both emerging talents and established filmmakers with a strong artistic, visual and cinematographic language to tell their stories in films aimed at local and international audiences. The company has several projects ongoing from the region, including the new feature film of Ghassan Salhab, 'The Last City' (in development) and the second feature documentary of Sonia Ben Slama, 'Machtat' (in post-production), co-produced with Alter Ego Production (France).

Contact:

Tania El Khoury

khamsinfilms@hotmail.com

Machtat

Tunisia, Lebanon, France, Qatar / Arabic / 2023 / 81 min

Genre: **Drama**Themes: **Culture, Social Issues, Women's Issues, Music**

Fatma and her daughters, Najeh and Waffeh, are 'machtat', wedding musicians in Mahdia, Tunisia. The sisters follow opposite paths—while Najeh, divorced, tries to remarry to escape the authority of her brothers, Waffeh wishes to divorce her violent husband.



In the small town of Mahdia, Tunisia, live Fatma and her two daughters, Najeh and Waffeh. They are machtat, wedding musicians. They go from one wedding to another to celebrate, sing and bless the young brides. Najeh, the eldest daughter, is looking for a husband. But she's not an easy match as a divorced 36-year-old woman with two sons. Since her brother lives under the same roof and watches every step she takes, she has no other choice but to meet men on Facebook and talk to them secretly on the phone. As she is finally about to get married, the groom slips away. Meanwhile, her younger sister, Waffeh, struggles with her abusive husband and her four kids. She lives a bit far from her mother and sister and has to deal with everyday violence. She thinks her husband might end up killing her, and she would like to get a divorce. But she doesn't want to leave the house in which she has invested all her machtat income. Fatma navigates between her two daughters, praying that things will get better one day.

Sonia Ben Slama

Sonia Ben Slama is a Tunisian-French documentary filmmaker. She grew up in Paris, where she studied Art and Cinema at

3-Sorbonne-Nouvelle. During her second Master's degree at University Panthéon-Sorbonne, she directed two short documentaries produced by Serge Lalou for Les Films d'Ici and Catherine Derosier-Pouchou for the Louvre museum. In 2015, she directed her first feature documentary 'Maktoub', produced by Les films de la Caravane (Djerba Doc Days - Grand Jury Prize, Zagora Film Festival - Special distinction from jury, AFIDOK - Grand Jury Prize). She's currently working on two feature documentaries, 'Machtat' (Chicken & Egg Pictures Lab 2020, MFI Script 2 Film Workshops Project Development Award from Visions du Réel) and '316 North Main Street' (in development).

Tania El Khoury

After filmmaking and psychology studies in Beirut, Tania El Khoury joined the Parisian independent production company Moby

Dick Films, with which she worked as legal and financial manager until 2019. In 2017, she founded the production company Khamsin Films in Beirut. She recently produced the latest feature fiction of Ghassan Salhab, 'The River' (International Competition, Locarno 2021). She is the recipient of the Netflix Fund for Creative Equity x AFAC in 2022 as a producer for the project 'Manity' by Hussen Ibraheem.

Director's Note

I grew up between France and Tunisia, and I often think that I could have had a similar life to Waffeh and Najeh if my father did not choose to emigrate. I could have been a woman among women and would have been under the authority of an entire society that would have had my body and future at its disposal. This is surely the reason why hidden women have always fascinated me, beginning with my grandmother, who got married very young and was repudiated by my grandfather. This story was the starting point of my previous film, 'Maktoub'. With 'Machtat', I keep digging—what does that imply to be a woman in Mahdia? Why are strong women caught up between their will of empowerment and an overwhelming tradition? Why do they want to be free and at the same time expect their daughters to marry and live the same lives as them? My desire and willingness to do this film are stronger because I'm both from there and a foreigner. I'm part of these women and part of western women. I've always felt I'm on a wire, ready to tip over one side or the other.

Financial InformationTotal Budget: **\$245,204**Secured Financing: **\$245,204**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- AFAC, Lebanon
- Chicken & Egg Pictures (Egg) celerator Lab, USA
- Cyclic Région Centre, France
- CNC FSA, France
- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- Lyon Capitale TV, France
- Périphérie, France
- Procirep-Angoa, France
- World Cinema Fund, Germany

Project Requirements:

- Broadcasters
- Distributors
- Festivals
- Marketing Advice
- Pre-sales

Director:
Riar Rizaldi

Producer:
B.M. Anggana

Company Profile:

New Pessimism is a production and publishing cooperative. Established in 2018 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, New Pessimism aims to support artists, filmmakers, and writers working with various mediums in Indonesia with striking visions and challenging ideas. New Pessimisms has produced award-winning films, video installations, printed objects, and audio pieces, including 'Kasiterit' (2019), 'Tellurian Drama' (2020), 'Isle of Tears' (2020), 'The Right to do Nothing' (2021), 'The Order of Autophagia' (2021), and many others.

Contact:
Riar Rizaldi
rizaldiriar@gmail.com

Monisme

Indonesia, Qatar / Indonesian / 2023 / 115 min
Genre: **Documentary, Mystery**
Themes: **Politics, Nature, Violence, Culture**

In the shadows of recent eruptions, several professional actors and non-actor professionals portray a dynamic of human-nature relationships in one of the most active stratovolcanoes in the world, Mount Merapi.



Repressed by state-sponsored violence, a mystic is determined to remain on his land in the foothills of Mount Merapi. Nothing can change his determination to stay and keep practising his belief of being one with the mountain. On the other side of the ridge, a volcanologist—gaining knowledge from earth-sensing technology—declares that mitigation is the only way for humanity to survive the colossal eruption of Merapi that he predicts. Not far from where the volcanologists conducted their research, the sand mining industry blooms. While documented by a filmmaker, one miner contemplates the impact of sand mining and the extraction economy on the community, the mountain, and his psyche. Meanwhile, in Merapi, everything is connected to the presence of paramilitaries.

Formed between factual and fictional, future and past, material and incorporeal, scientific and magic, 'Monisme' reflects the intermingled relationships between people in Mount Merapi. Constructed through a spirit of collective filmmaking, the film trips to a place where actuality is intertwined with myth and legend.

Riar Rizaldi



Riar Rizaldi is an artist and filmmaker. He works predominantly with the medium of moving images and sound, both

in the black-box of cinema settings and in spatial presentation as installation. His artistic practice focuses mostly on the relationship between capital and technology, labour and nature, worldviews, genre cinema, and the possibility of theoretical fiction. His works have been shown at various international film festivals (Locarno, IFFR, Viennale, BFI London, Cinema du Reel, Vancouver, etc.) as well as at NTT InterCommunication Center Tokyo, Centre Pompidou Paris, Times Museum Guangzhou, Istanbul Biennial, Venice Architecture Biennale, Biennale Jogja, and National Gallery of Indonesia amongst others. His short film 'Tellurian Drama' (2020) won the Silver Screen Award for Best Southeast Asian Short Film at Singapore International Film Festival 2020 and was awarded Honorable Mention at DOK Leipzig 2021.

B.M. Anggana



B.M. Anggana, personally known as Eng/Ang, is an Indonesian theatre artist/film producer based in Yogyakarta. He is the founder and

director of Komunitas Sakatoya, an art collective working on art management and theatre production focusing on ecological issues. He has produced several music videos, theatre and dance productions, and short films. In 2019 he was appointed as the Program Manager for Indonesia Dramatic Reading Festival. In early 2020 he completed professional development training in Management Production at the Art Centre Melbourne, fully funded by the Australia Council for the Arts. He also produced a full-length performance film by visual artist Natasha Tontey 'The Order of Autophagia', which premiered at Kyoto Experiment 2021.

Director's Note

My personal attachment to Mount Merapi, which I deem a fantasy place filled with kingdoms of unseen entities, determines my intent to develop this film—not in a straightforward documentary style, but rather incorporating magical and mythical elements. In this film, an investigation into the actuality of the labour phenomenon from the three modes—mystic, volcanologist, and sand miner—will be combined with more fantastical imagery and sound. This film tries to see actuality and fiction in the same form. This is an effort to continue my personal exploration and experimentation of the entanglement between fiction and nonfiction, technology and magic. Moreover, these two aspects are embodied in the cosmology of the people living in the Indonesian archipelago, where legends and myths determine everyday life as well as the social, political, and economic decisions of the country. There is nothing more real or objective, nor nothing more fantasy. Ultimately, what I want to portray in this film is how the contemporary political, cultural and social mechanics in Indonesia work, from the dispossession of land experienced by the indigenous, the presence of active paramilitarism, the state of living with perpetual natural hazards, to how we see worldviews interact with nature.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$104,300**
Secured Financing: **\$100,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- Hubert Bals Fund IFFR, The Netherlands
- Purin Pictures, Thailand
- Tan Ean Kiam Foundation - SGIFF, Singapore

Project Requirements:

- Distributors
- Festivals
- Sales

Development

Series

From the Mountain by Faisal Attrache

The House That My Mother Built by Alyaa Musa

Land of Nairi by Ovsanna Gevorgyan

Let the Earth Burn by Sofia Alaoui

Miara by Talal Selhami and Jawad Lahlou

Nguya by Michiel Robberecht and Precy Numbi

Status Quo by Gilbert Karam

Director / Screenwriter / Producer:

Faisal Attrache

Contact:

Faisal Attrache

fattrache@gmail.com

From the Mountain

'Min Al Jabal' / Syria, Jordan / Arabic, EnglishGenre: **Biography, Drama, History, War**Themes: **Family, Human Rights, Identity, Politics, Social Issues**

When a fiery young farmer returns from war to find the Ottomans have executed his father and subjugated his people, he rises up, becoming a local hero. His quest for revenge, justice and his own journey of fatherhood intertwine when the fight for Arab independence finally arrives.



In pre-WWI Syria, Sultan Al Atrash returns home from forced military service to find that the Ottomans have executed his father and stolen land from his village. With the help of his family and close friends, Sultan defies his elders and local leadership to win back the land, catapulting him to local hero. As Sultan gains influence among the villagers and his extended family who run the “Jabal” (Mountain), he faces off against his pro-Ottoman cousins who are more interested in power than fighting for freedom, despite ruthless Ottoman rule and corruption.

Sultan becomes a father figure to his brothers, but his dream is to start his own family with Turkiya, his strong and righteous wife. They struggle to conceive a son, tragically losing several babies to illness. When the Ottomans cause a famine across the country, Sultan opens his home to refugees and political exiles, attracting the attention of both the Ottomans and Arab nationalists. Sultan joins Prince Faisal’s movement, aligning the Jabal with the Arabs against his cousin’s demands. In the season finale, Sultan’s army frees Damascus, ending 400 years of Ottoman rule. However, freedom is short-lived when the French take control of Syria...

Faisal Attrache



Faisal Attrache is a writer, director and producer who tells stories about universal human experiences with a socially conscious message. His

short docu-fiction film ‘Hasta Siempre, Comandante’ (2016), made under the tutelage of Abbas Kiarostami, won a Mention Spéciale du Jury at the Clermont-Ferrand International Short Film Festival, France. His short documentary ‘Growing Home’ (2014) premiered at the Sheffield DocFest, UK (2015) and won Best Documentary Short at the Newport Beach Film Festival, USA. ‘From the Mountain’ (2021), his latest short historical drama based on part of his great-grandfather’s life, premiered at the Red Sea Film Festival, Saudi Arabia and won the Jury Award at the Franco-Arab Film Festival, Jordan. He is currently developing it into a TV series. He received an MFA in Film Production from the USC School of Cinematic Arts, Los Angeles. Born in Swaida, Syria, Attrache grew up in California and is currently based in the UK.

Director’s Note

We’ve all heard stories of the revolutions that built our modern nations, and how their leaders united people to expel oppressors from their lands. In Syria, the leader of that modern nationalist revolution was Sultan Basha Al Atrash—my great-grandfather. I was born in Syria and grew up in the US. When we used to visit, seeing his picture in people’s houses, his statues in squares, and hearing stories made me proud and sparked my imagination. Like many, I dreamed of seeing this history on screen. This is a family story, at times epic in its context and scale, yet more often intimate in its relationship dynamics. The drama is described by the Arab proverb “‘Me and my brother against my cousin; Me, my brother and my cousin against the stranger’”. Most people today know Syria for all the wrong reasons, unaware of its rich history. This series tells the story of the birth of modern Syria through the people who dared to fight for their dreams. Sultan Basha Al Atrash was unwavering and steadfast, a beacon and example of how to unite and energize people when all seems lost. He is an Arab hero we need today.

Financial Information

Project Requirements:

- Co-producers
- Creative Advice
- Development Funds
- Pitching Advice
- Writers’ Room

Director / Producer:

Alyaa Musa

Producer:

Mia Bittar**Company Profile:**

Black Balance is a Sudanese film production company based in Khartoum, Sudan. We produce independent documentary films, features and shorts with a focus on Sudanese and African stories and directors. Black Balance is currently leading four feature-length films supported and recognized by regional and international film funds, film festivals and institutions, including Doha Film Institute, AFAC, Mawred Cultural resources, DocAfrica, CNC France, FESPACO Festival Burkina Faso, HotDocs Blue- Ice fund Canada, Goteborg Sweden, WCF Berlinale, MiradasDoc Spain, EAVE EU and the DW Akademie.

Contact:

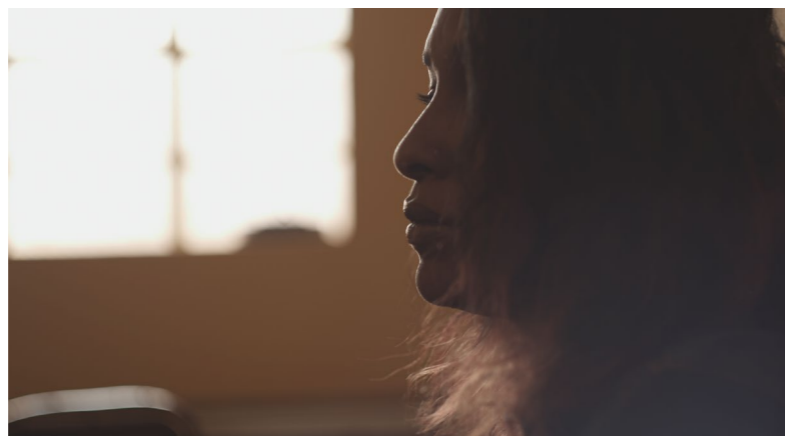
Alyaa Musa

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The House That My Mother Built

Sudan / ArabicGenre: **Documentary**Themes: **Women's Issues, Social Issues, Politics, Culture, Art**

Eight women from across Sudan share their astonishing encounters with the inhabitants of the households they take refuge in during Sudan's revolution 2019-2022.



The first season of 'The House That My Mother Built' is set in current time Sudan. It sheds light on the continuous uprising movement and covers part of the last three-year period, which culminated in the tumbling of a 30 years of dictatorship under the Albashir regime, which spanned between 1989-2019. While the revolution's defeats and victories were mainly captured and therefore seen from outside in the streets—this series is entirely focused on the unseen and untold stories which took place behind closed doors.

It restructures precarious, emotional and overwhelming encounters between women protesters and the inhabitants of the homes that received them as they fled from the severe violence at the hands of the security and militia men chasing them in the streets. The eight episodes of the series cover eight random encounters across Sudan before the fall in April 2019. Women of different political interests, cultural and economic backgrounds narrate their own stories. In each episode, one woman shares her personal experience about an insightful encounter that either examined her confidence and own self-awareness or shifted her perspective about the revolution and the people she is fighting for.

Alyaa Musa

Based in Sudan, Alyaa Musa is a graduate of the EAVE producers workshop 2021. PGD Filmmaking, London Film

School and MA with distinction in Cinematography and Post-production from the University of Greenwich. Alyaa has creative credits in a number of recognized shorts. She is currently producing and directing the documentary essay 'Becoming Omer Khairy', co-writing and producing the feature doc in production 'The Camera Never Cries' and co-produced the feature documentary 'The New Man' with Cape Verde, premiering at FESPACO (Panafrikan Film and Television Festival of Ouagadougou) 2023.

Director's Note

As a woman in a conservative society, I had the privilege to enter the most private corners and encounter the stories of the families that saved me. I was engaged in the most intimate and personal conversations with my fellow protestors and hosts. I ate, slept, helped around, laughed, lost my temper and witnessed some irritating and many discomfoting situations. 'The House That My Mother Built' series uses artistic and dramaturgic structures to explore different kinds of inner conflicts that live within our characters. The setting inside of homes provides the stage on which our protagonists will leave their comfort zones and be forced to face their judgments and question their own self-awareness. Each house is a microcosm which reflects back a picture of the wider Sudanese society to the viewer. This series explores the connections and disconnect between the rooted domestic values and culture in Sudan and the "New Sudan" which is being proposed by the slogan of the revolution.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$51,000**
Secured Financing: **\$7,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Göteborg Film Festival, Sweden

Project Requirements:

- Distributors
- Financing
- Marketing Advice
- Pre-sales
- TV Broadcasters

Director / Screenwriter / Producer:

Ovsanna Gevorgyan

Contact:

Ovsanna Gevorgyan

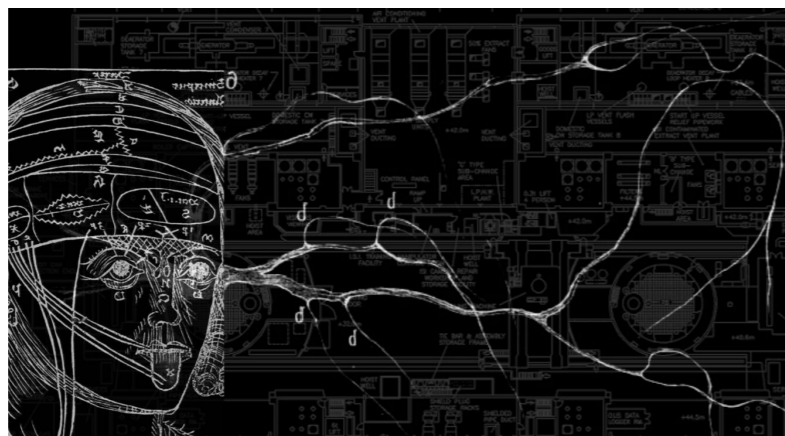
gevorgyanovsanna@gmail.com

Land of Nairi

'Երկիր Նաիրի' / Armenia / Armenian, English

Genre: **Science Fiction, History, Romance, Mystery, Thriller**Themes: **Culture, Identity**

The ill-managed demolition of a chemical plant floods Nairi with a purple liquid that puts the town's young people to sleep. When they start to die from terrible nightmares, a team of researchers use a dream projection machine to enter the patients' subconscious.



'Land of Nairi' is a science fiction story about a small post-industrial town in Armenia where young people fall asleep after an ill-managed chemical plant demolition damages a waste yard and floods the town with radioactive mud. While the young people suffer from torturing nightmares that slowly kill them, professor Adam Kapica has to find the cure and save them, including the woman he loves, Anna. The only problem is—the sleeping people exhibit no medical issues; all the analyses and check-ups give zero information. Their brain is active only when it is dreaming.

Due to a lack of other leads, Adam looks for clues in their dreams, connecting the patients to a dream projection machine. The real breakthrough happens when the first patient, Ivan, dies. The autopsy reveals that Ivan's body was filled with a liquid that drowned him. The more severe the nightmares, the more liquid the body produces, proving that dreams do indeed kill them. Adam decides to use an untested feature of the dream machine and enter the patient's dreams.

Ovsanna Gevorgyan



Ovsanna Gevorgyan is an Armenian writer and director. She received her Bachelor's degree in Journalism from YSU in

Armenia, then moved to New York to study film directing at Columbia University, School of the Arts. Her short film 'Tale of the Anguished Gardener' premiered internationally at the 27th Raindance Film Festival. It was also in official selection at Golden Apricot International Film Festival in Armenia and the Pomegranate film festival in Toronto. Her first feature film script, 'My Heart Is Like Those Ruined Houses,' was selected for the "Bridges industry day. East of West film days" pitching sessions. Her short film 'Orphanhood' received the best cinematography award for a short film by the Armenian guild of cinematographers. Ovsanna's TV series project 'Land of Nairi' was part of Torino Film Lab Next - TV Series 2022 and Doha Film Institute Series Lab 2022. She is one of the 20 young filmmakers from Asia to be part of the 2022 Chanel and BIFF Asian Film Academy. Ovsanna's most recent short film 'Headless Horsemen' is currently in post-production.

Director's Note

Just as America has its Generation X and Millennials, Armenia has what I call "The Generation of Gaghj". "Gaghj" means stagnant in Armenian, something that's not moving, a swamp. I felt like it's the perfect word to describe a generation that feels spiritually trapped in time and place, while their minds try to find solace in the "drug" that history books taught them - the nostalgia for times they never knew, but were taught to be the greatest. This is why the incident of the sleeping town was such a suitable vessel for this story. The entire script is a metaphor for Armenian history and our centennial mentality of seeking refuge in our nostalgia for the glorious past when the present is in ruins. Every dream is a metaphor for a trait in Armenians as a nation and a page in Armenian history that has been crucial in the formation of our identity. Our parents and their parents too were born in the Soviet Union—into a world of an established moral code and a ready-made system of beliefs to follow. While we were born when the old was destroyed, but the new was not built yet. Our generation unconsciously fell into the trap of "waiting for a miracle", a state of mind very descriptive of Armenians. This story is trying to understand what historical events led to this tired gene in my people, who refuse to fight and prefer to wait to be saved.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$500,000 (per episode)**
Secured Financing: **\$40,000**

Project Requirements:

- Co-producers
- Development Funds
- Financing
- Producers
- TV Broadcasters

Director:

Sofia Alaoui

Producer:

Sophie Penson**Company Profile:**

Barney Production was founded by Saïd Hamich Benlarbi, a graduate from La Fémis film school in Paris, in 2009, with the aim of championing sensitive and committed filmmakers. In 2011 the company won the Lagardère Foundation prize. In 2013, he founded the company Mont Fleuri Production in Morocco. Barney Production co-produced 'Much Loved' by Nabil Ayouch (Directors' Fortnight, Cannes 2015) and produced 'Northern Wind' by Walid Mattar, 'Volubilis' by Faouzi Bensaïdi (Venice Days 2017), 'Return to Bollène' by Saïd Hamich Benlarbi (Louis Delluc Film Prize Nominee 2018) and 'Zanka Contact' by Ismaël El Iraki (Best Actress Orizzonti Award - Venice Film Festival 2020, Special Mention from the Jury - Cinemed 2020), as well as around 30 short films by authors such as Leyla Bouzid, Steve Achiepo, Kamal Lazraq and Vincent Tricon, with whom collaboration on feature films is ongoing. Steve Achiepo's feature film 'Slumlord' was released in February 2023. Faouzi Bensaïdi's 'Deserts' and Kamal Lazraq's 'Hounds' are in post-production.

Contact:

Sophie Penson

sophie@barneyproduction.com

Let the Earth Burn

'Que la terre brûle' / France, Qatar / Arabic

Genre: **Crime, Drama, Thriller**Themes: **Identity, Nature, Social Issues, Violence, Women's Issues**

Despite getting excellent results, fresh police academy graduate Kenza is posted to a remote station in a small town in the Atlas Mountains.



Despite getting excellent results, recent police academy graduate Kenza is posted to a remote station in a small town in the Atlas Mountains. Surrounded by misogynistic, unwilling colleagues, Kenza learns, despite their indifference—that some shepherds' children are going missing...

Sofia Alaoui

Born in Casablanca, Sofia Alaoui spent her childhood between Morocco and China. After studying in Paris, she moved

to Casablanca in 2015 and directed both documentaries: 'The Children of Nablus', 'The Waves or Nothing' and fictions: 'Cinderella's Dream' and 'Kenza des Choux'. Her latest short film, 'So What If The Goats Die' won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Festival 2020, the French Union of Film Critics Prize and the Jury Prize at Paris Courts Devant 2021, then the César 2021 for short film. After shooting a commissioned short film as part of a genre series for Hulu, she directed her first feature film 'Animalia', produced by Wrong Film and Srab films in France, which premiered at Sundance and won the World Cinema Dramatic Special Jury Award.

Sophie Penson

Sophie Penson joined Barney Production as a producer and development officer in 2016 after studies at La Fémis. She

has produced short films by Saïd Hamich Benlarbi, Ilias El Faris, Camille Lukan, Randa Maroufi and Vincent Tricon, and has collaborated on the production of the feature-length films 'Slumlord', 'Deserts' and, currently, 'La Mer au loin' and the series 'Let the Earth Burn'.

Director's Note

A genre series inspired by real events. Certain regions in Morocco are the scene of mysterious child kidnappings and disappearances. These children are said to be used in witchcraft rituals to unearth treasures hidden by the jinn. They are known as "Zouhris", meaning "The lucky ones", and can be distinguished by their blue eyes and blond hair. A metaphysical detective series tinged with fantasy and social drama, 'Let the Earth Burn', immerses us in the daily life of one of these remote regions where justice struggles to prevail. The inhabitants of these villages live in precarious circumstances with scant access to education and healthcare. The farthest-flung communities are, for the most part, illiterate and speak Amazigh, a language not widely spoken by the police. The police officers, often sent there from big cities, are scornful and disrespectful of crime scenes. They torture suspects in the hope of forcing a confession out of them, acting like despots in the absence of any clear rules and lording it over the local population. 'Let the Earth Burn' is the x-ray of a fractured country, of its social inequalities and power struggles. Who to believe? Where to turn in the hope of finding an escape? Magic acts as a refuge when the state abandons its people.

Financial InformationTotal Budget: **\$5,790,000**Secured Financing: **\$870,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Black Mic Mac, France
- Mont Fleuri Production, Morocco

Project Requirements:

- Broadcasters
- Development Funds
- TV Broadcasters
- VOD Platforms

Director / Screenwriter:

Talal Selhami

Screenwriter:

Jawad Lahlou

Producer:

Lamia Chraibi**Company Profile:**

La Prod develops fiction in its broadest sense by combining imagination and rigour without compromise or self-censorship. The company works for a committed, free and independent cinema. La Prod accompanies directors in the creative process, including Hicham Lasri, Narjiss Nejjar, Ismail Ferroukhi, Mohcine Besri, co-produced Oliver Laxe's 'Las Mimosas' (Grand Prize of the Critics' Week at Cannes Film Festival 2016) as well as Balint Kenyeres' 'Tegnap' (Locarno Film Festival), produced Talal Selhami's 'Achoura', a Moroccan fantasy film (Best Film Award - Hardline Festival, Special Mention of the jury - Sitges Fantastic Film Festival) and Ismael Ferroukhi's film 'Mica' (Festival du Film Francophone d'Angoulême 2020), the documentaries 'Ziyara' by Simone Bitton (Grand Prix at Filmmaker Milan), 'School Of Hope' by Mohamed El Aboudi (Special Jury Prize at Hot Docs - Special prize at Tampere). The company also produced various feature film projects and television programs.

Contact:

Lamia Chraibi

Lamia@laprod.ma

Miara

Morocco, Qatar / EnglishGenre: **Drama, History, Fantasy**Themes: **Coming-of-Age, Culture, Identity**

7th century. North Africa. After the brutal murder of her father, Miara, a young Amazigh woman, discovers that he was a Viking king. Torn between her yearning for identity and the desire for revenge, Miara has to become a fierce warrior, a legend.



Miara and her father, Ahar, are outcasts by choice, living in the hostile lands of 7th-century Morocco. Despite being a tough mentor, Miara means the world to Ahar. But the girl is tired of this lonely life and wants to belong to a tribe. Ahar forbids it—they can only rely on each other. When Amazigh tribes unite against a common threat, Ahar and Miara fight a new invading force, Viking warriors. Ahar's past is revealed, and Miara finds out he was a Viking king.

A decade ago, Lothar(Ahar) abandoned his kingdom and his daughter, Gunnfried, to seek a gift from the Gods. She never ceased to look for him. Lothar reunites with his long-lost biological daughter, Gunnfried. Yet, when she realises that he didn't go missing but abandoned her to raise Miara instead, she brutally murders him and blames Miara for her deed. Both women will go to hell and back to exact vengeance on each other. However, when a new threat emerges, they will have to unite as Miara's truest nature comes to light.

Talal Selhami

After graduating with a master's degree in Cinema from the University of Paris, Talal Selhami began

his career directing several short films. His first feature film, 'Mirages', a thriller set in the Moroccan Desert, produced in 2010 by famous Moroccan director Nabil Ayouch, opens at Marrakech Film Festival to critical and audience praise. In 2020, he directed 'Achoura', the first feature film with a creature inspired by Moroccan mythology. He won the Best Film Award at the Hardline Festival in Germany and the Special Mention of the Jury at the prestigious Sitges Fantastic Film Festival. In the same year, he directed 'Tell Me Why', a video game which won the Game for Change Award in The Video Game Awards 2021. Talal is also currently working on his third feature, 'Le Refuge', produced by Lamia Chraibi.

Jawad Lahlou

With a double Major in Entrepreneurship and Cinema & Drama at the University of Missouri, Kansas

City, Jawad Lahlou trained as an assistant director and worked on international productions. He took part in the Writers' Workshop of Méditalents to write his first feature, 'A Man Like You'. Sharing

a strong taste for fantasy films, he met Talal Selhami and collaborated in the writing of 'Achoura', an epic fantasy tale on childhood. He participates in various workshops and classes, amongst them the Groundbreaking Television Content Workshop (HBO & Global Media Makers), the American Film Showcase (El Gouna Film Festival). Since then, he has written over 15 Moroccan TV shows, with subjects revolving around feminism and social identity and opened the local audience to new genres with an average of 7 million viewers per episode. He recently developed three historical TV shows on three different Moroccan dynasties.

Lamia Chraibi

Lamia Chraibi is the founder of La Prod, created in 2007 in Casablanca and Moon a Deal Films in 2011 in

Paris. She works for a committed, free and independent cinema. She accompanies directors in the creative process, including Hicham Lasri, Narjiss Nejjar, Mohcine Besri, co-produced Oliver Laxe's 'Las Mimosas' (Grand Prize of the Critics' Week at Cannes Film Festival 2016) as well as Balint Kenyeres' 'Tegnap' (Locarno Film Festival). Lamia produced Talal Selhami's 'Achoura', a Moroccan fantasy film (Best Film Award - Hardline Festival, Special Mention of the jury - Sitges Fantastic FF) and Ismael Ferroukhi's film 'Mica' (Festival du Film Francophone d'Angoulême 2020). Her last two documentaries, 'Ziyara' by

Simone Bitton (Grand Prix at Filmmaker Milan) and 'School Of Hope' by Mohamed El Aboudi (Special Jury Prize at Hot Docs - Special prize at Tampere), were very well received by the critics. Lamia also produced various television programs.

Director's Note

If there are very few written traces of Amazigh culture, it is due to the fact that this culture has been mainly transmitted through oral tradition. While some traces disappeared over time, historians affirm that the Amazigh culture is not any less rich with myths and legends, and go so far as to suspect that these have inspired Eastern and Western mythologies. Indeed, many features of Amazigh cosmogony can be found in Egyptian, Greek, and Roman Gods and myths. The Greek myth of the Amazons, for example, can be compared to the story of Teryel, a powerful Amazigh warrior who stayed far from men and terrorised them. An era full of myths and legends that provides exclusive stories, leaving room for fantasy and imagination. Miara is a necessary fantasy tale, as our part of the world is sorely lacking in representation, despite having a rich and fertile breeding ground for stories with heroic, Romanesque, independent characters. We like the idea that the Viking culture—introduced by the central character of Lothar—popularised by many successful series is a portal to this lesser-known Amazigh culture, which makes us want to dig deeper into the Amazigh point of view in the script development.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$4,735,000**
Secured Financing: **\$10,000**

Project Requirements:

- Co-producers
- Development Funds
- Pre-sales
- TV Broadcasters
- VOD Platforms

Director / Screenwriter:
Michiel Robberecht

Director:
Precy Numbi

Producer:
Maarten D'Hollander

Contact:
Maarten D'Hollander
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Michiel Robberecht
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Nguya

Democratic Republic of the Congo, Belgium / Swahili, Lingala, French, English
Genre: **Drama, Comedy, Superhero**
Themes: **Coming-of-Age, Human Rights, Politics, Youth, Social Issues**

Nia's life is turned upside down when she meets Nguya—a superhero robot born in the coltan mines of Eastern Congo. When they become the target of an evil mining company, the pair are forced to travel in search of Nguya's superpower.



Nia dreams of being an engineer abroad, but is tied to her small and struggling business, fixing electric cars, which is on the brink of collapse. When she meets a soul-searching robot who has a powerful connection with electricity, she sees a possible solution to her problems. The robot, whom Nia baptises “Nguya”, was born in a nearby coltan mine and is trying to figure out who he is and what’s his purpose in this world. In Nia, the one person that doesn’t run away from him in fear, he sees a friend who will help him figure things out.

What the pair don’t know is they’re being hunted by Forescore, a big mining company that sees major money-making potential in Nguya’s powers that are connected to the valuable coltan. After a couple of failed attempts to capture Nguya and Nia, Forescore creates the narrative that Nguya is a superhero, here to bring prosperity to a destabilised region in an effort to lure them out. Still identity-less, Nguya is desperate to take on that role, which causes a rift with Nia. With the enemy closing in, Nguya must find his power, and Nia must decide whether to help a friend.

Michiel Robberecht



Michiel Robberecht currently lives in Kigali after having spent the last years working and living between Brussels, Kinshasa and Addis Ababa. Michiel got his master’s degree in Arts & Literature at the University of Antwerp and, during his studies, fell in love with cinema. After university, he didn’t attend film school but chose to learn to make films by self-discovery. He set off to Congo, where he lived for half a year in a small village in the Congolese rainforest, to make his first independent movie ‘Peer Gynt’. Besides his work as a writer/director, Robberecht also works as a photographer, with his pictures bathing in the same magical realistic realm as his movies. He just finished his new short film ‘The Blind’, made with blind actors on an island in France and is currently developing a television series named ‘Nguya’ set in Eastern Congo.

Precy Numbi



Precy Numbi is a Congolese visual artist and performer who creates robot costumes out of recycled materials he finds on the streets. He graduated from Kinshasa’s Academie des beaux Arts and is currently living in Brussels. Before,

Precy lived in three major Congolese cities (Kisangani, Kinshasa and Goma), where he faced the problems of poverty, access to resources such as water or electricity, wars, insecurity, pollution, gender inequalities and even child soldiers. But nevertheless, he sees himself at the centre of the dynamics of social, political, technological, economic and artistic innovations. It is in this clash of problems and opportunities that he finds his various sources of inspiration—“My works are made of yesterday’s goods, today’s waste and tomorrow’s hope”. Precy Numbi wants to show strength and human resilience in light of the different problems he has faced in his life.

Maarten D'Hollander



Maarten D'Hollander has been working in the film industry since 2009, when he started as an assistant producer and line producer for the documentary production company Offworld. In 2014 he started his own company Jeepster and has worked since then as a freelance and independent (line)producer on different international productions. Last year he worked as an executive producer on feature films such as ‘Cleo’ from Eva Cools and ‘The Barefoot Emperor’ and ‘Fortress’ from Peter Brosens and Jessica Woodworth. In 2020 he created Krater together with Tim Martens.

Director's Note

Africa serves too often as the dumping ground for our disposals, but at the same time, it is also a continent that is exploited for its most valuable resources. Similarly, Nguya, our hero, is a robot made from scrap metal, but that has a special power everybody wants to use for their own interest. It's this intriguing dualism of the African continent that inspires us to bring Nguya to life. Not a VFX-created superhero, but rather a real Congolese robot made from scrap metal that decolonizes the superhero narrative. With this series, we want to put a spotlight on the forgotten conflict of the region driven by the worldwide hunt for Coltan. But most important to us, is that the story is mainly carried by a unique friendship between a robot and a young woman. It is Nguya, the robot, that awakens again Nia's wonderment and social engagement that she had lost due to the war and instability in the region. Throughout the series we see how it is Nguya, a robot, that reminds people about their own humanity. The story is set in a political context but will mostly be driven by the deeply emotional backstory of Nia and the comic relief of the robot. With Nguya we tend to bring a story that is rooted in an actual political context, but that dares to dream about an African superhero that embraces and appropriates its own superpower.

Financial Information

Project Requirements:

- Artistic Direction
- Co-producers
- Development Funds
- Marketing Advice
- VOD Platforms

Director:
Gilbert Karam

Screenwriter:
Hiba Louis, Estephan Khattar

Producer:
Pierre Sarraf

Company Profile:

né à Beyrouth Films is a Beirut-based company specialised in creative audiovisual content covering Commercials, Motion Pictures and Series. One of the particularities of né à Beyrouth Films is that it began as an annual film festival in 2001. Rooted in the film culture in Lebanon, the festival grew to become the foremost platform for Lebanese filmmakers allowing the company to anchor itself as a reference in the industry and build a strong network in the field. In 2004, the initiative developed into a boutique production house, actively contributing to the rebirth of national cinema. In 2008, we expanded into advertising, working with the region's most influential advertising agencies, producing Commercials that channelled a whole approach to impact. In 2020, the company ventured into series development in an attempt to adapt to the evolving market. 'Status Quo' is the flagship series the company is working on. With a grass-roots approach né à Beyrouth Films boasts an ongoing thirst for creativity and original content through its selective client portfolio as it continues to expand its work regionally and internationally.

Contact:
Pierre Sarraf
pierre@neabeyrouth.org

Status Quo

Lebanon, Qatar, Spain, USA / Arabic

Genre: **Drama, Thriller**

Themes: **Youth, Women's Issues, Violence, Social Issues, Human Rights**

Beirut heats up as three unsuspecting girlfriends are forced to unite against the corrupt regime after they mistakenly kidnap a powerful politician's son.



On a fateful Friday night, five unlikely heroes will be thrown into a dangerous game of justice in the city of Beirut. Dalila, Sherine, and Youmna are having a night out when they find themselves face to face with Rabih Ibrahim, the son of a notorious politician responsible for the tragic death of over 30 innocent children. With no other options, the trio seeks refuge with their friends, the daring drag queens Amin and Salah. But just as they think things couldn't get any worse, they receive a mysterious call with a frightening ultimatum.

They must announce the kidnapping of Rabih and demand his father's confession for the hospital massacre. The group is torn between fear and determination, but it's Dalila who takes the lead, convincing her friends to join her in a risky game that could shake the oppressive system to its core. As they navigate the dangerous terrain, they must outsmart top officials who believe they are facing a terrorist organisation. In the end, they have to decide how far they are willing to go for justice, but their bravery may come at a price.

Gilbert Karam



Gilbert Karam is a film director and screenwriter from Beirut who holds a master's degree in Film Directing from the Lebanese

University. He received recognition for his award-winning short film 'Alnajma' in 2020, which was nominated for 17 local and international film festivals. His debut TV series 'Status Quo,' which is supported by the Doha Film Institute, has already won the VIS Paramount Plus Storytellers Award and the Break The Format Media Award at Conecta Fiction & Entertainment. In addition to his success with 'Status Quo,' Gilbert recently wrote and directed an episode of the award-winning poetic series 'Ana Beirut' (I Am Beirut) as part of the Intuitive Film Lab led by Muriel Abourouss.

Pierre Sarraf



Pierre Sarraf is one of the founders of né à Beyrouth Films, the Beirut-based film development and production

company established in 2004. Born in Beirut in 1975, Pierre grew up in a city divided by civil war. In 1990, he immigrated to Italy (Lycée Chateaubriand 1990-1993), France (Masters in Biochemistry 1993-1998) and Canada (McGill, MBA class 2002). After a few years of professional experience, he returned to Beirut in 2004 to set up né à Beyrouth Films. His last completed features as co-producer are 'Insyriated' (Panorama Audience Award, Berlinale 2017), 'Capernaum' (Jury Prize, Cannes Film Festival 2018 and nominated by the Academy of Motion Pictures in the Best Foreign Film category in 2019 in addition to a BAFTA and a Golden Globe nomination), '3D' (Europa Cinemas label, Giornate degli autori, Venice 2022) and 'Warsha' (winner of 99 awards including Best International Short at Sundance 2022 and shortlisted by the Academy in 2023).

Director's Note

This story is a tribute to the collective trauma experienced by people in Beirut and the wounds caused by violence and crime around the world. It explores universal themes of friendship, power, and the struggle for justice. From a unique and authentic perspective, the underground world of Beirut is painted as a place of beauty, excitement, and mystery, a city pulsing with life even in the shadows. In this series, we invite you to explore through the adventure of our protagonists the hidden gems of the city, from its stunning nightlife to its dazzling drag shows and the resilient spirit of its queer community. Amidst the beautiful ruins and chaotic streets, we follow the journey of three women who, after a chance encounter, find themselves caught up in a game like no other. Through their eyes, we witness the power of friendship, the resilience of women in the Middle East, and the raw, unbridled energy of a city like no other.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$3,200,000**
Secured Financing: **\$100,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- BTF Media, USA
- Doha Film Institute, Qatar
- VIS Paramount+, Spain

Project Requirements:

- Co-producers
- Distributors
- Financing
- TV Broadcasters
- VOD Platforms

Development

Short Narrative

Alaqiq: Darkness of Media by Mohammed A. Al-Suwaidi and Kummam Al Maadeed

Beauty in Solace by Ali Al-Hajri

Continuity (Working Title) by Nadia Al-Khater

Holy Feet by Karim Emara

I Wished for Solitude by Hamad Alfayhani

Missed Connections (Working Title) by Dhoha Abdelsattar

Director:
Mohammed A. Al-Suwaidi

Screenwriter:
Kummam Al-Maadeed

Producer:
Ben Robinson

Contact:
Ben Robinson
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Qatari Film Fund
qff@dohafilminstitute.com

Alaqiq: Darkness of Media

Qatar / Arabic, English
Genre: **Animation, Action**
Themes: **Heroism**

In a city warped by social media and technology and after a brutal attack against his grandfather—Aqiq discovers he is the first in a new generation of a superhero group called “The Guardians”.



In a metropolis warped by social media and technology, a sinister group, “The Trolls”, menace the city with criminal acts. Enter Aqiq, a successful architect and philanthropist whose grandfather hides a secret identity as one of “The Guardians”—an ancient order protecting humanity from evil through the ages. Each Guardian wields a magic gemstone that endows them with awesome powers. Aqiq’s life is disrupted when his beloved grandfather is hospitalised by a masked figure. The attack is cruelly broadcast live on social media, sparking outcry and an army of bloggers keen to investigate. Keeping vigil by his grandfather’s hospital bed, Aqiq is distraught.

Returning to his grandfather’s jewellery shop—plundered during the attack—he meets blogger Yagot Al-Hamar, who is investigating the story. Reluctant to get involved, Aqiq dismisses her demands and goes to his private workshop. There, he deciphers a message from his grandfather that leads him to an old clock with a pair of mysterious black agate cufflinks inside. Aqiq wears them, and overwhelmed with sadness, he leans onto his hands, not realising that when the cufflinks touch, their power is activated. The attacker, Hasad, is alerted of the cufflink’s location, and Aqiq is assaulted. After a struggle, he wins, but the secret is out, and The Trolls are coming for him. Whether he likes it or not, Aqiq has been chosen to join The Guardians in their mission...

Mohammed A. Al-Suwaidi



Mohammad Al-Suwaidi is an Electronics Engineering graduate from Purdue University who also holds a master’s degree in

Business Administration. He is a versatile professional with a background in both electronics engineering and business administration. Mohammad’s academic qualifications and extensive experience in animation, character design, and graphic design make him a perfect fit as a director. Mohammad has over twelve years of practical experience in the animation industry. His work as a character animator on the short film ‘Matar’ and as a cartoon character developer on the ‘Mandoos’ series demonstrates his remarkable technical skills and creativity in bringing unique and innovative ideas to life. Currently, Mohammad is working on several exciting projects, including the ‘Harf Esem’ platform that provides entertaining and educational content for Arab children and families by promoting the Arabic language. Mohammad is enthusiastic and determined to achieve his goal of delivering educational and entertaining art to audiences of all ages in Qatar and beyond. He is passionate about making a positive impact through his work and is eager to share his skills and creativity with a broader audience.

Kummam Al-Maadeed



Kummam Al-Maadeed is a Qatari writer, specialised in fantasy novels written in English. She holds a Master of Business

Administration (2018) and a Bachelor of Public Relations and Advertising (2011) from Qatar University. She has worked in several governmental and semi-governmental institutions in Qatar, such as the Doha Film Institute, the Ministry of Communications and Transportation, the Qatar National Library and Qatar University. Kummam published her first novel, ‘The Lost Rose’, in 2016, which was then translated into Arabic in 2018. In 2019 she published two books, ‘Calling Magic’ a fantasy novel, part of a duology and ‘Sparks of Imagination’, a collection of flash fiction and one short story. Her latest work of fiction is a Comic titled ‘Adventures in the Dark Land’, which she worked on with local artist Maha AlAli.

Director’s Note

Through this short film, I would like to introduce my characters (The Guardians) to the local community in Doha and hopefully to international audiences as well. My film portrays superheroes from the local community, which is a rare sight in the film industry. I wish for children and adults of this country to feel represented

in this genre. Furthermore, my film will discuss a very important issue, which is people’s current social media addiction and the consequences of a viral rumour. I want the film to highlight the danger of how rumours can create rifts between people and how the only way forward for any nation is with the core of good intentions, which are represented by the gems, and also to be united and fight the negative aspects of social media. My aim through this project is to create a beautiful work of art that is exciting for the viewer and, at the same time, holds a positive message. I always aim for my animation and art to have a purpose and to influence the viewer positively. The animation style for this film will be 2D. The characters and the city in which the story is set will be designed to reflect the Khaleeji culture. The story is set in a fictional modern city, and the Guardians will have Arabic names that represent the stones that give each one of them their core good intentions reflected in powers (precious gems). In this film, I will implement all the skills I have learned from my previous animation experience and the new knowledge I acquired through the various Doha Film Institute animation workshops I have attended over the past couple of years. This is an animation that will bring a new twist to the world of superheroes, and I am confident it will find its audience in Doha and beyond.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$50,000**
Secured Financing: **\$50,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:
• Doha Film Institute, Qatar

Project Requirements:
• Distributors
• Festivals
• Pitching Advice
• VOD Platforms
• Writers’ Room

Director:
Ali Al-Hajri

Producer:
Basel Owies

Contact:
Basel Owies
bowies@dohafilminstitute.com

Qatari Film Fund
qff@dohafilminstitute.com

Beauty in Solace

Qatar / Arabic

Genre: **Biography, Experimental**

Themes: **Childhood, Death, Identity, Grief**

Developed as Part of the Documentary Lab with Rithy Panh

When a man is faced with his own mortality, images from his past force him to understand his state of melancholy and his need to release it.



After a startling car crash, Ali is woken up in a place where time and space are arbitrary. He faces strange encounters that confront him with his existence and leaves him lost in images from his life. When darkness approaches, will he find freedom, or will he be lost forever as a product of life's debris?

Ali Al-Hajri



Ali Al-Hajri is a Qatari filmmaker. He graduated from Drexel University with a TV Production and Media Management

degree. Al-Hajri is interested in films that subvert realities humans create but, in a way, show the truth/rawness in them. He hopes to continue exploring ways of telling stories born out of inner conflicts. Professionally, he works at Qatar Foundation, where he produces/directs short documentaries. Currently, he's in post-production for his first short 'Kinship', a film exploring tensions within father-son bonds.

Director's Note

The film is an autobiographical narrative that explores the notion of deeply rooted trauma and how, often, it dominates our subconscious. Grappling with the loss of my father at a young age, I could never fully grasp the meaning of death and the absence of a life never lived, and with this film, I'm attempting to make sense of who I am now because of it. I've lived with fears that governed my existence, and living under their dominion gave me the illusion of feeling safe. The fear grew to a point where it became self-destructive in a way that almost led me to my demise, in both the literal and metaphorical sense. However, when I came so close to death, I was forced to examine my life and deal with emotions I had kept blocked for years, which opened memories that I almost don't recognize anymore. This film is also an ode to a child unscathed by what life has thrown at him and my way of resurrecting my connection to him. Untangling pieces of memory weaved with fabricated fantasy, the film has allowed me to grieve and find the beauty that lives within that grief.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$50,000**
Secured Financing: **\$50,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:
• Doha Film Institute, Qatar

Project Requirements:
• Artistic Direction
• Festivals
• Post-production Advice

Director / Screenwriter:

Nadia Al-Khater

Producer:

Basel Owies

Contact:

Basel Owies

bowies@dohafilminstitute.com

Nadia Al-Khater

nadia.alkhater@gmail.com

Qatari Film Fund

qff@dohafilminstitute.com

Continuity

(Working Title)**Qatar / English**Genre: **Drama, Mystery**Themes: **Identity****Upon starting a new editing project, a young woman discovers that she is editing her own life.**

A young and obsessive editor works at a commercial production house. There, she grinds daily through the many projects that she cannot tell apart. One day, she begins a new project that is different from the rest. It blurs the lines of her reality. Suddenly, she loses her sense of where the edit ends and her life begins, and must find a way out of it all.

Nadia Al-Khater

Nadia Al-Khater is a Qatari filmmaker drawn to innovative storytelling. Her early passion for filmmaking inspired her to

direct after graduating from Georgetown University. She wrote and directed the short drama-thriller 'This Is Not a Drill' (2019) with The Film House. Her successful collaboration with The Film House continued with her second short film, the satire 'A Proposal' (2023). Her photograph "Djurgarden 10" has been highlighted by AccidentallyWesAnderson and was selected to exhibit in South Korea in Spring 2022. She has most recently directed the 2022 brand video for the National Museum of Qatar.

Director's Note

The film explores the philosophy of the continuity of personal identity through the art of editing. I am inspired by the structuralists and post-structuralist of the 20th century whose age-old questions consider the continuity of human perception and identity. This influenced me to move beyond linear narrative storytelling. Particularly, the surrealists such as Maya Deren have impacted my consideration for what is possible in film. Symbolism is used in this film to dramatize in a dream-like and subversive way. Without taking away from the literal story, the recurring symbols are used in various ways to make multifaceted thematic points. This story also opens up many possibilities to play with space and time. In a way, how to maintain space-time continuity is one of the foundational lessons of editing, but this story twists conventions, building upon the avant-garde and experimental works of the last century.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$50,000**
Secured Financing: **\$50,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Doha Film Institute, Qatar

Project Requirements:

- Artistic Direction
- Creative Advice
- Pre-production Advice
- Script Advice

Director / Screenwriter:

Karim Emara

Contact:

Karim Emara

karimemaraoo@gmail.com

Holy Feet

USA, Egypt, Qatar / English, Arabic

Genre: **Drama, Dark Comedy**Themes: **Identity, Immigration, Religion, Social Issues**

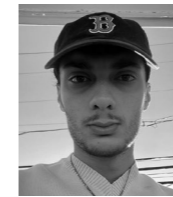
In the Northeast of the United States, Iman is forced into a difficult decision to save her ailing husband—using her glamorous feet as a means to secure the funds needed for his treatment.



Iman, a devout Arab Muslim immigrant living in the Northeast United States, finds herself in a difficult position after her husband Basel is involved in a devastating accident. With mounting hospital bills and a newborn to care for, Iman takes on janitorial work at the local mosque and pleads for financial assistance. Despite her best efforts, the bills continue to pile up, and her husband's limbs are at risk of amputation. In a moment of desperation, Iman is presented with an opportunity to make quick money by selling pictures of her glamorous feet online. This proposal conflicts with her religious principles and creates a moral dilemma.

However, as she explores this new realm, she realizes that there is an absurd amount of money to be made, which could greatly benefit her family. Even after paying off Basel's medical bills, the money from Iman's pictures continues to come in, making her husband suspicious of why she is glued to her phone. Eventually, Basel discovers that Iman's way of making money is through selling pictures of her feet online. At first, he is shocked and struggles to process the information. However, after he gathers his thoughts, the couple subtly reconciles, symbolized by their interlocking feet, with Basel's amputated foot and Iman's glamorous feet.

Image credit: Jessica Ballantyne

Karim Emara

Egypt and raised in the US, Karim's work explores the challenges of maintaining a Muslim identity in the modern world through the lens of dark comedy. He has written and directed 'The Chandelier' (2022), selected for the Doha Film Institute's Qumra and produced 'Bayt El Omor' (2019), a fiction film selected in 7 festivals, winning the award for Best Lebanese Expat film at LIFF. Currently, Karim is distributing 'The Chandelier' and working on his next short film, 'Holy Feet' (2022).

Director's Note

As a Muslim residing in the United States, I have grappled with reconciling my cultural and religious beliefs with the pervasive influence of Western society. At times, succumbing to Western norms has granted me momentary satisfaction, but ultimately led me astray from my faith and traditions. I experience a feeling of alienation when I try to stay true to my faith in a society that does not always align with my beliefs. Despite this, I find solace in my relationship with God, but also frustration in feeling isolated due to my beliefs. This inner turmoil, commonly experienced by Muslims living in the West, captivates me, and I sought to delve into this complex issue through the narrative of a character in a morally challenging situation. Additionally, after residing in the West for over a decade, my family and I have yet to realize the so-called "American Dream". We have not acquired property,

nor do we possess passports, and we are left with a considerable amount of debt. This narrative shines a spotlight on the adverse effects the American way of life can inflict upon marginalized communities, particularly in regards to the healthcare system and the financial pressures it imposes on households nationwide. It challenges the widely held belief in the Middle East: that America is a land of wealth and opportunities, but rather reveals it as a highly individualistic society where each person battles their own struggles and lacks mutual support.

Financial Information

Project Requirements:

- Artistic Direction
- Financing
- Pitching Advice
- Producers
- Script Advice

Director / Screenwriter:

Hamad Alfayhani

Producer:

Basel Owies

Contact:

Basel Owies

bowies@dohafilminstitute.com

Hamad Alfayhani

hamad12555@gmail.com

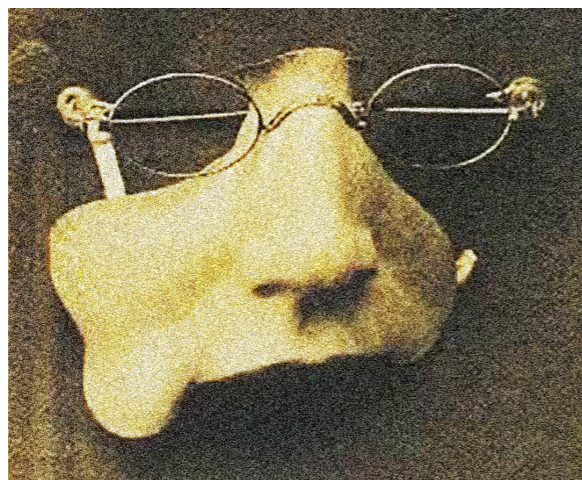
Qatari Film Fund

qff@dohafilminstitute.com

I Wished for Solitude

Qatar / ArabicGenre: **Drama**Themes: **Disability, Identity, Social Issues, Nature, Illness**

Developed as Part of the Documentary Lab with Rithy Panh

A man losing his face decides to become a recluse and has his final conversations with the people in his life.

A man is born with a rare illness that causes him to slowly lose his face throughout his life and is now at the stage where most of it has disappeared. His mother has lovingly crafted and painted him a mask that resembles a human face. After a conversation with his doctor, the man decides that it is time for him to become a recluse. He has his final poignant conversations with his mother, his friends, and the thing that means the most to him—the beetle that lives in his room. Through these dialogues, themes of isolation, illness, and social responsibility are unpacked. The man argues that, without a face, how can you truly be a part of human society?

Hamad Alfayhani

Hamad Alfayhani is a filmmaker from Qatar. He studied Media Industries and Technologies at Northwestern University

Qatar. Hamad's work features themes of isolation, illness, and the overall experience of being in an area that is on the continuous line between modernization and traditionalism. Hamad uses film and photography to convey his vision to the world and highlight his surroundings. He has been featured in and assisted in multiple exhibitions in Qatar and has directed five audio-visual installations that are currently being shown at the National Museum of Qatar.

Director's Note

Throughout my journey of being chronically ill, I have had many experiences where I have doubted my own place in the world. Having conversations where I am misunderstood, and pushed to the point of overexplaining myself to the people around me. My illness is not invisible; it is a skin disorder that can be seen by anyone looking at me. This film takes the illness a step further, giving the protagonist a definite end, with the illness erasing his most prominent feature, his face. For me, this collection of conversations that happen throughout the film are necessary analysis to discover what illness takes from a person, but does it also give? It is a reflection on how we view people with illness, and how they view the world around them. Having an illness is not a journey you take alone, although it can seem like it, but it is a journey that you take with everything that you encounter.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$50,000**Secured Financing: **\$50,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Doha Film Institute, Qatar

Project Requirements:

- Casting / Actors
- Creative Advice
- Pre-production Advice
- Script Advice

Director / Screenwriter:

Dhoha Abdelsattar

Producer:

Muntaha El-Mumin

Contact:

Dhoha Abdelsattar

dhoha.abdelsattar@gmail.com

Missed Connections

(Working Title)

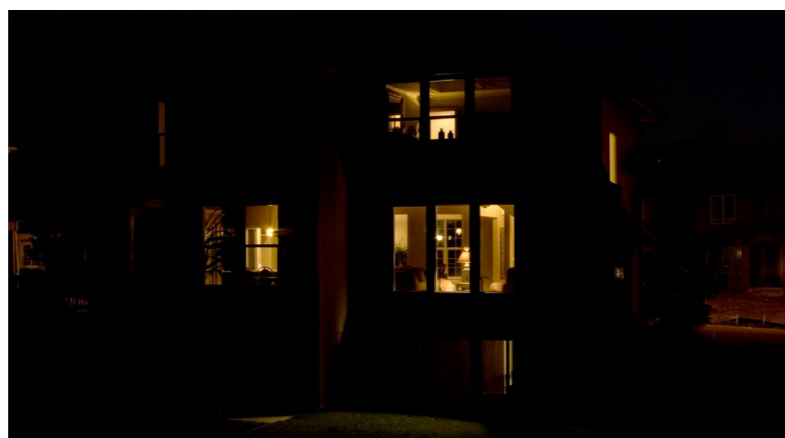
Qatar / Arabic

Genre: **Drama**

Themes: **Culture, Social Issues**

Developed as Part of the Documentary Lab with Rithy Panh

A married couple repeatedly try and fail to connect emotionally, ultimately finding themselves stuck in a cycle of quiet conflict.



Ahmed and Maryam have nothing in common. Tied together by marriage, they merely cohabit within the confines of their shared home. There are rare moments where they seek to connect, failing repeatedly to understand what resonates with the other. Eventually, they each seek different coping mechanisms to survive their conjugal solitude.

Dhoha Abdelsattar



Dhoha Abdelsattar is a Qatari photo artist, exhibition curator and aspiring writer/director. She has a Master of Arts in Comparative

Art and Archaeology from University College London and is currently managing exhibitions in the Distinctive Collections section at Qatar National Library. Dhoha's photographic work is mainly rooted in analogue and alternative darkroom processes but includes video installations and digital images. Her art unpacks themes of solitude and the female experience, particularly in the Arab world. Dhoha has been selected to participate in various workshops at institutions such as Foundation FOTODOK in the Netherlands, and recently completed a creative residency at arthere Istanbul over the summer of 2022. She is currently working on her first short film as part of the Short Documentary Lab.

Muntaha El-Mumin



Muntaha El-Mumin is a British film researcher and producer based in Qatar. After graduating with a master's in

Near and Middle Eastern Studies from SOAS, University of London, El-Mumin has dedicated her time to researching and exploring MENA representation and culture within film and literature in her online project, Al-Ghus Essays. Additionally, she has helped produce and worked closely with directors with short films in Qatar and the UK. With experience in both film production and theory, El-Mumin aims to support stories and talent from the MENA region as they emerge on the big screen.

Director's Note

A house can be the symbol of many things, but in Qatar, it is the heart of a family's secrets and a strict threshold of privacy. This film takes a voyeuristic perspective through the windows of a Qatari couple's home, watching their inability to bridge the vast divide between them. By leaving their public personas to the imagination, my intention is to explore the unspoken loneliness experienced within intimate relationships, and the underlying toxicity that can be found in mundanity.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$7,000**

Secured Financing: **\$4,000**

Project Requirements:

- Casting / Actors
- Creative Advice
- Pre-production Advice
- Script Advice

Development

Short Documentary or Essay

Bel Falstini by Obada Jarbi

This I Remember by Alessandra El Chanti

Director:
Obada Jarbi

Producer:
Dana J. Atrach

Contact:
Dana J. Atrach
dana.atrach@gmail.com

Bel Falstini

Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic, English

Genre: **Drama, Non-Fiction**

Themes: **Identity, Culture, Human Rights, Social Issues, Politics**

Developed as Part of the Documentary Lab with Rithy Panh

This documentary tells the story of Palestinian refugees living in the Shatila Refugee Camp in Lebanon. It will focus on the history of its people, the burden of their hope, and how the tension created by the two affects the lives of the different generations of Palestinians living in the camp.



The tension between the promise of hope and return and the reality of permanence and moving on has impacted the lives of thousands of Palestinian refugees living in the Shatila camp. Generation after generation, the same promises of returning home linger. But with each new generation, the reality and pressure of settling in only grows stronger. This camp has its own story to tell—a landmark of this constant struggle.

This documentary will tell the story of this struggle through the architecture, how tents became concrete walls, through the mundane detail and how these details tell the story of what you don't see, and through the families—the history of its people and the burden of their hope. Despite their pain and their struggle of being stuck in time and trying to move on, this documentary will show how Palestine is still alive in these people. They will never forget their country or where they come from. And although this creates a struggle for them and stops them from trying to move on, it gives them the hope they need to carry on.

Obada Jarbi



Obada Yousef Jarbi is a Jordanian resident of Qatar who holds a bachelor's degree in Mass Communication and Broadcast

Journalism from Qatar University. He made his directorial debut with the documentary 'Addicted to Alienation' (2016). His second short film 'The Fishermen' (2017), created through Doha Film Institute's documentary workshop, screened in several international film festivals. His third documentary 'Okht Rjal' premiered in 2020 and has been very well received.

Dana J. Atrach



Dana J. Atrach is a Palestinian storyteller who is fascinated by the world of untold stories. She creates to raise awareness

and inspire change by tackling quotidian social issues through comedy. Atrach holds a BS in Communication and Media Studies from Northwestern University in Qatar and an MFA in Screenwriting from the University of California, Los Angeles. Atrach is an Assistant Professor in Residence at Northwestern University in Qatar, where she teaches screenwriting. In 2014, Atrach's first feature script, Heeya Howa, won "Best Unproduced Script Based on a Family Drama" at the St. Tropez International Film Festival. Atrach has also written and co-written several short films that have premiered in Doha and Los Angeles.

Director's Note

The Palestinian conflict is one we've been hearing about since we were children and a conflict we continue to hear about today. We've seen the injustice of how their narrative is being told through the different media outlets around the world. We've seen the horrors of their daily lives through social media accounts of activists and people living through this terror. But, over the years, the Palestinians have become dehumanized. I want to make this film because I want to show and focus on the human element of this film. I'm not going into the camp to interview the refugees. I'm living their life. This film will cover their whole lifestyle through their human experience. There will be no interviews in this film. It's capturing the emotions, not the words. Not what they are saying, but how they're feeling. I want people to see what the root cause of all this pain is and how it affects the lives of these refugees.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$30,000**

Project Requirements:

- Artistic Direction
- Financing
- Pitching Advice
- Pre-production Advice
- Producers

Director / Screenwriter / Producer:
Alessandra El Chanti

Contact:
Alessandra El Chanti
alessandraelchanti@gmail.com

This I Remember

Lebanon, Qatar / Arabic

Genre: **Biography, History, War**

Themes: **Politics, Immigration, Identity, Social Issues, Coming-of-Age**

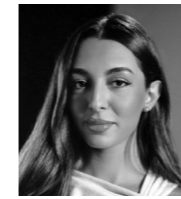
Developed as Part of the Documentary Lab with Rithy Panh

A young woman pieces together her memories of the city she was never able to call her home—Beirut.



Interweaving historical records with the filmmaker's subjective recreations of super 8 film archives, this short documentary tells the story of growing up in the Lebanese diaspora. Her recollection is an ebb and flow of pieces she involuntarily consumed from different types of media growing up, and firsthand experiences she remembers from her yearly trips to her hometown. These pieces have shaped her understanding of her identity, and what it means to be a Lebanese who was born and raised abroad. The film centres on three moments—her earliest recollection of Lebanon that she was too young to understand, her dislike of spending her summers there as a teenager, and her need to reconnect with her identity in her adulthood.

Alessandra El Chanti



Alessandra El Chanti is a Lebanese filmmaker, born and raised in Qatar. Her interests lie in the culture, art, politics, and identity of the Levant. El Chanti's latest film, 'When Beirut Was Beirut' (2021), is an animated documentary that has toured international festivals, and won the Bader Best Short Film Award at Doha Film Institute's Ajyal Film Festival in 2021. El Chanti holds an MFA in Documentary Media from Northwestern University.

Director's Note

Growing up as part of a diaspora, different types of media & archives have exposed me to a life I have never lived, hence leading to my obsession with archives. Through news, books, film and photographs, I was able to understand a life and a world beyond my imagination, and to have something tangible to refer to when piecing up the puzzle of my identity. In this film, I make a visually poetic commentary on a part of history that I have not experienced other than through watching it on a screen, but also choose to add my own experience that younger generations who also did not experience living in Lebanon could relate to. The film is my version of Lebanon as I know it, and an ode to audiovisual and tangible archives. They have helped me understand where I'm from, and helped me navigate the types of emotions I have had towards Lebanon as I matured. This is one version of Lebanon amongst millions of versions, that other people in the diaspora have.

Financial Information

Confirmed Financial Partners:

- Doha Film Institute, Qatar

Project Requirements:

- Artistic Direction
- Creative Advice
- Pre-production Advice
- Script Advice

In Production

Short Documentary or Essay

17-0: The Untold Story (Working Title) by Fatma Al-Ghanim

Gihan (Working Title) by Hadeer Omar

Villa 187 by Eiman Mirghani

Director / Screenwriter:
Fatma Al-Ghanim

Producer:
Basel Owies

Contact:
Basel Owies
bowies@dohafilminstitute.com

Qatari Film Fund
qff@dohafilminstitute.com

17-0: The Untold Story

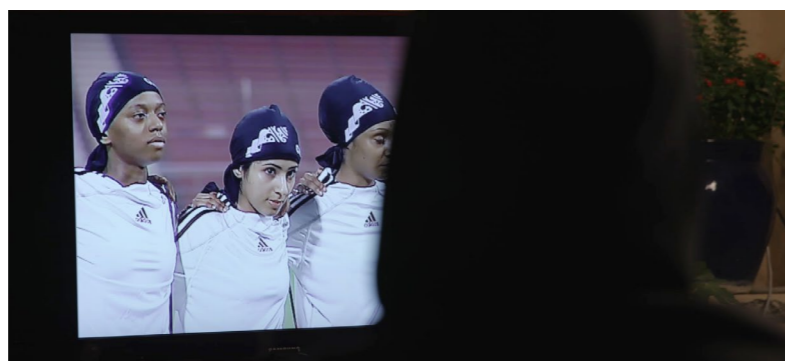
(Working Title)

Qatar / Arabic, English

Genre: **Biography, Sports, Drama**

Themes: **Women's Issues, Coming-of-Age, Identity, Social Issues, Culture**
Developed as Part of the Documentary Lab with Rithy Panh

The captain of the first-ever Qatari Women's Football Team grapples with the painful hidden costs that come with being a part of the first generation of women to break through cultural taboos in pursuit of their footballing passion and dreams.



'17-0: The Untold Story' tells the story of the bravery and hidden sacrifice of the first-ever Qatar Women's National Football Team (QWNFT) through the personal experience of team captain, Fatma Al-Ghanim. The story of this team begins twelve years ago—nearly two months prior to the historic December 2nd, 2010 announcement that named Qatar as the host country to the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022™—when a group of passionate young ladies from Qatar made football history of their own by breaking cultural barriers to become the first-ever players to debut as the QWNFT.

Set against the backdrop of the football frenzy that surrounded the build-up of Qatar's FIFA World Cup 2022 bid campaign, the newly formed QWNFT was prematurely fielded to play the opening match of the 2010 Arabia Cup on live television—a game in which the QWNFT was mercilessly thrashed 17-0 by a much more experienced opponent. Despite the heavy loss, the match was historic not only because it marked the debut of the QWNFT, but it also marked the first time the public witnessed the breaking of a cultural taboo: Qatari women playing football in public and on live TV.

Fatma Al-Ghanim



Fatma Al-Ghanim currently serves as the Director of Marketing and Communications at the Doha Film Institute (DFI) and Ajyal

Film Festival, a role she's fulfilled since 2015. Cumulatively, Fatma has over ten years of experience in the sports and entertainment industry, serving in various roles, including International Relations Deputy Director for the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, Marketing & Communications Director for the Doha 2020 Olympic Bid Committee, first-female Board Member of Qatar Cycling and Triathlon Association, and practising as an independent film producer, writer, and director. Prior to her career in the sports and entertainment sector, Fatma served in Qatar's oil and gas industry for a span of five years. Entrepreneurship, consulting, and venture capitalism are also among Fatma's independent business interests. Fatma lives in Doha, Qatar and holds a BA in Economics from the University of Texas at Austin and an MBA from Duke University's Fuqua School of Business.

Abdul Jabbar Maki



Abdul Jabbar Maki began his editing career in the UK, working on documentaries and TV shows for various broadcasters,

including The Discovery Channel, Channel 4 and the BBC. He then moved to Qatar, where he worked with local and regional filmmakers on numerous documentaries, commercials and award-winning short films. Past credits include 'Coptico', a series of art installation films for Palestinian filmmaker Scandar Copti, as well as 'If I Could Go Back in Time', a music video by Jackie Salloum for Palestinian hip hop group Dam, which received critical praise for its advocacy on women's rights issues in the Arab world. In 2018, he worked on Reem Saleh's acclaimed feature documentary debut, 'What Comes Around'; the film was nominated for the Glashutte Original Documentary Award at Berlinale. He is presently the lead editor at the Doha Film Institute, cutting promotional and corporate content, as well as continuing his year-round engagement with short films from the Institute's Qatar Film Fund.

Director's Note

'17-0: The Untold Story' is a short documentary film that is deeply personal to me. Aside from being the director of this film, I was also the first woman to captain the Qatar Women's National Team. I feel a great sense of responsibility to honour the story of this historic team not only for the impact that it's had on shaping my own life but, more importantly, for the sake of honouring the brave sacrifice made by my teammates and coach, and the role that this story has the potential to play in ensuring the enduring legacy of their sacrifice for the cause of advancing Qatari women in sports and women in sports globally.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$50,000**
Secured Financing: **\$50,000**

Confirmed Financial Partners:
• Doha Film Institute, Qatar

Project Requirements:
• Creative Advice
• Festivals
• Post-production Advice
• Script Advice
• VOD Platforms

Director / Producer:

Hadeer Omar

Contact:

Hadeer Omar

hadeersomar@gmail.com

Gihan

(Working Title)

Egypt, Qatar / Arabic

Genre: **Short VR Documentary, Experimental**

Themes: **Art, Identity, Women's Issues, Psychology**

Developed as Part of the Documentary Lab with Rithy Panh

A performative and self-discovery journey for a jewellery designer taking control of her body and spirituality through movement and introspection while becoming an actress.



A virtual reality film that invites the spectator to a 360-sensory experience in the inner and outer world of Gihan. Gihan is a jewellery designer with numerous curiosities, which made her begin exploring a career in acting. Two years later, she is already in the film/TV industry, making a name for herself. A visual trip that encapsulates bodily autonomy, dance therapy, spirituality, and emotions as a woman. Two versions are in a world that allows them to deliver a shared monologue through art, fashion, performance, and soundscapes. An expressed introspection on what her body and soul were going through and developed her resolution.

Hadeer Omar



Hadeer Omar (1988, Alexandria) is a new media artist, designer, and educator. Omar holds an MFA in Design and BFA in

Graphic Design. Omar's passion for storytelling and cultural movements crosses disciplines within academia and entertainment. Her research explores cultural identity, memories, the self, and narratives artfully through immersive XR media and technologies, video art installations, motion graphics, A/V performances and photography. She currently serves as an Assistant Professor at VCUarts in Qatar and is a former artist in residence at the Doha Fire Station program in Qatar. Her work has been showcased regionally and internationally.

Director's Note

As an artist, I began my research by documenting my own turning points in life. Felt the need to bridge what was happening to me internally and my surroundings. I am a Muslim millennial woman; daring to ask, is my story worth sharing? Do I fear judgement, or am I in control of my narrative? Can emotions be exaggerated and deceiving? As a kid, I was confused and relied on other people's stories to define mine. I needed to develop my visual language to express my narratives over time. Based on my experience as a female, you are expected to fit the societal/cultural norms that a group of people agreed upon following, no matter what. That may be why I wanted to meet Gihan. In a 360 set, I tried to capture her state of mind over time. The gradients of a person's emotion are showcased through a façade or mask, which acts as a template we are gifted to customise. Some are aware of its existence, while others don't. We all perform daily to survive, and it's a coping mechanism for what life offers us. Once Gihan puts on the mask, she becomes part of a more significant struggle and commitment.

Financial Information

Total Budget: **\$15,000**

Secured Financing: **\$3,000**

Project Requirements:

- Distributors
- Editing Advice
- Marketing Advice
- Post-production Advice
- Pre-sales

Director:

Eiman Mirghani

Company Profile:

FilmMENA is a production house based in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Our goal is to support and nurture the next generation of filmmakers and content creators in the region. By offering services such as project development, film production, and educational resources like online panel discussions and workshops, we aim to create a platform that empowers these talents to share their own stories and amplify their voices through cinema.

Contact:

Eiman Mirghani

em.mirghani@gmail.com

Villa 187

Sudan, Qatar / Arabic, English

Genre: **Biography, Documentary**

Themes: **Coming-of-Age, Identity, Immigration, Social Issues**

[Developed as Part of the Documentary Lab with Rithy Panh](#)

Driven by the sudden cancellation of her family's residency visa in Qatar, Sudanese filmmaker Eiman Mirghani documents her family's house—and the memories that made it a home—for over 30 years.



Filmmaker Eiman Mirghani and her family have called Qatar home for over 30 years, despite being from Sudan. In 2020, Eiman's father broke the news to the family that their visa had suddenly been cancelled, and, for the first time ever, they were unsure of their future. Shortly after, Eiman begins to document the process of packing up the house her family have called home for over three decades—reminiscing over the past and pondering on the future in a home that was never really theirs.

Eiman Mirghani



Eiman Mirghani is a Sudanese filmmaker based in Qatar. Upon graduating with a BA in Film and Media Studies at the University of Nottingham, Eiman has worked on numerous short films in the MENA region as director and producer. Eiman is the founder and senior producer of a film production house called FilmMENA, which aims to assist and elevate filmmakers from the Middle East and North African region. In 2021, Eiman was one of the producers of the short Sudanese film 'Al-Sit', which has grown to receive accolades in numerous international film festivals and has become qualified for the Academy Awards. Eiman's second short film, 'The Bleaching Syndrome', was directed under the mentorship of world-renowned filmmaker Rithy Panh and has travelled to several international film festivals. Eiman is under the mentorship of Rithy Panh once more, as part of the Doha Film Institute's Documentary Lab Fellowship, to direct her latest short film, 'Villa 187'.

Director's Note

The news about my family's visa cancellation was a very important moment in my life. It had brought up many questions and ideas which I had never really given much thought to—like belonging, duty, identity—and more importantly, what makes a place home? The visa's cancellation is what compelled me to document the process. It has been some time since that news came out, but I still have the urge to share my experience and story as I believe that it is a universal feeling people could relate to in their own lives or begin to interrogate.

Financial Information

Project Requirements:

- Creative Advice
- Distributors
- Festivals
- Producers
- Gap Funding

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